

It is a comfort to escape from the hot-house passions of this type of book into the clean, sweet atmosphere of such a delightful little comedy of youth and health

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and out-door happiness as Grace Sartwell Mason has given us in *The Godparents*.

"The Godparents"

Imagine a young woman in the early thirties who for years has been in the habit of answering to no one for her conduct, or of thinking of anybody's comfort save her own; imagine further that she is on the point of sailing for Europe, with her trunks and satchels, her books and her French maid; the signal for visitors to leave has sounded, in a few minutes the vessel will be gliding from the dock—and suddenly a man, a stranger so far as she can, for the moment, recall, springs aboard, confronts her, and tells her that she is not to sail, that a half-grown boy, at whose baptism these two had stood sponsors twelve years earlier, has fallen into bad hands, and is being ruined for lack of the care that they had solemnly vowed to give. And because he is the type of man who usually has his way; because, in her heart, the woman knows he is right; and also perhaps because she is rather tired of having no interest in life but her own sweet will, and enjoys the novelty of being mastered, she meekly follows him off the steamer and onto the train that is to take them to an obscure little village where the boy lives. Now the conditions that confront them when they arrive are rather disheartening. The boy's grandmother—the one person who could have helped them—has died; the boy is dominated by the housekeeper, a shrewish, scheming woman, who is working to ruin him, because by the terms of a curious will the family property will be lost to him if, before he comes of age, he has done anything to disgrace the family name. She has poisoned the boy's mind against his Godparents, with the result that, upon learning that they have come, he runs away, hides in the woods and lives a life half animal, half gypsy. If these Godparents had been a less determined, less adventurous type, they would probably have abandoned the boy to his fate; but instead they decide to play his own game and play it better. So we have the pretty sylvan picture of a man, a maid and a much perturbed French servant, camping out in the heart of a Northern forest, apparently with no other purpose

than the joy of the passing hour—and a puzzled and distrustful small boy, prowling daily around the camp, lured strongly both by curiosity and by hunger—for woodland berries are not sustaining food, and frying bacon diffuses a redolence that is hard to resist. And while the conquest of the small boy is going on, the young woman, who has for years aimlessly sought to please herself and has succeeded only in being bored, learns the valuable lesson that it is rather pleasant to be dictated to, provided the right man does the dictating, and does it in the right way. The whole book has a daintiness, a wholesomeness and a deftness of treatment that give it a genuine and pervading charm.