

CONTENT IN A GARDEN

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Content in a Garden by Candace Wheeler

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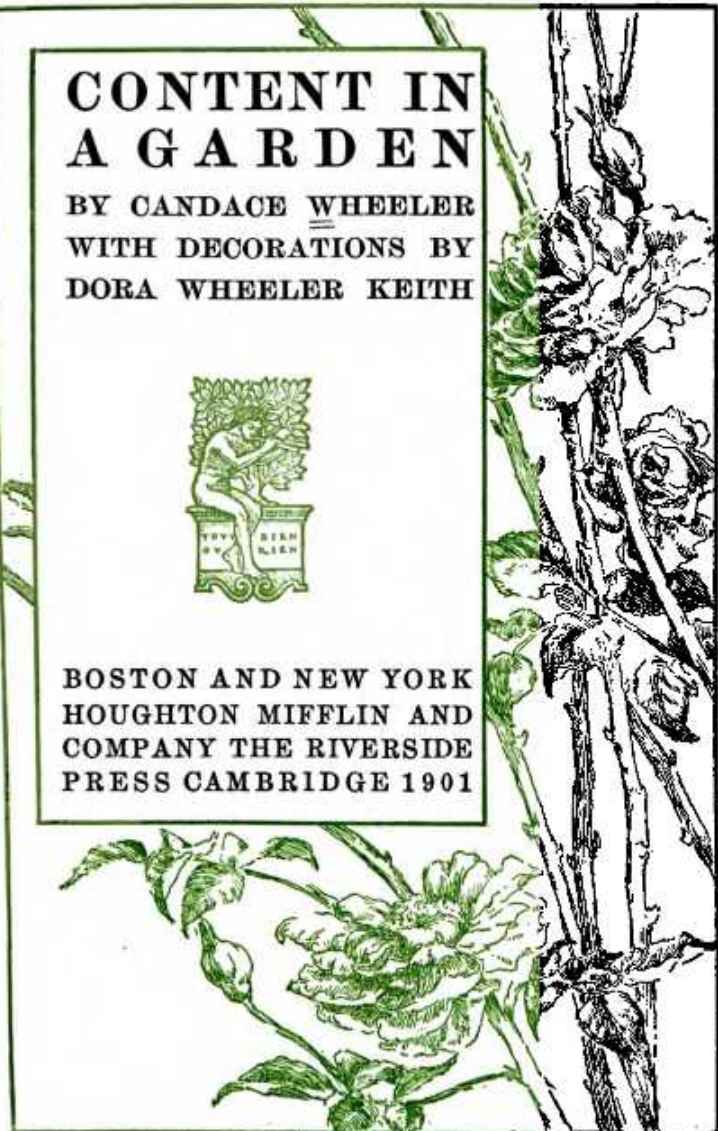
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BY CANDACE WHEELER
WITH DECORATIONS BY
DORA WHEELER KEITH



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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND
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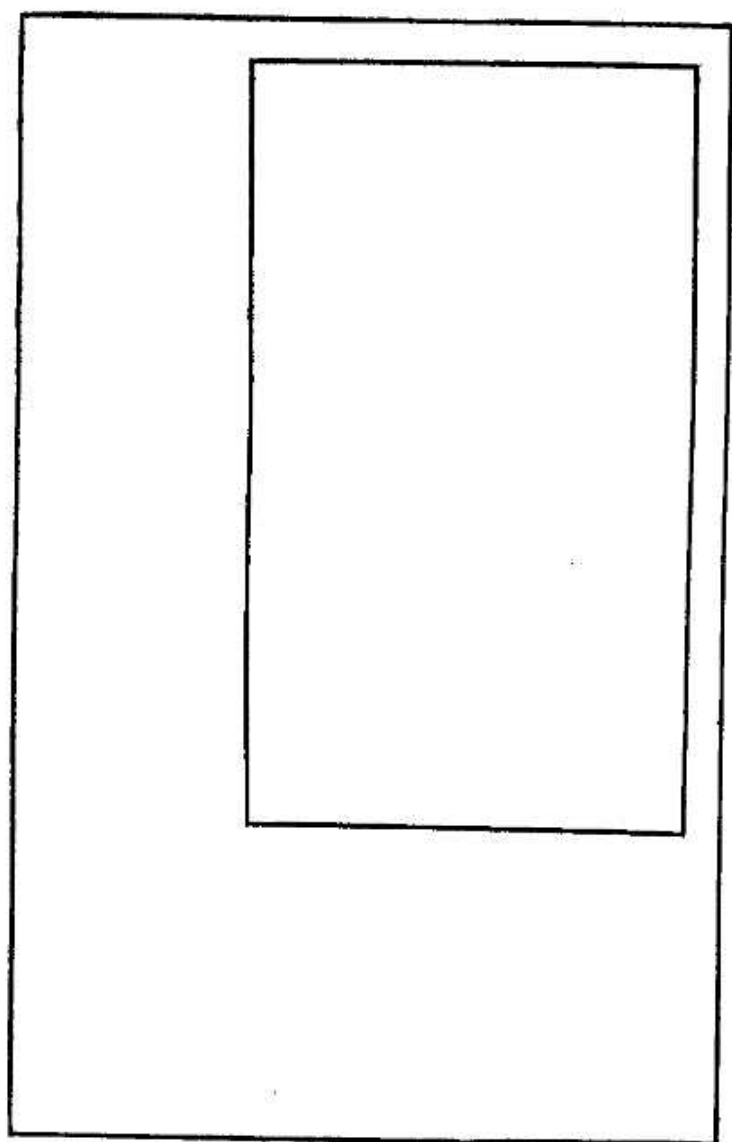
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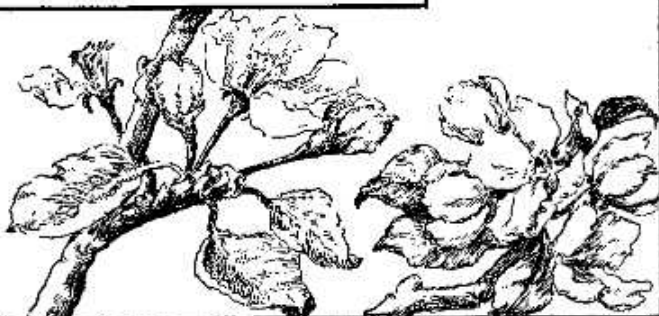
Content in a Garden

I

God Almighty first planted a garden; and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross handwork. — BACON.

MY Garden of Content lies high on Onteora Mountain. It is a half-round space of rough red soil, sloping to the east, and inclining upward and inclosing the log studio.

When I began to dig and plant, I little knew the joy which would grow out of the soil, and descend from the skies, and gather from far-off places and times to gladden my soul; but



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to-day, as I walk therein, or sit in the spicy shadow of its pair of fir trees, and think what it has done for me, I feel that untroubled happiness begins and ends within it; that it is truly the Land of Content.

It was just a rocky patch of pasture land lying between us and the woods, when it came into my mind to plant it as a garden, and how could I guess that the ground of it had been longing to blossom? but when I saw how it received and fostered and urged into growth the things I planted, I understood that the earth mother had coveted the power of making herself beautiful.

Before the garden was made, there were two young balsam-fir trees growing almost under the house eaves, —

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young things pulled from the roadside in one of our drives. It was easy to see that they approved of the garden, for summer by summer they threw up yard-long blue-green spires, until now, as I stand on the upper piazza, I can hold a cup and gather their drops of balsam.

How fine they are! Just at the college graduate age, and full to overflow of the joy of living.

There is something in a balsam-fir which seems to gather to itself almost more than its arborescent share of human interest. The young trees are delightful babies; one can hardly walk away and leave them alone. Just as innocent and enticing as a human baby, and appealing to sense as well as sentiment, for they exhale the