

The Rarest Flower

The drawback to trying to tell a story of emotions, almost without events, is that there is so little to tell. And yet the great story of the world is the story of emotions...

The girls were profoundly interested in his coming, likely interested with maidenly curiosity for a Newcomer...

After the artist had been two weeks in Newrick, during which time the community had favorably made up its individual and collective mind in regard to him...

It got to be rather like 'Palermo' after a while, for he was likely to be seen with the girls following him whenever he went sketching into the fields or woods...

How is it that little Cicely has fallen on silence? I always liked that quaint old term, but I don't like to apply it to Cicely!

On Sunday, after the earliest Mass in the fresh little white frame church, Floyd would have the steeple to sit out under a certain great oak that was near to them all...

There was the dearest child, there, he told them, 'about your age, about Cicely's age; little Cicely is the youngest of you, isn't she? So I thought. The child's name was Yvonne. She was as pretty as it

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It was possible to be all fresh tints and dewy sweetness, and as the books say, she was as good as she was beautiful. Hardly there came to the mountains about the same time that I got there, a famous botanist...

'I had good luck with my work, thanks to Yvonne, who sat for me with unflinching patience, just as all your kind ladies do. But Professor Elwell was less fortunate; he did not find what he had come to seek. He was giving up and deciding to move on to the next promising field...

'I have a headache,' she said. 'A headache! That is bad, but not enough to make you cry like this, dear Cicely,' Floyd said softly. Then for the first time, he realized as he looked at her beauty, so oblique in the midst of tears, yet so womanly sweet, what she was to him...

'Little Yvonne has gone into botanical records as the discoverer of the rarest of the southern European mountain flowers, though it surely is not her fault, and she does not fit well into dry old botanical lists...

'It is a very pretty story, a dear story, and we like the sermon,' said some of the girls, but not Cicely. She smiled a little, but her eyes were clouded, and she became silent and abstracted. Silent and abstracted a charged Cicely, she remained for days, till at last Floyd Cranston noticed it.

'How is it that little Cicely has fallen on silence? I always liked that quaint old term, but I don't like to apply it to Cicely!' he said. 'I'm just my same old self,' she said, but with a sudden sense that she should never be that again.

Cicely began to drop out of the

pleas-ant daily excursions; there now were eleven girls then seven in the groups that Floyd picked. Why this was he could not understand, he found himself pondering it often after he had vainly tried to penetrate Cicely's reasons, which he knew were not the real reason for her absenting herself. Pondering did not go well under these conditions; the six girls added to each other that their perception of a love affair had been so-called, but they lacked experience to know that clouds usually precede day in these cases, and were cast down because it was going wrong.

One day, returning home alone, he came upon Cicely proce on her face beneath the great oak under which they had all sat so often. He came up so quickly and softly over the thick grass that when she sprang up at the sound of his voice she had to time to hide her tears. Floyd sat down on his knees beside her. Gently cupping both hands, he asked her what was wrong.

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