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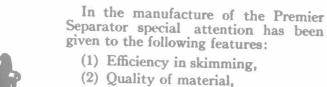
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velopments. We were spared long suspense; for, on hearing the noise, and going to the little tea-room extension where I keep my winter plants, I saw a horde of men rapidly demolishing the shop, under directions of a superintendent, who was absolutely sitting on top of my honeysuckle trellis. After swallowing six times .- a trick father once taught me to cure explosive speech,-I went down and asked him if he could tell me to what use the lot was to be He replied: 'My job is only to clean it up; but the plans call for a twelve-story structure, — warehouse, I guess. But you needn't fret; it's to be fireproof.'

"'Fireproof! What do I care?' I cried, gazing around my poor gardenor rather I must have fairly snorted. for he looked down quickly and took in the situation at a glance, gave a whistle and added: 'I see, you'll be planted in; but, marm, that's what's got to happen in a pushing city-it don't stop even for graveyards, but just plants 'em in.'

"My afternoon sun gone. Not for one minute in the day will its light rest en my garden, and finis is already written on it, and I see it in an arid mud bank. I wonder if you can realize, you openair Barbara, with your garden and fields and all space around you, how a citybred woman, to whom crowds are more vital than nature, still loves her back vard. I had a cockney nature calendar planted in mine, that began with a bunch of snowdrops, ran through hot poppy days, and ended in a glow of chrysanthemums, but all the while I worked among these I felt the breath of civilization about me and the solid pavement under my feet.

"I believe that every woman primarily has concealed in the three round corners of her heart, waiting development, love of home, love of children, and love of nature, and my nature love has yet only developed to the size of a back

"Yes, I will come to visit you at Oaklands gladly, though it's a poor compliment under the circumstances. The mother of twins should be gone to; but tremble! you may never get rid of me, for I may supplant Martha Corkle, the miraculous, in spoiling the boys."

"February 1st.

"One more question to answer and this budget of letters will go to the post with at least four stamps on it, for since you have yoked me to a stub pen and begged me not to criss-cross the sheets, my bills for stamps and stationery have increased.

"Sylvia Latham is the daughter of your Bluff people. Her father's name is Sylvester Johns Latham, and he is a Wall Street broker and promoter, with a deal of money, and ability the wires, but not much liked socially, I should judge,-that is, outside a cer tain commercial group.

"Mrs. Latham was, at the time of her marriage, a pretty southern girl, Vivian Carhart, with only a face for fortune. In a way she is a beautiful woman now, has quite a social follow-ing, a gift for entertaining, and, I judge, unbounded vanity and ambition.

"Quite recently some apparently valueless western land, belonging to her people, has developed fabulous ore, and they say that she is now more opulent than her husband.

"They were pewholders at St. Jacob's for many years, until three seasone ago, when they moved from a side street near Washington Square to 'Millionaire Row,' on the east side of the Park. There are two children, Sylvia, the younger, and a son, Carhart, a finelooking blond fellow when I knew him, but who got into some bad scrape the year after he left college,—a gambling debt, I think, that his father repudiated, and sent him to try ranch life in the West. There was a good deal of talk at the time, and it was said that the boy fell into bad company at his mother's own card table, and that it has caused a chilliness between Mr. and Mrs. Latham.

"However it may be, Sylvia, who is an unspoiled girl of the frank and intellectual type, tall, and radiant with warm-hearted health, was kept much away at boarding-school for three years, and then went to college for a special two years' course in literature.