



**Memory's
Picture Gallery**

Isabella Alden

MEMORY'S PICTURE GALLERY



Isabella “Pansy” Alden

Anglocentria
Aurora, Colorado

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P.O. Box 460458

Aurora, CO 80046-0458

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MEMORY'S PICTURE GALLERY



Memory's Picture Gallery

I am only a little sweet-scented violet, but I have pictures in my memory as well as anyone. People think I'm dead, and call me "pressed," but I am not *dead*, though if being laid in a book and shut up is pressed, I certainly must admit I am *that*.

My first memory is of a cool, quiet hillside close beside a little clear, sparkling brook that babbled along over smooth white pebbles. Some delicate ferns were just rising by my side, for it was early springtime, and moss was spread all around my feet.

I was very happy. The brook was a great friend of mine, and I used to enjoy watching it as it ran along.

Everything was beautiful. The waving branches just beginning to put on little green leaves, the moss, and above all, the lovely blue sky.

But I had a great desire to see my own face. I was the first violet out, the brook told me, so there were no other violets for me to look at, and I couldn't imagine my own face at all.

One morning I woke up and looked around me, and there right on my own green leaf was a great big dewdrop. I stooped down softly, so as not to frighten it, and whispered:

"Dear dewdrop, would you be so kind as to tell me how I look?"

It told me, and I have been thankful ever since that God gave me such a pretty face and such a sweet breath.

That same afternoon, while I was looking at the beautiful blue sky and wondering what those lovely white clouds were made of, I heard footsteps, and looking around, saw a young man coming toward me.

He did not see me at first, but I nodded my head and smiled, and then he stopped and said "Oh!" and stooped and picked me.

Although I was sorry to leave my pretty home, still I was glad to go, for I knew my mission in this world was to do some good, and I could do none so long as I remained there.

He took me home and placed me in a little glass on his marble mantel.

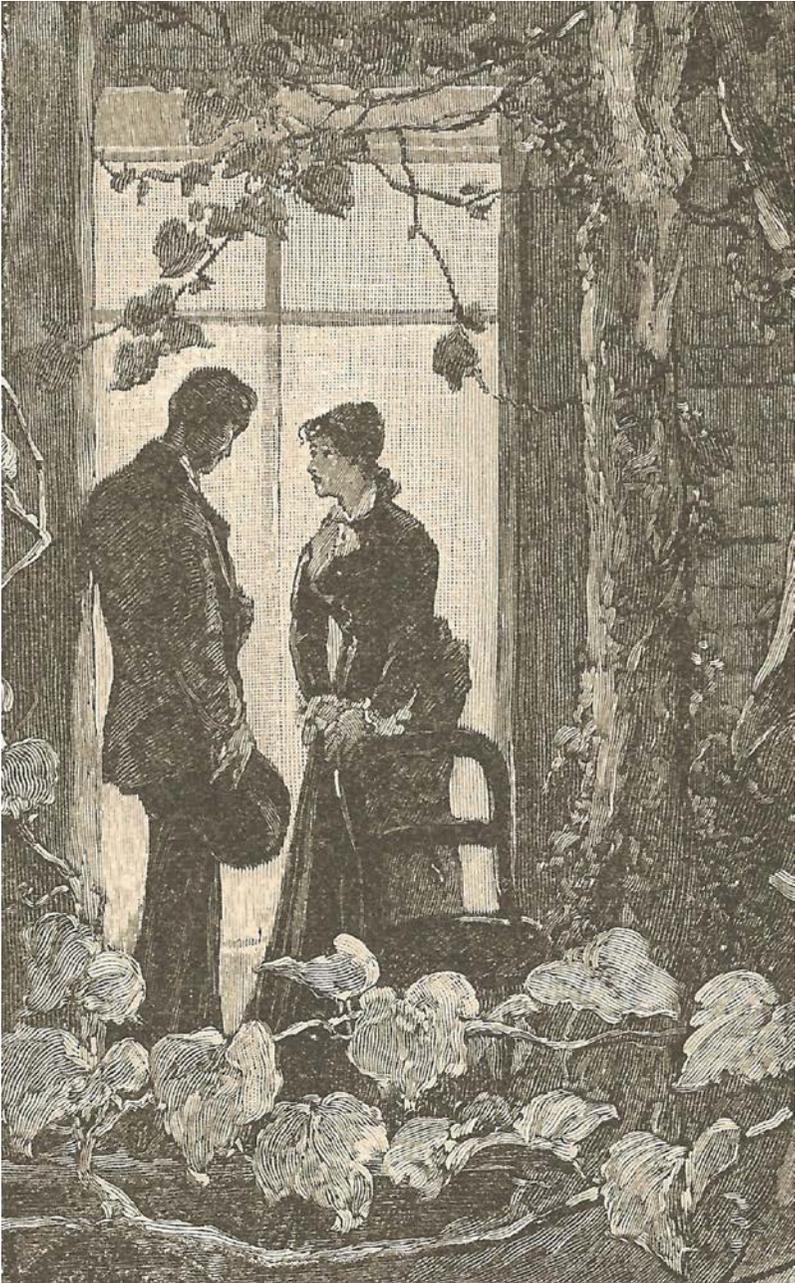
It grew dark, and pretty soon he came back again and took me. We went outdoors and the bright little stars gave me twinkles of recognition. The moon peeped out from behind the trees and said, in such a soft silvery voice, "Goodbye, little violet. Do all the good you can."

The young man went up to the steps of a beautiful house and rang the bell. A servant led us into a lovely room all ablaze with light. It was almost as pretty, and much more elegant, than my home beside the brook.

Soon a pretty young lady came into the room. I fell in love with her at once.

The gentleman gave me to her, and she exclaimed, looked, and smelled, and finally put me into water. I was very contented there, watching and listening to them. I found out that he was going away to a place called Australia, to travel for his health.

When I had heard that much I couldn't keep my eyes open. I was so tired, so I shut them for just one little minute and when I opened them, the young lady was standing by the table looking at me, and the young man was gone. I was sorry, for I wanted to say goodbye to him.



The Parting

She made a pretty picture standing there with her beautiful eyes all filled with tears. But she didn't stay there very long. She took me upstairs, and carried me to her own room.

There she kept me several days, and then, one night when she was reading her Bible, she took me up and kissed me, and laid me between the leaves of the blessed book I learned to love so well.

Every night and morning when she read in the Bible, she would look at me most tenderly. Well, I stayed there a long, long time, I guess about three years. For a time she used to get beautiful long letters, and would sometimes lay them beside me in the Bible; but after about two years, she brought no more letters to put beside me, and she looked very sad in those days.

Then came a time when she didn't look into her Bible any longer. She was sick, very sick, as I learned afterward.

When she began to get well she wanted her Bible, and I was so happy to be with her every day.

One afternoon she was sitting out in the yard under a big tree. The Bible lay open on her lap and I was smiling and doing my best to make her look happy, but she still had that sad, far-away look.

Suddenly the gate clicked. I turned around to see who it was, and there, coming up the walk, was the same young man who picked me.

Oh, such a lovely smile as broke over her face! But I saw no more, for she jumped up and shut the book. They were talking a long time, and I could hear some of the things they said.

He told how he had been taken terribly sick among strangers, was delirious, and when he was able to tell who he was, he found he was among very ignorant people, who did not know how to write. He said that the place where he was taken sick was a little hut far away from away human habitation.

He had thought to take a long ramble alone, and taking provisions, had been traveling for several days, when he came to this hut, asked leave to stay overnight, and was there taken sick.

But now he had come home well, to stay, and they were to be married soon.

He seemed very much pleased with me and pleased to think she had kept me so long. He asked if he might have me, and when he saw that she hesitated about giving me up, he said he would give me back again.

He took me to a jeweler's and had me put in a gold locket all set with little sparkling diamonds, and she wore me on her wedding day.

The pictures in the gallery of my memory are very beautiful. Some are sad, some joyful, and all peaceful.

The End

