

Nestling in a grove of primeval pines that sentinelled the placid, shining waters of the Don stood a low, wide-eaved cottage. It was completely clad in ivy; and upon the eastern side there was a dull copper tinge through the matted masses of the Virginia creeper.

Many of the earlier flowers had faded; but the pinks and the poppies were still rich in blood; and the sunflower sturdily held up its yellow face like 'a wizened sorcerer of old,' as a fair and gifted friend of my acquaintance puts it. The cottage and the grounds about it were the property of an English gentleman of taste and means. The nearest dwelling had an air of luxury, and round about it stretched wide areas of land from which the harvest of wheat and oats had been taken. Here and there in the distance a group of boys might be seen with their fishing rods in their hands; for at that day the Don stream was not foul by the drainage of fields, and shrunken from the downpour of the sun, and from the loss of its sheltering forest. Trout and often salmon-trout went into its quiet retreats in the face of the spring freshets; and many a congregation of foam bubbles did it hold upon its breast to screen the greedy, vigilant speckled trout.

In a little summer house through whose latticed sides the gadding vines were so interlocked and twined, as to remind you of the legend of Salmacis and 'Hermes' son, sat a girl. Her wide-brimmed hat rested upon the seat beside her, and round about it was a double girdle of ivy, as if twining there. Looking through the door of the dainty place you could not see the girl's face; for she had turned her head, and her chin was resting upon her slim, white hands, as she read from a book that lay upon her lap.

Her hair you could see, for it hung over her shoulders and down her white dress, like 'a gold flag over a sail.' For myself I usually prefer dark hair for women; but ah! who could have gainsaid the glory of those luxurious