



FLOWER POWER

1907 FLOWER POWER 2007



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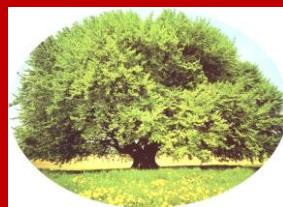
He goes about with his features wreathed in a perpetual smile and invariably wears a flower.

For a time he lived at the cottage of a humble artisan, but never paid anything for board or lodging.

When remonstrated he smiled disdainfully and admitted it was true he had eaten the poor man's bread but said that he had all along radiated life upon him which ought to be more than sufficient reward.



Daily Press Newport News, August 16, 1907



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1907, 16. August

Queer Roads Back To Nature

On the western hank of Lake Maggiore, in the Swiss Canton of Ticino, where the River Maggia flows into the lake, lies the picturesque village of Ascona, which has of late become known as the abode of a number of well meaning persons who are united in their desire to get back to nature and whose attempts to reach that desirable state are as varied as they are peculiar.

Certain it is that they have selected for practicing their doctrines a spot of natural beauty. The lake side here is famous for its magnificently wooded high road, between Losone and Ronco, close to which Ascona is situated. Here a wonderful panorama of mountains and lake reveals itself.

The sun shines on an average 340 days in the year and winter is almost unknown. Ground is cheap, for owing to the phylloxera scourge, the majority of the native inhabitants have abandoned their unprofitable pursuit of vine growing and have emigrated.

Today Ascona is populated chiefly by long haired and bearded strangers, each of whom has a different notion of living the simple life and advocates his system as the only panacea for physical, psυχical and social ills.

The extreme vegetarians form the most numerous body of this community. In addition to vegetable diet they also consume certain animal products, such as milk, butter and eggs; a heresy strongly condemned by the fruitarians, who subsist exclusively on products of the soil.

The former frankly admit that they have adopted their diet mainly for reasons of health; but the latter bring ethical and religious motives to bear on their abstinence from all fresh food. Their prophet is Tolstoi, as far as he is able to agree with them.

A third group consists of the so called raw foddors. The use of beds and soap these abhor as conventional lies. It was one of these extremists, a former officer in the Austrian army, who persuaded the wife of the ex-Archduke Leopold of Austria to embrace his creed, thus bringing about an estrangement between her and her husband culminating in a legal separation.

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For a time he lived at the cottage of a humble artisan, hut never paid anything for board or lodging. When remonstrated with he smiled disdainfully and admitted it was true that he had eaten the poor man's bread, but said he had all along radiated life upon him, which ought to be more than sufficient reward.

Another type is the orchard man. In the fall he rents from a farmer a fruit tree, under which he sleeps and on the fruits of which he subsists. When the tree is eaten are he

rents the next tree.

The most peculiar of the mall is a gentleman known as the Mexican because he once spent two mouths in Mexico. His view is that it is a sin to torment an animal, and that to keep an animal in a stable or even to tie it up is a form of torment and a sin.

In his hut he keeps a goat, which provides him with sustenance. His conscience forbids him to tie the goat up. but at the same time he wants to prevent the animal from straying. Therefore he is obliged to be in constant attendance on the goat and never leaves her. As a mater of fact he is the goat's prisoner, and as such he is known throughout the district.

It is a remarkable fact that the women of this community appear on the whole to be physically and mentally the more robust sex. While true and loyal to their convictions they do not go to the unpractical extremes the men advocate.

One of them is nicknamed Soupsuds. She has made the discovery that the Bible is not essentially a religious work, but a book replete with secret medicinal prescriptions. According to her the substances named most frequently in the Scriptures have mysterious curative properties.

As salt, sand and wine are among these substances she makes a mixture of them and offers it with incredible preserverance to any sick person in the village. If the patient recovers she triumphs; if not, her explanation is that the patient is possessed of evil spirits.

Two events have lately disturbed the community. One woman, the wife of a strict simple lifer, showed signs of acute mental derangement and had to he removed to a sanitarium, where she has since recovered since under proper treatment. Another, whose aim was to kill mater and live in the spirit, voluntarily abstained for a long period from taking nourishment, and finally took poison and died.

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