

CASTORIA

The Kind You Have Always Bought and which has been in use for over 30 years, has borne the signature of

Chas. H. Fletcher.

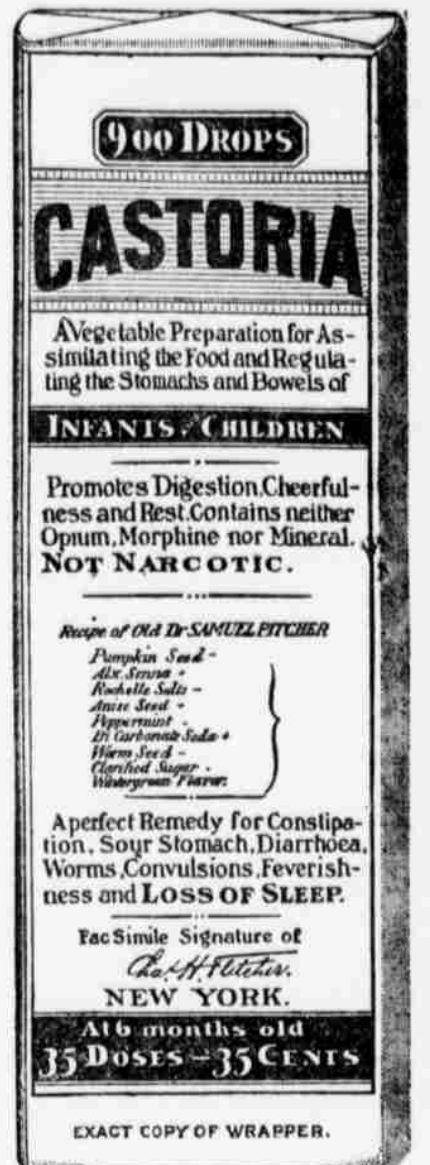
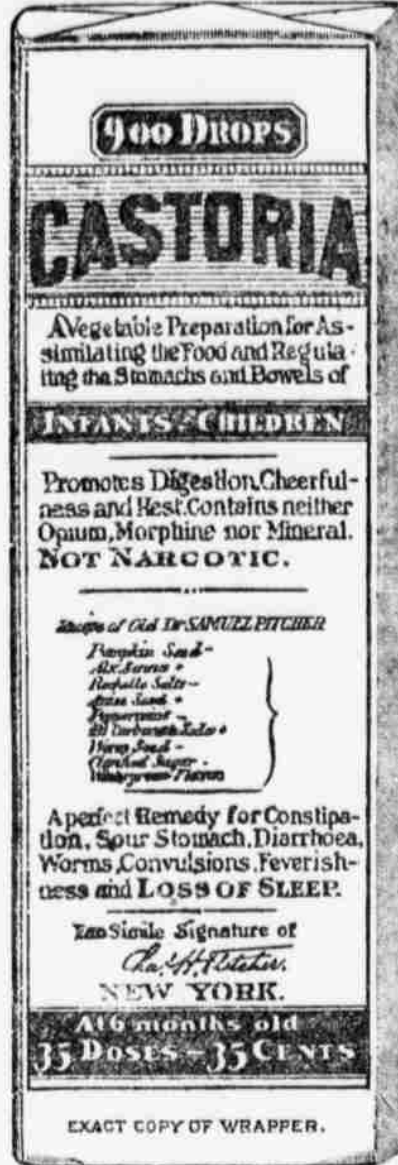
WHAT IS CASTORIA

Castoria is a harmless substitute for Castor Oil, Paregoric, Drops and Soothing Syrups. It is Pleasant. It contains neither Opium, Morphine nor other Narcotic substance. Its age is its guarantee. It destroys Worms and allays Feverishness. It cures Diarrhoea and Wind Colic. It relieves Teething Troubles, cures Constipation and Flatulency. It assimilates the Food, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, giving healthy and natural sleep. The Children's Panacea—the Mother's Friend.

GENUINE CASTORIA ALWAYS

Bears the Signature of

Chas. H. Fletcher.



The Kind You Have Always Bought. In Use for Over 30 Years.

Mam 'Ephany's Quest

—FRANCIS LYND IN CHICAGO INTER-OCEAN.

Is you-all de cap'n of dishyer railroad, sub?"

Russell looked up from his desk. It was not the omnipresent negro venter of perambulations or muscades; it was a woman, gray, bent, and wrinkled and with the bloodiest old eyes that ever looked out upon a masterful world. She wore a knotted bandanna on her head, and her dress was of the coarsest; but Russell, whose glance was that of a trained summarist, remarked that everything about her was scrupulously neat and spotless.

"I am the passenger agent," he said. "What can I do for you?"

"Yes, sub; dat's what dey tol' me, an' I des climb up dem stairs ter see ef you-all couldn't help de po' of nighab 'oman git back tol' Virginia. I's dis nigh home, maste, but dese ol' laigs dey ain' gwine cyar me dah—no, sub; dey des mek out lak dey couldin'."

"Where are you from, aunty?"

Russell was new to the South, and all negroes of a certain age were yet "aunties" and "uncles" to him.

"I's fom Alabama, sub, dis las time, yes, sub. Dese tromp all de way fom Montgomery, sub."

Now a railway passenger agent, being stationed at a principal junction point of human desires and disabilities, must needs harden his heart; but it is a long walk from Montgomery to Chattanooga.

"What will you do when you get to Virginia? Have you relatives there?"

"Kin folks? No, sub. But dah's wha' I's bon' an' rite."

"How long have you been away?"

"Ain' been dah sense de wah time, sub."

"Since the war? Why, you won't find anybody there now that you know?"

"No, sub. I don't 'spect her; but I's lak ter lay my old bones on de ol' maneh fahn wha' de maheteh an' de missis is sleepin'; yes, sub, I would."

Russell put business aside, and with it the stereotyped rule in such cases made and provided. An application for half fare "account charity" should have come from the proper official of the county court, but he waived the formality.

"What is your name, aunty?" he asked, dipping his pen in his ink.

"Sephny Dickson, sub—yes, sub. Tank you kinly, sub."

"Dickson?" It was a family name in which the passenger agent was deeply interested—for cause.

"Yes, sub; Sephny Dickson."

Russell filled out the order for half rates, but when the money stage of the small transaction was reached the little heap of nickels and dimes which the old woman took from a knot in the corner of her kerchief was all too small, and the charitable causeway broke down in a new place.

"Is that all you have, aunty?"

"Yes, sub; ev' las' picayune, sub. It ain't half enough, even for the half fare."

The dim, old eyes filled with tears. "Dat's—dat's jes what I's skeered of, sub. 'Spect I's jes got ter tromp it, after all. How fur is it, maste?"

Russell's hand sought his pocket, but something in the old woman's manner

over came to send her up here, of all places in the world?"

"She got next to the sympathetic side of me, and I didn't know what else to do with her. And I happened to remember what you said the other evening about the old-time negro woman. What have I done?"

"If you had been our good angel you couldn't have done a lovelier thing. Do you know who Mam 'Sephny is? She is papa's old 'black mammy.' She was a house servant in Grandfather Dickson's old home in Virginia."

"Well, I'll be ———. You don't say! Why, it was the merest chance in the world! As I say, I didn't know what else to do with her."

"It was an—an inspiration, I think," declared Lois impulsively. "Papa can't make enough of her, and she—well, I just thought she would die with the sheer joy of it. Poor old woman! She has had such a dreadfully hard time of it."

"Has she? I guessed as much—from her eyes, you know."

"She didn't tell you her story?"

"No."

"It is fairly heartrending. She had a child, a little boy who was 2 years old when she lost him it was in the last year of the war, and Wytche county was overrun with negro stealers, making the most of their opportunity while it lasted, papa says. They stole the boy, and Mam 'Sephny could never learn anything more definite about him than that he was sold south with a lot of others, old and young. Wasn't it pitiful?"

The young man nodded. He had abolition blood in his veins, and it made him glad to the finger tips to know that a daughter of slave-holders could also sympathize with a black mother bereft.

"Of course, there was nothing for her to do at the time," Lois went on, "but when grandfather and grandmother died, and papa was reported killed at Petersburg, she was free, and she started out to hunt for her baby. Did you ever hear of such a hopeless task?"

"Never," said Russell, trying to imagine himself seeking a loved one—say a sweet-faced young woman with star-like eyes—under like hopeless conditions. "Did she find the boy?"

"O, no; it wasn't to be expected. She has spent her whole life going from place to place all through the Southern states, looking and asking and always hoping. But she has given it up at last, and she was trying to get back to the old home place in Virginia."

"Yes; to die and be buried beside her old master and mistress. She told me that. It's very pathetic, and—and, Miss Lois, you don't know how glad I am that you can sympathize with her. He said it became it was in him, and clamoring for speech, but he was quite unprepared for her half-reproachful protest.

"Glad, but surprised; is that it?" she queried, with a little note of antagonism in her voice.

"I suppose I ought to be polite and say no, but I'm going to be truthful and say yes. I've always been led to believe that your attitude—that is, the attitude of the Southern people—toward the—er—the negroes was—"

He stammered, not knowing just how to put it in the least offensive phrasing, but he needed no too go on.

"I know," she laughed, and the little whiff of antagonism was gone. "But after you've been here longer you will understand. They are men and women to you, yet, I suppose, but to us they are simply good-natured, overgrown children. And we are kinder to them than you will be—until you know them as well as we do."

The young man suspected that he was getting upon thin ice, and made

haste to go back to Mam 'Sephny and safety.

"Will you tell me what the old aunty name is?" he asked. "It's been puzzling me all day."

"'Persephony,' of course," said Lois. "She cried when papa called her that; said she hadn't heard her 'wh' name since her old mistress died. But you mustn't call her 'aunty.' That's only a brevet title you know. She is a 'mammy.'"

Russell promised to remember, and opened the gate for his companion. A moment later he was trying to explain to Major Dickson that his sending of Mam 'Sephny was the purest bit of haphazard, and so quite thoughtless.

"But our obligation is the same," said the major. "Why, bless my soul, seh, I couldn't feel no' grateful if somebody had made me a present of the old home place in Virginia—I couldn't, for a fact! Being from the North, you cain't quite appreciate our feelings toward these old black mammys of ours; you'd have to be Southern bawn for that. Will you walk out to youth dinner, seh?"

Under the circumstances the table talk was inevitably of faithful old servants, and the patriarchal system of bygone days; but later, when they had all adjourned to the veranda, the major, with his long-stemmed pipe, and Russell and his camera, the young man made good his promise to induce Miss Dickson into the mysteries of the fad photographic. Lois proved an apt pupil, and when they had taken snap shots of the valley, of each other, and of the negro man working on the lawn, the young girl sighed for fresh subjects.

"I wish we would get Mam 'Sephny. She's a type, you know, and one that is nearly extinct. Is there light enough? Shall I call her?"

Lois could not reply, and as if the wish had evoked her, the aged negro came around the corner of the house and stood with arms akimbo scanning the man at work on the lawn. Her pose was exceptionally good, and Russell made haste to adjust the camera.

"The light is exactly right on her face," he said. "Tell her to stand just as she is for a moment, please. It's a chance in a thousand."

Lois called to the unconscious possessor: "Stand right still, Mam 'Sephny—don't move. Mr. Russell is going to take your picture."

The effect of the warning was altogether unexpected and not a little disconcerting. The old negro threw up her hands, shrieked, and disappeared, and the man on the lawn caught up his scythe and made as if he would charge the group on the veranda. Lois laughed merrily.

"Dear me!" she said, "I quite forgot that Mam 'Sephny might object." And then, in explanation: "It's a foolish superstition among the older ones; somehow connected with the 'evil eye,' I believe."

"She didn't object soon enough," said Russell, laughing. "I got her before she moved."

He said it in an ordinary tone, but the stalwart negro overheard. With a quick thrust of his bent head he knocked the scythe blade from its socket, and it became a sword to slay. Catching up the weapon he made a dash for the veranda.

Russell saw him coming and realized dimly that he might presently have to fight for his life with a superstition-crazed maniac; but at the critical instant the artistic prompting was stronger than the self-defensive; the man was on the steps, with his weapon swung high, became for the moment a camera subject not to be duplicated

in a lifetime. The rays of the setting sun, streaming over the shrugged shoulder of the mountain, fell full on his ruge-distorted face, and a livid scar, invisible at other times, gashed one black cheek from temple to jaw angle. If there had been certain death in the lifting of the scythe blade, Russell could not have resisted the impulse to photograph the man as he stood.

The click of the camera shutter broke the spell for all of them. Lois shrieked, her father sprang from his chair, and the negro dropped his weapon. It was the major who first found speech.

"Why, David, you black rascal, you! What are you about, seh! Put that scythe back on the snath, and go to your work! Do you heah me?"

The man turned and went back to his grass-cutting without a word, and a few minutes later he was out of shot Russell laughed good-naturedly.

"You've been telling me all along that I have a good bit to learn about the brother in black, major, and I'm beginning to take it in, slowly. 'Pon my word, I believe that fellow really has it in mind to kill me!"

From that talk drifted easily to ohism, and racial characteristics, and things atavistic, and it was late when Russell rose to take his leave. Lois, too, and went around to the side veranda to look for the incline signal at the Point Hotel. It had disappeared.

"The last car has gone down," she announced, going back to the two men at the steps. Whereupon the hospitable major made instant offer of head and breakfast, but the young man would not fray his welcome.

"I shan't mind the walk in the least," he protested. "It will do me good; I don't have enough exercise, anyway."

So it was concluded, and Russell strode back with his hat, Lois with her scythe. But when he would have essayed it two soft arms went around his neck and a pair of tremulous lips touched his forehead. As a half-stunned man might, he said the first thing that suggested itself: "I don't care if it rains pitchforks!"

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said a voice with a soft note. "I was sure he had killed you! Where are you hurt?"

Russell came to his own in the matter of self-possession with gratifying celerity.

"As long as I lie perfectly still I'm not hurt anywhere; don't move, please. Was it the crazy-headed negro?"

"Yes; it was David. He thought you had 'bedoned' Mam 'Sephny, and he was trying to smash the camera."

"Where is he now?"

"He has gone to the house for help. Oh, I do wish they'd hurry!"

"Don't. I'm quite comfortable." Then, in a spasm of reluctant thoughtfulness: "But you'll take cold sitting on the ground."

He made a shameless pretense of rising and the two arms held him down, as he tried to save his, like the brave little girl that you are. Lois—my darling—I suppose you've got to be true to the other man, but I love you—love you a thousand times better than he ever could if he tries till doomsday!"

"The other?" There was a perfect fusillade of queries in the two little words, and he lifted her hand—the one with the ring on the finger—and kissed it.

"Yes; the man who put this ring on your finger."

She bent above him until her eyes clinched the stars. "Do you think you love me better than he does?" she said, softly. "You've known me only a few

months, and he—he has known me all my life."

The young man groaned. "Don't tell me you love him, Lois—I couldn't stand that."

"But I do." There were hurrying steps in the road above them, and the flickering light of a lantern cut yellow swaths in the darkness. She bent lower, and her lips brushed his forehead. "You wouldn't want me not to love my own father, would you?" It was mother's ring, and he gave it to her.

This was how it came about that the major, coming hastily, with an improvised stretcher, borne by an ash-hued David, found the young man on his feet, with Lois in his arms; and when they had all gone back to the house, it took the better half of a fresh cigar on Russell's part, and a few changes of the long-stemmed pipe on the major's, to work out the explanation on the vine-shadowed veranda. When it was made, the case of one David Jackson came up for trial that afternoon. "He's your matrimony son," said the major. "Of course, he's a grand rascal, and it's your privilege to send him to the coal mines, but—"

"But a Southern gentleman wouldn't invoke the law because an ignorant negro was terrified enough to knock him for trial that sentence." "He's your matrimony son," said the major. "Of course, he's a grand rascal, and it's your privilege to send him to the coal mines, but—"

"This makes account for David's reappearance on the lawn three days later when Russell was again a guest at the Dickson cottage. They were waiting for Mam 'Sephny to come to dinner, and Russell was showing the major and Lois the pictures taken on the eventful evening of assaults and happiness.

"The look so wonderful now," said the young man, with a glance at David. "You'd hardly recognize him as the fellow who posed for this."

"The photograph was a study in ferocity, and the old negro stood out on the pictured face like the welt of a broad whiplash."

"It's simply horridly," said Lois, shuddering. "But that is a beautiful picture of Mam 'Sephny. Come here, mammy, and see how you look to other people."

The ancient negro had just come out to announce dinner, and she vouchsafed no more than a single contemptuous eyesweep.

"Hain't dat ol' nighab wench me? No, mammy! I ain' nowha's nick as of an' ugly as dat." Then she caught sight of the grotesque ferocity. "Faw de Lawd's sake, you nighab, you gimme dat one, please! Wha'—wha' yo' git dat?"

Russell gave her the picture, and once more the old eyes filled with tears.

"Dat's my George Wash'n'n Alizzard Dickson, grieved up an' come to be a main. Dat's de same ear wha' he got ax'nd de ol' hot stove in ol' missis' kitchen! Oh, maheteh, wha' yo'ol' git dat?"

The man on the lawn had dropped his rake and started toward the house. The major rose.

"I mistrust David's own boy, sure enough, mammy; I recollect that scar myself, he declared, and when the old woman took down the steps with her trembling arms spread wide, the soft-hearted veteran seized upon the two young people and marched them to the farther end of the long veranda.

"And so they discussed the view and killed time with set purpose, while around on the front steps an old negro mother rocked herself back and forth, crying softly, and trying to hold a stalwart giant in her arms, as she had long ago held her lost man-child."

Breaking It Quietly.

Man (hurriedly)—Are you Miss Dawson, mum?

Yes.

Well, I've been sent to tell you that your husband's head has been broken, mum, and I'm to break it to you gently, mum.—Punch.