

**THE HANDSOME
HUMES. IN THREE
VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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The handsome Humes. In three volumes. Vol. II by William Black

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WILLIAM BLACK

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BY
WILLIAM BLACK

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

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THE HANDSOME HUMES.



CHAPTER I.

“ALL A WONDER AND A WILD DESIRE.”

SHE was seated in the garden; a book lay open on her lap; her face was in shadow, save for the soft suffusion of light reflected upwards from the masses of flowers aglow in the sun; her eyes were plunged in a profound reverie. It was not a common mood with Nan Summers, who was naturally gay of heart; nor had it escaped the ever-watchful observation of her father. On this occasion he came along the garden path in a casual kind of way, as if he were chiefly occupied with the peonies, the columbine and larkspur,

the geraniums, and none-so-pretty, and white Canterbury-bells; and when he spoke to her he was careful to hide his vague anxiety.

“Nan,” said he, “you must really give that book back to Mr. Hume. I am afraid it is too difficult for you. I have noticed once or twice that when you begin to study it, you fall into long thinking fits; and that’s not like you, Nan; that’s not to be allowed at all. You must not lose your high spirits, you know; you were always splendid for that; your eyes must be kept laughing—not troubled by any book. If you are really puzzled about any of those wild flowers, I will get somebody down from London; it would not cost so much to get a teacher down from London for a week or two; and then you could let Mr. Hume have his book back.”

Now on his approach she had hastily shut the volume that lay on her knee; then she seemed ashamed of that instinc-

tive action; she opened the Flora again; and when she addressed her father, it was with brave eyes—though there was some touch of conscious colour in her forehead.

"To tell you the truth, Dodo," she said, "I was thinking the same thing, though for a different reason. Mr. Hume must have forgotten what was in this book; I suppose it is some years since he carried it about with him, among the Cumberland and Westmoreland hills; and he appears to have jotted down anything that came into his head—different phrases of translation, as if he were trying which was the best; and these are from the Greek—so much I know, for there are references to 'Artemis and the broad-bosomed Athene,' and Arethusa that was changed into the fountain. Then there are pencillings of flowers on the margins, and bits of mountain or lake scenery on the half-pages; I should say the book had been