## The Widow's Son

By WILLIS BRINDLEY

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BIG Matt Donovan backed his twelve-cylinder roadster into the street and straightened her up. Then, for no reason except that he wanted to, he glanced across the street and, sure enough, there was Mrs. Bailey, and beckoning to him. It was nine of a nice fall morning, a Saturday.

Big Matt was a master plumber with his own shop and all, fifty, but spry in spite of the great bulk of him. He lived alone in the big house that he and Mary had worked so hard for, and with Mary gone now two years and his daughter away in some village called Green Witch, or something like that, desecrating interiors of rich men's homes, it was plenty lonely. The colored woman who cooked his meals went home right after the dinner dishes were out of the way.

"What's wrong, Mrs. Bailey?" Matt Donovan's was a voice to shake the timbers in a hall, but he held in to a rumble in deference to the lady.

"It's the plumbing. The sink. I got a man and he was to have come yesterday and he didn't come, and last night the faucet wouldn't turn clear off, and the drain was clogged and the sink ran over, and I had to get up and mop. The man's here now, but, supposing he didn't know his business? So, I said, I'll just call to Mr. Donovan."

"Sure, sure," said Matt, and pushed by her into the house. "That lad of her's should be able to help his mother by now, but not him—the Little Lord Fauntleroy, with his belted jacket suit and his dancing lessons! If it weren't for that no-account boy—"

In the kitchen, Matt found Jim, a friend and fellow plumber.

"I'll be going now," he said to Mrs. Bailey, then hesitated. "You're all right now with the plumbing and I'll be getting to the shop."

"Yes, of course, and thank you very much, but—" and flushed, and she was pretty when she flushed, very pretty, and so young looking. "I had an appointment with the dentist, and I'm afraid that this has delayed me."

"Sure, sure," boomed Donovan. "Jump into the car and I'll drop you there in no time at all."

On the way Mrs. Bailey talked of her only son, lovingly and proudly, as a mother should.

It was late afternoon when, having bellowed a belligerent "Well" into the receiver, he heard her voice, and he knew at once that she was crying.

"Oh, please, Mr. Donovan. Could you come and help me? David hasn't come home."

"Sure, right away. Don't worry."

He clamped on his hat, banged out and into the roadster and pulled up before the Bailey house in half a jerk. Mrs. Bailey was on the step waiting, craning to see if her boy was coming, clasping and unclasping her pretty hands. She told him, all in a breath.

"The plumber wasn't done when I left, you know, and I didn't want to detain you, and I was late for the dentist, so I just went on and left David there, but he ought to have known that I'd be back. He's twelve, you know. And I got back shortly after noon, and he wasn't here, and I can't locate him anywhere, and I've telephoned and telephoned, and nobody has seen him and—"

Donovan wanted to sit down, put his arm around her and comfort her.

"Get into the car, Mrs. Bailey," he said, "and we'll be finding him in no time."

They went far in the car—to the dancing school, where David had not been, the teacher said; to the house of a little girl who had no telephone, and the little girl hadn't seen him; to a baseball game in a vacant lot; up and down many streets, inquiring for a small boy in a belted suit with a green cap. Finally home, to see if the boy had came in their absence.

A raucous blast outside brought them to the door, and they saw a small boy in belted suit with green cap jump from an ancient flivver roadster and leap up the steps.

"Good-by, Jim," he yelled at the man, and then poured words at his mother and Donovan. "Gee, but I had a swell time. Jim—that's the plumber—let me go along with him all day. We were in some of the swellest homes, and the junk plumbing in them you'd never believe. We worked right through lunch and Jim gave me a sandwich, but just one, and that's all, and I'm awfully hungry. Did you see Jim's car? It's eight years old and he called her 'Asthma,' but she can go just the same. And I helped him all day and Jim says I'm a dandy helper and next summer when he gets his own shop he's going to hire me and pay me a dollar a day, and I can wipe a joint already. What do you think of that, mother? I can wipe a joint already, and next Saturday he's going to show me how to plug a pipe. Gee, but I had a swell time."

His mother held David Bailey to her.

"But David, your clothes—they're a sight, and look at your face and your hands."

Matt Donovan cleared his throat. He was hoarse when he spoke, but he spoke as speaks the head of the house.

"Get out of here at once," he said. "Get upstairs and wash your face and hands and put some iodine on that knuckle where the pipe wrench caught you. And don't hurry down too fast—I've got a matter of importance to talk to your mother about."

### "Hard" and "Soft" Water

Hard water is water which contains dissolved in it certain substances which interfere with the action of soap by forming with it an insoluble compound or curd. The hardness of natural waters is principally due to the salts of calcium and magnesium, especially calcium carbonate, which produces temporary hardness, removable by boiling, and calcium sulphate, which causes permanent hardness. Soft water is characterized by the practical absence of substances which prevent the formation of lather with soaps.

### Nothing Like Marriage to Stir Up Interest

There is always "human interest" in the account of a wedding in which the contracting parties belong to decidedly different social strata. It is interesting when a chauffeur elopes with the daughter of a citizen who pays a federal income tax of more than $1,000. But if a dishwasher becomes the husband of a lady whose family is given an AA rating, both in the register of society and in the register of finance, the event is a nine days' wonder, observes the Boston Globe.

Getting married represents one of the chief businesses of the human race. It is supposed that women are more concerned with it than men, but that may be disputed. Some men have been known to acquire fortunes and other men to obtain positions by reason of the women they have espoused. Whenever the wedding bells ring most people stop to appraise the alliance.

It is a curious fact that very few marriages are entirely satisfactory to the relatives of both parties. The whisper goes around that "she might have done better," or that "he could have found a wife who would have been of more help in his career."

In this endless discussion of marriages there is ground for the suspicion that the democratic United States is a trifle aristocratic after all. When the question of a wife or a husband comes up it is treated as though there were as many gradations of caste in American life as among the population of India. And yet the federal Constitution forbids titles of nobility.

### Cats Have Positive Likes and Dislikes

Few persons really know their cats. Yet cats can talk, though it is a dumb language.

Give your cat for dinner something she doesn't like, and watch her sniff it, shake her right paw, and walk away in disgust. If she be really hungry and no other food offers she will return to the disliked dish, making a queer cackling hiss as she eats it, and saying, "Must have it if there's nothing else in the larder."

Watch her "smile" at you when she is pleased. She does this by closing her eyes very slowly and opening them again. A cat will "smile" like this every time when spoken to by some one she loves, says the Springfield Republican.

When in absolute ecstasy she will paw the air with outstretched claws. In making a new friend she will arch her back and hold up a trembling tail, saying, "I know you like me."

If there be a savory smell she will walk round and round your legs, rubbing them hard, and asking you to "hurry with dinner."

It is wonderful how domesticated the cat has become. Yet we have only to see her knead her bed before settling to realize that the wild animal strain persists in her, for her ancestors turned round and round and round and kneaded their beds to soften the forest growths.

### The Nile's Source

The question of the source of the Nile is at once the oldest and the most recent of geography. The first European to lay claim to having discovered the true source was James Bruce. The Scotch explorer believed that the middle one of the three branches, called the Blue Nile, was the true river. It was later discovered that he had been mistaken in his assumptions. The ancients believed that the westernmost branch, called the White Nile, was the true Nile. The ancients were right and Bruce was wrong. Many explorers sought to trace the White Nile to its source, but the greatest discovery of all, that the Nile really rises in south latitude and crosses the equator, was made by Captains Grant and Speke, who in 1858 discovered Lake Victoria Nyanza.

### Birth of Words

Where do new words come from? Some, of course, are coined by scientists and philosophers, others are lifted bodily from one language to another, as, for instance, the French "sabotage," now excellent English.

Sometimes, too, a word is coined by a newspaper. For instance, the word "apache," which has now been officially admitted to the French language by a decision of the academy, was invented by the Figaro newspaper 22 years ago, when it used it to describe a Parisian criminal type which has since become famous.

Another word which caught on, "suffragette," also owes its existence to the genius of a newspaper man. This word appeared for the first time in the columns of the Daily Mail.—Answers.

### Lady Arabella Johnson

Lady Arabella was the daughter of Thomas, earl of Lincoln. She married Isaac Johnson, who left his native land for New England from religious motives. Lady Arabella cheerfully accompanied him, and they arrived at Salem, Mass., in April, 1630. Her exalted character and gentleness gained her universal esteem, but she died in the September following her arrival. Mr. Johnson survived her little more than a month. He is regarded as the founder of Boston, and though his time was brief, yet the good work he accomplished will never be forgotten by the people of New England. But dearer still is the memory of Lady Arabella.—Chicago Journal.

### Organization of Scientists

The Royal society grew out of two small groups of friends, who met occasionally in London and Oxford to discuss scientific questions, about the middle of the Seventeenth century. These were organized into a definite society in 1660, and two years later the society was granted a charter by Charles II and incorporated as the Royal society. Its early meetings took place in Gresham college, and afterwards in Crane court. In 1782 the place of meeting was transferred to Somerset house, and in 1857 to Burlington house, London.—London Mail.

## OUTLOOK FOR FARMING BETTER

### High Prices Of Grains Is Predicted For Several Years

The general outlook for American agriculture is fairly encouaging this year as compared with recent years, although there may be a slackening in domestic demand for farm products next winter, according to the annual outlook report of the United States Department of Agriculture just issued.

Producers of the major farm crops, such as cotton and wheat, are advised by the department to follow about the same program of production as last year. Increased acreage of these crops is not advised this year, the department says.

"General business prosperity during the first half of this year will maintain domestic demand for the 1924 farm products yet to be marketed and should stimulate the demand for the better grades of certain farm products says the report.

"It is not assured, however, that the industrial improvement of the first half of 1925 will continue into 1926 at the same high level, and should there be a reduction in business activity, as a result of overstimulation of business a slackened demand for some of the 1925 crops may be expected.

"The foreign market for most American farm products promises to be as good at least as during the last year.


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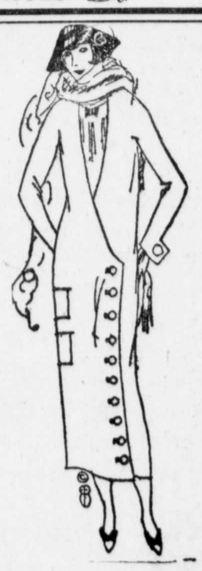


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