

THE NEW DOCTOR ARRIVES

By George Hansen



Aesop's Fables and Ours.

Fables are the records of man's social views in the simplest form. The larger number of these tales come down from earlier periods and those written by men of modern culture usually deal with primitive elements in our nature. In a collection such as Frederic Taber Cooper has made, "An Argosy of Fables" (Stokes), there is both race history and searching analysis even of the slaves and the society we take too seriously to-day. There is a useful mirror here for the lamb-like, wolfish, leonine and caty critics that we still are to look in and learn wisdom. There are fables from Caesar's Rome and Hannibal's Africa, from

the Russia of the Czar and the America that needed no Monroe Doctrine. The volume would be worth having if it were only for the extraordinary ingenuity of the Hindoo fables. And the pictures by Paul Branson lead us into the very hearts and councils of the beasts, animals of such reality that one is obliged to believe in the text.

Look at that fox out in the winter woods, crunching an icicle in desperate perplexity, and you scarcely need to turn the page to know that he is growling:

"There is the sound of a bone in my ears and the feel of a bone between my teeth, but never a scrap of it goes down into my stomach."

War and warning are chief among the recurrent themes of the fabulist—the strong against the weak, the cunning against the foolish. The great merit of this kind of presenta-

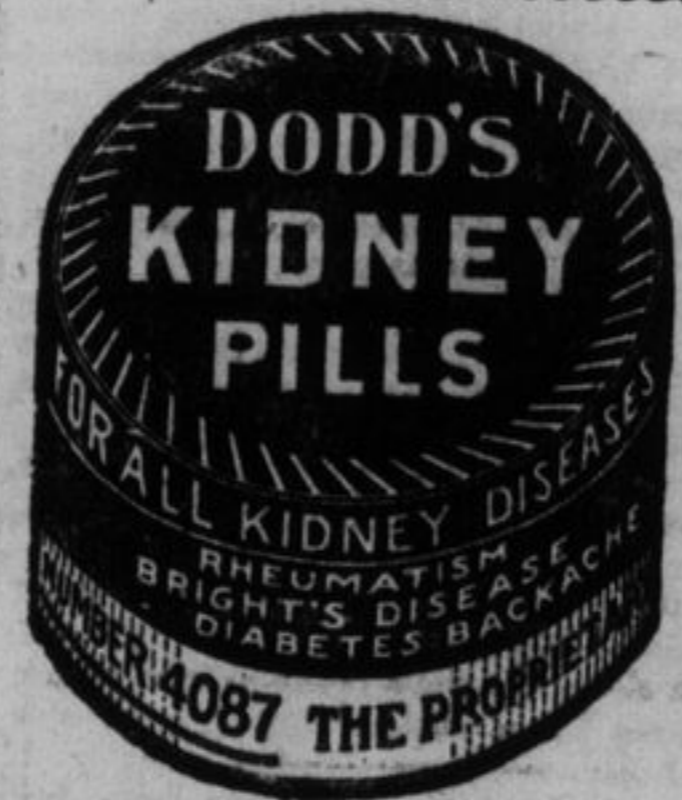
tion is in its courageous facing of the harsh facts that must be faced. There is cruelty and injustice and cold selfishness. And they will never be changed by pretending they do not exist.

The fact that gives a lover of his kind some courage, as he reads the old fables, is the conviction that our own time feels the moving of another spirit. In the great war men strove not alone against the enemy but against war itself.

Our fables are spread out into the complex fabric of elaborate fiction. There we find the foxes and the snakes; but we find something that has no analogy in the animal kingdom, save in such rare gleams as the lion's magnanimity to the mouse. And what we are seeking to-day is not magnanimity but an understanding love that is meek and lowly—a love that does not stoop, for it ad-

mits no limitation of height or depth.

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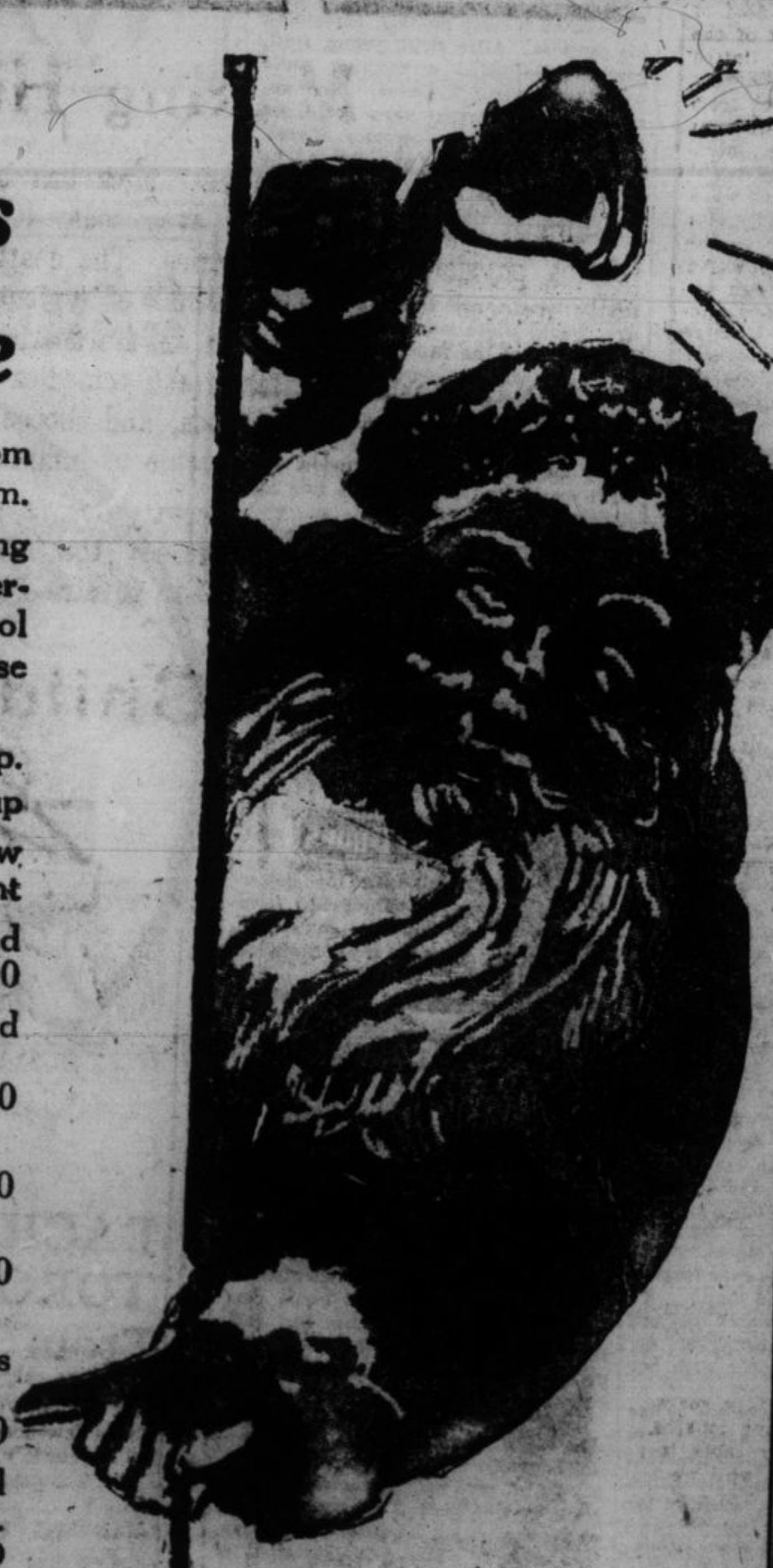
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