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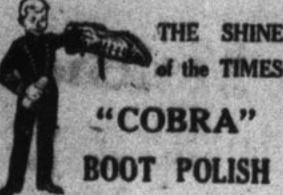
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Harry King Tootle

brought against the machine was that river wards. Durken even admitted it spection. The blood of the star reporter warmed in the editor's veins. The idea was tantalizing It was one of those stories a good nian would sao rifice half a year's salary to handle.

Without saying anything to anyone the owner of the News thought of the

expedition for several days. The more he thought of it, the more it appealed to him. The more it appealed to hir the less was the likelihood of his sidering the axiom that in battle it a general's duty not to get hurt. fact, the thought of physical injury did not occur to him. He was stranger to Belmont, no one knew him. and in the daytime there was no dan-

When Wright finally decided to investigate personally it was only a few days before the election. He deter mined that he would wander down into the first ward two days before the votes were cast to gather mate rial for his story. The next afternoon, just on the eve of the election, his final attack on the machine would b an expose of ring methods of handling vagabond voters imported for the oc-

This programme was being carried out as originally planned, notwithstanding the break with Gloria the previous day, when Wright was induced to go through Noonan's "hotel." Here, deserted by Durken, who had been his guide, he had fallen into the hands of Turkey Ryan and Buck Kelly. Although dazed by the unexpected ness of the attack, he had neverthe less managed to give a good account of himself. The cramped attic quarters in which they had fought had been in his favor. The two bruisers had been surprised by what a scientific boxer could do in a rough-andtumble fight. To the momentary indecision resulting from his good defense Wright owed his escape from the room in which he had been trapped.

A stinging blow having taken all the fight out of Kelly, he lurched and fell forward against the door just as the newspaper man had managed to elude his assailants for the instant and slip out of the room. Forced to minister to his companion, Turkey Ryan had ost many valuable seconds before he could take up the pursuit. It was during this resplie that Wright, groping blindly for the stair, had tripped and fallen, to be found_unconscious by Gloria in front of Little Ella's door.

No one ever knew exactly what had aken place in Noonan's lodging house that afternoon in early spring. Returning from the mission with Norton, Mrs. Hayes was surprised to and the door of the Windermere womprise gave way to alarm, and she called upon Dr. Norton to aid her in opening the door. Gloria had not fastened it as securely as she had thought. and it required no great strength on he part of the physician to force it

Gloria was removed to Mrs. Hayes home in a carriage as soon as she was revived. Little Ella, in a semi conscious, delirious state, was hurried to the city hospital in a police ambu lance. An examination having shown that Wright had sustained no serious injury, as soon as he regained conjousness he was taken to his own

David Kerr was not allowed to see his daughter. Although the exact naof the shock to which she had been subjected was not known, since both Kelly and Ryan had disappeared. yet the physicians did not think it best in her nervous condition for her to see even her father. The following day she remained in bed, speaking never a word, busy with her own thoughts. The next day, that of the election, she dressed, but did eave her room.

When it was seen that Gloria was under the cloud of a settled melancholy, there was debate how best to minister to her. Her very silence made the problem more perplexing. She uttered never a word by which mystery. Strange as it may seem, she id not even ask about Joe Wright. She did however, read the morning and afternoon papers carefully. neither was there any reference to an beat upon the bars of its new iron cage, it sufficed her to know that all

Joe Wright's injuries-were not of a serious nature, yet it was thought best days. By means of the telephone and the next night that the dominant party had been defeated. David Kerr's rule

Nothing of a personal nature had been allowed to help contribute to this success. No mention had been made tor in Mike Noonan's lodging house, scause to Wright it had appeared as

a personal matter. The day previous with him. He had finally placed it un Gloria had denounced him and cried | der a pile of clothing beside | his aloud for vengeance. He recognized the affair the result might have been

few moments of exhibitration when his looked under a pile of things and real feelings were submerged in the found the pretty picture lady." She general rejoicing that David Kerr had gazed at the picture of Gloria admirbeen given a more severe set-back ingly. than he had ever before received. heartening uncertainty. The past was a nightmare and the future a blank

The tumult and the cheers had died away, the brass bands at last wer stilled, his sitting-room with two dows on the street and its own private

Gloria? What of her? It was always Gloria, Gloria, Gloria, running through his mind, knocking at the door of his heart.

Always of the Gloria who had spurned him, he thought, for he knew nothing of the part she had played in the lodging house. It was not a situ -this living in the same town with the woman he loved madly. Were Belmont of some size, a city like St. Louis or Pittsburgh, there would be the prob ability that their paths would seldom cross. Yet in Belmont everyone knew everyone else and never a week passed but what they all met at least in pass-

It would be impossible for him to avoid Gloria altogether. He was frank enough to acknowledge to himself that would undoubtedly seek those places where there would be some certainty of his meeting her. To be in the same town with her meant that he could not give her up. Yet he knew that any overtures he might make fully, would be worse than useless. He felt that her prejudice was such that there could never be established that bond without which matrimony is unholy The ruffled pool may again be calm. the misted mirror may again be clear, yet he believed in her ignorance she would feel that when two hearts but once have broken troth there is no alchemy that love distills can make the past to live again and the dead present as though it had not been.

The harder he tried to fight against his conviction of what he should do. the more Wright was convinced that there was but one course for him to pursue: it would be best for him to leave Belmont. This would be not for a week or a month, but for all time, It would be necessary for him to dispose of the paper, but this he could do through a broker. He was quite willing to let it go at a sacrifice, to lose what he had himself put into it, so anxious was he to escape from Belmont in search of that magical flower,

Having made up his mind, Wright went to bed, but not to sleep. The few remaining hours of darkness he rolled and tossed. It was not the bruises he had received in the fight at Noonan's that kept him awake, annoying as they were. It was always the one thought -Gloria, Gloria, Gloria,

Morning brought diversions which slightly relieved the tension. There were two editorials to be written upon the political situation. This was followed by conferences with men on an's room fastened from within. When the paper, and then came the letter to the response greeted her knock sur, that the News was for sale. He did not dictate this to his secretary, but "That Surely Was a Raw Frame-Up wrote it out laboriously in long-hand. The morning was more than half

over when he began to pack. It was Wright's intention to leave Belmont that night, ostensibly on a vacation for the purpose of recuperation after the hard campaign. The owner of the News felt, bowever, that he would nev

The many steps necessitated packing taught him how weak he was and after lunch he called in Patty, the little daughter of his landlady, to help him. They had always been the best friends, and her sorrow when she learned he was going away on a long vacation was genuine. The child was of much assistance, bringing all the smaller things from the living room into the bedroom where the real work of packing was being done.

When the packing was about completed the little girl remembered that she had brought a doll with her. In beside Wright's trunk she felt some thing hard. To satisfy her curiosity she drew it forth, to discover, instead of her doll, that it was a framed picture of a young woman. It was a pic ture of Gloria which had appeared in a weekly society paper.

Patty had helped wrap the framed sictures in old newspapers, and as she brought Gloria's picture, she exclaimed triumphantly, "Here's another picture,

Wright had put it aside surrepti tiously when packing the things he had planned to take with him for immediate use. For the fraction of a minute there had been a debate in his be weak enough to carry her picture

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steamer trunk. "It's extremely good of you to find that picture," the man remarked with the gravity he sometimes assumed in treating Patty as one of equal years The news that the day had been car. and understanding; "I doubt if I

"Really, Patty, you astonish me! your perseverance. I don't think I should ever have found that picture. don't-if you love me-lose your dolly any more, please; at least not until all my things are securely packed." Patty was just on the point of ask

ing the name of the young woman who

had so taken her fancy, when the doorrang. With the annuncement to answer the bell, she scampered off. Wright picked up the picture and gazed at it intently. He was sacrificing all for her. Was the sacrifice worth while? The question would have been an idle one. He loved her, had never loved anyone else and never would love anyone else. No sacrifice was too great which would mean any ncreased happiness for her. The sound of some one being brought to ils rooms by Patty caused him to put ation to contemplate with equanimity he picture hastily face downward on he table. The door opened to admit

> Good afternoon, Mr. Wright," he exclaimed cordially as he came forward with hand outstretched. "I hope you'll let an opponent drop in to congratulate you on winning the election." The editor's face lit up with pleasire as they clasped hands.

> "Thank you, old man. It's awfully good of you to stop by before I startd on a little vacation. The News won its fight; but of course we can't expect this to be the end of the contest, can

The coroner shock his head dole

"Don't ask me. I've ceased to be a political prophet. 'Do you think it'll 'now,' says I, shaking my head solemnlke. I'm going to get that wise about politics. I don't prophesy anything flow until after it happens. But I lever thought I'd live to see the day hat Belmont would go against us. I'm ut of politicay"

Wright smiled. "Isn't that what they ill say-the day after?"



They Handed You."

has done nothing but read the riot act "I imagine Mrs. Hayes is a purist in

"Well, I can't blame her," the doctor admitted. "She's been poking around down in the river wards, and that swrely was a raw frame-up they handed you. She got onto it, and she's

Wright had discussed the affair with Dr. Norton and had also told Ar thur Morrison what little he knew. This was the first intimation coming from the ring that they even knew of the occurrence. The newspaper man was curious to know the ring version of it. Dr. Hayes' remark afforded him the opportunity to approach the matter cautiously.

"What was Mrs. Hayes' connection with that-ah-little episode?" he asked. "I gathered from Dr. Norton that in some way or other she knew something about it."

Dr. Hayes stared at him in amaze ment. Miss Kerr had never uttered a word, yet he readily believed, as did the others, that both Wright and she were the only ones who could tell the story. The woman in whose room they had been found was still in a delirlous condition at the city hospital and nothing could be learned from her. Although Kerr had ordered the police to bring in Ryan and Kelly, the search had been unsuccessful

"What!" gasped Dr. Hayes, "don't you know how you got out of that mess and why the thugs didn't finish

Wright shook his head. His visitor's "I don't know a thing. I think some but Dr. Norton claimed he knew noth

"Well, I'll be darned!"

comes. Ask your doctor about | thing I knew was when I heard Dr.

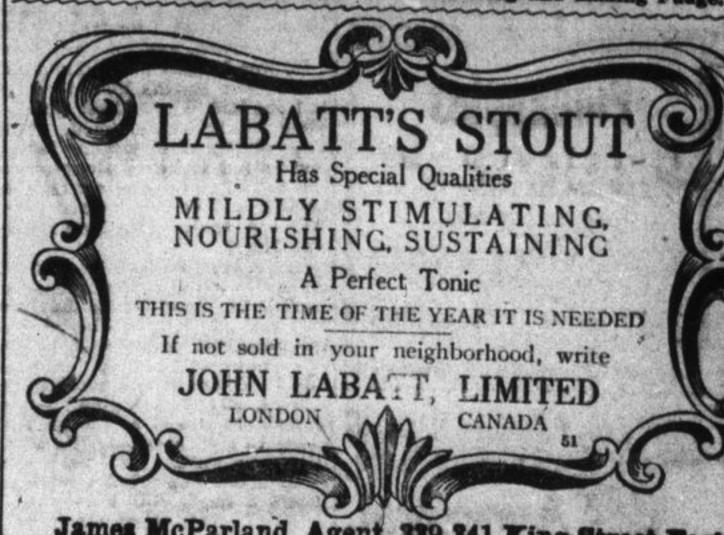
Soon Hayes picked up his hat to go. He stood for an instant, as if inviting Wright to speak. As he did not do to, the visitor asked, thinking of Glo ria the while:

(To be continued.

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