

SPRING.

Thou of the sunny head,
With lilies garlanded,
And bosom fairer than the blown sea foam;
O Spring, in what waste desert dost thou stay
Whilst leaves await thy presence to unfold?
The branches of the lime with frost are gray,
And all imprisoned is the crocus' gold.
Come, sweet Enchantress, come!

Though, in the sombre west,
Thy star hath lit its crest—
Pale Phosphor, fronting full the withered moon—
Thy violets are sepulchred in snow,
Thy daisies twinkle never in the sun,
Rude blasts throughout the ruined forests blow,
And silent is the dove's melodious moan;
Enchantress, hasten soon.

White are the country ways,
And white and tangled maze,
Loved of the oxlip and the creeping thyme;
Bare shakes the poplar on the sullen ridge,
Cold glooms the spectral mill above the flood;
Hoarse torrents stream beneath the ivied bridge,
And lightnings strike the darkness of the wood:
Enchantress, bless our clime.

No bloom of dewy morn,
No freshly-blossomed thorn,
Gladdens the importunings of sad eyes;
The day wastes drearily, through cloud and sleat:
Over the watered meadows and stark vales
The night comes down impetuous and fleet,
And ships and cities shiver in the gales;
O fair Enchantress, rise.

Arise, and bring with thee
The rathe bud for the tree,
The healing sunshine for the trampled grass!
Loose tendrils for the boughs which bless the eaves,
And shield the swallows in the rainy hours,
The pendent flames which the laburnum heaves,
And faint scenes for the wind-stirred lilac flowers,
Enchantress, breathe and pass.

Men knew, and kissed, of old,
Thy garment's glittering fold—
Thy radiant footprint on the mead or waste;
Earth kindled at thine advent—allars burned,
And ringing cymbals bade the hearths be gay;
But now, in sunless solitude inured,
Thou leav'st the world unto reluctant day.
Oh! haste, Enchantress, haste!

The lark shall sing again,
Between the sun and rain,
The brown bee through the flowered pastures roam.
There shall be music in the frozen woods,
A gurgling carol in the rushing brook,
An odour in the half-unblossomed bud,
And dancing foxgloves in each forest nook;
Then, come, Enchantress, come!

THE RED ROSE.

"Yes, I am pretty," she said.
She put her hands on either side of the mirror-frame, and made a little grimace at it as though she were about to kiss the fair reflection.

"Very pretty, and I'm glad of it. What would be the use of living if one were not pretty?" She turned away from the glass after this, and sat down on a little ottoman with her arms folded, and the frown of reflection on her smooth forehead.

"It seems a pity that I must grow old and faded," she said.
"But I know I'm only mortal."
"I'd like to be a girl for ever. But since I can't, I must marry somebody."
"I'm twenty-one. It's time I thought seriously about it, I know."
"Last year I had five suitors. Two I refused. They are married both of them. There are three left. Do I like any one of them enough to marry him?"
"Three!" she said, in a moment more. "I could say four, if I choose, only of course I don't count the little music-teacher."
Then she pulled her watch from her belt.
"Half-past three," she said. "In ten minutes more he will be done teaching that stupid cousin of mine her piece."
"Yes," she said again, "if I choose to count the little music-master amongst my beaux, I could. Only of course I don't."
"Of course I don't, sir," apostrophizing some unseen individual. "Don't be vain and ridiculous, and fancy that I do."
"Firstly," she said, touching one rosy forefinger's tip to the other, "you are not at all good-looking."
"Secondly, you are as poor as a church-mouse."
"Thirdly, you are nobody but a poor music-teacher, and I am Miss Velt."
"We are proud of our family. We move in the first society. I shouldn't have much respect for myself if I counted little Devoe among my beaux."
"Last year I danced with a French nobleman. An Italian count fell in love with me."
"A German baron—oh, wasn't he funny!—popped the question one night in broken English, and set me laughing so that I couldn't answer him."
"My loaffie Mess, that's how he began. Oh, dear, he was ugly, and he smelt of smoke, but he was a baron."
"Yes, I can marry well, when I do marry. No little music-teacher for me; but, dear me, how he likes me! A minute more now and he'll go into the conservatory, just because he fancies he'll find me there, and he'll pretend he comes for a tuberose and a leaf of geranium to wear in his buttonhole."
"It's only to see me, I know. And if he finds me there, I shall cut the flower for him, and he'll say, 'thank you,' and put it in his buttonhole."
"He always does. Fond of tuberoses? Nonsense! He's fond of me. And the tuberoses are at the farthest end of the conservatory."
"It takes longest to get them. That's why he chooses them. I won't go down to-day. I declare I won't. There, the lesson is over. I hear his step on the stairs."
Then she looked in the glass, and went at once to the conservatory.
The music-teacher was there before her.

It was all as she said.
He would have only the tuberoses.
She looked at him as she knew how to look when she gave them to him.
And he looked at her as men look at women they love.
But nothing was said more than might have been uttered by strangers.

They talked of the weather, of the last new book—of anything, of everything; she thinking to herself the while, "He dare not show his heart to Miss Velt."
She might look and smile and speak softly without danger—an immeasurable gulf lay between them.
On the other side he knelt worshipping her in vain. He was a gentleman too.
No one looking at them would have fancied that pretty girl in any way his superior.
But that every man must fall in love with her, was, in her opinion, a law of nature.
That only a rich and aristocratic person dared aspire to her hand, was another; but there was triumph in the adoration of those humble creatures at her feet.

When the music-master went away, she ran up stairs quite exhilarated, and put on her hat for a walk.
In this summer weather the Velts lived at their country seat, and the doctor had ordered Miss Velt to walk every day. She had taken too little exercise, as idle young ladies with carriages at command often do.
This afternoon her way lay along a green lane, dotted here and there by pretty cottages.
Passing one of these, Miss Velt saw a dress she knew and a bonnet that was familiar to her emerge from its little gate.
They were the dress and bonnet of Miss Burns, a lady devoted to Sunday-school interests, and kindly given to the visiting of the sick. Tracts and jelly filled her basket.
Kettles of soup and little Bibles were always ready for the poor.
She preached to them, but if they needed it, she fed them also.
Everyone spoke well of Miss Burns.
"My dear Miss Velt," she said, "how glad I am to see you! I've been paying a most interesting visit—not to a poor person, not a very poor one, at least—a lady; but nearly gone in consumption, and so beautiful."
"Will you see her? I should like to introduce you. A call from you would cheer her up. She's in the garden. She's about your age, and so pretty. Let me just take you to see her."
Miss Velt made no objection.
Miss Burns took her by the arm and led her around the house into the garden.
There, under a grape arbour, in a great chair, reclined a lady—a very young one, not more than seventeen—and as beautiful as a human being well could be, but plainly fading fast.
There were homely flowers growing all about her, and in the bosom of her dress she wore pinned a white tuberose and a geranium leaf.
Near her sat an old woman knitting.
She knew Miss Velt and courtesied.
The girl looked up.
"This is Miss Rose Bray—Miss Velt," said Miss Burns.
"Miss Velt was a Sunday-school scholar of mine a year or two ago, Rose. I wanted her to know you."
"I am glad to know your friend," said Miss Velt.
"I see you love flowers. I will send you as many as you want, and fruit also. Our grapes would tempt an invalid."
"You'll come and get some, won't you, Mrs. Black, or shall I send a servant? That will be better. Anything you'd like to have I'll be so pleased to send."
"Yes, very kind of you," said the girl, wearily. "Yes, I love flowers."
"Have you tuberoses?" asked Miss Velt of Mrs. Black.
"Those in Miss Bray's dress are as fine as ours, I'm sure."
"Nay," said the old lady; "someone brings those to Rose. Don't they, dear?"
The girl flushed brightly.
"A lover, evidently," thought Miss Velt.
"Every afternoon he brings 'em," said the old lady. "She loves tuberoses so."
Miss Velt glanced at the flowers.
She knew of none so fine, save in her own conservatory.
"Every afternoon!"
Suddenly she felt angry without knowing why.
What a very beautiful girl this was!
She said a few more words, and hurried away.
Out in the lane she put her thought into shape for herself, having bidden Miss Burns good-bye.
"Those flowers are the same I gave this morning to Mr. Devoe, to the little music-master."
She walked on faster, her face quite hot.
"She is prettier than I," she said, "much. He is in love with her—not with me. I'm a fool. He comes to the conservatory only to get the flowers for her. He doesn't think of me; of course, I don't care. Why should I?"
She sat down under a great elm tree, holding her parasol low.
Her face was burning hot.
"He has dared to flirt with me—with Miss Velt!" she said; "he!"
Now scalding tears were in her eyes.
"I'm not sure," she said; "there may be other tuberoses in the place as large as those. I'll know whether there are."
She arose and walked on.
"After all," she said, "what does it matter? I could never have a thought for him. I've said so often enough. I know that I shall marry Charles Delano when he asks me. He's rich; he's stylish; he's of good family; he's very handsome. What is a little music-master to me? Only—and she clenched her gloved hand—"did he dare look so at me if he meant nothing?"
The next day she listened to the music lesson in the conservatory, and she had a little piece of scarlet ribbon in her pocket.
When Mr. Devoe joined her, she smiled more charmingly than ever, and she tied his little bouquet with the ribbon.
When he turned his eyes upon her, when he looked at she was used to see him look—when she saw in his face that tender wistfulness that had proved to her haughty heart that he loved her well and hopelessly, she said to herself—
"This is natural; this is not art. He does love me. There are other tuberoses, and he is not Rose's lover."
Yet she called on Rose in the twilight with an offering of

white grapes, and before the girl saw her she had seen that the flowers in her bosom were held together with scarlet ribbon.

It was the first experience of this kind that Miss Velt—belle, beauty, and heiress—had ever had.
She stood triumphant, and others suffered for her sake.
When she should marry, hearts would break.
This was her faith.
Suddenly, one man had dared to slight her.
He looked tenderly at her, meaning nothing.
He only played the admirer, and carried her gifts of flowers to another girl.
She always had believed that he wore their faded ashes next his heart, and apostrophised them in lonely moments.
He only came to the conservatory to obtain something hard to find elsewhere.
He cared nothing for her beauty.
He admired fair hair and blue eyes.
He was Rose's lover.
Miss Velt came to this conclusion reluctantly.
If this could be so, why, others might do the same.
Where was her power?
Suddenly, as she found herself lowered in her own estimation, she found the man who had brought her to this pass exalted.
She suddenly felt that his admiration was something well worth having.
Yesterday he had been a humble lover, at whose homage she jested.
Now he was a man not to be won by her charms.
He had only flirted with her.
He was in love with this beautiful girl at the cottage.
The next day she sought Miss Burns to talk about the girl.
But Miss Burns only knew that Mrs. Black said she had had money left her.
That there was some trouble she did not know, and that her cousin, Charles Devoe, was always very kind to her.
"Buys her flowers and books, and sings to her, and all that sort of thing," said Miss Burns.
After this, one might have noticed that Miss Velt was a thought less gay in her manner.
A shade lay upon the beauty of her face.
She was conscious of being mastered by her own feelings—something that had never happened to her before.
Against her own will her feet carried her to the conservatory, where she plucked tuberoses for this music-master to give his love.
She could not forbid herself to see him, and this, with lovers at her feet, and the power of an acknowledged belle and heiress in her hands.
The grapes that hang out of reach are the sweetest.
The lover of another woman, whose heart she could not move, was to Miss Velt a different being from those who pined for her smiles.
He was still only the music-master—still poor, and no handsomer than before.
All the same, he was out of reach.
Talking to him more, listening to what he said in a graver, quieter way, she learnt more of him.
He was mentally superior to most of the men she knew.
He was charming, if he was not beautiful.
And still had she not known that her flowers were given for his lady-love, she might have fancied that he meant something by his tender glances.
"They are not assumed," she said to herself, "only they are not for me. When he looks so, he is thinking of that fair girl at widow Black's cottage."
One day Charles Delano proposed to her and was refused.
Time passed on.
The weather grew cold.
There was to be a fitting cityward soon, but Miss Velt had no delightful anticipation of the coming winter.
All that she had rejoiced in seemed stale, flat, and unprofitable.
She was pleased no more with the thought of wounding many men's hearts.
She desired to have one for her very own—just one out of all the beating hearts in all the world.
Yet for that she made no effort.
She could strive with all a belle's high art for love that she intended to fling aside when it was won, but she was too proud to beckon on the man she loved in very truth.
Miss Velt grew fond of sitting alone in the twilight; of wandering in the mossy garden, beneath the glimpses of the moon; of reading poetry and singing tender love-songs to herself.
She grew fond also of going to evening prayers.
At that hour the church was quiet; the few women scattered about the pews devout; the service sweet and comforting.
And besides the prayers in the velvet prayer-book, Miss Velt prayed another prayer as she knelt alone on her crimson cushion.
She prayed for relief from the sadness that had fallen upon her—for her light young heart again.
She prayed that she might cease to love this man who loved another.
It was the country custom of the place to toll the church bell when anyone left it forever through the gate of Death.
One day, walking in her garden, Miss Velt heard the long, solemn strokes drop upon the air. Pale and trembling, she stood still.
Just then a voice, broken with sobs, called to her over the gate.
Miss Burns stood there.
"It is little Rose," she said. "She died last night in my arms."
"Was he there?" asked Miss Velt.
"Her cousin?"—yes. He knelt beside her.
"I was very wicked, Charles," she said, "but you forgave me. Kiss me before I go. I would have loved you, Charles, if I had known you as I do now."
"And he kissed her. It almost broke my heart," said poor Miss Burns.
The two women sat down together.
The young one held the other one's hand.
Tears flooded both their eyes.
Neither said a word more.
For once, between two women silence said all.
But, when Miss Burns was gone, Miss Velt went into her conservatory, and severed from its stem every waxen tuberoses that grew there.
She heaped them in a basket with long, trailing slips of oy-