

one striving to do something. Many of the victims of the giant were recovered.

The storming of the castle went on vigorously, and it soon began to show signs of giving way. One morning the 'Blue Boar' was left empty, and a notice 'To Let,' was up in the window. The gentleman who had given them their room bought the property, and handed it over to the Boys' Temperance Club.

Now, indeed, was Jack's dream more than realized, as he proudly entered the public-house—he was actually in the giant's castle. Every arrangement was made for a complete boys' home, and Mrs. Symonds and Jack were to live there and take charge of it.

PAUL JEWITT.

Our Sweet Peas.

Mamma had been out calling all the afternoon. The last visit was paid to a charming woman, right royally endowed with the gift of poesy, as all who possess a volume of her lyrics, or read them in the passing papers, will gladly affirm.

Just as mamma was coming away she caught a glimpse of a vista of pink, and white, and purple sweet peas, which bordered the garden walk.

'By what magic,' she exclaimed, 'do you succeed so wonderfully in the culture of sweet peas?'

'They always grow and blossom for me. I believe they know how I love them,' fondly answered the lady, whom we will call Mrs. Smith.

Then she went down the walk and picked a lovely bunch of them for mamma. So it came about that we had a pink and white bouquet on the tea-table that night, which filled the room with dainty fragrance. Now for many years we had always planted sweet peas, and yet scarcely a blossom had ever rewarded our labor.

We planted them in a different garden-spot every year, putting the seeds just so many inches below the ground surface. We 'bushed' or strung them as soon as they peeped through the earth, and watered them copiously or left them to dry.

Do any wonder at these contradictory systems? Between floral guides and horticultural acquaintances we received so much advice that we had an opportunity to experiment on the value of a great many theories, and the result had, invariably, been scarcely a blossom.

At tea, that night, we discussed again the old question, Why would not these dainty flowers spring into beauty for us? but, as usual, it was left unanswered. And Mrs. Smith's sweet peas grew paler, and finally faded away, leaving only sweet memories of the giver. Fall and winter passed, each day full of duties and pleasures, and one afternoon when spring was beginning to wake from her long lethargy, and the buds were swelling in the crocus beds, mamma looked out on the world of mud and water, and exclaimed, decidedly, 'I shall cultivate sweet peas once more.'

'Has somebody given you a new theory?' we asked, laughingly.

'No,' she answered; 'I have an idea, and I believe it will prove to be a good one.'

Finding it impossible to extract her secret, we gave up attempting to satisfy our curiosity, and trusted to the future for revelations. A few days later she came in from a walk with a generous seed package, labelled, 'Sweet Peas' in a child's round, studied chirography.

'The germ of future blossoms,' she said, passing the paper about for inspection. And then she told us that she had gone to Mrs.

Smith for seed and advice, and found that lady's little daughter, Amy, putting up packages of seeds, all the proceeds of which were for her mission jug, because she 'wanted to earn the money' herself.

This time, the sweet peas were planted in a new spot—a damp rich corner of the vegetable garden—a part of the family possessions we did not visit, although mamma was frequently seen strolling in that direction.

'Have the sweet peas started?' at first, we asked; later, the query changed to 'Are they nudged?'

To the latter question we received no reply but dignified silence, and concluded that, as usual, her hopes were blighted. What was our amazement one warm summer evening to find a dainty bunch of pink, and white, and purple on the tea-table.

'Amy's sweet-peas!' said mamma, triumphantly.

Figuratively speaking, the household welkin rang long with applause, which the successful cultivator gracefully acknowledged. From that day every room had its fragrant bouquet, and the neighbors received many a bunch of the lovely blossoms. A sweet-souled invalid was so fond of her portion, that as she was moved from lounge to hammock, the vase of pink and white fragrance followed, perforce. One boy who asked how he could earn money for his jug, was delighted when we told him he could have five bunches to sell.

In a most ingenious manner he converted a large paste-board box into a basket, lining it with tin-foil; and soon found regular customers in offices and store, who gladly purchased his ten-cent bouquets. At the end of the season he had eight dollars as the result of his labor.

Mamma stoutly affirms (and who will gainsay it?) that her success was due to the fact that her vines sprang from missionary seed. Cannot some other 'Amy' sell packages of flower-seed 'for the missionaries?' Perhaps even a richer blessing would follow.—Fannie Bell Pettes, in 'Life and Light.'

The Spectacles Peddler.

'No, I don't wish for anything,' I said in reply to the question of an old man who called at my door on New Year's eve. Having been imposed on many times; having bought bottles of cement which was no better than so much water, and of furniture polish which was worse, and numerous other articles which were of no earthly use; at last I had made up my mind to have nothing to do with peddlers or agents of any kind. But a second glance convinced me that my present caller was no ordinary person. His long white beard gave him a venerable aspect. His eyes were deep-set and luminous. His expression was that of a man who had tasted life's joys and sorrows, and had extracted sweetness from both. I was so impressed by his appearance that it didn't occur to me that it was a singular time for a peddler to call; and notwithstanding the fact that I was alone in the house, John and the children having gone to a New Year's entertainment for the Sunday-school, I felt no hesitation about admitting this stranger. He fastened a searching but sympathetic gaze upon me, as I resumed my easy chair before the fire.

'You are somewhat near-sighted, madam, I perceive,' he said, at last, drawing from a small bag a pair of silver-bowed spectacles.

'You were never more mistaken,' I replied. 'My eyesight is perfectly good. I can easily read this fine-print newspaper by lamplight.'

'Nevertheless,' responded the old man in a manner so gentle and courteous it was im-

possible to be vexed, 'most of us have a somewhat defective vision, and consequently get only a partial and imperfect view. Now these glasses will enable you to see, not only the side nearest to you, but the other side as well. If you will kindly test them, I am sure you will find their use a great advantage. Please call to mind some event of the past year that disturbed or annoyed you. Do not select anything of too serious a nature as this is your first trial, and your eyes not being accustomed to the use of these, or indeed, as you say, of any lenses, the effect might be merely to produce a blur.'

I took the offered glasses, and the old man turned away, as if to give me opportunity to reflect, and became apparently absorbed in contemplating the fire upon the hearth.

It was not difficult to recall vexations and trials. Indeed, I had been engaged in that very common but profitable occupation when interrupted by the old man's knock. As I found myself growing hot over the thought of the meanness of my neighbor in setting his dog upon my pet cat, poor Toddles! I adjusted the spectacles to my nose. Much to my surprise I now beheld Toddles in the act of dissecting one of my neighbor's chickens. 'He was not without some shadow of an excuse, then,' I thought, as I looked upon the irascible old gentleman himself, at that moment sitting alone in his great house, looking quite feeble and forlorn. He was evidently failing in mind and body, and yet he was without wife or child to care for him in his declining years. My indignation softened into sympathy.

'Poor old man,' I murmured, 'I think I will invite him to dine with us to-morrow. He must be so lonely with only hired help in the house.'

'Excuse me, madam, did you speak to me?' inquired the spectacles peddler.

'Oh, no, only to someone I saw through the glasses,' I replied; and he again gazed at the fire in silence.

My mind reverted to the time last spring when in the midst of house-cleaning I was laid aside with a sprained ankle. It seemed a most unfortunate occurrence; but now by the aid of these far-seeing glasses, I saw what a real blessing my forced inactivity had been to me and the children. It had made of Helen, who was naturally rather indolent, quite a good little housekeeper, and had developed in Tom, who, it must be confessed, was in great danger of becoming selfish, a spirit of helpfulness toward his mother and sister. Besides I had enjoyed several delightful rides with Mrs. Holmes, who would not have thought of inviting me but for my accident.

Then there came to my mind the thought of a business opening which seemed to promise so much advantage to John, and of our great disappointment that it was lost through the unfair dealing of a supposed friend. Now through the glasses I was able to see plainly that the firm in which I so much wished to see my husband a partner, was on the verge of bankruptcy.

So I went from one subject to another, finding to each a brighter side than I had discerned before. 'The old man is right,' I thought; 'I am a little near-sighted.'

'Perhaps you are ready for stronger glasses,' he said, producing a pair of gold-bowed spectacles. 'They have more power than the others, and if your eyes are able to bear them, will enable you to see farther.'

As I adjusted the gold bows my gaze fell upon a portrait which hung over the mantel. It was a life-like picture of my precious Charley. How many times during these ten months I had lived over the last sad days of his bright young life! How many