

On the hills facing the mountains at the north end of the town, and below on the borders of a lake, cottages and camps had been built, and at last the morning came when Leah hitched old Tug into an open wagon, filled with vegetables, and started out to seek a market among the summer people.

Besides filling baskets with peas and beans, young onions and vegetable marrows, she had tied up bunches of small beets, pulled before they were much bigger than a hen's egg—at the very moment when the beet is sweetest and tenderest.

Then there were young kohlrabi, with funny topknots, corn-salad, Swiss chard, the queen of garden greens, and bunches of parsley and cress temptingly spread out in boxes lined with white paper.

It was the crucial moment of the summer for Leah. She had planned, watched, labored and waited for this first harvest. To the utmost she had done her part; the garden had responded by doing its lavish best; all now hinged on the question, "Would these people buy?"

Seven weeks were left before the money on the mortgage was due, and so far only small returns on a few early vegetables sold at the Flat had come in. Her success or failure rested wholly with these strangers.

She was driving by a thicket of alders when the sound of something crashing through the bushes, followed by a blood-curdling, agonized cry, brought her to a standstill. In an instant she jumped down, and broke her way into the underbrush. There on the ground lay a beautiful, terrified Angora cat, its pink ribbon torn and smeared with dirt, its soft coat matted with burs, and one of its paws held fast in the jaws of a steel trap, evidently set for some thieving skunk.

Although in the end her hands were bleeding from scratches, Leah succeeded in freeing the poor creature, and with it on the seat beside her, drove on to the first house of the summer colony.

As she went up the driveway, a handsome boy in riding-breeches came across the lawn, and catching sight of the cat, ran into the house, only to reappear with a lady, evidently his mother.

"My dear child, where did you find my poor pussy-cat?" she asked, in such a pleasant voice that Leah, forgetting her shyness, gave an animated account of her little adventure. "And what have you here? Fresh vegetables to sell, and you raised them yourself? We must have some at once," and to Leah's astonished delight, she made so many purchases that the money fairly poured into her canvas bag.

When Leah finally drove away, she was escorted by Harold on horseback, who went to point out the different cottages, and to introduce her to his mother's friends.

"And when everything is sold, come back here and have lunch with Harold and me," his mother said, with such cordial hospitality that Leah could not refuse.

That afternoon she returned home with every spear of green sold out, and a list of customers who had given her standing orders to supply them with fresh vegetables, three times a week, throughout the season. Her summer's success was assured.

Three months later Leah had earned enough from her garden to pay back interest on the mortgage, besides a first instalment toward clearing the debt, and a sufficient sum had been put aside to carry on the business a second season. And—what seemed to her best of all, as she watched her aunt knitting by the fire, the freedom from anxiety had changed the older woman's expression—she seemed pretty, and almost young. For the color had come into her cheeks, and the look of hopelessness, due to years of waiting for an inevitable blow to fall, had at last gone from her eyes.

### The Test of the Heart.

It is easy enough to be pleasant

When life flows like a song,

But the man worth while is the man who will smile

When everything goes dead wrong:

For the test of the heart is trouble,

and it always comes with years,

And the smile that comes with the praises of earth

Is the smile that shines through tears.

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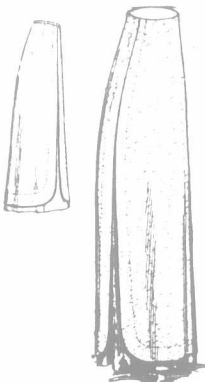
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