

could not marry her and she did not want to marry him. She did not want to marry anybody just now. She was a free woman in a free country.

She was not free, however, from the witchery of this night, this dream, the vast yearning of this mountainous beauty. She was not free of the disaster of desire, the hunger to be embraced and kissed and whispered to, the need to be kept warm in the cold loneliness of the world.

Her thoughts spun giddily in her mind, all entangled with a skein of romantic threads. She was young and pretty and time was wasting her flowerly graces. Some one bloomed!

While she debated with herself, as doubtless innumerable women have plights, Claymore's own mind was a chaos of equally ancient platitudes of a man's philosophy.

At length he found the courage or the cruelty to slip his arm about Mem's waist and to draw her close to him. He was almost more alarmed than delighted to find that she hardly resisted at all.

He took her hands in his and whispered, "Your poor little hands are cold!"

Then he kissed them with cold lips that he lifted at once to hers and found them warm and strangely like a rose against his mouth.

He was as much amazed as if hers were the first lips he had ever kissed—as if he had just invented kissing. Then in a frenzy of wonder he closed

He did not know that the wheel bruised her side, and neither did she.

But she forgot to debate her duty or think of her soul. She thought only of the rapture of this communion, and her arms stole around his neck and she clenched him with all the power of her arms.

Mem, swooning she knew not whither, was awakened from her mad rapture by a low voice across her shoulder.

"Sorry to interrupt you, folks, but I need your money!"

She turned and found herself blinded by the glare from a motor halted at a little distance. Dazzled as she was, she could see the gaunt hand that held before her a black pistol with a glint outlining its ugly muzzle.

Claymore was sane enough to attempt no resistance, though he almost perished of chagrin. He endured the insolence of the masked stranger who stole the chain and a wallet and the loose silver.

The blackguard held his clubbed pistol over Claymore's head a moment, then forebore to strike, and dropped from the step with a last warning.

"Sit pretty now and keep 'em up till I git goin' or I'll—"

His car shot around the curve.

Claymore brought down his aching arms. They were too much ashamed of themselves to return to their late post about Mem's shoulders.

A preverse remorse filled their souls with confusion; a remorse because of a wrong remorse, a disgust for an unaccepted temptation and for being so temptable.

A woman never quite forgives a man for not dying for her at the first opportunity. She probably never quite forgives him for dying, either. So the clever man evades the situ-

ation where a choice is required, as the virtuous man evades temptation while it is yet far off.

(Continued Next Week)

Grateful Hens

Kansas City, Mo., — Seven eggs were left for Ralph Highley and Hugh Dougherty, detectives, by a flock of grateful hens rescued from a band of chicken thieves.

It Did Not Work

Lorain, O.,—Joseph Shepkowski, 15, constructed a home made parachute in an endeavor to emulate a parachute jumper. He made a leap from a tree. The parachute did not work, and his arm was broken.

Dog Captures 25 Pound Catfish

Leon, Ia.,—The prize fishing catch for the season has been made by "Bode," a police dog owned by Dick

Woodmansee. "Bode" accompanied his master and others to the Grand River.

During the afternoon a large fish was seen swimming so near the surface that wavelets marked its course. It was pointed out to "Bode." The dog was twice pulled under water by the fish before he had dragged it near enough to the shore to be aided in landing it. It was a blue catfish weighing 25 pounds.

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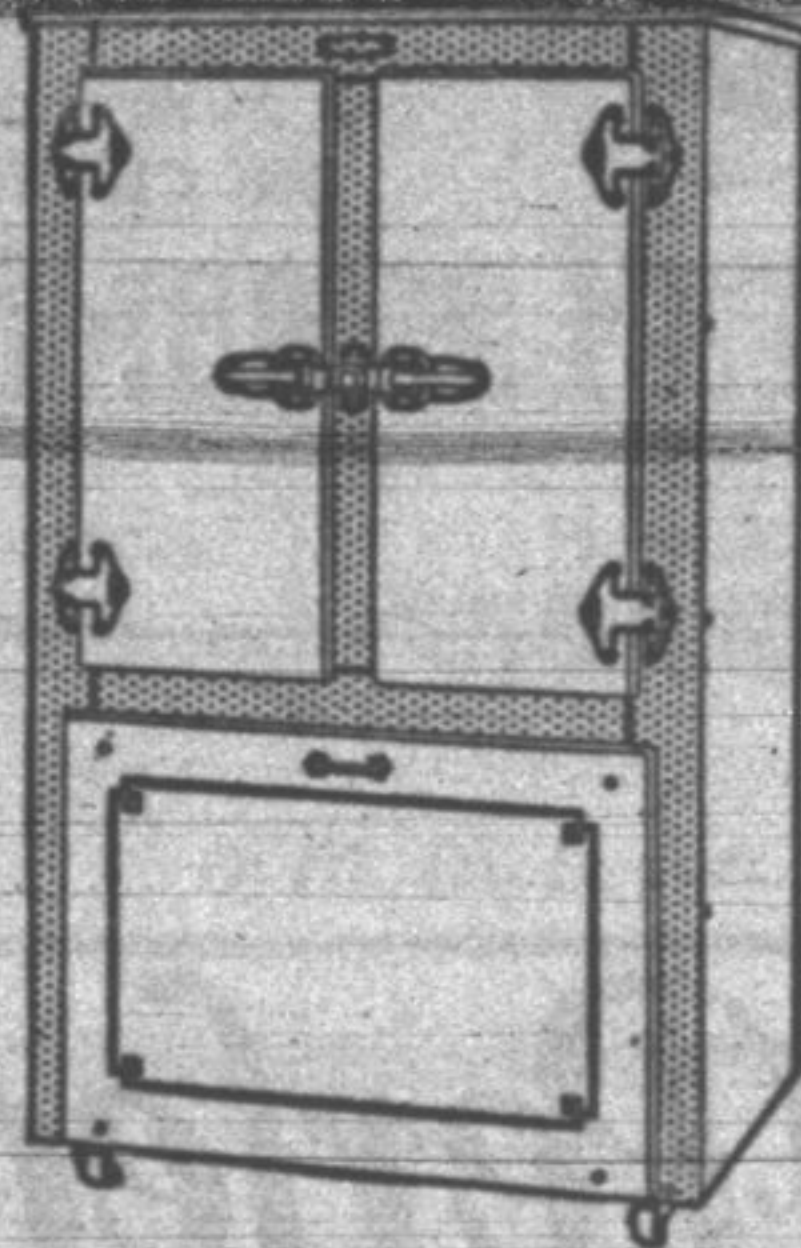
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