

**THE HERESY OF  
MEHETABEL CLARK**

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The Heresy of Mehetabel Clark by Annie Trumbull Slosson

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**ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON**

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The trees—except the evergreens—were leafless; but the hill-side forests wore that tender haze, or misty bloom, too faint and delicate to call color, but suggesting palest mauves and olives and grays, and here and there among them the swamp-maple showed its red buds.

Already the straw-yellow flowers of the adder's-tongue drooped above their odd, spotted leaves, and the wood anemone showed its frail white blossoms. The violets were out, too, the tiny, sweet white ones along the brook-sides, the round-leaved yellow ones in rocky places along the road, and selkirks with blue, long-spurred flowers peeping out where some little cold rill trickled slowly down from the mountain—a promise of the real spring; a mere whisper of a promise, but one sure to be fulfilled.

And now it was June, the very first of that lovely month, a warm, soft, sunny day, and we were spending it out-doors.



We were boarding in the village that season (in Franconia, I mean) at Deacon Whipple's—Deacon Seth, as he was always called, to distinguish him from Deacon Ephraim Whipple of the same town. He was not a native of Franconia, but was born in Sugar Hill, some three miles away, in the town of Lisbon, and to-day he was taking us out in his roomy, comfortable wagon to show us his native place.

Down the village street we went, past post-office and store and across the bridge over Gale River. Then we wound slowly uphill. The apple-trees were just coming into full bloom, the bird-cherries were losing their flowers, but the choke-cherries were white with spikes of feathery blossoms filling the air with their bitter-sweet scent. On we went, past meadows where the golden dandelions lay thick among the fresh young grass, pastures where the eyebrights clustered so closely

that they looked at a distance like drifted snow ; past brooks where the clear white water shone in the sunlight, and the blue and white violets peeped out along the banks. Maple, willow, elm, birch, beech and alder were all in full leaf now, and we drove along in a golden-green light, as the sunshine came down through the leaves. We were in no haste that day, and again and again we stopped to gather wild-flowers, ferns, or mosses, to chase a curious insect, or again to drop a line into a tempting hole under the shadow of a rock in Oakes's Brook. With tiarella, straw-lilies, gold-thread, trillium, cassandra, labrador tea, our hands and laps were soon full ; and at our feet lay a big bunch of the rhodora, its leafless branches covered with lovely flowers of purple-pink.

Deacon Seth was a pleasant companion, and had a story for every spot on the way. He told us of the queer city-folks

who sometimes came to the hotels which we were passing, and of the old days before those hotels existed. He pointed out the Salmon-hole Road, turning off at our right beyond Goodnow's, and related a thrilling incident of a drive down there on a night of storm and darkness. Then as we came to the little school-house, he told a pathetic tale of a little daughter, Marietty, dead long years ago, but whose memory was as fresh and green in the old man's heart as the springing grass and budding leaves on this fair June day. Off there was the old gold-mine, which once raised such hopes and sunk so many dollars, and farther away, lying part in Lisbon and part in East Landaff, Ore Mountain, with its treasures of iron still hidden underground.

And so, through light and perfume and color and sound, sunshine and flower-scent, the green of leaf and bright tint of blossom, the song of birds and murmur