

"There's no use in saying that crosses don't hurt while you're bearing them, for they do!" she said, under breath, so that only the Lord heard, and it couldn't displeas him. "It may be your Christian duty and pleasure to put your name down for a 'Self-denial Nobody-knows-how-long,' for the sake of helping the dear old Board pay its debts, but there's no use saying it isn't self-denial. And I'm afraid our 'board' has got to go bare till the time is up."

When she appeared again she was as cheery as ever, and no one would have suspected that she had no more idea than the birds of the air where her dinner was coming from. After all, there were worse things to worry about. One was that she could not stir up her Society ladies to be any more public-spirited about the matter.

"I declare I wouldn't ask my husband for every cent I wanted to give away!" she said energetically. "It should be my earning or my saving, somehow, and a definite, count-able sum, at that! I'd do it if I had to earn the money—selling greens!" she added desperately, looking out of the window at two small boys with big baskets and shining broken knife-blades,—signs that they were "going greening." A bright thought popped into her fertile brain, and she put her head into the dining-room where her husband was at present engaged with the last number of the *Hebraica*, studying up the Pentateuchal question.

"Want some grass, Nebuchadnezzar?" she said laughing.

"Ye-es!" he said absently, looking through her rather than at her, and seeming to weigh the matter profoundly. "Still, even the most conservative scholars have long recognized the existence of various documents (in an undigested form) in these and other——"

A merry peal of laughter half roused him from his dazed condition, but the door closed considerably, and a few moments later he might have heard the closing of another door, as his wife sallied out into the street with a big basket in her hand and a broken knife in the basket, and a big shade hat on her pretty, bright head. She had a morning call to make, and her visitor lived on the outskirts of the village.

Miss Pettijohn looked down, as she saw her yellow head framed in the light of the doorway. She was standing on the top stair of the front entry stairway, brushing cobwebs.

"What are you up to now, Shalott Tewksbury, for the Lord's sake!"

It was only Miss Pettijohn's way of speaking. She had rough, pious ways. She had known the minister's wife ever since she had worn sunbonnets, and never proposed to call her by anything but her "given name" if she had a dozen married ones.

"I am glad you see what I've come for!" laughed Charlotte, running up the stairs, and dropping down on the broad, three-cornered step at the turn, where she could talk easily. "'Tis for His sake, but to some folks I have to tell my errand. I'm round to talk to you about that hundred dollars that we've pledged to the Board to help along, you know! I do want that we ladies should have a hand in it, Miss Pettijohn, and I want you to be the good, strong, middle finger!" "Humph!" said Miss Pettijohn, grimly, retying her check apron, which she had wound around her head to keep the spiders off. "I'm all thumbs. You mean well, Shalott, and you're a first-rate, enterprisin' forefinger to point the way, and do a good share of the work, and all that, but the rest of us aren't of much account to raise money, and you ought

to know that by this time. You can't depend on so much as one, good, active, little finger! We haven't got the money, bad as we'd like to give it, and that's all there is to it. No—the rest is that we don't know how to get it."

"Oh, ain't I glad I came to you first!" said Charlotte, seeming in nowise dismayed by this discouraging way of looking at the situation. "You have such a blessed way of picking up my dry Aaron's rod of a simile, and making it bud and blossom in ways I never thought of! Oh, you dear woman, if you only will be 'thumbs', and help us poor weak fingers get a good grip of the money there is lying around ready to pick up, we'll have that hundred in no time. I've got a scheme!"

"Getting married don't take 'em out of ye!" was Miss Pettijohn's half-smiling comment. "Come along down into the kitchen an' set awhile, if you can stop, an' tell about it. I've got to stick an' pick a chicken. We're going to have the Hollises to supper to-night, and they're the greatest hands for chicken salad,—or he is. Why ain't you down stairs cutting up that bunch o' salary, Roxy Ann?" she demanded suddenly and sharply, in a tone of voice that was as good as a shaking, reaching over and past the startled visitor on the stairs to surprise her little handmaid listening curiously at the foot, while she pretended to be busily dusting the baluster.

"O, I can't stop, Miss Pettijohn, unless——"

"There ain't any 'unless' about it!" retorted that lady, clattering down stairs with an air of expecting her to follow. "Now, you've said so much, you may tell your scheme, an' be done with it!"

"I want you ladies all to buy your 'greens' of me!" said Charlotte, who was nothing if she was not definite.

"Where'll you get 'em!" demanded Miss Pettijohn, while the little bound-girl stood with upraised knife and a half-decapitated head of celery in her hand, and her mouth open, as if the next thing she meant to do was to swallow it.

"Dig 'em!" said Charlotte, merrily.

"You talk about 'middle fingers'!" said Miss Pettijohn. "There isn't a woman in the parish that would have thought of such a thing!"

"They all will if you tell them about it!" returned Charlotte, "and don't you see how much money there is in it! I saw the boys go by this morning, and they'll sell their dandelions for thirty or forty cents a peck when they get them. And it's just fun! I know; I used to dig them for my mother! You're out doors in the sun, and down in the grass, and it's no harder work than digging up roots for a herbarium. How often will you take 'a mess,' Miss Pettijohn!"

"Every day in the week!" said Miss Pettijohn, with enthusiasm. "Well, just as often as the men folks will stand havin' 'em, anyway; and I'll warrant I'll get twenty women pledged to the same thing 'fofe night. An' what's more, I'll dig. Fun for you is just as good fun for me, I guess! Wish't the Hollises wasn't coming!"

"Please, Miss Pettijohn?" said a timid voice at her elbow. "I know where there's banks of 'em growin'!"

"Ain't a mortal thing to hinder you from going if them dishes don't take till doomsday!"

"Would you be willing I should get a lot more to come, too?" asked the girl, turning beamingly to her adored minister's wife. "I know all your Sunday-school class will!"

"A boy and a girl to every dandelion!" said Charlotte,