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The Garden
In The Wilderness

"A MOON-
PIERCED FOREST"

The Garden
in the
Wilderness

BY
A HERMIT

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ILLUSTRATED BY
THE AUTHOR
& BENTLEY

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& BENTLEY

THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY
1909

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Published, October, 1909

SB 455
.V5

248660

THE PREMIER PRESS, NEW YORK

To
Dora L. P.
The Sweetest Hardy Perennial
in My Small Garden
of Friends

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The Garden
In The Wilderness

The Garden In The Wilderness

THE wilderness was purchased from a bold sea captain, who had been so inaccessible upon the high seas and so invisible, we had come to regard him as the real Flying Dutchman. The finalities of the purchase, including the exchange of bothersome lucre for the redundant title, had therefore never been concluded, as the land had not been formally surveyed.

All these blissful months we have been the undisputed possessors of all our greedy vision could see, including the horizon line. We were compassed by no cramping lines; living

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in an Elysium of elastic borders, which stretched or contracted according to the day's mood.

But yesterday a Mephistopheles in blue serge accompanied by three diabolical assistants and a soulless instrument came to shatter our ideal. The road upon which we have our pleasant being is a dear old cow path that was beset with ambitions to be a highway. It has, however, never been greatly encouraged in its aspirations by the people who live on its edges. Each individual has placed his fence where it will include the pippins that fall from his apple tree, or accommodate the extra frills of his cabbage's skirts.

We who have no fences, trail the trains of our lawns as far out on the dusty roadway as we deem graceful. I have even appropriated the top of a boulder which is on the road and by the touch of magic fertilizer and a few kind words, have made it to wear a tiara of bloom. Last spring as one made the turn in the road, it greeted the pilgrim with tall tossing tulips, which were the floral sign-post that read: "This is the way to the home of Kitty and Bentley." The tulips lighted the way far into June, when their mission was taken up by annual coreopsis and nasturtiums, which

"INCUBATING A
TWENTY-YEAR FEUD"

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later on were succeeded by the fall-blooming crocus.

But when this prosaic surveyor came, he impudently insisted the road must be defined in order to decide where our line lay, quickly placing all of us in the category of trespassing. He then ruthlessly went into our harmless neighbor's yard and drove a stake which curtailed her flower garden cruelly; had she not been the good Mrs. Merriweather I'm sure she would never have spoken to us again.

As the staking proceeded other neighbors sidled up with twenty-year feuds incubating in their eyes. The surveyor then began at the equator and measured up, and at the North Pole and measured down, and found us located somewhere betwixt heaven and hell.

I, in my happy ignorance, thought they only longitued the sea, and merely latitued the land, but this inexorable man, did *both* to us! We sullenly dogged his every footstep, not daring to turn our backs for a minute for fear he would loot us of an inch of precious soil.

After a day of racking suspense and no lunch, what compensation was it to two aching heads to find the stakes placed several feet beyond most of the lines they had guessed at?

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Who would exchange the plastic boundaries of imagination for the stern limits of lawful lines, even at a gain?

Before the snow had gone from under the pines, Bentley with axe and I with saw invaded our newly acquired wilderness. It was the first time I had used a saw and realized the joy, the demoniacal joy of destruction. Despite my passionate love of all that grows, it was actually difficult to restrain myself from sawing down everything in the woods. Bentley said: "You are a hybrid of George Nation and Carrie Washington."

We only took out the dead branches and superfluous sumach, still retaining enough of the latter for autumn coloring, but we accumulated a brush pile the size of two elephants. On burning it Friday night all the neighbors came over to enjoy this great mountain of incense burnt to our awakening garden; for the time we all understood why there are fire-worshippers in this world.

Mr. Schweinehunden is the gardener, and very high boss. Seventy-three years old, he is a pathetic statue of toil, and more than three score years of wearied muscle. For many years he has worked on the railroad beds all day and in his vegetables ones by night. Some-

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times we think he is the "Man in the Moon" come down, for not only is his garden worked by moonlight, but everything is done by a moon-maxim.

Last year he told us if we planted the onion sets in the dark of the moon they would jump out of the ground to see the moon when it shone again. We were punished later on for our lack of faith by having to take turns sitting on the onions to hold them down.

Did one ever hear of a gardener who did not have a contempt for flowers?

There stood a wondrous wild rose six feet high, of splendid undisciplined width of growth, on the north end of the white birch and pine barricade of my to-be rose garden. When I went out after lunch one day to see where the old man had been grubbing I noted a wicked gleam of triumph in his curdled old eyes.

With riotous chucklings upheaving his Punchinello back, he pointed to the felled body of my prized Eglantine and giggled: "I'se god one wudhless ding out of dis blace." Before my vocabulary had recovered I found him aiming with death-dealing axe at the two elms whose plumelike tops are the favorite hammocks of our bird colony.

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"But where would my birds swing then?"

With a sniff he waved scornfully to the great pines on the ridge and walked away muttering: "Der's enuf drees for all voolishness in your own garten."

So he considers all the sensibly cleared land as having no relationship whatever to me.

When I was reviewing my carnation bed after its secluded winter under fir branches, he walked my way purposely to irritate me. "I'd rader zee one gude bodado hill, dan your whole garten of plowers," he casually murmured.

It takes a garden to express your faults to yourself. Now, I've had a garden ever since I gave up the bottle—never, of course, a real Garden of Paradise like this before, but still I've always had a chance to spoil my hands each summer. Bentley, on the contrary, snatched by art from the country and right living, has been defrauded of the soil for thirty years and is like a ravenous long-starved creature.

Yet such a selfish pig am I, I will scarcely let him touch the earth, trembling in terror if he lifts a leaf, dogging his steps to see that he does not tread on a precious plant. My reconstruction must begin tomorrow; I shall be a

MR. SCHWEINEHUNDEN

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chastened spirit from this time forth, smiling in ecstasy when he rakes off the earth to see why the bulbs don't come up and decapitates their tender heads, patting him delightedly on the back every time he crushes a too ambitious iris.

When I am on Bentley's trail, if I pause by the way five seconds to whiff a blossom, I lose him. There are so many sudden turns into seclusion, the two and a half acres seem miles in radius. I can tire out any unwelcome caller by taking her in devious turns and twists through its labyrinth of tangle. Mother Nature very pleasantly made our wilderness a fantasy of unbridled loveliness, but it lacked just our artistic influence to make it altogether perfect. We are going to pay every deference to its natural wild beauty, only seizing upon its few spots of accidental decorum to plant flowers to punctuate its untutored eloquence.

Just as in a fascinating character of artistic chaos it is a relief to come across a few austere and conservative traits, so the conventionalism in the rose department will be a foil for the wilderness.

I have laid a rough stone path through my front garden. The path meanders sinuously to the natural break in the thick growth

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of the first instalment of pines in the wilderness. It steals with many a turn for backward glance, through Shasta daisies, cornflower asters, Canterbury bells, foxgloves, columbine and the great poppy beds. From the studio window to-night I can see the stones gleaming in the moonlight and it seems the path from realism into fairy.

Why are paths so alluring? They always remind me somehow of ambition, and dreams we were too busy to finish.

Mr. Sams has almost completed the hot-bed. It looks like a cow-catcher to the tool-house. The tool-house was once the chicken-house, but you mustn't tell it, for it resents its former chicken lice and has great ambitions now that it is the only thing in our family that is to have an Easter dress. Tomorrow it is going to exchange its old whitewash raiment for a wonderful coat of pine-green paint.

Mr. Sams is the most versatile member of our embassy. He does not confine his services to hot-beds, but as dexterously makes the frames for our paintings and often poses on Sundays for Bentley.

26th March.

It is an awful and wonderful thing to look from our bedroom window and see 'four backs all bent in our service, for today two more have been added to our corps. Ferrara, the Italian, has been introduced as Mr. Schweinehunden's understudy, while a Van Elken has been pressed into service for hauling manure and carrying away ash piles which are to form the basis of a walk along the neglected front of the wilderness skirting the main country road.

I hope Ferrara has a grain of the expected Italian poetry in his soul. It was at least encouraging that he did not look scorn when I pleaded to have two pussy willows spared. He has a ravishingly beautiful wife whom I long to paint, and a delightfully nebulous bambino.

I remember a relative who boarded with

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them last summer, a laborer on the railroad, who had one of the most lyrical voices I've ever heard. Every night we sat breathlessly, with feet dangling over the back porch roof, listening to the witchery of Neapolitan songs which sent our souls drifting far out on Italian waters. I furthered my reputation for imbecility by carrying him laps full of nasturtiums.

Isn't it strange how ignorance and incompetence take things for granted? It is only those who strive and know the difficulties of accomplishment who mete out appreciation. The other neighbors did not realize one of those rare God-given voices of flawless beauty was being nightly given them free, a voice New York would pay fabulous sums to hear, if the public knew of it. I even heard a woman complaining of "that miserable Italy-man who makes so much noise every night." One of his songs had a peculiar element that communicated a fearful homesickness for Italy—to one who has never even been there. Just the same inexplicable subtlety that "The Wearing of the Green" has,—producing a desire in me to shed every drop of un-Irish blood I have for Ireland's cause, though I know nothing of the right of her wrongs.

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We find the same lack of appreciation that befell the Italian, in the total absence of understanding about here of Art. They cannot realize the agony of trying to express the glorious ideal shadowed in the birth of the first conception—the hell of an evening that closes a day of failure, the heaven of even a faint approach to success.

Here lies one of the great points of a garden. In New York there was no redress after a day of defeat; here when a painting “goes bad,” we fly to the out-of-doors where we never remain hopeless very long, or meet an absolute Waterloo.

Bentley has a dear habit of going about with his pockets full of seed, generally nasturtiums, which he surreptitiously drops into any unexpected nook, and later on provides us both with surprises, for he forgets their location himself.

We both have a great tenderness for nasturtiums—they played such a star part in our love. It was by a mere chance of taking an overflow of nasturtiums from my garden to the studio next to his, that we met.

The friend to whom I carried them was out of town, but the door being open I proceeded to fill his vases anyway, and Bentley

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hearing me, walked in. Until then he had been only a name to me, while I, alas! had not even enough fame to be known to him at all. Yet in that first ten minutes of joint arrangement of nasturtiums, and their appropriation by him for his studio, we both realized the paramount hour of fate (though of course neither of us "let on" for a long time afterward). Is it any wonder three-fourths of our flowers are nasturtiums?

Yet I always call the nasturtiums "Bentley's." They seem to have become his along with me. It's wonderful how the different flowers adopt one. Though the poppies blow in my domain, they are always referred to as Bentley's; the holly-hocks too are his, but he is going to lend me two for sentinels to guard my stone path.

It is already "Kitty's rose garden," and though the iris seem to live in Bentley's bed, they are called mine.

Easter Monday 1st of April.

Our first plowing is being done, and I plowed three rows (corrected by Bentley into furrows), and won a compliment from the Van Elken. The ground now looks like one vast chocolate cake in the making.

Mr. Schweinehunden is having the happiest time of his long life, with Ferrara as slave. After all these years of being underling to a superior, he is now a boss himself. Bentley says he must feel like an old century plant that has finally blossomed. The hot-bed is finished and is truly beautiful. It is packed solid on the outside with pine needles and earth banked over them to keep out the frost.

Bentley improvised a little hot-bed out of the turtle-box, and used an old glass sash to lay over it. We filched some of the manure Mr. Schweinehunden had planned for the

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back hillock when he wasn't looking, and we really felt more proud of this make-believe hot-bed than our perfect made-to-order big one.

This morning, to show his contempt, Mr. Schweinehunden yanked the frame off to make way for the plow-horses and carelessly put it up against a pine, where the wind abetted him and blew it over, breaking it irretrievably.

Bentley had an equinoctial storm, shook his fist down into Mr. Schweinehunden's countenance, and filled the air with several strata of oaths.

8th April.

If I were asked to describe optimism, I should say, a robin singing merrily in an April snow storm.

When we were awakened this morning by a strange tapping on the window panes, I jumped up in perfect indignation, to find it sleeting all over my garden. But as it has turned into a dazzling snow while retaining a genial warmth of atmosphere, I have been almost lured into good nature, and irresistibly into admiration.

It is also a sample of how our renovated grounds will look next winter. In the swale now cleared between the mass of large pines and the back hillock lies the first unbroken expanse of snow.

The pines droop earthward with their heavy freight, forming vast plumes of white.

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Even the last unburnt piles of brushwood are glorified, each twig a separate, accentuated beauty. All I can see of my yesterday front garden are the spears of iris piercing the blanket of white.

The window-habit if once cultivated becomes incurable. I am sure I age my legs more just standing at different windows staring out on my possessions than I do in laboring in them.

Eighteen of my infantile roses are studying to be real roses in Bentley's small warm frame (once the turtle-box).

Yesterday we planted the big hot-bed. I almost forgot Bentley's celery which is also being persuaded under glass. I think I am a little prejudiced against that celery, for it has postponed our pool and water garden a year. Mr. Schweinehunden discovered that the marsh, where the pool was to be, was planned by Providence for celery-raising, and has converted Bentley. After all I needed to postpone something, for we have enough promised wonder and already accomplished improvements to unsettle the firmest mind with joy. So the deferred pool will give us something to dream over all next winter.

The marsh had never been cleared, but was

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the undisputed realm of the dankest swamp weeds, ferns, sumach, snakes, and frogs. The last year's growth having dried out, we took advantage of Wednesday's stillness to burn it, first judiciously clearing away some space from the pines on two sides. It was a perfect success and a fine imitation of what a prairie fire must look like. The incineration disclosed the fact that the marsh must have been the town dumping-ground for discarded tin cans. It took Mr. Schweinehunden a whole day to collect and cart them somewhere over into the next county.

Mr. Schweinehunden took Wednesday off to repair and start his own hot-bed, and threatened to spend several other days in spading his own garden, but the sight of Bentley and me getting the whole marsh cleared by fire in one afternoon had a most salutary effect, for he had prophesied it to mean a week's work. He was over here by half past six the next morning declaring to me after breakfast: "I zee yesterday if I didn't get back to wurk you'd have dis whole blace finished in anudder day."

On Saturday the great box from the seedman arrived, and lunch had to be postponed indefinitely, until it was opened and gloated

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over. Bentley brought Mr. Schweinehunden in, and I made him sit in a chair in the kitchen while I displayed our treasures and forced him to listen while I intoned the labels of at least a hundred flower packages.

When he saw our two hundred asparagus roots, the bag of immense Noroton potatoes, the seventeen rhubarb, the half hundred packages of vegetable seed, to say nothing of the flowers, he said we would need fifteen acres to plant them all.

The past week I have exchanged my water-colors for house paint, and made some very impressionistic effects on a small out-house and the kitchen sink. I now know why artists are not house painters—it is too difficult. I also bobbed my head against the painted wall, and saw how I shall look twenty years from now, with whitened locks.

Yesterday I spent papering the aforesaid out-house, and I also found out why academicians are not paper hangers.

9th April.

Yesterday was a day of penance. For two weeks I have only used the house for eating and sleeping, and to be condemned to indoors all day was almost unbearable.

When one's life is so vivid with spring awakening and each day a wondrous drama of coming-true dreams, it is impossible to find the winter satisfaction in books. The best efforts of an author to interest one are futile; no novel can seem anything but pallid unreality in contrast to the living miracles out of doors. The only touch of truth in yesterday was our trip in the snow out to the warm frame to put eight freshly arrived rose-children to school.

I am so glad we postponed re-modelling the house until next year, for it is only in winter I am *uncivilized* enough to enjoy a good habitation.

It just occurred to me the other night that

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we are the only people I know who never fret about the things we *have not*. We are always referring to something with the inevitable commentary: "Didn't we get a lot of good out of that!" until I sometimes feel conscience stricken and fear we work every object of our lives threadbare, extracting an over-portion of joy. Bentley is indeed the true philosopher; he has even wrung personal gain from this ill-timed snow.

We have many private love anniversaries, all of which indicate cause for a "Party." Of course I am the entire list of guests, but the parties are nevertheless always great functions, and the cellar is kept in readiness for these frequent celebrations. Sparkling Moselle or Burgundy are used to drink the toasts, and if the weather is cool, grapefruit is sure to be included in the *mênu*. Bentley seized the winter by its hind leg, during what he thought the last winter storm, and made a "corner" in snow, banking the store under the pine thicket where he kept the secret from the sun for weeks. But as it had all finally melted Bentley now revels in the fact that a special dispensation from the God of Lovers will fill the cooler again tonight.

Last Wednesday the Waddingtons moved

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into the long deserted house across the way. We looked at this old place so covetously when we were house-hunting two years ago. Its hoary garden, the long, uneven stone walk, the latticed well, and quaint little bird hotel, all fascinated us.

It is unfortunate we have only two bodies when we want to live in so many places. Now there's the old stone house on the Walkill. A few months after our union we came nest-hunting in this region, and here was a wonderful coincidence. Naturally our temperments had always been tugging countryward, and through those years of city imprisonment, though we were yet unknown to each other, we were trending toward the same goal.

I was inoculated with country fever by Mowbray's nature books, and formed a habit of sending continually for real estate prospectuses of country places; each spring meant a search for the "blue rose country." Bentley had the same habit, and in one of his pamphlets he found a little place of seven acres on a river, with a stone house over two hundred years old.

It became his ideal to possess it, and those seven acres formed the stage setting of all his make-believe plans. The pamphlet got lost

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in the multitude of studio traps, and even the location of the place became vague as the years passed, only the mental picture of the house and the river remained indelible.

When we came to a real estate office on our first honey-moon, on looking through the book of places to be had, Bentley almost fainted with joy on discovering in it the very place of his years of yearning. It was on the Walkill River. We drove to inspect it, of course, and were wild with joy over its delights but unfortunately like so many castles in the air, it proved inaccessible to us.

It was nine miles from town, and weather untrustworthy, and above all it was only for sale and the price was nine hundred dollars, while our combined wealth at that time was only forty small dollars. So it had to be foregone and the dream tucked away to sleep a little longer.

Then we rented this house which came within requirements both as to location and pocket-book, and proceeded to make it live up to our standard. When our combined Lares and Penates arrived after their many vicissitudes, we received them on the lawn—I with my first and only tear.

Bentley also gulped and whispered:

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“Doesn’t it look like the salvage from Noah’s ark?”

The very fact that our household goods had been so mutually battered constituted their best point of harmony. They immediately fraternized as though they had descended from the same ancestor, and the interior of the house took on a tone of time.

Well, when one is so happy for two years as we have been, I suppose they can’t help waxing prosperous. We have not only bought our little rented home, but paid vulgar cash for it, and more recently have done the same, in getting possession of all the wilderness adjoining.

Of course, we always planned to re-visit the shrine of our little Walkill near-home, but somehow it never came about until this past February. We chose a perfect Sunday afternoon when the sleighing was delicious, to drive the nine miles.

One passes through many various phases of country in reaching the Walkill, and as Bentley and I both lose our geographical footing very easily through the senses, we found ourselves at times transplanted to Germany or England, and even penetrated a Russian forest.

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Nearing the old house we passed the great falls which were then muttering menacingly deep under the ice and snow, only thundering in watery cataract in the very centre. The little house was even more entrancing under its snow covering, than when last seen decked about with myriad lilac blooms. It seemed the very embodiment of peaceful retreat. One instantly thought of the possible blaze in its huge fireplace lighting up the gigantic rafters which are big enough to support a sky-scraper, and sighed to remember a commonplace furnace at home.

"What a refuge for beset lovers!" exclaimed Bentley, and we felt the tragedy of no longer being sorely beset.

"Let's buy it just for fun," I thoughtlessly replied, and we silently looked at each other with the pathos of now being able to buy "for fun," that which in our former extremity we could not attain by any circumstance.

It was deserted—having the air of faithfully awaiting its rightful owners. The river which winds with many a coquettish curve within twenty feet of the door sill, pleaded with promise of summer fishing. We were torn with desire for it all the way home, and welcomed the great snow storm that over-

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took us, blinding us each from the other.

Though we pretended to have shelved the absurdity of purchase, not referring to the subject for hours, that night I lay sleepless, turning over in my mind any scheme by which it might be made practical to own it, if only as a fishing lodge, or bower, to offer our friends for summer rustication.

But we really have no friends foolish enough to feel about it as we do, unless it is the Poet, and he has his shanty in the Catskills.

I even thought we might go to some alms-house and adopt an uncle, offering the Walkill place to him to live in, if he would only treat us kindly and let us visit him often. Finally suspecting that Bentley's quietness was not all innocent sleep, I tentatively whispered:

"Bentley?"

"Yes."

"We could take that oil stove we used in the old studio, up to the Walkill place for cooking on."

"Oh, pshaw!" he replied disdainfully, "I took that stove up there an hour ago."

I've found a new cure for insomnia. Get out of bed, deliberately dress, even to arranging the hair, then calmly undress again, go to bed for the second time, and peacefully fall asleep.

The past few nights have been ones of rare excitement. We got out all our old garden and country magazines and read every article bearing directly or obliquely on our garden. Strange to say we have formerly only valued these magazines for their illustrations and art suggestions, but during the past nights we have unearthed mines of value in the reading matter. Sometimes we both found such fascinating suggestions, we feverishly read aloud to each other dissimilar articles simultaneously.

Last night about half past twelve I noticed Bentley was restless so I inquired what he was doing.

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"Mentally building a concrete greenhouse. What are you doing?" To which I shamefacedly had to reply:

"Nothing at all."

"You lazy thing!" he denounced.

This midnight gardening in brain, books, and catalogues will have to stop. We rob ourselves of energy that should be saved for the real garden next day.

Yesterday was my first chance to return to outdoor labor. Mr. Schweinehunden and I started to conquer the north end of the wilderness, west of the marsh.

Our land is surely the realm of surprise. We thought we knew all the beauties we were purchasing, but we find we had only a casual idea of them. There were actually bits of our territory we had never set foot on, so successfully had impenetrable grape vines, briars, and under-tangle barred out trespassing.

The space we were conquering yesterday was a complete revelation. It has been the kingdom of colossal briars of a tough vine variety I've never before seen. They grew from three to twenty feet in length, weaving themselves through pine and sumach in a solid network. It was fiendish work exterminating them, but we were richly compensated, for it

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revealed the most charming natural bluff overlooking the future pool, to which we can descend by a series of stone steps.

Beginning at the top of this bank is a perfect amphitheatre of a garden, almost secreted from everything, yet apparently getting an abundance of sunlight. It is bordered by the larger pine thicket on the south, smaller pines and poplars on the east, four giant pines that tower starward on the north, and white birch and hemlock on the west. We cleared out everything in the centre except the exquisite young poplars with their blue-green trunks, that suggest the clean cut legs of youth.

Today another joyous surprise awaited these two Jack Horners, who pull out a plum every time they put in their thumbs. The wind-break referred to at the north end of the planned rose garden, grows thickly with young hemlock, pines and white birches to the bottom of the great rocky ravine. Grape vines woven solid by countless years of unwitnessed growth had made transit northward from wind-break impossible.

By a little cautious pruning I broke through and there before me in dank hollow and bank lay a treasure store of wild columbine. In our "Nature's Sanctuary" near the house, last

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fall we planted dozens of these elfish flowers, but here unknown to us was a natural bed of five times the number we formerly possessed.

It makes me feel like saving some part of the wilderness for next year's exploration; it would be a real tragedy to forestall all future surprise by ferretting out every joy the first season.

To Bentley belongs the laurels—he discovered the first crocus on the lawn today. I pray it is a herald of the real spring.

The hepatica and arbutus bloomed in our garden in last week's sunlight.

The arbutus is very hard to naturalize, but each fall we make a bed of it, and it blossoms delightfully the following spring, succumbing, however, later on to the summer heat blasts. We hope to eventually select some spot in the wilderness where we may deceive it into believing itself back in the woods.

The hepatica, on the contrary, is most amenable to culture, and blooms in our garden before it does in the fields. Surely it is the loveliest symbol of spring there is to be obtained.

10th April.

I have always felt I could not play the Grieg "Springtime" with perfect understanding, but today after years of puzzling the real meaning was revealed—today was its embodiment.

I now know the middle part is the anachronism of an April snow-storm. Henselt's Spring Song was undoubtedly composed after an extremely severe winter. It's *prélude* is a prayer of surprised gratitude that they survived the winter at all.

I always find myself playing the hymn-like beginning in the most unnaturally solemn manner, indeed I never warm up to the feeling of spring until I'm well into the second part, when my left hand takes charge of the March winds, that got lost and strayed over the fences of April. The butterflies do not arrive until the third page from the end. Even the zephyr-like finale always leaves me with misgivings about late frosts. Both Grieg and Henselt were outdone in strangeness by the spring song that took place on our back hillock today.

THE GRIEG
"SPRING TIME"

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Mr. Schweinehunden with eyes glued to the ground persistently grubbing out roots, behind him a mountain of brush sulkily smoking volcano-like, a distance suggesting the dreaminess of a Francis Murphy painting, a foreground of very green and hopeful sweet-williams, and over all fell the foolish snow.

But my garden behaved superbly; it refused to take the mistake of the weather seriously, simply absorbing the snow greedily as though it were a feast.

The pines, which I am sure are vain jades, never can resist an opportunity for beautifying themselves; they retained every particle of snow, and tossed their heads with a vanity that betrayed their sex to be feminine.

It only occurred to me a few days ago (in contrast to pines) that I, apparently, am going to be the only thing in my garden not appropriately decked for spring. I find I either ignore clothes utterly, or take them too seriously.

The garden is such a splendid excuse for wearing out Bentley's cast-offs. His gloves and old coats are always my legacy, and I confess I yearn terribly toward his trousers.

My old ball gowns hang dolefully on the walls of the waste-paper-basket-room off the

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studio—mere commentaries on past frivolities. I felt so sorry for them I hung them out on the lawn yesterday and let them dance all day in the breeze.

Dressmakers sap one's individuality so much, I forego them entirely; taking advantage of having been blessed with even proportions I rejoice in buying all my dresses ready-made. When garbed in my simple lawns I pretend to myself I dress just as the European royalties do, only I'm sure I look much happier.

The only time I am gorgeously clad is at breakfast, before I interview my garden. Then a Japanese kimono with a wistaria arbor over my shoulders, Fujiyama rearing majestically up my back, and tea-houses scattered along the banks of my knees, seems to atone for my begrimed condition all the rest of the day.

But to get back to the soil; Monday we set out the two hundred asparagus roots, and infuriated Mr. Schweinehunden by reading aloud directions from a book. Trenches eighteen inches deep and twenty-one feet long were dug, into these was put well rotted manure and a little coal ashes for drainage. The octopus-like roots were placed six inches deep and a foot apart on all sides. To start an

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asparagus bed seems such a grip on the *permanent*.

The former owner of this house brought his wife and daughter to see the transformation we had made. They were 'frankly homesick, and evidently amazed to think they had lived here blindly for years and never grasped one opportunity for improvement.

I took the women through the wilderness, filling them with wonder, *for they had never been through it before*, yet they lived next door to it for years. Mr. Sams spoke last year of our beautiful wilderness as an "eye-sore" and "a disgrace to the town"; now he joins the chorus of admiration, and we hear regrets that it was not purchased for a town park.

1th May.

The first dandelion ushered in May. Bentley and I both adore these vagabonds, encouraging them by giving all the space they desire on our lawn. This brings down on our heads gratuitous advice from all our acquaintances, who declare we never shall have a lawn as long as we persist in such foolishness. With the tact bred of a garden we listen politely, and persist in our evil admiration.

The sloping front bank presents a daily edition of the nightly firmament with its constellations of dandelions. They bloom riotously during the spring, retiring entirely in mid-summer, leaving the lawn to its grassy platitudes, uninjured, but surely regretful of its vanished gold.

With the same imprudent love, we never destroy a wild daisy, queen's lace or wild

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aster, and are repaid by unexpected bits of informal beauty in the most well-regulated beds.

The hepatica made all April lovely. Our artificial bed bloomed weeks ahead of the natural bank of them in the wilderness, which is only now in its full glory.

As soon as the hepatica ceases, the wild columbine naturalized beside it, takes up the legend of spring where its little blue neighbor left off.

The intervening time since I last wrote has seen miracles accomplished. The rose garden was laid out during April-like showers to which I have become impervious. On a flying trip to New York I found even a prosaic department store had been seized with spring dementia, and was almost giving flowers away in its enthusiasm.

We seized on its generosity and secured two dozen and four more roses, three-year-olds at that, for the insignificant price of \$1.25 per dozen. Other portions of the garden were enhanced by Japanese iris and lilies, hardy azaleas, two rhododendrons and a magnolia tree.

About the rhododendron there blows a sentiment. When I first knew Bentley there

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lived in his studio a beautiful laurel, given by some feminine admirer who probably intended the leaves for his brow. As much as I seemed to thrive in the dear old studio, the rhododendron, strangely enough, pined for the open.

After watching its growing illness we decided it must, in kindness, be invited to live in my garden out of the city tumult. But we procrastinated until I, myself, lay very ill, and in sore persecution (due to some people not understanding and loving my Bentley as they should). I was afterward told of the secret visit one night by Bentley, when he smuggled the laurel into the soil of my lonely garden.

Queer to relate the rhododendron and I merely changed places, for while it probably goes on being a spindling old spinster in my deserted garden, it was found that I pined so forlornly, I was transplanted to the studio, where I might bloom again in the Garden of Love.

The rhododendron seemed to be the only thing we ever regretted, and we both felt this garden would never be quite perfect until we replaced it. Now that we have two, a great peace has fallen over us.

The rose garden was spaded by the lusty

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Bentley eighteen inches deep. Into each individual rose hole a portion of well rotted manure, rich wood-loam and charcoal was worked. In all I have seventy roses, ranging in age from one year old to three.

On the edge of the marsh on each side of the path leading to the mysteries of the pine thicket, we have made iris beds. This moist soil was found to be also ideal for forget-me-nots and lilies-of-the-valley. Higher on the bank are masses of golden glow.

Among the achievements of the past week is a moon-garden. It is where we filled in a great rock-hollow, and is to have moon-flowers all along the back, trained to festoon the tall cedars that encircle it toward the west. In front of them will be a mass of nicotiana affinis, and four-o'clocks, bordered by annual purple evening primroses, and the perennial yellow variety. Yesterday saw many seeds carefully tucked away in the warm earth. Bentley spaded diligently all day, and prepared a vast space for more poppies on the edge of the back lawn. We were so fagged by twilight it needed all the chanting of our bird chorus, and the diversion of reading aloud to keep our spirits above our bodies.

But a telephone from New York of con-

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gratulations from a friend on the success of Bentley's and my paintings in the exhibition, brought us an unlooked-for flutter of joy.

We have been so engrossed in the garden, we quite forgot having sent our paintings, and had not even thought to have the mail forwarded to learn their fate. It made us feel as though we had been a bit untrue to our art, and this will undoubtedly cause Bentley to forsake the hoe for the brush today.

It seems strange that our paintings should be such cosmopolitans, jaunting from one place to another, while we live a life of almost monastic solitude. It has often been months I've not put my foot off our own soil, yet gone to bed footsore and radiant each night.

I choose to mingle so little with others, being so fearfully sensitive to the physical nearness of the uncongenial, I really fear many of my ancestors must have been hermits. Perhaps I'm a descendant of Saint Simeon himself, though I could never have been content with the pillar unless a rose vined about it.

This has been such a topsy-turvy spring, things are not blooming in their proper niches at all.

We are not to have any peaches; the loss of their blossom beauty saddens us as much as that of the fruit. The cherry trees have however lent the land the semblance of Japan, while the apple blossoms challenge my paint brush every hour. The lilacs are intoxicating both nose and eye.

Although I am not to have my birthday until July, Bentley has seized Time by the fetlock, and presented me two bay trees, that stand to the height of seven feet, on either side of the front steps. They are covered with demure flowers, suggesting orange blossoms. The revolutionary effect the trees have had on our appearance is remarkable; from a very

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commonplace expression, the house has assumed quite a Kate Greenaway air.

My last birthday gift from Bentley was the oleander tree, that resides at the end of the porch in summer.

So ingrossed have we been with the labor in our own domain we have quite neglected the woods until last Sunday. We make it a rule never to take a walk without secreting a trowel in our pockets, or we are sure to rue the omission, there are so many candidates in the forest for transplantation in our garden. Sunday gave the richest haul we've ever had.

I've often wondered if laurels ever have a babyhood for I've never seen any that did not look as if they had been born grown-up. On a very steep, rocky hillside, we happened upon the nursery of all mountain laurel I'm sure. There were thousands upon thousands of the tiniest proportions, evidently drawing their first Spring's breath.

We had returned to this spot because we remembered finding the only wild azalea we had seen in all our rambles, here, yet we had not noticed any kalmia last year at all. This year we not only found the infant laurels, but seven wild azaleas, some of them large, prosperous bushes. We came home laden like

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pack-horses, and made Anna postpone dinner indefinitely until they were all planted in the gloaming.

I wonder how many gardeners can make this boast. I have never lost a plant by transplanting. This record I attribute entirely to my method. I dig a rather deep hole, into which the water is poured, placing the roots in it, then gradually putting the earth around press firmly when half covered; the last fourth of the hole is filled in with perfectly dry soil, to insure there being no damp surface for the sun to bake. I often transplant things in full flower, and they never seem to know they have been interrupted. It is seldom ever necessary to water them again after planting in this way.

Yesterday a fearful and un-heard-of hubbub sounded through our peaceful neighborhood, and a frenzied rap of our door knocker brought us flying downstairs, to be told: "The cows are ruining your garden." Two mastodons could have created no greater panic—and this in the country where cows are supposed by right to roam.

Seized by bovine wanderlust, these two animals had broken away from some distant pasture, and meandered through all the preced-

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ing neighbors' premises, where terrified females pounced upon them with brooms driving them by force upon our land. They had wended their way through the hyacinth beds, plowed up a newly planted bit of lawn with their hoofs, and at the moment of their discovery by us, were enjoying a perfect debauch in the tub of soapy water I keep out back for my plants.

Bentley, looking like a crusader with his long birch staff, charged them gallantly, routing the invaders completely. After they had been sent adrift on the turbulent town road, our silent maid Anna soliloquized: "I think they were my father's cows."

24th May.

The first whip-poor-will.

28th MAY

The stars of the garden are the copper azalea and the purple rhododendron. Side by side, they each scream at the top of their voice. Instead of drowning each other out, they only serve by contrast to accentuate each the superlative beauty of their rival. Thank goodness these two bushes seem immune from frost and all other grievances, possibly it is because they prudently form their buds the previous autumn and become inured to anything by the winter severities.

When the thermometer begins to get in the dumps, and steadily descends, Bentley arms himself toward night with hundreds of strawberry and peach baskets, putting night-caps on all the tenderest plants, even to corn and potatoes.

5 June

The prettiest thing in the world has happened to us. Two dear little birds became Bentley's accomplices, and added the touch of the ideal to my birthday trees, by making their nest in one, and laying me two heavenly blue eggs.

When I returned yesterday after an unwilling absence from home of a few hours, I noticed Bentley looked congested with news, and it was not long before he whispered this wonderful secret to me. Of course a whisper is the only appropriate means of communicating such a delicate confidence. Although Bentley and I are generally alone, there are many exquisite things to exchange that we could never commonplacely say out loud.

While weeding in one of my private beds yesterday the first humming-bird paid me a call. Such marvels of centrifugal beauty as they are! I'll wager if I asked any great writer quickly, "What bird flies backward at times?" he couldn't tell me.

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I had been so won by the witchery of the wild columbines, I found the conventional beauty of the cultivated ones rather tame until they were glorified by the humming-bird's approval. The nasturtiums are prime favorites of his, but they have only one cornucopia of honey to offer, while the columbines have many flagons of nectar to each flower.

I kept so still he did not know it was an ordinary mortal nestled among the flowers, and after drinking deeply of the columbines I think he must have been intoxicated for he flew against my face as if to sample me.

Bentley ejaculated, "The wicked robber! he wants to steal the sweetness from your lips." Now even the Irish could not pay a blarnier compliment than that.

6th June .

We have a most original kind of kitchen gardening; we fill strawberry baskets with up-turned sod, and plant stubborn seed like ver-bena and Japanese morning-glories in them, leaving them in the genial warmth under the stove until they come up, when they are placed in the sun. This is also a splendid method of hurrying up cucumbers, melons, nasturtiums, and of conquering the difficult moon-flower.

We also plant corn and lima beans in boxes of damp sand. When sprouted the seed are sown out-doors. Having passed the sprouting stage safely, they seem immune from the rot that claims so many seed in the chilly spring weather.

Most domestics would find it very provoking to have the kitchen filled with strawberry baskets and sod, but Bentley is such a diplomat with women, he completely seduces Anna with such transparent exclamations as—"Anna, how soon are you going to give us melons for breakfast?" or, "I tell you, Anna beats us all gardening, just look at the size of her moon flowers."

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When sufficiently developed the sods are lifted from the baskets and cut in sections with a sharp knife, leaving a plant to each section and the sod is planted without disturbing the root.

I have made a complete chart of my rose garden, with each rose in its corresponding place, name and kind, (hardy, tea, hybrid-tea, noisette, Bourbon) written out, so that in case any of the labels are lost this summer, I may just look on the chart in the autumn and know which roses will require winter protection.

We have literally carved a boulevard through the upper end of the pine thicket, winding to the top of the ravine, where it ends in the abrupt fashion I adore in a road over the crest of a hill.

8th June.

Saturday being the great anniversary of Bentley's birth, I sent a telegram of reiterated thanks to his mother for borning him so thoughtfully for me, and presented him among trifles, with a half interest in my rose garden, and the privilege of spanking Vagrant when he goes mole-hunting in his asters. Then while he was out in the garden I wrote him a love-letter giving him many things I won't tell of here.

He had one birthday present he didn't appreciate a bit—poison ivy. Hundreds of these pests grew near where we have hung the hammock in the large pine grove, so if we wanted any comfort this summer they had to be eradicated. Arming ourselves to the teeth with Christian Science, we handled them with kid gloves, and yanked out roots for over an hour. The Christian Science worked

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up as far as my wrists, and the poison worked the rest of my body. As we couldn't get rid of the poison ivy we dispensed with Christian Science, and are trying separately and collectively every remedy any kindly disposed person will suggest.

17th June .

The first tragedy of the season has befallen me,—the tiny pair of bay-tree birdlings have deserted their nest. And all because of a prying girl. The little tree stands as a monument to loss, with useless and fallen orange-blossoms.

A certain pair of robins have, however, tried their best to console me with their ever-increasing friendship. Mr. Robin boasts two very large white spots on his tail, while his wife's one peculiarity is a waddling walk. It is amazing what great walkers robins are; I verily believe they stroll about almost as much as they fly.

This pair have done an unheard-of thing, apparently appropriating the nest a pair of robins started this spring in one of the cedars back of the moon garden, and deserted because of not knowing Bentley and me sufficiently, it being so early in the season.

We lay in the hammock almost under this nest, and the robins seemed to want to tell us

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they now realized we could be trusted with a secret, so they proceeded their rehabilitation of the nest, flitting right over our heads. I think this pair probably eloped, and were so absorbed in their love-making they neglected home-making until Maria exclaimed: "My goodness, Henry, what were we thinking of?—here I am going to lay an egg day after tomorrow and no nest prepared!" Henry having heard the gossip in early spring of those monsters Kitty and Bentley, who scared his cousin and wife from their nest, bethought himself of this refuge in emergency.

So with great strategy he lured Maria in the vicinity of the deserted home, and pretended great surprise when she chirped:

"Why, Henry dear, if here isn't the dearest nest already begun, and so clean I know it has never been used; would it make the birds talk too much if we took possession and finished it?"

Henry, I fear, being a man, could not resist a chance for self-aggrandizement, so he ruffled out his feathers and said:

"Maria, this is a little surprise for you; when I first saw you in apple-blossom time I lost my heart immediately, and made up my mind to win you before the season was

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over. To occupy my thoughts, (which all trended nestward), and to also give you a proof, should I win you, of my long preparation for your comfort, I began building this home. Realizing your fastidious taste, however, I did not complete it, not knowing whether you preferred Kitty's hair combings to horse strands for a lining. If it pleases your fancy, you may now give your directions and we will have it all ready for the little egg in a day."

(I'm sure if I tell the Naturalist this tale he will never believe it.)

Maria worked diligently all Saturday finishing the nest, her little heart probably throbbing with pride over her lover's thoughtfulness. I'm sure she and Henry discussed us, and cussed Vagrant who lay in the hammock with us, his interest in the nest furnishing having several times to be checked by an admonishing slap.

Yesterday the couple hovered about us all day, and in the morning, while Bentley and I sat on the grass by our bed of a thousand asters, they walked to and fro about us getting many worms from this newly planted plot.

Finally Henry seemed to exclaim, "Oh, Bentley, for goodness sake, spade up a bit be-

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tween your French artichokes, so Maria may make a fine meal."

The obliging Bentley spaded, and what do you suppose that sly Henry did? He said, "Maria, let's hurry down to the potato patch; I found a grand worm there yesterday." Poor trusting Maria waddled off after him, and he deliberately lost her among the barren potatoes, and sneakingly flying straight for the spaded-up spot simply gorged himself!

21st June.

The birds found out about the ripening strawberries before we did. Bentley said this morning, "They probably regard them as part of their salary for their orchestral work," and added, "I'm perfectly willing to share with them, but I do hope they won't take a fancy to my new potatoes."

(Bentley threatens a vegetable party of miniature potatoes and green peas some night soon.)

"Don't you think we might have a scarecrow?" I suggested.

"What's the use?" queried my sometimes disdainful lord. "The birds get more intimate with us every day, and if they saw your or my old garments realistically stuffed, they'd simply regard it as an invitation to a picnic and flock to our supposed sides."

"Well, that's so," I had to agree. "Vagrant

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is the only member of the household they still stand in awe of. We might get some old fur and rig up a fierce looking imitation of him."

Bentley greatly applauded the idea of a dog-scare-crow, and has taken it under his august consideration.

Our next-door neighbor—the best in the world—is very nervous and afraid of storms, so we are naturally torn between our fondness for her and our love of the garden, during this stubborn drought. Mrs. Merriweather is our rain-bird, for at the first thunder-grumble she seeks refuge under our roof. We divert her mind from the perils without, wearing the reassuring expression of lightning-rods.

Bentley says he heard me secretly praying, "Oh Lord, please send a great rain on my poppies and Bentley's onions, and make it to thunder and lightning so terribly as to bring Mrs. Merriweather flying."

If prayers are wishes, then I fear I am guilty.

It has been left for me to discover how the end of the world is to come, and at the present rate I fear that hideous event is not far off. I'm convinced we are to be *vanquished by insects*. If the pests increase at the rate they have since even last summer, it will soon be impossible to raise anything either to eat or look at.

The Dominie, who has had such experience saving souls and plants, recommended whale oil soap for our roses, and in fact as a general exterminator of insect enemies. We discreetly made it much less strong than the directions suggested, yet the applications wrought grievous results.

The insects evidently thought we were serving them ice-cream and cake, and lapped it

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up with perfect ecstasy, positively fattening on it, while it destroyed almost all the foliage.

At present the only things on the place immune from insects are the hitching and lamp posts.

I do not remember, when a child, hearing my mother wail over these devastations, and last night on looking over her book on flowers I find she dismisses the subject in a few words. In regard to rose pests she says: "patronize toads for their destruction."

It makes my heart ache to read her pages so a-bloom with eternal spring, and realize the lastingness of the inanimate over the human, for gardening is long over for Mama. But her share in my garden is very large; she may still be my preceptor through her legacy of words, and perhaps after all the reason my flowers thrive so well is because of their guardian spirit.

26th June.

Mrs. Merriweather had lunch with us to-day, which means my prayerful wishes were gratified, by a bountiful rain, accompanied by premature Fourth of July pyrotechnics.

Bentley seized upon the psychologic hour to set out hundreds of celery plants in the marsh. Irrespective of downpour I flitted about my garden.

So quickly did the plants respond to the rain, I found the Canterbury bells, which had not even determined on their color this morning, open and dancing in petticoats of purple, blue and white.

My roses had made strides with seven league boots, a white Mama Cochet and a La France proclaiming themselves the winners in the race for priority. There is not a rose in the garden but is going to bloom, even the

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littlest one-year-old babies are determined to reward me with babbling blossoms.

I found several robins out taking a bath, and a cute little toad gathering up water in its hands to sip. Day before yesterday I heard the first catching sob of the dove. It carried me back home again, for in our pines behind the Southern home, lived many hundreds of these mournful birds; their lamentations and the sighing of the pines always sent a wave of sadness over me even in my happiest hours.

"Dear Goose," intervenes the oracle, "they are not lamenting, they are only love-making."

"I don't believe it," I retort unconvinced. "It doesn't sound a bit like the kind you make."

On Monday while at lunch the fanfare of a bugle sent us flying to the door, to see a picturesque trio of two vagabonds and a great bear lumbering down the road.

Involuntarily I exclaimed, "*Uh-huh!* it's happened at last, Bentley! Our old favorite Horatio's come to life and called to pay his respects."

He was a gigantic bear from the Pyrenees, his masters two debonair Frenchmen from Toulouse. With open blouses showing bear-like breasts, rakish red sashes, hats worn at

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the tilt of François Villon, they were the ideal strollers. One fellow burst into a rollicking air, which smacked of the vine and trilled of love, the great bear rose on his hind feet and danced with irresponsible abandon and perfect rhythm. So infectious was the air, you felt sure it was the melody Pan piped of old.

After drilling and doing many other undignified human tricks, the bear came on our lawn and sank back into the old stateliness of the natural. I sat down beside him, and scratched his ears as I do Vag's. He seemed to know my sympathy for he put up his paw as much as to say, "Shake, my friend," and gently clasped his great nails about my willing hand.

We brought out ice-tea for the perspiring and loquacious Frenchmen, but they refused all offers of refreshment for the poor weary bear, Bentley says because they have to keep him hungry to make him perform. So I had to be content with offering him ice, which he licked as gently from my hand as a dog would. Bentley got little enjoyment out of the affair; the degradation of this old monarch of the wilds was too much of a tragedy to him.

17th July.

Since my last chronicle a birthday and a wedding have occurred in our family.

On the eleventh I took formal possession of the bay trees; on the twelfth Marcus Aurelius, our turtle, took unto himself a new wife. Five months seem a very decent length of widowerhood for a turtle, and after all Sappho Plutonium Aurelius was not a wife to grieve over unlimitedly, though far be it from me to abuse the dead who can't talk back, still she *was* a baggage—a turtleous Xantippe. The late Sappho, while roaming about the house last summer, with feminine curiosity decided to investigate the open cellar door, falling with some dozen bumps to the bottom. She was a changed woman from that day forth, showing a meekness of spirit that suggested it might be a good course of training to try on many bad tempered wives.

Marcus was very much in love with Sappho, but I sometimes believe she died a self-centred

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old maid. When I am more kindly disposed to her memory I think she was perhaps being true to some husband from whose bosom she was snatched when we took her into captivity to be a companion for Marcus.

It was a terrible problem at first to know how to sustain them, as never having been on intimate terms with turtles before I didn't know whether they lived on spiders or *pâté de foies gras*. But Marcus seems to enjoy the same fare we have. I'm sure if he ever loses me he will starve for lack of his accustomed lamb, porterhouse steak and fish.

By last autumn Marcus and Sappho had become so over-civilized they refused to burrow or attend to their hibernation at all; never having tried it myself, though I have wished to, I was terribly put to it to imagine the proper etiquette of the affair. However, I guessed at it and provided them a box in the studio with an old flannel petticoat to hide under, and they went to sleep in November.

Not having the natural moisture they would have had in the ground, they dried out awfully. So once a month I woke them up and put them in lukewarm water to soak, afterward lubricating them with cold cream. Then I forced some meat down their throats to

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sustain them during their next month's slumbers.

This probably unnatural method succeeded beautifully with Marcus, who rose from his bed in April as sprightly a turtle as one could desire, but alas! when I took Mrs. Aurelius out for her February bath she never aroused from her January dreams.

What an inexplicable thing is the majesty of death. While that poor misguided spouse of Marcus Aurelius lay in state on an upturned shoe-box-bier, with birthday candles at her head and feet, and a bit of incense to help sweeten her not too perfect soul, we were quite cast down for the several days of her lying-in-state.

Such is the presence of death in the great or lowly, I noticed Bentley walked about the studio with hushed footsteps, and we unconsciously lowered our voices in the manifest presence of the Great Conqueror.

The present wife seems to be a sweet Christian character and most amenable to human civilization. I taught her to eat from a spoon the second day, and now each evening after dinner it is quite a diverting sight to see me with the happy pair on my lap feeding one, then the other with meat and potatoes or rice.

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I have a new friend and valuable assistant gardener—a gentle little maiden toad. I noticed one day, while weeding with my claw-fork, a little toad kept hopping about me, even getting in the way of my hand at times.

I then paid stricter attention and found that curiosity is the besetting quality of hoppy-toads. That toad was dying to see what I was doing, and every time I dug it couldn't resist hopping over to investigate. The minute it would find me looking at it too closely it would turn its back quickly, like a negro when he eats; thinking itself quite hidden by this clever military tactic, it would then bulge its eye far out at the side and look around the corner of its head at me. I noticed the markings on its back quite carefully, so I might identify it in future; fortunately the spots were irregular enough for distinction.

I worked over a large bed on to another, Mistress Toad following me from spot to spot. Then I went into the house and got a piece of bread for hospitality's sake, which I offered amidst much coquetting on her part.

Curiosity rising uppermost she took it in her strangely human hands and nibbled it. Alas for her manners, she violently spat it forth, and finding she had not evacuated it all,

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took her fingers and more daintily removed the rest of the disapproved bread from the corners of her mouth.

Since then I often find she has followed me to quite distant parts of the wilderness, permitting me great liberties in stroking her back and getting close for study. Once I gave her a large earth-worm which was so much too much for her, she often lost her balance in trying to consume it, taking the most absurd somersaults backward.

Again I noticed the wonderful use they have of their hands; she held the worm just as a person might their more palatable dainties. Ants crawl over her continually, suggesting that perhaps she is infested with some varmints—frog-fleas for instance, which the ants go hunting for. Or possibly when in a hurry to get somewhere the ants jump on her back and travel by Toad-Express.

NIGHT OF 23^d July.

Not content with having gone all through the garden ourselves and afterward taking Mrs. Merriweather, I feel we must share it with you too.

The moon is quite round tonight and hangs high for our lantern. First we will go down the front walk where the phalanx of hollyhocks stand at attention; we pass all the various colors from the pale pinks, that still hold their color in the moon glow, to those which from their blackness lose themselves in the kindred night, until at the end of the row we reach the great stalks of bridal double white.

Looking across at my bed from here the bank of Shasta daisies are another Milky Way, while back of them are the thousand deflowered poppy seed-pods which nod in the

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shimmering light as if drowsy with their own narcotic burden.

Now we cross the unbroken lawn, passing up the stone path through my beds past the lilac, and still garded by sentinel hollyhocks we approach the moon garden, drinking in with each breath its exquisite fragrance.

The myriad flowers of the *nicotiana-affinis* float before us—starry constellations, their foliage lost in the gloaming shadows. Behind them the many cedars stand, Nature's exclamation marks after the excessive beauty before them.

After involuntarily lingering here intoxicated by the perfume, we reluctantly go through the path in the adjacent pines to find ourselves in the open where dahlias and more *nicotiana* compensate. Behind these is the powdered velvet foliage of the great pine thicket.

Now take my hand, for we are going to plunge through the foliage into that apparently impenetrable blackness beyond; it may be a cave—it may be a bottomless pit. . . .

But once safely through the piney portals we find magic beyond belief. What a moment before seemed all mystery, becomes a moon-pierced forest, the shadows of a hun-

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dred slender tree trunks trailing long on the ground—the pine needled ground that is so like the shining, tawny back of a sleek animal.

Here we will sit and dream on the bench that considerably invites us, looking back over the uneven horizon line broken by traceries of grape and bitter-sweet against the western sky. Far out on the north the moon illumines the clearing of the amphitheatre where we can still see the Shirley poppies that have lingered beyond the day.

Below, through the trees, the shining marsh gives the delusion that it is already the pool it is to be in the future.

Passing by the poppies we make a sudden turn through poplars and birch and climb the winding path that leads to light and the top of the ravine.

Here the calmness of the pine grove leaves us; we are possessed by the excitement of a mountain landscape, for below us the great rocks fall like giant steps, partially hidden by wild grapes in greatest confusion, and pines tower over our heads, casting the blackest of shadows. One could easily believe any wild beast might lurk in this tempestuous bit of nature.

Looking southwest we see the slopes of the

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near mountains while even the distant Catskills can be felt and mistily seen as in a dream. Below us—so far below us—lies the rose garden, its beautiful curves and formal lines accentuated by the chaos in which we stand. The moon seems to linger lovingly on it, resting especially on its centre pedestal, which now tacitly transforms itself into a lunar dial.

When we begin the descent we all hold hands, for we go down a precipitous drop of twenty feet before we reach the slope leading to the rose garden,

Here is indeed witchery; the borders of phlox are now a solid mass of flowers, and almost every rose tree in the garden has decked herself in blossoms.

About the dial climb nasturtiums, at the far west end shine the sweet-peas. Looking back at the great pines and stately cedars with the moon hanging between, it takes but little imagination to fancy oneself transported to an old Italian garden. To the west the prim lines of vegetable rows are glorified by the night from mere necessities to beautiful accessories, while ever and again a tall sunflower that has smuggled itself in, stands triumphantly smiling.

Bentley, who has not spoken for some time,

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says in a hushed voice: "It's about as near Paradise as we'll probably ever get—or want."

The first morning-glory and green corn to-day.

Does it seem sentimental to have a sentiment about green corn? Then I fear I must plead guilty for the memories of the first summer spent with Bentley are so inseparably connected with it. We lived very near heaven in every sense of the word, in the altitudes of the old downtown studio, and we had such a prodigious amount of love and genius and so little money to interfere with either.

When I gaze on the superfluous amount of dishes we now own, I think back rather wist-

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fully on the days of the beginning of our world, when our possessions in that line consisted of a shaving mug, two tumblers, a knife, a fork, two spoons and five dishes.

This prodigality of dishes was entirely owing to the loose moral standards of the studio before my day, when nervous females sent pies on plates to poets and artists, and neither plate nor pie was ever returned.

Our table was then spread with the day before news, and Japanese napkins served our purpose, being afterward made into wads and hurled down on the heads of unoffending passers-by. Our breakfasts were the ideal ones of much cream and a few berries, some rolls and a plenty of good coffee. Dear frugal meals!—dearer mental feasts!

Many times they were shared with all their scarcity of implements with editors, poets and general greatnesses. If the *mênu* was brief that was no reason why the breakfasts should not last until almost noon, for they seemed somehow to incite the mind to great feats, and the longer we lingered the more brilliant we each believed ourselves to be.

The lunches—(here comes the cause of the corn sentiment)—all summer long Bentley fed me with tender ears of corn prepared in

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the chafing dish at noon, and our love so thrived on this diet I recommend it to the consideration of all unsuccessful lovers.

At night for some reason Bentley thought we should be more festive, so he took me out to dine sumptuously at Golferdernio's, Chichini's, the Griffou or any other place where one can get well upholstered with spaghetti on an artistic income. When filled with waste-paper-basket salads and "near" wine, I always went to bed wholesomely yearning for the green fields of next day's simple corn.

Bentley has such a way of cooking corn! He leaves their little green chemise on when he boils them, retaining all their delicate, modest flavor.

29th July.

When weeding a few days ago in the amphitheatre, I heard Bentley making sounds of distress in the distance, showing he had lost me. On making the countersign he stole up looking very important.

"Kitty, you've always longed for an Italian garden, haven't you?"

"Yes, dear," I gurgled.

"Well, I'm giving it to you *now*," saying which he led me to the top of the ravine. I gazed down on what appeared to be a swarm of locusts.

Eight Italians were going through the garden with every implement we own at a rate

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which made me dizzy, Italianizing every inch.

It seems Ferrara's wife noticed we were getting the worse in our battle with weeds, so she flitted (or flirted) over to Bentley, saying: "Too much erb (weed) here—my cousin—*she* come over—work for you."

"My-cousin-she" turned out to be eight lusty fellow countrymen who vanquished the "erbs" in a few short hours only wanting one dollar and fifty cents for their crusade, but Bentley threw in a "Larkin prize" of twenty-five onions.

Never have I seen such charming labor, it was more like a Saturnalia. The Italians never talk—they exclaim. When Americans work, if they say anything, they must cease their labor and lean on the hoe until finished, while the Italians chatter every second and never miss a stroke for all their laughter.

Behind each ear was tucked a flower. These decorations added so much to my happiness, I sat down and hugged my knees, rocking with blissful chucklings. I have only one good ear, the hearing of the other having departed for parts unknown some years ago. This merely ornamental ear the Italians have taught me how to use. I now keep it decked

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with the flower its neighbor nose can most enjoy.

This deaf ear is a thing to envy, for it is the source of my most serene hours. When the children play too riotously around me I merely stick one finger in the good ear, and they move before me as phantoms in a soundless sphere.

At night after our last garden plans have been discussed I say: "Now I'm going to close," as a flower might to a bee, and by lying on the noisy ear, I am quickly in the passage of silence that leads to the door of dreams.

As we took the last sip of dinner coffee yesterday, the strange vision of two black-robed nuns appeared in the holly-hock walk. Anna, good Catholic, bustled to the door to welcome them and find out what we could do for them.

Pilgrims from a rather distant convent, passing along our road to the depot, they saw our wealth of flowers, so stopped in to ask floral alms for their orphanage. For, as it developed, these good sisters were the mothers of over two hundred appropriately fatherless children.

Fortunately I had just picked during the afternoon great bunches of sweet-peas, corn-flowers and carnations, so I was as prepared to give as though I had felt a sacred augury of their advent. As we passed to the out of doors my garden quickly took on a demure

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air, the flowers making many a pretty genuflection to the passing holy forms. The black-robed figures were so picturesque among my gay blossoms, I quite wished I might wear the same garb, if I could only escape its significance.

While I picked nasturtiums to add to my contribution, Bentley lured the sisters off to the white altar of the moon-garden and the more distant pine sanctuary. I hoped they would not dwell too much on the apparent bliss of living in such a Paradise, for it would surely unsettle the most nun-like mind and forever unfit them for a manless, loveless existence.

31 @ July—

Last night we reluctantly noticed the lessening of our birds' vesper songs. They still sing sweetly in the early morning but their joy seems spent by night. The robins have finished their nesting and are doubtless worn out with the harrowing ordeal of bringing up their young in the way they should fly. I know one or two of the Mistress Robins are so disgusted with matrimony they will probably take the veil before next season.

We have had such a large colony of great brown thrushes this season—such stylish birds as they are, always wearing their Sunday best. Bentley loves the catbirds. "They are such linguists," he says, "speaking with equal facility French, Italian and English."

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The birds we are completely entranced by now are some tiny grey and brown creatures, whom, in lieu of knowledge, we call the "lover-birds." You know what a hard-working drudge Mrs. Robin is, and Mrs. Catbird has but little time to frivol, while Mrs. Thrush is eternally unnerved by her nest-hold cares. Mrs. Lover-bird is a delicious contrast. She lives a life of luxury, compared to which the far-famed Miss Curly-locks' Mother Goose existence, was mere slavery.

This spoiled darling of a birdling is told by her doting mate to wait for him upon a certain bough while he goes foraging for food. She patiently sits there, only stirring to give a coquettish prune to her feathers once in a while, or perks her head to one side to admire her small toes. When her husband returns after his search for dainties he generally perches on the bough above her, bending over to feed her as he might his young.

After the meal comes the really exquisite part of the drama—for then they always kiss and kiss and kiss! Sometimes they come on the lawn to hunt the crumbs we throw out; she hops about in pretty aimlessness, chirping sweet nothings, while he diligently searches until he gets a crumb. Summoning her to him

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by a sound between that of a tree frog and a cricket, she is fed from his bill, then one holds their breath to see the kisses which are sure to ensue.

4th August .

There are of course certain laws of etiquette to be observed in a garden. One of the strictest in ours consists in always treating with the greatest courtesy any self-invited flower. We always call these "gift flowers," and never look them critically in the petals.

The uninitiated may find strange lapses in the color schemes of our beds to criticise, but how could any gardener of true feeling expel a poppy soldier of fortune, or a free lance phlox who sought their hospitality for a brief season?

The great exception to this fine law has been the petunia. The petunia we have both regarded as the tramp of flowers, maintaining that it should have every insect in the garden sicked upon it.

Even this exception exists no longer. Bentley and I have formally apologized to the pe-

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tunias for our treatment of their race, and are making amends by singing their praise in all meekness. For there was a shady, dry, poverty stricken bank under pine and sumach that skirted the large pine grove nearest the house—a most conspicuous spot—nothing would thrive here.

Even the accommodating phlox subulata refused to exist; the generally hardy verbenas died of acute dyspepsia. In final desperation I gathered up all the vagrant petunias which were unwelcome in various beds, and planted them with what looked like premeditated murder. Lo and behold, they perked up their heads, and were so rejoiced over having a community of their own, they forthwith made their settlement a positive bower of beauty.

So after all it proves there is nothing entirely despicable—if we can only find the proper place for it.

What a wise gardener is he who plants a wealth of white flowers, for then his garden will be even more beautiful by night than by day. Our grounds seem almost barbaric in the sun with the intense reds, blues and orange, but by moon everything becomes spiritualized, showing only the spots of virginal white.

10th August.

A neighbor whom we inveigled into gardening against nature and his own desires, has proven quite hopeless with one exception—he calls it his “specialty”—cantaloupes.

This optimistic pessimist dug his first potatoes last week, and after taking away all the children of the mother vine, he replanted her for further offspring. He has a beautiful excuse for the weed-swamped condition of his premises, a theory that if the weeds are undisturbed the insects will devour them and ignore the vegetables.

To return to his specialty though, this melon patch is visited by him as often as a Mohammedan looks Mecca-ward, and it has undergone every agony of over-cultivation. Of course it would be quite commonplace to loot a neighbor's melon patch, only the original Bentley could have the inspiration of augmenting one.

For this fell purpose we purchased the most measly melon we could find. Bentley arose

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before day and sneaked over to the sacred patch, tenderly placing the monstrosity under a vine not eight inches long. Our neighbor while a very great man is not encumbered by a sense of humor. I draw a veil over what happened when the melon was discovered. Bentley has one acquaintance less in this world.

13th August.

For weeks have my ears been strained for the music of thunder in heartless disregard of the feelings of Mrs. Merriweather. So utterly parched has my poor garden become under the relentless rays of the sun, I have felt the kindest thing to do was not to notice it.

The bed of a thousand asters has lifted three thousand or more appealing faces above withered foliage. The rose garden with its quantity of phlox stubbornly blooming has been unbearably brilliant, presenting an aspect of hot color beside which the sands of Sahara would have seemed meek coolness.

In a garden where the absence of wind-mill

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makes the rule of no watering imperative, a long extended drought is indeed a calamity.

There are some flowers—Kaiser blumen, California poppies, phlox drummondii, annual coreopsis and nicotiana, which ignore all vicissitudes of weather. These keep the living rooms so a-bloom the house is quite oblivious of the sad conditions that exist outside.

Mrs. John Laing and Captain Christy still persist in sending delegates from the rose garden to the dining table. In fixing the vases I always like to have one filled with an old-fashioned nosegay of mixed flowers, another holding a bouquet of sweet odors. The most delectable combination we have found is that of pink sweet-peas with a great mass of blue cornflowers in their centre.

Now indeed are we rewarded for our special dispensation to the "Queen Anne's Lace." Sprinkled throughout the garden we see their fairy parasols lifted against the sun. Later on in the season, in their seed phase, they masquerade as summer ghosts. In the winter their denuded skeleton hands catch the snow, presenting a delusion of a garden filled with phantom flowers.

15th — August —

Our lives are filled with the unprophesied, and as a greater sage than I has said on a billboard, "You Never Can Tell"—especially in these dog days and cat nights of August.

Judging from the limited ideals of a woman, I should have thought Marcus Aurelius would have satisfied every yearning of a feminine turtle's heart, but it seems not. Yesterday afternoon his perfidious wife scaled the wire walls of their castle, while Marcus was taking a siesta, and departed for foreign lands.

Poor Marcus! he doesn't seem to have much success with his wives. Of course Sappho showed great consideration of his happiness by dying when she did, and death is always so respectable, but to be deserted by a wife is indeed humiliating.

Mrs. Aurelius II. had not even stayed long enough for me to decide whether her name was to be Claudia or Faustina, thereby she cheated herself out of a christening party. But if she

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could thus pusillanimously leave her husband, it either proves she was not worthy of Marcus, or else he was not the man for her, so I fold my mental hands and say complacently to Marcus, "It is probably for the best."

Mr. Aurelius is naturally a bit despondent, at least what I can see of him, for he keeps his head buried in the corner, exhibiting only a dejected rear. Claudia or Faustina had her faults, and many eccentricities, among which might be numbered her habit of laying her eggs in their bath-tub where they incontinently melted away. Taking her all in all, I think she was a sort of woman's rights turtle and not the real affinity of a domestic person like Marcus.

The season for hibernating is approaching, so I console Marcus by reminding him he won't know or care whether he is a benedict or a bachelor when he is asleep.

22nd August—.

Yesterday morning we drove over to the Naturalist's and returned in the evening bringing much of the "Birch Bark" soil with us.

His far-famed celery patch (at present a lettuce-field) contains the most extraordinary black snuff-like earth, which is so beautiful I wanted to get down and wallow in it. The green of the lettuce on the purplish black earth fairly sang.

With rare generosity he encouraged my candid covetousness by telling me to fill all the discarded bags and boxes in his fireplace with soil to take home to my flowers. By frequent visits I may be able to eventually relieve him of all his earth. It took great will power to

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restrain myself from even taking off my stockings and filling them Santa-Claus like with this precious stuff.

The only thing I can't understand about "Birch-Bark" is the lack of flowers. I mentally sowed all his field with flowers, and in imagination saw it a-bloom as never garden yet blossomed on this earth.

Bentley carried many packages of our flower seed to proselyte the Naturalist, but he remained firm, calmly saying his daughter-in-law would be glad to get them.

Wouldn't it be a dreadful joke to carry quantities of seed of persistent flowers like phlox drummondii, Shirley poppies and annual coreopsis, scattering them broadcast about "Birch-Bark?" It would take years to eradicate them and in the meantime they might win a new devotee.

Both in the mountain-shanty and the home on the river, the Naturalist has made his bookcases a part of the walls themselves, which is a kind idea, for the books then really become a part of the house, not the extraneous ornaments they generally are.

I also noticed a nicety of balance he preserves on his shelves. For example, "The Doom of Death" was counteracted by two

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volumes of "My Recollections of a Happy Life" beside it.

I told the Naturalist about my "lover-birds" and he says their real name is social or sociable sparrow, which after all isn't half as nice as my term for them. He had never witnessed their kissing but was not the least skeptical when I told him about it. This was a great relief, for I was trembling lest I be ordered to go and sit on the table beside the volumes of Mr. Long.

This is one of the most fascinating periods of our garden for it is the time of our seed harvest. It takes the utmost diplomacy on my part not to have a seed harvest beginning in May.

When the first blossom unfolds, Bentley inevitably says: "Now we won't pick that flower—just let it go to seed." I've had to give up the habit of allowing him to help me cut flowers for the house, for he arrested my scissors at every snip and never cut any himself.

It would be an interesting experiment for Bentley and the Canadian to conduct a garden together. The latter always pinches off each bud that appears from spring throughout summer to make the *next* flower larger, until the

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last effort of autumn has been similarly arrested, while Bentley would never have more than a week of bloom in his greediness for seed.

We make no trip through the garden now without carrying small yellow envelopes, which return with their sides bulging to enter the seed box in the studio.

There is even a science in gathering seed. I have just mastered the best way of getting at the Canterbury bells. The long California poppy pods nearly scare me to death by the way they pop in my face. I now place them quickly in a paper bag as I do the phlox drummondii, and let them go off like caps as much as they please.

The big poppy pods are the most delightful. From the little windows around the tops of their turrets, spill such a wealth of promised color. We have almost a quart of poppy seed, enough to cause a floral conflagration in the garden next year.

In gathering candy-tuft it is a good thing to leave the chaff in the seed and sow both, then they will not come up too thickly. We mix corn-meal with our poppy seed for the same purpose; one is then saved the agony of sacrificial thinning out.

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By saving our own seed we have discovered the cause of the many failures of bought ones. Our fresh seed always come up, which would seem to indicate the great antiquity of much of the seedman's stock.

Last week when the weather was most parching and my garden looking its saddest, the greatest florist of these parts came to see it. To show the tenderness of comprehending experience, he did not find one fault—took the drought for granted and only praised my success in spite of such disadvantages. He knew every plant in the vegetable kingdom as well as those of the flower dynasty, taking the greatest delight in our all-embracing variety of subjects.

It seems we are the only people round about here who raise sweet potatoes, French artichokes and okra. I took him up on the back hill so he might admire our fine cantaloupes and melons, sympathize with our small crop of peanuts and rejoice in our corn.

All through our vegetables are sprinkled flowers to put a bit of poetry into their more prosaic kindred. Even the tail of an onion bed is fringed with brilliant nasturtiums.

He especially praised my rose garden, declaring I was the only person he knew of, out-

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side of florists, who was getting roses out of their garden at this time.

When he had seen all the kaleidoscopic beauties of my domain, he said: "To go through your garden is like reading a wonderful novel." Only a gardener can know the true definition of pride.

PINES BACK
OF THE HOUSE

24 4 August.

I was awakened in the night by the exquisite sound of the so-long-deferred rain-drops. It seemed ungrateful to go to sleep and miss the music of one drop.

So quickly does nature in mortals and flowers respond to a little kindness, my chrysanthemums which looked hopelessly parched yesterday, have perked up their leafy heads today in quick forgetfulness of their recently threatened extinction.

"Rain" is surely the gentlest word in our language, and the most soothing phase of nature. Out of doors a rainy day means getting a new lease on life to the plants. In doors it means the doing of the long postponed, the writing of procrastinated letters, mending of clothes, straightening out life's tangled accounts—getting a new start.

Bentley, alas! is laid low on a bed of suf-

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fering, so today is divided between bringing him be-jewelled flowers and giving him nasty medicine.

I have just picked him a Wright's *Datura*, a newcomer in our garden this season. It is really only a glorified jimson weed, but as I always loved the weed in the South, I do not hold that against it, but give the *Datura* the extra admiration its evolution commands.

It is like a bush moon flower. Next year I shall plant it across from the moon-garden.

I shall also have the paths leading to the moon-garden lined with four-o'clocks, so the evening may seem to begin a few hours earlier, and the moon have an appropriate escort as it steals up to rest in the nicotiana.

To help make Bentley well I have put on his table (to hide his bottles and pellets) a great bowl of blue Kaiser blumen with a center of the white cornflowers, or sweet sultan as some people call them.

These last—the Marguerite variety, I often think the loveliest of all flowers, but frankly my opinion is unreliable for I think that so often of others, shifting constantly my definition of the superlative.

The patient is also being dosed with many asters,—the tight rosette-like purple ones and

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the great shaggy white ones. I have just admistered one pink morning-glory on a long trailing stem. Placed alone in a Venetian vase, it saved me the trouble of writing him a poem to tell him what I think about him.

If I complete my flower treatment with a sleeping potion of nicotiana, I'm sure he should wake up tomorrow as hale and hearty an assistant-gardener as anyone could desire.

This afternoon I started out with my sister on the commendable errand of getting some Jersey milk for my patient. But every outing in the country is apt to irresistibly turn out to be as full of incidents as a "Sentimental Journey."

Our way lay down the serpentine hill road that creeps over the brook which today surged noisily with its overnight replenishment of rain. Here we dawdled beneath the great sycamores which I love, for they alone of all trees, imitate Bentley's Japanesque manner of drawing limbs.

As we wound up the ever-curving road there broke on my never jaded eyes the long expanse of lately harvested fields in the great plain walled in on the south and west by the Dunderburg mountains. These mountains seem to saunter leisurely out of the mysterious

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mists of the far distance like great giants weary with long effort. As they plod skyward they pause between peaks in great dips for breath. Working gradually up they make the grand effort of the last magnificent elevation, which so exhausts their energy, all Jovian ambition is abandoned, and relaxing themselves in many small hills they finally tumble with weary backs to rest beside the comforting little brook.

With the rippling water singing an ever fainter tune we journeyed through the Innis-like landscape past a venerable apple orchard which only kept its footing on the steep hillside by means of its gripping root toes. Here a yokel was gathering the many apples which the great drought had caused the trees to give premature birth. With the easy fraternity of the soil I climbed over (my sister under) the old rail fence to beg a pippin and have a little atmospheric gossip.

With my mouth very full I managed to get out: "What do you do with all these apples?"

"I gether them fur my pigs," he replied, adding apologetically, "but it don't seem fair to give 'em to 'em so green and spotted, so I cook 'em in a big boiler and make a kinder nice sauce fur their supper."

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This consideration so delighted me I drew him out further by a well-timed admiration of his view.

"Yes, it is nice, aint it? I have to pass here every morning 'bout sunrise, and the fog always lies in the valley up to these trees—it makes me think of the sea, though I aint never seen *it* yet—you'd never know there was any land if it wasn't for that steeple what shows over on that hill," pointing to a church on the heights of the distant town.

"Gracious!" thought I, "here is indeed a poetical bumkin."

I sampled meantime every variety of pain-giving apple in his orchard, reminding myself inwardly of the sad fate of Johnny Jones' sister Sue.

"If you don't mind the wet grass," the youth ventured, "there's a tree over in that field that's got striped apples on it, what are ripe."

Finding I still had a clamoring space for both apples and his conversation I hoisted the sails of my skirts and followed. My sister having daintily brought up the rear picked up in delight an exquisite apple of faintest blush, exclaiming to me: "What wouldn't you give for a complexion like that!"

My yokel with charming lack of self-con-

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sciousness confessed: "Why do you know I used to look jest like that—that's why they call me 'Apple-blossom!'"

"Apple-blossom!"—I might have known it.

"But," he temporized, "being out in the sun so much has cured all that." But it hadn't, I decided, as I examined his fine russet tones; he had merely grown naturally from the tints of the blossom to that of the fruit.

When my blouse was quite filled to a degree that lent me a majestic corpulency I have often longed for, and my sister's silk bag (which she always carries for just such emergencies as this) was bulging, we started to cut across fields after many thanks for Lord Pippin's generosity, when I found him following. On my turning questioningly around, he asked a little wistfully: "Didn't you want to see my pigs?"

"Of course we do," I replied in quick remorse.

"I've some little pigs too—they's the cutest things you ever did see," he further enticed. As I had never seen baby pigs, I hastily followed to find piglets about a foot long and so clean and dear I thought some other name should be applied to them through infancy.

He had put a quantity of clean straw at one

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end of the pen, and the babies had routed under, appearing only between the thatch over their backs. The mother was eating a hearty meal of weeds with small reserve in view of the apple sauce promised her.

"I don't see why people call pigs dirty," defensively began Sir Apple-blossom.

"No?" I encouraged.

"Why, they are the cleanest animals we have on the farm," was the astounding news. "Yes, sir," he continued, "they don't like dirt. Every day I give 'em fresh straw for their house"—pointing to an opening from the pen into a building—"and they pile it to suit themselves all in one corner. Those three pigs"—pointing to the occupants of an adjacent pen—"all cuddle up close together under the straw to sleep at night, and every morning they clean house, same as a woman. They carry every bit of dirty straw out into the pen in their snouts; no, they don't like dirt," he reiterated.

This was a new nature chapter to me, and it reminded me of an old sign of rain Bentley had mentioned, of the farmer looking for a storm when the pigs carry in straw to fix a bed for refuge.

"How about their love of wallowing?" I queried.

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"They wallow, that's so, but they always clean 'emselves off afterwards."

It seemed true, for as I examined them I found they were pink and white, quite free from mud except around their ankles. With a chastened regard for the *cleanly pig* I bade Lord Pippin a reluctant good-bye, liking him most genuinely for his fine defense of his swine. I hoped it would be a long time before he saw any sea but the one of mist in his valley, for it would be rather sad to make a sailor out of this good farmer.

As we crossed the railroad tracks the familiar faces of Ferrara and all eight "my-cousin-shes" greeted us from above pick-axe and shovel. As my apples refused to peacefully beautify my figure in front but insisted upon producing apparent tumors by slipping round to my back, I seized the first refractory one and tossed it to the distant Ferrara. He caught it with the ready Italian love of play. When I saw the expectancy on "my-cousin-shes" countenances, I hastily dislodged another deformity and hurled it cousinward, continuing the merry pantomime until my form had resumed its normal willowy lines, when to my horror I found I was two apples short of cousins.

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Visions of the possible Italian translation of slight darkened my horizon—possibilities of Vagrant's tail being stilettoed flitted before me. But with rare tact and much reprimanding dignity my sister walked sedately over to the neglected two, and gravely handed each an apple from her bag.

Happily just then three of the young Ferraras—Tinine, Cyrane and Cesare, came tripping along in joyous anticipation of the greatest pleasure their day holds—the triumphant carrying home of their father's and cousins' dinner pails, which fortunately reminded me I was still carrying a pitcher as yet unfilled, for a patient, waiting Bentley.

My sister has returned to the South. I don't think our home-made wine caused her to shorten her visit—at least I hope not.

After I had shown her all the views, made her look at our mountains as many times and from as many different viewpoints as one must gaze at St. Peter's in Rome, introduced all our rich assortments of "types" to her, taught her my favorite solitaire, and allowed her to try and save my Bentley's soul, I bethought me of the crowning glory of her visit—a sample of our home-made wine.

Leading her by a string of enthusiastic adjectives, I drew her into the subterranean parts of the house, and from the mysterious shadows under the hanging shelf pulled forth bottles which the cellar dampness had deco-

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rated with a mold a monastery need not have felt ashamed of. Rubbing the dust and mold (of only a year's mellowing) from the labels I attempted to decide on a bottle worthy of her fastidious preference.

Cleaning up the first label I read: "Arrested half-way on the road to the vinegar-barrel" in Bentley's truthful writing. Somewhat crestfallen, I said, "I guess that won't do, we'll try another," but as "Hell-broth," "Witch of Umbaloo Decoction," "Guaranteed to Cure Inebriates," and even a skull and crossbones were graphically inscribed on the next few I selected, I explained hastily that perhaps I had gotten hold of our "sour" wines.

On diving under the table I produced a bottle marked "Love Vibrations." This I delightedly declared would undoubtedly be delicious. I was very proud when I noted the snap of approval in her eyes as the ruby vintage of the currant wine gurgled into my best wine glasses, I meanwhile murmuring confidentially: "Our own currants, you know—the very first wine Bentley and I ever *tried* to make."

Simultaneously we sipped. As is often the case with wine, one gets their palate into such a state of expectation during the pouring, it

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is nerved to any sort of surprise and it generally takes two or three sips for one to find out what it really tastes like.

There was a veneer flavor that I imagined probably tasted like vitriol, but when you got over the surface shock, there was a strata of a rare, potent suggestion of something that I'm quite at a loss to describe, never having drank anything in the least like it before.

Like connoisseurs we sipped and meditated, my sister Margaret almost whispering: "A rare aroma."

"Yes, doesn't smell a bit like plain currants, does it?"

"Suggests a little a cordial I once drank in Tunis," she reminisced.

"The sub-flavor I suppose you mean?"

"Yes—now that you mention it, it has two tones."

"Doesn't it warm one's vitals up greatly?" I exclaimed feelingly.

"Very subtle—but direct," Margaret assented.

It was indeed both, the first definition applying to its effect on my sister, the latter to its results with me.

I have never encouraged the fad of either peritonitis or appendicitis, but I had to con-

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fide to Bentley I feared I had *both*. I now know just how a poor volcano must feel in its middle. Margaret retired courteously to her own room as she said "Just for a little nap," but I saw her secreting several lumps of sugar in her silk bag. I fancied she had an underscored expression of unmarried superiority, that had always held convictions about "vibrations" of that variety.

The inauguration of autumn was the arrival yesterday of the first instalment of bulbs. The scanning of catalogues, the perturbation of selection and the excitement of ordering undoubtedly constitute some of the chief delights of gardening, but the actual arrival of the stuff sometimes causes great dismay, for there never seems to be land enough to hold one's purchases, nor is any part of that land ever in readiness.

The only way to survive the avalanche of bulbs yesterday was just to pretend they hadn't come—Bentley even rising to the supreme heights of fancy by swearing nobly because "that nursery always delays things so." The place we have selected for our iris garden, is

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the only piece of untamed land along our front road skirting the pine thicket.

Savage weeds have flourished here all summer, making an eyesore to all who had not the prophetic vision we possess of its exquisite iris future. The strip is about sixty-five feet long varying in width from eight to ten feet. It is low but with a natural slope for drainage, partaking somewhat of the queer granulated soil quality of the swamp. It merges into the marsh where the iris will meet the border bed of their relatives who have already become sturdy citizens this summer.

Seventy-five Japanese iris alone should make any spot a fairy-land, but when you know that one hundred English, several dozen German, and five hundred Spanish, are to be included in our iris-garden you may understand why I wish I could hurdle winter and land in the lap of spring.

Mr. Schweinehunden has plodded all day, properly translating the soil from savagery to civilization, and has meantime gotten out enough rocks to build a stone wall, though I insisted on many being retained.

Bentley and Mr. Schweinehunden have really had rather strained relations lately, for two reasons—for one of which I am to blame.

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I made an eternal enemy, I fear, of the old man by presenting Bentley with a hand-cultivator (and waist-reducer). Bentley made such a fine horse, speeding through the potato field at such a rate Mr. Schweinehunden's old-world soul couldn't stand such radical methods.

"Dey never had zuch vool mazhines in de old gundtry; de hoe unt de spade ees goot enuf fur me. Now you god dis ding I sink you kin do widdout me, so I go wurk some udder blace"—and he did for a time.

The second grievance is Bentley's celery patch of over thirteen hundred plants. Mr. Schweinehunden has for years produced most of the celery sold in these parts, and for this upstart of an artist to have a patch right along the road where Mr. Schweinehunden must see it every time he passes, has been quinine to his soul. When he suggested raising celery in the marsh, he did not calculate on our phenomenal success.

When I think of Bentley having been on his knees to that celery all summer when he might have saved his devotional attitudes for me, I suppose I ought to go over to Mr. Schweinehunden's side. But I fear I am a gardener first and a woman second, for I

"BENTLEY HAS BEEN ON HIS KNEES
TO THAT CELERY ALL SUMMER"

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placidly glory and peacock about that celery as much as Bentley.

All my flowers together have not been more beautiful than the celery patch with its symmetrical rows of green plumed knights, flanked at the ends by the galaxy of cabbage beauties, whom one expects any moment to gather up their crinolines and pirouette about.

In a sunny space at the south portals of the pine wilderness overlooking the azalea territory which lies under the bank, a peony kingdom has been founded over which Bentley is to be sole ruler. It should rival my rose garden in splendor.

Look over any catalogue of peony prices and you will realize why I shall probably only be able to afford sufficient raiment this winter to barely escape the clutches of Anthony Comstock.

The preparation of the ground for peonies must be as far-reaching as for roses. With the ground loosened by the wonderful rains of the past week, I attempted my first spading with the four-pronged fork, actually digging such wells for the plants I expected to strike oil any second.

Please observe I don't recommend spading to any other woman—it was merely experi-

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menting with my muscle and to show off before Bentley; generally speaking I advocate leaving the spading and voting entirely to the men.*

After finding little or no information in our floral magazines about the cultivation of peonies, I went to mama's book for assistance. She calls them "peonias," which was evidently their "befo' de war" name. We filled in the wells with the mellow earth of the old cold frame and set the crown of the plant three inches below the surface.

Yesterday we made a bed of hardy phlox—sixty-two in all, which now makes the entire front garden permanent. They are planted where one of the poppy beds had been located for two years; these we shall plant out back next year, giving a larger space to them, and a locality where their unbeautiful ragged appearance toward the end of the ripening seed stage will not mar our front expression.

My fall house-cleaning in the rose-garden is completed; I suppose I have the same self-satisfied sensation most housewives have after an orgy of cleanliness indoors. The gay little

* Since writing the above I've become a suffragette, so I amend it by saying "leave the spading and *swearing* to the men."

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phlox *drummondii* were ripped out and laid on two old bed sheets to dry and shed their seed.

After renovating the borders, I filled them with their permanent Scotch pinks; these will not grow too high to detract from the roses, and they possess that wonderful blue-green which harmonizes with everything. At the upper end of the garden the phlox *subulata* will make a matted border that will sound the first spring note. The center bed about the sun-dial will be filled with hyacinths and later on in the spring with the same flowers it held so successfully this summer—nasturtiums, phlox and the *ageratum* border.

The Jacqueminot, Perle Blanche, and Viscountess Folkstone are filled with blooms, and I see many buds forming for autumn's farewell to summer.

14th September.

The other day Bentley remarked: "I believe that old controversy as to whether Katy did or didn't has at last been laid at rest."

But last night I heard sounds that would indicate there is as much difference of opinion on the subject as ever. If the old adage is true, our garden has still six weeks of respite from frost. The scarcity of katy-dids in our woods this autumn we attribute to the great flock of birds we have entertained this summer.

All our old friends have departed for warmer climes except the "lover-birds." They are with us in such numbers, I think many of the newcomers must be travellers from the farther north, merely paying us a call on their Southern flight.

Bentley saw a large woodcock fly out of our marsh a few weeks ago, which seems a remarkable thing as the Naturalist says he

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hasn't seen one about here for many years.

While I worked in the iris-garden two great eagles wended their portentous passage over me, coming, probably, from some distant eyrie in the Catskills. How the sight of an eagle blots out the commonplace, and transports one's imagination to inaccessible heights, where there is only mystery, solitude, largeness. I followed them both with my eyes until I lost all sense of earth.

Bentley gazing upward asked: "Did you ever feel the ridiculous inconsequence of *things?*"

"Yes," I said, still floating, "when I follow an eagle's flight or gaze too long at the stars."

This is one of the most exhilarating seasons; all the glorious plans and visions of the next year's garden crowd on you so thickly, the eyes scarcely see the flowers that still patiently bloom.

"What liar was that," Bentley grumbled, "who called these 'the melancholy days?'"

"A man who did not find his sweetheart in September," I replied. "Even I formerly indulged in conventional sadness at this time of the year," I continued, "thinking all sorts of false platitudes about the dying year—departing flowers, but that was before the greatest of

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all Septembers when I carried nasturtiums to the wrong man and stumbled into the arms of the right one."

Being in the shadows of the pine wilderness we grabbed each other in the agony of the—"suppose it hadn't happened," and the joy of—"but it did."

When I was quite happy again over the assurance that all our autumns forever and ever should be spent together, Bentley, not to take too much glory to himself, went on: "Of course, the owning of a garden helps us to interpret fall correctly, for the soil is never so full of promise as now."

18th September.

When one has a wise gardener who plants in rotation, there is no reason why the vegetables of spring should not continue until frost. Our green peas are as delicate and prolific now as they were in June, thanks to many sowings and trenching. Just as we plant the flowering sweet-peas we sow the garden-peas in deep trenches and cover gradually as they grow; this method saved our peas through the drought which meant ruin to most other gardens.

The corn we planted the day the bear came to see us is now ready—two hundred and fifty hills. On account of not tying up our tomatoes, but permitting them to sprawl naturally on the ground, they too withstood the drought which cooked the trained-up tomatoes in the surrounding gardens.

The melon patch has been the most surprising success. Bentley needed much gentle per-

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suasion brought to bear on him to "sacrifice" any soil to what he termed "a foolish experiment." Although the patch is due to my persistence and eloquence, that greedy thing has never permitted me to pick a single melon until I murmured this morning: "Eighteenth melon, and I've not been allowed to touch one yet!"

The dictator then escorted me out to them through the dew, but kept his eagle eye on me to see that I picked only the ones he had fore-ordained for his breakfast. Such delicious melons I've never before tasted.

They were appropriated by Bentley for a certain anniversary which necessitated a very grand party a few starry nights ago.

This is the month when the flower stalks of all hardy perennials such as golden glow, Shasta daisies, hollyhocks and delphiniums should be cut down to the ground so their strength may be thrown into their roots and the next season's growth. If you did not shear the flower stalks of your sweet williams sufficiently after their spring outburst, do so now by all means.

Many spots that have held early blooming annuals may now be cleared and their beds made up again. If I were placed in some hide-

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ous spot where no flowers would bloom, I should have a garden laid out of perpetually turned up ground and still be happy—so much do I love the color and “feel” of the earth. Soil is never *dirt* to me—“dirt” is that dreadful thing New England women fight indoors all their lives—and the men we don’t love wear on their collars.

The moon-garden has been cleared of its frazzled nicotiana, leaving the night-duty to the four o’clocks and moon-flowers. It is a good thing to choose annual beds for your bulbs, then they can be made ready early, and you wont be found as unprepared as we were for the iris. The annuals may be sown again in the spring, when the bulbs are finishing their beauty service. I like to have annual borders for my perennial beds for the same reason, so that hyacinths, tulips, jonquils or crocus may be used in conjunction.

I almost achieved two great stone gate posts yesterday, but Mr. Schweinehunden had worked for two days within swearing distance of the celery patch, and jealously had worked in him like yeast until I feared we might have to begin dodging the stones. Bentley softly but firmly told him he should go home and take a good long rest.

19 September.

Of all our two and a half acres the most unique and valuable part is a bit of land thirty by thirty feet lying in the corner next to Ferrara's. Perhaps you've never heard of a barometer made of soil—well, this precious clump of earth was the exact indicator of my Bentley's condition.

When I heard him remark: "I guess I'll give that corner patch to Ferrara," I agreed out loud, "That's a good idea;" and said to myself, "Bentley has worked too hard today." When the morning came with its untarnished energy, Bentley burst forth: "That corner down there would be bully for celery," I agreed aloud, "So it would;" and to myself I said, "Bentley is himself again."

When toward evening we made our last rounds through the twilighted garden with

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toilworn feet, Bentley sighed: "I've more than I can take care of. Ferrara might as well have that corner patch to raise some celery for his family," once more I agreed aloud: "He would probably be glad to get it;" and said to myself, "Bentley stood too long at his easel today."

And when he woke next morning and gazed hungrily out back saying: "Kitty, we should buy fifty feet further over the crest of the hill," I hugged his back and smiled under his shoulder.

Just before he was taken ill, he marched Ferrara-ward with desperate finality, and with the setting sun and me as witnesses, he bestowed the corner patch on one of Ferrara's "my-cousin-shes."

"Take it," said he, "nothing could induce me to plant another inch—it's yours!" (with a grandiloquent gesture) "and I'll give you the celery plants to fill it."

"My-cousin-she" gazed vaguely at Bentley. I said nothing aloud, but to myself I said: "I fear this is a case for the doctor," and added in still smaller inward whisper to myself, "And Ferrara's cousin doesn't understand a word of English!"

When Bentley recovered and made his first

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plunge into the garden after days of land-homesickness, he planted that patch himself with four hundred celery roots all in one afternoon;—and I?—I winked at the sun and said nothing.

21 * September.

Yesterday morning we rose at five, which fact in itself is indicative of the unusual. If anybody chants the good or charm of early rising don't believe them. Is it the early-rising toiler who leaves his individual stamp on the centuries?

I came to the country with fine notions about intimacy with the rising sun and the exquisite purity of the newborn day, but a few experiments cured me of tampering with heredity and lifelong habits of comfortable hours. We settled back into our pleasant custom of "breakfast about eight," and have never broken it since except under stress of catching the train for New York which rural-like insists on starting at seven.

During that hideous attempt at early rising I found I grew contemplative about noon, inert at four, vacuous at seven.

Fortunately for us Bentley's profession is one that delights in ignoring hand-made time,

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so I found in him my true mate—I, who have always abominated clocks. The day is long or short according to our moods, meals occur at no hide-bound hour, but hover comfortably about certain periods, always deferentially ready to be postponed or hastened as our fancy dictates.

Anna is ideal in this respect, while she is methodical to a painful degree in everything else. She never expects us to come to a meal when summoned, so she strategically calls us some time before it is ready, giving us time to perversely flit over the garden, or read another chapter, or paint a few last strokes.

But we rose at five yesterday, which, as I said, was alarming enough, but it also meant the temporary loss of Bentley to the garden and me. At the drowsy breakfast Bentley, while munching his melon, bemoaned:

"It seems a positive crime to leave a place where there is so much good food."

If it had been later in the day he would have gallantly given other reasons for sadness at departure.

"If Gentian's place is prettier than ours I'll kill him," he proceeded savagely.

Inconsistently he went off bulging with flower seed packages to add more beauty to

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the abode of the recently threatened Gentian.

I fear a garden would be small solace to the lonely or sad, though of course under any melancholy circumstances it would be preferable to people. When Bentley is away I find I actually hurry through my flowers instead of loitering forever, as we do when together. I could have slapped the American Beauty who tossed her head at me this morning for blooming so complacently when there is no Bentley to enjoy her.

I can imagine nothing more desolate than travelling through beautiful lands alone, nor could anything be more futile than living in a lovely garden alone. But I would share my garden with few—only a loving few.

So sensitive is a garden it feels the impress of everyone who passes through. I have known my garden to be so magical in its beauty I felt a beast of selfishness in keeping so much loveliness to myself. So in a moment of misguided altruism I have invited a feminine acquaintance within its sacred portals. On taking her through, to my horror I would find my garden suddenly grown ugly, the woman made me see only the many lurking weeds (losing all sight of flowers), I realized only the mistakes in arrangement (not remember-

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ing the many successes)—in short, I felt absolutely apologetic for what only an hour before had been to me a symphony of perfection.

There are two people whose visits to our garden have all the blighting effect of premature frosts. On the contrary there is the joyous wife of Ferrara. She trips over through the back field—sometimes in her bare feet—and literally dances a tarantelle through my flowers. Her eyes so bright with reflected color, her hands fluttering in ecstasy like wind-blown petals, her nostrils quivering with each new perfume—then indeed my garden loses its false self-consciousness and basks itself in her appreciation, laying bare the very secrets of its heart.

We've fought rose-bugs, potato-bugs, cabbage-worms and moles, but I would take my chances with all these rather than contend with the blight of the professional fault-finder. When in early spring you stand in admiring abstraction before your iris he passes by with:

"What are those things?"

"Iris."

"Awfully queer, aren't they?—no form or distinction. I'd chuck them out if they were mine."

And a few weeks later when some undis-

"THE JOYOUS WIFE
OF FERRARA"

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covered ones bloom in his own garden he calls over:

"If you want to see some flowers that really have a decorative value, come over and see these."

You go, and find the very iris he had damned a short time before.

Again when absorbed in the planting of bulbs, putting each just the same number of inches in the ground, so they will all bloom at once, he startles you with:

"By George! I believe they are nothing but onions. Your gardening is all guess-work; why don't you hire an experienced florist?—then you'd know the thing was done right."

You are seated peacefully at the head of your rose-garden, congratulating yourself on the wisdom of bordering all the beds the first year with gay little phlox, and rejoicing over the continuous beauty with which you have been beguiled while your roses were gaining their real foothold, when you are interrupted by:

"Would you border your table cloth with fur?"

"No, I haven't tried it yet," you temporize.

"Just as appropriate as those motley things

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in a rose-garden—looks for all the world like a patchwork quilt.”

There is no use, nor ever was, of any argument on any subject, since any world began, so you hold your tongue—though not your peace. He persists in going through your garden, the flowers have the same fascination for him they have for insects, but you can't turn your sprayer on him—more's the pity. He passes along, eyes strained for flaws, sarcasm seething for expression.

“What is this effect supposed to be?”

“Moon-garden,” you are forced into declaring.

“Humph! reminds me of a painting I once saw of a girl holding a dog in her lap. The title of the picture was ‘*The Flea*.’”

Next your haphazard sunflowers claim his attention. The sunflowers that make a festival of all August and bird-feast of all September.

“Those sunflowers look like the dickens scattered that way. Why don't you study massing?”

As explanations were never in my line, I smile quietly, thinking, after all we really owe a debt of gratitude to anyone who gives us the opportunity for feeling so immensely superior

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—and it doesn't change one inch of our garden-of-surprise.

NIGHT OF 21st September.

Except for the tree-toads, who have said the same thing over and over until no one would dispute them, and the distant symphony of pots and pans in Anna's domain, I am alone with the silence of the studio.

Yet I should not say alone, for does not the devoted Vagrant lie on my skirt tails? In looking back over my garden book I wonder I've made so little note of Vagrant—for he is really the most adored thing on the place. It is a great secret, but Vagrant is a *woman*. She is, however, such a perfect gentleman we always use the superior sex in speaking and thinking of him.

It is only because Vag can't read that I am perfidious enough to let you into the hidden recesses of his history. "In the candid dawn of his juvenile innocence" he was the surreptitious mother of four puppies, but I discreetly helped her dispose of them, and he had to

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be formally introduced to his children when she met them on the street thereafter.

Ever since that youthful accident, Vagrant has been as well disciplined an old bachelor as ever existed on or off the dog star, and after forswearing canine society for six years, she has come to regard himself an absolute *person*, as much as you or I.

Anyone can buy or steal a dog, but only to the elect is vouchsafed the honor of being adopted by one—such was my distinction. We met in a rainstorm—Vagrant and I, and knew instantly we were affinities. It is hard to reason from a dog's standpoint, but by doing it hind part before, I believe one comes very near their view.

For instance: Vagrant never having met chickens in New York, except in their post-mortem state, did not recognize them as old favorites of his, when they intruded alive from neighbor's yards upon my garden. I was naturally glad to have them discouraged from forming a fondness for the flower beds and may have even gently sicked him on them, but when he got one down in his enthusiasm, and proceeded to hasten it toward the spirit-world, I arrested him and delivered a lecture on moderation.

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As soon as I let him go he pounced on it again. This time a loving spanking augmented my words. Again freed he got the chicken down—then it was spank, pounce, spank, pounce, until it occurred to me to try and find his point of view.

Here it is; each time I chastised him he thought he was being punished for not *killing* the chicken, and was trying to say: "Oh mama, if you'll only let me have one more go at it I'll kill it sure."

Vagrant often looks at me as much as to say: "Well, you come as near my ideal of a dog as anything I've ever found." I can truthfully respond: "And you, Vag, come nearer my ideal of a human being than most people I know."

He is the police of our premises, making his beat many times a day. He is always anxious to do the right thing, however queer it may seem to him. It was difficult at first for him to understand when I said "Keep to the path," that "path" sometimes meant stone, sometimes brick, other times shale and often even soil—just the same soil which when called "beds" must be avoided as he would an automobile.

It was indeed hard to learn, but he was very

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patient. Starting across the garden he would go a little way looking around questioningly; if I said "No, little pig, that's the bed," he would turn back and literally tiptoe off the forbidden spot.

When he caught a mole in the early spring and Bentley called him "A hero!" it was naturally incomprehensible to Vag when he was severely licked by this same Bentley for trying again to be a hero in the aster bed. What inconsistent creatures we are from a dog's standpoint.

Vagrant never says much about his ancestors, but from his looks I should say there were Cocker spaniels, Dandy-Dinmonts and a few scandals up his family tree.

Bentley returned, bringing with him the equinoctial storm and a great drop in two thermometers; one hangs outside the bedroom door, the other is the sensitive creature holding this pen. So susceptible is the latter, no sooner had he returned, that I felt as never before the inadequacy of this house and the fact that our seemingly limitless wilderness is after all only what the surveyor pronounced it—two and a half acres.

Bentley said in preface: "It was very hard to be true to this place," which proves that Gentian's place must have been very beautiful, and instead of vengeance, seduction took possession of Bentley's senses.

His description of the multifarious brooks

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in Connecticut made me frantic over the lack of one on our land. The wonderful soil there, unlike ours, does not need constant overtures and wooing to produce things lavishly. The houses he told of were of an antiquity that made me feel I must forthwith array our house in swaddling clothes.

But one thermometer has recovered her normal complacency, though the other one still hangs grumpily around 50 degrees. After all this is our very own home, the home that provided a roof over our first years of happiness together. It has kept us warm in winter, proved staunch in summer storms and has been the willing listener and conspirator in so many joyous, improvident plans—so many more delicious practical ones.

When your house has a pleasant personality, what though its exterior be unromantic? And the dear wilderness—has it not provided us with just the experience we had both longed for and never expected to find in these suburbaned-to-death-days?

We discovered here, one spot on this earth entirely untampered with by man since time immemorial. The pioneer spirit in both of us had free play, we carved our way through chaos, we wrested by force of muscle and mind

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every inch of garden from primeval confusion.

It gave a chance for that greatest of all arts, the knowing of what to eliminate, and that second phase of genius, the knowledge of what *not* to sacrifice. When I stand in the rose-garden in the midst of well-cared for conventional beauty and remember its former limitless history of briar and sumach, I think well of elimination. When I lift my eyes to the heights above where patriarchal pines loom against the clouds with an under mystery of tangle, I hug myself in memory of the saw I restrained.

It is an almost overpowering thing to realize your power of misuse or protection over a great untouched province of nature. Man is so prone to abuse his opportunity of mastery. One should have a great sense of humility when they begin to exercise the questionable privilege of civilization.

Unless you can produce something better you have no right to tamper with nature.

No one should attempt a garden unless, to begin with, he has an illimitable love of all growing things. He must also possess infinite patience, unflagging industry, an abundance of common sense and eternal optimism.

"THE HEIGHTS ABOVE"

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There is nothing in the world more sensitive to influence than a flower. They seem to feel instinctively whether they are beloved or not, and their gratitude for care is absolutely human.

If anyone tells you "flowers will not grow for me," you need not resort to reason, to know it is because they bring no love to the flower. When a woman facetiously says to me:

"What cabalistic words do you utter over your roses, to make them succeed as they never do for me?"

I answer practically:

"To start with I selected a sloping spot for my garden to insure proper drainage, and a location that has been naturally blessed by a wind-break to the north. I buy roses only of rosarians, not of seedmen. I plant nothing between my roses to rob them of strength or prevent my walking about them to pick the flowers or perpetually cultivate the bushes. There are generous spaces of beautiful clear soil between the plants, where no weeds grow because none are ever permitted to start. Each week when the lawn is mowed, all grass shavings go to mulch my roses, the week-old grass being worked into the soil about the plants before the new supply is placed about them.

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Thus not only is the ground thoroughly aerated but it is enriched by the disintegration of the grass and it saves me the trouble of watering. I pick every blossom during or immediately after its flowering. If a rose is sick, I nurse it. All the bushes are treated many times with stimulating commercial fertilizer during the strain of the blooming season, being careful that none ever touches the plant, placing it in a trench-like circle about it. As I look at my roses every day, hand picking prohibits any long victory for insects. So you see there is no magic; just constant attention, much manipulation of soil and a little common sense."

I do not add to this person "and *love, love, love,*" for she could not comprehend.

20th September.

The alarming behavior of the thermometer caused panic both in the head-gardener's heart and those of her flowers. When I rushed shiveringly about the garden yester evening I ached with sympathy, for the flowers looked scared to death. I gazed sadly at the procrastinating cœsmos which have dilly-dallied about blooming until they may not have a chance at all; perhaps they too believed those perfidious katy-dids. o/

My tenderest chrysanthemums laden with hopeful swelling buds were much perturbed. Most of the dahlias were picked and carried within the unfrosty house. Like a mother with a threatened child, I nervously consulted the thermometer all evening and struck many a match during the night. My vigilance must have kept off the frost, for we passed the night safely. But the narrow escape warned me and this afternoon was spent in potting all my susceptible things.

We do not have many plants in the house in

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winter, perhaps because we haven't room, but I think it is rather that we both feel that an abundance of bloom all winter long indoors, robs the spring of its great mission of surprise and the birth of all things new.

Coincident with the chilliness of the past few days are symptoms in us of a return to our old winter friends,—the books. They will probably have to be mollified after our long neglect.

Last winter we spent many evenings in revisiting the wondrous land of the Doones. "Lorna Doone" is one of the most expensive books. With its continuous and succulent relation of feasts, the room fairly reeked with savory aromas. Bentley and I would get so ravenously hungry, we would have to cease reading to make a raid on the cellar. If the book had not come at last to a repleted end I'm sure I could never have endured Bentley's ever increasing corpulency, and there is no telling in what condition the family finances would have been.

As I dug among the columbines yesterday with my ear close to the earth and imagination in tune, I could scarcely believe my senses when I caught on a vagrant breeze a bar of "The King of Thule."

"Oh!" thought I, "it is contrast that counts. To hear an air from 'Faust' in the city would stir no strange chord within me. Ah! what it means in the wilderness. Who can this minstrel be?"

The sounds grew nearer and fancy tiptoed farther away. The tune now mingling with a rumble of wheels was almost upon me. I rose excitedly from the ground and looked into the roseate face of our rotund butcher, who was merely singing a good old Methodist hymn, while carrying home all that was left of a calf's young dream.

"Such is realism," I sighed as I fell to earth again.

But Nature has a way of comforting us after all, for our shattered dreams, if we will

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but wait. You elders destroy fairyland for us in childhood—we one day go out in the woods to see the carpet of moss that grew where the elves danced last night, we proudly show to you that toad-stool band-stand where sat the fairy orchestra, and we are told, it is damp and unhealthy where moss grows and not to touch that poisonous mushroom. But Nature—the good old fairy godmother—puts her lips to our ear and confides the great secret of the restoration of fairy-land, and tells us its name is "*Garden.*"

Yesterday afternoon as Bentley and I sat in the soft-pedalled depths of the pine thicket, he whispered mysteriously shutting his eyes very tight:

"Are you sure this is not the hand of Ferrara I'm holding?" (so callous has my hard-digging palm become) when his hand suddenly tightened on mine and his eyes flew open with incredulity.

Had my ears deceived me twice in one day?—surely we heard the laugh of a robin! "But," thought I, "they all left us a month ago."

Bentley and I scarcely breathed, but we gazed on each other with perfect ecstasy as we heard the rocking, soothing, lullaby-like song

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of a robin carolling from the great pine. Pulling me along after him, Bentley crept over the silent pine carpet until we located our visitor. We were riveted with the reminiscence of summer until a flight of brownish red left us alone with autumn again.

3rd October.

There are different standards of money in this world and various scales of richness, but my idea of absolute wealth consists in owning all the manure we need. To the un-gardening eye, the dark mountain that has sprung up the last week at the east of my rose-garden, may not be a thing of beauty. It is not due to any geological cataclysm, it is only a deposit in the bank of fertility for my flowers' future endowment.

At the end of the great field of "bear corn," rises a whole range of mountains of the same variety. When I realize they were made possible by the earnings of the very garden they are to return to, I feel very proud. The daughter of a nearby farmer came to these so-called city-amateurs to buy corn yesterday;

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under the circumstances it was only human to feel slightly bumptious.

Bentley was for not selling a thing out of the garden this summer, but after he had given to his heart's content of his store of vegetables to all the widows and maidens round-about and there was still much more than we could use, I suddenly developed financial genius, making a deal of exchange with the grocer. Our vegetables were always so fresh and the baskets piled so high, the villagers on investigation of their origin began to come directly to us for supplies.

I now have a sympathetic understanding of the ways of the market gardener—so frequently censured by myself and others for an apparent proneness to deception.

It is only art, and a natural leaning to the beautiful in appearance that makes a gardener put his most perfect fruit or vegetable on top. It is very nice to find so pleasant an explanation of this gentle fraud, and should go far toward establishing a new comprehension of the fine instincts of the general purveyors of food.

* * * * *

I just heard the doctor who was passing by

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(the nicest thing for a doctor to do) ask Bentley:

"Haven't you got the automobile craze yet?"

"N—no," drawled Bentley, "but I do sorely yearn for a jack-ass."

When one's barber (that is Bentley's) can afford a great red automobile, I feel it is very distinguished to possess only a good old wheelbarrow.

"A GOOD OLD WHEEL-BARROW"

6 ♯ October .

"If it were not for a slight discrepancy of period I should be sure it was your character that inspired the line, 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast!' " quoth Bentley when I announced we should make wine again this season. "Didn't you ever hear of the terms 'discouraged'—'hopeless?' " he continued.

"I'm afraid my vocabulary hasn't acquired them yet," I confessed blithely.

You see a garden eradicates all pessimistic weeds in one's nature; my flowers have taught me there is no such thing as despair. And so it is with the painting. Never have I taken out a clean canvas but I have said to myself: "Here goes for the greatest painting ever yet produced." When it is finished, the mere accident of its not being a masterpiece never keeps me from hoping it of the next; I say

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placidly: "It is as good as I can make it with my present development, but *just wait*."

This confidence having been communicated to Bentley, brought forth:

"Yes, we say certain artists and authors are so exceedingly modest; they are without doubt the greatest egotists, so are we. When the world praises what we now do, their appreciation of our present accomplishment seems perfectly absurd, for we have the knowledge within ourselves that this is nothing—not an atom, of the superlative latent force we possess. The perfect poise bred of absolute faith in our eventual, supernal, all-conquering genius, passes for modesty."

"Yes indeed," I agreed with delight, "and unless an artist has this eternal faith, heaven help him."

But this seems a far cry from wine. If the mere thought of the vintage inspires such eloquence, what might the wine itself do?

We could not bring ourselves to the point of using our own carefully bagged grapes for the required ten gallons. The method of bagging is but little trouble and so very worth while. We get the bags by the hundreds and slit a small place in the end for drainage, then pin them about the clusters in their early

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stage. The vines look quite gay, and when the bags are opened, it is as much fun as rum-maging in a Christmas stocking. The grapes retain that exquisite bloom and perfection which is only attained by cheating bugs, insects, bees and birds.

Our former landlord and very high constable, drove me far over the mountains to get the necessary crates of grapes. The drive was most enlightening for he knows all the inhabitants of the country, having at times arrested some of them, and having an eye to the windward for others.

I received many sympathetic glances from the country people, for of course they thought, on account of my escort, I must be in the same predicament many of them had been in, and others feared they might be.

It was also a chance to study politics. As township elections are drawing near, my constable was the recipient of many hearty handshakes and reminders of fellow-lodge membership by aspiring candidates.

A drive of twenty miles over mountain roads makes one appreciate a good road-commissioner. To my delight I found the man who sold us the grapes held that office and was up for re-election, so I was able, on my

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return home, to tell Bentley how he must vote for me.

Bentley's craving of a jack-ass came within one of being satisfied, for I found our road-commissioner had a jinny he would part with under proper pressure.

Should Bentley take possession of it, I shall certainly get an Irish jaunting-car and peddle my flowers and vegetables over hill and dale, doing a little happy-fortune-telling on the side.

It was necessary for Bentley and Mr. Schweinehunden to form a truce in order that our wine be made, for the latter owns the cider press we needed. Oh! but Bentley should have been in the diplomatic service! Mr. Schweinehunden was in the midst of his own cider-making, but the good old man dumped his apple-cheese out of the press, falling an instant victim to Bentley's engaging ways.

The cider press is kept in an old windowless out-house, filled with the heterogeneous treasures of a hoarding life, and Rembradntean shadows. The sociable chickens, accustomed to roam at will, swarmed about the floor, as also did the Schweinehunden cats, except when Vagrant made violent onslaughts on the assembled party, throwing us all into tempo-

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rary pandemonium. I did not dare go home and leave the pressing out to the men, there was too much live stock about, and the possibility of their making sausage instead of wine too apparent.

Even if our wine turns out to be another case of fire-water, I have been compensated for my trouble by the delicious fragrance of those crushed grapes. So much of my joy in life comes through my nose, I often find myself regretting it had not been the style at the time I was created to have at least a dozen.

We have left the keg in the out-house to "work," which it does for several weeks. It seems such a proof of the great invisible sympathetic chord in Nature that the wine will again work in the spring when the grape-vines blossom—an echoing throb of the spring efflorescence.

11th October.

Bentley stuck a Shirley poppy in my hair yesterday, a sort of posthumous poppy, for the plants look dead and dried, yet all these last weeks they have once in a while added another verse to their supposed completed summer song. The unexpected bunch of lavender sweet-peas I laid on Bentley's easel this morning meant more than a thousand in August.

These postscripts of the garden are sometimes its most precious bits. I am sure I should not enjoy living in California or the Hawaiian Islands, where the flowers bloom unceasingly and gratuitously. It is the battle I enjoy—the attaining through struggle, vigilance, industry and the opportunity for expending motherly love.

Neither could I bear a whole year of unabated bloom. I need my rest from beauty as much as the garden. It is the severe winter

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we must endure which whets our appetite properly for spring. In the South I used to take our flowers much more for granted.

The thermometer has begun to browbeat me again. After a few nights of agonized fear and constant inspection of its menacing countenance, I wearily complained to Bentley, "It's the uncertainty that sickens me. I wish the miserable old thing would go down in the thirties and be done with it." It took me at my word, and night before last (katy-dids to the contrary) the frost came.

The lazy cosmos was spared and is now reminding us every day of how much they helped our love affair on, three years ago. Bentley had never seen them until that time; he was so enamored of the sprays I brought to his studio, it was an easy transition from loving the cosmos to love the gardener too.

Concurrent with the frost came our second portion of bulbs. If a dear old sea-captain-of-an-uncle had pleasantly died in the Indian Ocean, leaving us a treasure-laden ship legacy, we could not have been more delighted than we were over our large box of bulbs. For many of them came from Japan, bringing thoughts of the fragile exquisiteness of that fantastic land, while others coming from Hol-

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land, reconstructed memories of its peaceful atmosphere disturbed by nothing more strenuous than the wind-mill's deliberate wings. Though we knew just how they would look, we untied every package, examined and exclaimed over the rare handsomeness of each variety of bulb.

Yesterday morning Bentley was sleeping so musically, I decided he should be rewarded by having his breakfast in bed. This always constitutes a great luxury, and we confer the privilege on each other as reward of merit or even at times use it as a bribe.

I slipped out in the garden to gather choice posies for his breakfast tray, and found myself quite surrounded by birds. One fellow was evidently practicing a new musical part; in the wild grape vines he sang:

and that strain not being quite to his liking he tried:

Then he improvised several other variations on his original theme, just as a great composer might.

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Tiny birds not much larger than humming-birds fluttered nervously about, and plump round creatures of dove-grey with golden faces and greenish head-tops flitted everywhere. They minded me so little, I really forgot all about being only a person, and broke into a birdlike song irresistibly.

Bentley and I have never felt we could join the army of sparrow detractors. In summer when our woods are appropriated by the robins, thrushes and other large birds, the sparrows modestly withdraw, only appearing toward evening in the front road for their playful funny dust baths.

They seem to have more socialistic, communistic ideas than any other birds. The rest of our bird friends have little or no affiliation with their kind, only associating with their chosen mate, instead of fraternizing generally as the sparrows do. In the fall the sparrows re-enter our dynasty, adding a merry touch to many an otherwise dreary winter's landscape.

Bentley has a justification of his kindness to them, for we find they have successfully assisted him in keeping down the cabbage worms.

A neighbor catches these friendly little

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birds by the dozen in her chicken-yard, where they unsuspectingly go within the wire netting in their winter extremity, to gather the crumbs that fall from the pullets' table. In all kindness, this neighbor sent over for our delectation four and twenty sparrows baked within a pie.

Poor Bentley almost fainted with horror as he gasped:

"I'd just as soon eat Vagrant!" And I fed any possible relatives of the deceased with increased tenderness for days. The pie we silently buried.

12 4 October.

When we undertook the problem of conquering two and a half acres of wilderness last spring, realizing the necessary expense of much hired assistance and fertilization, we faced the fact squarely that our first year's debit account would assuredly be largely in excess of the credit side. But in looking back over the past seven months in perspective, we find that in spite of our great expenditures the garden has really paid for itself.

We have not bought a vegetable since the first of May, meanwhile feasting as few monarchs do.

Our cellar already looks as if we were preparing for a medieval siege, with its crates of potatoes, onions, cabbages and apples, the hanging shelf laden with preserves, canned vegetables and pickles, to say nothing of the casks of our famous home-brewed wine and cider.

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Our preserving and canning are done, I might say, in parenthesis. For it is never deliberately planned, but happens incidentally when the spirit moves us or the hours seem unhampered. Bentley and I always make a lark of this sort of thing, accomplishing our preserving at night, on the sly, after the faithful Anna has gone upstairs to her well-earned rest. We alternately take turns, one reading aloud while the other fellow stirs, and before we know it, lo and behold, the cellar is enriched by a few dozen more jars of goodies, and we smile over the future "Parties" made possible. Our garden has not only fed this greedy household prodigally for six months already, but it will provide for all our winter hunger besides.

Bentley in making out a statement of expenses and profits put down the following item: "Saved \$1,000 by the flower garden, it having produced all the floral offerings I should otherwise have had to purchase for one Kitty."

Just for curiosity I counted the buds in the rose-garden this morning; there are ninety-four ready to bloom, if the frost will only mind its own business elsewhere for a time.

From the Faultfinder's standpoint our

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premises have a rather ragged appearance now, for hundreds of gaunt sun-flower skeletons appear everywhere. We are compensated for the reprieve we have given them by the swarms of birds they attract.

Our not knowing the ornithological names of the birds does not interfere with our enjoyment of them, for after all, are we not merely in the happy predicament of the dear birds themselves who are quite ignorant of the commonplace titles men have conferred on them? I think the early spring and summer birds must be worm and insect gourmands, while the birds of autumn are probably the seed epicures.

Quite a number of robins are using our garden as a way-side tavern on their journey south, but they do not pay their board in song, as our lone guest did on the thirtieth of September. The present ones must be the rear-guard of the great robin army.

Bentley notices a different quality in their mode of flying now. It is not the desultory flutterings of summer, but a stronger more pigeon-like flight. We observed during the summer how rarely the robins scaled the summits of the highest pines, but they now seem to prefer the very crests of trees, following

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out, perhaps, some bird method of physical training to prepare them for their coming strenuous journey south.

The garden is more full of color now than at any previous time. In every direction the eye is dazzled by the fern-like fronds of sumach painted a splendid scarlet by the magic brush of J. Frost, N. A. (Nature Academician).

The wild grapes bother little with the fruit their cultivated relatives can bear in so much greater perfection, but with some wonderful alchemy they now change their leaves to the purest gold.

After filching so much wilderness from Nature, we made amends by allowing her a reservation on the lower back hill where we gave her permission to be as rampantly audacious as she chose. An ever-changing programme of wild flowers here, has been almost a rebuke to our supposed better methods of culture. With a reckless disregard of perfunctory form, she has produced a multiform beauty merely by a prodigal use of white daisies, black-eyed Susans, Queen Anne's Lace, yellow wild snapdragons, bittersweet, goldenrod, 'sneeze-weed, sumach and the wild purple aster.

SUMACH FROM THE
STUDIO WINDOW

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Along the back lawn are some beds I beguiled the inscrutable Anna into planting. Of course Anna's life is not altogether bare of interest, for Bentley adds much piquancy to her existence by such remarks as: "Look out, Anna, you'll bust your biler!" And when she slipped on the icy back steps last winter and sprained her ankle, Bentley pretended to believe the long predicted had happened, making daily facetious inquiries as to how her shattered "biler" was progressing.

Frequent reference to her mythical approaching marriage never fails to produce a pleasant flutter in Anna's reposeful bosom. When Bentley, who can sing or whistle farther off the key than any other living mortal, bursts into the kitchen quietude with strains of truly extraordinary discord, interpolated with: "Anna, don't you think my music grows more beautiful every day?" Anna's joy becomes complete. She simpers: "It does sound ni-ees!" Everyone feminine existing within Bentley's aureola, is well content with their gender.

However, not to let Bentley supply all the sunshine in Anna's life of drudgery, I bethought me of letting her taste the pleasures of digging, the wonder of seed planting, the

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excitement of watching the upcoming, and the thrill of beholding the first bud,—all of which gives one the actual sensation of creation. Her little garden has been a great respite, I'm sure, from the kitchen stove during the hot summer, and has provided her with beautiful bunches of flowers to carry home proudly every Thursday and Sunday.

Anna has even caught the contagion of seed harvesting, having gathered enough nasturtiums, phlox, nicotiana, stocks and coreopsis seed to supply her family and friends as well as provide for a repetition of her own garden next year.

17 October.

Bentley, a few days ago, went to hunt Mr. Sams to get him to do a little fall tinkering for us, and found him employed at the lugubrious job of polishing up the town hearse.

"Why, who's dead?" Bentley asked with anxiety.

"Nobody in particular," Mr. Sams enigmatically replied.

In the country where even the names of all family horses are familiar to us, we are brought face to face with the raw tragedies of life more than when we dwelt in the city. Our sympathies, naturally vibrant, were often sadly stirred when we first came here to live, but as we gradually found we were apparently the only ones deeply grieved over deaths and accidents, we have learned to take a more philosophic, rustic view of things. Emo-

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tion is often merely a phase of education—grief a form of culture. A funeral in the country frequently provides the children of the departed one the only opportunity of their lives to enjoy the distinction of riding in a slam-door carriage.

Never shall I forget that essay on, O death, thou hath no sting! O grave behold thy victory! presented by the little mulatto Robert, who lived in our backyard in the South, when his dusky mother passed on to brighter shores.

In the funeral procession sat the small Robert in regal state in the big glass carriage, gazing out of its window at me, with an ecstatic pride and more glistening teeth than I had ever believed one human head could hold.

During the first weeks after our settlement here, a violent knock at our door at five one morning took Bentley in haste to the front studio to inquire the trouble. Leaping high in the air in order to be seen above the porch roof rim, keeping a strange rhythm to his tearless ejaculation, was a neighboring urchin, spreading the news of "Pa's a-dyin'," "pa's a-dyin'."

Once it became my wretched duty to shatter the feelings of a wife with the intelli-

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gence, all other neighbors shunned to convey, of her husband's hideous death. I found my agony of sympathy was quite unnecessary, for the woman's only disquietude was caused by the fear that the blood from "her man's" mutilated body, dripping on the parlor floor, would obliterate the insurance policy she had secretly taken out on his life (in accordance with the advice of a fortune-teller), and had hidden under the carpet.

A large hearted Hibernian took charge of the family of another victim of tragedy in our vicinity, afterward recounting many County Cork details of the affair to me, such as: "'Sarah,' I seys ter her, 'meck the byes clane thimselves up, the company bein' comin' soon, an wash yersilf fer yer gude man's nice funerald,' but thet 'oman be only a-thinkin' uv the rooster she wanted to kouck fer dinner, yis-sir! 'Sarah,' agin seys I, rockin' of mesilf back and forrards, 'don't yer *dare* tek the rooster's hid off, with yer gude man lyin' cold an' stark in the parler.' An' on I steys to watch the cratur. Oh! she wus *sumpin fierce!* An' niver wunce did she sey to me, 'have a cup of tay, Mrs. Mulligan, to warrum yer-silf up a bit'—no sir! it be only uv her own stummick she be a-thinkin'!"

26th October.

Last Sunday night after a tour outdoors in the chilly atmosphere Bentley came in and said to me:

“Your garden is in its last throes, Kitty, why should you be made miserable by witnessing its death struggle? Come away with me on the honeymoon that’s getting dreadfully overdue.”

It was after ten o’clock, but that was no reason why two minds could not be made up for a daylight flight. Our last look next morning from the back bedroom window disclosed the first snow on the Catskills, behind which a great orange moon was slowly hiding from the sun that peeped over the eastern rim of the horizon.

The first snow on the Catskills has inaugurated civil war in our household for two years. I am always its discoverer—Bent-

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ley invariably contradicting my announcement by declaring it to be only the light on the autumn leaves. After dignified reiteration of "snow" on my part and vehement refutation on Bentley's side, we leave it to the Postmistress, who is never wrong about anything. This year we were too busy getting away to disagree on the subject except in eloquent looks.

When on reaching the Berkshires (which turned out to be our destination) we found four inches of snow, I experienced a supreme verification of past and present observations. How snow could remain unmelted on the gold and red of the autumn's blaze seemed incomprehensible.

We drove up and ever upward through snow-laden trees, whose heavy golden limbs made low obeisance to the passing travelers.

That night was spent on the gables of the world.

And no one else in the whole universe knew where we two were. What a wonderful thing it is to thus get lost, with the one you love, cutting all ties with everyday life, beyond the reach of summoning telegram or banal letter.

Neither Vagrant nor Anna could lay a thought upon us, for we had said farewells in-

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to two astonished blue eyes, and two wistful brown ones, going forth into space—indefinite space. It was such an extraordinary thing, that first honeymooning morning, to enter instantly into the day with an absence of that feeling of responsibility, unfinished labor, awaiting tasks, that always fills my breast at home even before sleep has absolutely lifted its seal from my lids.

That morning in the Berkshires I danced into the day unshackled—a kindred of the butterfly, a sister to the bird. Bentley and I have never deliberately planned anything in our love-life. Even on that first nasturtium-day he did not ask my name—my earth name, nor the location of my mundane residence. Neither did he inquire when he should see me again. There is in both of us that abiding faith in the eventualness of life, that makes plans seem trivial and, I had almost said, amateurish.

A week after the nasturtium meeting Bentley sent a note through the friend of the next-door studio to "Betsy-of-the-garden," informing her he was coming to find her and teach her how to paint. Never during all that first year of lessons in painting, in loving and other mysteries, did either of us ever ask—"When

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shall we see each other again?" So when we go a-holidaying, it is never long thought over, destination is generally vague and return nebulous.

After days of gipsying in the Berkshires, through fields of dead golden-rod and hills of living fire, I grew weary of irresponsibility, so I whispered one morning to Bentley: "I am so tired of tramping over other people's land, I'm getting homesick for the shade of our pines—I even long to hear the tinkle of our milkman's bell. Take me home and we will finish our honeymoon in our own wilderness."

27th October

After all, the best part of going away is the getting back home again. My predominant feeling on our return was the satisfaction of not owning more land than we can be intimately acquainted with. I could not bear being deprived, by too vast an estate, of visiting all portions of my possessions every day.

The garden was screaming for help, so we only had time to kiss our hands to the studio and fly to the assistance of the out-of-doors. Bentley rushed to the last banking of his celery which is still to be left to grow outside a little longer, though others are storing theirs in cellars.

I hastily began digging holes for the long postponed English and Spanish iris. A dilettante would forever forswear gardening if she had to dig six hundred holes, putting a trowelful of sand above and below each bulb; although my hand was wobbly by evening,

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I was sustained by the elation of having accomplished great things, while my inward eye was fixed on next year's iris loveliness.

Altogether we have planted over a thousand bulbs—tulips, hyacinths and scillas. We already possess so many narcissi we did not add to our store of them this season.

The amphitheatre will glow next spring with different shades of pink and old rose tulips, interspersed with rose colored scillas. Later in spring a great space will send up foxglove steeples, and the perennial candy-tuft will make all the borders shine with white. Shirley poppies will again be with us here, with an addition of Oriental poppies for genuine splendor. On the rocky bank between the amphitheatre and marsh we are experimenting with tulips—dark purple and white. If they thrive they should be startlingly beautiful seen through the pale green trunks of the slender poplars.

Right here I must sing the praise of stone. If your land is rocky, congratulate yourself, for if you are judicious in how few stones you throw out, the perils of droughts are lessened for you. Mr. Schweinehunden tells of a farmer in Germany who had all the stones removed from his land at great expense. His

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following crops were such failures, he had all the stones hauled back again.

Wherever our land is inclined to be very dry, I introduce many stones to conserve the moisture. When planting a bank or slope that is greatly drained and consequently dry, I drive stones with the big hammer in between the plants, both to retain the moisture and resist the washing away of soil by rains.

* * * * *

It seems to me I had to go away from home to appreciate the extraordinary beauty of our own garden. If any credit belongs to us it is because we really meddled so little with nature. One of the first things we realized convincingly was this: if you study out the natural, it is very sure to be the beautiful.

Before we purchased the Wilderness, we of course tramped through it frequently, naturally making our way toward the points of greatest beauty. Gradually we formed trails through its tangles—trails that *led to something*. So it now happens there are no perfunctory paths through garden or wilderness, only the old trails cleared and made more beautiful.

So, too, none of our flower-beds were espe-

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cially designed, they merely developed in the natural spots—skirting the edges of the different pine thickets or tucked away in the curves of the trails, taking the place of eradicated briars. Consequently none of the flower stretches have conventional shapes; we do not possess a popular floral star or crescent, yet the beds are seldom straight, for when you follow Nature's lead you are very apt to find many curves.

I do not believe the greatest landscape gardener could have thought out the perfect symmetry and harmony we achieved by merely surrendering ourselves to the natural.

29th October.

The emphasis of the season's change is only felt distinctly by those who abide in the country. When the cold blasts of autumn's bugle announce the approach of winter, you city dwellers merely have to hunt up the pawn tickets to redeem your overcoats, or casually don your union-suits. The only association of winter's inauguration clinging to many minds is the odor of moth balls. But in the country when the Indian summer's haze vanishes there begins a preparation like unto that of the old baronial days, when retainers stocked the cellars of their lord with enough provender to withstand an indefinite siege. Every hour is now devoted to snuggling things away. The corn must be stacked, the sweet potatoes dug, the onions dried out, the apples

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picked, the cabbage buried—each day is so exciting and filled with real labor!

In the flower garden the last weeds must be eradicated for they must not be permitted to drop their seed if you would lessen next year's trials. I have never seen the phenomena of the weeds' knack of impersonation commented on, yet their remarkable imitations of the flowers they reside beside must have been noticed by all gardeners. When flower seed come up, there is always an accompanying weed that sprouts up in the rows, so nearly identical with the flower leaf form, it is impossible to tell them apart for some time. In the onion bed we even found a weed trying to form an onion-like root in the enthusiasm of its emulation.

We do not throw the weeds in their seed stage on the compost pile, nor the old flower stalks and dead vines. It is best to burn them all, destroying their disease germs and possible insect eggs.

Yesterday Bentley dug a great trench, carpeting the bottom with leaves. This he filled with sixty-two heads of cabbage, tucking leaves between and over. "You don't know the wonder of handling so much color," he called out to me, as he gloatingly grabbed up

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armsfull of the molten gold and copper of the maple leaves.

Of course he had to add a touch of the original, which took the form of using the tall hollow tubes of the dead sunflower stalks for upright pipes of ventilation in the cabbage vault.

He left thirty cabbages out to be used for our sauerkraut. Don't scoff at kraut until you've tried making your own. Our half barrel of last winter provided many a lunch with an absolute delicacy, when served with melted butter. The "bear-corn" is still holding out. We planted three kinds at once—therein lay the secret of success; a large variety, name unknown, supplied by Mr. Schweinehunden, black Mexican, and Country Gentlemen! The Mexican ripened first, the Schweinehunden second and the Country Gentleman we are fattening on now.

The bagged grapes resisted the frost, supplying the luscious preface of each present morning's breakfast. The rose garden provided two Richmonds for last night's dinner.

When we arrived home we found all the hardy chrysanthemums in full bloom—yellow, pink, brown and red. The tender vari-

THE CORN WE PLANTED THE
DAY THE BEAR CAME

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eties have been brought up to the studio, where they will brighten the days far into December. How I love the pungent odor of the chrysanthemum; it seems the condensed essence of the autumn's perfume.

Here endeth the most violent day of our united garden existence.

After two bitter cold rainy nights, Bentley decided Providence unassisted could not be expected to save that celery. Early this morning the family equipage began its one-wheeled pilgrimage from marsh to hot-bed carrying each trip about fifty bunches of celery. The marsh in its ruthless haste to embody my pool-dreams, has been an almost unbroken lake since the past two days' violent rains, and could even have been used as a skating-pond had its mornings' ice been a little thicker.

After being on his knees to that celery all summer, Bentley realized it would not be the proper sequence to leave it to a paltry fate at this late day. So this morning he began to

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store the bunches in the spent hot-bed and his private warm frame, placing them as thick as sardines, with a little soil between. The swimming condition of the marsh caused the black soil to cling intact to the celery roots, so there should be no interruption in their growth.

Being merely female after all, I suppose I couldn't resist questioning after the thirteenth wheel-barrow of leaden weight had been trundled—

"Do you still think you will plant the entire marsh in celery next season?"

"Hell no!" came the sepulchral explosive from the hot-bed depths, "I'll never plant more than fifty again."

Bentley's celery-patience has been sorely tried lately, almost reaching its utter decline yesterday when a lisping boy interrupted a seventy-five dollar illustration by requesting, "Thixt thents wuth of thelery." Bentley stamped the two hundred feet to the patch, yanking forth the desired bunch with small apparent appreciation of our financial gain.

This afternoon, after a back-breaking day of digging roots of dahlias, besides planting my last hyacinths in the dial bed of the rose garden, I sighed in the vicinity of the hot-bed:

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"I feel as old as the Dunderbergs!"

"*Dunderbergs?*—bosh! I'm as old as the first thought."

I realized things were getting serious toward the end of the obsequies of the five hundredth celery bunch, but the real situation did not dawn upon me until I saw Bentley leap out of the hot-bed with haggard countenance and limp Ferrara-ward.

I took to my heels in pursuit, but arrived on the scene too late to prevent the climax, only getting there in time to hear Ferrara delightedly exclaiming:

"Yes, yes, I understand sir—thank you."

"Oh! Bentley, what is it?" I gasped.

"It's done, Kitty." Bentley gleefully announced, "I've been interrupted for seven cents, six cents, five cents worth of celery long enough, now I've disposed of some of it in bulk. It was fate—I always had a psychological feeling of Ferrara's right to that patch, and now it's gone where it belongs."

"You've never given him all those four hundred celery?" I grieved.

But Bentley had danced off with a rejuvenation miraculous to behold.

I thought of the months of his marrow-bone service, the trenching, the planting, the bank-

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ing, the swearing. I gazed reproachfully upon the rapturous countenance of the illumined Ferrara, then on looking away and finding a glowing red face peeping knowingly at me from behind the far purple mountains, I—what could I do but smile at the sun?

It rained again last night, yet the morning found us quite rested and content, Bentley's first matutinal remark being: "There are many worse sensations in life than mere physical fatigue."

Mr. Schweinehunden came over with the barrel of greenings we had engaged from him, and told a fearful tale of woe. The summer's drought had dealt sadly with his celery, and what was left of it had been quite ruined by the late freezing rains.

"That's what comes of not having a marsh that's wet in dry weather and dry in wet weather," declared the rather unsympathetic Bentley.

When I saw the marsh this morning I could scarcely applaud the veracity of the latter part of Bentley's bragging statement. The swift retribution that befell the prevaricator

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is only hearsay, for I am thankful to say I was spared the harrowing sight of my lord's humiliation.

This morning, it seems, Bentley had to fairly swim out like a muskrat, to rescue one bunch at a time. When in a particularly boggy section of the swamp it suddenly dawned upon him—something was giving away! Down sank one foot out of sight. Its twin used for a prop to derrick forth its brother foot met the same fate, being quickly sucked under.

When foot number one was pulled forth after violent tugging, it came up minus rubber and shoe. With only its stocking protection, it had, however, to be lowered again to form a brace for the rescue of foot number two. The latter, on being uplifted, was found to have also lost most of its dignified apparel. On being lowered to save the life of number one, number one was dragged forth appearing in a muck-raked edition of the nude, its stocking having sunk somewhere toward the earth's centre of gravity (or levity).

This bucket in the well performance becoming more and more futile, Bentley was forced to return to the attitude of some of his respected forefathers, to solve his dilemma,

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using his hands as adjuncts. When in his last extremity of hope he yelled for assistance, he beheld the elated Mr. Schweinehunden placidly standing on the safe shores of the firm highway, reaping his long wished-for revenge.

Bentley afterwards declared: "Do you know, Kitty, I do believe that delighted old wretch was undecided for a minute whether to rescue me, or let me sink to my doom right there in the bosom of my celery!"

Whether Mr. Schweinehunden's soul rose to greatness of its own volition, or whether Bentley assisted it to heroism by threats or vituperation will probably never be known. But the old man eventually flung a plank across the celery-sea, and went out on the raft, dragging forth an unusually humble Bentley. Mr. Schweinehunden then assisted to the house the most bedraggled looking sweetheart a woman's eyes ever beheld.

After lamentations over my Bentley's trials and rejoicings at his rescue (all made feelingly by me at a safe distance), I inquired: "Of what did you think, when you realized you were being swallowed up—is it true that at such moments one's past rises before them?"

"*My* past? No indeed. Only the dreadful

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pasts of my friends loomed hideously before me."

* * * * *

After cleanliness and dignity had been restored Bentley laughed: "Well I got rid of another parcel of that celery."

"How's that, did it too sink toward the antipodes?"

"No. On the way back to the house, I awarded Mr. Schweinehunden a Carnegie medal of one hundred celery."

The future holds no labor problems for us, whatever the precarious relations of Bentley and Mr. Schweinhunden may be. The Ferraras thoughtfully, or thoughtlessly, produced many children—how many I've never exactly known, for a new child is always appearing on the scene, explained variously as "cousin," "brother," and sometimes as plain "child."

Bentley, when in the early stages of his late celery throes (before the thrilling rescue by Mr. Schweinhunden) was willing to thankfully accept any variety of assistance, be it large or small. At a crucial moment two young Ferraras, attracted by curiosity or a desire for lucre, appeared in the marsh. It seemed absurd to expect adequate labor from such a small aggregation of years, but Bentley was desperate and regarded them as human manna descending from heaven.

"WHEN THE HOUR OF
PAYMENT ARRIVED"

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Our experience hitherto with children in the garden has been confined to some small Irish vagabonds who worked with violent enthusiasm and some brogue during the early stages of service, rapidly developing into violent brogue and no enthusiasm for work toward the latter part.

These little Italians however had immense enthusiasm, unheard-of-stick-to-it-ness, genuine cleverness in idea assimilation, and muscle. After the first two Ferraras had been celery-assisting for about an hour, another Ferrara, Cyrane by name, approached, demanding a job. On his heels there shortly followed the four-year-old Tinine. Her voluble Italian was translated by her more Americanized brothers into an urgent request for labor. Tinine in her scarlet gown seemed to have a positive genius for getting under everyone's heels.

She had such a faculty of swarming, it seemed hard to believe there was only one of her. When assailed by a hail-storm of invectives from her furious brothers, she would flee to Bentley's person for protection, grabbing him beseechingly by the seat of his trousers. When the "Vendetta" seemed imminent, Bentley with masterly tact, solved the situation by offering, through an interpreter, a sal-

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ary to Tinine for mere goodness, unaccompanied by manual labor.

The boys did not confine their assistance to the celery, but dug potatoes, weeded asparagus, and gathered apples with undiminished faithfulness and many songs. I have radiant visions of a garden future facilitated and made merry by the generous family Ferrara has improvised.

And should Anna's long prophesied marriage ever really occur, there is Tinine whom the years will fit to fill the dreaded vacancy.

When the hour of payment arrived, they sat in line, a queer little brigade to be sure. Fifteen cents was gravely handed out to the larger boys; the slightly incompetent six years old Cyrane had only earned five cents, but he was presented with a penny bonus "for looking like your mother," Bentley explained. When it came to Tinine, Bentley alas! searched his pockets in vain for the promised cent. There was nothing to do, but give a verbal promissory note for her salary.

The next afternoon they were back in full force as soon as school was over. Bentley lamented to Cesare:

"That was too bad about Tinine's penny.

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She shall surely have it this afternoon though."

"Oh! I fixed that for you," proudly confided Caesare. "I had a penny in my breeches what I gave her, and she never knew the difference."

"Well, that was nice of you," applauded the surprised Bentley. "But of course I'll make it good to you."

"Oh! never mind that," said Caesare, with the air of a man of the world, "that's all right, sir."

I asked the little Italians today what they did with all the money they have earned in our service. Sale responded quite as a matter of course:

"Give it to our mother."

"To save for you?"

"No—she gives us food all the time. When we make money we give it to her."

A fine sense of reciprocity indeed!

Tinine is now receiving a salary for staying at home.

17th November.

The greatest charm of a garden—and I am always finding a new *greatest*, is its eternal beckoning. Why doesn't a physician instinctively prescribe gardening to those who, for some tragic reason, have lost interest in life? One might labor faithfully in a garden half a century, and still leave an adorably unfinished legacy to some loved one. The only saddening feature is the difficult matter of finding the loving legatee.

An unconquerable sentiment caused me to revisit my old home in the South last year. It was then inhabited by strangers, my parents having passed to the quietude of the garden by the church—their children scattered to homes of their own making, elsewhere on earth.

I stood outside the fence an exile. Gazing

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past the straggling, aged box borders, my eyes sought in vain the beautiful old traceries of paths—the curves of symmetrical beds. Alas! beds and paths had intermingled in an universal neglect. Where were the roses that had been my mother's heart's-joy and the village pride? Only a few decayed stalks showed here and there, distinguished alone by their dried, dead thorns. Even the magnolia trees had felt the general blight, and were fast inviting the felling axe.

I could have borne the desolation and destruction, perhaps, had I not spied a cow stolidly grazing within the sacred domain, to the perfection of whose beauty my mother had given the loving service of a lifetime.

So kind is memory, however, I generally banish this last vision from my mind's eye, and when I think of the garden, old recollections reconstruct its loveliness just as it was in its most beautiful days. I said to Bentley not long ago:

"We are founding the most wonderful of gardens—for *someone*."

If I have a prayer, it is that a sympathetic someone may some day love and continue its history long after I myself have become grass and violets.

I have always thought if we make believe long enough and hard enough, the thing comes true. The Wilderness is a proof of that. Of course another player might not have called it "Wilderness" because her fairy-bubble might have borne a different title. In that short-long-ago, when Bentley and I could have no assurance that our lives should be united except in dreams, we began a very fine make-believe, and called our game "The Wilderness."

When circumstances seemed insurmountable, outside prejudices assailed, we pretended that

"OUR FIRST
NOVEMBER SNOW"

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our real everyday life was only an ugly phantom, and we were the happy residents of a halcyon spot called "The Wilderness." I have just re-read an old letter from Bentley, written when things looked quite unsolvable. He wrote:

"Take my hand, and we will flee from everything that hurts—over the hills to the peaceful refuge of the Wilderness."

During a particularly sick, sad time, I painted a picture of our dream country to make it seem more real. Vagrant elected to sleep on its damp hills one night when it was only half finished, which accounts for its "Whistleresque" effect. An art jury might be blind to its hidden beauties, but to two minds at least, it will probably always remain an art treasure.

When we moved to the country we rented this place because we couldn't purchase the Walkill house. We both loved pines and the many surrounding this home delighted us. However strange it seems to us now, it was indeed weeks before we found time to investigate the adjoining tangle and wood. As we broke through its vines and braved its briars, I exclaimed in rapture, "Why Bentley, this is the very Wilderness we dreamed of so long."

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For over a year we were only trespassers on our coveted preserves, having to even suffer the impotent agony of seeing vandals enter at will, slaying a beloved cedar, or carrying away particularly adored poplars for bean-poles.

This became more and more unbearable, until, as you remember, we landed the sea-captain and became the lawful protectors of our materialized dream.

When I looked out the window this morning and found the Wilderness all white and sparkling, I enticed to Bentley:

"Our first November snow should be the occasion of a general holiday. We shall desert the studio and spend the day a-wintering outside.

He looked disturbed.

"I'm awfully sorry," he replied, "but I have an engagement today that can't be broken."

Never before in my memory of Bentley has there been a business engagement that could not be more easily broken than kept. It is no wonder I looked astonished.

Then female-like I said to myself, "It's the first secret he has had from me," feeling inordinately sad over his lack of explanations. A day without him is always desultory. I did

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a thousand useless things and stared the landscape threadbare from each window.

Finally I donned my brave old garden shoes, rubbers, and Bentley's smoking jacket (which does not fit him any more since our large corn-harvest) and flew to the comforting garden. After wandering without purpose, my mind re-weaving the gossamer threads of the past, I brushed the snow from the white seat at the head of my rose garden, and sat down to contemplate the brigade of straw scarecrows surrounding the grey, cold sundial.

The winter rests lightly upon our garden; the abundance of pines, hemlocks, firs and cedars rob the season of dreariness. In my rose garden alone, I seem to feel the actual sense of chill. Perhaps it is because so many of my roses have disappeared from view under their winter straw trousers.

It was not yet five o'clock, yet the overhead sky was painted in copper pink and emerald green. While I was watching the sun, whose great pedulum has now swung far to the south, Bentley's approach was heralded by the violent joy of Vag's tail. He returned with the same air of hidden thought he had left with in the forenoon.

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I was too glad to have him back to be analytical, however. Sitting down beside me, he fell into the silence of one who has too much to say. Suddenly he bolted out:

"Kitty, how would you like to move to Connecticut to that little farm near Gentian's?"

"Oh! Bentley," was all I had eloquence enough to reply.

"After all," he elaborated, "we have only two and a half acres here. There, on the farm, we could raise sheep, and the house has all the open fire-places you could desire." Still I could think of nothing to respond, so heavy was my heart. He turned on me, as I thought, defiantly: "What will you say when you hear I've disposed of this place?"

My throat ached too much to form anything but a feeble "Bentley—darlin'."

"Yes," he relentlessly proceeded. "I had an engagement today with a lawyer who was to draw up the deed. Here it is," and he pulled forth a gloomy-looking paper. I could hardly see for wetness in my eyes, but I managed to make out in big funereal type

"THIS INDENTURE

Made the 25th day of November, in the year one thousand nine hundred and, between

"THE RAVINE ROCKS"

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Bentley, and Kitty, of the town of”

I stopped, blinded by amazement.

“What does it mean Bentley?”

“It means I’ve disposed of my property to the one who, in all the world, loves it best”—then he whispered the terms.

I was so overcome, I could say nothing—do nothing.

Hand in hand with Vagrant following, we passed the rose garden, climbed the ravine rocks, wound through the amphitheatre to the pine cloister, where Bentley led me to the green bench.

“One night three years ago,” said he, “I spent an hour you did not know of, wandering disconsolately in your former garden, among the flowers you had planted and loved. I looked up at the light in your window and asked myself squarely: ‘What right have I to offer Kitty a shaving mug, a few dishes and an old studio in compensation for losing all this?’ When I left your garden I thought I was licked! But the shaving mug won the day, it seems, and I now want to add a little more to go with it. This is hereafter to be all *your own garden*—but I reserve the right

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to retain my position as assistant gardener permanently."

I felt my face falling into the old comfortable lines of childhood's abandon and—I bawled.

* * * * *

Tonight, however, I wear a hidden smile, for does not Bentley have a birthday next June?—Don't tell anybody, but *I'll just give the dear Wilderness back to him then!*

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