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"A DENOMINATIONAL GARDEN."

Being a Partial Account of Lovey Mary's Visit to Miss Viny.

In the February Century, Lovey Mary, Mrs. Wiggs and all the other delightful folks of the Cabbage Patch go on as unique a picnic as any pleasure seekers ever enjoyed. Before this outing Lovey Mary is sent on a Sunday trip to Miss Viny for some yellow root, and Miss Viny tells her all about her "denominational garden":

"This here is a denominational garden, an' I got every congregation I ever heard of planted in it. I ain't got no favorite bed. I keer fer 'em all jes alike. When you come to think of it, the same rule holds good in startin' a garden as does in startin' a church. You first got to steady what sort of soil you going work with, then you have to sum up all the things you have to fight ag'in. Next you choose what flowers are goin' to hold the best places. That's a mighty important question in churches, too, ain't it? Then you go to plantin', the thicker the better, fer in both you got to allow fer a mighty fallin' off. After that you must take good keer of what you got, an' be sure to plant something new each year. Once in a while some of the old growths has to be thinned out, an' the new upstarts an' suckers has to be pulled up. Now if you'll come out here I'll show you round."

"These here are the Baptists," said Miss Viny, waving her hand toward a bed of heliotrope and flags. "They want lots of water; like to be wet clean through. They sorter set off to themselves an' tend to their own business; don't keer much 'bout minglin' with the other flowers."

"These is geraniums, ain't they? One of the girls had one, once, in a flowerpot when she was sick."

"Yes," said Miss Viny; "they're Methodist. They fall from grace and has to be revived; they like lots of encouragement in the way of sun an' water. These phlox are Methodist, too; no set color, easy to grow, hardy an' vigorous. Pinchin' an' cuttin' back the shoots makes it flower all the better; needs new soil every few years. Now, ain't that Methodist down to the ground?"

"Are there any Presbyterians?" asked Lovey Mary, beginning to grasp Miss Viny's meaning.

"Yes, indeed; they are a good, old, reliable bed. Look at all those roses an' tiger-lilies an' dahlias; they all knew what they was goin' to be afore they started to grow. They was elected to it, an' they'll keep on bein' what they started out to be clean to the very end."

Miss Viny crossed the garden, and stopped before a bed of stately lillies and azaleas. "These are 'Piscopals,'" she explained. "Ain't they tony? Jes look like they thought their bed was the only one in the garden. Somebody said that a lily didn't have no pore kin among the flowers. It ain't no wonder they 'most die of dignity. They're like the 'Piscopals in more ways'n one; both hates to be disturbed, both like some shade, an'—confidentially—both are pretty pernickity. But to tell you the truth, ain't nothin' kin touch them when it comes to beauty. I think all the other beds are proud of 'em, if you'd come to look into it. Why, look at weddins' an' funerals! Don't all the churches call in the 'Piscopals an' the lillies on both them occasions?"

"An' here," continued Miss Viny, "are the Unitarians. You may be 'sprised at me fer havin' 'em in here, 'long with the orthodox churches; but if the sun an' the rain don't make no distinction, I don't see what right I got to put 'em on the other side of the fence. These first is sweet-william, as rich in bloom as the Unitarian is in good works, a-sowin' themselves constant, an' every little plant a-puttin' out a flower."

"Ain't there any Catholics?" asked Lovey Mary.

"Don't you see them hollyhaws an' snowballs an' laylacs? All of them are Catholics, takin' up lots of room an' needin' the prunin'-knife pretty often, but bringin' cheer and brightness to the whole garden when it needs it most. Yes, I guess you'd have trouble thinkin' of any sect I ain't got planted. Them ferns over in the corner is Quakers, I ain't never been no Quaker, but they tell me that they don't 'bieve in flowerin' out; that they like coolness an' shade an' quiet, an' are jest the same the year round. These colt plants are the apes; they are all things to all men, take on any color that's round 'em, can be the worst kind of Baptists or Presbyterians, but if left to themselves they run back to good-fer-nothin's. This here everlastin' is one of these here Christians that's so busy thinkin' 'bout dyin' that he forgets to live."

Miss Viny chuckled as she crumbled the dry flower in her fingers.

"See how different this is," she said, plucking a sprig of lemon-verbena. "This an' the mint an' the sage an' the lavender is all true Christians; jes by bein' touched they give out a influence that makes the whole world a sweeter place to live in. But, after all, they can't all be alike. There's all sorts of Christians; some stands fer sunshine, some fer shade; some fer beauty, some fer use; some up high, some down low. There's jes one thing all the flowers has to unite in fightin' ag'in—that's the cankerworm. Hate. If it once gets in a plant, no mat-

ter how good an' strong that plant may be, it eats right down to its heart."

"How do you get it out, Miss Viny?" asked Lovey Mary, earnestly.

"Prayer an' perseverance. If the Christian 'ill do his part, God 'ill do his. You see, I'm tryin' to be to these flowers what God is to his churches. The sun, which answers to the Spirit, has to shine on 'em all, an' the rain, which answers to God's mercy, has to fall on 'em all, jes watch 'em, an' plow fer 'em an' shelter 'em, an' love 'em, an' if they do their part, they're bound to grow."

HIS FATAL MISTAKE.

"One of the strangest mistakes I have ever heard of," said a man who keeps an eye open for the curious and odd in life, "was the one made by the man who got his assurance application and his pension papers mixed, and as a result of the mistake he lost out at both ends of the line. I might remark here that it would be a good thing for the government and the country generally if a few hundred thousand men in the United States would make the same mistake. If the pension authorities could get hold of the insurance policies, or rather the applications which are made for insurance by many of the men who are drawing pensions, they would find that they are carrying a rather vigorous set of fellows on the roll. The case I have in mind amply illustrates the point."

"The man lived in the mountainous regions of one of the central Western States, and, having fought for the Union in the '60s, he concluded that he would get in on the pension deal. He got in all right and had been drawing a pension for years when he made the mistake to which I had referred. He made an application for an increase in his allowance. My recollection is that he had been getting about \$8 a month, or \$24 every quarter. He wanted to raise the allowance to \$12 a month. He fixed up the papers. He set forth in extenso the condition of his health, recited all the ailments which had swooped down upon him as a result of exposure during the war, and when he had finished his application for an increase in the pension allowance his life did not look like it was worth anything. He was simply a physical wreck, had constitutional troubles and all that sort of thing, and was simply dragging his feet through the world. It was all caused by the game fight he put up for his country, of course."

"About the same time he was dickerin' with an assurance company, and had filled out an application blank for a policy of \$3,000. The facts set forth in his application for assurance made him one of the healthiest men in the world. There was not a blemish anywhere in his make-up. He was hefty, vigorous and a rosy-cheeked picture of health generally. He had no kind of ailment, was perfectly sound, and really there hadn't been any weak, sticky folks in his family as far back as he could trace them. So far, so good."

"When the poor fellow got ready to send his papers on he made the horrible and disastrous mistake of sending his pension papers to the assurance company, and his application for assurance went to the Pension Office. You can guess the result. The assurance company was inclined to make sport of the blunder, and they told the applicant plainly that they had not yet started into the business of assuring men who were practically on their way to the graveyard. They simply turned him down with a few curt and cutting remarks. The pension authorities at Washington, while a little more dignified in what they had to say about the man's application for an increase in pension, yet took occasion to congratulate him on the splendid state of his health, and remarked in passing that the government would be glad to see all the old soldiers recover so completely from the war's hardships. They not only refused the increase which he made an effort to get, but an investigation was made and the man's name stricken from the pension roll. The blunder cost him the pension he had been getting for years, and the assurance people decided that they had rather not take the risk. The fellow lost both ways. The moral of the tale is that it never pays to push a good thing too far."

A Missing Point.

A good instance of the importance of punctuation was afforded in the case of a contemporary, according to the *London Chronicle*, which once announced the death of the bishop of Brisbane. This was promptly contradicted. The explanation followed that the cable received was: "Bishop of Brisbane found dead sea serpent fifty feet long." Reading this as two items of news, the news editor chose the piece of information most suited to his columns, and the cable announced, "The bishop of Brisbane has been found dead."

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