

# Northern Messenger

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'We have for quite a number of years taken the 'Messenger,' and we are well pleased with it.'—P. H. Hudson, Plympton, Man.

—'Congregationalist.'

## The Disappointed Vines.

(Mrs. M. B. Randolph, in the M. C. 'Advocate.')

One cold morning in spring two young tendrils of a woodbine hung shivering in the rain. A rough wind had almost stripped them of their delicate clothing, and they looked almost disconsolate and forlorn.

After a while one of them gave the other a light tap, and began to whisper on this wise:

'Summer after summer our ancestors have beautified this old ramshackle house. But for them it long ago would have been a scar upon the landscape. As it is, it has become a really picturesque object. It seems as if the owner might have built at least a shed to protect them, the same as he did for those sticks of wood yonder, which are of no use but to burn. We are too independent, however, to bear such neglect. Let us seek our own shelter. You make for the attic and I will take to the cellar. There we shall escape these distracting winds and rains and the prostrating heat of later suns.'

This they did. One climbed day by day till it reached the eaves, and, entering a wide crevice, began trailing on the garret floor. The other crept along the ground until, having found a convenient hole in the foundation, it crawled in and descended to the cellar's mouldy bottom.

Weeks passed. Both grew pale and sickly, yet after the instinct of their kind, each tried to drape the unsightly objects around them with a wan beauty. In vain. Their strength was not equal to even this poor effort, and they grew into long, straggling, leafless stretches of stem.

At last October came around with his paint-pot. Sometimes they could hear the shouts of children over the rich tints of the vines outside. Sometimes the low voices of artists who loved to linger about the spot would reach them, and they began to feel that, after all, they might better have faced the elements than miss the transformation their kindred were undergoing.

Moved at last by a desperate desire for light and air and autumn beauty, each made a feeble turn, one reaching again toward the eaves and one toward the crumbling wall.

In time they reached the outer world, and, with united voices, begged October to give them a touch of red and gold.

'My children,' said he, 'you know not what you ask. My pot is seething with the flames of the frost. At one stroke of my brush your weakened forms would fall withered to the ground. The coloring you covet comes only through the touch of fire. This you cannot bear. The loveliness about you is born of pain. I cannot explain the mystery, but the splendor developed depends on a certain vitality within. You are too near dead for this glory. By too tenderly shielding your lives and refusing to face the winds and the storms you have forfeited the strength which alone could have fitted you for the beauty you desire. Were you to live again I would say, strive not to miss but to meet the trials of your lot. In this way life would be conserved and autumn glory its reward.'

