The Children of the Valley

[Illustrated]



H. Prescott Spofford

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About Author

[H. Prescott Spofford]



Harriet Elizabeth Prescott Spofford (1835 –1921) was a notable American writer remembered for her novels, poems and detective stories.

Biography:

Born in Calais, Maine, in 1835 Spofford moved with her parents to Newburyport, Massachusetts, which was ever after her home, though she spent many of her winters in Boston and Washington, D.C. She attended the Putnam Free School in Newburyport, and Pinkerton Academy in Derry, New Hampshire from 1853 to 1855. At Newburyport her prize essay on Hamlet drew the attention of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who soon became her friend, and gave her counsel and encouragement.

Spofford began writing after her parents became sick, sometimes working fifteen hours a day. She contributed story papers for small pay to Boston. In 1859, she sent a story about Parisian life entitled "In a Cellar" to *Atlantic Monthly*. The magazine's editor, James Russell Lowell, at first believed the story to be a translation and withheld it from publication. Reassured that it was original, he published it and it established her reputation. She became a welcome contributor to the chief periodicals of the United States, both of prose and poetry.

Spofford's fiction had very little in common with what was regarded as representative of the New England mind. Her gothic romances were set apart by luxuriant descriptions, and an unconventional handling of female stereotypes of the day. Her writing was ideal, intense in feeling. In her descriptions and fancies, she reveled in sensuous delights and every variety of splendor.

In 1865, she married Richard S. Spofford, a Boston lawyer. They lived on Deer Island overlooking the Merrimack River at Amesbury, a suburb of Newburyport, where she died on August 14, 1921.

When Higginson asked Emily Dickinson whether she had read Spofford's work "Circumstance," Dickinson replied, "I read Miss Prescott's 'Circumstance,' but it followed me in the dark, so I avoided her."

Books:

- *Sir Rohan's Ghost*, 1860
- *The Amber Gods, and Other Stories*, 1863, republished 1989
- *Azarian: An Episode*, 1864
- *New England Legends*, 1871
- *The Thief in the Night*, 1872
- *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, 1878
- *The Servant Girl Question*, 1881
- *Marquis of Carabas*, 1882
- *Poems*, 1882
- *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's*, 1883
- *Ballads About Authors*, 1887
- *A Scarlet Poppy, and Other Stories*, 1894

- *Old Madame, and Other Tragedies*, 1900
- *That Betty*, 1903
- *The Ray of Displacement and other stories*, 1903
- *Old Washington*, 1906
- *The Fairy Changeling*, 1910
- *A Little Book of Friends*, 1916
- *The Elder's People*, 1920

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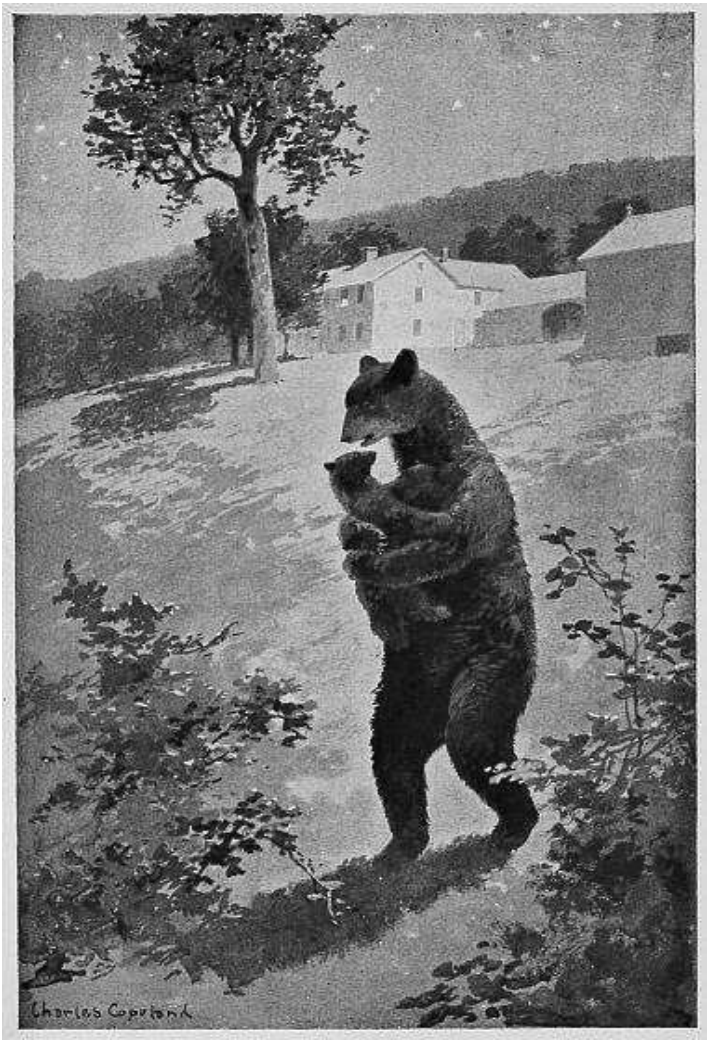
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“ PINCHER DECLARED “. . .

SHE WAS ON HER HIND LEGS CARRYING HER BABY IN HER ARMS LIKE ANYBODY.”

The Children of the Valley.

BY
HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD
Author of the "Hester Stanley" Books,
"A Lost Jewel," etc.

FIFTH THOUSAND

NEW YORK:
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I. ALLY AND THE CHILDREN OF THE HILL.



Ally was lost—the little blue-eyed dear! That is to say, she was nowhere to be found. And of course there was commotion in the Valley. Michael, the gardener, was going one way; and John, the house-man, another; and Pincher, one of the loggers, was making for the hills with Uncle Billy in one direction, and Old Uncle and Will and Charlie had gone up in another; and Aunt Rose and Aunt Susan were hunting through the house;

and Janet and Essie were running this way and that—and it was noon, and still they hadn't found her.

Will was sure Ally would be found in the strawberry-patch on the farther edge of the intervale across the river, and as the boat was on the other side he had offered to swim over and fetch it.

Charlie had been equally sure that she was looking for bear-cubs again in the hollow half-way up Blue Top.

Aunt Susan was convinced that she had fallen asleep somewhere under a bush, when she could not be found in the house.

Aunt Rose thought she might have been taken to drive by people passing through the Valley—sometimes some of them were—and they would bring her back.

"Of course," said Old Uncle, "they'll bring her back! Ally'll turn up all right—she makes more noise, when she sets about it, than all the rest of you put together!" Nevertheless, Old Uncle—who believed in whipping, at least he said he did—was making for the hollows of Blue Top as he said it. For Ally was really the darling of the household, always bright and sweet-tempered, and daring and ready for anything.

Essie, who was Ally's twin, felt indignant with Old Uncle for talking so when no one knew what had become of