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PAUL COMEGYS

MILLINGTON, MD.

HER HEART NOT BROKEN BUT IT WAS LOST

(©, by D. J. Walsh.)

WHEN Veronica Long looked up and saw Doctor Byfield coming along the hospital corridor she knew instinctively that he was about to ask her to perform some unusual duty. She was not prepared, though, for the extreme oddity of the commission he imposed upon her.

"Mr. Leighton will send his car for you this afternoon," he told her. "You're to go right to the young man's room as soon as you arrive. He will probably be napping, but when he stirs you're to begin at once trying to pull him out of himself. You're to pose as a distant relative who has arrived for a visit unannounced. Mind—no uniform—only your prettiest and most becoming frocks. No hint of hospitals or medicines. You're to tease him, tantalize him, boss him—anything to arouse the spark I know must be left in that otherwise healthy makeup. He's in bad shape. Sneaked off and got into the war when he was a mere infant and he has never recovered from his terrible experiences overseas. I know you can help him. His family are desperate over his failure to respond to any of their efforts."

"Why pick on me, Doctor Byfield?"

"Because you're the only nurse on my staff that I'd trust to go there and not lose her head. Bob Leighton is a handsome devil and I don't want the heart of the best nurse I've got broken. Are you sufficiently forewarned?"

"Amply. I'll be good and report every day or two."

Ronnie Long was strangely confident that she knew exactly how to handle Bob Leighton's case. She had been overseas herself and was not altogether unfamiliar with cases of America's finest whom the tragedies of the World war had turned from men into seemingly immovable, stony-hearted images.

Robert Leighton, Sr., greeted her very cordially and asked her if she understood the terms of their contract. When she answered affirmatively he asked her to lose no time going to the young man's quarters.

When she opened the door softly she found herself in a large, pleasant room, beautifully furnished. One whole side of it was screened and open to a view of the mountains. Stretched out asleep on a long lounging chair lay the man whom she knew must be her "patient."

She sat down across from him and a little way off, opening her book to read, planning to begin operations by startling her patient with her presence when he awakened. Losing herself in the first interesting pages of the novel, she finally looked up quickly to be startled herself. Bob Leighton was looking at her as though he had been at it for hours, with a pair of soft brown eyes, weary in spite of the amusement in them.

He spoke first. "Are you real or make-believe?"

"You'll find I'm very real," she answered with a little chuckle. "I'm Veronica Long. You didn't know you possessed a Far Western cousin with nerve enough to wish herself on you for a visit without being invited, did you?"

"Let me see—I believe I have heard such a person mentioned, but I didn't know she hailed from the West."

Ronnie decided that she had made an auspicious beginning. Already she had aroused him to the point of feigning knowledge of her instead of stubbornly refusing to talk to her, as Doctor Byfield had warned her he might do. That night Bob decided to try dining with the family and got by with only one short lapse into one of his deadly apathetic spells.

As days lengthened into weeks the process of the treatment she was using gave Nurse Long some question. She teased Bob from his dark moods of despondency; inveigled him into doing things he utterly refused to do at first; she even angered him occasionally.

The black, dangerous moods passed slowly. She felt that she was winning, but the state of her own heart and mind, as her patient grew to be more and more himself, worried her considerably.

"Idiot!" she told her image as she was combing her hair one night before retiring. "Here you are doing exactly what Doctor Byfield warned you against. You're losing your heart to a man who is so far above you socially that he won't stop to dust his shoes on you when he learns the truth."

It had been arranged that Ronnie was to accompany Bob on a fishing trip in the Maine woods as a climax to the good work she had been doing, but she had made up her mind that she simply could not carry it through. She spoke to Mr. Leighton about it and in spite of his earnest pleading, she said she was determined to return at once to the hospital. Then she went to Bob's room to say good-by and collect a few of her minor belongings.

"What's doing?" he asked casually, watching her flit about the room. "You act as though we were starting for Maine today instead of next week."

"I am not going to Maine," she began, turning her back so that she needn't see his face. "The show's over, Bob. I'm not your cousin Ronnie from out West. I'm Veronica Long, a nurse, and I'm returning to my hospital today."

Before she guessed what he would do or say he slipped up behind her and caught her to him. Then he turned her face toward him and crushed the soft scarlet of her mouth beneath a deluge of caresses.

"My dear," he finally stopped to say, "I knew who you were and why you were coming even before you arrived. I heard Dad and Doctor Byfield plotting over the telephone one day when they thought I was asleep—listened in on my room phone here. At first I was furious and wasn't going to allow you to come in. Then some devilish, unnatural impulse prompted me to let them bring you here so that I could make you miserable, but the very first time I set my eyes upon you, as you sat here reading, I knew what was going to happen. I'm here to tell you, Ronnie, you've done the work you came to do so darn well that I'll have the most awful relapse you ever heard of if you don't promise this instant to marry me and go to Maine with me as we planned. I've known for days that I was going to try, at least, to make the trip a honeymoon. Won't you listen to me, dear? I'm no longer a sick man, but I swear to you I will be if you refuse me."

"But you and I belong to such different social strata, Bob. I—I'm a working girl, you know."

"Stuff and nonsense! Didn't we both fight to make the world safe for democracy? Wasn't the imprint you just helped to obliterate made by lying in filthy trenches alongside plumbers and gas men and butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers? Can't you make yourself care for me just a little?"

"W-e-l-l," she hesitated helplessly, "if you insist on knowing, I was running away from you because—anyway—you're the one who'll have to tell Doctor Byfield that his best nurse's heart isn't broken—it's lost—irretrievably lost!"

Obligation of Kinship Pretty Well Shattered

It is well that fathers and mothers are beginning to discover that it is hard work making their children's acquaintance, and that before they have done so it will be just as well not to bank too heavily on the innate love and wisdom which the mere fact of parenthood is supposed to give them.

There is no reason why parents and children may not be the best of friends, but it is getting to be believed that frankness is a better preface to such friendship than the mysticism of blood.

It is not merely that much of the mythology has been squeezed out of the parent-child relation, but that the greater independence of the individual within the family has brought with it the necessity of taking some effort to establish any and all of the truly valuable relations that are implicit in the family instead of taking them for granted as prior necessities.

Brothers and sisters have to earn each others' esteem. Temperamental differences disqualify the close of kin for long-enduring friendship just as they disqualify complete strangers in the world outside the family. That the younger brother fags for the older is no longer felt to be a law of nature, nor need one make it a point of honor to distribute one's deferences evenly between the maternal and the paternal kinfolk. Grandparents are no longer semidivine.

Kinship is a glorious opportunity for the meeting of minds and hearts, but in itself it constitutes neither an obligation nor a privilege.—Edward Sapier in the American Mercury.

Submarine Finds Wrecks

A one-man submarine, which can search for wrecks on the bed of the ocean, has been built at Milan, Italy. It is a torpedo-shaped boat, 53 feet long and 10 feet wide, with twin propellers, operated by electric motors, capable of developing 400 horsepower.

The underwater detective sits in a steel chamber, like a conning tower, and a similar chamber behind him contains enough oxygen to allow 60 hours under the water.

The vessel is equipped with a movable searchlight, a mechanically operated camera for taking photographs and a telephone to give the course and distance steered. Dial recorders give the depth, and there is a log to record the mileage.

Another Epidemic

The very pale-faced man entered the doctor's consulting room.

"Well, sir," said the medico, "and what is the matter with you?"

"I believe I've caught insomnia," confessed the patient nervously. "I cannot sleep a wink until round about three in the morning."

"Nonsense, man!" replied the doctor. "Insomnia is not contagious."

"It is in my case, though," returned the other. "The baby in the flat below has it."

Medieval Dining Tables

A conspicuous peculiarity of medieval dining was the fact that the guests sat only on one side of the table, the other side being reserved for the service. When there was a banquet, the tables were often arranged in the form of a horseshoe, both to facilitate the service and to provide space for dramatic performances or "cabarets," as they would be known today, which were often introduced between courses.—Detroit News.

Causes of "Blood Rain"

There are many cases of so-called miraculous showers in which the substances found on the ground did not actually fall from aloft. Thus some alleged rains of blood are due to the deposit of red fluid ejected by certain species of lepidoptera emerging simultaneously in large numbers from their cocoons, and others to the rapid multiplications in rain pools of algae and rotifers containing red coloring matter. The well-known red snow of polar regions results from the presence of similar organisms.

"Dragon's Blood" in the Arts

The "Dragon's Blood" of commerce is a red gum made from the ripe fruit of palm trees growing in Siam and the Dutch East Indies. It is used in the pharmacy and finds its way into the arts as a means of coloring varnish and also for use in photo-engraving. It is secured from the nut by a process of steaming and crushing. The product is sent to Penang and Singapore and thence it is shipped half way around the world to points in Europe and America.

Subscription to the Transcript $1.50 per annum.

Airplane's "Flying" and "Cruising" Speed Differ

Cruising speed of an airplane is the speed at which it runs to best advantage considering oil and fuel consumption rate, vibration, laboring of and strain on motor. In other words, the speed one would care to run the motor (or airplane) on a long trip so that one would not burn up too much gas per hour at, perhaps, a slightly lower motor speed at, perhaps, no decrease in airplane speed; so that the motor would not waste oil; so that the motor would vibrate least; so that the motor would take it most easily. Comparable to an automobile there is top speed—say 65 miles per hour—and cruising speed (speed at which a car runs most smoothly with not too much care in steering, say at 30 miles per hour). In a plane, top speed might be 105 miles per hour; cruising speed, 90 miles per hour. Speed necessary to keep the plane in air is called flying speed. Minimum flying speed is called stalling speed. Landing speed is usually about two miles per hour greater than stalling speed.

Harvest Home Festival Great Scottish Event

The annual "Kirn" or Harvest Home, is a settled institution on Scottish farms. These events are usually held in the granary of the farm, which is suitably decked for the occasion. The floor is none too smooth; but the tackety boots of the dancers are quite able to contend with it. The band consists of a fiddle and melodeon, and the dances bear such weird titles as "Petronella," "Rifleman" and "Drops of Brandy." The most amusing part of the proceedings comes when the steward returns thanks to the farmer for giving the "kirn." It is the one speech he makes in the year, so it is a great event for him. He usually begins in high-flown English, to the admiration of the company, but invariably fails to keep it up, and ends in braid Scots.

Hint for the Home

Women may lead in literature, divorce, glass blowing, fat girls, etc., but there is still one province where man reigns supreme.

When I got home last night Mrs. B was listing about 30 degrees to the starboard and complaining of severe pains in her left side.

After much coaxing I got her to tell me what the trouble was. She said she had carried in a bucket of coal.

I lit into her good. I was furious. I told her never to let me hear of her carrying in another single bucket of coal as long as she lived.

Her lips quivered and I thought that perhaps I had gone too far.

Then I told her that if she wanted to carry in the coal it was all right with me, but I wanted her to carry two buckets at a time in the future. I don't want no lopsided wife.—Spokane Spokesman Review.

Force in Expression

The expression, "An unlicked cub," is a strong, homely reference to a person who is crude, unpolished and undeveloped, who must literally be licked into shape by the attrition of lifes' experiences.

The metaphor is one we have borrowed from the world of zoology. It is an allusion to the practice of the mother bear, who actually seems to be constantly licking her cubs.

While, of course, the cub is not in reality licked into shape, still, an unlicked cub is such a bedraggled looking spectacle as compared with one who is, that the unlicked cub has come to take on the significance it has today, of something unfinished and uncouth.—Kansas City Star.

One's "Birthday"

The word birthday designates primarily the day of one's birth. Colloquially, the term is used to designate subsequent anniversaries of that day. Dictionaries emphasize this use defining the day as, "the day of one's birth or its anniversary." An anniversary is defined as, "a commemorative observance or celebration of an event separated by one year, or by an exact number of years from some past event." On one's first anniversary, one is one year old but celebrates what is colloquially accepted as one's second birthday, but one's first birthday anniversary.—Literary Digest.

Caesar's Profound Rebuke

The following quotation is from "Plutarch's Lives"; "Caesar once, seeing some wealthy strangers at Rome carrying up and down with them in their arms and bosoms young puppy dogs and monkeys, embracing and making much of them, took occasion, not unnaturally, to ask whether the women in their country were not used to bear children; by that prince-like reprimand gravely reflecting upon persons who spend and lavish upon brute beasts that affection and kindness which nature has implanted in us to be bestowed on those of our own kind."

Early Arctic Voyages

The Arctic regions were explored as early as 1588 by John Davis, who in that year reached latitude 72 degrees 12 minutes north. He was followed by William Barents in 1596, Henry Hudson in 1607 and William Baffin in 1616. The North pole was reached by Peary on April 6, 1909. The south polar regions were explored by Capt. James Cook in 1774. The South pole was discovered by Roald Amundsen on December 14, 1911.

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