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Hattie C. Shefner

William Doherty

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A SARITA FLOWER.

BY HATTIE C. SHEPNER

HERE you all are—cats, dogs and children—watching every move I make!" exclaimed the busy mother, breaking the eggs for a cake. "How in the world can I ever get anything done with you all at my feet? Away with you, every one! Scat! Here, Bobbie, you run outdoors and play, and take these two mischievous puppies with you. Ralph, you see that I have plenty of wood, as I must keep a fire all morning; and Nellie, you and Fanny may go out to the garden and get a nice lot of vegetables for dinner. The men who are coming will be hungry for something green, as they can't have such things this time of the year in the North."

Fanny, who had been helping Susie with the sweeping, was called and she and Nellie were soon in the garden, chatting merrily over their task. Ralph hurried out to the wood pile and Bobbie ran out to frolic with the puppies in the grassy back yard.

It was a busy day for the Rosses. Some home-seekers from the North were expected that morning and Mr. Ross was to meet them at the train and bring them home with him for dinner.

The Ross family, to escape the severity of the Northern winters, had come South some years before, to find health and prosperity in the new home awaiting them in Southwest Texas. Contented and happy themselves, they were always ready to extend a welcoming hand to others, and many there were who enjoyed their genial hospitality.

This bright December morning was an ideal one. Through the open doors and windows the warm rays of the sun flooded the neat rooms with a cheerful glow. The morning air was as soft and balmy as that of a sweet spring day. Wafted in on the breeze came the scent of the flowers that still brightened the yard. The cackling of busy hens mingled with the melodious songs of birds, the cooing of doves, the call of the quail. Not far away a flock of wild ducks rested on the quiet bosom of the lake; while herds of cattle peacefully grazing on the prairie added to the scene the picturesque charm of frontier freedom. As a background, in the distance, rose the live oak trees, whose green foliage breathes of eternal spring.

While the mother was busy in the kitchen preparing a feast of good things, Susie, the oldest daughter, who was sweet and fair as a Southern morn at sunrise, was putting the house in order, giving to each simply furnished room an artistic touch of beauty.



By Courtesy U. S. Dept. Agriculture. South Texas Garden—One Day's Harvest From Vegetable Garden Two Months After First Planting.

When, just as dinner was ready, the carriage arrived and the four visitors alighted, they were greeted with a warm cordiality that at once made them feel at home.

"My wife would be tickled to death if she could only be here, in such a home as this," said Mr. Watson, when, seated in the cozy sitting room, the men were discussing Southwest Texas and its advantages. "I do wish she could have come along; but if I don't miss my guess the whole set of us and a lot of our friends besides will be somewhere down here before another winter rolls around. It makes me shiver now to think of the snow I left behind me. Why, don't you doubt it a minute, my boys would be going crazy with delight if they could now be running barefooted with those little chaps out there in the yard. From the way you are all dressed you folks seem to think it's summer yet."

"We have a touch of winter now and then," said Mr. Ross; "but it's soon over and serves to make us appreciate our mild climate all the more."

"To fully appreciate it," said Mr. Jones of Minnesota, "one must drop down here from where the snow is flying and the mercury is hovering about the zero point."

"And likely at any moment to dip away below," added Mr. Lewis, of Wisconsin.

"Yes, and from a drive out in one of those piercing Iowa winds that fairly freezes the blood in one's veins," said John Pemberton, the youthful member of the party.

"That's the reason John's not married," said Mr. Watson, with a twinkle of the eye. "A fellow can't fall in love when his heart is frozen. I brought him down here to thaw him out."

When invited out to the dining room to partake of the bounties spread for them, the men unanimously agreed that they must have dropped into the lap of summer.

"What a magnificent bouquet of roses!" exclaimed Mr. Watson at first glimpse of the table.

"Spring chicken in December!" exclaimed Mr. Jones, as he took his seat.

"With new peas, okra, lettuce, radishes, string beans, and ripe tomatoes, sliced, as sure as you're alive!" added Mr. Lewis, as his eyes scanned the table. Then he said, apologetically: "Pardon our boyish enthusiasm, Mrs. Ross. If you had just emerged from the snow drifts to behold such a tempting display of viands fresh from the garden you would know how we feel."

Mrs. Ross replied with a gracious smile, and the conversation went on in easy flow.

"There you are, at a little table of your own, close to Mother, so she can keep you well supplied," said Mr. Watson, catching sight of the children.

"By arranging it in this way," said Mrs. Ross, "we can all eat at the same time, making it more pleasant for every one, I think, than to have the children wait."

"A capital idea," said Mr. Jones. "To have to wait is enough to make children hate to see company come."

"I was just thinking," said Mr. Watson, "that if my wife could be here now, she would be more than tickled to death." Turning to John Pemberton, who sat beside him, he continued: "John, here, has little to say; but I can hear him thinking mighty loud. Truly, such a spread as this in December, with the sun shining so gloriously that it makes life seem a dream, is enough to set us all to thinking."

"You didn't grow these oranges?" questioned Mr. Lewis doubtfully.

"We gathered them from our own trees," replied Mr. Ross. "It is the Satsuma orange, which does nicely here."

"That settles it," said Mr. Watson. "You couldn't tie my wife up there in the snow when she once hears of these oranges; and the boys—why, they'll go wild at mention of them. I may as well sell out and come without another word."

"You must get out to Mr. John Kenedy's while you are here," said Mrs. Ross. "They have lemon trees bearing the finest lemons grown. There are many things out there that will interest you; and you will be royally entertained."

"We'll drive out there early tomorrow morning," said Mr. Ross. "I'll show you our place this afternoon. There are other places, too, that you must see; and I want you to see something of Sarita, noting the progress she has made during the few years of her existence."

"Sarita was formerly a part of the Kenedy ranch, was it not?" asked Mr. Lewis.

"Yes, a very small part of the La Parra Ranch, as it is called," replied Mr. Ross. "The ranch home is five miles from Sarita."

"Sarita was named for Mr. Kenedy's daughter," said Susie, modestly.

"The fine looking cattle we see along here are Mr. Kenedy's, I suppose," remarked Mr. Jones.

"Yes, after you pass Mrs. King's ranch," replied Mr. Ross. "I couldn't venture to say how many cattle are shipped from these immense ranches every year."

"When the teacher of the Sarita school asked the children one day to name some of the great men of the United States," said Mrs. Ross, laughing, "one little tot said 'Mr. John Kenedy and George Washington!'"

When the laughter had subsided, Mr. Watson said, with a wink at Bobbie: "Do give that curly headed little chap over there another piece of chicken. I can see him watching the plate out of the corner of his eye."

"How about the artesian wells?" asked Mr. Lewis.

"Well sir," replied Mr. Ross, "they are the making of this country. By means of them, these semi-arid pasture lands are being converted into gardens and orchards. You would hardly believe that the origin of that lake out there is a living stream of water that rises in a constant flow from a depth of fifteen hundred feet below the earth's surface. Yet such is the case; and this is only one of many. Yes, the artesian well is a grand thing for this country. The Texas steer no longer holds undisputed sway over these broad acres teeming with rich possibilities. His day is rapidly passing away, and in his stead are springing up the homes of a happy and prosperous people. It is the artesian well that has made possible this wonderful transformation."

"I noticed a flock of ducks on the lake," remarked John Pemberton, who, though quiet, was keenly alive to the enjoyment of the hour.

"Yes," said Mrs. Ross, "there are great flocks of wild ducks and geese flying over every day, especially of mornings and evenings. We often see a flock of geese resting on the prairie. There are so many birds here it makes it very pleasant."

"And you just ought to see the wild flowers in the spring!" exclaimed Susie, forgetting her timidity.

"Yes," added Mrs. Ross; "while in the North you are still in the grasp of winter, here the prairie is aglow with color—red, white, blue and yellow—flowers, flowers everywhere, mingling with the green."

"When the train stops," said Susie, "you would laugh to see the passengers running to gather some flowers. People from the North go wild over them."

"I don't wonder at it," said Mr. Watson. "My wife would take a fit over them—I know she would."

"Sarita can certainly boast of a fine depot," remarked Mr. Jones. "Many a city of considerable size hasn't anything to equal it."

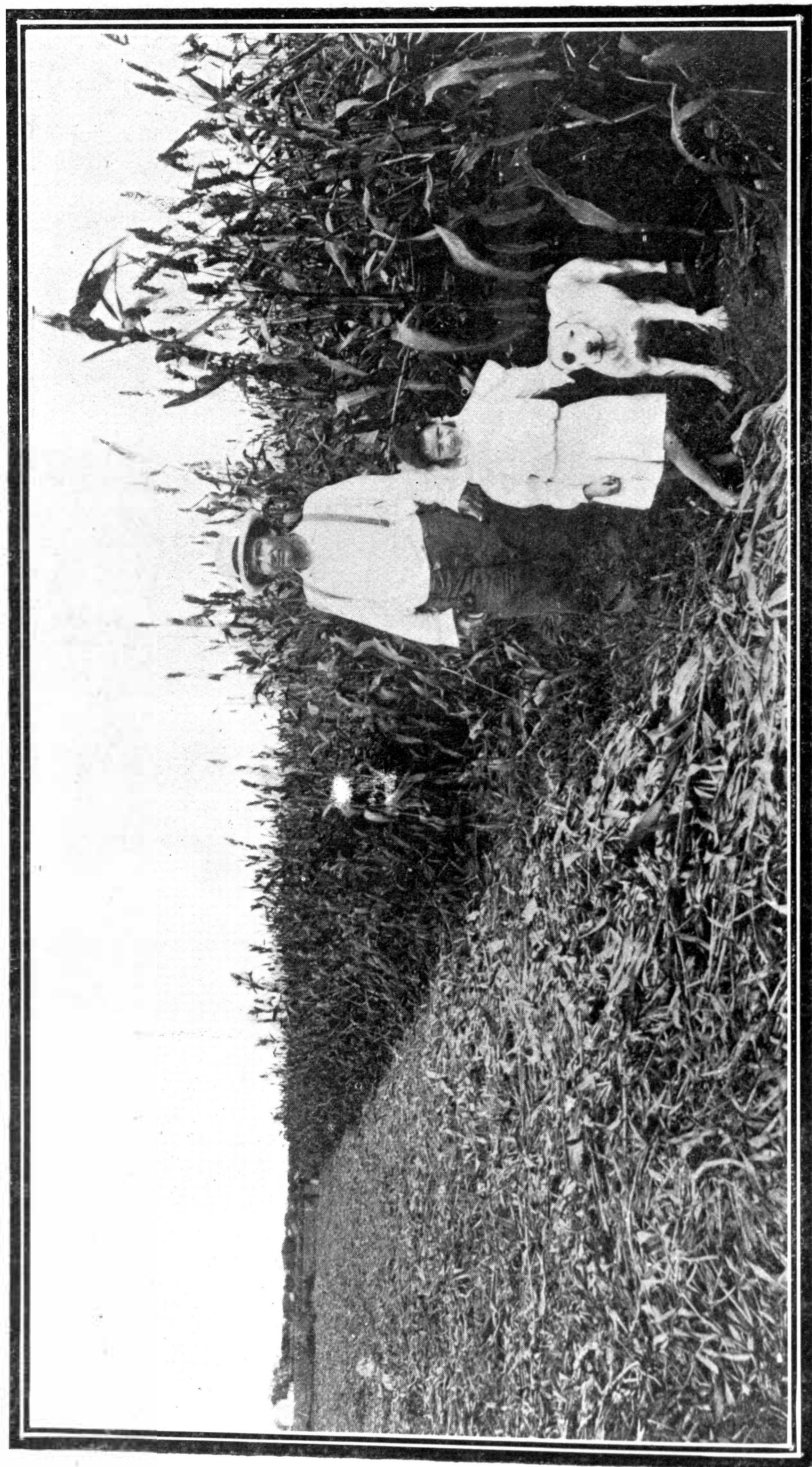
"I was surprised to see how well the Brownsville road is equipped," added Mr. Lewis. "In rolling stock I must say it compares very favorably, indeed, with the trunk lines of the North."

"It is an up-to-date road, run by wide awake, hustling men," said Mr. Ross, with some show of pride.

"Well, they would better be wide awake and hustling, to be able to handle the flood of humanity that is headed this way," said Mr. Watson, taking another ear of corn.

"Riviera seems a promising location," said Mr. Jones.

"Did you get down to Riviera Beach?" asked Mrs. Ross.



Harlingen Sorghum—Planted May 4, 1908, Photographed July 25, 1908.

"We couldn't pass by without running down to take a dip in the bay," replied Mr. Jones. "As a popular resort that place has a future."

"Kingsville is a bustling place," remarked Mr. Lewis, doing justice to the sliced tomatoes.

"Kingsville is pushing ahead rapidly," said Mr. Ross. "In fact, all along the line you will see striking evidences of the spirit of enterprise."

"We've seen nothing to disappoint us yet," said Mr. Watson.

"Thus far our trip has been a series of delightful surprises. We have Raymondville, Mercedes, Brownsville and other points yet to visit; but surely nothing can surpass what we have already seen."

"It is like choosing a wife," said Mr. Ross. "Each place has its individual charms and attractions, but people can't all see alike. When you have seen them all, you can choose the one that suits you best."

A few days later, when the cordial good-byes were being spoken, the youthful John Pemberton said enthusiastically: "The others may settle where they like, but I have found the place that suits me."

With a knowing wink at Susie, on whose cheeks the roses grew a deeper pink, Mr. Watson said dryly: "I might have known that John would have eyes for nothing else after seeing a Sarita Flower."



THE DOG AND MAN.

The dog is man's most faithful friend. A man may lie, but a dog don't; a man may get drunk, a man may slander his neighbor, a man may embezzle and defraud, a man may borrow money, a man may steal money, a man may go into politics, a man may knife his best friend, a man may gamble himself to ruin, a man may waste his substance in riotous living, a man may go to heaven—but a dog won't. Can these things be truthfully spoken of the other friends a man has about him? There is a strong affinity between man and the dog; it must be the affinity of contrast. Yet any man will resent being called a dog. Possibly the dog would resent being called a man if he understood—I do not know. I only know that the maxim works but one way; and if we should say, "Man is the dog's most faithful friend," there would be many to cavil, saying that it was mighty rough on the dog. — *Success Magazine*.



Lon C. Hill's 15-acre Vineyard, Planted May 8, 1908, Photographed July 25, 1908.



Cotton on Ground from which a Crop of Onions was Gathered in Spring,
on George Hoffman Farm, near Kingsville.