

THE SOWER.

Lithe-limbed and tall is she,  
And straight as you young stately pine,  
With eyes and hair of bronze,  
And teeth milk-white, and lips like wine.  
Her simple gown is set  
Close to her form in modest grace.  
Above her shining braids  
The coarse straw shades her comely face.  
She comes across the farmer's furrowed field  
To do his bidding with her bare brown hands,  
And ever and anon she casts  
The golden grain that winter's store shall yield.

—Hannah Hearn, in the Current.

RED TULIPS.

BY LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

"Please, ma'am, will you give me one of them red tulips?"

The eager voice woke Helen from her reverie, and looking up she saw a little colored girl holding on to the iron railing with one hand, while the other pointed to a bed of expanded red and yellow tulips waving in the sunshine.

"I can't give you one, child, for they don't belong to me," answered Helen, aroused by the wistful face, over which her words brought a shadow of disappointment.

"I thought maybe you lived in this house, or knew the folks; and I do want one of those flowers dreadful bad," said the girl, regarding the gay tulips with a look of intense desire.

"I wish I could give you one; but it would be stealing, you know. Perhaps, if you go and ask the owner, he may let you have one—there are so many."

And having offered all the consolation in her power, Helen went on, busy with a certain disappointment of her own, which just then weighed very heavily on her girlish heart.

Half an hour later, as she came down the street on the opposite side, she saw the same girl sitting on a doorstep, still gazing at the tulips with hopeless admiration.

The child looked up as she approached, and recognizing the pretty young lady who had spoken kindly to her, smiled and nodded so confidently, that Helen could not resist stopping to say:

"Did you ask over there?"

"Yes, ma'am; but the girl said 'No,' and told me to clear out; so I came over here to sit and look at the pretties since I can't have none," she answered, with a patient sigh.

"You shall have some!" cried Helen, remembering how easily she could gratify the innocent longing of the poor child, and feeling a curious sympathy with all disappointed people. "Come with me, dear; there is a flower-shop round the corner, and you shall have a posy of some sort."

Such wonder, gratitude and delight shown in Betty's face that Helen felt rejoiced for her small kindness.

As they walked, she questioned her about herself, and quite won her heart by the friendly interest expressed in Betty's mother, Betty's kitten and Betty's affairs generally.

When they came to the flower-shop, little Bet felt as if she had got into a fairy tale; and when Helen gave her a pot with a blue hyacinth and a rosy tulip blooming prettily together she felt as if a lovely fairy had granted all her wishes in the good old way.

"It's just splendid! and I don't know how to thank you, miss. But mother takes in washing, and she'll love to do yours and plait the ruffles elegant, 'cause you done this for me!" cried Betty, embracing the flower-pot in one hand, and squeezing Miss Helen's with the other.

Helen promised to come and see her new friend, and, when they parted, kept turning round to watch the little figure trotting up the hill, often pausing to turn and show her a beaming black face, all smiles and delight, as Betty threw her kisses, and hugged the tulip like a treasure of great price.

When she vanished, Helen said to herself with a smile and a sigh: "There, I feel better for that little job, and it is a comfort to know that some one has got what she wants, though it's not I."

Some weeks later, when Helen was preparing to go into the country for the summer, and wanted certain delicate muslins done up, she remembered what Betty had said about her mother, and had a fancy to see how the child and her flowers prospered.

She found them in a small, poor room, hot and close, and full of washtubs and flat-irons. The mother was busy at her work, and Betty sat by the one window, listlessly picking out ruffles.

When she saw the face at the door she jumped up and clapped her hands, crying delightedly:

"Oh, mammy, it's my lady! my dear, pretty lady truly come at last!"

Such a welcome made friends of the three at once, and Mrs. Simms gladly undertook the work Helen offered.

"And how are the posies?" asked the young lady, as she rose to go.

"Only leaves now, miss; but I take real good care of 'em, and mammy says they will blow again next spring," answered Betty, showing her poor little garden, which consisted of the hyacinth, tulip and one stout dandelion, blooming bravely in an old tea-pot. That will be a long time to wait, won't it?"

"Yes'm; but I go and take peeks at them flowers in the shop, and once the man gave me a pink that hadn't no stem. Maybe he will again, and so I'll get along," said Betty, softly touching her cheerful dandelion as if it was a friend.

"I wish you would come and see my garden, little Betty. You should pick as many flowers as you liked and play there all day long. I suppose your mother couldn't spare you for a visit, could she?"

Betty's face shone at the blissful thought; then the smile faded, and she shook her head, saying, steadily:

"No, miss, I guess she couldn't; for she gets so tired, I like to help her by carrying home the clothes. Some other day maybe I can come."

Something in the patient little face touched Helen, and made her feel as if she had been too busy thinking of her own burden to help others bear theirs.

She longed to do something, but did not know how till Mrs. Simms showed her the way by saying, as she stroked the frizzly little head that leaned against her:

"Betty thinks a heap of flowers, and 'pears to get lots of comfort out of 'em. She's a good child, and some day we are going to see the country—soon as ever we can afford it."

"Meantime the country must come to you," said Helen, with a happy thought shining in her face. "If you are willing, I will make a nice little plan with Betty, so she can have a posy all the time. I shall come in town twice a week to take my German lessons, and if Betty will be at the corner of the park, by the deer, every Wednesday and Saturday morning at 10 o'clock, I'll have a nice nosegay for her."

If she had proposed to present the child with all the sweets of a confectioner's shop, it would not have given her greater joy.

Betty could only dance a jig of rapture among the wash-tubs, and Mrs. Simms thanked Helen with tears in her eyes.

"Ain't she just like a good fairy, mammy?" said Betty, settling down in an empty clothes-basket to brood over the joyful prospect.

"No, honey, she's an angel," answered mammy, folding her tired hands for a moment's rest when her guest had gone. Helen heard both question and answer, and sighed to herself:

"I wish somebody else thought so."

When the first Wednesday came, Betty was at the trysting-place half an hour too soon, and had time to tell the mild-eyed deer all about it before Miss Helen came.

That meeting was a pretty sight, though only a fawn and an old apple-woman saw it.

Helen was half-hidden behind a great nosegay of June roses, lilies-of-the-valley, sweet jonquils and narcissus, sprays of tender green and white lilac plumes.

Betty gave one cry of rapture as she clutched it in both hands, trembling with delight, for never had she dreamed of owning such a treasure as this.

"All for me! all for me!" she said, as if it was hard to believe. "Oh, what will mammy say?"

"Run home and see. Never mind thanks. Get your posy into water as soon as you can, and come again Saturday," said Helen, as she went on, with a nod and a smile, while Betty raced home to fill every cup and plate they owned and make a garden of the poor little room where mamma worked all day.

All through the summer, rain or shine, these two friends kept tryst, and though Helen seemed no nearer getting her wish this little flower mission of hers had helped her to wait.

Strangers watched the pretty girl with her nosegays, and felt refreshed by the winsome sight. Friends joked her about her black Flora, and would-be lovers pleaded in vain for one bud from her bouquets.

She found real happiness in this small duty, and did it faithfully for its own sake, little dreaming that some one was tracking her by the flowers she left behind her in the highways of her life.

For, seeing how much these frequent messengers were to Betty and her mother Helen felt into the way of taking flowers to others also, and never went to town without a handful to leave here and there, by some sick bed, in a child's hand, on a needle-woman's table, or dropped in the gutter for dear dirty babies to find and crow over.

And all unconsciously these glimpses of poverty, pain, neglect and loneliness taught her a lesson she never learned before—a sweeter language than German, a nobler music than any Herr Pedalstrum could give her, and a more winning charm than either youth or beauty could confer—for the gay girl was discovering that life was not all a summer day, and she was something better than a butterfly.

When autumn came, and she returned to her city home, her young friends discovered that Helen's quiet season had improved her wonderfully, for behind the belle they found a tender-hearted woman.

She took up her old life where she laid it down apparently; but to those who knew her best there was a difference now, for, in many unsuspected ways, pretty Helen was unconsciously fitting herself for the happiness that was coming to her very soon.

Betty helped to bring it, though she never guessed that her measles was a blessing to her dear lady. When Dr. Strong, finding a hot-house bouquet beside her bed, very naturally asked where it came from, Betty told all about Miss Helen from the time of her red tulips to the fine tea-roses in her hand.

"She has lots of bunches like these sent to her, and she gives 'em to our poor folks. This one was for her to take to a splendid ball, but she kept it fresh, and came herself to fetch it to me. Ain't she kind?"

"Very, to you, but rather cruel to the gentlemen who hope to see her wear their gifts, for one evening at least," answered the doctor, examining the bouquet with an odd smile.

"Oh, she does keep some, when they are from folks she likes. I was there one day when some violets came in with a book, and she wouldn't give me one. But I didn't care a mite, for I had two great posies, all red geranium and pinks, instead."

"She likes violets, then?" and the doctor gently patted Betty's head, as if he had grown suddenly fond of her.

"I guess she does, for when I went the next week, that very bunch was in the vase on her table all dead and yellow, and she wouldn't let me fling it away when I wanted to put in a rose from the bunch she gave me."

"You are a grateful little girl, my dear, and a very observing child. Now, keep warm and quiet, and we'll have you again trotting off to Miss Helen's in a week or so."

The doctor stole a sprig of rose geranium out of Betty's last bouquet, and went away looking as if he had found something even sweeter than that in the dingy room where his patient lay.

Next day Miss Helen had fresh violets in the vase on her table, and fresh roses blooming on her cheeks. Dr. Strong advised her not to visit Betty, as there was fever in the neighborhood, but kindly called every day or two to let Helen know how her little friend was getting on.

After one of these calls the doctor went away, saying to himself, with an air of tender pride and satisfaction:

"I was mistaken, and judged too hastily last year. Helen is not what I thought her, a frivolous, fashionable beauty but a sweet, sensible girl, who is tired of that empty life, and quietly tries to make it beautiful and useful in the best and truest way. I hope I read the blue eyes right, and I think I may venture to say now what I dared not say last year."

After that same visit Helen sat thinking to herself, with a face full of happiness and humility: "He finds me improved, so I have not waited in vain; and I believe I shall not be disappointed after all."

It is evident that the doctor did venture and that Helen was not disappointed, for on the first day of June Betty and her mother, all in their best, went to a certain church and were shown to the best seat in the gallery, where several other humble friends were gathered to see their dear Miss Helen married.

Betty was in high feather, with a pink dress and blue sash, and with yellow ribbons in her hat, and lighted up the seat like an animated rainbow.

Full of delight and importance was Miss Betty, for she had been in the midst of the festive preparations, and told glowing tales to her interested listeners while they waited for the bride.

When the music sounded, Betty held her breath and rolled up her eyes in a pious rapture.

When a general stir announced the grand arrival, she leaned so far over the gallery that she would have gone head first, if her mother had not caught her striped legs; and when the misty white figure passed up the aisle, Betty audibly remarked:

"If she had wings, she'd look like an out-and-out angel, wouldn't she, mammy?"

She sat like a little ebony statue all through the service; but she had something on her mind, and the moment the bridal couple turned to go, Betty was off, scrambling down stairs, dodging under people's arms, hopping over ladies' skirts, and steadily making her way to the carriage in waiting for the happy pair.

The door had just closed and Dr. Strong was about to draw down the curtain, when a black face, with a yellow hat surrounding it like a glory, appeared at the window. An arm was thrust in, offering a bunch of flowers, and a breathless voice cried, resolutely:

"Oh, please do let me give 'em to my lady! They bloomed a-purpose for her, and she must have 'em!"

Those outside saw a sweet face bend to kiss the little black one, but they did not see what happened afterward, for Helen, remembering a year ago, said, smiling:

"Patient waiters are no losers. The poor child has red tulips all her own at last."

"And I have mine," answered the happy doctor, gently kissing his young wife as the carriage rolled away, leaving Betty to retire in triumph.

A Horrible Custom in India.

The horrible crime of mutilating women by cutting off their noses is so common in Bombay as to call for the most stringent repression, and nothing, we imagine, will repress it but the free use of the lash. In the sessions ending yesterday, Mr. Justice Scott had to hear three—we might say five—of these cases, one after the other. He postponed his sentences for a week, and we were in hopes he would in each case order the criminals to be flogged within an ace of their lives.

Eventually, however, he sentenced them severally to what he had ascertained to be the usual punishment, three years' imprisonment. We are inclined to regret that the learned sessions judge, new as he is to the country, did not throw precedent over altogether. Surely these are cases in which the lash would be at once the most fitting punishment and the best deterrent.

Estimated by the misery inflicted, even the most severe penalties would seem too trivial, and if the law does not permit of flogging in the cases of such cruel mutilation, the law should be altered. The miserable women who are mutilated in this way are, of course, rendered hideous ever afterward, and because they are women, it is simply impossible to calculate the misery and degradation that they will experience during the rest of their lives. No amount of imprisonment will eradicate a crime that is still evidently a customary form of marital punishment among the lower classes. But a wholesome terror of the cat-o'-ninetails is common to the degraded classes all the world over.—Times of India.

Mississippi is following Georgia in the development of truck farming.

HUMORISTS OF THE PRESS.

FUNNY STORIES BY NEWSPAPER WAGS.

Not a Musical Ear—A Narrow Escape—A Masher Routed—The Railroad Hog—Dog and Crab.

"My dear, I wish you would tell the servant to stop moving that furniture around in the parlor. I'm sure she has broken some of the vases and Sevres ware."

"I hear no noise, Christopher."

"There! She has dropped the clock! I heard the shade smash!"

"Why, Christopher, how silly you are! That's not the servant moving the furniture: that's Birdie practicing a Wagnerian sonata.—Chicago News.

A Narrow Escape.

"Sister!" cried a little boy, running into the room, "your little pug dog has bit me on the leg."

"What!" exclaimed the frightened young lady. "Beauty has bitten you on the leg? Let me see."

She hastily pulled down his stocking, and sure enough there was the impression of his teeth.

"You naughty boy," said his sister, shaking him violently, "don't you know better than to tease Beauty? Some day he will bite a big lump out of your leg, and it might make him deathly sick."—Philadelphia Call.

A Masher Routed.

A lady, young and handsomely dressed, entered a Woodward avenue car and sat down opposite a passenger who had the appearance of a gentleman, but soon showed himself to be that contemptible creature, a masher. He took no notes on time, but at once proceeded to mash; he stared, ogled, smiled insinuatingly and made a second-class fool of himself at sight. The lady was discomposed. She seized her parasol and every one present hoped she was about to mash the masher.

But she simply raised the parasol and spread it in his face. Under its protecting screen she calmly continued on her way, but the chagrined masher got out at the next crossing and made himself scarce.

When he was gone the lady closed her parasol and said: "I have heard of frightening wild beasts by such a weapon opened suddenly in their faces, and I find it serves as good a purpose with tame ones."

The passengers all applauded.—Detroit Free Press.

The Railroad Hog.

"Is this seat unoccupied?" a lady timidly inquired.

Her voice was not very loud. It did not recall the fat man from his reverie nor his gaze from something interesting in the brick wall of the depot. The lady passed on as though embarrassed at the sound of her request.

"Is one of these seats disengaged?" The question was asked in a firm, clear voice by a young woman, who looked steadily into the monopolist's eyes as though she understood him. His head turned slowly, and he coldly replied: "All engaged."

Then he resumed his study of the wall, and the train moved slowly out of the depot.

"Oof!"

The exclamation resembled exactly the grunt of a pig. It was made by a young man with a dimple in his cheek and a twinkle in his eye, on a seat diagonally across the aisle and behind the bald-headed man. He was absorbed in an interesting article in a newspaper. The exclamation was not noticed.

"Oof! Oof! Oof!"

A young lady in the seat behind the person intended to be described by the young man with the dimple, tittered aloud. The fat man with four sittings stole a wicked glance at the young man with the newspaper, and then settled back with a determined gesture of his head and neck as if he wasn't going to mind it.

"Oo-oo-oo! kweek! kwe-e-ek! oof! oof!"

The passengers turned their attention to the passenger with the four seats. The bald spot on his head began to get red.

"Kwe-e-ek, kwe-e-ek, kwe-e-ek! Oof, oof, oof, oof!"

A tittering and giggling broke out spontaneously up and down the car. The bald spot on the fat man's head blazed. Then one foot was dragged slowly off from the front seat, then the other. A hand reached out carefully and set one valise on the floor. Then the other valise followed.

"Seat here, I guess, ladies," he growled.

Three women threw grateful glances at the grunter and took their seats. The grunter, who had not lifted his eyes from his newspaper, turned it over to continue reading, but just at that instant the train glided into the tunnel.—New York Sun.

Dog and Crab.

Some years ago my neighbor had a dog of an inquiring turn of mind, which he called Philosopher when he was not in a hurry. Philosopher was in the habit of coming over upon my premises, and trying in various ways to win my respect and esteem; but he never succeeded to any great extent. Perhaps he did not go about it in the right way. He came off in the stilly night, and sat under my window and poured out his sorrow to the moon. The moon seemed to stand it, but I couldn't. I went to my neighbor with a protest, but he said he could do nothing; that he didn't like to hear a dog howl any better than I did; but, according to divine law, that was the only way in which a dog could give expression to his deeper emotions, and he thought man ought to try and put up with it. Beside, he said, he believed

that the howling of a dog was an omen of death.

I told him I thought so, too, especially when the dog howled under my window, and then I went and bought a shot-gun.

But after that Philosopher seemed to reform and lead a more joyous life. He stayed home of nights, and if he was ever sad, he brooded mostly in silence.

One day I came home with a basket full of crabs, and found Philosopher sitting in my yard with a look of mingled curiosity and pleasure on his open and expressive countenance. He seemed to be glad to see me, and when I set the basket upon the ground and turned aside, he went up to it in an inquiring sort of way. As I have said, he was of a very investigating turn of mind. He would sit by a hen's nest half an hour, waiting for the hen to get through laying and adjourn, so that he could form himself into a committee of one and investigate the proceedings. And his investigation of a hen's nest was always systematic and thorough.

When he saw something move in my basket, he appeared to grow more than usually curious. He seemed to be both surprised and delighted that I had carried home something that was alive. He smelled cautiously around the basket, wagged his tail with a graceful easy motion, and then, growing more curious and bold, he stuck his nose down among the crabs and picked a large one up. He did not intend to pick it up so suddenly; it was all the crab's doing. It got one of its claws tangled somehow with Philosopher's nose, and then there was a sound of revelry by day. I never before saw a dog get so excited. He lost all control over himself. His one prominent thought seemed to be a desire to go away somewhere and he went. He went with exceeding impetuosity. He went as nothing had gone before, except chain-lightning, perhaps, and he took my crab with him.

If any traveler in Europe, Asia or Africa has seen a yellow dog with a part of one ear bit off, and an expression denoting humble birth, with a healthy looking crab hanging to his nose, the traveler will receive a large assortment of thanks by communicating with my neighbor. But I am rather indifferent. I lost a good crab, I know; but there is no loss without some slight compensation.—Scott Way, in Puck.

Early American Coinage.

The earliest coinage that can be called American, in the sense of Anglo-American, was ordered by the original Virginia company, only five years after the founding of Jamestown. The coins were minted at Somers islands, now known as the Bermudas. For a long while the standard currency of Virginia was tobacco, as in many of the early settlements of the Northwest it was beaver skins. The accounts of the fur traders and pioneers in their dealings with the Indians were kept in beaver skins instead of dollars until some years after the opening of this century, and in some parts of the Dominion of Canada they are still kept so. In 1645 the assembly of the Virginia colony, after a preamble reciting that "it had maturely weighed and considered how advantageous a quoine would be to this colony, and the great wants and miseries which do daily happen unto it by the sole dependency upon tobacco," provided for the issue of copper coins of the denomination of twopence, threepence, sixpence and ninepence; but this law was never carried into effect, so the first colonial coinage of this country was that struck off by Massachusetts under the order of the general court of that colony, passed May 27, 1655, creating a "mint howse" at Boston, and providing for the mintage of "12 pence, 6 pence and 3 pence pieces, which shall be for forme flat, and stamped on the one side with N. E., and on the other side with XII d., VI d., and III d., according to the value of each piece." In 1662, from this same mint, appeared the famous "pine tree shillings," which were two-penny pieces. This mint was maintained for thirty-four years. In the reign of William and Mary copper coins were struck in England for New England and Carolina. Lord Baltimore had silver shillings, sixpences, and fourpences made in England to supply the demands of his province of Maryland. Vermont and Connecticut established mints in 1785 for the issue of copper coin. New Jersey followed a year later. But Congress had the establishment of a mint for the confederated States under advisement, and in this same year agreed upon a plan submitted by Thomas Jefferson, and the act went into operation on a small scale in 1787. After the adoption of the Constitution of the United States in 1789 all the State mints were closed, as the constitution specifically places the sole power of coining money in the Federal government.

Mexican Etiquette.

I was given a lesson in etiquette by a Mexican young lady I met in the train, says a correspondent. I chanced to be the only man in the sleeping-car when it drew out from El Paso, and after an introduction by the conductor, to whose charge the young lady had been committed, she and I became quite well acquainted. "I saw you eating an orange on the depot platform," she said. "In Mexico that would be considered unmannerly. There it is unmannerly to eat anything outside of a house, even candy. And I noticed when Mr. Romero gave you a Mexican match you threw it away after using but one end of it. The other was still serviceable, and you should have returned the match with your thanks. If you had one cigar or cigarette to light with, you must take a whiff from it after it has been returned to you, though it may be so short as to burn your fingers." All this I received with good grace, for my young lady was but ten years of age.