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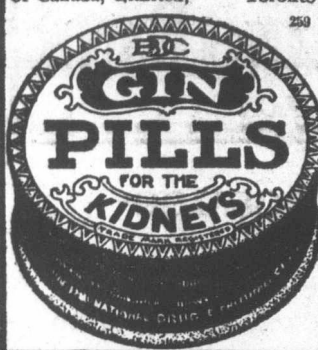
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Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

Often a man is not on speaking terms with his wife because she takes up all the time.

Her Husband's Twin Brother

A Story of a Deserted Wife

By LOUISE B. CUMMINGS

Donald Brewer, a handsome young fellow with light hair, blue eyes and a pleasant smile on his lips, was walking on Main street swinging a light cane. Pretty girls were moving hither and thither, for Donald was in the shopping district, and it was the hour when the stores were much crowded. He was an admirer of beauty, and his expression indicated that he was reveling in the display. His heart was light, and when a young man is in happy mood the appeal of fair faces and trim figures is especially strong.

Who is this young woman advancing slowly with a little girl not four years old clinging to her skirt? Donald thought her prettier than any one he had yet met. Her glance met his, and with a cry she sprang to him, threw her arms about his neck and cried out in a sweet, appealing voice:

"Oh, Walter, why did you leave me? Come back! Do, Walter, dear, come back and all will be forgiven."

Donald Brewer's admiration for the fair sex was general, and he preferred that the favors he received should be general. This was altogether too particular. Besides, it was too public, and, like most men worthy of the name, he detested "scenes."

He assured the lady that she had mistaken him for some one else. This only occasioned a burst of grief and reproaches. The child began to cry, a crowd collected, and a policeman came hurrying up to discover the cause of the blocking of the sidewalk. He saw a young woman clinging to a young man who was evidently not as well pleased as he should have been. Donald explained that she had mistaken him for some one else. The lady explained that he was her husband, who had deserted. The policeman evidently believed the latter story and viewed Donald with disfavor.

"I think," he said to the woman, "we'd better go to the police office. You can make a charge against him if you like, and that'll bring the matter into the courts."

"Don't, Walter; don't force me to do that. Come home, and we will again be happy."

And she wept on his bosom.

Walter signified to the policeman that he preferred to go with him. So the party adjourned to the police station, where Walter sent out for his mother and other friends to identify him, and the lady sent for a sister-in-law. All of the former pronounced him Donald Brewer, and the latter declared that, though he resembled him, he was not her brother. This satisfied every one except the lady, who was amazed and disappointed that they should be so obtuse. When Donald left her she took his hand and, looking at him appealingly out of a pair of liquid brown eyes, made a last appeal while the pretty little girl begged papa to come home and not make mamma cry.

It makes a lot of difference to a man

when appealed to by a pretty woman whether he is free or wedlocked. Under certain circumstances—action for alimony, for instance—the word wedlock is suggestive of bolts and bars. Donald, being exonerated from being a fugitive husband, assured the poor woman of his deep sympathy and that he was deeply touched by her faith, despite proof to the contrary, that he belonged to her. If she would give him her address he would call upon her and would be glad to serve her in any way.

A beautiful hope shone in her eyes, and, giving him a parting look, she said that she would trust him once more, sure that he would not fail her. Then, to evade observation, she asked him to call a carriage, and, getting into it with her little girl, who insisted on giving papa a parting kiss, she was driven away smiling through tears.

A few days later Donald called upon the grass widow. He found her a good deal changed. Her sister-in-law had convinced her that there was a doubt as to Donald being her husband. When she came into the room to receive him she paused on the threshold, searching every line of his countenance. Then beautiful blushes rose to her cheeks at remembering the caresses she had given him, and she hung her head in shame at the remembrance of the caresses she had bestowed upon one who had turned out to be a stranger.

What is forced upon us we don't want. What we cannot get we crave. Donald, who up to this moment feared the lady would claim him, was now disappointed that she did not. Those who are chained wish to be free; those who are free wish to be chained. In the words of the crusty old bachelor, marriage is something one half the world is trying to get into and the other half is trying to get out of.

Donald had not experienced any pleasurable sensation in the caresses he had received the day before; he was dreading being forced into great trouble at establishing his identity. Now he longed to have those arms about his neck and those appealing eyes looking into his. An idea occurred to him. It was an idea not worthy of him, but it was irresistible. While a few days before he had been telling the truth to keep out of trouble, he now yielded to a temptation to tell a lie that would get him back into trouble and keep him there. Why is it that a man who will protect himself circumspectly against ordinary entanglements will plunge into a slough of despond where a woman is concerned?

Donald Brewer was young and reckless and believed accordingly. He smiled at the lady in a way to cause her to doubt a decision she had just made that he was not her husband. A quick glance of inquiry, followed by a step forward, then a step backward, and she sprang toward him. He caught her in his arms, and her head sank on his bosom.

Donald was facing, as it happened, a mirror, and when he caught sight of his reflection holding in his arms a woman whom he had permitted to think was her husband a sense of the dishonor of his act and its probable consequences rose within him to plague him.

"What a confounded fool and villain I am!" he mentally exclaimed. Shocked at what he had done, he began at once to conjure up some method of getting out of the trap he had laid for himself. Taking her hands in his, he disengaged her embrace, and, holding her apart so that he could look her in the eyes, he set about framing a statement that would put the matter back where it was before he had made the break. But one look out of those brown eyes bereft him of the will to do so. He was like one in deep water struggling to rise. As soon as he got to the surface a heavy hand pushed him back again. He felt as though he were sinking deeper and deeper in a moral quicksand.

"Forgive me," he muttered and took her in his arms again.

Now, it doesn't matter whether he asked her to forgive him for thus deceiving her or for having deserted her, for at that moment he saw reflected in the glass the sister-in-law who had freed him from the imputation of being the deserter. She was looking at the pair locked in a mutual embrace with an expression of extreme dissatisfaction.

He was appalled.

The lady he was holding in his arms, fortunately for him, looked and, seeing the intruder, relieved him from the necessity of disengaging himself.

"Given" said she who had entered reproachfully.

"Ruth," replied the other, "you were mistaken, after all. He is Walter."

Ruth gave Donald a look which he remembered to his dying day.

"I grant," she said, "that you may be Walter's twin brother, for villainy seems to run in the blood."

This opened the door for at least a temporary escape.

"You are right," he said, catching at a straw. "I am Walter's twin brother."

Both women drew back and stared at Donald, who stood like Ajax defying the lightning.

"Walter Schofield had no twin brother," said Ruth.

"None that he would acknowledge. I was regarded as the black sheep of the family. At twelve years of age I ran away, and my name was never after mentioned in the family."

The grass widow by this time had returned to a state of wondering doubt. "We have had," said Ruth, "one black sheep of your family in ours, and we have no use for another."

She pointed to the door.

Assuming a proud innocence the very opposite of what he felt, Donald said: "I am aware of my brother's injustice to his angel wife. I have been tempted to do evil that good might come. I was disposed to take advantage of the resemblance between us to right the wrongs he has done. I have failed. An avowal."

With a low bow he strutted out of the room and the house, Ruth looking after him with a glance of indignant contempt, while Given evidently did not know whether to let him go or detain him.

A month passed, during which Donald Brewer dreaded every day lest he should in some way be punished for having yielded to temptation and formed innumerable plans to set himself right in the matter. There is but one way for persons who have erred to set themselves right, and that is confession. When Donald had turned down a plan or two a day he finally arrived at the confessional state.

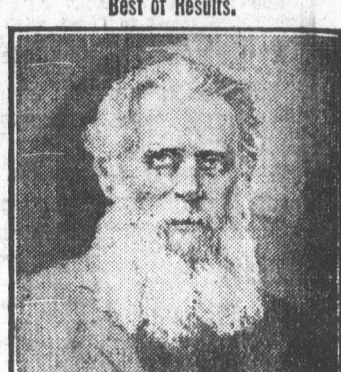
He wrote a long letter to the "wife of his twin brother," giving a detailed account of his temptation and the cause of it and acknowledging that his final statement was false from beginning to end. His excuse was one which with a woman will always win. It was that he had found her so charming and sympathized so deeply with her and her lovely child that he simply couldn't help it.

And here is the beginning to a sequel of this story of which only the bare facts can be given. Donald called by invitation on the widow and was forgiven, and his call was followed by a number of others. The lady was about to apply for a divorce in order that she might marry him when her husband conveniently died, thus saving trouble, expense and time, which last to Donald was the most important of the three, for he was madly in love and had been waiting long enough already.

All this happened years ago. What was at one time a serious matter is now one on which Donald Brewer occasionally ventures to crack a joke. He is an affectionate stepfather to his wife's child, and her aunt Ruth has come to a point where she considers that he had some excuse for his altogether objectionable action. But women are apt to think that love covers a multitude of sins.

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