

THE FLOWERS ON HER BONNET

How a Pink Geranium Made Trouble in a Church Society.

By CLARISSA MACKIE.
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Mrs. Wixon paused outside the church door and waited until two other women joined her; then the three made their way slowly down the path and out into the dusty road, where their plodding feet left a white cloud of dust in their wake.

Mrs. Wixon was short and stout and red of face, with iron gray hair, surrounded by a rusty black velvet turban, above which waggled a worn ostrich feather. Her antiquated cape was rusty, as was the blue silk skirt she trailed.

Miss Luella Barton was tall and of a narrow complexion. Her gown was of better material and perhaps in a



"I'D LIKE TO SPEAK A FEW WORDS MYSELF."

better state of preservation than that of her stout companion, but it was far from fresh or inviting.

Little Mrs. Peters skipped along beside the other women, a faded blue straw hat askew on her white hair. All three women wore exceedingly shabby shoes, and their garments were unsuitable for the hot June day. They had been the last ones to leave the church, and now they had the white, hot highway to themselves.

"Did you see it?" asked Mrs. Wixon breathlessly of her companions.

"I did," agreed Miss Barton acidly.

"And I," chirruped Mrs. Peters.

"I guess we'll have to call a special meeting, after all," murmured Mrs. Wixon, with a degree of relish in her tone.

"There ain't no use in having a society with rules to it if the rules ain't kept," snorted Miss Barton.

"My husband says a rule isn't a rule unless it is enforced," remarked Mrs. Peters importantly.

"We're going to enforce this one," said Mrs. Wixon decidedly.

"Cornelia Rowland knows the rules of the Give It Up society of the First M. E. church just as well as you and me do. She knows she ought to wear her old bonnet, no matter how poor it looks, until the new organ is paid for."

"I guess it won't hurt Cornelia to give up buying flowers for her hat any more; it does for me to wear my Cousin Emmeline's castoff clothes," commented Luella Barton gloomily.

"No, indeed," chimed in Mrs. Peters, "or for me to wear this awful bonnet. I ain't accustomed to wearing blue anyhow, and—"

"Tain't so much the wearing the clothes," interrupted Mrs. Wixon, tossing the thin feather majestically; "it's the principle of the thing. Here's Cornelia, one of the charter members of the society, coming out with pink flowers in her bonnet for the last two Sundays. She knew she was breaking the tenth rule, which says:

"No member shall purchase any new garment or article of adornment for her person until the debt on the church organ has been fully met and paid," quoted Mrs. Peters eagerly.

"As I was about to say," remarked Mrs. Wixon in an injured tone.

"And there's still \$50 due on the organ," commented Miss Barton as she took out a handkerchief saturated with Florida water and proceeded to dust her square shoulders energetically.

"I suppose it will be another year before we can have any new—that is, I suppose it will be another year before the debt will be paid," said Mrs. Peters moodily.

"Mary Peters, I do believe you are feeling bad because you can't go galivanting around with pink flowers in your bonnet, too!" exclaimed Mrs. Wixon indignantly. "For my part," she continued virtuously, "I'm willing to wear my old clothes year in and year out for the Lord's sake."

"So am I," said Miss Barton. "I give \$2 last winter that I was going to lay out on spring clothes."

"I guess I've done my share," whimpered Mrs. Peters angrily. "I guess I done all the cooking for the fair and give—"

"That ain't either here or there," interrupted Mrs. Wixon decidedly as she paused at her front gate. "The matter before the society will be this: Cornelia Rowland has bought new

pink flowers for her bonnet and has worn 'em to church two Sundays. Last Sunday I spoke to her about it, and she said nothing and did nothing. Today she wore 'em again, and now we've got to take some action. That bunch of flowers never cost less than 50 cents!"

"How do you know?" asked Luella.

"I went into Miss Kluge's millinery store and asked to see pink geranium flowers, and she showed me a bunch just like Cornelia's, and it was 50 cents."

"Did Cornelia buy hers there?" asked the other women eagerly.

"I asked Miss Kluge, and she wouldn't say. She's terrible close mouthed, you know."

"I know," nodded Mrs. Peters sagely. "When is the meeting to be?"

"Tomorrow afternoon, here, to my house," said Mrs. Wixon, "and I hope you'll both come. All the other members will be here and Cornelia, too."

"We'll come," said the other women, moving along the road.

"Goodby!" said the president of the Give It Up society as she panted up the gravelled walk.

"Is that Cornelia ahead?" asked Mrs. Peters, peering nearsightedly up the road.

"Yes," replied Luella Barton grimly. "She's just going in her gate."

"Cornelia's terrible dressy," sighed Mrs. Peters. "I always liked Cornelia Rowland, but I always thought she was fond of clothes."

"I've seen other people that's fond of clothes," sniffed Miss Barton, with a furtive glance at her friend.

"I suppose you mean me," retorted Mrs. Peters, with an offended laugh. "I don't care if I do like to look nice. My husband says I've looked so shabby the last year that he's ashamed to be seen with me on the street."

"I suppose that's why he spends so much time down to the postoffice," remarked Luella maliciously as she stalked into her front yard and closed the gate with a vicious snap.

Mrs. Peters did not reply. Her blue eyes grew watery, and her thin little nose turned a deep pink, but she did not weep. There were suppressed woe and anger in the look that followed Luella's gaunt form into the front door. Then Mary Peters trotted along home.

"Yes," said Mrs. Wixon, bustling about her small parlor hospitably the following afternoon; "we're all here except Cornelia Rowland herself. I expect she'll be here presently."

There was a murmur of approval among the assembled ladies who comprised the members of the Give It Up society. Seated about the stuffy little room they numbered about twenty-five in all. Without exception they were shabbily attired. Some were even slovenly in their dress, while many were neatly but poorly dressed; but, representing, as they did, a prosperous farming community, a stranger would have been surprised at the lack of taste or beauty in their garments. Even the younger women wore threadbare gowns.

"Here comes Cornelia," whispered Mrs. Peters from her seat in the front window.

There were a shifting of chairs and a buzzing undertone as the harsh bell clanged through the house.

Then Mrs. Wixon, with grave importance depicted on her round face, ushered into the room the erring member of the Give It Up society.

Cornelia Rowland was small and thin, with a straight back and a trim figure. She had meek brown eyes and soft brown hair parted over her smooth brow. Her skin was faded, with a few lines here and there. She wore a spotlessly clean white muslin dress, with a white ribbon belt, and her feet were shod with old fashioned black prunella gaiters. She wore no hat.

She nodded seriously to the assembled women and took a chair which Mrs. Nixon indicated. As she seated herself she found that she was confronting the members of the society, while Mrs. Wixon, as its president, was seated beside her in a huge Boston rocker.

They all looked silently for a few seconds; then Mrs. Wixon got upon her feet and adjusted a pair of steel bowed spectacles upon her nose. The women were looking at Cornelia Rowland's fresh attire and whispering among themselves.

"Silence!" commanded Mrs. Wixon sharply. There was a rustle of protest among the members; then they settled themselves expectantly.

"We are gathered here this afternoon," continued the president gravely, "to consider the action of one of our members in breaking the tenth rule."

There was a murmur of approval.

"I will give in a few words the history of the Give It Up society, and then the members can agree upon whether Cornelia Rowland's behavior is becoming to a member."

"I guess I'd like to speak a few words for myself," said Cornelia Rowland, arising with unexpected spirit and fixing her mild eyes upon Mrs. Wixon's heated countenance.

"Anybody got any objection?" wheezed Mrs. Wixon, looking apprehensively about the room.

There was no answer, and Mrs. Wixon lurched into her chair, leaving the floor to Cornelia Rowland.

The latter faced the assembled women. There was an obstinate line about her pleasant mouth, and her soft eyes wore a look of new determination. She fanned herself with a black silk fan for a few moments before she began, and then she closed it with a little click.

"I am a member of the Give It Up society," she said earnestly. "I can recite all the rules forward and backward, and I've lived up to all of 'em forward and backward. I ain't never broke a rule."

There was a gasp of horror from the women.

"I ain't never broke a rule," repeated Cornelia energetically. "Now, the Give It Up society was formed for the purpose of paying for the new organ. Nobody asked the ladies of the church to give up wearing any respectable clothes and going around looking like ragpickers' wives in order that the First M. E. church should have a new organ." Cornelia fixed an accusing eye upon Mrs. Wixon's startled countenance. "That organ could have been paid for if it was needed in the regular way by fairs and suppers and the like. But no; somebody with the idea of getting a martyr's crown organized this society, with the result that Upper Village has got the reputation of having the shabbiest looking lot of women in Suffolk county."

There was a shrinking of feet under chairs and a concealing of worn sleeves.

"I want to know if the members of the choir belong to this society?"

"No," piped Mrs. Peters, with a newly awakened sense of injury. "Catch them fine ladies a-wearing any old clothes for the Lord's sake!"

"I don't believe in churches a-buying organs and things they can't afford. When they can raise the money for a new organ or such without throwing the whole congregation into the poorhouse, it's time to have it. In the meantime the Lord will harken to the old melody until the church can afford an organ. But the Methodist church has bought the organ. The choir wanted it, and the minister wanted it, and the congregation wanted it, and now they've got it, and we're working hand and foot and eyelids a-trying to pay for it!" Cornelia's voice took on a dramatic quality, and the women listened eagerly.

"We said we'd pay for it, and we will do what we promised, and I say to all of you that while you're wearing these terrible old garments you might as well be clean and tidy about it and—"

"But that ain't explaining about the pink geraniums in your hat," interrupted Luella Barton sourly.

"That's so. If you ladies will follow me to my house I will explain about the pink flowers," replied Cornelia amiably.

There was some protest at this sudden adjournment of the meeting, but presently they all trailed down the road toward the small brown house where Cornelia Rowland lived by herself. Cornelia led the way with head erect and white skirts billowing in the breeze.

She led the way into the house and through the hall to the sunny sitting room. When they were all inside she left the room and returned with a small black bonnet in her hand.

"This is the bonnet," she said dryly. "That has caused all the trouble."

"Yes, yes, but you've taken the flowers off, Cornelia Rowland!" cried old Mrs. Beers fiercely.

"Look here," said Cornelia, turning to the widow. "This is where I get the flowers for my bonnet every Sunday, and they're a mite sweeter than any you can buy."

She indicated a large potted geranium which was covered with great pink, spiky blossoms.

There was a dead silence while the women stared first at Cornelia, then at the geranium and finally at the bonnet.

"I want to know!" ejaculated Mrs. Peters admiringly. "I guess I can do that myself and have a new flower every Sunday."

"I know you are all looking at my white dress," continued Cornelia pleasantly, "but if you'll look at it closely you will see it is made from the white muslin curtains that used to hang in my best bedroom. I had plan-



"THEY'RE A MITE SWEETER THAN YOU CAN BUY."

ty of curtains, but no dress, and so I used them for that." She smoothed down the crisp folds thoughtfully and then looked at her guests with a bright smile.

"And now, ladies, you will see that in wearing the pink flowers in my bonnet I was not breaking a rule of the society."

"That's so," they agreed heartily, casting accusing glances at the unhappy president.

"And I want you all to stay and have tea with me," continued Cornelia, "and we'll plan an entertainment so's to pay off the church debt this summer. Then we can all have something decent to wear next winter."

So the members of the Give It Up society of the Methodist church sat down amiably together and ate of the delicious cooking of Cornelia Rowland, while the pink geranium graced the center of the table and shed beauty and perfume over all.



ARID SOIL HOME OF ALFALFA.

Much Water is Required for Successful Growing of Crop.

A valuable bulletin on the irrigation of alfalfa has just been issued by the department of agriculture. The material used in this report is based upon the best irrigation practiced in the arid regions and is intended for use of settlers under the large canal systems now under construction.

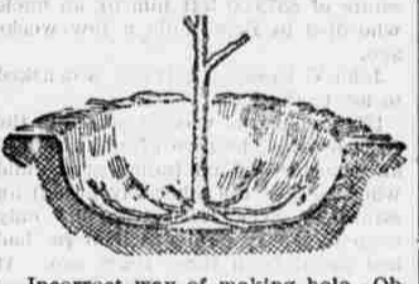
Experience in the growing of alfalfa for more than 2,000 years shows that it thrives best in the soil and climate of arid and semi-arid regions. The abundant sunshine, the warmth and the deep rich soil prevailing throughout the western half of the United States seem to be well suited to its requirements.

Alfalfa requires more water than most crops. This is accounted for by the character of the plant, the rapidity with which it grows, the number of crops produced in one season and the heavy tonnage obtained. If the crop is intelligently handled, the report states, it cannot be excelled in value, and a single ton may save the lives of many head of stock by providing feed during the short periods of cold, stormy weather.

How to Plant Shrubs.



Correct way of making hole. Notice how the bottom is rounded. The roots lie with a downward turn. They are not cramped or crowded or bent from their proper course.



Incorrect way of making hole. Observe how the roots are bent upward. If the shrub lives the roots must bend downward again—not always successfully accomplished.

Thorough Work.

To an American who is accustomed to select plows that win at plowing contests because of doing the best work with the lightest draft, these ungainly rooting machines look behind the times. But when you come to think of it, you begin to realize that the most scientifically constructed plow as to draft may do the most unscientific work, you begin to think our American plows are not plowing at all, but instead are just turning a furrow of earth upside down with hardly a break in it. The soil hardly knows that anything has happened to disturb it. Is this plowing? I ask you young gentlemen, to think this question over carefully and perhaps you will come to the conclusion that possibly the best and most scientific plow that money can buy, according to American standard of excellence, does not guarantee the best or most scientific plowing.

Pumpkins with Corn.

It has always been my practice to plant pumpkin seed with my cheek rowed corn with a hand planter, and as almost all of these planters are equipped with a pumpkin seed attachment, the only expense of planting is for the seed, which is not more than 15 or 20 cents an acre, says a writer in the Baltimore American. This amount is sufficient for an acre. The cultivation is done at the same time as for corn, consequently the only expense of a crop of pumpkins is for the seed. I find pumpkins available as a feed for cows and hogs. For hogs some farmers boil the pumpkins in a large kettle until thoroughly cooked and mix with chopped feed when cold. One of my neighbors raises fine hogs in this way.

Corn on Large Cob.

Some corn growers like a large cob because it takes a lot of corn to go around it, others prefer less cob and more corn, says a writer in an exchange. In our trials of many varieties of corn, we find it impossible to get a large yield without having a large cob. A small, slim corn is fine for feeding cattle, but after raising it for 12 years it will be discarded when we plant next spring.

Apple Trees in Autumn.

Apple trees should be carefully examined after harvest to see that broken limbs are removed and wounds properly dressed with good linseed oil paint. This precaution will prevent the entrance of decay and thus lengthen the life of the trees.

Treat Manure Properly.

If you do not put the manure on the land as fast as made, fork over the pile frequently to prevent it from burning. Properly treated it will rot down in a short time with no loss of ammonia.

He Told Her.
A young woman stenographer who does a big business with the patrons of a busy hotel was talking about the peculiarities of her clients.

"What I call a man in a hurry," she said, "is a man who will hand me a card with an address on it and a few notes of what he wants said and tell



SMILED AND STROLLED AWAY.

me to write the letter and mail it and hurry away. I have quite a number of those.

"The most interesting man I ever had was one who stopped and gave me a visiting card. His address was engraved in the lower corner. He handed me a dollar with the card and said, 'Please write a letter for me.'

"I said: 'Certainly. To whom?'

"To my wife," he answered. "That is my name you have on the card."

"I understand that," I told him, "but what shall I write about?"

"Oh, write about a page," he replied as he smiled and strode away."—Chicago Tribune.

Rough on Irving.

In the excitement of the moment public speakers often say the opposite of what they mean to convey, and when Henry Irving gave a reading in the Ulster hall in 1878, says Bram Stoker in "Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving," one speaker made as pretty an Irish bull as could be found, though the bull is generally supposed to belong to other provinces than the hard headed Ulster. In descending on the many virtues of the guest of the evening he mentioned the excellence of his moral nature and rectitude of his private life in these terms: "Mr. Irving, sir, is a gentleman what lends a life of unbroken blemish."

Wanted.

Identifice to clean the "teeth of the wind."

The apparatus used in "colting new phrases."

The rule used in measuring "broad daylight."

The timid man who wrote in "nervous English."

Portrait of a horse that has "eaten its head off."—London Mail.

DEVELOPMENT OF GENIUS.

Some Doubts as to the Benefits of the Aley Plan.

So much educational effort has been expended on the improvement of defective and inefficient pupils that Robert J. Aley's plea for corresponding school facilities for "gifted children" will appear to have a basis of justice. Speaking before the National Education Association Mr. Aley said:

"The forward movements of civilization are never led by average men; they are always under the leadership of an individual who, because of his superior ability, has stepped out and beyond the crowd. The ordinary school has failed to meet the needs of such students. It is worth more to train the genius to the realization of his possibilities than to bring the deficient child to the height of his capability."

Whether or not it is "worth more to develop precocity than mediocrity, class distinctions even in education are not wholly consistent with democratic principles. It is better to continue to lean to the side of special help for the defective than to seek to encourage "gifted children" with an aid it is not certain they need.

Genius has a way of training itself without regard to special curriculum. The little red school house was sufficient in the past and doubtless the school system as it is adequate for the present.

Magnetic Lamps.

Among the more recent forms of arc-lamps are those in which a stick of magnetite is substituted for carbon in the negative terminal. The magnetic lamp is the result of efforts to find a substance capable of withstanding exposure in an open arc, and giving a white light instead of the orange color of the brilliant flame carbon lamps. To increase its efficiency, a small percentage of other metallic oxides is added to the magnetite. It is found that the flame in these lamps is fed only by the negative electrode, the magnetite stick, which alone needs to be replaced from time to time, the positive terminal, composed of copper, not being consumed.

Oatmeal and Stature.

Archdeacon Sinclair was the guest of Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M. P., at a display of gymnastics given by members of the Shoreditch Working Lads' Club, London, which was founded by the late Baroness Burdett-Coutts. In congratulating the members the Archdeacon said: "I go through many of your exercises myself even to the present day, and as a Scotsman I should like to recommend what I consider one of the best preparations for them, namely, good old Scotch oatmeal. I had four brothers, all six feet high, and my father had sixteen brothers and sisters, ranging from six feet to six feet eight inches—all brought up on Scotch oatmeal porridge."

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