DENTON JOURNAL

PAGE 3

HOWARD MELVIN BENJ. H. JOHNSON

MELVIN & JOHNSON,

PUBLISHERS

SATURDAY MORNING, NOV. 16, 1912

New Incubator Catalogue Free.
Poultry Supply Catalogue Free.

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Quilts, $1.00 to $1.25 each.
Bed Spreads, $1.00 to $2.50.
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Regular 25c Bureau Scarfs, 10c.
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Misses' Aviation Caps, 50c.
Ladies' Aviation Caps, $1.00.
Children's Bear Skin Coats, $1.50.
Misses' Pony Skin and Caracal Coats, $2.50 to $5.00.
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Ladies' good quality Dress Shoe, $1.50.
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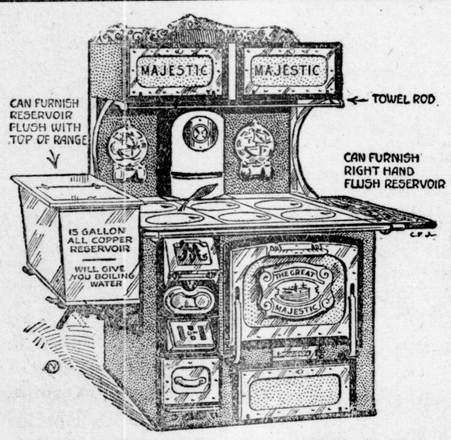

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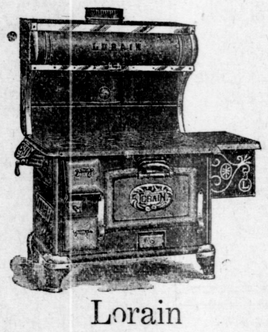
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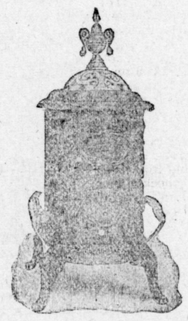
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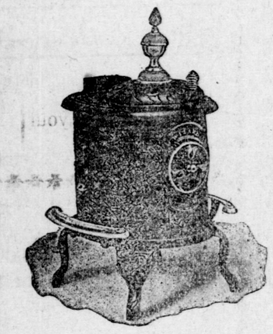
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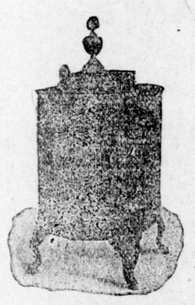
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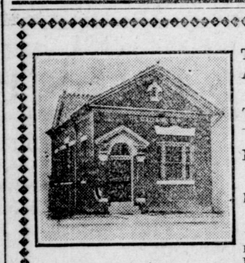

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Two Camphor Wood Boxes

Contemplated Harmless Revenge That Came Near to Tragedy

By CLARISSA MACKIE

It was two years since Captain Benjamin Worth had sailed for the orient, and when his return was heralded in Little River two people awaited his coming with different emotions. Philo Moore, the hard header, flinty hearted miller who had incurred Captain Worth's everlasting wrath by a dubious deal in real estate, shuddered at the thought of facing his victim again. On the other hand, Mrs. Ariana Wesley, the handsome widow who had promised to marry the captain on his return, looked eagerly for his coming.

Philo Moore aired his grievances on the hospitable steps of the postoffice. "I thought Cap'n Ben was to stay for two years," he grumbled.

"So he has—so he has," said Ariana Wesley's brother, Sam Brown—"two years and one month. Of course our folk would know." He threw out his chest and looked important, for Captain Benjamin Worth was well to do, and his trip to China and India had been taken merely as a passenger on a large trading schooner. The captain had sailed to all those eastern ports in his earlier days, and this prenuptial trip was what might be called a last fling at his roving life before he submitted to double harness.

"Two years and one month," groaned Philo; "seems like two months. Time does fly."

"Specially if you ain't all powerful glad to see somebody," grinned Sam Brown. "Let me see—what was it the captain said he was going to do to you when he come back, eh, Philo?"

Philo spat nervously into the dusty road and half unconsciously looked over his shoulder. "I don't see what call Ben Worth has to do anything to me!" he complained. "If he tries to make me any trouble I'll get the law on to him, and don't you forget it, Sam Brown. You can put a flea in his ear if you wanter."

"Tell him yourself," retorted Sam. "I didn't never get up at midnight and change the stakes on the captain's buildin' lot up to Paradise Heights so's 'twould make my lot three foot bigger. I didn't do it!"

"Didn't know you had a lot up to Paradise Heights," ejaculated a bystander curiously.

"No more I ain't," said Sam, with such emphasis that they all looked at Philo Moore.

"I didn't know Philo had neither," said the bystander.

"He hasn't—now," grinned Sam Brown. "He sold it to somebuddy—an Eyetalian, I think, wasn't it, Philo?"

Philo nodded surlily. "I could buy it back if I liked."

There was a general laugh. "You could buy most any lot on the heights low for a song. The only feller that's made any money offen Paradise Heights was the one who wrote those fancy advertisements. When the captain heard you'd sold that lot next to him to a dago he wrote he'd skin you alive, Philo." Sam Brown winked at the other loungers and strolled away.

AT LAST THERE APPEARED THE FORM OF CAPTAIN BENJAMIN WORTH

Philo Moore humped himself in a corner by one of the posts and waited patiently for the arrival of the stage with the evening mail. As the time drew near for its arrival a little crowd gathered there, discussing the daily happenings of the village. Philo Moore sat strangely silent, smoking his pipe, watching keenly out of his little dark eyes.

There was a distant rumble from the hill. It grew louder and with it came the pound of hoofs and then there came into view the heavy stage drawn by two white horses. Around it whirled a cloud of dust, for the March wind was blowing mightily.

The mail bags flew out and struck the porch with a thud. The back doors of the stage were flung wide open and several people tumbled out. At last amid a grumbling monologue there emerged the familiar form of Captain Benjamin Worth, a carpet bag in each hand and a wide smile wreathing his good natured countenance.

Philo Moore melted away into the darkness while the newcomer's eyes embraced the familiar crowd with friendly warmth. They gathered about him and made his welcome one to be remembered.

"There's an old friend of yours hereabouts, captain," grinned Sam Brown after awhile. "Hi, there, Philo, step forward here!"

"Philo Moore, the most unscrupulous old scalawag that ever turned a hand to business," sputtered Captain Worth as he peered into the surrounding darkness.

"He's gone," said a small boy and at that they all laughed and broke the spell of ill feeling that the mention of Philo's name had engendered.

The captain registered at the hotel, for his bachelor abode was still closely shuttered and locked, and after he had partaken of a supper and attended to the load of boxes which had followed him down from the station, he made a careful toilet and went up to call on his lady love.

Mrs. Ariana Wesley had wind of his coming and was waiting for him in her snug little parlor. The drum stove was stuffed with apple tree logs and the roar of the blaze as it drew up the chimney quite drowned the first tender greetings of the reunited lovers.

"It's my last voyage in those parts, Ariana," said the captain rather regretfully. "I reckon I'll just drop anchor hereabouts. I expect I'll be under your foot all the time."

"But never in my way," beamed the widow softly, and the captain squeezed her plump hand appreciatively. He lifted the hand and looked at its pink palm thoughtfully.

"I've got a blamed sight of truck stowed away for you, Ariana," he said. "All kinds of gewgaws to stick in your hair—rings for your fingers and slippers for your toes—what?" He leaned back and roared delightedly at his own wit. Then he sobered down and stared solemnly at the twinkling prisms on the hanging lamp. "Guess what I've got for you in a camphor wood chest, Ariana!"

"Oh, I can't guess," sighed Ariana. "What is it like, Benjamin?"

"Something that no woman in Little River can match!" boasted the captain. "My gracious, but you'll take the wind out of their sails when you get on that rigging!"

"It's something to wear," suggested the widow.

"Like as not," grinned the captain happily. "Never mind. I'll send up the chest tomorrow, and then you'll see what you'll see."

"You are the kindest man in the world, Captain Ben," said the widow feelingly. "You've been real sweet to me."

The captain blushed like a beet, and he went on hastily and somewhat incoherently: "Yes, ma'am, I said to myself, Mrs. Ariana must have nothing but the choicest in the market, and when you see what's in that chest you'll realize just how much Captain Ben Worth thinks of you."

After the captain had left the widow's abode and was on his way back to the hotel his mind became filled with bitter thoughts of Philo Moore. "Blast his toplights!" he muttered angrily as he stumped along. "I'll fix him. When he opens the box I've got for him he'll wish he'd never monkeyed with Benjamin Worth!"

Captain Ben growled all the rest of the way to the hotel, and when he was up in his room he dropped on his knees before two small brass bound chests made from aromatic camphor wood and unfastened the straps that carefully secured them.

He took a bunch of keys from his pocket and fitted one to one of the chests. He threw back the lid and disclosed a quantity of tissue paper. Under this was roll after roll of rich silk, fans, bracelets, ivory and jade carvings, lacquer wood boxes and other Chinese wares. These treasures would quite turn the head of the prospective bride.

The lid snapped down and the chest locked. Captain Ben opened the second one, this time carefully and with what seemed to be elaborate caution. Indeed, he went through various maneuvers that would have excited the wonder and curiosity of an onlooker had there been one.

At length he closed the lid, locked it and went to bed to sleep soundly the long night through. Side by side in the moonlight there stood the two little camphor wood chests, one filled with pretty things dear to a woman's heart, the other containing a death dealing force.

One was a gift for his sweetheart, the other his revenge on Philo Moore.

"If it wasn't right and just for me to pay Philo back in this way the Lord would have prevented me from getting the thing here!" So reasoned Captain Ben as he dressed the following morning, and he stilled his conscience with the recollection of the mean trick the miller had played on him two years ago. He did not know that matters had not been going Philo Moore's way lately. Perhaps it was the old man's crooked treatment of Captain Ben which shook public confidence in him. Anyway, business fell off from the mill, and people went a long way around to the Brook mill rather than trade with Philo Moore.

After breakfast Captain Ben shouldered one of the boxes and went downstairs. "Here, Bill," he said to one of the loungers, "you take this over to Mrs. Wesley's, will you?" He flipped a quarter at the man and returned upstairs for the other box. This one he handled carefully and conveyed it down the river road to the silver gray mill where Philo Moore lived in a mist of white flour dust.

The wheel was rushing merrily around, and the water flowed in a snowy stream over the rims. Captain Ben walked steadily up to the door of the mill with his burden and looked in. The wheel was turning, but there was no corn in the hoppers, there was no wheat to be turned into flour, for the bags were piled rafter high, and Philo had not yet disposed of what he had ground, but he was keeping up an outward appearance of business.

Captain Ben went into the dusty little office where Philo was poring over his accounts and set the camphor wood chest down on a high stool before the astounded miller. Philo Moore grew very pale around the lips when he saw the chest and read the vengeance in Captain Ben's stern face.

"What's this?" faltered the miller.

"That's what's coming to you, Philo," said the captain, closing the door. "That box is for you to open, and when you see what is inside you'll understand the nature of revenge. I don't believe you'll ever skin another man out of his rightful property. Now, you open that box—quick!" He turned on the miller with such ferocity that Philo accepted the proffered key and thrust it in the lock.

All at once with a sudden accession of courage the man threw back the lid and lifted the mass of tissue paper that was there. His eyes widened at

FIRST THE CAPTAIN WAS AHEAD AND THEN THE MILLER.

the sight of rolls of silk, fans and other women's gewgaws, and he turned to the silent man beside him.

"So that's your revenge," he was beginning, when the captain's hand clutched his arm with an awful grip.

"My God, Philo, what have I done?" he gasped. "I've sent the wrong box to Ariana Wesley. Come, I've got to get there right away!" He dragged the astonished miller after him, and together they sped up the road one behind the other. First the captain was ahead and then the miller would make a spurt and pass him, and so they ran, followed by the populace of Little River, who became woefully confused in mind as to whether Captain Ben Worth was chasing Philo Moore or whether the miller was pursuing the captain.

And so they came to the house of the Widow Wesley, and found her just entering her yard after a morning spent at her mother's. She opened the gate to admit the captain, but the miller spurted then and passed the sailor, and so the widow admitted the captain and then closed the gate in the face of Little River.

In the front porch they paused and breathed heavily. On the green settee where the messenger had placed it during the widow's absence, was the camphor wood chest unopened.

"What's this?" asked the widow curiously.

"I sent the wrong one by mistake. This one belongs to Philo Moore—or, at least, it did—but I'm going to take it back," panted the captain.

"Can't I see what's inside?" coaxed the widow, laying a hand on the chest.

"No, no, Ariana! Philo, will you go back to the mill and bring that chest to Mrs. Wesley? Then come to the hotel; I've got something for you."

An hour afterward Captain Benjamin Worth had completed the burial of a very dead specimen of a fangless cobra which he had brought in a torpid state to thoroughly frighten Philo Moore. And when the nervous miller finally presented himself at the hotel to receive the dreaded gift he almost wept for joy to discover it was nothing save a curious pair of Chinese swords which his old enemy had kindly brought from Asia.

When Captain Ben was alone once more he wiped the sweat from his brow and sank weakly back in his chair. "I've had a great deliverance," he muttered thankfully. "The next time there's vengeance to be handed out I guess I'll let the good Lord take care of it in his own way!"

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