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Mouse Nest and Marc's Nest By GEORGE SIDNEY

Berwynd's defalcation was only \$1,500, but had he looted the subtreasury of as many millions Boontown could not have been more shocked. It was not so much the loss of the money to the Boontown First National; that was but an incident. It was the fact that Chet Berwynd should have been guilty at all. For generations the Berwynds had been among the leaders of Boontown society, and it was regarded as a matter of course that Chet should have been made cashier and paying teller when the bank was started. Some of those who had known Chester Berwynd's father refused at first to believe the charge, but in the end circumstantial evidence proved too strong to be ignored, and though Hank Simmons, the town constable, had a suspicious moisture in his eyes, he led Chet over to the little village lock-up and left him in a cell, promising that a rocking chair and other unprisonlike conveniences should be sent over from his own home as soon as possible. Hank had never forgotten how old Dr. Berwynd had worked for twelve hours over his little daughter when she had had the membranous croup, though he had just returned from a long ride into the country. One did not have to go back to Chet's father for acts of kindness. As boy and man Chet had always been ready to give his aid to others, with no thought of return, and his incarceration was a shock to the community. Even after the venerable John Hollis had explained that there was a package of five \$100 bills and two \$500 certificates which no one could account for save Chet, who had denied all knowledge of the money, there were those who refused to believe that Dr. Berwynd's son could be guilty. Foremost among these was Gertrude Hollis, who set aside even her father's



WITH A CRY GERTRUDE SANK UPON THE SOFA.

opinion to declare herself openly a partisan of Chet, and it was one of the things that shook her father's faith in his own judgment. Judge Hollis was a believer in woman's intuition. It was this which induced him to hurry the trial in the hope that some evidence would turn up whereby the accused cashier might clear himself, and there was none more pleased when, two days before the trial, it was discovered that rats had stolen the package and had made a nest of the crisp paper. Gertrude discovered the nest in a cranny under the cashier's desk. She communicated her "find" to her father, who was also president of the bank. It made an insignificant little mass, this expensive nest; but, while the masticated particles were too small to be redeemed by the treasury department, it was plain to be seen that the nest was composed of bills. The nest was duly brought forward at the trial and was sufficient to acquit. Chester was the only one dissatisfied with the acquittal, and that evening he called at the Hollis home. Gertrude met him with an apology for her father, for whom the excitement of the trial had been too much. "It was you I came to see," returned Chester. "I want to ask you a question." The red flashed into Gertrude's face. There had been no open courtship, but it had seemed to her that there was but one question Chester would want to ask. Her heart beat high, but the next moment her hopes were dashed. "Where did you really find that nest?" he demanded. "I told you this morning at the trial," she declared. "It was in the little cubbyhole under your desk." "Whatever made you look there?" he asked curiously. "I supposed that I had a right to feel curious," she said defiantly. "It was my father's bank, and I had heard of how bills were stolen by rats at various times. I thought I would look around your desk."

"May I see the nest?" he asked curiously. "They let you keep it, did they not?" She flushed, but she crossed to a writing desk and drew from it a small almost shapeless mass, on the outside of which were tiny particles, barely large enough for the "C" or "100" to be distinguished. Chet looked at it curiously. It was all that had stood between him and prison. "Do you know," he said softly, "that this looks more as though it had been made of Confederate money?" She flung up her head. "You didn't say so this morning." "I did not see it this morning," he protested. "The only expert opinion given was by your brother, who pronounced them to be genuine bills. There are no silk threads in these bills and not a trace of the yellow backed gold certificates." "I didn't have any yellow ones," she said, off her guard for the instant. He caught her wrist. "Do you mean," he demanded, "that you made this?" "I couldn't see you go to jail," she said, tears trembling on her lashes. "Did you think I was guilty?" he demanded. She shook her head. "I couldn't think that of you," she said simply, "but things looked so black against you, and I remembered stories of mice building nests—and I—I fixed this up." He was so close to her that she could feel his quick breath on her forehead. "Did you do this because you were sorry?" he asked. She raised her head bravely. "Not because I was sorry." "Because you loved me?" Her blushes were her answer. In a moment his strong arms were about her and she had hidden her burning face upon his shoulder. How long they stood there neither knew. It was Judge Hollis who interrupted them. There were new lines of care in his face as he came slowly forward from the doorway. "Chester," he said slowly, "God knows how I have been hoping that some day your union with Gertrude would give me the right to call you 'son.' I have looked forward to the day with no thought of what would have come before. You are cleared in our eyes, but while this hangs over you it is not well that you should marry."

With a cry Gertrude sank upon the sofa. Chester bent over and kissed her, then turned to her father. "You are right, judge," he said. "Until this is cleared to our own satisfaction it is better so." He turned slowly to the door, to be jostled violently by Jack Hollis. "I've run all the way from the bank," shouted the lad. "We found the bills in the trial balance book. Old Dixon used them for a bookmark and then forgot all about them." Chester gasped. "And I thought all the time you had them," he cried. "Don't you remember handling them the afternoon they were missed?" Jack almost sobbed. "Did you keep quiet for me—or for Sis?" "For Sis?" answered Chester quietly. And this time the judge gave them his blessing.

His Only Victory. "Rarely, very rarely," asserted a west side resident, "do I repeat to a friend something that I've been saying to another friend. But I did say a good thing to my wife the other day. Generally I don't indulge in repartee with her. Ideas come to her more rapidly than they do to me. This was an exceptional case. I'll agree that women are pretty sensible in most things, but in some things they're unreasonable, especially in money matters. They have to make a little money go so far themselves that they imagine it can be stretched until it accomplishes wonders. My wife was discussing a new servant. 'I don't wonder that folks are poor,' she said haughtily. 'I get out of all patience with them, they're so careless and improvident. Do you know this girl of ours had to walk up here?' She didn't even have car fare."

Rum Butter Hunt. In certain districts in England a mixture of butter, sugar, spices and rum, called "rum butter," is made when a child is born. A special bowl of the delicacy is hidden in some out of the way place in the house. Then a number of young fellows of the neighborhood search for it. Sometimes they succeed in locating it and at other times they fail. After eating the rum butter a collection is made among those present, and the money contributed is placed in the bowl for the newborn child and returned along with the bowl to the house where it was procured.—London Spectator.

Married to a Dead Tiger. A curious custom obtains among the Coorgs. When one of them kills a tiger or a panther, he is married to the dead animal, regardless of its sex. Propped upon a framework of wood or bamboo, the animal is carried in procession, and the marriage ritual is strictly observed, while lavish hospitality is dispensed.—Caucasia Statesman.

Time's Changes. "It used to please me," said Olden, "to have the barber ask me if I wanted a shave when I was a youngster." "Yes?" "Yes, and now he sometimes fattens me by asking if I want a hair cut."—Philadelphia Ledger.

A Mean Insinuation. Towne—There goes Slopsy. He must be in debt again. Browne—Why, he looks quite prosperous. That suit of his is quite new. Towne—Yes, that's why I say he must be in debt. We regret the low voices of those who pay us compliments almost as much as we regret the high voices of those who abuse us.—Atchison Globe.

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Franklin and Kings. In the writings of Thomas Jefferson are some interesting anecdotes of Benjamin Franklin. He says: "When Dr. Franklin went to France on his Revolutionary mission his eminence as a philosopher, his venerable appearance and the cause on which he was sent rendered him extremely popular. All ranks and conditions of men entered warmly into the American interest. He was, therefore, feasted and invited to all court parties. At these he sometimes met the old Duchess of Bourbon, who, being a chess player of about his force, very generally played with him. Happening once to put her king into prise, the doctor took it. 'Ah,' said she, 'we do not take kings so.' 'We do in America,' said the doctor.

Housekeeper—Those eggs you sold me were stale, and I asked you for fresh laid eggs. Dealer—Those eggs are fresh, madam, not salted, and they are laid eggs, madam, not manufactured. Had you desired eggs recently taken from the nest you should have asked for freshly laid eggs.

Run Butter Hunt. In certain districts in England a mixture of butter, sugar, spices and rum, called "rum butter," is made when a child is born. A special bowl of the delicacy is hidden in some out of the way place in the house. Then a number of young fellows of the neighborhood search for it. Sometimes they succeed in locating it and at other times they fail. After eating the rum butter a collection is made among those present, and the money contributed is placed in the bowl for the newborn child and returned along with the bowl to the house where it was procured.—London Spectator.

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