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## A CHARACTER SKETCH.

"Watch out, Mr. Archer, or I'll run right into you."

"Hay thar, whats that?" growled the old man turning slowly and meeting the front wheel of my bicycle.

"Me." I responded gramatically, pulling the wheel out of his way.

"It is me!"

"Yas. It is me is it? Wal?"

"Eh? I laughed at him, "Oh, yes."

"Why, mama sent me up to see about those rose bushes you promised her."

"Rose bushes! Rose bushes! Did she say what kind?" He scratched the back of his huge hand with a large trowel on which clung the dark moist soil.

"Great big red ones—enormous," I said.

"They were over here last year—Jacsomething was the name."

He moved slowly toward the spot, talking slowly to himself and cleaning the trowel with his stumpy fore finger

As he dug the roses up he gave me directions as to their planting, in a slow precise manner, emphazizing what he said with nods of his head and occasionally a wave of the trowel.

"An don't water 'em too much er 'tittle, an' be keerful o' these spring frosts, an' cover 'em."

He rose slowly with a long deep breath, holding the tiny rose bushes in his hand, their roots carefully enclosed in a large clump of moist fresh-smelling earth.

"Come in an' I'll roll 'em up," he said with an "umph!" as he finally straightened his tall form.

I looked around the three tiny rooms curiously—all mused to a startling degree—as I followed the old man into the "front room." His thick shoes "clumped" loudly on the bare floor as he crossed to one corner where a pile of rubbish lay.

The little bay window in front was filled with cacti of all kinds. There were long ones, set high on a shelf with their snake-like stems touching the floor; fat broad ones with sharp little spikes all around them; ridged ones, smooth ones; some with long smooth stems; some covered with long hair; some with glorious red flowers, set in a nest of needles; others with star-like flowers, yellow and black and ill smelling, nestled in between their thick branches; many with a wholly different cactus grafed on them—the whole forming a thorny picture, indeed.

By these, were palms of all descriptions and of all sizes, and on the other side of the room bloomed the most gorgeous and flashy flowers.

Standing in the midst of this confusion of plants, with the cacti for a back ground, Mr. Archer was a fitting picture for the frame.

His height impressed me most, for he was very tall, with his shoulders stooped. He had a large face set in a mass of whiskers—his long gray beard reaching nearly to his waist. Above, his eyes, one light blue and shifting and the other a light brown, gave one an uncertain feeling—until he smiled—then they almost closed, and his whole face beamed down upon one like that of a genial Saint Nicholas.

He always wore brown corduroy trousers turned up to his shoe tops—"An' I allays fergets t' turn 'em down so they make fine patches for things," he told my mother once.

A loose frock coat, generally of blue denim, with a gray flannel shirt was the rest of his costume, except for a light fitting cap which he wore over a mass of short gray curls.

He drew long whiffs from his old-fashioned Dutch pipe and blew the smoke carefully against a superb hibiscus, covered withscarlet flowers which stood supreme in the middle of the room.

"Th' mites her been trubblin it fear-

ful—they're gettin better naouw." He took the pipe slowly from his mouth and motioned with it solemnly.

"They caint," he pushed a flower pot in one corner with his foot, "They caint stand terbaccer smoke, will ye jest put yer finger on thet knot."

Then as he finished tying up the roses—"Hev ye noticed my tulips?"

"I didn't see them as I came in," I answered. "Oh, yes," as he led the way into the garden.

"Naouw she"—she was old Mrs. Archer, as eccentric in her way as he in his—she said they'd not bloom this here spring, but keer, keer did it—an' all the result!" As soon's I git this all cleaned up—"

Ah yes—as soon as he did! But "Old Archer's garden" was a synonym for untidiness.

It was a beautiful mass of foliage and bloom in summer, but with no order or system about it and in the spring and autumn it was forlorn indeed with the tiny cottage nestled in amongst its scraggy bushes and tall vines.

"I'm much obliged, Mr. Archer,"—I said this twice, but the old man seemed to have forgotten me. He was pottering around, loosening up the dirt around this plant and that and breaking dead leaves from the bushes.

"Goodbye, Mr. Archer," I shouted.

He waved his hand in dismissal without turning.

"I told her," he muttered, reaching high with his pipe and brushing off a huge spider. "I told her spiders were eatin' this vine."

HARRIET COOKE.

BARBS.

It's not the fault of the women's clubs that one half the world don't know how the other half lives.

No one knows how to change his politics quite so quick as a mail carrier.

In time of political excitement, the landslide from one party to another is always in some other town. And the farther away the town the greater the landslide.

Woman loves above everything else to gloat over the inconstancy in woman.

Boarding-house maxim—One spoon with six dishes is better than six spoons with one dish.

"If the women ran this government," she said, dropping the morning paper, "this national debt would be wiped out even if the government had to borrow the money to do it."

Every election brings out a lot of fellows who are going to leave their own party, and vote the other ticket. You don't know them yourself, but you know another fellow who knows them.

"A man," says an exchange, "who shows more than five inches of his cuff is no gentleman." And it should be added that the woman who exhibits more than five inches of her stocking in crossing the street is no lady.

The more one pays for his theater ticket, the greater critic of the play he becomes. The top gallery is as enthusiastic as a negro revival meeting, while the man in the orchestra chairs is a slab of marble.

Ten years ago, afternoon teas and sewing circles. Today, woman's clubs of all kinds. But its the same thing—within a block of either.

A man signs a petition to get rid of the bearer. A woman signs it to see her name before the public.

How quickly a little favor from the rich engenders the aristocratic in a man.

No, Herbert, it is all a mistake. Fat girls are never the ones that want you to teach them how to skate, dance, or ride a bicycle. They prefer to stay at home and practice on the piano or do fancy work.

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