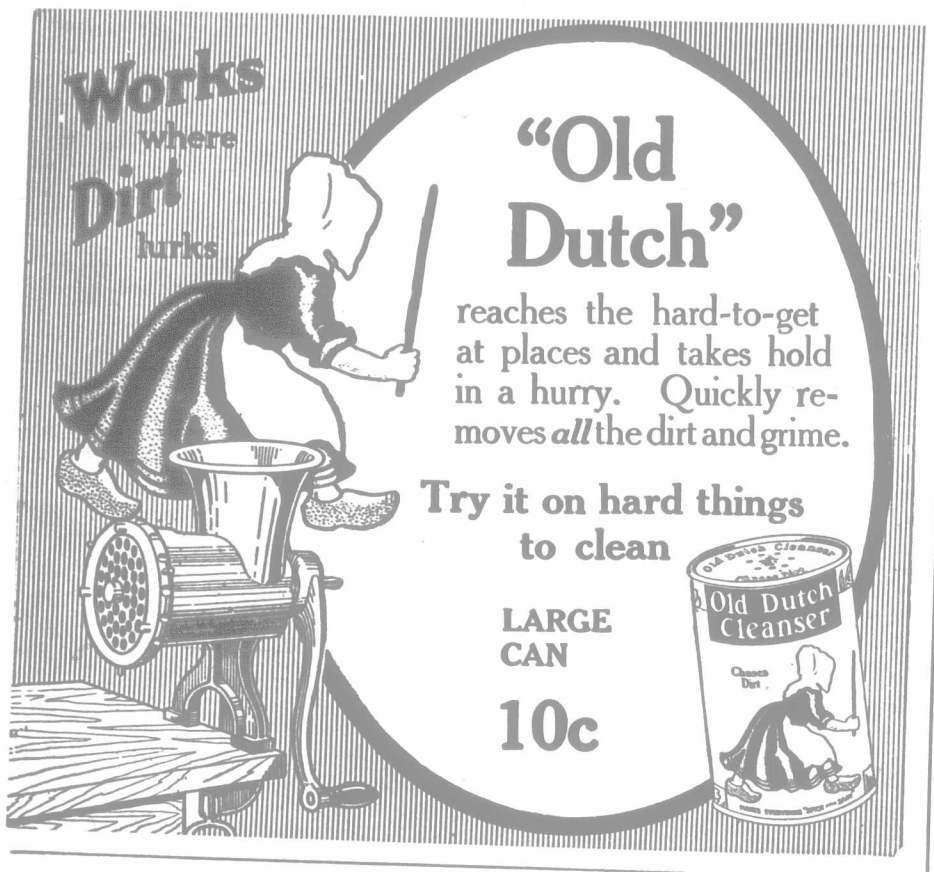

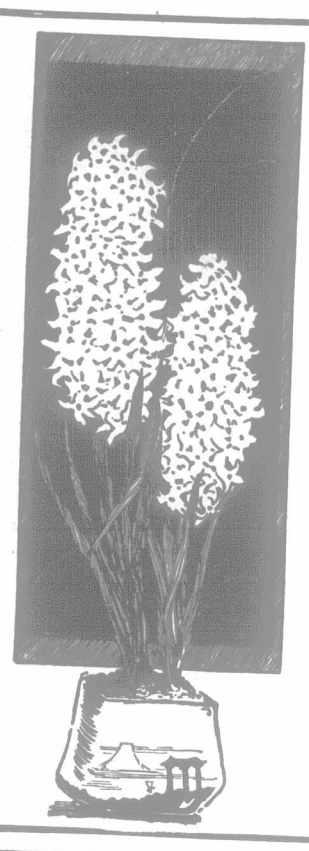

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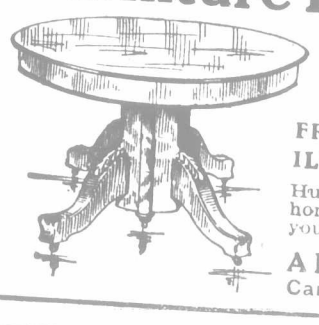

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Shelley you ever saw. No, Mr. Breen, Ruth wants you; we will be with you in a few minutes—" Then after the two had passed on ahead—"Look at them, Major—aren't they a joy, just to watch?—and aren't you ashamed of yourself that you have wasted your life? No arbor for you! What would you give if a lovely girl like that wanted you all to herself by the side of my frog pond?"

A shout ahead from Jack, and a rippling laugh from Ruth now floated our way.

"Oh!— Oh!—" and "Yes—isn't it wonderful—come and see the arbor—" and then a clatter of feet down the soggy steps and fainter footfalls on the moist bricks, ending in silence.

"There!" laughed Miss Felicia, turning toward us and clapping her hands—"they have reached the arbor and it's all over, and now we will all go out on the porch for our coffee. I haven't any Shelley that you have not seen a dozen times—I just intended that surprise to come to the boy and in the way Ruth wanted it—she has talked of nothing else since she knew he was coming. Mighty dangerous, I can tell you, that old bench. Ruth can take care of herself, but that poor fellow will be in a dreadful state if we leave them alone too long. Sit here, Holker, and tell me about the dinner and what you said. All that Peter could remember was that you never did better, and that everybody cheered, and that the squabs were so dry he couldn't eat them."

But the Scribe refuses to be interested in Holker's talk, however brilliant, or in Miss Felicia's crisp repartee. His thoughts are down among the palms, where the two figures are entering the arbor, the soft glow of half a dozen lanterns falling upon the joyous face of the beautiful girl, as, with hand in Jack's, she leads him to a seat beside her on the bench.

"But it's like home," Jack gasped. "Why, you must remember your own garden, and the porch that ran alongside of the kitchen, and the brick walls—and just see how big it is and you never told me a word about it! Why?"

"Oh, because it would have spoiled all the fun; I was so afraid daddy would tell you that I made him promise not to say a word; and nobody else had seen it except Mr. Morris, and he said torture couldn't drag it out of him. That old Major that Uncle Peter thinks so much of came near spoiling the surprise, but Aunt Felicia said she would take care of him in the back of the house—and she did: and I mounted guard at the top of the stairs before anybody could get hold of you. Isn't it too lovely?—and, do you know, there are real frogs in that pond and you can hear them croak? And now tell me about daddy, and how he gets on without me"

But Jack was not ready yet to talk about daddy, or the work, or anything that concerned Corklesville and its tunnel—the transition had been so sudden and too startling. To be fired from a gun loaded with care, hard work and anxiety—hurled through hours of winter travel and landed at a dinner-table next some charming young woman, was an experience which had occurred to him more than once in the past two years. But to be thrust still further into space until he reached an Elysium replete with whispering fountains, flowering vines and the perfume of countless blossoms—the whole tucked away in a cosey arbor containing a seat for two—and no more—and this millions of miles away, so far as he could see, from the listening ear or watchful eye of mortal man or woman—and with Ruth, too—the tips of whose fingers were so many little shrines for devout kisses—that was like having been transported into Paradise.

"Oh, please let me look around a little," he begged at last. "And this is why you love to come here?"

"Yes—wouldn't you?"

"I would not live anywhere else if I could—and it has just the air of summer—and it feels like a summer's night, too—as if the moon was coming up somewhere."

Ruth's delight equalled his own; she must show him the new tulips just sprouting, taking down a lantern so that he could see the better; and he must see how the jessamine was twisted in and out the criss-cross slats of the trellis, so that the flowers bloomed both

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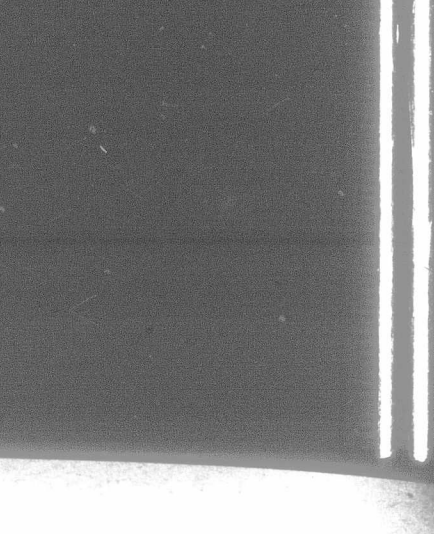

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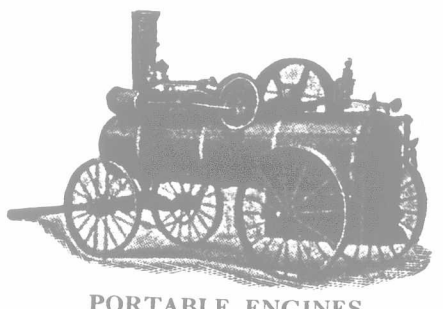

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