

# In the Season of Growth

By PETER M'ARTHUR

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THEY had been introduced only a few minutes before and were wandering through the garden trying to make conversation. The beautiful weather had received full and careful attention, the condition of the blue and rose bushes had been discussed, and then came silence. Both were beginning to feel awkward when Jack's eye lighted on a bulb lying partly hidden by a border. True to the instincts of a football player, he gave it a deft kick that sent it spinning along the gravel walk.

"The gardener must have dropped it when he was planting the crocuses," said Betty, glad to hear her own voice again.

"Perhaps he just laid it aside there because he didn't want a hyacinth among them," Jack replied, picking up the bulb, and, then, being a true Omurian, he could not resist quoting:

"I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The rose as where some buried Caesar bled;

That every hyacinth the garden wears  
Dropped in her lap from some once lovely head."

"Well," said Betty, with a mischievous smile, "Donald's head may have been lovely once, but it must have been before he took to gardening. At present he is very bald, and the little fringe of hair he has left is decidedly red. His are hardly the 'hyacinthine locks' Milton had in mind, and I doubt if Emerson would have recognized him as 'The hyacinthine boy for whom Morn well might break and April bloom.'"

"You are fond of poetry, I see," said Jack when they had stopped laughing at her sally.

"Very," said Betty, "but you started us on the wrong tack if we are to do justice to that neglected little bulb. You should have recited Holmes' lines:

"The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mold,  
Naked and shivering with his cup of gold."

"But I don't see how that applies to this hyacinth."

"Pardon me—to that crocus."

"But I took a high stand in botany when I graduated. It was one of the optional studies on my course, and I plugged four volumes in two weeks."

"Primroses by the river's brim  
Dicolitidons were to him,  
And they were nothing more."

she quoted smilingly from a clever parody.

"That may be," he replied, "but though my knowledge of botany is entirely bookish I'll leave it to the practical and red haired Donald to prove that I am right. I'll wager a pair of gloves to a tie that this is a hyacinth. What do you say?"

"Simply that I wear five and a halfs."

"Well, where can we find Donald?"

"This being his day off I can hardly say. But I'll tell you what will be better fun. Let us plant the bulb and see which it turns out to be?"

"That is a bargain. But will it be sure to get the attention necessary to make it grow?"

"I'll plant it and care for it myself."

"But I claim the right of superintending the work and examining the plant from time to time to make sure that my interest is being guarded."

"All right. If you will go up to the veranda and get the trowel that is ly-



SHE PULLED UP HER SLEEVES TO HER ELBOWS.

ing by the step I will find an empty spot in one of the beds in which to plant my crocus."

When Jack had performed his errand he found Betty kneeling on the border of one of the beds waiting for him. He gallantly offered to do the planting, but she scorned his assistance.

"Do you think," she cried, "that I would trust the planting of an innocent little bulb to a man whose knowledge of botany is at once academic and wrong? Never!"

She had taken off her cuffs and pulled up her sleeves to her elbows, and as Jack watched he had a chance to see how lithe and shapely were her wrists

and hands. He could also see how naturally the sunlight glistened through her brown hair, and when she looked up at him with laughing eyes, after patting the soil into place over the bulb, he could see that they were of an unfathomable blue.

"You have done the planting," he exclaimed. "Now I should be permitted to do the watering."

"But a plant like this should be watered every evening," she protested.

"Or oftener," he pursued blandly.

"Oh, I couldn't think of letting a foolish little bit like this interfere with your business."

"You couldn't? Why, I propose to make the watering of this plant my chiefest business, and I shall not let anything else interfere with it."

"But you are a lawyer, I understand. What will you clients say?"

"To be a lawyer you must first catch your client," he commented whimsically and then added with well affected earnestness: "By the way, you haven't any troubles that I could straighten out for you, have you? I mean trouble of a legal nature."

"I have no troubles of any kind," she replied laughing.

"Lucky girl, though it is unlucky for me. I don't know but I shall feel it my duty to make trouble of some kind for you."

"If you try you will perhaps find that I can make trouble too."

"I don't doubt it," he said banteringly and heaved a deep sigh. "When it comes to really making trouble commend me to good looking girls of eighteen or thereabout, especially in the springtime."

"Oh, you needn't be alarmed," she pointed.

"And I was just beginning to hope that I might be. Well, well, if you do have trouble of any kind that develops a legal aspect that does not require too profound a knowledge of the law, but at the same time demands lengthy consultations, I hope you will not forget me. My office hours are from 10 to 5, except when I am yachting, golfing or playing tennis."

"Do you do much yachting?"

"I usually spend Friday and Saturday of each week on board and take a couple of long cruises each season."

"Do you golf much?" she persisted, with growing mischief in her eyes.

"I make it a rule to play eighteen holes each Monday and Wednesday. It really takes a great deal of practice to keep oneself in form at golf," he explained unblushingly.

"And tennis?"

"Well, I am able to devote only my Tuesdays and Thursdays to that fascinating game. We really have ripping courts, and I hope you will become a member of our little club."

She laughed joyously, without answering his suggestion.

"With the amount of time you devote to golf, tennis and yachting I am afraid you would not have much time to devote to any troubles I might bring to you."

"I sincerely hope you may never have any more troubles than I can attend to, even in the small amount of time that I devote to law." This was said so meaningly that she blushed faintly. But just at that point his mother concluded her call on Betty's mother, and he had to go along as her escort.

There never was a flower more carefully tended than that little waif. As Betty Curtis had come to the town with her mother to spend the summer in the fine residence her father had bought for them she had nothing to do but enjoy herself. Jack Etheridge was almost equally blessed with leisure, for, though, in compliance with the wishes of his widowed mother, he had commenced the practice of law so that he would know better how to care for his wealth when she left him her fortune, in addition to the handsome income he derived from the estate of his father, he did not elect to live a strenuous life. After careful investigation he decided to hang out his shingle in this pleasant little town that had excellent golf links at the rear and a luxurious yacht club on the water front. He opened offices with a southern exposure in the post-office building and fitted them up with furniture admirably suited for lounging on and waited comfortably for his first client. In order to pass the time as pleasantly as possible he supplemented his library of law books with all the latest novels and current magazines. His mother was satisfied, and it cannot be said that he felt life to be unduly exacting. He conscientiously kept regular office hours, as explained above, so it naturally happened that he frequently walked home from the links with Betty after a pleasant game, and the first thing they always did was to take a look at the little mound that covered their bulb. Donald had been warned to leave it alone, and they saw to it that no weed sprouted in its vicinity.

"I am inclined to think," said Betty a couple of weeks after the planting. "that a watched bulb is somewhat like a watched pot."

"Perhaps the hyacinthine Donald threw it away because he saw that it was dead."

"Oh, I noticed that it was quite fresh when I planted it, but I think it means of you to use the word hyacinthine when you know well enough that there is no common adjective derived from crocus. I shall have my revenge, however, when it comes."

One fine evening about the middle of May when they went to the garden spot in the garden they found their bulb had pushed through the ground. But it had not come far enough for them to decide which was right.

Next evening Jack came again, for matters were getting exciting. By this

time the tender green leaves had begun to open, and it was clear that the plant was not a crocus. The leaves were thick and broad.

"I knew I was right," Jack exclaimed exultingly. "It is certainly not a crocus; therefore it must be a hyacinth. I prefer flies that are quiet in color and pattern."

"Not so fast," said Betty. "The idea of a lawyer using such logic. I admit it is not a crocus, but I see no reason to believe that it is a hyacinth. It is not necessarily a hyacinth because it is not a crocus. There are thousands of other things that it may be. You a lawyer and to make such a claim. Flie!"

"Oh, that is all right! A lawyer always claims everything in sight. I suppose we will have to ask Donald to settle the matter for us."

"We shall do nothing of the kind. Let us wait until it flowers, and then I'll undertake to eat it in addition to paying my wager if you prove to be right, though I may be tempted to transplant something more edible in its place if it should really turn out to be a hyacinth."

"A leek, for instance. It grows from a bulb and is edible."

Shakespeare has said that "for lovers lacking matter the cleanest shift is to kiss," but Betty and Jack had not confessed to themselves that they were lovers, and whenever they lacked matter they could fall back on the bulb. It furnished them with unending matter for chat and banter when other



"SOMETHING ELSE YOU PLANTED HAS ALSO BLOSSOMED."

conversation failed, and in a subtle way all their thoughts of one another were intertwined with it.

When Jack went away on the annual yachting cruise of the club Betty found a peculiar pleasure in tending to the mysterious little plant that was strangely familiar, although she could not remember ever having seen one in a garden. While watering it and removing every weed that dared to appear it brought back to her many pleasant memories, and she had a sense of companionship while watching it. And when it finally put forth the blossom that betrayed its identity she blushed and laughed and blushed again when she wondered what Jack would say when he saw it.

Yachting is a most leisurely pastime and gives one ample opportunities for thought. Before the cruise was over Jack had made for himself an unaccountable reputation for silence and unsociability. Those who observed him noted that he frequently smiled to himself and shook their heads ominously. Toward the end of the cruise it was seen that his face had taken on the seriousness of a great resolution, and it was evident that his mind had been made up finally on some matter of the gravest importance.

When Betty saw him coming up the garden path after his return she was smitten with sudden confusion, but she managed to greet him with proper dignity. After the usual exchange of compliments and a few inquiries on her part regarding the cruise the conversation became monosyllabic. As usual on such occasions she reverted to the bulb to start it again.

"I have taken good care of our bulb since you left. It has blossomed at last."

"I have also watched the growth of something you planted, and it has also blossomed," he said like one who had carefully rehearsed a part.

"That I planted? I don't understand. And she looked at him with wide eyed wonder. She observed, however, that he looked very athletic and that a tanned complexion became him."

"Yes. I have watched what you planted, and it has blossomed into love. I have come to ask if you will care for that flower in my heart forever."

Being of a poetic temperament, how could she refuse a proposal so poetic? When the matter was settled, with pretty formalities too sacred for the eyes of outsiders, she looked up at him and exclaimed:

"Wouldn't you like to see the other plant? It turns out to have been very significant."

"It doesn't bear orange blossoms, does it?"

"Not exactly, but it bears something almost as appropriate."

"Well, it will be the favorite plant in our garden some day. In fact, I think I'll have a whole garden full of it."

"I have found how it got here," she explained as they passed through the garden. "One of Donald's children brought it home from the woods and put it among the bulbs. He recognized it and threw it away."

When Jack saw the plant he laughed loudly, and their laughter mingled into

music. Of the little mound where Betty had planted the bulb there bloomed as fine a Jack-in-the-pulpit as any one would wish to see.

"It looks just as if it were ready to perform the marriage service and give us its blessing," said Jack as he knelt to remove a little weed that showed its head near by.

Betty very appropriately knelt beside him.

## HOT AND COLD WATER.

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Hot or cold water is excellent as an application for inflammation, congestions or abrasions, but how many people know while to apply in particular cases while awaiting the arrival of medical relief? Not many, and the mistakes made in some instances are ludicrous.

Take the barber, for example, who has cut his patron's face. He generally washes the face with a towel soaked in warm water, often pressing it right into the injury, and then wonders why the blood flows from the cut so freely. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred if he had used cold water, and the colder the better, the blood would have ceased to flow from the injury altogether, as the cold would have a tendency to contract the openings in the torn blood vessels. In all cases of such cuts or abrasions very cold water will at least reduce the amount of bleeding. If it doesn't stop it altogether, and yet, singularly enough, boiling water will have the same effect.

Water below the boiling point increases the flow, but above that degree decreases it. In surface inflammations or congestions cold water ought to be used, while if the condition is situated below the surface hot water is necessary as an application because it draws the blood toward the surface and thus stimulates the circulation through the part where it is most needed.

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