

## Sage

Written for The Western Home Monthly by May Howard.

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I HAD never liked sage ever since the day Ron and I had made a magic brew with it and frightened ourselves nearly to death. But to-day Uncle Philip, (from whom we had expectations,) was coming to dinner, and Clive had bought a goose.

"Must I stuff it?" I asked. I do so loathe sage and onions, even the smell of them makes me dream."

"Just as you like, darling," answered my devoted hubby. Only I know Uncle Pip is partial to it and, unfortunately, he knows we've goose."

"Very well," I agreed despairingly. "Go and pick the sage and I'll start right in; but I warn you if I'm ill to-morrow, it will be your fault, or Uncle Pip's."

"I'll risk it," laughed Clive. I watched him striding down the narrow garden walk, humming to himself, the sun shone across him as he stooped to the herb bed under his hand the sage-bush, all in a blossom, made a faint purple haze.

My mind flashed back to a replica of that picture long ago, only it was mad-cap Ron, my only brother, who had filled it then.

Good old Ron! What fun we had to be sure! What ages it was since I had seen him, not even my wedding had lured him to England. I did not know where he was, except that it must be in some God-forsaken, out-of-the-way corner of the earth; hunting for some weird flower or other. I don't see the sense of men risking their lives for such trash. Who cares, after all, if there is a flower more or less in the world, or if some lunatic of a professor proves his insane theories or not.

Somehow the thought of Ron would not leave me that morning. I wondered when he would come back to turn us out of our comfortable home. I didn't suppose he would do that unless he were married, and so far he had mentioned no girl in his scappy and infrequent letters to me, but of course there was no judging

by that, men seldom speak of vital things in a letter.

The onions boiled over just then, and I caught them hastily off the stove. The goose lay on the table, gaping for its stuffing, so I added the sage to the hot onions forthwith and began to chop.

Up from the steaming mess under my knife rose the strong aromatic smell I knew, and hated. I moved my head, so that less would come into my face, but the thin white steam seemed to follow me, the kitchen walls, the sunny window, began to fade in spite of my efforts to concentrate on them. I tried to scream for Clive, who was only in the next room, but no sound would come. The hot steam and the pungent scent seemed to enfold me in a silence as impenetrable as a tropical jungle. About me were leaves, huge green leaves, I could see them plainly, they scarcely moved in the steamy heat. From the branches of the trees hung twisted vines and long aerial roots. Orchids, such as I had never seen bloomed here. At my feet a thick carpet of rank growth and rotting vegetation deadened sound. Coiled up, not a stone's throw from me yet veiled in a bower of leaves and roots, was a huge snake, its eyes were bright, its forked tongue quivering in and out. I knew it was getting angry as it watched with darting eyes something that moved opposite. I looked too, still without the power of speech or movement. Through the undergrowth plunged a man, ragged, dirty and unshaved, his eyes, glittering strangely, looked huge in his thin white face.

"I tell you it must be here Carter," he cried, "it's just the place for it. I see it man! I see it!" His voice rose to a shriek of triumph; he plunged forward, eager, trembling hands outstretched to grasp a pale bloom hanging just above the guardian of the forest.

Up went its head, out shot its venomous tongue as its coils began to heave and loosen.

## The Patience of Hope

By G. Washington Moon, Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

Song of Solomon ii. 17.

HAVE patience, my brother; oh, be not despairing; Nor fret thou, nor murmur at seeming delays; For oft, in God's providence, dark clouds are bearing Rich showers of blessings for happier days.

"I sleep," dost thou say, "but my lonely heart waketh, And sighs, 'Ah! how long will this heavy gloom last!'"— 'Tis darkest, we know, just before the day breaketh; Oh, wait, and the midnight gloom soon will be past.

Or is it day with thee, yet no sun is shining To cheer thy cold spirit and brighten thy lot? And is that the reason why thou are repining? Ah! think why it is that thy sun shineth not.

The vapours and mists which the sun's light is shrouding, Descend not from heaven, but rise from the earth; And the dark gloomy fears which thy life's sky are clouding Have all in thine own want of faith had their birth.

Oh! why art thou so slowly comfort receiving?— Thou art so unworthy?—That is not denied; But is that cause for doubting? No!—cause for believing, Since 'tis for the unworthy the Saviour has died.