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The Last Flower On the Azalia

[Original.]
A broad open stretch of country, with here and there a clump of trees, bathed in that deep yellow afternoon sunlight peculiar to certain portions of the west. There is but one house in sight, and that a log cabin. No fence incloses it; no trees shade it. The only attempt to beautify it is a row of flowers on each side of the little stoop in its front.

From a well in the rear a young girl is carrying a watering pot to give the flowers their evening sprinkling. Her dress is a common calico, its skirt reaching only to her ankles. On her back hangs a sunbonnet, thrown off now that the sun has lost its power. Tenderly she bends over her plants, which seem to raise their lips to drink in the refreshing draft. In all that landscape there is no other cultivated beauty.

So wrapt was she in her occupation that she did not hear a step behind her till it was very near; then, turning, she saw a figure and a face before which the beauty of her flowers paled. Till this moment they had been her companions, her children, the only objects to love in that lonely land. Hearing a step, she turned. A handsome, good natured, boyish face, with kindly blue eyes, was looking at her. Amused at her startled appearance and the pleasure she did not attempt to conceal, the stranger unslinging a rifle from his back and rested it on the ground.

"Do you think," he asked, "that I could stay here all night?"
"I'll see." And she went into the house. When she returned to say that he could have what he wanted she found him pouring a fresh pot of water on her plants, which he had been to the well to bring. A mother seeing one feeding her hungry children could not have been more affected. Indeed, everything about the stranger tended to bring the girl under his magical influence. Whence comes this young fellow to sympathize with the one delight of her life? She neither knew nor cared. She only felt his presence.

The huntsman spent the night at the cabin. There were no rules to govern the conduct of the two, and they sat out on the stoop under the stars till the moon rose and eclipsed her heavenly sisters with her greater splendor. The man had been used to forms, but he forgot them now. Only an hour elapsed between his arrival and his first word expressing what both had felt for that whole hour.

"May I have a kiss?" he asked.
He whose manner was that of a god to ask for a kiss from a daughter of the desert!
In the morning he was gone. It seemed to her that instead of the sun rising it had set. Oh, that the hunting grounds had lain near the cabin! But he had promised to return that way. She did not question that he would. She simply waited and watched and thought of him till he should come.

One morning she arose, threw open the shutter and looked out. The sun was rising, and his first soft morning rays lent to the desolate scene something like beauty. The few trees did not look so lonely, the uncovered country did not look so barren, now that the sun's light shone through mellowing mists. But if the orb of day was rising in the east the sun of the girl's heart was rising in the west. Glancing thither, she saw a little figure stepping lightly along the road. It was the young stranger, and he carried something in his arms.

When she went downstairs, there on the stoop sat the huntsman, and near him in an earthen pot was a plant—one that she had never seen before.

"When on the line of the railroad," he said, "I sent to the city for it. Had I not been waiting I would have returned earlier, for to give you one moment of happiness is worth more than all the game in the west."

"It is not in bloom," said the girl.
"No; it will not bloom till I come again, or, rather, when it blooms again I will come."

They spent one happy day together, then the stranger went on. Autumn faded into winter. A traveler stopped at the cabin one day and, seeing a name written on a bit of wood tied to the plant, asked:

"Has he been here?"

"Yes."
"Look out for him, little girl; he's a heart smasher. Hunts hearts as he hunts deer or antelope."

The girl turned pale.
"Did he give you that azalia?" asked the traveler.

"Yes. When does it bloom?"

"In the early spring."

From that time the girl began to wilt. It seemed when the winter was passing out and the azalia began to take on its new life that it was drawing its vigor from its mistress. Before the traveler's arrival she had not doubted that the giver would come when the plant bloomed. Now she felt that he would never come.

One morning a bud opened, then another and another, till the azalia was in full bloom, emitting a rich odor. The girl's vitality flickered as a candle burns down into its socket. Meanwhile the flowers dropped away. One evening she went out to sprinkle her plants. Carrying the water exhausted her strength. But one flower remained. She stooped to inhale its odor and fell. A strong arm raised her. Looking up, she saw the smiling face of the huntsman looking down at her.

"I'm not too late to keep my promise," he said. "There's one flower left."
"I was told," she faltered, "by one who knows you that you would not

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Hostetter's Stomach Bitters.

"Love promises I have never kept before. The one I made to you I could not break."
F. A. MITCHEL.

DUBLIN JARVIES.

The Happy Go Lucky Hackmen of the Irish Metropolis.

The Dublin Jarvies are not what you would call good whips. They drive, as unwhiplike people say, like the devil; they cut around corners feasting enough and go slashing up heartbreaking hills, but nine out of ten of them drive with a loose rein. They talk to the fare, and the little horse runs on, doing the best he can and following his own dauntless will. I lay no fault upon the Jarvy. The Irish horse shares Paddy's gragh for independence. Of him, too, it may be said that he serves without servility.

The Jarvy—light hearted lad, be he young or old—gains in the run of the days an average of 6 shillings. The fares are jolly cheap. For a "set down" within the boundary the charge for two persons between 9 a. m. and 10 p. m. is only sixpence. By time the charges are one and six an hour, with an added sixpence for each succeeding hour. Still the Jarvy does fairly well. Barney, who is no better than the others, took me to his home. It was in Spring Gardens, where there are rows upon rows of neat little red brick cottages, with gardens and stables. They rent at £20 a year. Owning his car as he does, Barney pays no car rent to any one, and if he drives Lawler's mare 'tis more for love than profit. Year in and year out he puts by a bit, for the "childer, God bless 'em!" are growing and will have need of education. In his smart little home, with his smart little wife, there are unluckier men than he.

"If 'twere not for the fightin'," says Mrs. O'Hea, "a better man than Barney never pulled a shirt over his head."
Barney, it seems, believes that animosities should be cultivated. Being a good man with his hands and blithe and gay in battle, he colors the week's end with riot.—Vance Thompson in Outing.

SEA GAZING IN BERMUDA.

Wonderful Life of Crystal Depths as Revealed to the Observer.

It was a little parrot fish that started out so briskly on this summer morning. Whether he was eager to keep an appointment or had been unexpectedly summoned to a distant part of his world one will never know, but one may be certain that the matter was of the greatest consequence so far as the little fish was concerned. Keeping his bright eyes fixed straight ahead, he passed a corner of the reef where the coral was incrustated with mollusks and sea urchins and where a pair of beautiful squirrel fish, deeply engrossed in sentimental affairs, turned to look after him wonderingly through their enormous eyes. Below in a deep pool a school of spotted trunkfish played heedlessly, while under a projecting plate of staghorn coral a huge grouper waited expectantly, but as the parrot fish, warned of his danger, turned quickly away he gave his attention to a pair of gray snappers—great, quiet, ghostly figures that seemed like two shadows drifting along far down through the green waters.

A few feet farther on and the hurrying parrot fish passed a tall sea fan, around which three dainty butterfly fish, clad brilliantly in yellow, were peering into each nook and corner in their search for small prey, while a sober cowfish, with his two conspicuous horns, looked on sedately. Suddenly the parrot fish turned sharply aside to avoid a spot where the reef was broken by jutting rocks covered with green ulva. Around this a school of bright little zebra striped sergeant majors were sporting, while just to the right an anglefish, whose blue body tipped with gold first attracted the attention of the mariners so many centuries ago, sailed from under a purple gorgonia with a disdainful air.—Metropolitan Magazine.

Rejected Engines of War.

Certain engines of war have been rejected by civilized nations in times gone by because they were too destructive and too horrible. England has still in keeping a secret war plan of the tenth Earl of Dundonald which the authorities rejected because, while it was infallible, it was too inhuman to use by man against man. Even Louis XV, of France had backbone enough to refuse Dupre's terrible invention. If the story of this discovery be true the plan was to create by a secret process a conflagration whose intensity was but increased by water. It would burn town or fleet. Louis refused to have the secret published, and it went down to the grave with Dupre.

If goodness were only a theory, it were a pity it should be lost to the world.—Hastitt.

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Anyone Desiring a Situation can Insert an Advertisement in this Column of Three Lines Two Times Free of Charge.

PROPOSALS INVITED.

PROPOSALS FOR BEEF AND MUTTON—Office chief commissary, Vancouver Barracks, Wash., March 15, 1905. Sealed proposals for furnishing and delivering fresh beef and mutton for six months beginning July 1, 1905, will be received here and at offices of commissaries at Fort Stevens, Ore.; Boise Barracks, Idaho; Forts Casey, Columbia, Flagler, Lawton, Walla Walla, Ward, Worden Wright and Vancouver Barracks, Wash., until 10 a. m. April 15, 1905, and then opened. Envelopes containing proposals should be indorsed "Proposals for fresh beef and mutton to be opened April 15, 1905," and addressed to Commissary of Post to be supplied, or to Maj. George B. Davis, Chief Com'y.

NOTICE FOR BIDS—BIDS WILL be received for the foundation and basement of the New St. Mary's Hospital; plans and specifications may be seen at the office of the architect at St. Mary's Hospital; all bids to be in on or before the 25th of this month; right reserved to reject any or all bids. March 6, 1905.

FOR SALE—MISCELLANEOUS.

FOR SALE—SECOND-HAND FURNITURE. Inquire at room 2 over Peterson & Brown's store.

NCUBATOR FOR SALE—400 EGGS capacity; also three 100 capacity brooders; first-class condition. Address A. Astorian Office.

HORSE, BUGGY AND HARNESS for sale. Address M. Astorian.

FOR SALE—SHETLAND PONEY, cart and harness. Apply to A. E. Allen, Clatsop, Ore.

160 ACRES OF FIRST CLASS Timber land for sale, in Pacific county, near Columbia river. Address Box 699 Astoria, Ore.

FOR SALE—LOT 1, BLOCK 14, Adair's Astoria; for particulars write to J. P. Miller, Onleda, Wash.

FOR SALE—STEAM TUG IN FIRST-class condition; terms reasonable; suitable for seining purposes. For particulars apply at this office.

SCOW FOR SALE AT M'GREGOR'S mill, 22x64; would make a good fish scow. Inquire of Dan Gambel at mill.

HELP WANTED.

WANTED—MEN TO LEARN BARBER trade; 8 weeks completes; positions guaranteed; tuition earned while learning. Write for terms. Moler's Barber College, 644 Clay St., San Francisco.

Wanted.—A school girl to do light work at Mrs. E. C. Holden's on Duane street.

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