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## ROSE ISLAND

By Lilian Leveridge

CHAPTER XV.

Love of the Wild.

"There are no flowers like the wild flowers,  
Search wherever you will,  
For they bloom in their simple beauty  
O'er meadow and vale and hill.  
They gladden the little children  
And the poorest in the land,  
For they drink of the dews of heaven,  
And are kept by God's own hand."  
—W. Blake Atkinson.

"Oh that thou couldst know thy joy  
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!"

THUS sang the Quaker poet from the fullness of his own experience of the cares and sadness that later years bring in their train. Childhood does not know its joy, and, paradoxical as this may seem, herein lies the joyousness of it. If childhood realized that life's sunny, flowery

ways are the first to be traversed, and that the thorny, wind-swept, tempest-riven steeps are waiting farther on, would the flowers seem half so sweet, the sunshine half so fair? Yet the balance-wheels of life bring compensation all along the years. Roses of joy, sweeter by far than childhood's buttercups and daisies, grow along the arid steeps, and the toil-worn pilgrim unflinchingly suffers the piercing of the thorns that he may press love's peerless blossoms to his lips. Robin and June were yet to realize this, but to-day they gathered their buttercups and daisies, nor dreamed that life had anything less bright in store.

Never a day passed in sunshine over Rose Island but its youthful inhabitants spent the greater part of it out of doors. Not in idle dreaming or basking in the sunshine—their joys were active joys. When their home tasks were done they went out together, usually across the lake into the woods beyond, Robin taking the camera and June a basket and trowel.

Many a flower or pretty landscape was photographed. Subjects for the camera were, indeed, legion. Here a vista from a hilltop of a tiny valley, white with hawthorn or saskatoon or wild cherry blossoms; here a brook, rippling between mossy rocks, and lapping the shores of tiny islands fringed with delicate fronds of fern, or a clump of feathery bishop's cap, or, later, its twin sister, still more fairy-like and frail. There were banks starred with white trilliums—our young botanists no longer called them lilies—a few late spring beauties (locally known as Mayflowers), Dutchman's breeches, for which unpoetic appellation June gladly substituted the prettier name of "white hearts"; pinky, creamy foam flowers, and purple-hearted royal violets in low, moist places; faintly sweet dog violets, violets white and violets yellow, and pale Canada violets, purpling in the wind. There were tiny mounds set with frail, sweet arbutus blooms—June's own flower, Robin declared—and graceful, fern-like meadow rue, with its tremulous mist of blossoms; columbine, brightening the rocky hillsides with its crimson, honey-laden chalices; pink-purple wild geraniums, fragile and fair; exquisite star flowers, lighting up the shady places; slender, dainty gold thread; bunch-berry, lavishly carpeting the waste hillsides.

All these and many more were found in May and early June, and photographed in their native haunts. Of course, the amateur photographers made many mistakes and had many disappointing failures, but they never gave up, and by means of frequent experiments and a little help now and then from Miss Cameron they managed to produce some really good work. Before the summer was over their little album of photos grew to be a thing of beauty and an eloquent record of many joys. It was well that Dave Christie's gift had been a generous one.

What an Eldorado of delight this old world of ours is, anyhow! Treasures rich beyond expression are spread around us on every side. We have only to reach out our hand—the hand of a grateful, appreciative spirit—and take them. The cloud glories of dawn and sunset; the star-sown heavens; the silver splendours of the moonlight; the shimmer of sunlight on rain-washed leaves; the deep, enfolding silence of the everlasting hills; the thousand tender beauties of leaf and bud and flower and fruit; the manifold and marvellous colourings and the sweet, harmonious music of the birds; the joy of work and the priceless gift of love—these all are ours if we will but claim our princely heritage.

Like flowers opening to the sunlight, the hearts of the youthful dwellers on Rose Island opened to receive these daily blessings; and every beauty claimed from Nature's inexhaustible store seemed to light the way for the coming of the next.

Not alone by the photographs were the charms of Nature kept in remembrance. June would have liked to adopt the whole race of flowers. Failing in that, her ingenuity turned Rose Island into a nursery, where a surprising number were "mothered." From the heart of the woods, from sunny hillsides, from shady nooks by rippling streams; in fact, from any spot where a flower showed its face, June carefully dug up hundreds of wild plants. These, with plenty of their native soil around the roots, were carried home in the big basket and planted in a suitable spot on the island.

Rose Island abounded in suitable spots. Flowers that needed little sunshine took kindly to the fleckered shadows of the white birch grove, and gratefully breathed the spicy airs under the pines. Thirsty plants—violets, ferns, wild callas, marsh marigolds, etc.—were planted along the

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