

and kings for celluloid collars and automobiles and church benches."

The king was still puzzling over Vannoy's elucidation, when three pink-tighted, gauze-skirted figures bounded into the open space and tugged breathlessly at the comedy monarch of Rainbow Land.

"We've washed our duds," chirped Miss Tessie LeGrand. "Aren't they swell?"

"What in the world are you doing with all these Williams and Walker minstrelst?" demanded Miss Bessie LeGrand.

"That's an awfully slow dance the front row's giving," declared Miss Jessie LeGrand. "Let us give them the Fifty-seven Pickles Ballet!"

"Hamlet and King Dodo!" shouted Vannoy. "It's the very thing!"

With little gurgles of delight the Sisters LeGrand whirled upon the sandy stage and rendered the Broadwayesque dance—spinning, turning, leaping and kicking, coquetting, vaulting, wagon-wheeling, somersaulting, the three red-gauzed skirts seeming thirty, the trio danced upon the sands. The king of the palms beamed his soul's delight—his dusky woman swayed in unconscious effort—his barbaric warriors grinned and howled their satisfaction.

"We've got him going," whispered the comedian to Miss Bradbury—and, when the dance wound up to the salvos of a kingdom, he stepped graciously to the panting ballet.

"Have a chocolate apiece," he invited, with his hand on his heart, "but don't take any more."

"Goody!" shouted the Misses LeGrand. "Too many would make us fat, anyhow."

Over on his seat of thatch the king watched the consumption of chocolates, while he explained to his henchmen that the strangers lived in the sun, and that he, the king, would visit them in time.

THE NINTH CHOCOLATE CREAM—PURE HOGGISHNESS.

"What strange food is this, that is black and round like a walnut and that causes all its eaters to laugh like naked children at play?" the king asked, through his faithful interpreter.

Vannoy sprang up with celerity. "It is the beauty-food of our women, O King! Producing pink-skinned maidens such as the damsel here. It is eaten on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons when the red-skirted girls dance upon the stage."

"Is there no magic?"

"Not a bit," answered Vannoy. "Just have one nibble—but look, who's here!"

Two grim giants entered the circle, dragging a straggling, screaming mountain of flesh. When the giants had withdrawn, leaving the flesh-heap cringing before sleek, brown royalty, the mountain resolved itself into Mr Bill Archer, of U-squodunk, in Connecticut, late deck-hand on the crack liner Equatoria. Tucked under Mr Archer's fat, right arm was a bundle of stick-like things, rescued stage properties from the ship. The king jabbered in excited palmsese.

"He says you'd make a fine meal," translated Boanga. "You're so fat,"

"Oh, save me—hell-up, hell-up!" screamed Mr Archer.

"Shut up!" commanded Vannoy. "Keep your mouth, and nobody will hurt you."

"I'm hungry," whined the deck-hand. "The girls got the last of the grub last night, and I could eat a soaked sea-biscuit."

"Stand over here," ordered Vannoy, "or I'll soak your thick head! As I was saying, your majesty, the chocolate cream is a delicious edible. Kindly sample one, and Miss Bradbury will take care of the other."

The comedian passed the pink and gilt box, with Boanga rapidly translating. The smiling king, his last shred of Oceanic conservatism gone, reached for the dainty.

"Oh, lord!" cried Mr Bill Archer, "don't waste that chocolate drop on a nigger king!" And he clapped the bon-bon into his great mouth.

THE TENTH CHOCOLATE CREAM—STRANGULATION.

Vannoy mowled at the hungry deck-hand, drawing back as if he would strike. "Seize him!" roared the king. "Seize the fat hog!"

A dozen of the royal guard made for the startled Archer, while Vannoy growled: "The blanked fool will spoil everything!" The LeGrands clustered about Miss Bradbury, crying "Goodness me!" in a tinkling chorus.

darkened third act. The sceptre sprang into glaring, sizzling light throughout its length, and the startled palm-warriors jumped back.

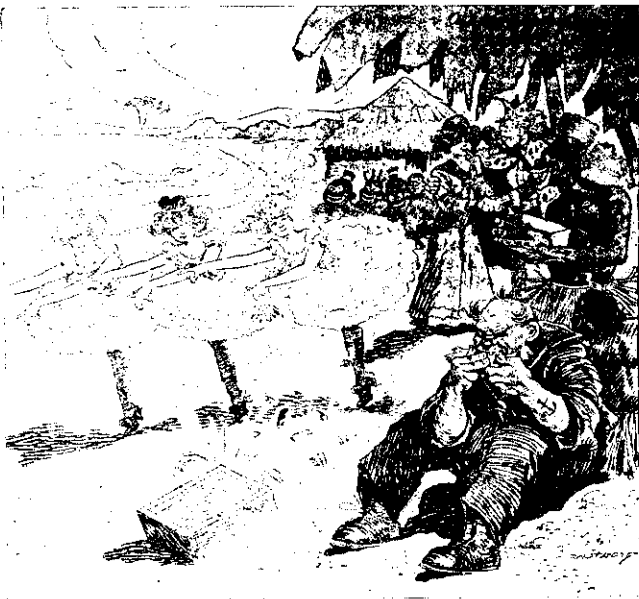
"Golly!" shouted Bill Archer, "the stick's on fire!" He hurled it into the air, and the flaming thing landed upon the infuriated king.

"Magic! Sorcery!" yelled the brown monarch. "Secure the white demons!"

But Mr Archer had accidentally fumbled his second reserve—the spear. The king of Rainbow Land used the thing in the grand finale to chase the ugly princess, who desired to marry him, round and round the stage. The spear released a dozen rubber serpents, and when Mr Archer found the button, the coloured reptiles wriggled out, and three of them coiled about the person of the king.

"Whoop!" went his majesty. "Whoop!" and he tore at the quivering snakes. The eager guards grabbed Vannoy and the white women—and Bill Archer released his final bit of voodoo. He fumbled the spring on a thick police club, and a concealed music-box went grandly off into: "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-night!"

"Cook the last one of them!" bawled the king, who had come free of the reptilian peril. "Boil the magic from their bones!"



The ridiculous music box on the ground chimed, "There'll be a hot time!"

"Yow, yow!" went the warrior chorus. The procession hurried by the maddened king, and the monarch opened his mouth wide for further taunt.

"Roast them alive! Put them on—gurgle—gurgle—ugh!"

Miss Corinne Bradbury, of Toledo, Ohio, U.S.A., passing in miserable review, had thrust the final chocolate cream into the wide-drawn mouth of the king, shoving the half-melted confection deep into the gaping, brown jaws—almost strangling the irate ruler of coral and palm.

"Ya—a—ah!" went the king. "Ha—a—ya—ah!"

He spluttered and choked on the sweet confection—then, the white, mealy fondant mixed with the crisp, brown coating and lolled and sloshed upon the imperial tongue. The king had intended to spit, but he changed his mind—as kings may do. Instead, he crunched the sweet, sweet mixture, pressed it against his tough palate, knesled and worked it with his tongue. The prison procession had halted, and the excited guards had released their captives.

"Yow," went the king in satisfaction, and a blissful, child-like smile sat upon his great face.

"The king wants another chocolate," Boanga, the interpreter, announced.

"There are no more," responded Vannoy, producing the empty pink box. "But in my country there are—"

But Boanga was already translating, and the king had seized the pretty box, and was smelling and licking the brown coating from the sides. After that, he raised his hands for silence.

"O, my children and the children of my children! There is a land where the white people live, and where all

things are big and fair and deadly. It is a land of magic—but the magic is pleasant as bee's honey and cow's milk. It is the magic that makes the beautiful lady pink and plump as a young pig, making even the sour Netia and the shrivelled Nolsol to smile. Now, I say that I will go, and the best among you shall go to the land of the beautiful magic, and we will eat the beauty-food and grow fat and pink as these, our strange visitors. We will make long boats and go with the white people, who will show us the way. It is Danno's will!"

"Yow, yow!" boomed the Dannoland infantry. The Misses LeGrand were dancing once more upon the sand—Mr. Bill Archer snarled over the piece of cold mutton he had found—the comedian and the lady of gold and petroleum held hands in the sunlight, while the ridiculous music-box chimed the Hot Time piece on the ground.

"We're going back," Vannoy sighed, "back to the gas tanks and curtain calls, and ugly, ugly billboards and the sad things of the Rialto."

"Yes," said Corinne Bradbury, looking toward the illimitable East, "but we are going together—you and I."

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