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POETRY.

In the Heart of the Woods,
Such beautiful things in the heart of the woods!
Flowers and ferns, and the soft green mosses,
Such joys of the birds, in the solitude,
Where the swift winged places, and the tree-tops toss;

Spaces of silence, sweet with sleep,
Which nobody hears but the God above;
Spaces where myriad creatures throng,
Singing themselves in his guarding love.

Such safety and peace in the heart of the woods,
Far from the city's dust and din,
Where fashion nor hate of man intrudes,
Nor fashion nor folly has entered in,
Deeper than hunter's trail hath gone,
Glimmering the torn where the wild deer drink,

And fearless and free comes the gentle fawn
To peep at herself o'er the grassy brink.

Such pledges of love in the heart of the woods,
For the maker of all things keeps the least,
And over the tiny flowered broods,
With care that for ages has never ceased.

If he care for this, will he not for these—
These, wherever thou art to-day—
Child of an Infinite Father, see;
And safe in such gentler keeping stay.
Margaret E. Sangster.

SELECT SERIAL.

Sweet Violet.

CHAPTER XV.

If Ceil could have seen that look of deadly hate in Amber's eyes, and read the wicked thoughts in her mind, he would have snatched Violet in his strong arms, and fled away with her to some safe refuge from the cloud of woe lowering darkly over that lovely golden head.

But Amber's seeming kindness had lulled every suspicion in his mind to rest. He believed that she was the only friend he and Violet had in their love affair.

But he might as well pray in a new version of the litany:
"From all false friends and wicked schemers, good Lord, deliver us!"

Just now he could think of nothing clearly but the intoxicating bliss of Violet's nearness, and the shy gladness of her dark blue eyes as they dwelt on his, so dark, so true, so tender.

He placed his hand fondly over hers, thrilling with joy at the soft contact, and poured out, in love's tender phrases, low and deep, all his joy at seeing her again.

But Violet, with a shy consciousness of Amber's presence, rejoined, softly and anxiously:

"Oh, Ceil, we have no time even to rejoice over this happy meeting, for I want you to advise me how to escape from the perils that surround me."

And, clasping her hands in piteous terror, she added:

"Oh, I am so frightened, Ceil, at the dark and cruel fate that seems lowering over my head! I have no peace by day or night. Terrible dreams startle me from sleep, and fill me with forebodings of evil!"

"My darling, you are weak and nervous, that is all. There is so real danger, for, as I have written to you every day, they cannot force you into an unwilling marriage. Only beCourageous, and persist in refusing Harold Castello's suit, and all will be well. Judge Camden will give up his plan when he finds you are determined not to yield."

"Ah, you do not know grandpapa as well as I do, Ceil. I fear his power, he is so harsh and cruel!"

"Not cruel to you, my little love, for no one could be that!" cried the dotting lover.

Suddenly Amber looked around at them, the angry frown all gone as if by magic, from her dark and brilliant face.

"I beg pardon for interrupting," she began, "but really I see that I must speak a word for Violet."

"A hundred if you wish!" he said, courteously.

"Ceil, you do not really comprehend the perils that environ poor Violet, because we have kept back from you a startling fact."

"Oh, Amber—" Violet began, piteously.

"Hush, dear; I will tell Ceil the truth! He ought to know the real reason of you illness. I am ashamed of my grandfathers, but he must know that it was a cruel blow from that old

man's hand that struck you senseless to the floor, and almost cost your life!"

How much indignation she looked as she uttered the words! Who could guess that, deep in her heart, Amber was furious that this cruel blow had not ended her rival's innocent life.

"Oh!" breathed Ceil Grant, in deadly wrath and amazement, while the veins stood out on his forehead like whipcords, and his hands involuntarily clenched themselves as though they were round the throat of the dastard who had sunk so low to all gentlemanly instincts as to strike a woman.

"Oh, Amber, I wished Ceil never to hear that!" cried Violet, in deep distress.

"It was best that he should know it, Violet, so that he might be rescued to a case of your danger. Grandpapa is a cruel, violent old man, and almost loses his reason when thwarted in any darling plan. He is determined that Violet shall marry this proud millionaire, and if she continues to defy his commands, I tremble for her very life!"

shuddered Amber, seeing her part so superbly that no one could doubt that she loved and pitied Violet with real country affection.

Ah, Heaven defend the noble heart from insidious foes, who work in the dark—foes, who, in the guise of friendship, smile in the face, with a hidden sword in the hand! Of all enemies these are the most to be feared and scorned.

There is something brave at least in open defiance and enmity, but the real recoil from the foe in ambush, from lying lips and deceitful hearts!

She, the beautiful traitress, watched Ceil's bitter wrath with secret satisfaction, knowing that it would brand him more surely to her plans.

"That old man, to dare to strike you, my Violet! It is incredible! But he shall suffer for his villainy. I will challenge him to fight. I—I will kill him!" roared Ceil, in sudden, deadly anger, his eyes flashing luridly.

"Oh, no, no, no, dear Ceil, you must not harm that old man—you shall not! I forgive him freely!" cried Violet in terror.

"No, you must not harm him," added Amber, "you must not wreak revenge on our grandfather; you must simply take measures to remove Violet beyond reach of his fatal anger."

His face pale with despair, and he cried, wretchedly:

"Ah, Heaven, what can I do! Judge Camden will not give his consent to our marriage, and as she is his ward still, she could not marry me without."

"But you can elope with Violet," cried Amber, boldly.

There was a start from Ceil, a little shriek from Violet, and Amber continued:

"Washington is but an hour's ride from here, and you could marry Violet there, you know, in defiance of the whole world. I can plan the elopement for you if you will trust to my judgment. In fact, I have been thinking it over some time, for I knew it was the only way to save Violet from Judge Camden's fury."

Ceil looked at Violet with dark, eager eyes.

"Would you be willing, my darling?" he breathed tenderly.

Sweet Violet shrank and trembled to this! She murmured: "You know, Amber, how my poor mother brought reproach upon herself by her runaway marriage with my father."

"Yes, I have heard all about it, and I never blamed poor Marie Camden for the least. Her father almost forced her to it; just as he is now forcing you, Violet," replied Amber, instantly.

Ceil took her little love's hand in his and pressed it warmly, as he murmured:

"I have but a poor home to offer you, my darling, in exchange for all the luxury of Golden Willows; but if you will come to me, I will love you more than life."

"Like the Lord of Barleigh," laughed Amber, repeating:

"I can make no marriage present,
Little can I give my wits;
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love you more than life."

Violet's eyes were shining through a mist of tender tears, her cheeks flushed rosy, and she returned the tender

pressure of her lover's hand.

"Ceil, I am not afraid of poverty with you," she cried, bravely. "I only dreaded the world's reproach. But why should I care for that, since we shall be all the world to each other? I am afraid of grandpapa, I love you, and I should be charmed to live at picturesque Bonnycastle, with that sweet lady, your beautiful mother. So I will run away with you at any time you say so. And Amber you must be bidden, dear."

"I will," was the gay reply, and Amber said to herself that she would not miss being the bridesmaid for anything, but her smile just then was not good to see.

"Now that we have decided on the elopement, I had better take Violet home, for if we stay too long, Judge Camden may come out to look for us," she added.

"Will you bring Violet out again tomorrow?" Ceil asked, anxiously.

"I will try, and unless grandpapa is in a bad humor, I may succeed. But, at any rate, I will be here, and will decide on our plans for the elopement," declared Amber.

He kissed Violet's little hand with tender passion, then they drove away, leaving him alone in the quiet road, watching them and praying and hoping that Violet would come again tomorrow.

An impulse came over him to go and tell his mother that he would soon bring honey Violet home to her for a daughter, to live in the old ruin of a place, and shed brightness over it, after the manner of all young, joyous things.

But half way home he changed his mind.

"It is better she should not know. Then no one can say that she aided and abetted me in eloping with the grand-daughter of the rich Judge Camden."

He knew that Violet would be sure of a welcome from his stately mother, and he decided not to tell her anything but to take her by surprise with his bonny bride.

He turned back toward his office, daisy with joy, and revolving plans for fitting up the prettiest rooms at Bonnycastle for his darling's use. He was sure that he could afford some pretty, simple, new furniture and the blue and white hangings to brighten up the place. And, as for flowers, there were loads of them at home, and Violet delighted in them. Besides, he would love her so dearly, he would not be so much that she should be too happy to miss the splendors she had enjoyed at Golden Willows.

CHAPTER XVI.

Only an adoring lover can realize how Ceil waited for Amber the next afternoon, hoping and praying that Violet would be her companion.

But he was doomed to disappointment.

When the pretty little photos came in sight, Amber was sitting in it all alone, with a grave and thoughtful expression on her brilliant face.

"You are disappointed, I know, but it is impossible for me to bring Violet," she cried, inwardly writhing at the sadness of his face.

"I am sure it was not your fault," he replied, trying to stifle his pain, and speak cheerfully.

"No, indeed, but something has happened that has set grandpapa quite wild. Can you guess what?"

"Violet is not ill again? Don't tell me that, Amber," he cried, anxiously, his thoughts fling in terror to his darling.

"No, no, it is not that, Ceil. Violet is well, and wanted to come with me, but grandpapa made her stay at home to entertain—Harold Castello."

"So he has come?" Ceil cried out, jealously.

"Yes, just an hour ago; and really, Ceil, he is a formidable rival."

"Handsome, eh?" he asked, trying to speak lightly.

"He is magnificent. Dark as a Spaniard—in fact, grandpapa told me he inherited a strain of Spanish blood—and with the most winning manners, and a low, musical voice," returned Amber, dwelling at length on Harold Castello's perfections in order to arouse the demon of jealousy in Ceil's heart.

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She had suffered all the agonies of jealous love herself, and desired that Ceil also should have a taste of that exquisite torture.

She knew well that Ceil Grant was as handsome and even more attractive than Harold Castello, but it suited her purpose to expatiate on the new-comer.

"If Violet were as fickle as some girls I have known, I should tremble for your chances, Ceil," she continued, banteringly. "He is very fascinating, this man, and so rich, too. Of course that would count with many girls."

"Not with my true-hearted Violet!" he cried, proudly.

"She assented, carelessly saying: "No, for Violet is very romantic, and fancies that love and poverty combined will be very charming. I wonder how she will find the reality."

There was a hidden sneer in the words that he vaguely felt, and his cheek flushed as he said:

"It is very noble in Violet to be content with my poverty. But I feel that fortune will one day change for me, and then she shall have all the luxuries of life!"

"Will you drive with me a little way while I unfold my plans for the elopement?" she asked; and when he was seated by her side, driving along the sandy road, with the low murmur of the river in their ears, she continued:

"Violet and I talked it over a long time last night, and decided on a plan, if it meets your approval."

He listened to her eagerly without speaking.

"To begin with," continued Amber, "Violet and I used to know a young divinity student in Alexandria, who now has a church in Washington. She would like this young minister, Wesley Christian, to perform the ceremony, if agreeable to you."

"Violet's wishes are always mine," he replied, with the gallantry of a true lover.

"Well, that is settled," said Amber. "Now we will go on to the next point, the elopement."

"Yes."

"It must take place to-morrow evening, for the day afterward is the one set for the marriage of Violet to the millionaire."

"One word, Amber. This young man, this rich squire for Violet's hand, does he know that she isaverse to his suit? Is he willing to accept an unwilling bride?"

"Grandpapa says that he knows all, and is willing to take Violet on any terms, feeling confident that he can win her heart after marriage."

"He is a dastard!" cried Ceil, with kindling anger.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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