



PRETTY sweet pea blossoms,
Nodding in a row,
May I tell the story
How you came to grow?
In the long ago, dears,
You were quite unknown,
Never was your perfume
On the breezes blown;
But one day in spring time,
Seven youthful Quakers
At a quiet meeting
Talked about their shakers,
And one maid, Priscilla,
Who was rather vain,
Thought their snowy bonnets
Were a little plain.
Patience then suggested
That each shallow crown
Should be puffed up higher,
"It was too low down."
Next they all decided
That from snowy white,
Each the hue would alter
To some colour bright.
Where they got the dye stuff
I can never think,
But soon all were coloured
Purple, blue and pink.
Only gentle Prudence
Wore the simple white.
She thought wearing colours
Was quite far from right,
But as she went with them
In their bright array,

Every one would think her
Quite as bad as they.
When the wind first saw them
All was calm and warm,
But the gay sight vexed him,
So he raised a storm.
Every shaker snatched he,
Far away he blew
Pretty pink and purple
And one white one, too;
Far away he blew them
O'er the country round,
And a short time after
Blossoms new were found,
Blossoms new and fragrant
Colours all so bright,
Here and there a rare one,
Prudence like, in white.
When the Quaker maidens
Told the story o'er
They were soon forgiven
And now sin no more.
Patience and Priscilla,
And dear Prudence, too,
Soon were called the sweet P's
They so gentle grew,
So the new-found flowers
Then were called the same.
Thus I end the legend
As I tell their name.
You a lesson teach us,
Blossoms dear we love,
For to earth you cling not,
But climb straight above.

ALMA FRANCES MCCOLLUM.

JUST YOU AND I.

"**W**E really need a special supply of grace for midsummer days,—or perhaps a special grace to meet the demands of the season."

It was a little housekeeper who spoke suddenly from the dining-room doorway. She made a prettier picture than she knew, with the rolled sleeves, the tucked-up skirt, the brown hair brushed damply back from the forehead, the flushed face and the big blue eyes looking half petulant, half earnest; while a large wooden spoon in her hand and certain stimulating fruit odours which exhilarated through the open door gave emphasis to her words.

I looked up from my book. "Come and talk it over," I said.

"Well, if you don't mind my leaving the door open, so that I can keep an eye on those preserving kettles—"

She crossed the dining-room, took a low wooden rocker, and sat down beside me; and together we looked through the broad low-ledge eastern window out upon the shaded bit of lawn. Beyond it was the vegetable garden, the raspberry bushes laden with their crimson berries,—the trees, the broad common, and then the slowly rising hills—magnified by local perspective into 'mountains.'

It was the intense heat of midsummer early

afternoon. Not a leaf stirred upon the trees; the grass drooped languidly even in the flood of sunlight, the crimson fruit burned dully in the heat.

The triple stillness of country, season and hour was about us. Even the insect hum was stilled; and the only sound that reached us was the soft bubble of the preserving kettle.

"It is almost too warm to talk, it is certainly too warm to think," protested the housekeeper, as she reached for a fan. "The first is much easier than the second, you know. Continuous thought is an effort; that's one of my reasons for that first statement."

"We have a way of calling July and August vacation time,—which means, I suppose a condition of emptiness—or nothingness. But it is really the most trying time of the year, and the fullest of temptations and worriments for most of us."

"Have a glass of lemonade," I urged, laughing. "Two preserving kettles and a thermometer in the nineties is a rather trying combination."

"Well, the fruit wouldn't keep. And how could I know that Jane's mother would fall over a wash tub, sprain her wrist, and need my 'reliable' during this especial week?"

The little housekeeper emptied her glass, and leaned back with a more restful look upon her face.

"Of course, I am not referring to the people who go to the seaside, cross the ocean, sail the lakes, or seek the mountain tops, thus avoiding the excessive heat—and the temptations; but to the mass of humanity, in the cities, towns, and country places—for a hot day in the country is as unendurable as it is anywhere—who simply have to bear the heat, plus the day's duties, and to accomplish as much high thinking and noble living as is possible under such adverse circumstance."

"Special grace—I should think so! Why, with the physical relaxing there is sure to be a corresponding mental and spiritual loosening."

"People are hardly aware how much of self-respect and moral backbone they owe to—clothes. No, I do not mean it in any Carlylean sense;—it's too warm for 'Sartor Resartus'; I mean just these ordinary every-day garments, prosaically considered."

"Now, clothes are an affliction in sultry midsummer days; we are in continual discomfort because of them; we indulge in deshabille, we venture toilet relaxations, we reduce our garments to the limits of the proprieties, and our moral and spiritual status relaxes in correspondence. A due observance of the conventionalities and full dress go together; and how can a man be properly self-respecting with the consciousness of a wilted collar, or a woman with limp bangs?"

The little housekeeper was smiling to herself now in half amusement, but the thread of sincerity ran through her banter.

"Now, at this minute," she went on, "I do not feel the slightest desire to be arrayed in either starched muslins—or manners; and I haven't a single spiritual aspiration. I should like to be a mermaid, or a dusky squaw; but since neither of these is possible, a bath, a lounging gown, a French novel, and a hammock are my desideratum."

"You see, dear," with a mournful shake of the nut-brown head, "one does feel so dreadfully of the earth, earthy, in August days."

"And then there are the petulances and irritations. Husbands and children are fretful; babies cry, and beetles get into the flour; there are sunburns and mosquitoes, long choky nights and languid mornings, mouldy bread and mustiness;—such a strong sense of humanness, such a weak sense of divinity! August may be vacation time for the body, but it's a busy season for the powers of evil,—from insects to iniquities. Again I declare that we need a special grace for midsummer days."

The little housekeeper grasped her wooden spoon and retreated to the kitchen.

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Two hours passed. I had written a letter, had a half-hour nap, made a fresh toilet; and was again at the window with my book, when she rejoined me.

She wore a crisp muslin gown, her hair was braided glossily, the flush was gone—with the spoon, and in her hand was a quaint china bowl full of fresh-gathered raspberries.

"We will have a delicious cup of tea presently, and some fresh cookies," she said. "It is five o'clock, and Jack won't be home until seven. How cool the lawn looks; and do you notice how prettily the breeze rustles those white-lined poplar leaves? The sun will be behind the mountain at six, and then we will have a drive along the river bank. We'll meet Jack at the depot; and there's a new moon, so we need not hurry home. Do you like my muslin? and aren't August evenings lovely?"

"Why, what has happened in the past two hours, little woman?" I asked.

"Jane has come back, and I have put my new dress on," she said simply.

And I was answered. FAITH FENTON.