

POETRY.

A DINNER AND A KISS.

"I have brought you dinner, father." The blacksmith's daughter said, As she took from her arm a kettle And lifted its shining lid.

The blacksmith tore off his apron And dined in happy mood, Wondering much at the favor Hid in his humble food.

White while with her kettle swinging, Merrily nudged away, Stopping at sight of a fire, Catching some wild bird's lay.

SELECT STORY.

THE SILVER SHOON.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUED.

"The little girl she picked up in the streets?" "Not exactly in the streets, Hetty; the child belonged to some poor woman your aunt had been in the habit of helping, and when she died Elizabeth took the little thing to her own home."

"How strange! I wonder what she is like?" "You will know soon," Mr. Clare added. "As she is left to my guardianship she must live with us."

"How nice," Hetty murmured, clasping her small hands. "When will she arrive, papa?" "To-day, most probably."

While Mrs. Clare hurried off to prepare a room for the new comer, Hetty amused herself by gathering flowers in the sunlit garden, beautiful fragrant ones and clusters of starry jacinths, destined to fill the many old-fashioned bowls.

As she wandered among the bright blossoms, looking a dainty flower herself in her azure-hued dress, she suddenly came face to face with a tall handsome youth who had been apparently seeking her.

"I've been hunting everywhere for you. What are you doing, Hetty?" he asked cheerily after the first greetings were over. "Have you forgotten you promised to let me row you down river this morning?"

"No, I have not forgotten; but I am too busy to go now," she answered. "You must go without me to-day, Dunstan."

"His face fell." "Oh! come now, Hetty. You know I hate to be teased; you promised, and I am not going to let you off so easily."

"But really I cannot go, Dunstan," the girl went on more earnestly. "We expect a visitor to-day, and I am gathering flowers for her room."

"A visitor! Dunstan echoed wonderingly. "Yes; you don't ask who she is. You are not so curious as you used to be."

"Am I not? Only yesterday you told me I was too curious when I asked you if you were very fond of me."

"That is different," the girl answered turning aside to gather a lovely half opened rose.

"Is that flower for me?" Dunstan said thoughtfully. "No," Hetty answered shortly. "But all the same she held the rose towards him; and as he took it Dunstan bent to kiss the fair trembling fingers."

"Thanks, oh! my queen. Now tell me, like a dear child, who is this wonderful stranger?" "A ward of papa's."

"Is she young—pretty?" "She is young; but as I have never seen her, I cannot say whether she is pretty."

"Is she coming to live with you always?" "Until she comes of age or marries. Any more questions?"

"No—at least only one. What is her name?" "Nora Clare."

"Hetty, couldn't you manage to spend an hour or two on the river? The boat is waiting, and I promised to stop at our place to pick up Cathy."

"Very well," Hetty answered yielding to his entreaties; "but you must bring me back before luncheon."

Leaving her dainty basket in the summer house, Hetty followed her companion down the green slope which slanted to the water's edge. A tiny boat was resting motionless upon the silvery surface, attached to a drooping willow tree by a slender cord. Into this they stepped, and in another moment a few vigorous strokes had sent it out in the centre of the stream.

"Isn't this better than standing broiling in the sun on shore?" Dunstan asked triumphantly. "Ever so much better!" Hetty responded in a low dreamy tone, and she leaned back against the red cushions with a little sigh of utter contentment.

What a delicious morning they spent on the river's calm bosom! Cathy, Dunstan's merry sister, joined them further down, and added to their enjoyment by their bright mirth. It was long past luncheon time when Hetty parted with her friends.

Still she did not feel very anxious; Mrs. Clare was a tender indulgent mother, and her father's absence would make it easy for her to slip in unnoticed. As she entered the cool house, she saw several trunks were piled in one corner of the hall, giving it a rather untidy air, and moving blithely towards the staircase with her strong arms full of wraps was her mother's maid Patty.

"Has Miss Clare arrived?" Hetty asked. "Yes, miss, and Mrs. Clare has been asking for you," Patty answered, and then Hetty noticed the look of suppressed excitement on the girl's rosy face.

"Where is she?" "In the blue room."

Hetty waited for no more; she flew up the broad staircase, and rushed rather abruptly into the room allotted to their guest. Her mother was there, but it was not upon her the girl's surprised eyes rested.

Standing near the window with a ray of golden sunlight falling straight across her face was a young girl clad in deepest mourning; the tall lissom figure still had something of a child's grace about it, as if not fully developed into perfect womanly beauty; dainty white hands gleamed like snow against the blackness of her dress, and masses of soft golden hair fell in one unloosened shower down to her waist.

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"My dear, I wonder you left the house when you knew your cousin was to arrive this morning," she began reprovingly. "See after her now, she must be tired to death, and everything is strange to her eyes." As she finished Mrs. Clare moved forward, and taking one of Nora's listless hands in here, pressed it tenderly. "This is my daughter Hetty; I hope you two will be friends."

A smile which dazzled poor Hetty by its exceeding brightness quivered for an instant over the girl's sweet face. "I am sure we shall!" she said warmly. "I have heard your name from poor auntie, so I cannot look upon you as a stranger."

Mrs. Clare hurried off, suddenly remembering she had not put out clean damask for the table. Left alone Hetty moved to Nora's side and laid a soft hand on the girl's slim shoulder.

"Would you like to change your dress? Shall I tell Patty to bring up your trunks? I am sure you must be both tired and dusty."

"I am; but it does not matter," Nora replied wearily. "I shall feel better when I have bathed my face."

Patty was called and with ambitious eagerness waited upon the new comer; her hands trembled a little as she brushed out the long fair hair, and she lingered over the task as if it were one of love rather than duty.

Having changed her heavy dress for a thin silk one, Nora followed Hetty downstairs into the big dining room where a delicate luncheon had been laid.

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"How old are you, Nora?" Hetty asked later, as they sat alone in the cool garden.

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"More than five years." Hetty was longing to ask more questions, but a shadow slowly settled on her companion's face, which warned her that in time she would learn all that was so strange and mysterious to her now.

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