



THE Easter glory dawns for all of every race and creed,  
And every soul is thrilled with joy,  
Since Christ is risen indeed.—*Elizabeth Hardy.*

## Rose of Old Harpeth

By MARIA THOMPSON DAVIES

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(Continued from last week)

"TO think that would be worth all the loneliness," answered Rose Mary gently. "Things were very hard for me the first year I had to come back from college. I used to sit here by the hour and watch Providence Road wind away over the Ridge and nothing ever seemed to come or go for me. But that was only for a little while, and now I never get the time to breathe between the things that happen along Providence Road for me to attend to. I came back to Sweetbriar like an empty crock, with just dregs of disappointment at the bottom, and now I'm all ready every morning to have five gallons of love-folk-happening poured into a two-and-a-half-gallon capacity. I wish I were twins or twice as much me."

"Why, you have never told me before, Rose Mary, that you belong to the new-woman persuasion, with a college hall-mark and suffragist leanings. I have made the mistake of putting you in the home-guard brigade and classing you fifty years behind your times. Don't tell me you have an M.A. I can't stand it to-night."

"No, I haven't got one," answered Rose Mary with both a smile and a longing in her voice. "I came home in the winter of my junior year. My father was one of the Harpeth Valley boys who went out upon the world, and he came back to die under the roof where his fathers had fought off the Indians, and he brought poor little motherless me to live with the aunts and Uncle Tucker. They loved me and cared for me just as they did Uncle Tucker's son, who was motherless, too, and a few years after he went out into the world to seek the fortune he felt so sure of. I was given my chance at college. In my senior year his tragedy came and I hurried back to find Uncle Tucker old and broken with the horror of it, and with the place practically sold to avoid open disgrace. His son died that year and left—left—some day I will tell you the rest of it. I might have gone back into the world and made a success of things and helped them in that way from a distance—but what they needed was—me. And so I sat here many sunset hours of loneliness and looked along Providence Road until—until I think the Master must have passed this way and left me His peace, though my mortal eyes didn't see Him. And now there lies my home nest swung in a bower of blossoms full of the old sweetie birds, the boy, the calf, puppy babies, pecker chickens and—and I'm going to take a large, grey, prowling night-bird back and tuck him away for fear

his cheeks will look hollow in the morning. I'm the mother bird, and while I know He watches with me all through the night, sometimes I sing in the dark because I and my nesties are close to Him and I'm not the least bit afraid."



"I Hope You Feel Easy in Your Mind Now"

### CHAPTER IV.

#### MOONLIGHT AND APPLE-BLOW.

"I hope you feel easy in your mind, child, now you've put this whole garden to bed and tucked 'em under cover, heads and all," said Uncle Tucker, as he spread the last bit of old sacking down over the end of the row of little sprouting bean vines. "When I look at the garden I'm half-scare to go in the house to bed for fear I haven't got a quilt to my joints."

"Now, honey sweet, you know better than that," answered Rose Mary as she rose from weighting down

the end of a frilled white petticoat with a huge coil of earth and stretched it so as to cover quite two yards of the green shoots. "I haven't taken a thing of yours but two shirts and one of your last summer seersucker coats. I'm going to mend the split up the back in it for the wash Monday. Aunt Amanda lent me two aprons and a sack and a petticoat for the peony bushes, and Aunt Viney gave me this shawl and three chemises that cover all the pinks. I've taken all the tablecloths for the early peas, and Stonie's shirts each one of them, have covered a lot of the poet's narcissus. All the rest of the things are my own clothes, and I've still got a clean dress for to-morrow. If I can just cover everything to-night, I won't be afraid of the frost any more. You don't want all the lovely little green things to die, do you, and not have any snaps or peas or peonies at all?"

"Oh, fly-away!" answered Uncle Tucker as he tucked in the last end of a non-descript frill over a group of tiny cabbage plants, "there's not even a smack of frost in the air! It's all in your mind."

"Well, a mind ought to be sensitive about covering up its friends from frost hurts," answered Rose Mary propitiously as she took a

"Tenting up the garden sass ag'in, Miss Rose Mary?"

"No, we're jest giving all the houseful duds a monsoon instead of a sunning, Cal," answered Uncle Tucker with a chuckle as he came over to the wall beside the visitor.

"What's the word along the Road?" "Gid Newsome have sent the news as he'll be here Su'day night to lay off and plow up this here dram or no-dram question for Sweetbriar voters, so as to tote our will up to the state house for its election. As a state senator, we can depend on Gid to expend some and have notice taken of this district, if for nothin', but his corn-silk voice and white necktie. It must take no less'n a pound of taller a week to keep them shoes and top hat of his'n so slick. I should judge his courting to be kinder like soft soap and molasses, Miss Rose Mary." And Mr. Rucker's smile was of the saddest as he handed this bit of gentle banter over the wall to Rose Mary, who had come over to stand beside Uncle Tucker in the end of the long path.

"It's wonderful how devoted Mr. Newsome is to all his friends," answered Rose Mary with a blush. "He sent me three copies of the *Bobbs-Herald* with no less'n a score of yours he had them printed last week, and I was just going over to take you and Mrs. Rucker one as soon as I got the time to."

"Johnnie-jump-ups, Miss Rose Mary, don't you never do nothing like that to me!" exclaimed Mr. Rucker with a very fire of desperation lighting his thin face. "If Miss Rucker was to see one verse of that there poetry I would have to plough the whole creek-bottom cornfield jest to pacify her. I've done almost persuaded her to hire Bob Nickols to do it with his two teams and young Bob, on account of a sciatia in my left side that ploughing don't do no kind of good to. I have took at least two bottles of her sassafras and sorsum water and have let Granney make a plaster as big and loud-smelling as a mill swamp on my back jest to git that matter of the cornfield fixed up and here you most go and stir up the ruckus agin with that poor little 'Trees in the Breeze' poem that Gid took and had printed unbeknownst to me. Please, mawn, burn them papers!"

"Oh, I wouldn't tell her for the world if you don't want me to, Mr. Rucker!" exclaimed Rose Mary in distress. "But I am sure she would be proud of—"

"No, it looks like women don't take to poetry for a husband; they prefers the hefting of a hoe and plough handles. It's hard on Miss Rucker that I ain't got no constitution to work with, and I feel it right to keep all my soul-squirrings and such outen her sight. The other night as I was a-putting Petie to bed, while she and Bob was at the front gate a-trying to trade on that there ploughing, a mighty sweet little verse come to me about—"

"The little shoes in mother's hand, and the tears was in my eyes so thick 'cause I didn't have nobody to say 'em to, that one dropped down on Petie and made him think I was a-going to wash his face, and such another ruckus as she had to come in to, as mad as hops! If I feel like outen her again for a new neck to try and make up to her for—"

"Aw, Mr. Rucker, M-A-A-R Rucker, come home to get ready for supper," came in a loud, jovial voice that carried across the street to the tinkling of a brass drum. The Rucker home sat in a clump of sugar maples just opposite the Briers, and was square, solid and unadorned of

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