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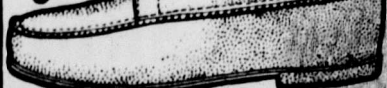


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WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS
PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE

Young Canada Club

By DIXIE PATTON

Here is one of the most beautiful garden stories I have ever read; so I am printing it this week instead of our usual letters. I feel sure you will love it.

DIXIE PATTON

GARDEN MAKING

By Grace Tabor, in St. Nicholas Magazine

"Oh-h, dear me!" wailed a tiny voice, quite as still and as small as ever the voice of conscience was, I am sure; "oh, dear me! I never shall be able to get it open. I never can push hard enough. My head aches, and my back aches, and all of me aches so, now—whatever will become of me? What shall I do?"

"How many warms and cools have passed?" asked a stiller, even smaller, voice, a weak, discouraged little voice that trailed faintly thru the silence as a wreath of mist trails thru the dawn.

"Ten," cried the first, breathless, pushing valiantly with bent head and shoulders rounded to the task; "ten warms and eleven cools—and it hasn't given a bit!"

"Nowhere?"

"Nowhere!"

At this there was a perfectly heart-rending chorus of soft little sobs, and thin little moans, and weak little cries; and I don't know how many gave right up then and there, without another struggle.

Of course that was not the thing to do, not as long as they could hold out another minute; but probably many of them really could not. And when one stops to consider what they had suffered, and how hopeless the struggle must surely have seemed by that time, I suppose it would be a cruel heart that could find it in itself to condemn even those who might have been equal to further effort, if their courage had not failed. Only of course, as subsequent developments show, it was too bad they did not try to hold out, just a little bit longer.

It was a dreadful place where they were, tho—as dark as a pocket, tho that did not matter so much; but dark and hot, and growing hotter now, for a "cool" was just past and a "warm" beginning. So presently it would palpitate with heat like a furnace. Each unhappy captive was in a cell whose walls were hard—oh, hard as a stone!—dreadful, burning walls that actually pressed against their tender bodies, so that they twisted and turned, struggling to be free. Over them rested, close and suffocating, a roof as hard and stony as all the rest, against which some bent their poor heads, others their little crooked backs, all lifting, pushing, staggering and fainting with their efforts. And choked and parched with the terrible heat tho they were, and tormented with hunger and thirst, they yet never dared stop an instant for rest, or to relax and get a breath, for each knew that they must win freedom with their own fast-failing strength, and win it very soon, or perish miserably.

Discouraged Ones Fall Out

Who could deny that it was much easier, and even seemingly wiser, to give up? Anyway, some of them did, on the instant of realizing fully the situation, as I have already said. But a few hung on still, not even yet quite hopeless or defeated; they just could not cease striving, but kept pushing and working, gasping and half out of their senses. And then a wonderful thing happened!

Yes, indeed. I don't suppose anything any more wonderful ever happened to a group of suffering captives such as these—and there are many such groups, you know; thousands and thousands of them, all over this world. It was so astonishing a thing that they were bewildered for long, and did not know whether to rejoice or be afraid, which in their weakened state, was no wonder at all. For the roof of the prison—the great, thick, hard, heavy, hot roof that rested its load fairly upon them—suddenly fell off! Fell clear off, if you will believe it, and there was the lovely blue of the morning

sky that they had never seen before, arching above them.

Such a phenomenon they knew could only be associated with some tremendous upheaval of established law, for, of course, nothing ever, of its own accord falls up. Moreover, they found themselves instantly in such a changed condition that their senses really did fail them for a bit. For instead of being in inky darkness, they were bathed in dazzling light; and the choking heat that stifled and tortured them had given way to some limpid delight that beat gently against their worn little bodies very much as the small soft waves beat against us when we go swimming in smooth water, of a summer's day. And wonder of wonders, and delight of delights, they could lift their heads, and straighten their poor aching backs, and they could turn their faces up and up, to the beautiful open heaven; up to God!

A Great Discovery

Frowning a little bit, a small sage bent down and scratched gently, with the pruning knife which he carried, the hard baked surface of the ground where the morning glory seeds had been planted; but it made almost no more impression than it would have made on rock. So he thrust the blade into the ground a little way, twisting and working it; and at last a great hard flake of crust broke loose and fell back as he pried. And lo! there to his astonished eyes was revealed the little group of wan prisoners, the white, waxy, tiny morning-glory plants that could not burst their dreadful prison walls—almost a great surprise to him as this marvelous occurrence was to them.

"Well, I'm blest!" said he, as he counted them; "whoever would have believed a single one could be alive?"

Being a true sage, he wasted no time in wondering, however; but set to work straightway to make effective the rescue which had so curiously happened, by getting the victims quite free of their prison.

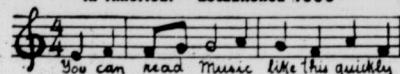
Providing Protection from Sun

First of all, he shaded them from the sun, which was on its way up the skies and rapidly growing hotter—you will remember that it was just the beginning of a "warm," which is what the day is to a plant. Night, when the sun is away, is the "cool," and each is a long, long time to them, as long as a month or so to us. Remembering how dark it had always been where they were confined, he put a big umbrella over them, which not only kept the sun from them, but tempered the light that dazzled them so. Then he watered the ground all about them very thoroughly, to soften it; watered it with the very fine sprayer of the watering pot, that they might not be beaten down under the water's weight as it fell on them. Then he ran indoors, and found that he might put them in the corner of the fence before the chicken run; and at once he got at the earth there, working furiously with spading-fork and rake until it was as fine and mellow and luscious as the most exacting morning-glory of high degree could desire. Then he moved them.

Ah, that was a ticklish job! Not satisfied with having strangled nearly all of their fellows, the earth of this place where the luckless mites had been sown clung to them cruelly when he sought to free them, as if it would tear and rend them asunder. Great clods of it dragged at the baby rootlets even after each plant was released from its jealous clasp; and if any one but a sage, and a very patient one at that had been engaged in the task of release, few if any, would have survived. But he knew just how to take between thumb and finger each hard-caked lump that was still closed about a delicate root and pinch it carefully, and roll it slightly, until, at last, it gave way,

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