

EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE



THE DEACON.

who is a real mild-spoken woman, came to the door. She didn't know what it all meant, and she looked sort of scared-like at Hannah standing there with the cow. "Good-morning," said she.

"I want to see the deacon," said Hannah.

Then the deacon's wife called him, and he came with his face all red with the soap and water scrubbing he had given it, and with strug-

gling into his Sunday collar, and trying to hide that he was in a twitter. "Why, good-mornin', Miss Stone," said he, just as if he was going to speak in meeting, kind of pleasant, but solemn. Hannah told me all about it afterward, when I had come to know her better.

Hannah didn't waste any ceremony. She always went straight to the point. "Where is the cow I bought?" said she.

"Why, ain't that the cow you bought?" said the deacon.

"No, it ain't," said she.

Then the deacon kind of cleared his throat. It was queer, but he hated to tell a downright lie, though he would always overreach in a bargain, if what folks say is true. "Why, you talked about buying that cow, didn't you?" said he. "You looked at that cow."

"I looked at her, and I looked away again," said Hannah. "I wouldn't take her as a gift. You know this ain't the cow I bought, Deacon Gay; she's something the same color, but you know she ain't the one, and you don't dare to say she is. Now I want the cow I bought."

Then the deacon got desperate, and he said, "That is the cow you bought," he.

"It ain't," said she.

"Yes, it is," said he, "and what is more, it's all the cow you'll get. A bargain is a bargain."

"Do you mean to say that you, a deacon of the church, are goin' to try to palm off this old cow on me for that fine young Jersey I bought?" said Hannah.

"This is the cow you bought," declared the deacon. "This is the cow I understood you wanted, and the one your dummy man came for. I wouldn't have let that Jersey go, anyhow."

Hannah didn't say any more; she had talked a good deal for her, as it was. She just gathered up her best black silk, and she sat down on the deacon's front doorstep. She was still holding the rope with the cow at the other end of it.

The deacon looked at her. "I suppose you know it's the Sabbath Day?" said he finally.

"I ain't lost my reckonin'," said Hannah.

"And it don't look becomin' for a woman to be leadin' around cows when it's most time for the bell to ring for meetin'," said the deacon.

Hannah didn't say anything. The cow begun to eat the top of Mrs. Gay's peony bush, which was all in full blow.

"What be you goin' to do?" said the deacon, kind of feeble like.

"I'm goin' to set here till you give me the cow I bought," said Hannah.

"Don't you know that the folks will be in to meetin' in a minute? And you're next door to the meetin'-house, and you're settin' here with this cow," said the deacon.

Hannah said nothing.

The deacon gave a kind of grunt and went into the house. The cow went on eating the peony.

Pretty soon a team drove up to the meeting-house, and the deacon came out again. He looked after the team kind of wild, then he looked at the cow. "I dunno but pinies are bad for cows to eat," said he.

"Well, it is nothin' to me, it ain't my cow," said Hannah.