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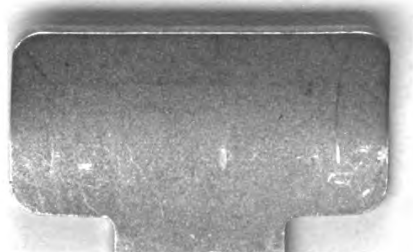
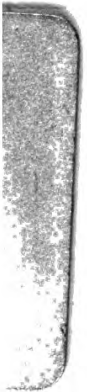
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COMMON **W**AYSIDE
FLOWERS



BIRKET FOSTER

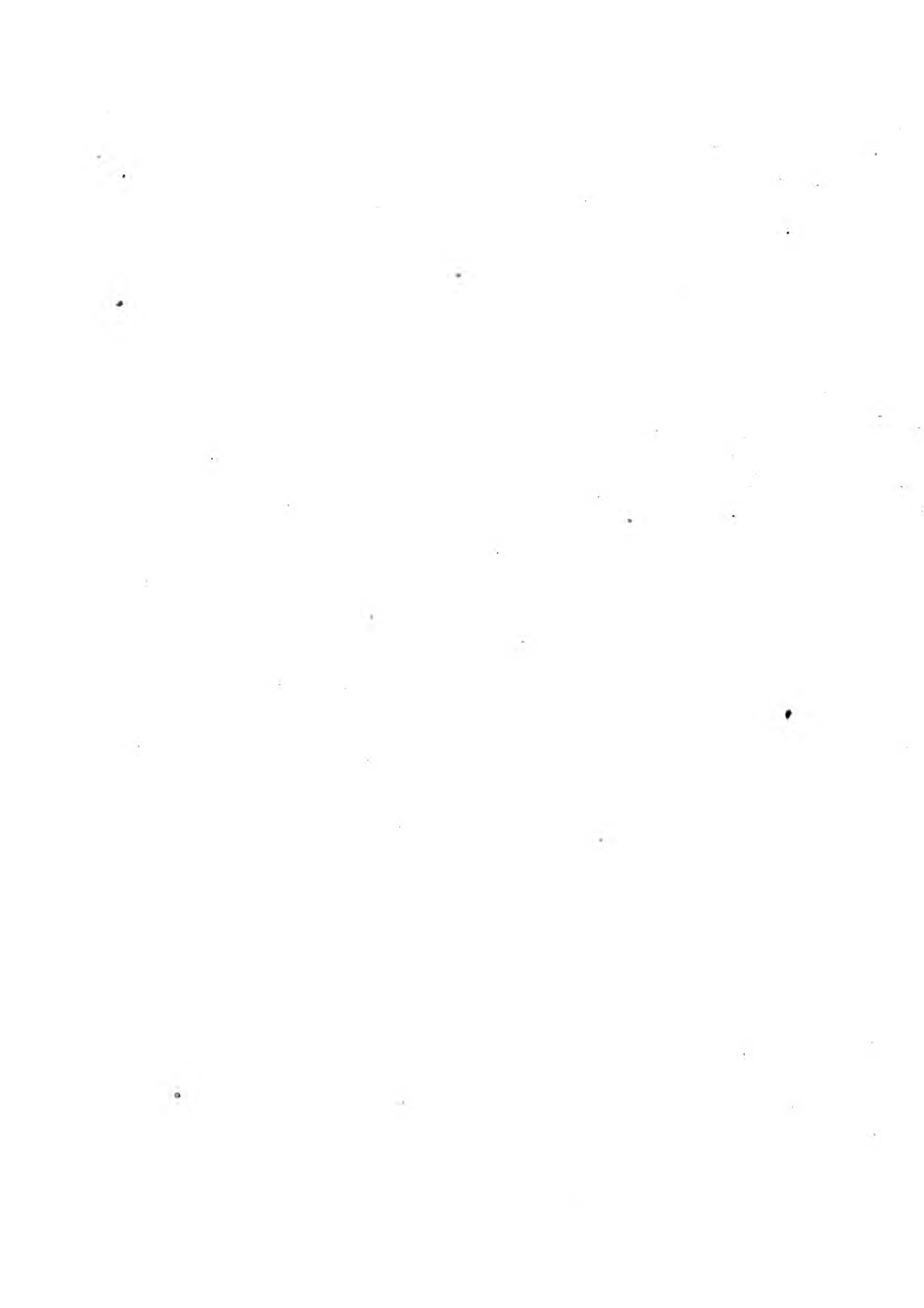
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COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS









COMMON
WAYSIDE FLOWERS



COMMON
WAYSIDE FLOWERS

BY
THOMAS MILLER

WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS BY BIRKET FOSTER
PRINTED IN COLOURS BY EDMUND EVANS



LONDON AND NEW YORK
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

1873

LONDON:
EDMUND EVANS, ENGRAVER AND PRINTER,
RAQUET COURT, FLEET STREET.



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CELANDINE.

THOU dost thy golden flowers put forth,
While yet from out the surly North
The bitter winds of Winter blow ;
Half-buried in the feathered snow,
I've seen thy blossoms many a time,
And thy broad leaves all white with rime,
When not another flower was near,
Before the primrose did appear—
That strong endurer of hard weather ;
And then I've seen you both together,
“ Nid-nodding ” on a sunny day,
And thought you could have much to say,
Of days and nights of wintry gloom,
That many a time had chill'd your bloom.





CELANDINE; SNOWDROP;

BLUE PERIWINKLE; RED DEAD-NETTLE; COMMON COLTSFOOT;
GROUND IVY; VERONICA; GERMANDER-SPEEDWELL;
AND LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY.

THE Celandine, so often mistaken by country children for the buttercup, is one of the very earliest of our wild Wayside Flowers that makes a show sufficient to attract the eye; and may, during a mild Winter, be found in flower under the shelter of warm hedgerows, beside the primrose, as early as the close of February. Even when not in bloom, the cluster of large, bright, dark-green leaves arrests the attention, through the very nakedness that surrounds them. Then, it is a grand, golden-coloured, star-shaped flower, often displaying as many as nine petals, all bold, bright, and pointed, and fine enough to decorate the breast of a royal prince; nor do we know any other wild flower that makes so gaudy a show so early in the year. This beautiful plant belongs to the genus *Ranunculus*, of which there are at least twenty species indigenous to our island, one of which is the common buttercup, and another the wood-crowfoot, the most graceful of the whole genus. It is pleasant to peep at this gay gold flower—the lesser celandine—rising out from amid the dead leaves which the winds of Winter have blown under the hedgerows, and to know that it is one of the first heralds that has brought tidings from the land of flowers of the approach of

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

Spring. We have frequently found it in flower early in February, long before a violet appeared, and when the daisy-leaves gave no sign of their whereabouts, beyond that of a little round button, level with the ground, and looking not unlike a green round-headed nail in form. Another glorious flower belonging to the genus *Ranunculus* is the marsh-marigold, generally found by water-courses, in which it is often reflected like a great cup of gold. Some of these flowers grow to an immense size in our wet marsh lands, and, as they hang over the water, might well be mistaken for golden water-lilies. Their heart-shaped leaves are also very large, and shine like jasper.

Although we have placed the celandine foremost, as it so figures in our plate, yet the snowdrop is the acknowledged chief herald of Spring; sending out its straight-veined, long, light-green leaves, and hanging out its white bell-shaped blossom, while dreary Winter reigns everywhere around, and when there is no other flower near at hand for companionship,—for this child of Winter is still found growing wild in many a hidden nook of England.

There is an old-world legend, which tells us how the snow-drop became the emblem of Hope: that Hope, with her long golden hair dishevelled, stood, one day, leaning upon her anchor, watching the snow fall as she looked down upon the earth; that Spring stood beside her, and Hope said the earth would look much more cheerful if, instead of snow, which melted and left the woods and fields dark and damp, the flakes were changed into white flowers when the snow had melted; that Spring smiled as she listened to Hope, and, sending her sweet warm breath among the falling snow, it fell in the form of flowers;

BLUE PERIWINKLE AND DEAD-NETTLE.

and so the snowdrop was first made ; that Hope caught the first flower before it fell, and said it should be her emblem throughout all time :—

Hope said, “ Ofttimes, when thou art gone,
I ’m left alone, without a thing
That I can fix my heart upon,
For Winter’s lonely without Spring.
'T will cheer me now for many an hour,
And in the future I shall see
Those who would sink raised by this flower,—
'T will make them think of thee and me ;
And many a sadful heart will sing,
“ The snowdrop bringeth Hope and Spring.”

The blue periwinkle is sometimes found in flower in February, in warm, sheltered situations in our woods, though it is but thinly sprinkled about in a wild state, and it is a great treat to come unaware upon a burst of its bright blue flowers during a winter’s walk, or to find its twisted bloom in the bud, resembling in form the unopened convolvulus. The common red or dead-nettle is also an early bloomer, and though we may pass it by as a worthless weed, there is something very curious, and even beautiful, in its under-lip shaped flower, with its raised hood, which the stamens seem to prop open. Then it has a handsome-looking cleft calyx, almost bell-shaped, as may be seen if held up ; while the leaf of the plant is second to none for beauty of form. But to see this common wayside weed to perfection requires a magnifying-glass ; then, to a lover of Nature, a world of beauty is revealed, that almost takes the breath away through amazement while looking into it : such touches of diversified bloom, rubies scattered on three-piled velvet, rich materials such

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

as empress never wore ; for "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Another of the early Spring flowers is the common coltsfoot, which, like the celandine, marsh marigold, and primrose, is also of a bright golden hue, and looks like a burst of sunshine where it covers a large space of land, when seen from the distance. This plant flowers before it puts forth its leaves, nor do the latter show themselves until the bloom dies off, and the downy seed begins to appear. Like the daisy and dandelion, the coltsfoot bloom is composed of separate florets, each of which is anchored in its own seed, and from which springs each plummy head. In railway cuttings through damp places, the whole of the new embankments become speedily covered with coltsfoot, though the plant was but thinly sprinkled about the neighbourhood before, and, in some places, had not been found for miles within the spots that are now decked with it within the memory of man. This is almost as great a mystery as, when the sea recedes from our coast and leaves dry land, the new soil thus regained is covered with white clover: have the clover seeds, then, been buried in the sea-weed, and the coltsfoot seeds interred in the earth, and retained their vitality for ages? Or is there something peculiarly attractive in these new soils, which draws down the myriads of seeds that are supposed to be continually floating in the air? Here is ample matter for meditation.

There is one more bright blue flower that comes to throw light and beauty upon the earth, among these early children of Spring, and that is the ground-ivy, the blossoms of which resemble in form the dead-nettle, already described. The scalloped leaves of this trailing plant are "beautiful exceedingly,"

VERONICA, AND LILY-OF-THE VALLEY.

as are most of the leaves that peer forth with the first flowers of Spring. These shoot out in pairs at the base of each range of flowers, as if they formed a green footstool for the blue-eyed beauties to rest upon; but you must peep inside the flowers with a magnifying-glass to see how exquisitely they are variegated. Another little blue flower, liable to be overlooked on account of its minuteness, may often be found a near neighbour of the ground-ivy, and that is the ivy-leaved veronica; it lies very close to the ground, but is well worth the trouble of hunting for, as it is the very fairy of Spring flowers. But the Germander-speedwell is the most beautiful of all the Veronica genus, and, we have at times thought, the prettiest wild-flower that blows: it rivals even the blue of heaven itself, when the sky is coloured with the most perfect azure. An old poet calls it "the blue angel of flowers."

The lily-of-the-valley is another beautiful Spring flower, only found in moist, light-soiled, shady places, while such as grow in woods produce the largest leaves and the finest blossoms. What a sweet delicate, clear look there is about that long slender stem of beautifully-formed snow-white bells, rising, tier above tier, to the tapering summit! That flower is a specimen of Nature's finest and choicest workmanship, and, on finishing her work, she has placed the two broad leaves to protect the little gem, in such a position that no harm can befall the flower, standing, as they do, to guard it, and pillowing its white ivory bells on a cushion of green velvet; and where it grows the early birds build their nests, and sit on the edges of their newly-erected homes, singing sweet songs to the bending and swaying of the lilies of-the-valley, which seem to beat time to the woodland music "by

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

merle and mavis made." Well do we remember a spot in which these beauties grew, in our earlier years :—

It was a valley filled with sweetest sounds ;
A languid music haunted everywhere,
Like those with which a Summer eve abounds,
From rustling corn, and song-birds calling clear ;
Where sloping uplands a green wood surround,
And falling streams are heard, but not too near ;
While cattle low from off the distant plain,
And peal of village bells is caught, then lost again.

There golden-belted bees hum in the air,
And tall silk-grasses bend and wave along,
Shelt'ring the flower-buds from the noon-day glare ;
The little streams chant their low undersong,
And take their own sweet course, without a care,
While lute-tongued birds the branches ever throng ;
And there the lilies-of-the-valley grow,
While o'er their snow-white bells the sweet wild-roses blow.





PRIMROSE.

CHILDREN of Spring,
We tidings bring,
Birds soon will sing
That Winter's over ;
And on the lea
You soon will see
The belted bee
Amid the clover.

We come to say,
All the long day
Lambs are at play
Where we were growing ;
The city street
We make more sweet,
And there you meet
Us " All-a-blowing."

Once we did grow
Where houses throw
A shade below
That dims the ground,
In mornings olden,
And made golden
The land around ;
But nevermore,
Through ages hoar,
Shall there be found.



PRIMROSES.

THE Primrose is one of the earliest and prettiest of our Spring flowers. It is refreshing both to the eye and the heart to look upon, and, so to speak, feel the beauty of its presence in the budding season of the year, peeping out from under the hedgerow, on some sunny bank that faces the south, and where the darker golden-coloured celandine has also made its appearance. There is a peculiar delicacy in the pale-golden hue of the primrose, unlike that of every other common wayside yellow flower, none of which possess the soft tint that gives such a pleasing tone to this pretty, star-shaped ornament of Spring. There is great elegance, too, in the form of its notched, heart-shaped five-pointed corolla, when pulled from the calyx and examined minutely,—in the uniting of the flower at the base, and the long golden neck, which was half-hidden in the pale green sheath from which it sprang. Nor is the foliage of the primrose less beautiful, with its little risings and fallings, full of tiny hollows and green ravines, that intersect the leaf in every direction, branching off from the main fibre, like pleasant lanes and winding embankments in a richly-meadowed country, diverging from the common highway. Let the leaf be placed between the eye and the sunshine, the better to see this fairy-land of hilly and hollowy green. It is pleasant to

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

have primroses for companionship during a country walk, either down a long lane, by the embankments of pasture-paths, at the foot of rounded hills, or, prettier still, by the side of an old wood; to see them coming forward here, and retiring backward there, the backward ones too abashed to greet us with that open and welcome look which seems to sparkle in the golden eyes of those that stand more boldly forward in the sunshine. What thousands of pleasant memories have primroses awakened,—more so, perhaps, than any other flowers; for they delight in green and silent places—such as Love, Friendship, and Meditation seek to retire into—and there only can they be found in the full perfection of their beauty. Who can tell, now, what was passing through the heart and mind of our great poet Milton, when he wrote that strange, mystic line about the primrose, in which he says, “Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies,” and numbers it amongst the flowers “that sad embroidery wear”? It was sad to the heart and mind of the bard, through calling up the image of his lost and regretted “Lycidas,” forsaken as it was by that beloved friend, who had perished in the deep. Its beauty had “died” with him, and in Milton’s “inward eye” it was embroidered with sad recollections,—seen, or thought of, but to recall him, who would return “no more for ever,” saving to the sorrowful eye of Memory; and this, if we err not, was why he placed one of the most cheerful flowers of Spring amongst those that

“ — Fill’d their cups with tears.”

To a contemplative mind, and one who has met Nature face to face in her green secluded haunts, primroses are ever filled with memories of happy and sorrowful Springs that have passed

PRIMROSES.

away : happy, in recalling the days and scenes of childhood and youth, before care had written a letter upon the unwrinkled brow ; and sorrowful, through awakening such recollections as made the flower sad and forsaken in the eye of Milton, because his beloved and bemoaned friend could never be with him to look upon the "rathe" primrose again,

" Under the opening eyelids of the morn."

In Sanderstead Wood, within ten miles of London, we have seen thousands of primroses in full bloom at Christmas. Before the last year's leaves were half decayed, the new foliage had sprung up and thrust its way through the withering leaves, while the whole was overtopped with tufts of sweet pale-golden flowers. At the first glance, we imagined it was the sunshine that lighted up the embankment, as seen from the little wooded knoll on which we stood ; but on looking down more narrowly, we soon perceived that the valley at our feet lay in the shade, and that the bright yellow light was reflected from a bed of flowers ; and so we walked up to, and along, that little land of primroses, "all a-growing, all a-blowing," the week before Christmas, and thought, if they were gathered and sold in the streets of London, at that season of the year, they would have been quite a fortune to some costermonger, whose Spring cry of "All a-blowing!" rings cheerfully through the courts and alleys of the murky metropolis, when "Winter is over and gone." It is, at the present day, the pleasantest of all "London cries," especially when it comes ringing from the lips of some poor girl who has a clear, silvery voice ; and we know few sounds that will cause such a sudden opening of doors and windows in our suburbs, as the first cry of "Come buy

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

my pretty primroses." Even in villages, you will see it in the spoutless and handleless jug, standing in the cottage window, intermixed with blue-bells,—the children's nosegay, and the first flowers they gathered since they revisited the familiar green nooks at the return of Spring. In our boyish days we traversed old woods, not an hour's walk from our home, where primroses, blue-bells, and lilies-of-the-valley spread over many an acre of woodland, carpeting the feet of tall trees, in whose branches the hawk, raven, carrion-crow, jay, owl, and ring-dove built, and on which their young looked when they peeped out of their nests, and saw far down, stretching away under the trees, long beds of these intermixed and beautiful Spring flowers.

In some of our out-of-the-way, old-fashioned English villages, it was a common phrase some century ago, and may be now, to speak of Spring as "primrose-time:"—such a couple wedded about "primrose-time;" he or she died at "primrose-time;" a poor soul was very ill, but would be sure to get better, if he could only keep up till next "primrose-time." Similar phrases are found in our old ballad poetry, such as "peascod-time," and "yeaning-time." As for "harvest-time," we find it so-called in the early chapters of the Holy Bible, and it was an every-day phrase with our Saxon ancestors, and will remain so until "Time is no more." For our part, we love to look back upon the past through these flowery vistas,—to stand and think of those who gazed on the early primrose above a thousand years ago, when they looked just the same as they do now, and many of them, indeed, grew in the very places where they are still to be found. We call to mind Rowena, Bertha, and Ethelburga, Saxon ladies, whose names are still remembered, who looked upon and took

PRIMROSES.

part in important scenes of which no record remains, and we fancy them walking forth and gazing with pleasant eyes on the primroses of Spring, in those old years which now hang grey upon the faded annals of Time. It is our belief that primroses grew in the wild forests which covered our island, ages before the voice of man had broken the silence of those solitudes, or human footstep had left its imprint on the sanded margin of our island shore;—that thousands of Springs and Summers came and went, during which these ancient flowers bloomed and faded; and that there were no other eyes to look at them, saving the beasts of the chase, the birds that built above them, and the bees and other insects that murmured amid their golden bloom.

The primrose varies in its form from many other flowers, in being united; for the star-shaped corolla cannot be separated without tearing the flower in pieces, which would not be done by dividing a buttercup and numbers of other flowers, from which a petal may be stripped off without injury to the rest of the flower. Several other blossoms are also united, such as the foxglove, the nettles, etc.; but these are all irregular in form, and have not the perfect symmetry which distinguishes the beautiful and simple-shaped primrose. Primroses, also, although they make such a show by thrusting their pretty heads every way among the leaves, almost covering the foliage with bloom, all spring from the heart of a single tuft, like the umbel-plants; and were this tuft, or point, strong enough and long enough, we should have a splendid head of blossom, all shooting from one stem, like the cowslip, or polyanthus—the latter of which is only a variety of the primrose—and a noble flower it would then be :

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a dozen or more of large primroses all blooming on one foot-stalk, and making as great a show as if we pulled half-a-score heads of cowslips and placed them all together.

The primrose is an excellent specimen of a perfect flower to exhibit to young beginners in botany,—by drawing out the corolla, and showing how it is united, and forms a tube which encloses the seed-vessel, the style of which is surmounted by its round stigma, also enfolding five stamens, the whole of which are sheathed in the beautiful calyx, and seated on the delicate foot-stalk, which sways to and fro before every breath of wind that blows.

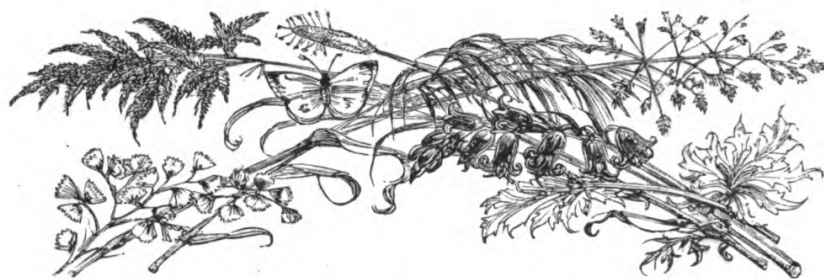
Honest Izaak Walton was a great lover of primroses, and no doubt they were the flowers which he thought were too beautiful to be looked upon “excepting on holidays.” He tells us how he was sitting under a beech-tree, when “the birds in an adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree, near to the brow of that primrose hill.”





WILD HYACINTH.

BEAUTIFUL blue-bell
Of the wood !
A name by children
Understood ;
All England through,
They search the dells,
In sweet Spring-time,
For thy blue bells ;—
Know all the spots
Where thou dost lie,
Blue-spreading, like
Another sky ;
Nor of the hare-bell
Know, nor care,
Though beautiful,
And quite as fair.
No Summer flowers
To them can bring
Half such delights
As those of Spring ;
For dearly do
They love to dally
'Mid the sweet
Lilies-of-the-valley,
For there they know
The blue-bells blow.
The flowers we hyacinthine call,
They would not understand at all.



WILD HYACINTH, OR BLUE-BELL OF SPRING;
HORSE-TAIL; VETCHES.

THIS beautiful Spring flower, which generally appears long before April quickens the ground, "making it all one emerald," is the true "blue-bell" of the old poets; the hare-bell of Summer is a flower of whose beauty they seldom sang: it is the early blue-bell, that bloomed before the cuckoo came, to which they did reverence. The first posy gathered by the village children, and placed in the cottage window, while March is blowing his windy bugle, generally consists of blue-bells, primroses, silver catkins of the willow, and a spray or two of blackthorn, which blossoms before the leaves appear, and is out of bloom by the time the first white May-bud is seen: as for the term "wild hyacinth," excepting amongst a few of the better educated, it is unknown to the generality of our country-people; while the blue-bell of Spring is a name as familiar to them as the field daisy. There is a faint, delicate perfume about this early blue-bell, scarcely perceived unless you stumble upon a broad bed of flowers; then you behold a beautiful picture—which imparts a double pleasure—for, while gazing, you inhale the grateful odour. Few flowers look prettier than a wide stretch of blue-bells, towering above the pale-green leaves, those that are open wearing a lighter blue than the bells that remain folded, which are tinged with a darkish purple colour.

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The bells also hang down in all kind of graceful forms; and beautiful they look, with the top of the divided corolla rolled back, swaying to and fro in the March wind, and some of them standing above a foot high, while nearly half the long stock is covered with the blue-bells.

The woods in which we went birds'-nesting, in our boyish days, were carpeted with these deep-dyed flowers; and it seemed like awakening from a long dream, when we first walked around the neighbourhood of Cobham, below Gravesend, and saw myriads of blue-bells and primroses lighting up the underwood that skirts the beautiful park. We have gathered them near London, in the fields that lie behind Camberwell, in Lordship's-lane, where, on the right-hand side, is seen a pond overhung with trees, a little way before reaching that very old road-side hostel, the "Plough"—a spot very little more than an hour's walk from the busy City. A few years ago, the whole bank around the pond, and portions of the field also, were covered with blue-bells. As for Dulwich Woods, there are nooks at the foot of the hill, where they lie like a blue sky between the openings of the underwood, and are as beautiful as ever bloomed, though growing within sight of London, which is seen from the hill-top, like a silent city,—for not an echo of its ceaseless roar reaches the listening bells of those sky-dyed flowers. * And further in, woodward, with St. Paul's Cathedral still before the eye, you can feel

“ The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Edged round with dark tree-tops, through which a dove
Doth often beat its wings; and often, too,
A little cloud doth move across the blue.”—KEATS.

WILD HYACINTH, OR BLUE-BELL.

What a grand sight it would be, if the blue-bells swept over and covered as large a space of ground as the heather—if we could see long miles of heath and moorland, stretching as far as the eye could reach, all covered with wild hyacinths, and nothing else beside! What ever-shifting colours would be produced—what a diversity of blues we should behold: the golden blue, in the sunshine; the dark purple, where the shadow of heavy clouds fell; the silvery blue, produced by the white, feathery floating clouds; and then the rosy flush of sunset, when all the west was hung with fire. How Turner would have revelled in such a scene—perhaps have changed the shifting colours into a sea, and have played madder pranks than when he made the sunset in the east, beyond Greenwich, that he might light up his “Old Temeraire” to suit his fancy, the ship being then towed London-ward—for such unnatural freaks will Genius at times indulge in.

Those who search for the finest flowers must plunge into the deepest solitudes; they will never be found where they are liable to be covered with wayside dust by every rising gust or passing vehicle, or by the tramp of cattle as they are driven to and fro. Let there only be a hedge between, and there is no comparison, for freshness and beauty of bloom, between those which are smothered with dust at every stir on the road, and those which, standing field-ward, are sheltered by the hedgerow. But even those are only “a sorry sight,” compared with what may be found far away in the fields, at the foot of, and upon, the hills, in lanes which lead only to the fields, and where no vehicles pass, excepting during the hay and corn harvest, or when carrying a little manure in the winter; where, at every few

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

yards, a bird's-nest may be found, telling how silent and undisturbed the whole green neighbourhood remains for the greater part of the year. In such spots as these the cowslips and blue-bells grow half as tall again as they do in dusty roadside places; while the primroses and celandines throw open such broad discs of gold, that they look like flowers from another and a far-off land.

Other places we knew, in our boyish days, where the blue-bells of Spring grew, that had never been cultivated within the memory of man. They lay in broad, low patches, amid high embankments of gorse, on land still moist, that might in former times have been a mere, though the sedges that would still have been waving there, had the water have remained, had not left a trace of their former existence, beyond a few common rushes. At every few yards, as if they had started up at some sudden alarm from their long sleep, stood gnarled and twisted thorns, hoary through age; deformed dwarfs, that could never attain any height, so twisted and curled around one another, as if to get out of the way of the armed and prickly gorse that pressed close upon them on every side. They looked as if they had grown in pain, and clung to one another in a time of unutterable agony, never to separate again. It was no land of giant trees, for even the oak, that showed signs of having stood long centuries, had attained neither breadth nor height in proportion to its great age, but had grown into great bulging knots, where, in another soil, there would have been broad branches. The fern, the gorse, the bramble, and the low-lying beds of wild blue-bells, alone seemed to flourish there, with here and there an aged

WILD HYACINTH, AND HORSE-TAIL.

crab-tree, that sometimes sent out a few weak leaves, but had unnumbered years ago ceased to blossom.

In one wild spot, which retained some portion of its former moisture—for in ancient times it had, no doubt, been a mere—grew several varieties of the horse-tail, and nowhere else was it to be found for miles around that ancient neighbourhood. This we frequently gathered only for its strange jointed appearance, and brought home amid our armfuls of long trailing blue-bells, not knowing even its name at that period, though we found amusement in pulling the joints asunder, and endeavouring to replace them again, which was a difficult task, although each fitted as true as if made by the most highly-finished machinery—but we now think that no art of man could ever form such beautiful and delicate joints. The spikes containing the seeds, etc., make their appearance before the leaves; and the long whorls of branches, if reversed, look like a pile of skeleton umbrellas, that want covering or filling in with green. One species of this plant—the rough horse-tail—is of so flinty a nature that it is grown largely in Holland, and sold for polishing iron and brass and other metallic substances. Few plants contain so much silica as the horse-tails; and this is sufficiently palpable to convince many a misbeliever who looks doubtingly when he is told seriously that certain plants contain large quantities of flint.

When the blue-bells have ceased to bloom, there may be found by the waysides, in the hedges, on dry, gravelly, and hilly pasture grounds, a beautiful variety of vetches, the originals of our everlasting-peas, sweet-peas, and other varieties. The tufted vetch—a regular hedge-climber—is a perfect beauty, and so

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

thickly crowded with clusters of lilac-shaped purple blossoms, that the flowers cover one another. The leaves of these plants are also beautifully arranged, running side by side regularly along the central stalk, and either terminating in a leaflet or a tendril. There is no mistaking these pea-plants, for they all have the butterfly-shaped flower, with its standard, wings, and keel. The rough-podded vetchling has a beautiful bright crimson standard, though the other portions of the flower are pale ; while the grass vetch has long narrow leaves, and bears the prettiest flower of the species. But the kidney-vetch, or Lady's Fingers, bears as great a variety of coloured flowers as our sweet-peas : sometimes they are red, oftener yellow ; then again, white, or of a rich cream-colour. Some of these dwarf vetches hide their beautiful colours among the corn ; others, like the tares, are half-buried amid the leaves ; and a few are so small, that their beautiful tints cannot be seen unless they are looked at very carefully. The milk-vetch, with its light purple flowers, is a pretty plant ; the more so, as the colour of the bloom frequently changes from dark to light, and at times to a clear, bright white. The vetches are about the most beautifully-coloured plants that grow wild in England, and are deserving of a special treatise, entirely devoted to themselves ; for in our rambles we have occasionally gathered rich varieties, for which no name could be found, though a blind man, only by the sense of touch, would have been able to tell what family they belonged to.



VIOLET.

FANCY did ne'er before assign
To flower so many names as thine :
"Come-kiss-me-at-the-garden-gate,"
Chosen by lovers parting late ;
"Cuddle-me-to-you," how endearing !
"Pansy," and "Heart's-ease," lovers cheering.
Then "Three-faces-under-a-hood,"
Was chosen by a youth who stood
Sheltering two maidens from the rain,
In a green violet-cover'd lane.
Shakspeare gave thee immortal fame,
Linking a goddess to thy name :
He said, much sweeter are thy dyes,
"Than the veined lids of Juno's eyes."





VIOLETS.

A CALYX, OR FLOWER-CUP, DESCRIBED.

THERE is no perfume thrown out by our common wayside flowers sweeter than that of the wild violet, or wood-violet, as some call it, though we hardly know why, as it is as commonly found under hedgerows and on shaded embankments as in woods. Like the rose, too, it retains its fragrance after the flower has withered, and long leaves its sweet odour amongst whatsoever may have enfolded its purple petals,—for it is only the dog-violet that is lilac and scentless. Small as the violet is, it has the power of throwing out its seed to the extent of two or three feet, as may be seen if the capsules are gathered and laid out to ripen in the sunshine after the seed-vessels have opened—for it requires some time for the valves to become dry and hard enough to obtain the strength of spring by which this jerking operation is performed. It may be fancy, but we still think the sweetest and strongest-scented violets we ever gathered grew at the hilly end of Clifton Grove,—a spot familiar in name, at least, to all who have read Kirke White's beautiful poems. These violets, also, were of a darker purple, and the small-eyed, golden centre was of a deeper orange, than those we have found in the south of England; and as for fragrance, it was so overpowering, that a goblet filled with

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flowers, and left in a closed room, would be more than a delicate person could bear, unless the door or window was opened beforehand, as the strong perfume produced a sensation of faintness.

From the frequent mention made of it in his immortal works, there can be no doubt about the violet being one of Shakspeare's favourite flowers. It is the violet he makes sweeter than the "lids of Juno's eyes;" and the most delicious spot he can select for the soft south breeze to blow upon is "a bank of violets." We have heard that the violet abounds in the neighbourhood of Stratford-upon-Avon, and have often thought, to one who had leisure and a love for flowers, what a pleasant pilgrimage it would be, to spend a few weeks in Spring and Summer-time in that venerated locality, and hunt about for the flowers which he so often mentions in his works, and to compare their names with some of the old herbals of his time. Even now we have our doubts as to what flower it really was which he called

"The lady-smock, all silver white;"

as we find "Lady Smock, or Cuckoo Flower," in an old herbal in our possession, published in 1653, which cannot, we imagine, be the same flower as Shakspeare speaks of—"Cuckoo-buds of yellow hue." The violet he also calls "blue," in the same beautiful song; and speaking after so great a master causes us to hesitate, and wonder whether or not the wild violets that grew about the great Poet's birth-place might not have been of a lighter colour than those which grew in the green-woods that lay around the home of our childhood. Milton calls it "the glowing violet," and he must have had a warmer colour than blue in his mind's eye when he wrote the word "glowing" in his "Lycidas,"

VIOLETS.

and devoted the whole line to those three words, "The glowing violet," which, we think, brings the colour nearer to dark purple than it does to blue, though "violet-colour" is commonly used in the present day. The violet that blows in Autumn is of a pale blue, and has no perfume; but that is not Shakspeare's violet, as he never mentions the flower, that we remember, without alluding to its sweetness; thus, in the churchyard scene in "Hamlet," where the Queen scatters flowers on the grave of Ophelia, and says, "Sweets to the sweet," and Laertes says—

"Lay her i' the earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring."

Many of our early poets also call the violet "purple," "dark," "deep-set," "dark velvet," and one "wine-coloured," another "watchet," which, if we mistake not, means a light blue; though every one who has seen the flowers grow wild must have been struck with the difference between the colour of the blue-bell, or wild hyacinth, with its unmistakable blue, and the darker purple of the sweet violet.

All who are familiar with the country must have noticed how great a distance from the hay-field the perfume of new-made hay has been carried: the aroma of May-buds never reaches so far, nor does the fragrance of a bean-field in blossom. All these sweet smells are well known to every lover of the country; but few, we dare say, have ever noticed the great distance to which the odour from a bed of wild violets is wafted. We found it out unexpectedly, many years ago, while wandering beside a wood in the neighbourhood of Newstead Abbey. There was no mistaking the perfume, as it came floating upon the pure

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

air of a sweet Spring morning, across that land of flowers and poetical association. But where were the violets? The sweet scent was distinct enough, but nowhere could we find the flowers, until we plunged into the wood; and, if our memory does not mislead us, the bed of violets lay some fifty good strides from the spot whence they first betrayed their "whereabouts" by their fragrance.

We have found violets growing in the midst of ancient ruins, where the wallflower scented the air above, and the violet bloomed over the unknown dead who slept below,—on spots where altars once stood, and the incense from waving censers floated; and endless old-world fancies have floated across our mind, as we imagined how those beautiful flowers first came there. In our eyes they appeared different from those that grew on the wooded knolls, as if they were, somehow or another, allied to the dead, and it would be sacrilege to carry them away with us. For in such solemn places, more so than in others, we seem to feel near an invisible Presence, such as the dead lying below once knelt before, and which we who are of the living still acknowledge in our devotions. Flowers in these once-hallowed places, unlike those in the bowery hollows or sunny embankments of woods, awaken no poetic dreams of nymphs and dryads, or of fay; no pictures of

"Juliet leaning
Amid her window-flowers;"

but images of the departed dead alone, who seem again to pace the ruined cloister, with leaden, downcast eyes, and to send back sigh for sigh in every breeze that whispers through the ivy leaves, which never seem at rest in that long, roofless aisle.

VIOLETS.

What colour were the violets that grew in the garden of Eden, and how large did they grow? Only the other day we read of an experiment with potted violets, attached to a balloon, which, after ascending a certain height, was made stationary, and that in a few days these violets grew thrice the size of any that had ever bloomed on this "firm-set" earth. There is true poetry in the thought that the air of our earth is too gross and heavy for violets to grow to perfection. Yet, for so small and delicately formed a flower, the violet is very hardy, "coming before the swallow dares," as Shakspeare tells us, and enduring the cold, cutting winds of March, while many other flowers, which seem to possess ten times its strength, do not even venture to put forth a bud until soft April showers, and warm, sunny May days, have far advanced the progress of Spring.

We have often thought that if, instead of the word "calyx," the compound word "flower-cup" were used, it would be better understood by young beginners in botany, as something which, although forming a part of the flower, the flower or petals rest upon. Neither do we know why we should hesitate even to use the old homely English word "saucer," and make the corolla the cup; stamens, pistils, etc., the contents of the cup,—if, by doing so, we could simplify our botanical lesson, and get rid of a few of those hard words which too often frighten young beginners. Or what if the calyx were the tray; the stem the table; the petals the cup; then stamens, etc.—where would the harm be? Nothing is lost by simplicity; and it would be easier to explain the various forms of the tray, or saucer, of the flower; how, also, some are large, others small: and thus, by keeping before the eye a familiar comparison—not at all difficult to do, for he or she

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would be a poor instructor who, even at a breakfast-table, could not find the illustrations to "apt allusions," which would make the beginning of botany as easy as the beginning of the alphabet. Nearly all flowers have the calyx strongly developed ; generally it is green, always underneath when the petals are open ; the exceptions are in a few bulbous plants, such as the snowdrop and crocus. The calyx, also, is formed of separate petals, called sepals ; like the corolla, they also correspond with the number of flower petals, though placed between, instead of exactly beneath, them ; they are, moreover, separate and distinct in some flowers, and united at the base, as in the primrose, in others. Some flowers, when in bloom, throw off the calyx altogether ; while the poppy bursts its cap, and opens at the top.

In some instances the "flower-cup" becomes a part of the seed-vessel, as in the rose, where it forms the covering, becoming eventually the future fruit, or outside of the "hep," in which are held the white and woolly seeds. In the beautiful golden-coloured egg-shape leaved Loosestrife, we find a splendid specimen, at the top of the slender foot-stalk, of the deeply divided and strongly marked flower-cup or calyx, the points of which press truly against the centre of the pretty petals, but are joined at the base. In some plants the stamens are attached to the calyx, and cannot be separated without tearing asunder and destroying either the flower-cup or the stamens ; and, trifling as these things may appear to a novice, they are the broad lines that divide the vegetable world, and enable the naturalist clearly to distinguish the different classes into which the flower kingdom is separated.





WOOD ANEMONE.

SOME Grecian poet,
Where it grew,
Lay dreaming, while
The sweet South blew
Its white-streak'd petals
To and fro ;
And through his eyes,
Half-shut, he saw
A God-like shape,
Form'd of the wind,
And thus a name
Did for it find :
For seeing all
Its bells in motion,
He thought this young god
Of the ocean
Had left fair Thetis'
Pearly side,
Upon its drooping
Bells to ride ;
And ever since
That dreamy hour,
It has been call'd
The Wind-flower.



WOOD-ANEMONE; FOLIAGE, AND ITS FUNCTIONS;
WOOD-SORREL; SWEET WOODRUFF.

WERE it not for knowing where certain flowers grow, through former visits to the same spots, and for anticipating their appearance as we look for the breaking of day, we could hardly imagine a more delightful surprise than to come unaware upon a large bed of anemones in full bloom, in some sudden opening of a wood, when the trees are just burgeoning with the first pale flush of Spring green. Those friends we have taken with us, and who have for the first time witnessed this beautiful display of early flowers, so unlike in colour to either the wild hyacinths or primroses of Spring, have gazed in wonder on the purple-tinged blossoms, as they lay like a rich carpet, stretched between every sunny break in the underwood. They have such a light, cheerful look as they sway to and fro in the wind,—now showing the outsides of their petals in flashes of pale purple, then bending back in lines of light, as they reveal the grey-white insides of the corolla,—never seeming the same for a minute together when in motion, but ever shifting their white and lilac hues, as if some fairy shuttle was shot through them at every stir, and constantly changing their colours. The leaves, also, are beautifully cut, and there is much grace in the pendulous hanging of the blossom, and the way in which it springs from its three-leaved involucre; for there is no true calyx to the anemone.

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Another anemone, often called the "Pasque-flower," and generally only found on chalky ground, is of a beautiful purple colour, while the outsides of the petals have a rich silky look, but such a silky material as the daintiest lady in the land never wore, for no loom was able to turn out such a bloom as these beautiful petals display. Why the Greeks gave the name of wind-flower to this handsome plant, has never been explained; perhaps it may have been through the petals opening wider during a warm windy day than at any other time.

We have already stated that the leaves of the anemone are deeply and beautifully cut, and, while speaking of the beauty of foliage, we will take a rapid glance at the great variety of forms it assumes, and show how it is the very life of each plant, shrub, and tree, receiving shower and shine, and giving to the vegetable world all its nourishing juices. Through its leaves the plant lives and breathes, sending out, so to speak, its own breath through numberless minute openings, and drawing in through the same apertures all it requires for support from the surrounding atmosphere; shutting up in very dry weather, and retaining the moisture it possesses, or opening to the refreshing shower, and receiving a new supply. Some leaves, on the under sides, are covered with hair-like bristles, forked or star-shaped; others, with a velvety down; some rough to the hand and piercing, and others feeling like silk floss, and softer than the softest feather ever plucked by a bird to cradle its young upon.

To see the beautiful formation of a leaf properly, a skeleton, or frame, of one that has lost all its green, and retains but the ribs and that exquisite network of veins, ought first to be examined. In this will be found more beautiful patterns than

FOLIAGE, AND ITS FUNCTIONS.

ever fair fingers wove into ornamental lace; and some of them so fine, that a glass is required to examine the beauty of the meshes. But the green which the skeleton leaf has lost was its vitality: its breathing power has gone; no more green blood flows through those tiny veins; those little mouths will never open again to receive the gentle showers; for "to this complexion has it come at last," though even in death it is still beautiful,—

" But, while we mourn its swift decay,
New buds are bursting on the spray."

In the grasses, flags, etc., we do not find the same beautiful net-work of veins as in the leaf of the oak or rose-tree, but long, straight, ribbon-like lines, beautifully illustrated in oat-leaves, which may be rent all the way down into silk-like shreds. The divisions of a leaf are so simple, that a child may easily comprehend them, consisting simply of the stalk, mid-rib, veins, top, bottom, and margin or edge, and skin or vegetable covering, with the downy or hairy spikes mostly on the under side. Some leaves are stalkless, and surround the stem, or spring out of it, as in the teasel and thistle, while the stems of grasses are sheathed in the foliage. The "Speedwell" furnishes a fine example of the close stem-sitting and stalkless leaf. As for the variety of the forms of foliage, the botanists have been compelled to seek for comparisons among the homeliest things we are acquainted with,—hearts and kidneys, hands and fingers, arrows and awls, and everything else that has a shape at all, and, in some instances, that has not—so difficult is it to find fitting comparisons. Then the margins are smooth, notched, saw-toothed, cut, crimped, slashed, torn, and bitten out, so to speak,

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in the most irregular little mouthfuls, as if every insect had tried to bite out a new pattern, from the stag-beetle to the tiny ant. Some, again, like the holly and thistle, are armed with sharp spikes, though for what purpose we have yet to discover; all we know is, that they are almost as dangerous to handle as wasps. As for compound leaves, they may be found doubly and trebly multiplied, as in the umbelliferous plants, many of which are very beautiful.

Leaves, with all their varied and pleasing forms, are the grand covering of Summer; they make our forests shady, our winding avenues cool and beautiful, giving pleasant shelter from the burning sun to the lord of the estate under his ancestral oaks, and to the "looped and windowed raggedness" of the beggar, while he snores beneath the wayside hedge. Our early poets loved to dwell upon the beauty and bursting of the leaves, from the moment when they first showed their tiny heads, to the time when they "grew green and long," and formed a covert for the timid doe and her little hind. Scores of eloquent passages might be extracted from our rough old ballads, describing the beauty of forest foliage.

It is the leaves that give such beautiful colours to Autumn—crimson and gold, purple and green,—dying the arras which Summer had hung up into new and more pleasing hues, as if trying to out-rival the splendour of the departed flowers. One old poet tells us that they were made for the birds to build and sing among, and to hide and shelter their little ones. But the tender green buds of Spring awaken more pleasurable feelings in our hearts than the changing hues of Autumn; for one brings the year in its bloom of youth—the other, when it is

WOOD-SORREL.

marked with the traces of age; and all these varying emotions are called up by the different appearance of the leaves. The fall of the leaf is, after all, but one of the silent and necessary operations of Nature; it is pushed out of the way by the new bud, which begins to swell, in Autumn, above the old leaf, which it thrusts from its place. This bud will readily be found, by a close inspection, before even the leaf falls, in the axilla, or armpit of the leaf; it is always above the old leaf, and, as it enlarges, pushes it downwards, and causes it to fall, or break off, at the point which connects it with the spray or branch. The reason why evergreens retain their leaves throughout the Winter, is simply through these buds not bursting out in Autumn, as they do in the generality of trees, but making their first appearance in the Spring, when they undergo the same process. In a dead plant, the leaves wither or die, but still remain on the stem for a long time, because there are no live buds forthcoming to push them off: this is an unmistakable sign in determining whether a plant be living or dead.

But we are dwelling on the faded beauties of Autumn while wandering among the anemones, which love to grow in wood-shaded nooks, or little openings between the trees, where the dark-blue hyacinths and sweet violets delight to blow. There we also find the beautiful wood-sorrel—the real Irish shamrock—which the Emerald Isle has abandoned, and substituted the clover in place of it; to which we say, “pity ’t is, if true.” Its bright green, heart-shaped, trefoil leaves, which close upon one another, all arise from the root, and close both at the approach of night and before rain. They are beautifully divided at the top, and look like rounded wings closed, when folded. The

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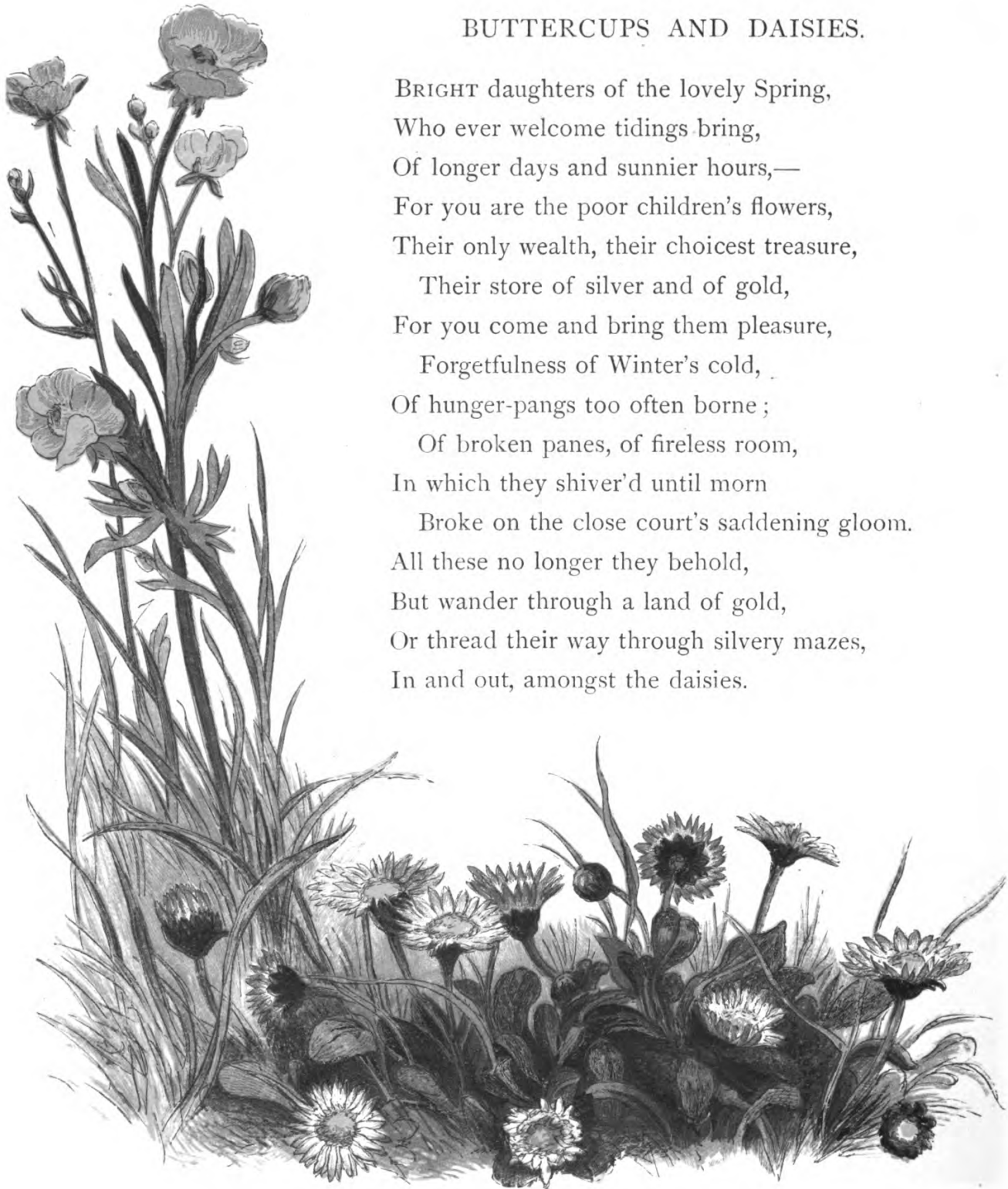
light-coloured petals are streaked with lilac, and are large for the size of the plant, while the roots resemble strings of threaded beads; but, like everything that is very fair, the flowers soon fade. The leaves are more acid than the common field or true sorrel, and are said to yield the pure oxalic acid, also, the so-called salts of lemon, when the juice is crystallized. The seeds, which are shut up in an elastic covering, when fully ripe burst their shells suddenly, and are projected to a considerable distance. Once seen, this beautiful plant can never be forgotten, as it resembles no other; for it cannot be mistaken for the yellow wood-sorrel, which lies on the ground, and bears its flowers in small umbels.

Here we find also the sweet woodruff, which, though seldom standing more than six or seven inches high, looks very pretty, with its small white flowers, when fresh gathered. Its narrow whorled leaves have also an elegant appearance; while, for fragrance, it may be compared with the sweet and delightful smell of new-mown hay, and when dry it retains its pleasant perfume, some say, for years,—for the odour is much more powerful in the dry, than in the newly-gathered plant. It loves best to grow in the mould formed by decayed leaves, and may generally be found around the stems of oak-trees, if such are grown in the wood, while the white, brilliant flowers are star-shaped, like those of the jessamine. The aroma is not very perceptible when first gathered; but on bruising a leaf between the fingers, the smell emitted is so sweet and powerful as never to be forgotten: even the warmth of the hand is sufficient to draw forth its fragrance.



BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES.

BRIGHT daughters of the lovely Spring,
Who ever welcome tidings bring,
Of longer days and sunnier hours,—
For you are the poor children's flowers,
Their only wealth, their choicest treasure,
 Their store of silver and of gold,
For you come and bring them pleasure,
 Forgetfulness of Winter's cold,
Of hunger-pangs too often borne ;
 Of broken panes, of fireless room,
In which they shiver'd until morn
 Broke on the close court's saddening gloom.
All these no longer they behold,
But wander through a land of gold,
Or thread their way through silvery mazes,
In and out, amongst the daisies.





BUTTERCUPS, DAISIES, AND ARUM.

STAMENS AND PISTILS OF FLOWERS.

BUTTERCUPS and daisies are the children's great treasury of gold and silver ; and should they be fortunate enough to become wealthy in after years, all the riches they accumulate cannot purchase greater pleasure than they enjoyed when, in their age of innocence, they went forth with their light-hearted and happy companions, to gather these old familiar and common wayside flowers. Nor do children seem to care so much for any other flowers as they do for these ; and the only reason we can give for this partiality is, that the contrast of the colours pleases their eyes, that they grow so plentifully together, and that they rarely see such vast masses of any other flowers in the fields at a single glance, as there are of buttercups and daisies. The daisy seems ever to have been a favourite flower in England : its beauty has been praised by our oldest poets ; and all know, who have ever read his works, that Chaucer's affection for this simple wayside flower was a constant and fervent passion. Chaucer tells us how he was so partial to the daisy ; but has he told us all ? We fancy not. It appears to us, who have been readers of his poems from our boyish days, that something is left untold regarding his love for the daisy ; that in his mind

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and heart this old English wild-flower was associated with feelings and memories we can never now know,—it may be, with one he had loved, or one who had died, to whose memory he “did reverence” while worshipping the flower; rising early, even before the sun was up, to see the daisy open, and remaining in the field until he could scarcely see what flowers were at his feet, to see it close. Wordsworth says, “its home is everywhere;” and, so far as he had England in view, he wrote what is true. But the daisy is no common flower when examined minutely; to say nothing of that beautiful silver fringe, often streaked with the richest crimson, the disc, or yellow centre, displays a rare array of tiny florets, showing that it is a compound flower. It is a beautiful adorning of our meadows, its clear white colour forming a pleasant contrast to the green grass, and affording more delight to the eye than the yellow buttercups, which seem but a golden shade of green when blended with the grasses, and not standing out bold and bright like the daisy. Chaucer speaks of a meadow “with daisies powdered over;” and the very quaintness of the word “powdered” brings before the eye of the mind the white touches in a landscape, as if put into a picture by a delicate hand, while the word “painted” would have had a heavy look in place of it, though it is not the case where Shakspeare makes the daisy

“paint the meadows with delight,”

It was called, as its name indicates, the “day’s eye,” and the “eye of day,” by our ancestors and early poets, and so the Saxon children called it, when they went into the fields, long centuries ago, to gather this favourite Spring flower, as children continue to do now. There are innumerable old, world-wise

BUTTERCUPS, DAISIES, AND ARUM.

aphorisms connected with the daisy ; and our forefathers looked upon it as a sure sign that Spring had come in real earnest, and that Winter was over, when they could stand upon nine daisies with one foot : yet we have often seen daisies in flower when the unmelted snow has been lying deep and white under the leafless hedges. It was also an old saying, " that the lambs lie down to sleep when they see the daisies close ;" and the folding up of a whole field of daisies in the space of a few minutes has a strange appearance, leaving the meadow wholly green, where before there were broad dashes of refreshing white. And this sleep of the daisy was first discovered by Chaucer, nearly four hundred years before such a stir was made about the sleep of plants by Linnæus, which was then considered a new discovery. We will quote Chaucer's own words, altering the form, and putting them into prose, excepting such as are marked in inverted commas, and they are word for word as Chaucer wrote them. The poet begins by telling us, in his introduction to the " Legend of Good Women," that no man loved heartier than he did to see the daisy close at evening ; that he would lay aside his pen and books as soon as he saw the sun sinking in the west,

" To see this flower, how it will go to rest,
For fear of night, so hateth it the darkness ;"

and that when the sun rises, the daisy " will unclose." This " going to rest" is equally as expressive as the title of Linnæus' work, "*Somnus Plantarum*," and is still as often used in England, in the present day, as " going to bed," or " going to sleep ;" and, to mark his meaning more strongly, Chaucer tells us that it hated darkness, and would not unclose (we dare not write " awaken," though that is Chaucer's meaning,) until " in brightness of the

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sun." In another passage, he calls the opening of the daisy in the morning, "its resurrection." Chaucer, then, discovered the sleep of plants ages before Linnæus was born, and the passage above quoted proves it.

The common buttercup is the strongly-marked representative of a large family of plants, of the genus *Ranunculus*, and, we have often thought, would be one of the very best flowers to gather and take to pieces for the examination of young students in botany. The number of sepals of calyx, five ; the number of petals, with nectar-cup at the base, being also five, so easy to remember ; and the pistils and stamens so numerous, that at first they need not bother their young brains to count them at all. The daisy, being a compound flower, is more difficult to understand, and belongs to such a numerous class of plants, that we pity the boy or girl who walks out on a windy day in March, when there is nothing else much in flower in the fields, and has to learn a first lesson from it, and hear all about its numerous relations, "whose name is Legion."

Next to buttercups and daisies, the great delight of children is to find the arum, or cuckoo-pint, — "lords and ladies," or "parson-in-the-pulpit," as, in their droll way, they have learned to call them. We do not know how many varieties of colour are to be found in the arum ; but we well remember, when children, what guessing there was, before we opened the hood or spathe, as to whether it would be "a lord" or "a lady ;" for the pale tubers we called the ladies, and the dark ones lords ; and very beautiful were the colours we found at times, especially the pearly pink, encompassed in the corolla of the richest flower. Then, in Autumn, the seed-vessels showed at the bottoms of the

BUTTERCUPS, DAISIES, AND ARUM.

hedge, like great clusters of the richest coral, bearing no resemblance to the form of the plant in Spring, nor scarcely any outer sign identical of the "lord" or "lady" of our childhood, "Robin-in-the-hedge," or "Wake Robin," for we know not by how many names this curious plant is called; nor can we recall a tithe of the old rhymes written upon it, such as—

" My lord and my lady toss'd up in a clout,
They pulled off the quilt, and my lady leap'd out."

And another, beginning with—

" Robin-a-bobbin, a bilberry hen,
Look'd as big as threescore men;
But when his clothes were taken off,
Like a skeleton kill'd with a cough," etc., etc.

We find the centre of perfect flowers bristling with stamens and pistils, "their golden heads erect towards heaven;" in the buttercup they stand thick as soldiers on a tower, when the besiegers are battering the gate. Then, again, we find but two stamens in the middle of a flower, and in the water star-wort only one. Without these the seeds could not be perfected, for they are the very life of the future flower, and live on when calyx and petals are gone. They remain at times, when ripe, shut up in their prison-houses, in other forms, after having scattered their gold-dust on the winds of heaven, to be blown, for aught we know, into the immensity of space, or settle down on the crust of new worlds still in formation. Sometimes these slender-stemmed, gold-dust laden pouches scatter their treasures on the earth, until the ground is yellow with it, while the bees come out of the bloom like yellow millers, who have been grinding and carrying gold. In these important and too often overlooked portions of a

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

flower we see the perfect harmony of Nature's works ; for the stamens surround the pistils, as the flower-cup does the petals, each alternating with the other. Each stamen, like a flower, has its stalk, on the top of which is placed the anther, which is generally marked as if cleft in the centre, each division forming a little garner, in which the golden pollen is deposited. The Linnæan classification of plants is grounded upon counting the stamens of each flower,—a wearisome task, as some amongst them contain a countless number.

There is no mistaking the pistils, as they spring from the very centre of the seed-vessel ; but why the stem should be called style, or what corresponds with the anther of the stamen be, in the pistil, named stigma, we cannot clearly comprehend, as we think the addition of the ovary, or seed-vessel, would alone be sufficient to identify the pistil from the stamen. True enough, the stem is not always present, nor is the stigma or anther, if we may so call it, always visible ; though, when it is, the sticky appearance, and the pollen-dust with which it is encrusted until absorbed into the seed-vessel, always renders it conspicuous to an "understanding eye." The pollen of the anthers would be useless without the absorbing power of the stigma, and the pistil likewise of no avail without the flower-dust of the anthers, as the seed neither fertilizes nor ripens. But here occurs one of Nature's mysteries : if the wind, or the bees, and other insects, bear the pollen of one flower to the stigma of another quite different—for the very air is sometimes filled with this golden powder—how is it that the seed remains unchanged, and produces its own class of flowers unaltered, just as if its native stamen alone had impregnated the stigma ? This question has yet to be answered.





COWSLIPS.

WHILE sitting in a bramble-brake,
Some Flower Spirit did thee make,
And gave thee an elastic form,
Harmless to bend beneath the storm ;
First umbel-shaped thou didst appear,
Of a dull green, like many near ;
Not pleasing the creator's eye,
She steep'd thee in a golden dye,
And larger made thy truss of bloom.
Pretty thou look'st, but there was room
To ornament thee further still ;
So she in crimson dipt her quill,
And to her fancy spotted thee,
And left thee nodding on the lea,
A perfect and a peerless flower,
As ever spread in Summer bower :
And Shakspeare's large, all-seeing eyes
Beam'd bright on thy "cinque-spotted" dye



COWSLIPS; FLOWER PETALS.

“**I** REMEMBER, I remember,” is the opening of one of Hood's beautiful poems, which, when we look back, ever comes ringing upon our memory, like the familiar peal of our home-church bells; for a country boy remembers many things which those who were born and brought up in the streets and smoke of cities never knew. Can we ever forget going “a-cowslipping,” in the old Park-house closes, that stretched far behind the summits of the hills which looked down upon the humble home of our childhood? No more than we can forget how our boyish hands were filled with these beautiful wayside flowers, as we stood upon a little knoll beside the pond where we had gathered them, and saw, for the first time in our lives, the grey old towers of Lincoln Minster—that gem of English cathedrals—in the far distance. A proud day it was, when we stood, Columbus-like, on our cowslip-crowned hillock, the first discoverer of that wondrous work, which no one had ever before known—so they said—to be seen nearer than a further range of hills some three or four miles distant. Thousands since that day have stood on the cowslipped knoll to gaze on the hoary cathedral; and we have since heard that no cowslips grow on it now. What years have passed away since we saw the great marigold window give back glory for glory, as it stood steeped in the sunshine of heaven!

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Cowslips, as all know, like the verbena, sweetwilliam, and several others, are many-flowered ; while the daisy and primrose never produce more than a single flower on the same stem. The largest number of cowslips we ever counted on one stem was twenty-seven, and the flower was nearly a foot high, with the stalk as straight as an arrow, and thick in proportion to the heavy truss of bloom it bore. Every separate flower, in the Midland counties, is called a "peep," and each "peep," or corolla, is pulled out of its calyx separately when the flowers are picked ready to make cowslip-wine—a wine set great store by in our boyish days. Beautiful did these golden blooms look, all ready picked, as we have seen them many a time, in a clean-looking basket, offered for sale by some pretty country girl, in the market-place of the town neighbouring upon the village from whence she had brought them. Izaak Walton, in his "Angler," tells us how to fry fish in picked, or "peeped," cowslips. It is pleasant to remember that Shakspeare mentions the spots in the "bottom" of the cowslip, showing how minutely he examined this beautiful wayside flower. Milton also mentions

"Cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head ;"

and this, again, is a minute distinction, for "droop" would be a wrong word, as the cowslip, like a pretty coquette, does hang its golden head a little aside—or its many heads, if each corolla is considered as a separate flower—a question botanists only can answer. When boys, we were taught to believe, that wherever cowslips abounded, they were sure proofs of ancient pasturage—certain signs that not a sod had been disturbed for many long-past years ; nor do we ever remember seeing the fields mown in

COWSLIPS ; FLOWER PETALS.

which these flowers grew so abundantly, though they furnished rich pasturage for flocks and herds. We have often fancied they never look like any other flowers when they are growing : there is no deep grass surrounding them, such as we see buttercups, daisies, and clover buried in, but a short, smooth, velvet-like greensward, not unlike moss for its shortness, softness, and richness of colour. And yet what a murmuring of bees there is about the places where cowslips grow ; and we well remember, when boys, sucking the cowslip flowers, under the belief that we were swallowing pure drops of delicious honey.

Then, what a pleasure it is to walk through field after field covered with cowslips,—to see them growing, here singly, with a clear space of beautiful short greensward between each little root of flowers, and a short way further on, so thick and close together, that, step however carefully we may, we cannot avoid trampling the crowd of beauties under foot ; while here and there some taller stem shoots up, and bends its golden head aside to let us pass through. What a pretty posy is a large handful of freshly-gathered cowslips—far more beautiful, in our eyes, than any nosegay consisting of only one variety of flowers that can be gathered in the costly garden,—one broad cluster of yielding gold, but ten thousand times more delicate than any goldsmith ever wrought into the form of crown or jewel ; for what flower is there beside

“ Cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip ”?—SHAKSPEARE.

Then, they spring up in such wild, irregular beauty, too, so that any one with a fanciful eye may trace out almost every variety of pleasing form in the fantastic lines and winding circles in

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which they grow, "lettering the fields," as a poet of our day has beautifully expressed it. Flowers in gardens spring not up in all these fairy-like mazes,—golden canopies, fit for Titania and her attendant fays to dance beneath, while the crimson-spotted bells of the flowers tremble above their heads when shaken by the quick-footed revellers. Then, what a distance one may walk beside them; no garden-fence, no wall to stop our way, but onward and onward, with the blessed sunshine above, below, and around us—scarcely a trace of the handiwork of man, excepting in the long lines of hedgerows; and even many of these spreading out so wildly, and running in and out so recklessly, that they look as if they had been left to grow according to their own inclination, unpruned or unclipt for years by human hand. A walk in a trim garden awakens none of these free thoughts, and but few of these pleasurable feelings, for there the emotions seem bounded—we see only the same objects again and again—we tire for want of novelty; but no such weary feelings come over us as we wander through ever-changing scenery, amid common wayside flowers. We have heard of the wealthy possessor of an immense park, and of many a goodly acre beyond its walls, who often said that he never seemed to breathe so freely as when he wandered miles away, along by-roads, and farms, and villages that were not his own; and this is a privilege anybody may enjoy in free Old England, who is able and willing to walk.

There is one pretty rural picture connected with cowslips, which may often be seen in the streets of our English villages; and that is, children selling cowslip-wine of their own manufacturing, which is done by getting a bottle, putting in as much

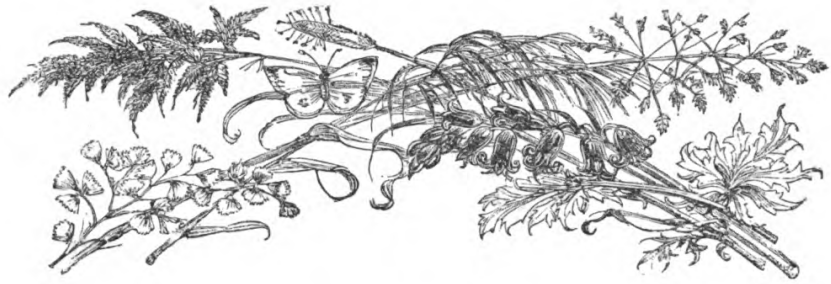
COWSLIPS ; FLOWER PETALS.

sugar as their mothers will allow them, or as they can otherwise obtain, then cowslip "peeps," or corollas, *ad libitum*, filling up with water, and well shaking the contents, when it is ready for sale. It is generally vended at the rate of one pin per spoonful, but should the market be overstocked, sales are effected at all kinds of prices, and stock often falls as low as three or four spoonfuls per pin ; and it is not surprising that the purchasers are capital judges of quality, as their test is sweetness, so that the merchant who is the largest sugar-holder, and liberal in supplying it, always meets with the readiest sale. Now and then a riot takes place in the market, as some pinless looker-on, not having the "wherewithal," will give some vendor's elbow a nudge while pouring out the coveted sweetness, which causes the wine to be spilt, when war commences, the end of which none can foretell.

As before remarked, the corollas, or petals, which generally are the first to strike the eye, are considered and called the flower, though forming but a portion of it ; as the calyx, or little green leaves, underneath this gaudy covering (which too often overhangs and eclipses the beautiful base on which the rich petals rest), has as just a claim to the name of flower as the more conspicuous corolla, though it is less showy, and generally green in colour, and often leaf-like in shape. It is also a beautiful arrangement, that of each petal not resting upon the centre of the sepals, or leaves of the calyx, but alternate, or between them, so that between each petal there is a sepal of the calyx, and thus the bottom of the flower is filled up, overlapped alternately, and strengthened. Then what a variety of forms these petals assume,—some, as in the simple bell-shaped flowers, are

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finished plain and neat, and so perfect that, even in form alone, art can make no improvement on their beauty. Others, like the violet and larkspur, have some of their petals rolled ; while, as in the latter, they throw out a sharp curving spur behind, which, were it strong as a thorn, would cause the bees to alight more carefully among the blossoms than they now do. Some, again, are toothed, waved, or cleft ; and it surely is a pardonable fancy to imagine that there are myriads of invisible little flower-spirits, whose pleasant task it is to shape the edges of the flowers into all kinds of fanciful forms. Then there is the ship-shaped pea, with its main-sail, or standard, ever hoisted to catch a favourable breeze, and its side-sails, or wings, to tack about, while its rounded keel sails noiseless through the air, as it carries some butterfly passenger, who sits swinging on its sweet-scented sails. There are also golden bell-shaped petals, and silver salver-like corollas, crosses of amethyst and ruby colours, and vases of perfume of every form, and of such surpassing beauty, that great artists have considered their labours most successful when they have copied Nature faithfully. Then we have the rich, rose-coloured Ragged Robin, looking as if some merry, mischievous Puck had been at work on the petals, laughing all the while he snipped away, at the tattered and torn appearance he was giving to them ; and, last finish of all, as if gold were not rich enough for “ a thing of beauty that is a joy for ever,” we have those fairy rubies before mentioned, scattered “ like crimson drops in the bottom of the cowslip.”



MAY-BUDS.

WE marvel not that observant foreigners, with an eye for the beauties of Nature, should, on first visiting England at the close of Spring, gaze in amazement at our long leagues of hawthorn hedges when sheeted with May, and that they should inhale with delight the refreshing aroma that arises from its countless millions of beautiful blossoms. We know but little beyond what we have read of other countries, but nowhere in the world have we ever heard of, or read of, anything more lovely than these flowery land-marks—these ancient roadside and field boundaries of Old England, the green, May-covered hedgerows—the berries of which, we believe, are the chief cause of so many strange birds visiting our island in Winter. Excepting only the daisy, there is no other blossom to which our old poets have paid so much reverence as the buds of May;—“crowned with May,” “with May garlanded,” “hung with May,”—like the chiming of sweet bells, are sounds ever ringing through their pleasant pages; and with them this worship was heartfelt and sincere, for the “bringing home of May” was one of the most poetical of our old English holidays. There must have been a great love for May-blossoms, to have caused them to rise so early—often before it was day—and go forth into the fields

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and woods to "bring home May," as we are told they did even by our sober old chroniclers. The muse of Spenser seems fairly to run away with him while describing the "bringing home of May;" and good old Stowe appears as if he could scarcely write soberly when describing the May-day games of London. Nor did the "observance of May" escape the quiet, all-seeing eyes of Chaucer, who alludes to it over and over again in his fine manly poetry. No prettier garland could be gathered, than a volume of poetical selections wholly devoted to May, with its flowers and blossoms, love-making processions, May-poles, and merry games. For four centuries our poets were never weary of alluding to the sweet season of May; and we do not hesitate to say, that more sterling poetry has been written relating to May than was ever penned on any other single subject.

Go into the country, and you will meet young men and maidens, and even little children, returning home laden with May, though the hawthorn blossoms within a stone's-throw of the houses in which they live. Go into the country parlours, and you will find the fireplaces crammed with branches of May-buds, which are renewed every other day or so while May is in bloom: that is the ornament the country dame chooses above all others for her fireless grate when the warm weather comes. There is an old familiar home-smell in the aroma of May-buds, better liked by country people generally than any other fragrance. Who is there that has not, unaware, felt the blood rushing back into the heart on suddenly inhaling some well-remembered fragrance? How stamped on the heart of Burns was the "milk-white thorn," scenting the evening air! Who,

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that has been young (there are hearts always old), and has spent a part of his life in the country—that has wandered with a friend, or one still dearer—can ever forget the fragrance of May, or the smell of the sweet-briar? Then, to be city-dried for years, and return to some spot—no matter where—abounding with the same odour, which you seem to have forgotten until you inhale it all at once; and if that man or woman has a sensitive heart, we defy its possessor, at that moment of re-awakened associations, not to feel its pulsations quickened with a sense of revived youth.

Then, what a beautiful harmony there is in the colouring of the landscape when the hedges are all white with May, the fields green and yellow with long-bladed grass and golden-coloured buttercups—for the grasses have hardly seeded before May is in bloom. We, who have been dreamers from our childhood, love to look on these landscapes of green and gold with half-closed eyes, and to fancy that the raised hedgerows of sheeted blossoms are silver terraces, leading ever onward to more beautiful scenery beyond the rim of the distant horizon, and far away from this place “which men call earth.” Then, what fragrance is thrown out by May-buds after a shower! In every neighbourhood where the fields, lanes, and common highways are bounded by hawthorn hedges, the whole air for miles around is filled with their grateful odour; and we have often fancied that birds possess the sense of smelling, or why should they sing more sweetly after a shower, and when the aroma of May fills the air, than at any other time? They also build their nests more commonly in hawthorn hedges than any other places embowered with green. He must have been a poet who first

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called it "May,"—who, perhaps after much thought, and recalling the names of every blossom and flower he was familiar with, could find nothing so applicable to its beauty and fragrance as the name of the month in which it bloomed—the month of flowers—so called it "May." In rare old books, we read of pretty maidens rising with the sun, and going forth into the fields to bathe their sweet faces in May-dew; but this dew, which they believed had the virtue of giving to their countenances the blush of the rose and the whiteness of the lily, was only to be found on the May-buds—whence its name of "May-dew;" and we can fancy what merry laughter, and squealing, and scampering of pretty feet there must have been, as some frolicsome girl shook a May-bough heavy with dew over the heads of her young companions, and scattered thousands of crystal pearls on their loose-flowing ringlets. Why have none of our artists ever painted such a picture? No Summer arbour, that was trailed and twined into form by the hand of man, ever appeared so beautiful as some of the huge bowery hawthorns we have sat beneath, covered with moonlight-coloured May-buds; and when the sun was shining, and you looked upward, the white blossoms appeared like golden flowers thrown over a graceful trellis of green, that seemed to hang between us and the sky, and looking as if they had never been allied to earth, but had for ever been steeped in the dew, the shine, and the shower.

We remember, in our younger years, doing "observance to sweet May" after a manner of our own; and that was, by sitting on a little daisy-crowned hillock (with a book beside us) which commanded a clear view of a footpath that stretched

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along the borders of several fields, and which all the way along was, in Spring, overhung with the blossoms of May; while the last stile, at the end of the farthest meadow, led into the village, which was nearly on a level line with the long rows of hawthorn hedges that skirted the field-paths. "Idleness all," says some hard, matter-of-fact man; still it was pleasant to sit and watch the forms that came and went townward and villageward, with the white May broken here and there by masses of green hanging over the footway,—to see the sun and shade shifting places, and colouring the costume of the passers-by,—to hear the jingling of sheep-bells, the bleating of lambs, and the lowing of milch cows in the village meadows; and then all those sounds to be drowned by the loud singing of birds, which you could both hear and see as they kept darting in and out between the May-blossoms, which they shook down in showers. "Idleness all," says the money-making man, rustling the leaves of his thick cheque-book—for what cares he for the rustling of the leaves and blossoms of May?

There are no other blossoms which inspired our early poets to utter so

"—————many a lovely saying
About its leaves and flowers,—about the playing
Of nymphs in woods and fountains, and the shade,
Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid"—(KEATS),

as the buds of May: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Herrick, and many another "high-browed bard," have sung the praises of this beautiful ornament of Spring. Burns, whose great heart was brimful of Nature's own poetry, on seeing

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the hawthorn in bloom, placed his young lovers beneath it, and exclaimed—

“I’ve pacèd much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare,—
If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'T is when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other’s arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the wilk-white thorn that scents the evening gale.”

The “milk-white” blossoms, as Burns calls them, are not so much admired by some people as the May tinged with pink, which is owing to the red clayey soil on which these richly-coloured hawthorns grow, and from which the red May, so ornamental to pleasure-grounds, is derived. Both, however, have the same sweet fragrance; and the most beautiful, in our eye, is the May flushed with pink, like a maiden-blush rose, or the warm inner side of a delicate shell. There is also something very elegant in the form of the foliage of the hawthorn, which is broad and beautifully shaped; while some of the “haws,” as the berries are called, are not only one of the richest reds the eye rests upon in Autumn, but are as sweet and pleasant to the palate as any berry to be found at the wane of the year. We have frequently gathered them when they have been almost as large as the “heps” of the wild rose, and, to our not over-particular tastes, were very agreeable, and as sweet as sugar. As to the May-blossoms, we used to devour them by handfuls, while we ate the leaves also, and called them “bread-and-cheese,”—a name still well known to poor country children, who too often, we fear, only eat their fill off the budding hedgerows in early Spring.



WILD ROSES, AND PERFUMES.

OUR beautiful wild wayside roses are, like our hawthorns, indigenous, and long before the eye of man gazed on their blushing petals, they bloomed and faded in many parts of our unpeopled island; so that England could not have selected a more befitting floral emblem than that of the rose; and in whatsoever ancient remains we find it sculptured, it is invariably the English wild rose that is copied. Beautiful as May is to look upon, and sweet and refreshing to inhale, it is deficient in that richness of colour which we find in the common wayside rose, and which sometimes approaches a pale crimson, though it is oftener found only a shade or two deeper than that of the delicately perfumed maiden-blush rose. Years ago we were familiar with many a green secluded nook, that was hedged in by nothing but blushing wild roses, many of which stood higher than the head of a tall mounted horseman; and although we have seen many a rare collection of choice flowers in our day, and walked through many a far-famed garden, yet none of these have left so lasting an impression on our minds as those long, high, thick hedges of wild roses when covered with bloom. There is something so beautiful in their foliage, too,—much more so, in our eyes, than is ever to be seen in garden roses: in the light, graceful sweep of the stems, with their long side-shoots, and in

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the fan-like fall of the branches, as they bend gracefully over one another, pointed at the end, and broad in the middle; while all the way up that beautiful green staircase are ranged the pale-crimson vases of roses, in such fanciful positions as the hand of man could never imitate, though a long league of wild-rose hedges were thrown together for his use,—for leaf and flower would wither before he had woven a screen of his own height.

There are a great many varieties of the wild rose, so closely resembling one another, that it is difficult to distinguish them apart; the commonest of these is the dog-rose, which abounds almost everywhere where there are fields, lanes, and hedges. Its colour frequently varies, according to the nature of the soil, being sometimes nearly white, but more generally of a rich pink, and occasionally rose-red. It has a slight, pleasant scent, especially after a shower. Another is the sweet-briar, beloved by all for its delicious perfume, for every leaf is steeped in a fragrance, which betrays its whereabouts to a considerable distance from the spot whence it comes. It is most abundant in the south of England, especially in Sussex, and is often hawked about the streets of London by countrymen, who bring it in hampers on their backs, together with branches of May, from a distance of ten or fifteen miles, often getting as much as ten shillings for a large hamper-full, by retailing it in penny-worths. We have no shrub in England that throws out a more powerful aroma than the sweet-briar. Its flower, too, is very beautiful, with its dark-pink petals; though, if it bore not a blossom, it would perhaps be equally prized on account of its delicious perfume.

In a very scarce work, published while Shakspeare was living,

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and entitled "The Bible Herbal," mention is made of the white rose being suspended over the festive board from the ceiling of the room, and as near the centre of the table as possible, at the merrymakings of our forefathers, who held it sacred to Silence. Within a circle, of which the rose formed the centre, was written :—

"He who doth secrets reveal,
Beneath my roof shall never live :"

and that man was held base, and unworthy of the name of man or friend, who repeated what had been said, or made mention of what had been done, "under the rose."

We have seen old pasture-lands, which had never been turned up within the memory of living man, surrounded with hedges of all kinds of wild roses, without any vestige of hawthorn in them. Some of these hedges were very high, and quite impenetrable, for the bottoms were filled with the trailing dog-roses, the branches of which were long as brambles in places, and armed with prickles from end to end; and a grand appearance did they make in Summer, with their large bunches of pearl-white flowers. The wild rose is indigenous to England, and it bloomed and faded in our island ages before the eye of man looked upon its beauty or saw its decay.

The rose has always been considered the Queen of Flowers, and for centuries fine specimens have grown in our old English gardens, which were perhaps first brought from the East, in the time of the Crusaders. Chaucer has sprinkled many beautiful passages over his poems descriptive of the rose; and the love of the nightingale for the rose is the favourite theme of Oriental poetry.

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Anacreon tells us that the rose perfumes the bowers of Olympus; that the Graces bind themselves together with bands of roses, and that it was enwreathed around the abode of the Muses; that he delighted to look upon it, folded on its graceful stem, in the early morning, and that he loved to wipe away with gentle hand the dew that lay like tears amid its blushes, and to gather the young buds, heavy with the rounded pearls that bowed them down. There is nothing, he tells us, beautiful in Nature, but what wears the tinge of the rose; for it is with that colour Aurora paints the morning sky, and with that hue the nymphs dye their blushes. But none of the roses of the East approach so near a blush on the cheek of a beautiful maiden as the pearl-flushed wild roses that adorn our English hedgerows. Rose-leaves are in pairs, or alternate, each matching each, as they start out side by side, and terminating with a large single leaf at the end of every spray. The seed is contained in a cup, or ovary, part of which is formed by the calyx, and the outer rind-covering, or fruit, which it is, is the gay scarlet hep, which makes such a gorgeous show in Autumn. This is made into a conserve, by removing the hairy seed when the heps are mellow, and beating up with sugar the soft crimson of the fruit; but even without this preparation the heps have a slightly sub-acid, sweet, pleasant flavour.

Those beautiful tufts of crimson moss, almost as pleasant to look upon as the roses themselves, and which we often see on the branches of the wild rose, are the productions of small insects, similar to those that puncture the oak and form the oak-galls. If cut open in the Autumn, these beautiful-looking

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rose-galls will be found full of little cells, each inhabited by a tiny grub.

There is one peculiar pleasure afforded us by the rose, viz., the retaining of its fragrance long after it has withered. The violet and one or two other flowers do the same, indeed, but in a lesser degree, their original perfume soon diminishing. It is said that the Persians flavour the water they drink with roses, and are able to give its perfume to the vessels that contain it; and that the Hindoos scatter rose-leaves to colour, not to flavour it, so as to give it what they call a fanciful attraction—"because it makes the water look sweet and pretty."

There are some large rose-grounds in England—for we can scarcely call them gardens—where roses are cultivated in acres, to be gathered anyhow, crammed together, and sold wholesale by the hundredweight. But we never heard of a rose-stack in England as large as a good-sized haystack: such a mound, however, a traveller tells us he found in Persia, and that he and his friends breakfasted on the top of this immense rose-stack, "which was as large as a common stack of hay in England, and had been formed without much trouble, from the heaps, or cocks, of rose-leaves collected, before they were sent into the city to be distilled." After this, we should almost imagine that the "beds of roses," which figure in poetry, will sink into contempt on account of their diminutiveness, and give place to whole "stacks of roses." It will be a long time before Englishmen will again be able to imagine the whole air around Lucknow redolent of nothing but the perfume of roses; for these roses of India—no other than Solomon's "rose of Sharon," from which they made the famous attar—were brought

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from Damascus, and for ages to come will have a smell of blood about them.

We have preserved an old image of a rose in contact with a lady's lips, which Etty once promised us he would attempt to paint,—and his was the only hand that could have done it, were it possible to do it at all, which we much doubt :—

Upon a bed of roses she reclined ;

The full-blown flowers across her lips were thrown,
And in one fragrance both their sweets combined,

As if they from the self-same stem had grown ;
So close were rose and lip together twined,

A double flower, that from one bud had blown :

No one could tell, so sweetly were they blended,

Where swell'd the pouting lip, or where the rose-bloom ended.





DANDELION.

In thorpe or town,
Its feather'd down,
Blown from the stock,
Is schoolboys' clock.
O happy time !
When to rude rhyme
We measured day
To suit our play.
And maidens fair,
With blown-back hair,
And raised-up arm,
Still try the charm
In many a spot.
"He loves me not,"
They sadly sigh,
If at one try
The silken down
Is not all blown
 Away ;
Then, Love, adieu.
"He loves me true,"
 They say,
"And will till death,"
If at one breath
The feather'd head
Abroad is spread,
And every seed
At once is freed.
Break not the spell :
She loveth well,
Who, in a flower,
Can feel Love's power.



DANDELION; CHICKWEED; GROUNDSEL; THISTLES;
AND PLANTAIN.

THERE are certain times when astronomers turn their gigantic telescopes towards far-distant planets, and can see nothing clearly; the atmosphere is so clouded with flying particles of matter, that, being magnified, make a kind of woolly haze between the earth and the distant world which they attempt in vain to examine. These obstacles are conjectured to be the seeds of plants, sand, etc., drawn into the higher currents of air, and floating about there, until released by some change in the atmosphere. The feathery seed of the dandelion is supposed to form a great portion of this floating matter, as there are countless millions of it in the air during Summer, and we have no other means of ascertaining to what altitude it is carried, except by these astronomical conjectures, which cannot, after all, be verified. The feathery parachute, familiar to every child through blowing it off—the down-covered dandelion—sails beautifully balanced through the air, while the little mass of curved seed is attached to it; but it no sooner strikes the ground than the seeds are separated, and left where the gossamer ball lighted. Not so with the feathery vehicle itself, which carried the seed along; this generally soars again into the air, now lightened of its burthen, and, for aught we know, is better adapted to

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

reach a high altitude than it was before the seed was released. It is the same with the coltsfoot and many other plants, the winged seeds of which fill the air. Gilbert White, in his matchless "History of Selborne," tells us of another phenomenon, which he himself witnessed, which was a shower of gossamer or cobwebs, that fell from "very elevated regions, and, from their silk-like texture, seemed to twinkle like stars as they fell with their sides turned to the sun." To what height they had been drawn up, or how long they might have remained in the air before they fell, he does not venture to surmise. These would be awkward things to come within the field of a telescope, being, as White tells us, "nearly an inch wide, and five or six inches in length."

Common as it is, the dandelion is really a handsome-looking flower, and a large bed of them all in bloom together, and waving their great golden heads in the wind, is, in our eyes, far more attractive than a field of buttercups. The leaf of the dandelion is also beautiful, and it is useful, too, when bleached, imparting a fine flavour to a salad, to our taste far before the water-cress. As one of our bitter medicinal plants, it also occupies a very high place, and, for certain disorders, is invaluable. Whether the dandelion root is pernicious or not, we cannot say, but many hundredweight of it have been dried, ground, and sold as chicory; and thousands of ignorant people, at this very day, believe that it is from the dandelion root alone that real chicory is obtained.

In a mild Spring, the dandelion flowers early: it is the first golden-coloured blossom we see near home, for we must go far a-field to find the celandines and primroses; whereas we

CHICKWEED AND GROUNDSEL.

have found this common wayside flower wagging its yellow head in the cold March wind, in waste places beside houses, where there was nothing besides in bloom, and but little that was even green to refresh the eye, excepting the chickweed; this, if anything, shows its dim-white star-shaped petals before the dandelion, though that wan early-comer soon disappears, and makes room for the broad-leaved, mouse-ear chickweed, that remains in flower all the Summer, shedding its seed several times, some say as many as six, and each time producing new plants, which all flower in the course of the year. We have pulled up chickweed, the stems of which have measured eighteen inches in length, entangled in a bed of strawberries, and we have also seen the flowers a pale pink: at first we thought we must be mistaken; but, on looking about, we found several other roots of the same colour, all growing in a bed of carrots. Birds are not so fond of chickweed as they are of groundsel; but the former being the earliest in flower, we have always roofed our wire cages with it as soon as it appeared, so that our feathered prisoners might have a green bower to sing in at the first approach of Spring.

Although there is something dull in the close-clustered, dusky-yellow flowers of the common groundsel, there is a pretty look about its toothed and deeply-divided leaves, which clasp the stem, and send up the flower-bearing branch aslant from the upper base of the leaf, alternately, all along the stalk. Then, it is such a favourite with the birds, and it is quite refreshing to watch its yellow bloom shake,

“ Where three grey linnets wrangle for the seed.”

Nor is it so common as many people imagine, as the London

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

groundsel-vendors will tell you, for they have at times to walk miles to collect a basketful, and they say it does not pay for stopping to pick up the few heads of groundsel they see here and there along the road. Some say, where the groundsel grows it denotes bad husbandry; but it is not always so: even in the most carefully tended gardens, the seed will spring up in places where it was never seen to grow before; for the seeds of this plant are winged, like those of the dandelion, and are carried by the wind we know not whither.

The thistles, of which there are a great many varieties, also send out winged seeds, which at times fill the air all around near to where they grow, saving when

“ No stir of air is there,
Not so much life as, on a Summer's day,
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf falls, there does it rest.”

The musk-thistle is a noble-looking plant, with large, handsome, purple heads, which droop gracefully; while the milk-thistle, which is not so common, has beautiful white-veined leaves, and—according to the ancient legends, which our simple-minded and pious forefathers believed in—the white veins on the leaves were made by the milk of the Virgin Mother, when she suckled the infant Saviour, and which fell on the thistles she carried as provender for the ass during the flight into Egypt. Take, also, the common sow-thistle, and see how deeply the serrated leaves are divided, cutting almost up to the mid-rib, until a single leaf looks like five: and where can you find a prettier pattern for a scent-bottle than the golden head of this little thistle, with its broad, round base, ribbed sides, and narrow

THISTLES AND PLANTAIN.

head, as seen before it expands, and throws abroad its winged seeds? Then, we have another thistle, that does not rise from the ground, but spreads out, like a great star-fish, both flower and leaves being stemless. On such a thistle, Tennyson, in his "Idylls of the King," makes Prince Geraint's war-horse plant his hoof:—

"His charger trampled many a prickly star
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones."

The Scotch thistle, that Burns held in such reverence, is very general—in short, it is the common thistle, which we see more of than any other sort; the cotton-thistle, with its white woolly covering, which is often seen in gardens, is not the real Scotch thistle.

The common burdock, so plentifully strewn along our waysides, and which is universally known, not only by its dull-purple flowers and immense leaves, but also through country children throwing them at one another, and finding great amusement, too, in covering a stranger's coat with the "burs," is another great disperser of seeds. These burs, with their bristly heads, cling to the fur or wool of animals, and to everything to which it is possible to cling, and so are carried abroad, and cast very often on land where they were before very rare, to the great grief of the farmer. We have heard—though we trust it is not true—of farmer-men, who, having a spite against their masters, have filled their pockets with thistle-down, and scattered it over newly-ploughed land, that had been prepared for corn, and which, to the farmers' great grief and loss, produced only a crop of thistles, after it was sown with wheat. A gallows high as Haman's, and the mercy

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

carrion crows would show the hanging body, would be meet punishment for such rascals, if such indeed there be.

But while dwelling on so many plants that furnish food for birds, we must not pass over the plantains, which every child knows; from the spiked heads being, in Summer, covered with seeds, country children call it the bird-seed. The formation of some of these plantains, when looked at closely, will be found to be both curious and pretty. Examine a single head, and you will find four long stamens projecting from the little floret that forms it; should the floret not be open, dismember the bud carefully, and you will find the filaments of the stamens snugly packed up in it, fold within fold, in such a neat manner as only a light-handed lady, with a gentle touch, could imitate in putting by her treasured lace and filmy veils; but, were she to try her skill on these slender and scarcely visible filaments, she would never, we believe, after a long day's toil, succeed in stowing away a single stamen in so small a compass as Nature has done.

Common enough are the names, and familiar enough the plants, described in this portion of our work; yet let the wayside wanderer pause when he next passes by them, and examine the noble forms of some of our large thistles, and the bold spreading out of the giant leaves of the burdock, and he will discover beauties which he never before perceived, and a grandeur of outline in some of these common objects, which will leave its impression long after on the eye of the mind, causing him to exclaim:—

Though man has power to build a town,
He cannot make the thistle-down,
Which every wind doth shake.





ROSE CAMPION.

OH, thou art very beautiful,
Nor gems, nor gold, surpass thee not,
Though thou dost spring up everywhere,
Where there is green about the spot ;
Where the sun shines and the rain falls,
And there is room enough to grow,
Lighting the long roadside for miles,
And making a most princely show.

Pleasant companion of the waste !
Oft dost thou greet me as I pass ;
And when there's no one going by,
Thou noddest to the bending grass.
So does my fancy weave the chain,
Linking the grass, and weeds, and flowers
Who in their whispers thoughts exchange,
And to each other talk for hours.

For they have life, as well as we,
And when that rustling sound is heard,
A something may communicate,
Though seeming by the faint breeze stirr'd
Like lovers leaning cheek on cheek,
Who feel, and think, but do not speak.



RED AND WHITE CAMPION; STITCHWORT; SAXIFRAGE;
WILD GERANIUMS; ORCHISES.

THESE are rather pretty-looking flowers, and so common, that they may be found under most hedges about the end of May. The white campion, which is very fragrant in the evening, grows from one to two feet high, and is very sticky at the points, to which small flies often adhere. It is, however, but rarely that both the red and white campion are found together, for where one is plentiful, the other is scarce. The five petals are beautifully formed, and so deeply notched at the edges, as almost to appear finger-shaped at the ends, and as the flowers are large, and grow in bunches, the plant makes a handsome appearance. Another kind, better known as Ragged Robin, does not flower until June: it is called ragged on account of the hacked and jagged appearance of its petals. It generally grows in moist meadow lands; the flowers are of a lively rose-colour, and the flower-stalks, as well as the calyx, of a reddish purple. This, also, is called a "cuckoo flower," and it may not be out of place here to hint, that it is just possible that many flowers which were in bloom during the brief period the cuckoo remains with us, were called "cuckoo flowers" in former times; for there are at least a score still called by that name in different parts of England. We have yet to learn, as we have elsewhere remarked,

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

which are the "cuckoo-buds of yellow hue," described by Shakespeare; it evidently is not the bright rose-coloured campion now under notice.

The stitchworts, to which the common chickweed belongs, are worthy of notice, were it only for the greater stitchwort—a noble-looking, star-shaped flower, of a beautiful clear white colour, full of styles and stamens, and hung with lance-pointed, serrated leaves; like the campion, it has five petals, but they are heart-shaped, and well opened, causing the stamens to fall about in picturesque order. The stems are square, and very slender, and the plant is often found growing to two feet in height. There is another pretty species, often found in lonely places, as if it had lost itself among the wilds of golden gorse and purple heather; this is the lesser stitchwort, and its delicate little snow-white flowers almost seem out of place among the hardy forest shrubs where it is generally met with.

The rue-leaved saxifrage is another white flower, which attains the height of three inches: it has also five petals, but is eclipsed by its taller sister, the meadow saxifrage, which is really a beautiful flower, often found full a foot high, and bearing large snowy blossoms. The golden saxifrages are only to be found near watery places, appearing as if the foliage was cut out of the richest silk; they look very beautiful, with their yellow umbels, especially the alternate-leaved one, the flowers of which are of a deep golden hue. Sometimes it will be found covering the fronts of rocks, and

" Making sunshine in a shady place."

They grow by the mountain tarns and beside the rivulets in the vales in the Lake Districts, also on the rocks of Shanklin Chine,

SAXIFRAGE AND WILD GERANIUMS.

in the Isle of Wight. In Ireland they are known by the poetical name of "None so Pretty:" they belong to our garden species called "London Pride." Nicholas Culpeper says, the white saxifrage "used to grow near Lamb's Conduit, on the back side of Gray's Inn." How the old man would stare, could he come back to life, and see the great London of the present day, spreading out for miles away from the places where he gathered many of his favourite herbs, few of which are now to be found within ten or a dozen miles of our great city. His favourite place for gathering the purple loose-strife was "about the ditches at and near Lambeth." He also speaks of another flower, so plentiful in the neighbourhood of London, that "unless you run your head into a hedge, you cannot but see some of them wherever you walk,"—that is the crow-foot, which, he adds, is also called "Frog-foot, Gold-knobs, Gold-cups, King-cob, Bassinets, Owl-flowers, Polts, Locker-goulans, and Butter-flowers." Here is a pretty catalogue of the names our forefathers gave to the *Ranunculus* species, hardly one of which is in use at the present time.

There are several varieties of the wild geranium, some of which are known as the Crane's-bill species; and one, called the Dove's-foot, flowers as early as April. The petals are of a pretty, palish rose-colour, while the leaves, which are nearly round, are beautifully and deeply divided. The flowers also grow in pairs, opposite the foliage, and the whole plant is very soft and downy, like many of the variegated geraniums of our gardens. Even to the naked eye, the seed-vessel appears very curious; but to see those beautiful long awns properly, requires a powerful glass, and this must be when the plant has done flowering.

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

The dusky Crane's-bill is a rich, velvety-looking flower, looking almost black in the shade, but showing purple in the sun. Some think it scarcely belongs to our wild flowers, but was originally cultivated in our ancient gardens. If so, how is it that the flower is found in our oldest woods, miles away from either house or garden?

The jagged-leaved Crane's-bill has never more than a couple of flowers, with notched petals, on a stalk, which are not so long as the calyx; but it is a prettily-spreading plant, with very beautiful leaves—the handsomest, we think, of the whole species—they are so beautifully divided, and sit so close to the flowers, the foot-stalks of which are short.

The blue meadow Crane's-bill—why so called we know not, as its flowers are purple—is really a grand-looking flower, with bloom as large as most of our garden geraniums. The leaves are also proportionately large, divided into five parts, and cut and jagged into most fantastic shapes beside. It is very common in the Lake Districts, especially about Whitbarrows; in the South it is rather scarce. About the Lakes, the shining Crane's-bill is also plentiful; and a pretty plant it is, with its small rose-coloured flowers, and bright shining, brittle, balsam-like stem, the pinky joints of which swell, while the round, five-lobed, and notched leaves are at times as richly coloured as the flowers. It must be gathered almost as carefully as if it were a glass flower in an enchanter's garden, for the stalk is so brittle that it snaps asunder at the lightest touch.

Many give the palm to the long-stalked Crane's-bill, as being the most elegant of all our wild geraniums, for it is tall and slender, like a graceful young lady. But how is it those fat,

WILD GERANIUMS AND ORCHISES.

podgy "Tom Thumbs" and portly "Little Davids" are so much in favour? There is nothing either slender or elegant about their forms, and yet they are all the rage now.

But, for beauty of colour, the one which figures as a tail-piece to the present work is not to be surpassed; it is called the "Herb Robert," and, to look at, few of our garden-plants are prettier, though it has anything but a pleasant smell. For years this flower was as familiar to our eye as the common daisy or scarlet pimpernel; and though we often admired its rich rosy hue, we had no thought of its belonging to our large family of wild geraniums, until we found it in a friend's garden. Taken altogether, it is a prettily-finished plant, for the very stalks and leaves are at times tinged with the rosy colour of the flower, which causes it to arrest the eye at once, wherever it grows, which is generally on wastes. There is also a pleasant, silky look about the leaves; and we need only point to the tail-piece of this volume, to show how charmingly they are divided and subdivided, and what exquisite taste is displayed by Nature in her fanciful workmanship and highly-finished designs.

The orchises are a singular-looking class of plants when in flower,—one resembling a fly, another a spider, a third a butterfly, a fourth a bee, and so on: nor does it require much of a fanciful eye, when the plants are in bloom, to picture them covered with one or other of these insects; so close a resemblance do the blossoms bear to them, that the different species have been named after the insects they are the most like. Unlike most flowers, the orchis displays neither stamen, style, nor seed-vessel, though it contains all, as may be found if the stamen-covers are examined. It has a spur, like the violet, and the flower rises from a twisted stem, which is its seed-vessel, or ovary, and rests

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

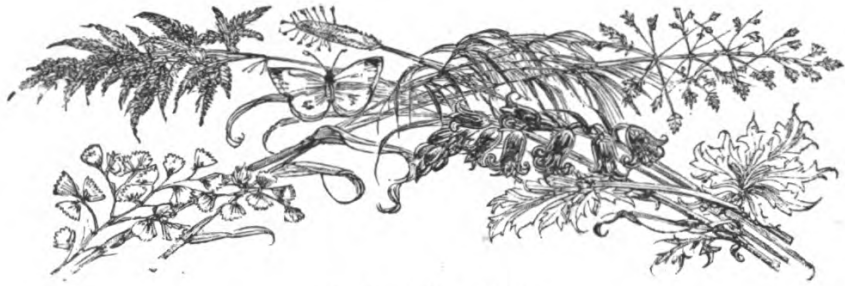
on a forked joint, or bract : below that is the stem. An orchis once seen can never be forgotten, on account of its spur and its twisted flower, together with the peculiar division of the flower itself, which may be said to consist of six parts, and may be equally divided into petals and calyx, though all are often of nearly the same colour, while the middlemost of the inner division, which is generally the longest, is called the lip. One of the first to flower is called the early purple, and blooms in April ; it generally grows about a foot high, and is not so rare as the others. The leaves are prettily marked with dark-purple spots. This is the plant so commonly hawked about London, and sold in the streets at Spring ; but it always perishes : indeed, the orchises are very difficult to keep, even in the best-managed gardens. The green-winged bears a great resemblance to the early purple, though, upon a close examination, the bloom will be found darker coloured. The butterfly orchis is a gem of a flower, and is often found nearly two feet high ; it is in full bloom about the end of May. The flowers are of a light-golden colour, relieved with white, and are very fragrant. There are also, the great brown-winged, with its large spike of flowers of a brownish purple, which reaches a height of two feet ; the monkey orchis, which only grows to about half the size of the above-named, and the flowers of which are of a pale purple, beautifully spotted ; and beside these, the spider, drone, and fly orchises, most of which may be found in Kent ; and, later in the season, the frog, green-man, marsh, and dwarf dark-winged orchises, beside several others, which it would be useless to mention ; for, as we have before said, when once an orchis is known, however numerous the varieties may be, they can never, by any mistake, be classed with any other family of flowers, as they are "themselves alone."





SHORT GRASSES.

SOME ancient poet,
At his leisure,
While gazing on
The grass with pleasure,
First unto that
Strange thought gave birth,
And called it the
“Green hair o’ th’ Earth.”
The wind, the comb
Which pass’d it thorough,
Nor left uncomb’d
A single furrow ;
The rain, the scent
Upon it shower’d,
T’ enrich the perfume
When it flower’d ;
Mowers, the barbers
With their shears :
And haymakers,
With pretty dears,
Who tumbled all
Earth’s locks about,
And the long curls
Turn’d inside out.
And so this ancient bard ran on,
In the old years now dead and gone



GRASSES.

NOWHERE in the wide world, travellers tell us, are there such beautiful grassy meadows, smooth, lawn-like parks, and delightful green hills, as there are in England. We have no great background of shadowy mountains to keep the free wind and refreshing rain from careering over and falling upon our long miles of velvet valleys; but we have the sea everywhere around us, over which comes that sweet, fresh air which keeps everything so refreshingly green. Nor is it enough that our island should be so richly carpeted with beautiful grasses to delight the eye; they feed the numerous flocks that dot the landscape and please the ear all day long by their pleasant bleating, while horned herds low in the green pastures, amid which they stand knee-deep in the sweet verdure they feed upon. Man, also, is indebted to these grasses for the bread he eats; for, by a course of cultivation, we have obtained from them wheat, barley, and rye, and several other cereals, which, in our present civilized state, have become the common necessities of life; and we have a variety of grasses growing wild in our fields, from which there is but little doubt our corn was originally obtained, as many of them are very nutritious, and yield excellent grain in their uncultivated state.

Nor is it the grasses alone—though in themselves, when closely examined, they are lavish of beauty—that satisfy the

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

mind, and fill the eye with delight; but profusion is found on profusion, and they fairly run over with beautiful wild flowers, who have to elbow their way through the crowded green that entangles their feet, so that they may stand up with heads erect, before they can be seen at all; and very often the clover and the daisy, and many another pretty flower, must be sought for amid the silky grasses, in which their beauty is half buried.

It makes the heart of a toiling, moiling, care-wrinkled, smoke-dried citizen beat with renewed vigour, to hear the fall of his weary feet muffled in the yielding grass. Even the little child, that can but just run, screams again with delight, as it throws itself down in the midst of it; weary men and women hoard their hard-earned pence for months, that they may for one day go out to enjoy themselves, where they can sit down on the grass. And we, who dwell in cities, and can see only houses, and hot, hard-paved streets, half envy those who live surrounded by grass and trees; we look upon the morsels of green before our door—if we are fortunate enough to have some half-dozen yards of dirty turf before the house—as a green oasis in the great wall-filled desert, pat it, coax it, and water it, and, when we return home at night, take five or six strides up and down it before retiring to rest, and try to fancy that we are pacing broad green sweeps of grass, such as, in our “inward eye,” we see stretching far away, miles beyond the smoke and the crowded, suffocating streets of the city. We try, also, to lay our dead where the grass grows and the trees wave—near to such spots as they loved to wander over when living, and where the silence never seems disturbed by the sounds that float around the dead, as it does amid the jar and thunder that, day and night, shake

GRASSES.

our city streets,—but where the wheels of the chariot of Time roll along muffled in the noiseless grass, and disturb not our meditations, as they seem to carry us along to that bourne “whence no traveller returns.”

Our Saxon and Danish ancestors called grass by the same name which we still retain, and which has come down to us unaltered through all the changes of so many departed centuries. They also distinguished some of the months by allusions to it, as grass-month, milk-month, mow-month, and hay-month,—from the time of its first appearance, from milking their cows in the meadows, from the mower first commencing to cut it, and bringing it home in their heavy, wooden-wheeled tumbrils, when tanned into hay. Our ancient poets called it the “favourite colour of God,” as they styled the rainbow “His bridge;” the face of heaven, “His blue eye;” and the rocks, “the bones of the earth.”

How pleasant it is to watch the grasses waving in the wind; to see the breeze pass along a large field like a wave of the sea, and note the feathery heads, that stand still as death until the wind comes rippling up and sets them in motion. Beautiful, too, do the grasses look under the ever-changing clouds,—all golden-green in the sunlight, of a silvery grey where the white masses of feathery clouds illuminate them, and dark-green where the dusky clouds throw their sable shadows on the field as they move along, like great spirits leaning down to look at the earth. Pleasant, too, is the grass under a shaded tree to a weary man, with the insects humming among the boughs—a land of delightful slumber. And, oh! how pleasant is the smell of a field of new-mown hay,—especially if it abounds in the scented

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vernal-grass, which is the sweetest of all our grasses. This "perfumer of the fields" only grows about a foot high, has shortish leaves, and what is called a compact panicle of flowers,—that is, it does not spread or hang like oats, but, in form, bears a greater resemblance to an ear of wheat, and is so yellow when ripe, that some call it the yellow grass-flower. It is supposed that the sweet scent of this favourite grass lies in the yellow dots with which the green flower-valves are marked, and which, as in several other of our plants, are not thrown out until ripe and dry. All the sorts of this species of grass are fragrant, and hay made from grasses where they are wanting has none of that sweetness which the scented vernal-grass alone throws out, though all kinds of grasses have a pleasant odour.

The rough and smooth-stalked meadow-grasses are our commonest and most useful grasses: it is the roughish meadow-grass that best stands the smoke of our cities, and gives the greenest look to our squares, while to the smooth-stalked we are indebted for the first green early flush of Spring—the "Spring-green," as it is poetically called, and which colour dyers find so much difficulty in imitating. But to see these beautiful grasses in perfection, they must be sought in moist or low-lying meadows, by the sides of pleasant rivers, such as good old Izaak Walton loved to walk along in early Spring, and where he gave birth to that glowing burst of eloquence, when he exclaimed,—“When I sat last on this primrose bank, and looked down these meadows, I thought of them as Charles the Emperor did of the city of Florence, that they were too pleasant to be looked on, but only on holidays.” There are several varieties of these meadow-grasses, some of which grow on our mountains, others in our



GRASSES.

woods, and a few on our sea-coasts : one of these is the bulbous meadow-grass, so called from its root. One of the tallest of our grasses is called the reed meadow-grass, often found amongst the sedge along our river-banks or water-courses : it is a beautiful-looking grass, and sometimes attains the height of five or six feet. Our wild-fowl shooters, in fens and marshy places, avail themselves of it as a shelter, when waiting for the arrival of water-fowl, or cautiously approaching them. It also grows in the water, where it sometimes even overtops the stately bull-rush ; and should the water be stagnant, it will in the course of a few years make new land, by sending out its strong creepers, and absorbing all the moisture, and leaving a wilderness of tall grass where before the fishes swam and the wild-fowl sailed to and fro. Many a time, in our younger days, have we pulled the boat noiselessly along, without even making a splash with the oar, by taking hold of this tall meadow-grass, and so reached the wild-fowl on the open mere, where they swam, thousands together, unaware of our presence until Death was in the midst of them.

The grass which we meet with everywhere—that grew up in the inn-yards when the railways spoiled their traffic ; that vegetates in the back-yard beside the dust-bin ; that children get out from between the crevices of the pavement ; and that you cannot even get rid of by pouring boiling water on it—is the annual meadow-grass, which ripens and sheds its seed for full eight months out of the twelve, producing several crops of grass in one season, as the chickweed renews itself by the same means some five or six times, if not more, in the course of a year. It is about one of the sweetest grasses cattle eat, and—wise

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provision!—the most plentiful of all the grasses ; and though it is too short to produce much hay, it makes the very finest of our grazing lands, and whatever feeds upon it thrives. Though it is so small, no grass draws so much nourishment from the earth as this does, through its numberless fibres, which, while they feed it, anchor it so firmly to the earth, that it is not easily uprooted. It does not seek for nutriment so deep down as many grasses, but nothing about the surface is lost—it converts all it can reach into nourishment ; let there be but an inch of soil, and there it is, rooted into the crevice of an old wall, or if a handful of dirt is thrown on a heap of stones, there it will find its way, and take root. The Winter may freeze, or the Summer sun burn—our hardy little friend bravely bears either cold or heat ; for the biting frost cannot wholly make it loose its hold, nor the heat of the dog-days scorch it up. Here it may be seen, just greening the ground, beneath the taller grass from which it has sprung, and which is again ready to shed more seed. There is a grass which sheep are very partial to, and on which they thrive well, while it is believed it imparts a fine flavour to mutton ; this is the sheep's Fescue-grass, often found on high, dry pasture land, or land that is considered rather poor, though it is not so poor as it appears, for there is a good thickness of under-grass, and sheep are very close biters. It looks poorest when in flower, as the flower-stalks are generally a pretty good width apart, though there is a good, strong, thick turf below,—so strong, indeed, that it is said this grass will, in time, destroy all other grasses that grow near it. It is often used for lawns, on account of the thick turf it forms, being also short, and seldom growing more than six or seven inches high. The

GRASSES.

meadow Fescue which grows as tall again as the other, is more commonly used, when it has to be sown, for grazing lands.

There are several grasses which, to an inexperienced eye, would appear to resemble one another so closely, as to offer, on a first inspection, but little difference; yet let a dozen of each be placed together, and the difference would at once be seen more readily, as those which were longer or shorter—for the length of grass-flowers often varies—would still have some distinct feature peculiarly its own. Amongst these grasses are the meadow fox-tail, slender fox-tail, floating fox-tail, when grown out of water, common cat's-tail, and a few others. They all have round heads—some thicker and longer than others, and most of them are so common that there is hardly a field of grass anywhere but one or another may be found in it. But, on looking closely, we find the meadow fox-tail, which is of a pretty golden-green colour, covered with hairs that have almost a silvery look, while the slender fox-tail has a purplish tint, is much longer in the spike, and as for its resemblance to a tail of any kind, is more like a mouse's than a fox's in form; in some places, it is called mouse-tail grass. The floating fox-tail will be readily known by its bent stem, looking as if some one had pinched it at the joint, and prevented a portion of it from standing upright. It mostly grows in watery places, though often found inland, where the ground is high and dry, and then the form of the root changes, becoming bulbous instead of fibrous, as it is when growing in moist places. The same change takes place in the root of the common cat's-tail, or Timothy grass, when growing on a dry soil. Another prettily-formed grass, though not at all attractive in colour, being green, is the crested dog's-tail grass,

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

which grows well on dry ground, and is very common; instead of being round, the flower is flattish, like barley, having two sides, and is easily distinguished from the fox and cat's-tail grasses. The rough cock's-foot grass grows everywhere; you cannot walk a yard, hardly, by the wayside, where there is a morsel of green, without finding it; for its coarse, tufted head is as familiar to the eye as the gravel on the road, and it is about the commonest grass that grows. It, however, grows rapidly on almost any kind of soil, and though making but very indifferent grass, which cattle care not to eat while green, when dried it becomes excellent hay.

Far different in appearance is the beautiful meadow soft-grass, though, like the cock's-foot, seldom eaten by cattle, if other herbage is to be found. Its flowers are really pretty, spreading out in a rich panicle of velvet bloom, that must feel like a carpet of down to the insect feet that press it. For colour, few things are more graceful than the intermingling of pale pink and delicate sea-green in the flowers of this elegant meadow-grass. It has also a fibrous root, which grows on any soil, though, to be found in perfection, it must be sought for on light peaty earth. There is another grass, that sends out shoots four or five feet long, which is also disliked by cattle,—that is the creeping soft-grass, as difficult to get rid of as couch-grass, when once it takes possession of the ground. Pigs, however, are partial to these long roots, and show great perseverance in getting them out of the ground.

The silky bent-grass, which is not very common, is one of our most beautiful varieties; in appearance it is as glossy as the richest silk, while the lightest breath of air sets it in motion. The feather-grass is both splendid and graceful, and no plumage

GRASSES.

can be compared with it for beauty of form, unless it be the tail-feathers of the bird of paradise. There is a doubt as to whether it is one of our native grasses; some stating that it has been found wild, others contending that it is only found in the neighbourhood of gardens, where it is commonly cultivated as an ornament, and has often been gathered by fair ladies to adorn their head-dresses. Another elegant-looking grass is the quaking or tottering grass, which the country children call "Ringing-all-the-bells-in-London," and which shakes its silken spikelets if only an insect stirs its stem, when all its beautiful purple blossoms vibrate and tremble like a thousand fairy bells, as the slightest touch will set the whole array of grasses that grow together in motion, like pearls twinkling in a lady's hair. Perhaps some such idea struck the old botanist who first called it Pearl-grass—a name retained by our old writers—and it still is, in our eye, a very fairy among grasses, for the stalks are almost as slender as silk; and we well remember an ancient grandmother who ornamented her summer-parlour with it, and who always called it the knotted-silk grass—and she knew a good deal about grasses. It is generally found on very poor soil; though where we gathered it, in our boyish days, cowslips grew plentifully beside it. It is more ornamental than useful, having a bitter flavour, and is never, we believe, eaten by cattle.

Another species of grass, mostly found in low-lying and moist meadow lands, is the hair-grass, of which there are several varieties. One, the turfy hair-grass, though looking very pretty with its purple panicle in bloom, is exceedingly coarse, and the cattle never touch it if there is anything else

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

green within their reach. It is the dread of mowers, as it grows in tufts, and is ten times worse to cut than if the scythe went into a mole-hill, for there the ground would at least be soft ; but, as the mowers say, cutting into a tuft of this hair-grass is like cutting through a hassock stuffed with horse-hair and wire; and in some places these tufts are actually called hassocks. Another, called the waved hair-grass, grows on our hills, heaths, and moorlands, and is also found in the arctic regions, which proves its dry, hardy nature ; while a third species, called the whorl hair-grass, delights in water, and supplies the water-fowl with abundance of food ; cattle also are very fond of it, and the flowers have a sweet and pleasant taste. The panicles are of a rich blue-purple, something of the colour of the blue dragon-flies that are always hovering around its beautiful branchy and tree-shaped head.

But the monarch of the water-grasses is the common reed. No bird that flies ever bore so beautiful a plume as surmounts this splendid grass ; then, when thousands of them wave their plumed heads together in the wind, we hear that soft whispering which every poet has attempted to describe, and which is as much unlike the great roar of leaves in a wood, as the voice of the ever-rolling sea is unlike the silver tinkling of a brook. What a rich purple-brown those graceful feathers are steeped in, appearing more lustrous than the costliest silk, when the sun gives a golden tinge to the amber-like richness of the plumage. We have often thought what sweet, soft beds those grassy feathers would make, and got laughed at for giving such thoughts utterance. We think, too, that there are few more beautiful objects in the vegetable world than a great embankment covered with

GRASSES.

these tall reeds up to the water's edge, over which the foremost rank leans, and is mirrored below. And, oh! what a delightful covert these reedy "ronds" formed for the birds! Thither they used to come by hundreds, as the day drew towards a close, and, alighting on the reeds, bend them down by their weight to the water's edge, and often into the water. We used to think it very cruel, when we heard the sound of fire-arms in the twilight, echoing over the reedy marshes of Lincolnshire, and knew that they were slaughtering the poor birds that had come to roost among the reeds; and when we remonstrated with the farmers, they only pointed to the havoc the birds had made, and told us how heavy their loss would be when the reeds were cut and sold, and that they could only be used for thatching, instead of ceilings and partitions, for which latter purpose they would have fetched treble the price, had they not been broken by the birds. And what rare birds we have, at times, seen there, such as we never saw elsewhere; and insects, too, many of which, we believe, are only to be found in the reed "ronds," and are at present unknown to the generality of entomologists.

Another beautiful tall grass, which everybody must have seen and noticed, on account of its close resemblance to the cultivated oat, is called the oat-like grass, and often grows in our road-side hedges, and in most pastures, where it frequently attains the height of five or six feet, while its panicle of beautiful drooping flowers, which shine like polished silver, has been found to measure a foot and a half in length. It is the very chameleon of grasses, and shows, in the ever-shifting light, hues of golden-green, silver, and flashes of purple, while its broad, ribbon-like leaves stream out full two feet in length. It is,

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however, of a bitter taste, though cattle manage to eat it, but not with much apparent relish.

There are several other of these oat-like grasses, amongst which may be numbered the hairy, soft, smooth, and barren brome-grasses. Some of these grow in our woods and hedges, and, as they are tall, look very pretty, bending over or mingling with the wild flowers. The hairy brome-grass grows as high as the common reed, and often attains an altitude of six or seven feet; it is readily distinguished, not only by its height, but by the drooping of its panicle, and by having stalks. The soft brome-grass grows everywhere; it seldom exceeds two feet in height, and shoots up its flowers erect as spears; it is, indeed, so common, that the rarity is to find out a spot where it does not grow, where a morsel of grass is to be found. The smooth rye brome-grass bears a close resemblance to rye—so much so, that it is difficult to persuade persons who have not noticed it before that it is not rye; and many in the country still believe that it is wild rye, the ears of which have dwindled down and lost their corn-bearing virtue, through want of proper cultivation. The barren brome-grass has beautiful long awns, like barley, and droops most gracefully.

But the real wild oat-grass is so much like the cultivated oat, that even botanists conclude that it is the same plant degenerated; and when growing among oats, as it often does, it is not easily distinguished from the true oat. There are also wild wheat-grasses, one of which is the common couch, twitch, or dog-grass—the greatest plague that can infest a garden; for if only an inch of the long trailing root be left, it is sure to spring up again.





FORGET-ME-NOT.

THY name is Love's own poetry,
Heart-born, and of the eye begot,
Pleading for aye, "Remember me ;"
Replying, I'll "Forget-thee-not."
Thy blue doth emblem Constancy,
Love never more to be forgot,
And by the streams grows everywhere,
Unchanged through every changing year.

Here in sunshine, there in shade,
Where embower'd streamlets brawl,
It ever stands, and seems afraid
When the shadows on it fall ;
But in warm sunshine when array'd,
It never knoweth fear at all.
So Love, when there is none to cherish,
Neglected stands, and soon will perish.

So when the sun's hid from the flower,
And the warm golden beams forsake it,
It bows its head, and from that hour
Prays only unto Death to take it.



FORGET-ME-NOT:

THE OLD AND NEW LEGEND.

WATER-MINT; WATER-FLAGS; ARROW-HEAD; WATER-PLANTAIN;
LOOSE-STRIPE; AND SILVER-WEED.

THERE are many doubts about this beautiful flower, though we hold that the true Forget-me-not is only to be found by water-courses, or in moist places, and that the (*Myosotis Arvensis*) hairy-stemmed, small blue flower, found by the wayside at times, and very common in meadows, is not the true forget-me-not. The clear, bright blue of heaven, when not a silver cloud hangs its skirt upon the sky, is not more beautifully blue than the forget-me-not; nor is there so delicate an azure to be found among all the costly green-house plants, as that which Nature has painted on this common wayside flower. Sometimes a long bed of the wild forget-me-not may be found extending some distance along the margin of a meadow brook, when the blue bloom is shadowed in the silver mirror, and swayed to and fro by the breeze, producing such beautiful and ever-changing pictures as art can never imitate; for every change in the sky and every motion of the flowers constantly shift the sweeping lights and shadows, which can only be seen to perfection as you lie idly down upon the very edge of the

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stream. Its pretty yellow centre, and streak of white at the bottom of its tiny cup, contrast beautifully with the pale blue of the petals, and make it altogether as lovely a flower as the eye can dwell upon; and many a time have we seen little islands, in the centre of clear sheets of silvery water, wholly covered with it. Did we not know better, we should conclude that the ancient Greeks had but little poetry in their souls when they gave the name of *Myosotis*, or mouse-ear, to this beautiful flower, on account of the form of its leaves. "Properly," says a great authority, "the name of forget-me-not belongs only to the beautiful plant that grows beside the water, and by that name it is known throughout Europe, and treasured as the emblem of friendship." Most flower-books connect a silly love-story about a minstrel and a maiden with the name of the forget-me-not. It was the evening before their wedding-day, when they were walking beside the Rhine, and the maiden took a fancy to a cluster of these flowers, which the lover of course gathered, losing his footing at the same time, and tumbling head over heels into the river. Did the jade push him in, we wonder, as the speediest method of getting rid of him? He, however, managed to throw the flowers on the bank, and to call out, "Forget me not!" as he took his "long farewell" of her. Now, to us it appears far more likely that, after gathering the flowers, they had "a word or two of a sort," and that he being a little bit of a "spoon," and she a regular "Tartar," he bade the world "good-night" after the skirmish; and that the story, as it has since been told, was concocted by some "penny-a-liner," who placed it under the heading of "Romantic and Pathetic Incident," instead of under the plain, downright,

FORGET-ME-NOT, AND WATER-MINT.

and unmistakable heading of "Shocking Suicide," as it ought to have been.

Our old legend of the forget-me-not, as told by the Persian poet, Shiraz, is far more poetical than the German one. "It was," says he, "in the golden mornings of the early world, when an angel sat weeping outside the closed gates of Eden, for he had fallen from his high estate through loving a daughter of earth, nor was he permitted to enter again, until she he loved had planted the flowers of the forget-me-not in every corner of the earth. So the angel returned to earth, and assisted her, and they went hand-in-hand over the world, planting the forget-me-not, and, when their task was ended, entered Eden together,—for she, without tasting the bitterness of death, became immortal, like the angel whose love her beauty had won, when she sat by the river twining her hair with the forget-me-not."

Another great beautifier of moist and watery places is the wild mint, of which there are several varieties; and a pretty sight it is to see these fragrant, lilac-coloured flowers standing in the water, as if gazing upon their own shadows, while the gaudy dragon-flies are playing around them, and all the air is redolent of the refreshing aroma. Then, the borders where the beautiful water-flowers grow are greener than the wayside wastes, and generally there are tall, shady trees either near at hand or overshadowing them; to say nothing of the rippling of the water, which ever seems "singing a sleepy tune." What grand and noble-looking flowers do the water-flags bear, which hang out like purple and golden banners over a castle wall, the water below seeming the moat in which they are reflected.

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

Here we also find the handsome arrow-head, with its beautiful white flowers, and arrow-point shaped leaves, as picturesque as the foliage of ivy. The water-plantain also throws its branches over these sweet inland streams; and pretty it looks, with its tiny rose-tinted flowers and broad leaves, especially when a gust of wind comes, and sets the whole bed in motion, rocking the pink blossoms of the beautiful knot-grass on the border at the same time. Nor is the purple loose-strife, with its splendid spike of flowers, less beautiful, margining the stream like a costly border of rich workmanship, and such as Nature only weaves in her mysterious looms. And pleasant it is to shelter under a tree from the rain, and watch the drops falling and moving the pretty flowers that grow about the water:—

The leaves drop, drop, and dot the crystal stream,
So quick, each circle wears the first away,
Far out the tufted bullrush seems to dream;
The water-flags with one another play,
And to the ripple nod their heads alway,
Bowing to every breeze that blows between,
While gaudy dragon-flies their wings display.
The restless swallow's arrowy flight is seen
Dimpling the sunny wave, then lost amid the green.

Another pretty-looking plant that grows about our river banks is the silver-weed, the notched leaves of which have on their lower surface a rich silky down, of a silvery appearance, while the large golden-coloured flowers have a soft, velvety feel about them, and spread out every way in the most picturesque positions.

Fresh-water aquariums are causing a knowledge of fresh-water plants to become a necessity, as without them life cannot

be maintained in these pretty crystal prisons, as the plants take in the carbonic acid thrown out by the fishes, and throw out in return oxygen sufficient for the blood of the watery inhabitants, thus keeping the water in a proper state to support both animal and vegetable life. These new drawing-room ornaments and objects of amusement and instruction cannot be managed at all without some knowledge of aquatic plants; and no doubt many of our readers, while searching for the *Vallisneria*, or common river weeds, for their aquariums, will meet with many of the beautiful water-flowers we have described above, and place some of them in their glass water-cases. We do not see why the beautiful forget-me-not might not be anchored in a little embankment, kept together by stones, and made to throw its blue shadow over the water for the pretty fishes to shelter under; this and much more may perhaps yet be done, for fresh-water aquariums are at present in their infancy.

Pleasant in Summer are the places where water-loving plants grow,—the great sedge-bordered meres, the pools overshadowed with trees, or the swift, bright meadow streams, that run flashing in the sunlight, and show silvery between their broad green embankments. The lapping of the water, the low sleepy rustling of the overhanging leaves, the whispering of the sedge, and the murmur of insects around, conjure up waking dreams and pleasing visions, which seem ever passing before the “half-shut eye.” Then, such spots are cool, no matter how hot the day may be; for there is always a refreshing moisture under the trees, even when far removed from water-courses, and shaded wood-paths are never wholly dry—wood streams very rarely. Nor is it the water-loving flowers that alone delight us; for

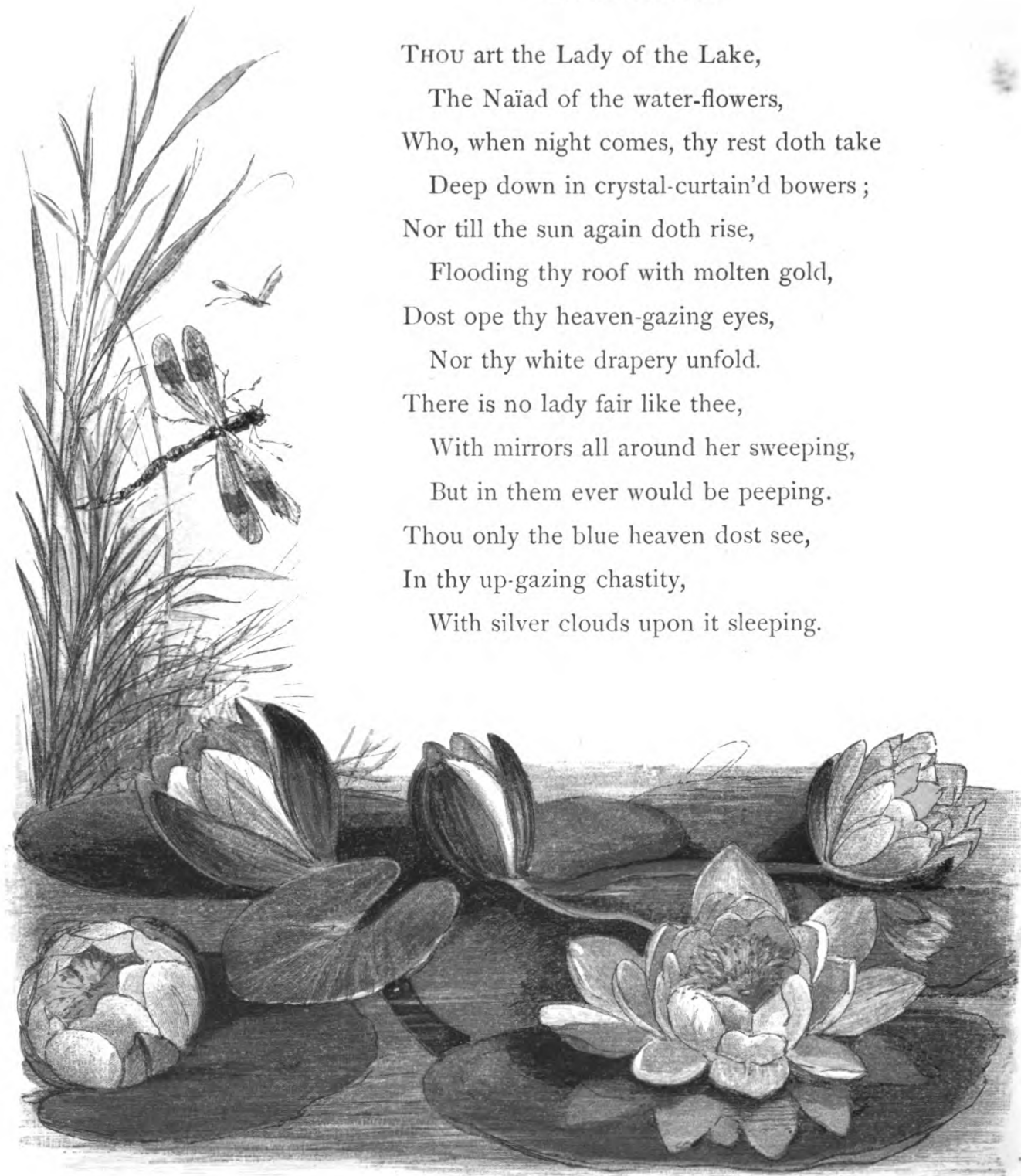
COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

water itself is always beautiful, constantly changing its colour under the moving clouds and shifting sky,—now blue as the forget-me-not, then white with the silvery shadow of the passing cloud, which is mirrored deep down, far below the tops of the inverted shadows of the trees. What a depth it seems, too, at times,—what a distance from those tree-tops deep down to the fleecy speck that lies at the bottom of the surrounding blue! Cattle in the water have also a picturesque appearance, especially if standing beneath overhanging trees, and when they also happen to be prettily marked—one white, another red, a third black, but catching the sunshine, and having its sable hide tinged with golden light. An angler is also a telling object, if he happens to be standing in the right place, where the river juts out, or where it curves in, or on a little tongue of land; but scarcely so beside a long, level embankment, unless he be standing under a tree. A passing boat is also a pleasing feature,—the more so, if containing a merry pleasure-party gaily dressed, for the drapery throws such rich reflections on the water; then, the motion of the boat sets all the little water-flowers rocking,—the forget-me-not bows to the mint, and the great water-flags sway to and fro almost threateningly, as they shake their broadswords. Pleasant is it, too, if they have music, to lie idly on the river bank and listen to it, as the sound comes in and drowns at intervals the lapping and swelling of the little waves, until at last it dies away in the distance, when the water and the sedge, the branches, the birds, and the insects, again make themselves heard; for there is poetry about every object surrounding water, though all cannot see it with the same eyes.



WATER-LILY.

THOU art the Lady of the Lake,
The Naiad of the water-flowers,
Who, when night comes, thy rest doth take
Deep down in crystal-curtain'd bowers ;
Nor till the sun again doth rise,
Flooding thy roof with molten gold,
Dost ope thy heaven-gazing eyes,
Nor thy white drapery unfold.
There is no lady fair like thee,
With mirrors all around her sweeping,
But in them ever would be peeping.
Thou only the blue heaven dost see,
In thy up-gazing chastity,
With silver clouds upon it sleeping.





WATER-LILIES;

BLADDERWORT; WATER-VIOLET; BOG-PIMPERNEL; FLOWERING RUSH; BUR-WEED; DUCK-WEED; WATER-SIDE TREES.

THE white water-lily is another beautiful aquatic flower, and belongs to the same species which the ancient Egyptians and Indians held sacred; and it must be confessed that there is something rather mystic, to appearance, in the water-lily disappearing beneath the water at night, and not leaving a trace of its "whereabouts" on the surface—not so much as a leaf, a fibre, or a folded flower, to point out the spot where it covered the water with its beauty a few hours before,—something suggestive of a resurrection, a returning to light and life, which, to those who lived in the dawn of that dim opening of the gates of knowledge, must have seemed to be under the obedience of some spiritual power. This "Lady of the Lake" has a beautiful appearance in clear water, where every rounded leaf and large white flower floats double, "lily and shadow;" nor is it less pleasing when, like a fairy fleet unmoored, the whole plant, set in motion by the breeze, rises and falls upon the ruffled water, like ships of emerald and silver, in which Titania and her train have embarked. Moore compares the water-lily to virgins that bathe in the water all night long, so that they may rise up more fresh and beautiful on the morrow.

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

It is nothing unusual to meet a countryman in his smock-frock, with a basketful of freshly gathered and half opened water-lilies for sale, in the streets of London; and before these aquatic beauties were made familiar to the public, through seeing them growing and blowing in the water of the Crystal Palace, it was not uncommon for some of the purchasers to stick their newly-bought water-lily in the ground, instead of in a vessel filled with water. It is a mistake to suppose that this White Nymph, as the botanists call it, perishes sooner than the generality of flowers when once gathered; if only half opened, it may be kept alive for several days by changing the water, especially if a very small pinch of salt is put in the vessel when the water is changed. Water-lilies in bloom on some pool that is made shady by dark, overhanging trees, have always seemed to us to look like funeral flowers growing over those who have been drowned; and the thought was first awakened by seeing them blowing in a gloomy fish-pond, that was surrounded with dark, melancholy looking trees, and in which a young girl was said to have drowned herself, and "all for love."

The yellow water-lily is neither so abundant nor so beautiful as the white one, though it is a handsome flower: it is called by country people Brandy-bottle, and really has a scent like brandy—at least, like that of native manufacture.

The bladderwort is a very curious plant, being covered with numbers of little bladders—if we may so call them—which are filled with water during the time the plant is immersed; but no sooner does the time of flowering arrive, than these little vesicles eject the water, become filled with air, and raise the plant to the surface, where it flowers in the light and sunshine. In Autumn,

WATER-VIOLET AND BOG-PIMPERNEL.

the air is ejected, the bladders again fill with water, and the plant once more sinks to the bottom, there to ripen its seed, and await the coming of another Summer, when it will once more fill its hundreds of tiny water-barrels with air, and bear the plant upward, to let it peep again at the gaudy coloured dragon-flies, as they chase their own shadows above the water. These bladders have a little valve, which water insects sometimes contrive to open, then get inside, and are unable to get out again until air is admitted.

The water-violet raises its large dark-blue petals above the water, while the leaves are beneath the surface; and a strange appearance they have, showing their whorls around the leafless-looking stem, while not a trace of the foliage meets the eye. It is sometimes found in rather deep water, when a long hook is required to secure the perfect plant, the root of which is not difficult to release from its anchorage. It bears resemblance neither in scent nor form to our sweet-violet, and ought, we think, only to be known by its old name of feather-foil—so called, no doubt, on account of the divided and thready look of its leaves.

Another beautiful little flower, found beside water-courses, or in low-lying moist places, is the bog-pimpernel, almost as pretty, though not so large, as the scarlet pimpernel, that throws such a flash of crimson among our wayside flowers in the sunny days of Summer. How pretty the little beauty looks, with its pink petals resting on the nursing moss, a very flower in arms—the baby of blossoms—pillowing its slender stems and small, exquisitely-shaped leaves on the soft carpet its mother earth had prepared for its coming. This is a splendid

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

flower to place in the herbarium, where, if properly dried, it may be made to look almost as beautiful as it was while growing.

Another noble-looking denizen of the water is the flowering rush, which rises, with its rich red tiara of bloom, above the silvery mirror that reflects its shadow, on a graceful tapering stem, that dances again when the wind is piping, like "music in motion;" for it is the lady of rushes, and has a grace in its appearance which we find in no other of the sedges, and, for its gracefulness and beauty was crowned by Nature with its umbel of rose-coloured flowers. Lower down we see the sword-leaved bur-weed, spreading beneath the tall cat's-tail and flowering rush, like the lowly fern and spreading bramble under the tall forest trees. Then comes the great green carpet—the grass of the waters—common duck-weed, well known to all. What miles of water does this tiny plant cover with its small oval-shaped leaf! With only one little root, it soon spreads over a whole pool, by sending out buds in all directions, which become flower and seed while still adhering to the original stem, and so send out leaf after leaf, creeping over and multiplying at last by myriads, until the whole surface is covered as with a carpet. The rapidity with which the pool is at last mantled over is somewhat startling. Break through it with stick or pole, shove even a boat across, and in a few minutes the opening will be closed over with green, and no more trace left than the footmarks of the hare on yesterday's snow, after the white fleeces have been falling all night long. Still, if carefully looked for in the flowering season, the anthers of the duck-weed may be seen peeping out here

DUCK-WEED, AND WATER-SIDE TREES.

and there above the water, though so small that the eye must be within a foot or so of the surface to discover them. Hooker, one of our greatest authorities, in speaking of this plant, says it has "fronds—which are the parts lying on the water—without distinct stems or leaves; these float on the water, and increase, not only by seeds, but far more abundantly by gemmæ, or buds, concealed in lateral clefts of the parent frond, which grow out on two opposite sides into new plants, and these again produce offspring in the same way, while still attached to their parent, which present a most curious appearance." The greater duckweed, though pretty common, is said to flower but rarely in England. Besides these, there are the ivy-leaved and gibbous duck-weeds, the last of which is rather rare: it is white, transparent, and beautifully celled.

The willows and alders that overhang our water-courses and pools add greatly to the beauty of their appearance, especially when dotted about in picturesque positions, which may be done by art. Too many alders together have a very dark appearance, while willows by themselves almost let in too much light, though there is something gloomy and grand about a deep lonely pool whose surface is darkened with alders. Then, the white willow seems always to give a kind of silvery shivering whenever its leaves are uplifted by the wind, and show the white under part; there is something so feathery about the foliage, too, almost reminding one of those graceful trees that grow in a tropical climate. The round-leaved sallow is another graceful ornament of water-side scenery, the foliage being of a dark-green on the surface, while the under part is covered with cottony down. This is the tree that is covered, in early Spring,

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

with beautiful golden-coloured blossoms, which the village children gather at Easter, and call "palm;" nor have they any other name for the catkins of the willow, excepting that of palm for the golden-coloured willow, and "pussy-cats" for the white silk-like buds, which appear long before the leaves. The willows are the very earliest trees that show signs of Spring, often showing their young catkins at the end of January; and around these "golden palms" the first bees that venture abroad are sure to congregate, for the very ground beneath is sown thick with rich yellow pollen, which these

"Singing masons, that build golden roofs,"

love to revel among. Then we have the poplar—Tennyson's immortal poplar—that

"Shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark;
For leagues no other tree did dark
The level waste."

But, somehow, we never much liked the tall, tapering poplars; they are among trees what overgrown, thin, pale, lanky school-boys are to fine, sturdy, cherry-cheeked lads, when compared with the glorious oaks and other broad-branching trees. Not but what there are localities in which they cut the sky, and give a picturesque appearance to the adjacent scenery; but these are rare exceptions.





FOXGLOVE.

WILD chieftain of the Wayside Flowers,
O'erlooking all that grow around,
But loving most the wooded bowers,
Where it is in perfection found,
And seems to fire the underwood
With its long jet of scarlet flame,
Which lights up the green neighbourhood,
And puts the lesser flowers to shame.

I love to stand and watch the bees
Pass in and out thy spotted bells,—
To hear their murmur in the trees,
As they fly laden to their cells ;
While a green twilight reigns around,
So deep, at times, one scarce can see
The little flowers that strew the ground ;
For thy commanding majesty
Half blinds us with its brilliancy.

Chieftain thou art of all the clan,
That grows without the aid of man ;
Contented in the wilderness,
Unseen, to wear thy gaudy dress ;
Nor needing any praise of ours,
Great monarch of the Wayside Flowers.



FOXGLOVE; MONKSHOOD; WOOD-BETONY; AGRIMONY;
SCARLET PIMPERNEL.

WHY do some botanists persist in calling the colour of this beautiful flower purple, when it is a rich crimson or deep red, and has not a dash of purple about it? We, who have walked over hundreds of miles of English ground in our day, never yet saw a purple foxglove, though we have seen acres of ground covered with them, where they seemed to flash up between the green underwood like pillars of fire. We were about to say, that the finest foxgloves we ever gathered were in the neighbourhood of Sherwood Forest, until we remembered wandering through the remnants of wood scattered about Penge, facing the Anerley Station, on the Croydon line—woods which, on looking down from the Crystal Palace, you might fancy you could throw a stone into—and there we gathered the largest and tallest foxgloves we ever saw growing in England. A good walker, starting from Cornhill, would reach these woods in an hour and a half—by rail it is done in a quarter of an hour. No Londoner that ever rode to Croydon but must have seen these little woods; but few visitors to the Crystal Palace but what must have looked over the tops of their trees; and not one in ten thousand of them was aware that the noblest-looking wild flower England can boast of was growing within five or ten minutes'

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

walk of the Anerley Station. We are not going to say that it looks so grand in these little copse-like woods as when seen in some of our old English forests, overhung with trees which have been growing for long centuries: still, meet with it wherever we may, it is a kingly flower, standing on its own firm base, neither craving support from shrub nor tree, but hanging out its fiery bloom above the lesser flowers that creep around its feet, like crimson lamps lighting up the green twilight of the denser underwood. Gather it, examine it well, look into its every bell, and see how beautifully it is spotted and freckled; then examine the elegant form of the bell-bloom itself, and you will begin to think that the early sculptors were well acquainted with the foxglove. We have found it growing nearly six feet high, with leaves at the base proportionate to its height, making it look like the monarch of flowers; indeed, no flaunting hollyhock was ever covered with a greater length of bloom, for more than half the length of this giant of the waste was buried in blossom. Though, at a first glance, there seems but little affinity in the family, yet the foxglove belongs to the botanical order of Fig-worts, the corolla of which is generally in one piece, with a four or five-lobed calyx, and claims kindred with the speedwell, the beautiful little eye-bright, the toad-flax, and several others: like most of the class, it has two long and two short stamens, which are curiously formed, and touch the pistil. The foxglove is, at the same time, a dangerous and a most valuable plant,—dangerous, if eaten or partaken of in any way by the unskilful; but very useful in practical hands, and ranking amongst the highest order of medicinal plants. Pull it up, and you will be startled at the peculiar smell of its root; there is nothing else

FOXGLOVE AND MONKSHOOD.

like it. Very weakly persons would faint away if the dangerous odour was long inhaled, and feel as if they had

“Emptied some dull opiate to the dregs.”

Old Culpeper's description of the foxglove, though written more than two hundred years ago, is so excellent that we gladly quote it; for no modern writer has in fewer words given so perfect a word-painting of the flower: the “hoary green colour,” and “soft woolly” feel of the leaves, are the right words in the right places. He says:—“The foxglove hath many long and broad leaves lying upon the ground, dented about the edges, a little soft or woolly, and of a hoary green colour, among which rise up, sometimes, sundry stalks, but one very often bearing such leaves thereon from the bottom to the middle, from whence to the top it is stored with large and long hollow, reddish purple flowers, a little more long and eminent at the lower edge, with some white spots within them, one above another, with small green leaves at every one (flower), but all of them turning their heads one way, and hanging downwards.” So far, all this is admirable flower-painting. He then speaks of “the thread in the middle,” and “round heads pointed sharp;” and we get rather confused among his stamens and “small brown seed.”

Now, the poisonous monkshood is called a purple-coloured flower as well as the foxglove, while there is no more resemblance in the colours of the two flowers than there is between the blue corn-bottle and the mallow. The monkshood, or wolfsbane—said to be so called because the wolf-hunters dipped their arrow-points in the juice of the plant, to make the death

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

of the wounded wolf certain—is found wild in several parts of England, and when once seen can never be forgotten; for it is a dark purple gloomy-looking flower, and the bees are said to keep far from it, for there is no converting its deadly poison into honey. Even the very smell is injurious; and as to champ-ing a leaf and swallowing the juice, it would be regarded by some as little better than wilful suicide. Take off the purple head, and there are some very curiously formed threads under-neath, which the country people call Venus's sparrows.

The wood-betony is sure to be found in the neighbourhood of the foxglove; it is a great favourite with the old country-women, who believe that the sun never shown on two finer plants than wood-betony and agrimony. Its flowers bear a close resemblance to the red-nettle, and, like that plant, it belongs to the labiated or lipped order of flowers: it is readily known by the length of stem between the leaves, and is a perfect staircase of flowers, every step up being a whorl of bloom; the blossoms are also much larger than those of the red-nettle, which it resembles in colour. A bed of it looks very beautiful in the underwood, especially when the sun is shining upon it, and throws a warm golden glow about the rosy bloom.

Agrimony, with its long spiked head, and small, dark, golden-coloured flowers, is a beautiful and very wholesome plant, and is commonly used as a substitute for tea by poor people in the country, many of whom—it may be through long habit—would rather drink it than the costliest tea money ever purchased. It was the favourite "tea" of our boyhood, drank with milk and sugar; and we took it very hard, when aunts and cousins came, and we were compelled to sit around the "holiday china,"

AGRIMONY.

and not allowed our little black earthenware tea-pot, in which we made our own agrimony-tea. Nor is there a more beautiful leaf to be found throughout all the length and breadth of the velvet valleys of green England than that of the common agrimony; the edges are deeply and elegantly cut, and divided evenly down to the stalk, and so exquisitely veined that they are almost prettier than the little five-petalled golden flower that surmounts them. It is generally met with in dry pastures, or near sunny embankments; but we have always found it most abundant in fields that stretch beyond the summits of hills, where we have frequently gathered it from two to three feet high, half that length being one continuous spike of flowers. The pleasant aroma of this beautiful plant is readily discovered by bruising the leaves between the fingers; nor does it require much to make a whole house redolent of the perfume of agrimony. It grows in the fields about Sydenham and Beckenham, in Kent.

These hill and vale and wood covering flowers are all in bloom while Summer reigns in the pride of her beauty, and throw a purple blush on the little hillocks of wild thyme, amid which the golden-banded bees make an incessant murmur. Even the little patches of green by the dusty wayside are ablaze with the blood-red crimson of the pimpernel,—a red which the richest scarlet of the geraniums cannot outrival. Though the bloom is but little larger than that of the chickweed, and the plant only attains the height of a few inches, yet its brilliant red flowers attract the eye in a moment, for we have nothing of so bright and pure a scarlet to compare with it amongst the whole of our common wayside flowers, excepting the common

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

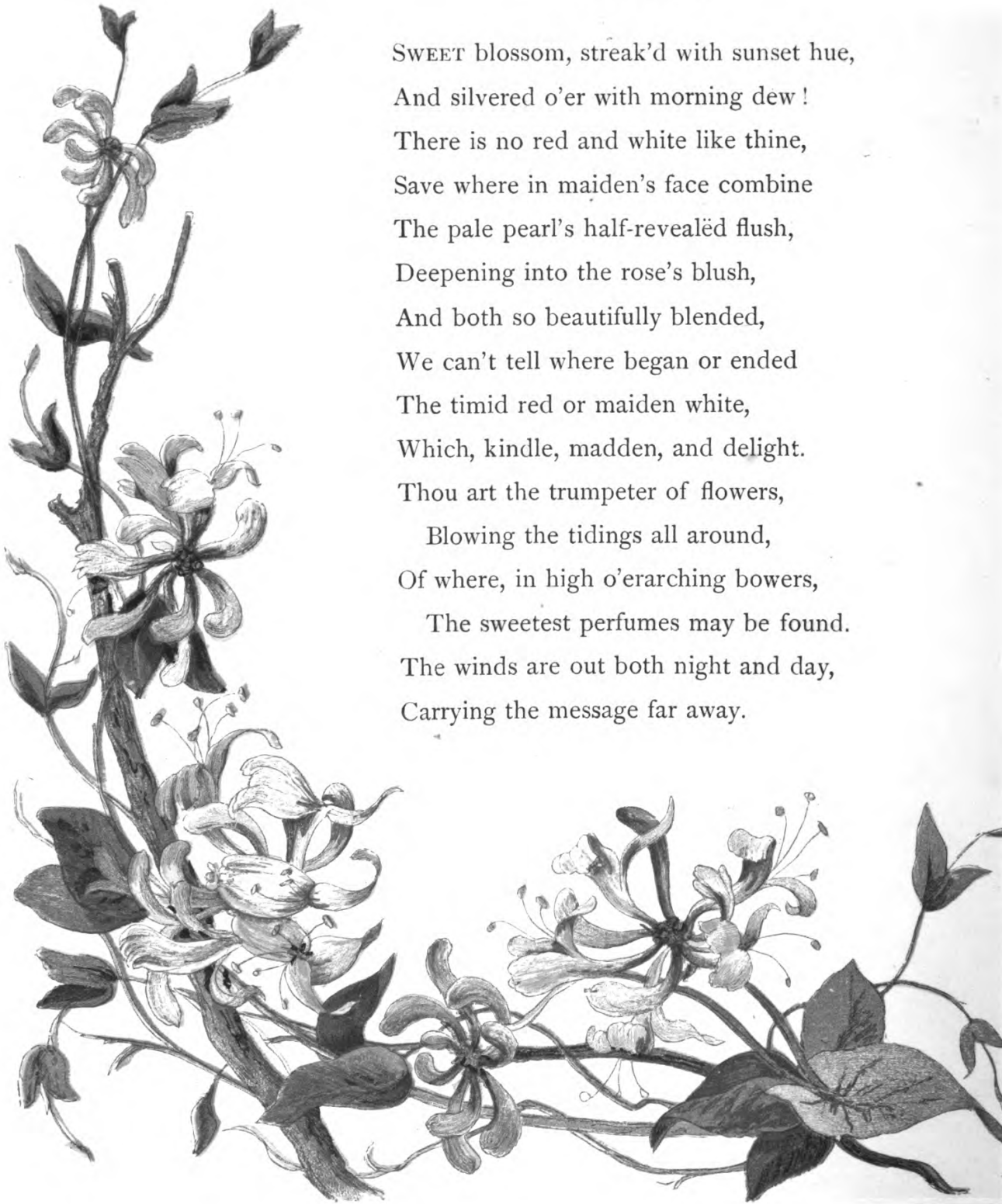
red poppy. Its leaves are also very pretty, oval in shape, and spotted underneath. In the country it is called the poor man's weather-glass, on account of closing its corolla before rain; and so far as denoting the approach of rain goes, it is a tolerable barometer, though we have but little faith in it as the shepherds' clock—another of its country names—for it invariably closes at noon, however bright the sun may shine, and never opens before seven in the morning on the finest and longest day in June, the month in which it flowers; and those who search for it before that hour, will only find the little red bud folded up in its green cup, or just peeping out, like a cherry-cheeked child from under the folds of a green shawl. Linnæus, it is said, could always tell the hour of the day by looking at the flowers, and that he so arranged them around a dial, that at every hour a flower either opened or shut, from sunrise to sunset. Pleasant must his rambles have been, along waysides hung with gold and silver jewelled time-pieces, which he had neither the trouble to carry, get repaired, or wind up; and "sweet discourse" he must have made about the hours, as they kept flowery time. His supper hour would be announced by their "shutting-up-rose time;" his message for dinner, "the pimpernel's closed." What poetry might be given to the divisions of the hours, were they thus marked, and what a pretty help would such time-keeping be to a fairy tale! Then might we tell—

How they lived in crystal springs,
And swung upon the honey-bells;
In meadows danced the dark-green mazes,
Strewed blossoms round the haunted wells,
And slept within the folded daisies.



WOODBINE.

SWEET blossom, streak'd with sunset hue,
And silvered o'er with morning dew !
There is no red and white like thine,
Save where in maiden's face combine
The pale pearl's half-reveal'd flush,
Deepening into the rose's blush,
And both so beautifully blended,
We can't tell where began or ended
The timid red or maiden white,
Which, kindle, madden, and delight.
Thou art the trumpeter of flowers,
Blowing the tidings all around,
Of where, in high o'erarching bowers,
The sweetest perfumes may be found.
The winds are out both night and day,
Carrying the message far away.





HONEYSUCKLE ;

BRIONY ; WOODY-NIGHTSHADE ; GUELDER-ROSES ; SPINDLE-TREE ;
BIRD-CHERRY ; DOG-WOOD ; PRIVET ; AND BUTCHER'S-BROOM.

THE woodbine, or common honeysuckle, is one of the most beautiful of our twining plants, and throws out a perfume so sweet and refreshing, that there is scarcely a flower to be found surpassing it in fragrance. It is a great favourite with our peasantry, and in the neighbourhoods where it abounds, it is a common practice with them to run up a light frame of lattice-work around their cottage doors, over which they train the woodbine ; and a pretty sight it is to see the trumpet-shaped flowers, streaked with red and white or red and yellow, drooping all about the picturesque porches, and to hear the bees murmuring among the honey-filled flowers all day long. But prettier still, in our eye, does it look in its native woods, twining around some small tree, just peeping out from the undermost branches which overshadow it, like a fair lady leaning from her bower window, and seeming, when the wind blows, to move her fair head to and fro, as if noting what passes in the flowery world without. Even the aged thorn seems proud to support its tiara of sun-stained blossoms, and hold it aloof from the entangling underwood. The woodbine, like the convolvulus, twines from left to right, and the briony in a contrary direction ; nor can

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

human skill alter the course of these twining plants, for if wound round in a different direction to that which they naturally take, they will uncoil themselves and hang down; yet, as if of their own accord, they will, when left to what the poet Spenser calls their "own inclination," reverse their spiral nature and twine round one another, as will the scarlet-runner. The blossoms of the black briony are very pretty, and show their grey-white spikes amid the large heart-shaped leaves, while the berries make quite a gay show in Autumn.

There is another climbing plant, very beautiful to look upon when in flower—the woody nightshade, which turns back its purple petals, while its golden anthers unite and project like the point of an ancient helmet. The berries, which are of the richest scarlet, though not so poisonous as those of the deadly nightshade, are very pernicious, and are often gathered and eaten by country children, who, when they partake of them to excess, rarely recover from the effects, though eating a few seldom proves fatal. The pleasant taste they have renders them the more dangerous to young folks, to say nothing of the tempting look of the fruit, which is not much unlike the red currant of our gardens. All these poisonous plants ought to be pointed out to children, so that when rambling about the lanes and woods they may avoid gathering them. The berries of the woodbine, when ripe, have a rich gushing scarlet appearance, and have been frequently eaten by children, to the great injury of their health.

The guelder-rose is another bearer of beautiful berries which must be avoided. It is found wild in the woods and hedges in moist lands; and the handsome white flowers, which grow in clusters, are always largest on the outside, and differ in form

GUELDER-ROSES, SPINDLE-TREE, AND BIRD-CHERRY.

from the inner flowers. The leaves, in Autumn, are almost as beautiful as the berries, seeming to fire the hedges in which they grow with their rich crimson hue. The wayfaring-tree, or mealy guelder-rose, as it is oftener called, on account of the meal-like down found on the under surface of the leaves, is another beautiful berry-bearer, though these are black when fully ripe; still they pass through a red transition, like many other berries of the same kind, and it is then they wear their most beautiful appearance.

The spindle-tree, though showing nothing attractive in its looks in the early part of Summer, makes a beautiful appearance in Autumn, and is a great ornament to our English hedgerows. The small, dull, greenish-white flowers, which open in May, become beautiful seed-vessels of a rosy colour in September, richer in hue than many of our choice Summer blossoms, and leading those to imagine, who know no better, that the tree is covered with bloom, especially when the capsules separate, like the petals of a rose-coloured flower, and reveal the golden-coloured seeds beneath. Then, there is something so bright and wax-like in these beautiful seed-vessels, that when they are shaken by the wind, one might fancy there were thousands of little fairies hidden among the leaves, sportively playing with their pretty coral flowers.

In companionship with these beautiful shrubs we find the bird-cherry, though it attracted our eyes in Spring, with its rich array of snow-white blossoms, which made it glow like a light in the hedges; but its rich-looking bunches of black ripe fruit add to the luscious appearance of Autumn, changing also from green to red, like many of the surrounding leaves, before they

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arrive at their dark, grape-like mellowness. The fruit is pleasanter to the eye than the taste, although there is nothing very injurious about it, if eaten moderately.

Another very beautiful berry-bearing shrub is the dog-wood, or wild cornell; it also bears a greenish-white flower, the smell of which is supposed to be pleasant to dogs, though to all beside very disagreeable. The berries bear a dark, rich purple hue, and the branches are of a rich red colour, which, together with the changes the foliage undergoes—green, purple, and the dying crimson of decay—makes it one among the many beautiful shrubs whose kindling-up fires the rich altar of Autumn:—

Leaves of all hues—green, gold, and red,
Ruins of Summer's bowers,
Looking almost as beautiful
As did her choicest flowers.

For the beech leaves now wear the burning gold of a Summer sunset, while into the pale yellow of the chesnut dips the deeper green of the elm, mingled with the dark foliage of the oak, which is here and there dashed with a metallic-looking brown, as if some of the leaves had been struck from thin sheets of bronze. The hews of the wild rose hang like rubies amid the darker gems of the blackberry, as if it were a great gala day, and Nature had put on all her richest jewels to honour the wealth and fruitfulness of mellow Autumn.

Old legends tell us, that it was at this season of the year when the woodbine was first finished; that it lay, white, withered and neglected, among the faded flowers of Summer, until a flower-spirit drew it out of the ruined heap with a sigh, breathed into it an odour she had brought with her from the garden of Eden,

PRIVET.

then streaked it with crimson and gold, and twined it about the form of one of her fair sisters, leaving the beautiful flowers to droop around her brow and mingle with her long ringlets, which were blown backward. And from that time it was exalted above all the beautiful blossoms of Summer, and received homage from every flower that cast its fragrance at the woodbine's feet; and ever since, wherever the woodbine has grown—

“ It has made the forest gloom
Bright with the beauty of its bloom,
And the bare and leafless mound
Has become enchanted ground.”

The privet, though the faint smell of its bloom is disagreeable to some people, affords a pleasant sight when in blossom, with its white lilac-looking flowers and beautiful myrtle-shaped leaves; nor is there any other shrub that makes a prettier hedge with so little trouble, while it grows anywhere, standing the smoke of densely populated cities, as if “to the manner born.” Then, its great bunches of black purple berries have quite a grand look in Autumn and Winter, as if the branches had ornamented themselves with great black bugles, to show that they have “something to wear,” when nearly every other shrub around is bare. They also furnish the birds with a rich banquet, no matter how severe the Winter may be; for when all the hawks and haws are frozen up, withered, and tasteless, the luscious-looking privet berries still retain their fulness, very often even till Spring is advanced, for it is nothing unusual to see the last year's berries rising above the bourgeoning leaves. From these berries oil fit to burn in lamps may also be obtained; while a handful or two thrown upon the garden ground anyhow, and just

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

covered over, will produce plants strong enough to be pricked out for the formation of hedges in the following Spring.

Last, but not least in beauty, is the butcher's-broom, so called because, in former times, its thorny branches were used by butchers for sweeping their chopping-blocks. Though hardly a shrub, in the true meaning of the word, it is a curious and very beautiful plant, as both the flowers and berries grow out of the very centre of the leaves, as if Nature, exhausted with invention, had stuck them there to leave us in wonder, and show us that in her green kingdom variety has no end. The flowers, which are of a yellowish green, are very small; while the handsome crimson berries, that make such a show in Winter, are nearly as large and as beautiful as cherries; and as the plant is an evergreen, few, unless they have seen it before, would believe that the berries have grown there, but think "they are only stuck on." It makes as handsome a house decoration as the holly at Christmas, and retains its green freshness longer.



POPPIES;

CORN BLUE-BOTTLE; SNAPDRAGON; ST. JOHN'S WORTS.
A COMPOUND FLOWER.

THE scarlet poppies, which make such a garish show in our Summer fields and waste places, where they contrast beautifully with the wild chamomile, beside which they so often grow, are called, in our Midland counties, "head-aches," and rightly too, as any one who tries the experiment will soon be convinced, by sitting in a room containing a handful of newly-gathered poppies. The poppy is also called the red-cap and corn-rose in the country, and the village maidens believe that they can test the affection of their swains by its satiny petals, which they place upon the palms of their hands and strike smartly, when, if the petal makes a loud report, their lovers are believed to be true; but if the petals are struck and make no noise, they then conclude that their lovers are false. Gay alludes to the practice in the following lines:—

" By a prophetic poppy-leaf I found
Your changed affection, for it gave no sound,
Though in my hand struck hollow as it lay,
But quickly withered, like your love, away."

The poppy is also linked to heathen mythology, and is there said to have been first raised to console the mother of Proserpine, when her daughter was carried off by Pluto, while gathering

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

flowers in the fields of Enna, and that ever since the goddess of corn caused it to wave amid her golden harvests.

White poppies are grown in our own country, principally for their seeds, and beautiful does a field of them look, bordered with green hedges, while swaying to and fro in the wind. Opium is obtained by cutting incisions in the ripe poppy-head or seed-vessel, lengthways and crossways, when a milky kind of juice exudes, which dries up like a hard gum : this is opium, and must be scraped off on the morning following the evening on which the cuts are made. Some consider that the opium we thus obtain is quite equal to what is brought from abroad. Country boys will go into the druggists' shops for a pennyworth of dry poppy-heads, and eat the seeds by the handful ; and very sweet eating they are, neither are they dangerous, for the opium is not in the seeds, but in the capsules.

Few farmers admire the scarlet poppies,—“nasty troublesome things,” they call them, when looking at the corn, “and costs a mint o' money to get rid of them and their likes.” But the poppy and the pimpernel are the only pure scarlets that we can number amongst our common wayside flowers, and we cannot part with them, for they give to a wild posy the same finish that a few blooms of scarlet geranium give to the garden nosegay.

Near the gaudy poppy will generally be seen the corn blue-bottle, a tall handsome-looking flower, which working gardeners call the cyanus, and which is found of every colour excepting black and yellow. We have at this moment waving before our window ten different varieties of colour, or varied markings of the corn-bottle,—dark-blue, and a blue as light as that of the forget-me-not, with dark centre, dark-purple, red, reddish centre with

CORN- BLUE-BOTTLE AND SNAPDRAGON.

white petals, all white, and white with lilac florets, with dark reds and whites, blues and whites, alternating ; nor is there any getting rid of them, as they spring up by hundreds in every corner of the garden, and but for the larkspurs stoutly holding their own in the midst, would occupy every inch of ground. The involucre, or calyx, is also very pretty, beautifully bell-shaped, while the scales are of a rich green, and their fringed edges marked with brown: take a magnifying-glass, and you will confess that you have seen few objects more beautifully marked than the scaly calyx of this common corn-flower. There are different varieties of this knapweed, but all looking so much alike, that the admirer cares not to be bored with the slight markings which distinguish them. The name *Centaurea*, which belongs to the corn-bottle, is derived from the "legend olden" of the Centaur Chiron, who, half-horse as he was, healed the wound made by Hercules, by bruising the corn-bottle flower and using the juice. Culpeper says it is called Blue-blow, Blue-bottle, Corn-flower, and Hurt-sickle, "because it turns the edges of the sickles that reap the corn."

Here we also find the large purple corn-cockle, which farmers dread, on account of its black seeds getting among the corn when it is thrashed. It is a noble-looking flower ; the upper portion of the calyx projecting out beyond the petals makes it remarkable, while the long narrow leaves are covered with soft silky hairs, and the plant grows about two feet high, beautifully branched, and upright as a spear, every bloom looking up at the sky.

Among the corn we are pretty sure to find the snapdragon, with its beautifully coloured flowers and tight-closing lips, which, when the smaller insects have forced open, become prison gates,

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

through which they can never escape, unless they break through or eat a road out of the flowery prison walls. What forms the self-acting and sharp-closing spring of this wonderfully formed flower? Mechanical science has hitherto invented nothing to be compared with it but what is clumsily visible; in the flower we see neither spring nor joint, yet open it, loose your hold, and quicker than the eye can follow, the lips close, and that curiously-formed indentation on the upper or shorter lip comes down as if struck by a hammer, riveting up the entrance of the bloom. Even the bee is at times, with all his strength, rather perplexed, after he has rifled the flower of its sweets, and we have seen him sadly bothered when he has ventured in too far, though he has managed to open himself a passage and carry off his treasure of honey from his frog-mouthed prison. The larger snapdragon is generally found in a wild state near chalk-pits, and some say, seldom far away from a garden, signifying that it is rather questionable whether it is a wild flower or not. There can, however, be no doubt about the lesser snapdragon, which is so commonly found in the corn-fields.

The St. John's worts, for richness of hue, ought almost to be placed first amongst our golden-coloured wild flowers. We never look at them without thinking of the reverence in which they were held by our superstitious ancestors, who believed them to be holy antidotes against the spell of witch or wizard, thunder, lightning, and all "elemental warfare," which they attributed to the Evil One. The lace-flowered St. John's wort bears a large beautiful yellow bloom, having five sets of handsome stamens in the centre; it is rarely found wild now, though it appears to have been sprinkled over certain corners of our country in former times. There

ST. JOHN'S WORTS.

are eleven well-known species of these worts ; and a very pretty one is the square-stalked St John's wort, which is generally found in moist places : the golden-hued flowers grow in a cluster, and the oval leaves appear beautifully dotted when held between the eye and the light ; the calyx leaves are long and narrow, and the plants grow about a foot or eighteen inches high. The common perforated St. John's wort has also similar dots on the leaves, and only two edges to the stem, with black spots on both the calyx and corolla, and sometimes on the leaves. It makes quite a rich golden light where it grows, especially in the woods, when seen through the tangled greenery. Nor less beautiful, though not so conspicuous, are the flowers of the trailing St. John's wort, which must be sought for close to the ground, as its delicate stems trail all about the root. The pretty small flowers are sprinkled with black spots, the same as the common perforated one. But the crowning flower in the whole wreath of St. John's worts is the small upright ; it is a perfect gem of a flower, tipped with red before it opens, and when expanded forming a beautiful loose bunch of yellow bloom with red anthers, quite refreshing to look upon. It is found almost everywhere in dry situations, and may be readily known, from the peculiar way in which the leaves clasp the stem.

We have noticed that, generally, where the scarlet poppy is found growing in waste places, there also will be seen a crowd of white flowers with yellow discs, which are all passed over under the head of wild chamomiles. These flowers have white-rayed florets, like the daisy, with deeply-cut leaves, and some of the plants have a strong scent, not unlike the chamomile, which, however, is seldom found growing wild. Amongst these is the

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

green-wort, readily distinguished by its white disc and lance-shaped leaves, which are sharp cut at the edges. The ox-eye, or horse daisy, is another of these white-rayed flowers, and about the commonest of them all; for there is hardly a waste place, in the middle of Summer, but what is covered with it, and as it grows nearly two feet high, it is rather a conspicuous object, but when contrasted with the deep scarlet of the poppy, looking very pretty, through the striking difference of the two colours. These plants belong to a large family—the rayed composites—and their formation is very curious, as may be seen by cutting down the middle a common daisy. The receptacle, or disc, is upcurved, from which springs the golden crown or yellow florets of the daisy, commonly called the centre, while the strap-shaped florets form the rays or white frill of the daisy, or the petals of the flower. But when we come to tear the daisy to pieces, we find every little yellow floret in the disc a separate and perfect flower, a little hollow corolla, containing stamens and style. The same with the frill or petal; it also has a seed at its base, which contains a style, but no stamens, and receives its fertilization from the stamens in the golden florets of the disc. These little disc florets are very delicate; a drop of rain falling heavily would fill up all their golden cells, drive in pistils and stamens, and perhaps destroy the whole fructifying qualities of the plant, especially as it lifts up its golden eye, clear and bright, towards heaven. To prevent this, the white rays or petals close over the yellow florets in rainy weather, shutting them up so securely that not a drop of rain can penetrate one of those golden chambers; and no matter from what direction the wind blows, the daisy turns from it, while enfolding its yellow storehouse.

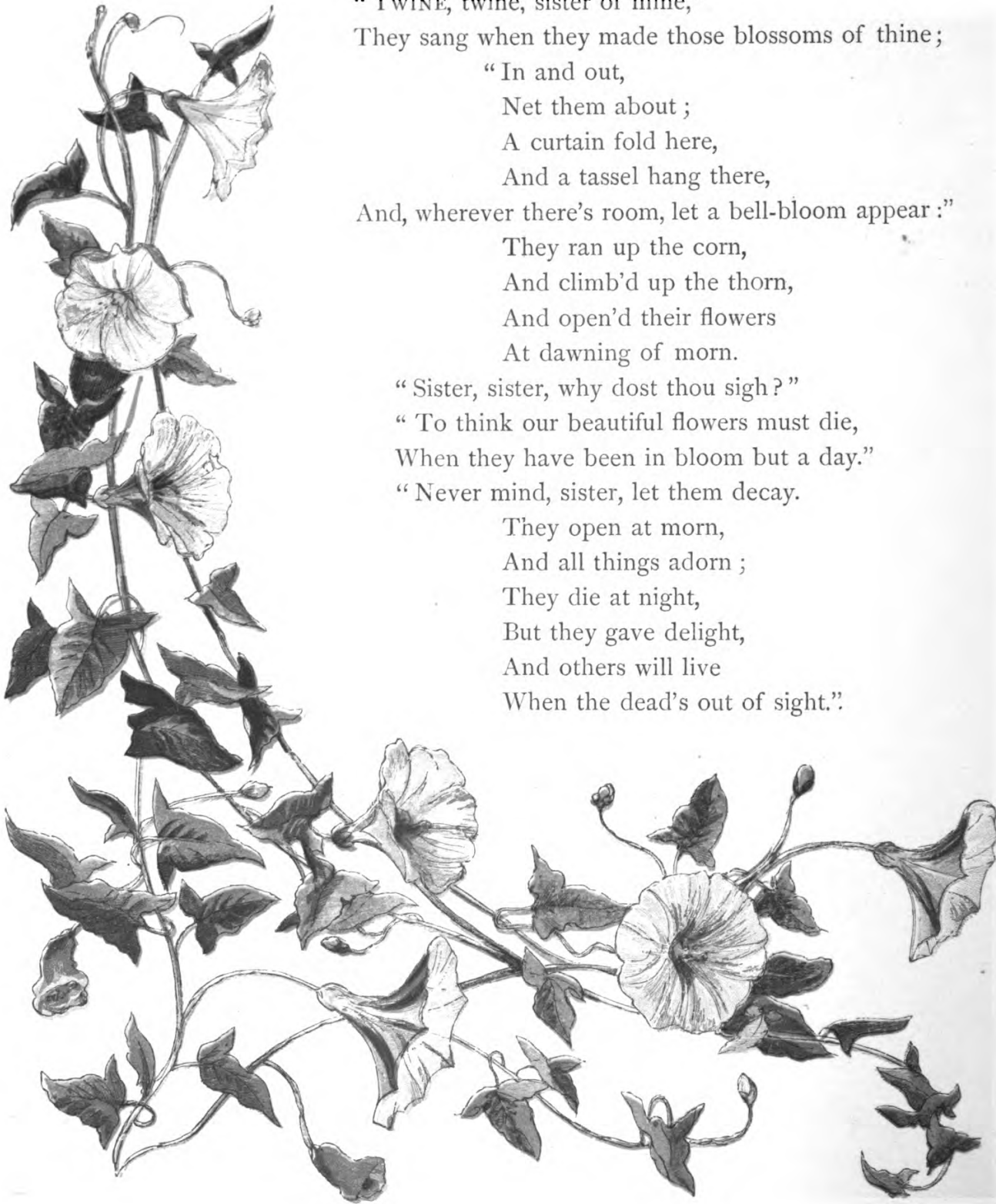


CONVOLVULUS.

“TWINE, twine, sister of mine,”
They sang when they made those blossoms of thine ;
“ In and out,
Net them about ;
A curtain fold here,
And a tassel hang there,
And, wherever there’s room, let a bell-bloom appear :”
They ran up the corn,
And climb’d up the thorn,
And open’d their flowers
At dawning of morn.

“ Sister, sister, why dost thou sigh ?”
“ To think our beautiful flowers must die,
When they have been in bloom but a day.”
“ Never mind, sister, let them decay.

They open at morn,
And all things adorn ;
They die at night,
But they gave delight,
And others will live
When the dead’s out of sight.”





CONVOLVULUS;

TRAVELLER'S-JOY; BED-STRAW; BEARBIND; HOP; FERNS.

THERE are three species of this well-known plant growing wild in our country, the most beautiful of which is the small bindweed, or lesser convolvulus, found almost everywhere, and well known by its pale-pink and rose-streaked flowers. It also throws out a pleasant perfume, and forms as pretty a picture, when twined among the tall feathered grasses, or around corn, as a lady would wish to sit down and copy, for the arrow-shaped leaves are very beautiful. Country children are very fond of wreathing their hats and bonnets with this little favourite; and we have seen young ladies, at a Summer picnic, twine the flowers amid their flowing hair, and thus add another charm to their dangerous beauty.

Another variety, called the sea-side convolvulus—though it grows inland, on sandy soil—is of a beautiful rose-colour, with kidney-shaped leaves; but it does not throw out such a profusion of flowers as the small bindweed. The blossoms are very sensitive to any change of weather, and they partially close at the approach of rain: those which bloom in the morning fade on the following day, and are succeeded by other flowers, which will be found screwed up, so to speak, and ready to show themselves as soon as those which have had “their little day” have

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

disappeared. Pity they should die as soon as they have attained perfection; and, whatever Keats may say, "a thing of beauty is *not* a joy for ever," or we should not mourn its decline.

The great bindweed is a splendid plant, and its large white blossoms may often be seen hanging about the tops of our highest hedges, around the tallest branches of which it has twined. These flowers are often found of an immense size, much larger than the major convolvulus of our gardens; and we once saw some in a meadow near Lincoln, nearly as large as the white lily. Country children call the great white blossoms "old women's night-caps," and we have seen a little girl clap one on the head of her doll, to show how nicely it fitted, though it was not put on without leaving a rent behind in her bell-shaped covering. The seed-vessel of the bindweed consists of two or three cells, each containing one or two seeds, which are of an angular form.

The wild clematis, or traveller's joy, is another climbing plant, and throws its greenish-white flowers over our hedges in thick clusters during the Summer, and covers them with white cottony down in Autumn, making them look, at times, as if they were buried under a winding-sheet of snow; sometimes the bloom will cover a whole bush, and a very pretty appearance it has, when the blossoms hang down from the ends of the sprays, and wave in the wind. The divided leaves are also very pretty, and as the leaf-stalks form tendrils like the vine, and the stems are of great length, it soon covers whatever it clings to with its fragrant flowers,—for the perfume is exceedingly pleasant.

Another long, straggling plant, which climbs up and clings to whatever it can lean upon, is the cross-leaved bed-straw, the

BED-STRAW AND BEARBIND.

only one of the species which has yellow flowers, as all the rest, with one exception, have white blossoms. It is a great ornament to our banks and hedges, and looks really pretty, with its whorls of leaves ringing the stalk at regular distances, with the little yellow flowers clustering upon them. This plant was much used in former times, when halls and chambers were strewn with herbs and flowers, in ladies' sleeping apartments: hence the origin of its name. Rushes were also used for the same purpose; and retainers were kept, called rush-bearers, whose office it was to strew the apartments every morning with fresh rushes. Then rush-matting came into use, as no doubt it lasted longer than the rushes would, scattered loosely about; and in some parts of England common green rush-mats are still in use, and are made on the spots where the rushes grow: in our younger days they were generally manufactured and sold by gipsies,—and a pleasant smell did a new rush mat give to the house.

The bearbind, which is covered with clusters of minute greenish flowers—for the intermingled white is hardly perceptible—covers whatever it clings to, and sends up an immense number of stems from its small, strong, wiry roots. Its leaves are so much like the lesser convolvulus, that it is difficult to tell the difference at a first glance, for they also are arrow-shaped, but terminate in a sharp point, while the tip of the bindweed leaf is slightly rounded. But there is one unmistakable sign about these plants—they twine contrary ways; the convolvulus twining in the same direction as the scarlet-runner,—the bindweed twining a contrary way; one going, as the gardeners term it, “round with the sun,” the other against it.

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

It is nothing uncommon to see whole rows of long hedges covered, about July, with the bearbind, and that so closely, that hardly a ray of light can be seen through the thick curtaining of leaves. We have now before our window a tall cluster of stocks going to seed, which is covered with the small bindweed and the bearbind, each twining a contrary way, and burying the flowers with leaves.

Another beautiful twining plant is the hop, the large leaves of which make a noble show in our wild hedges in Summer, while the pale-golden coloured catkins look almost as handsome as the finest wild flower that blows beneath the spiral stems. It is a pretty sight to see the wild hops when they have made their way through the hedges, twining around one another, and forming beautiful arches, or drooping gracefully while they are the sport of every breeze that blows.

One of the most pleasing features in English scenery is our great wild hedgerows, with the trailing stems tossing and streaming in the winds, and often overhung—as in our rural and rutted lanes—with tall trees. Many such we know, that go winding in here and out there, almost like the trailing plants which cover them; where you can never see beyond the bending of the road, excepting to the right or the left, over some gate, where a cow stands gazing at you; and which, in their tortuous course, at last bring you to the hedged entrance of some pretty village, where the long line of hawthorn changes to a fence of privet, sweet-briar, or even roses, or it may be box, or old armed holly. And pleasant it is to creep along between these flowery barriers, covered with convolvulus, woodbine, or, earlier in the season, with wild roses or bunches of May, besides scores of

FERNS.

other shrubs and flowers, amid which the fiery foxglove stands sentinel. Then, with what splendour these wild hedges are hung in Autumn, as if in mockery of the bright array of jewels with which Beauty loves to adorn herself. There we see the pure carnelian of the honeysuckle, oval pearls of every dye, settings of crimson and purple, the braceleted briony and black-beaded sloes, richly mingled with corals and emeralds, which the Autumn dews breathe upon, and leave such a delicate bloom as no artist could ever yet imitate. These are the beauties of green England, sought for in vain in any other country—the flowery and fruity barriers which bloom and ripen year after year without the aid of man, and make a rich framework for our long miles of sweeping grass, diapered with an ever-changing succession of beautiful wild flowers.

Then we have our noble family of ferns, those grand relics of an undated epoch, remnants of which we sometimes meet with among the remains of extinct animals. Look at the common flowering fern, which sometimes attains the height of eight or ten feet, and tosses its huge fans over you like the covering of a green tent, especially if it happen to grow near water, when they hang down like the graceful branches of the weeping willow. What are our silk manufacturers about, not to bring out the Lady Fern dress?—a light ground of green silk, then the leaflets in darker colours, with all their divisions and sub-divisions, fading away beautifully into the softened ground of delicate green. They would look as lovely as the fabled sea-nymphs, depicted by poets as floating about the gardens of the ocean, clothed in the grass-coloured garments of the deep.

We have, in another division of our work, spoken of the

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

beautiful foldings of the plantain filaments ; but the young fronds of the fern, before they uncoil themselves, are far more curious. Each frond is coiled upon itself, and when not too young it may, with very great care, be unfolded without breaking. Though the fern is not a flower, neither has it seed, still you will find on the back of a large leaf, but not on all the leaves, a number of little raised dots ; these are the coverings of the spores, the only seed, as we may call it, which the fern contains. But to examine their wonderful construction a good magnifier will be required ; then you may see the beautifully-jointed ring with which each is braided. A covert of the common bracken is a grand sight, especially if kindled by the fiery torch of Autumn, when it seems to set the whole broad moorland in a blaze,—for some of the crimson and golden colours of the fern are richer in hue than any of the foliage we find on the trees. But to see fern in perfection, the reader must wander into the neighbourhood of some of our old forests, or even into the forests, for fine specimens are sure to be found in the broad open glades that lie like little meadows here and there in the very heart of these woodlands. Then, it is poetical from its association, for underneath it the antlered monarch of the herd finds a covert, and there the mild-eyed doe sleeps beside her fawn. There is also such a real forest aroma about the fern—it smells like nothing else ; while a lounge under its great overhanging leaves, on the forest turf, with the sun shining faintly through the fronds, is enough to set the fancy roaming among the tropics, mayhap to dream of lotus-eaters, and sleepy climes—

“ Where it is ever idlesse evermore.”





BLUE HARE-BELL.

IN those old mornings, long ago,
The earth with flowers was thinly strown,
And, save a bunch of pearly snow,
Which on the hawthorn boughs had blown,
Nothing but grass and leaves were seen ;
No flowers grew in the sunny glade ;
The eye glanced round, and all was green,
The hare-bell then had not been made.

Then Spring came down, and made the flowers,
And first she formed the hare-bell blue ;
But undecided stood for hours,
Before she gave it that sweet hue :
Yellow and red first pleased her eye,
Then high o'erhead her vision ranged,
She caught the deep blue of the sky,
And instantly the colour changed.

“ I'll have a blue-bell, too, for Spring,”
She said, and hyacinths she made ;
“ But Summer shall my darling bring,
To make a heaven amid its shade :
For though I form ten thousand flowers,
And dye their buds of every hue,
The favourite in all my bowers,
Will ever be the hare-bell blue.”



BLUE HARE-BELL;

WILD THYME; EYE-BRIGHT; GOLDEN ROD; MEADOW SAFFRON;
MEADOW-SWEET; HEATHER AND FURZE, OR GORSE.

THE hare-bell, often called the blue-bell, though the wild hyacinth is more generally known by the latter name, belongs to the order of Campanula, and is one of the most beautiful of our Autumn wayside flowers. It is generally found beside our woods, or in waste places where the heather is in bloom, where its delicate bells, clear and bright as the blue of heaven, show like gems scattered on the green ground. When the foliage of the trees is touched with the yellow finger of decay, telling that the beauty of Summer is on the wane, the hare-bell is in full bloom, though so fragile a flower is it, that the lightest breeze will set all its azure bells in motion, for scarcely a more delicate-looking flower blows along the waysides of pastoral England. The fragrant wild thyme is generally found in bloom in the neighbourhood of the hare-bell, scenting the whole air for some distance around; and there the bees will be heard murmuring, for but few flowers besides now open their honied bells to the subsiding sunshine, as the nights nip their bloom, and the shortening days are becoming chilly. These, with the rose-coloured heather, are the last lingerers that Summer leaves behind which may still be called beautiful,—though we must not forget the little eye-bright,

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

which looks as if streaked with green and gold on a clear white ground, thrown out all the more distinctly through resting on its bed of dark serrated leaves; these, and the rose-coloured pheasant's-eye, or "Rose-a-ruby," as it was called in former times, are the richest wayside flowers that now hang in the decaying garland of Summer.

The common golden rod is a fine tall Autumn flower, bearing a perfect cloud of bloom; on this and the great ragwort, which, excepting in foliage, it resembles, the witches of old were supposed to take their aerial flights over town and tower, to the mustering-ground where they assembled to plot against the weal of their neighbours. There is a peculiar smell, resembling honey, about this beautiful plant, which is not found in any other flower. It is generally found on dry embankments.

The meadow saffron, or Autumn crocus, is another of our late-blowing flowers, and is but little unlike the crocus of Spring; it has, however, no leaf to protect it from the cold nights that are slowly approaching. The seeds, which do not ripen till mid-winter, lie in the earth until the approach of Spring, then the plant bears leaves, the seed is scattered abroad, and another race of Autumn flowers sown. Perhaps there is nothing more curious in the whole vegetable kingdom than the formation of this flower; the long tube or shaft—the cellar or storehouse into which the future flower sinks, and is buried in the earth until the following Spring—resembles nothing that we know of beside in the great world of flowers.

That sweetly-fragrant plant, with its creamy-looking yellow crown, the meadow-sweet, is still in flower, and may be found by the side of water-courses or in waste moist places, where it not

HEATHER AND FURZE, OR GORSE.

only shows itself on account of its noble height, but betrays itself before seen by its delicious odour, which is scarcely surpassed by the sweet-briar. Any Londoner jumping into the Croydon train, will, at the end of his journey, only have to walk a mile to Carshalton, where he will find this queen of the meadows flowering in abundance and scenting the whole scenery.

But we must write a few more words about the wild heather, which gives such beauty to the solitary wastes that would appear dull and lonely but for its presence, lighting up with its pale pink bells weary leagues of desolate moorland, where the trees are few and far apart, and human habitations are but rarely met with. Then it flowers towards the close of Summer, when—saving the plants we have before mentioned—there are but few others in bloom to attract the eye. But what is more beautiful than long miles of land carpeted with crimson and purple heath-bells, interspersed here and there with tall clusters of towering and flowering rushes, while the velvet turf that lies between is green as the richest emerald, and yields to the foot like a silken cushion stuffed with swan-down? The bees are humming about it and the sun shining upon it all day long, for there are neither trees nor hedgerows to keep off the sunshine, but over the great level and flower-purple solitude the sun shines at his uprising, and at his setting gilds the same scene with his fading glory. Far away, beyond even the reach of the eye, the level heath-covered solitude stretches like a sea of flowers, that seems to melt into and is lost amid the fading crimson of the evening clouds which gather around the setting sun.

The gorse, hung with its thousands of little baskets bellied out with gold, is another great ornament to our waysides. It is

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more generally known by the name of furze, often pronounced "fuzz" by country people, and also by the name of whin. Although armed to the very topmost sprig, and about the most formidable plant to handle that grows, as its spikes are as sharp as needles, still there are but few common wayside flowers that look more beautiful than the gorse, when it is covered from bottom to top with its thousands of little glowing golden lamps. When Linnæus first saw it here, he fell on his knees in admiration of its beauty, lamenting that his own country was destitute of so splendid a shrub, and envying England the possession of it. Hurdis, in his "Village Curate," says:—

"What's more noble than the vernal furze,
With golden baskets hung? Approach it not,
For every blossom has a troop of swords
Drawn to defend it."

The finest gorse-bush we have ever seen is one that blows double, and is still growing at the front of a farmhouse on the Earl of Darlington's estate, near Cobham. This shrub is eight or ten feet high, and as large round as a good-sized haycock. It is worth a walk from Gravesend, only to see this gorgeous shrub in flower. To our "mind's eye" it recalled the burning bush before which Moses stood with bowed head.

"When the gorse is out of flower, kissing's out of fashion," is an old saying, the gorse flowering all the year round, unless the Winter is very severe; and even then tiny blooms may be seen waiting for milder weather, when they will put forth their golden blossoms. The pods of the furze, when fully ripe, make a loud crackling noise when they open and discharge their seed, which, to a person who has never before heard it, sounds strangely,

HEATHER AND FURZE, OR GORSE.

especially amid the silence which reigns over many of the solitary places in which this shrub grows. Many imagine that bees which have easy access to lands where gorse grows abundantly make the richest honey, which has, moreover, a fine golden colour never found in any other sort. We have seen gorse in a few out-of-the-way wild places in England, where it has stood undisturbed, no doubt, for many a long year, growing to the height of eight or ten feet, and so close together that even a rabbit could only pass where its "runs" had long been made.

All these, or the chief part, are flowers of the forest and heath; and pleasant it is to wander in such places in Autumn, and see the dark-green foliage of the oak putting on its livery of russet or bronze-like brown, and hear the down-pattering of the pale-golden acorns as they are shaken from their carved cups by the breeze, while the beech-trees kindle up into a fiery orange, as if every branch shot out myriads of flaming tongues. The elms then wear a darker look; the ashes rattle their bunches of keys, and the whole woodland seems changed, as if by the touch of some mighty magician, since Summer first displayed her green mantle. Nor is it in the trees alone that we see such a rich variety of colours, for all the lower underwood has undergone a like transformation. The brambles are covered with berries, red, black, or purple; the wild roses are hung with scarlet "heps," the coral beads with which Nature bedecks herself in her beautiful solitudes; while above them, like a tiara on her brow, hang the crimson clusters of the mountain-ash. The gushing bunches of the briony, pleasant to the eye, but poisonous to the palate, add to the gaudy colouring of the underwood; while the ferns—red, green, brown, and yellow, and every shade

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that blends with those hues—lie in rich patches below, with tufts of purple heather here and there, peeping forth wherever there is opening enough to display their beauties; while, lower down, the blue hare-bells nod above the soft velvety turf,—for nowhere is there so soft and springy a greensward to be found as that which we sometimes tread upon in these little openings of the woods—fairy pastures, only frequented by the wild animals that come out from the shadowy and entangled underwood to bask and play there in the sunshine. Further on, where wider glades open like great wood-meadows, hemmed in with mile-deep fences of giant trees, the sunny borders are hung with blue bullaces and sable sloes, while wild crabs tempt the eye with their gold and crimson colours, though to the taste as unalluring as unripe lemons. The holly pierces its way through the surrounding slow decay, as if conscious of its strength, knowing that it is called upon to take possession, now that Autumn is on the wane; and the ivy, that seemed to peep out timidly when all beside was “long and leafy,” now stands out more boldly every day, and climbs up to the tops of the highest trees, as if to look down in triumph on the death and decay of the vegetable world below, and as if it were the crowned king of the forest, proud of its “green garland of Eternity.”



BRAMBLE, AND OTHER BERRIES.

THERE is an expressive roughness in the fine old Saxon word "bramble," which signifies any prickly bush; and in our boyish days, when we sallied out to gather blackberries, we called it "going a brambleberrying," and so will it continue to be called for centuries to come, for there are hundreds of pure Saxon and Danish words still in use in the Midland counties of England, which would scarcely be understood by the rest of our islanders. Nearly the whole of our common wayside flowers, which are well-known to all, still retain their ancient Saxon names: what our children call them now, they were called by the Saxon children as they wandered among the old thorpes, yarths, crofts, and spinneys to gather them above a thousand years ago. Among many of the pleasant English pictures we should like to have well painted and hung up in our parlour, one would be a group of village children brambleberrying, in checked frocks and check bonnets, with long curtains behind to preserve their little necks from the sun, and with the garments of the boys patched with different coloured stuffs; for, as their poor industrious mothers say, "they rive all the rags off their backs when the goe gatus a brambleberrying." They should also have long hair hanging about their faces, and peeping out here and there through the crowns of their hats and bonnets.

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But most of all does the long trailing bramble contribute to the wildness of our hedgerows, running no one knows whither, for it will force a way though there be room for nought else to creep into: we hesitate, indeed, to give the length of some of the bramble-shoots we have measured; so many feet have they run, that we question if their growth is exceeded by anything saving the canes of the tropics. Nor is it the length of the branch, the beauty of the leaf, or the various colours of the berries in their different stages, that make up the beauty of the hooked and armed bramble; there are also the

“Satin-threaded flowers,”

the last roses of Summer, for the bramble-rose is in bloom when all the rest are gone, and on it we find both blossom and fruit at the same time. We have in our wanderings amid the wild scenery of England seen nothing that bears such vast quantities of fruit as a large, fine, healthy bramble-bush; we have cut a spray not longer than the arm, and half as wide, that has contained several hundreds of berries—too closely clustered for them all to have ever properly ripened, beyond doubt, yet for all that, showing such a profusion of perfect fruit as it would be useless to search for in the same space of branch on either tree or shrub. When boys, we would bet a score of berries as to whose bramble-branch had the most fruit on; and there were sharp practitioners on this childish 'Change, who would hide behind the hedge, and hang more fruit on the thorns than the spray ever bore naturally, and so cheat us out of the precious stakes. If very little, and it was the first time of cheating, they were forgiven; but if not, such “babes in the wood” were never before beheld as we made

BRAMBLE, AND OTHER BERRIES.

them—even their own mothers would hardly have known them again ; for their pretty faces

“with blackberries
Were all besmear’d and dyed.”

Then there was the dewberry-bramble, so difficult to distinguish, when hung with berries, from the common bramble, though easily known when in blossom, as the bloom has all the pinky blush of the dog-rose, which gives to our rutted lanes such a look of Eden in Spring. But on looking narrowly, or holding it up in a favourable light, it will be seen that the dewberry has a rich plum-like blue bloom on its fruit, which is never found on the common blackberry, and that its drupes, or divisions of the fruit—grains, if you will—are much larger, and not so numerous as the blackberry, which, after all, is no true berry at all ; neither is the dewberry, as a whole, so large, though we still think both kinds might be improved by cultivation ; but fruit-growers say they would never be looked at beside the strawberry, and that “it wouldn’t pay.”

The mountain-bramble, or cloudberry, is the very dwarf of brambles, if it really is one at all, and is only found on the heaths and moors in the northern parts of our island, and about the Lake Districts, especially in Long Sleddale. It rarely grows more than a foot high, and is generally found much less than that, bearing a pretty broad leaf, not much unlike a mallow, while the fruit, when ripe, is of a rich orange colour, and about one of the most agreeable acids that can be found among our wild berries. The fruit is also large, considering the size of the plant.

The stone brambleberry is red, like the wild raspberry, when ripe, and acid, like the cloudberry, though not possessing quite

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so pleasant a flavour. The flowers make but little show, being a grey-green, or white clouded with green, while the berries are very small, often containing only four or five drupes, and sometimes only one, like a single berry. It is generally seen in dry rocky places, but is neither common nor plentiful even in the few localities where it is found.

Not so with the wild raspberry, which is met with almost everywhere, though most plentiful in our Northern counties. From this rude stock came our garden raspberry, not at all improved in flavour through transplanting—so argue, at least, our country housewives—and not to be compared with the wild berry for preserving. But even where they are plentiful, it is a wearisome task to gather only a quart of wild raspberries, they are so small, and so few are found together. This we often found to our sorrow in our fruit-pie-loving days, when raspberries and currants, or cherries and currants, were the favourite mixture, and always to be had for the asking, on condition that we gathered the given quart of wild fruit. It was so difficult, too, to refrain from eating them, for we found strong appetites while wandering among the hills and woods where they grew. The wild raspberry is often found three or four feet high, and even when not displaying whitey-green flowers, may be readily known by a willow-like whiteness on the under-side of the leaves.

The wild strawberry is also the origin of the cultivated strawberry—those great melting mouthfuls that require more than one bite, and would bump down some score of their wild ancestors in any fair scale. We have wandered through woods where the feet got entangled as in the meshes of a net among the wild runners, which had spread out year after year without any one

BRAMBLE, AND OTHER BERRIES.

checking their growth. Now and then, but very rarely, we have found one or two here and there that might, for bulk, be compared to a middling-sized brambleberry, though generally they run very small, so much so, that it is a homely proverb in the country, when a tart or custard is placed before a hungry man, to say, "They might as well try to fill him with wild strawberries, and let him pick them up with a pin:" also, "The more a man eats, the hungrier they make him:" and, "Eating wild strawberries, when a man's hungry, is like trying to stop a wide gap with a single hedgestake." Yet the remembrance we have of eating them, with new honey and cream, at country wakes, feasts, and weddings, makes us smack our lips even now.

Those who have rambled about the hilly districts of England must have noticed in Spring a beautiful little shrub covered with rosy, wax-like flowers and bright green foliage: this is the bilberry, a favourite preserve in the Northern counties, of which they make the "roly-poly" puddings in Winter, and which, in Devonshire, they eat with the famous golden-coloured cream of that pastoral province. There is a delicious purple bloom on these berries when first gathered, which goes off when they are laid close together, though we do not think it causes any deterioration of flavour, and they look beautiful even when only jet black. Game is said to be very partial to the bilberry; and those who are fortunate enough to feed on the game fattened by this delicious fruit say that it has a flavour worthy of the "food it fed upon," conveying with every mouthful its own fruity condiment.

The Mount Ida whortleberry is another handsome shrub, having when in bloom rich clusters of elegant white wax-like flowers, tinged with a rosy blush, which show like little stars amid the

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dark-green leaves. Before fully ripe the berries are very beautiful, having a rich peach-like bloom on the sunny side, reminding one pleasantly of the lady described by the poet Suckling, whose cheek

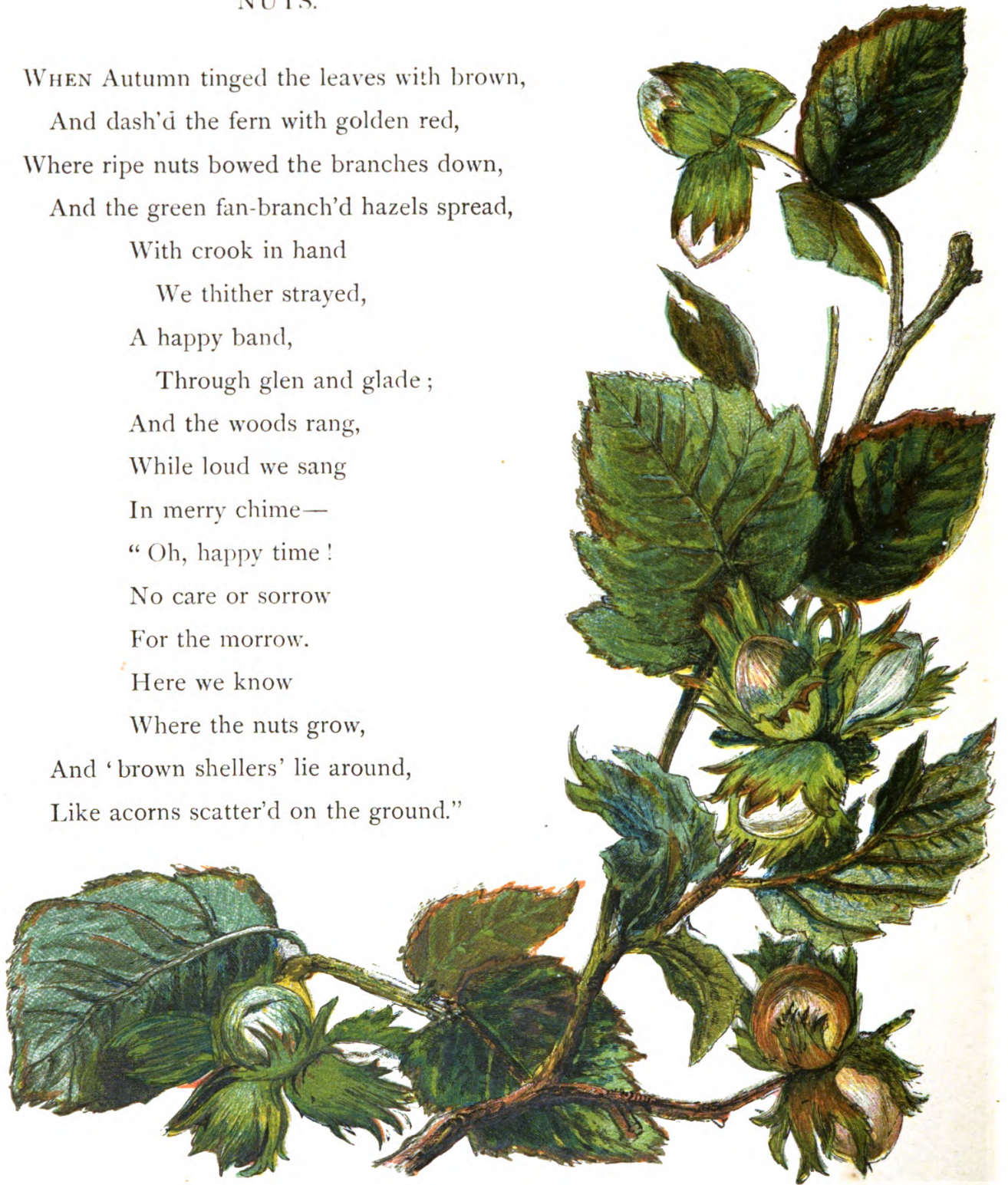
“ was like a Cath’rine pear,
The side that’s next the sun.”

But this, like maiden beauty, fades away, for when ripe the berries are scarlet, nor can we say much in favour of their flavour, for they are “much of a muchness” with the “very high game” with which they are sometimes eaten in the form of jelly—the best time to taste them, if they are eaten at all. But the little cranberry was the great favourite of all the mountain berries, as they are called, in our boyish days, and one for which our native county has long been renowned. “Though a poor thing, ’twas our own,” for it seldom grew more than four or five inches high; and, when boys, we seemed all the fonder of it because it was so little. We have heard grey-headed men tell how plentiful it was in their boyish days—that the little town in which we first saw the light used to be glutted with it on market-days; and we remember, when we last visited those old familiar places, scarcely a shrub was to be seen, but all seemed gone, like the great bustards which haunted the neighbouring marshes in the days of other years. How careful we were not to trample on those beautiful rose-coloured blossoms, well knowing that for every bloom we knocked off there would be a berry the less. Dear old grandmother! we can never forget that large closet, filled with quaintly-shaped bottles, in which thou didst keep all kinds of fruit all the long Winter, without any other preparation, that we knew of, beyond gathering it when dry. Are the English housewives of the present day in possession of that simple secret?



NUTS.

WHEN Autumn tinged the leaves with brown,
And dash'd the fern with golden red,
Where ripe nuts bowed the branches down,
And the green fan-branch'd hazels spread,
With crook in hand
We thither strayed,
A happy band,
Through glen and glade ;
And the woods rang,
While loud we sang
In merry chime—
“ Oh, happy time !
No care or sorrow
For the morrow.
Here we know
Where the nuts grow,
And ‘brown shellers’ lie around,
Like acorns scatter'd on the ground.”





NUTS, AND NUTTING.

TO go a-nutting was to keep up an old English holiday, which it gave us pleasure even to talk about only, many a day before we started; and, in our younger years, no one interfered with us, for we meddled not with game, so had the run of the whole of the woods for miles about the neighbourhood of our birthplace. And it is pleasant to know that this rural English holiday was enjoyed centuries ago, and that one of the poets who lived in the reign of Elizabeth—William Browne—has left us a beautiful poetical picture of nutting, with many another word-painting beside of greenwood scenery. Grey old grand-sires, who for more than half a century had known

“ Each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle and bushy dell of those wild woods,
And every bosky bcurn from side to side,”

went with us, nimble on foot, at times, as many of the young ones, to point out the spots where the finest nuts had always been found, even from their boyish days. Aged mothers, young married women and their husbands, brisk youths and their sweet-hearts, as well as boys and girls who could just manage to walk as far, made up the merry group, all laden with baskets and bottles, pipes and tinder-box—for lucifer-matches were not known in the country in those days, nor did we feel any alarm about

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our cornstacks and Captain Swing. All clothed in our homeliest attire, we neither feared bush nor brake, gorse nor bramble,—for every rent but added to our merriment, and “looped and windowed raggedness” laughed at its own tatters. Although there was little or no ceremony of any kind, yet there was no boorish rudeness—nothing but what awakened the approving smile, or called forth the gentle rebuke unaccompanied by anger, if some one erred inadvertently. Bread-and-cheese and cold country bacon, plain apple-pie and home-brewed beer, had a relish then which we have never since found, even when the dinner had cost one guinea per head with a heavy charge for all extras. Then, what a pleasure it was, instead of sitting down formally to dine, to make seats of our jackets for the girls, while we threw ourselves on the green forest turf, with the huge broad-branching oaks overhead for a canopy, and ate and drank our fill, repeating stale old jokes—accepted as well as if they had been new—about “fingers being made before forks,” and “no china-service in Eden;” making dinner-napkins of our pocket-handkerchiefs, and, instead of shaking them afterwards, catching all the mingled crumbs with one hand, and with a chuck sending them after the devoured dinner. What a comfort it was, too, to feel that we had nothing on that we could do much injury to, but might run, dance, climb the trees, and dash through the briary underwood, without doing any harm to our garments. And the girls!—“young ladies” they are called now, but they were not so called in our younger days—cherry-cheeked farmers’ daughters, and plain cottage lasses, who milked and made butter and cheese, not doing “the meanest chares,” for these were done by hired servants, but

NUTS, AND NUTTING.

busy as bees nearly all day long, for all that, and not ashamed to be seen in their working attire even so late as nearly tea-time on very busy days. Such as these were the fair nutters of our younger days, quite content to marry among the farmers of the neighbourhood, instead of looking out for the solicitor or the surgeon who came to "practice" in our villages.

Then, what laughing there was as we lifted one another up to reach down the highest clusters of wood-nuts, the real "brown shellers," only to be found on the tops of the hazel-boughs that towered high above the underwood, and basked in the ripening rays of the sun. Some of us were sure to get lost, too; and, oh! what a shouting there was! we startled the wild birds from the trees and the game from the thicket with our loud outcries; and, after all, it was often only a lover and his lass, who, as the old grandsire said when they returned, "were so wilfully deaf, they wouldn't hear." Clear was the wood-stream by which we laid down full length to drink our fill, though millions of leaves had fallen and sailed upon its surface; for there is a forest flavour about those tree-shaded streams that is found in no other water—a something

"Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance and provincial song."

Our choicest filberts and cob-nuts are but varieties of the common hazel-nut, improved by cultivation, though not improved in flavour so much as in size, as may readily be proved by waiting until the wood-nuts are ripe enough to be shaken out of their beautifully-formed husks or cups, then comparing them with such as are grown in our garden nutteries; for garden nuts

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have neither the firmness nor the sweetness of a thorough brown-ripe, common hazel-nut, which we very rarely find hollow, and not so often tenanted with the white grub. Is it true that the cicatrice made by the fly when it pierces the nut while in a soft state, early in Summer, to lay its eggs therein, can be readily distinguished when the nut is nearly ripe, and before the maggot has eaten its way out? One or two of our old naturalists say it can. We have stared with "might and main" at many a nut which we knew contained a grub, through its lightness, but were never yet able to find where it had first been pierced by the fly. They also say this grub, after eating its way out of the nut, spins a thread, by which it lowers itself to the ground, when it buries itself in the earth, and comes out a perfect fly in the following Spring, and turns nut-piercer on its own account, lays its eggs, and dies. There still seems to be some doubt about the nut-weevil amongst naturalists, especially as to the time it remains in the earth, or even as to whether it buries itself at all.

All lovers of the country must have noticed the beauty of the catkins of the hazel in Spring, and the plume-like elegance with which they droop, nor need they be told that these are the male flowers; the female flowers are also very beautiful, with their tiny crimson tufts, but are too small to attract attention when the others are in bloom, especially as they appear before the leaves show even a sign of life, for these beautiful pendulous tassels appear as early as the willow catkins. But if the leaves of the hazel do not come out early, they remain late; and amongst the many beautiful objects of Autumn may be placed the golden-coloured hue of the hazel-copse, and when

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that tint is seen, the nuts are in their prime, and the few bunches that remain in their husks are, for flavour, worth more than the gathering of the whole wood a month before. A little cleared space in a copse of hazels makes the prettiest summer arbour one can sit down in; no other bower resembles it—the stems are so smooth, the leaves so light and far apart, that when the sun shines it looks like a golden arbour. These smooth dark stems formed the fishing-rods of our boyish days; a penny a socket was the price we paid the tinman to finish the joints, and all the rest we did ourselves, turning out what was considered a perfect article—

“Fine by degrees, and beautifully less.”

Quantities of hazel-nuts, black with age, and which have, perhaps, been buried more centuries than we, in our record of time, have any knowledge of, have been dug up in bogs, and amid drift, among the remains of extinct animals; but at what undated epoch they grew, or what was the state of our island at that time, we can never now know. Even no longer ago than when the foundations of the new pier at Greenwich were sunk, bushels of hazel-nuts, black as ink, were found at the greatest depth they dug; and, as one of the men told us, he went many feet lower than the foundation of the pier, as some gentleman had given him half-a-crown to dig as low as he could in search of them, and that he was only stopped through being overflowed with water. How came they there? A glance at the hills about Woolwich and Greenwich tells that a mighty avalanche tore and thundered through what is now the valley and the river. Were those hills in ancient times covered with hazels? We find the fern there still, and a few thorns in Greenwich Park,

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so aged that they have lost every trace of the years that have passed over them.

Beech-nuts, or "beech-mast," as they are sometimes called, are considered by some to almost equal the hazel-nut for pleasantness of flavour. The beech-nut is, however, thought but little of now; only pigs are turned into the woods to feed on it. The acorn belongs to the true nut family, and its beautifully carved cup is only another form of the husk of the wood-nut. The ancient Britons are said to have had nothing better to make their bread of than acorns; but this we very much doubt, for Cæsar mentions the gathering in of their corn from the fields in which his legions skirmished.

The sweet-chesnut is set but little store by in England, while on some parts of the Continent it is a common article of food. Is it because it cannot be grown to such perfection on our island? Mention is frequently made of dishes of roasted chesnuts at our ancient banquets. Were they grown in England to greater perfection than they are now?

Next to the hazel-nuts—by whatsoever name they may be called—stands the noble walnut, being the only one beside that is grown, eaten, or cared much for in England: "wine and walnuts" have, indeed, become almost proverbial as essential concomitants in an Englishman's dessert. But the larger we grow our walnuts the worse they are, for the finest flavour is only to be found in the smaller ones. There are numbers of splendid walnut-trees scattered over England, many of which have grown to an immense size, and are of an age very difficult to ascertain, though some are well known to have stood two or three centuries.





HOLLY.

GONE are the Summer hours,
The birds have left the bowers ;
 While the holly true
 Retains its hue,
Nor changes like the flowers.

On its armèd leaf reposes
The berries red as roses ;
 'Tis always seen,
 In red and green,
While grim old Winter dozes.

It wakens old affections,
In Christmas recollections,
 And, as it glows,
 A soft veil throws
O'er all our imperfections.



HOLLY, IVY, MISTLETOE, AND YEW.

ONE of the most beautiful objects to be found in a Winter landscape is a large holly-bush hung with bright-green armed leaves and crimson berries; when the scene all around is covered with snow, it stands out more beautifully than the finest tree the eye ever dwelt upon hung with the roses of June, for when the holly-berries are red, our hedges no longer present that beautiful appearance which artists find it so difficult to paint; they are no longer covered with a rich confusion of creeping, overhanging, interwoven plants and shrubs—no longer show such a crowded mixture of particoloured foliage, leaves of all shapes, and berries and flowers of all colours, beginning at the ground and rising high overhead, where the topmost creepers curled round one another, and rocked to and fro in the sunshine. Then, there were great sweeps of shadow ever coming and going, the sport of every passing cloud,—dark-green where the hedges fell in, golden bright where they bulged out, with all their wild fruits ablaze—red haw, scarlet hep, the coral of the honeysuckle, the bursting crimson of the briony, gushing clusters of black brambleberries, the drooping brown of ripe nuts, gloomy poison-berries, a few golden-coloured crabs high up,—these, and a hundred other touches, made up the Autumn

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colouring of our great wild, picturesque hedges. Nor will either privet or hawthorn hedge stand comparing with one of holly, either for beauty or utility, as it is green all the year round, and as impenetrable as a stone wall, for only a hog in armour would be able to make its way through it, and even to do that the hedge must be very young indeed. Then, the grey-white flowers, which appear about the end of May, clustering about the sharp spiky leaves which protect them, are pretty objects to look at, if examined minutely. Holly, ivy, and mistletoe, are English household words, though ivy is not used so much now in our Christmas decorations as it used to be in former years. It is the greatest ornament that Time throws around his ruins, seeming as if even he had a wish to bury the dead past out of his sight, and cover the remains with something green and beautiful.

Above all old affections,
Like pleasant recollections,
The ivy grows, and a deep veil throws
O'er all Time's imperfections.
The empty oriel greening,
The shatter'd column screening,
While the fallen shrine it doth entwine,
Like a heart that's homeward leaning.

The ivy also differs from nearly all other vegetation, as it causes neither damp nor decay, but, on the contrary, is both dry and warm, and therefore a shelter to places to which it is attached; and many of our old ruins, that wear, no doubt, the green ivy of centuries, would long ago have crumbled into dust had they not been sheltered from the weather by this beautiful and ornamental protection. Were the ivy a parasitic plant, as many

IVY AND MISTLETOE.

imagine, it might be injurious to buildings ; but it is not, neither does it cling to anything for nourishment, but mainly for support, drawing its chief nurture from its own roots, and finding life in the air for its leaves, like all other foliage, in a manner not yet thoroughly understood by the wisest of us. There cannot, however, be much doubt about its tight-binding stems injuring the trunks of the trees it covers, by preventing the expansion of the wood and bark, and checking the sap. This woodmen well understand, calling such trees as the ivy has entwined "starved timber;" nor are we prepared to say that the ivy does not draw some nourishment from the moisture of the trees it encircles, though it is not a parasitic plant, like the mistletoe.

There is a great diversity of form in the ivy leaves, those on the lower part of the plant being quite different in shape to the flowery shoots, which latter are nearly heart-shaped, while the five-finger formed leaves shoot out at times into long points, and then again are simply indented sufficiently to mark the angles, so that he must be a very indifferent artist who cannot hit upon one or another of the many shapes the foliage of the ivy assumes. It flowers very late, and there is a buzzing and a humming heard on a sunny day late in Autumn among the ivy, which will be listened for in vain anywhere else beside, as its pale green blossoms are stored with honey, which attracts numbers of insects when the Summer flowers are gone. The dark ivy-berries also ripen late in Spring, and furnish food for birds when the hawks and haws are all devoured.

The mistletoe is a true parasitic plant, and the only one we can lay claim to as a native of our island. Did it grow on the oak, we wonder, in ancient times ?

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

We read in ancient story,
How the Druids, in their glory,
Went forth of old, with hooks of gold,
To the forests dim and hoary;
And the grey old oaks ascended,
And from their branches rended
The mistletoe, long, long ago,
By maidens fair attended.

And we know now that it is found but very rarely on the oak, but mostly on the crab, where it is a striking object in Winter, if so found in the midst of a wood, having somewhat of a golden-bough look, such as the ancient poets have depicted it. On old apple-trees it is also seen, making quite a picture as it hangs down amid the naked branches of the tree, with its green-golden leaves and pearl-like berries; it is also found common enough on old thorns, also on the ash, maple, lime, poplar, and many other trees, in a wild state. It is easily propagated by slitting the bark of a tree, inserting the seeds, and binding over the rent; some say, if this precaution be not taken, the mistle-thrush would be sure to have it out from between the bark, though this we are disposed to doubt, thinking so large a bird takes too much time to fill himself to lose much of it in hunting for a single seed. Bird-lime, so often alluded to by our old writers on fowling, and so seldom used now, is sometimes obtained from the mistletoe berries, but more extensively from the bark of young holly shoots, which is considered to make the best and strongest lime.

The wood of the holly is fine, hard, and often as white as ivory, and will take as fine a polish; and sometimes holly trees are found of such large dimensions as to be both useful and ornamental in cabinet work, especially when veneered. We have

HOLLY AND IVY.

heard of the ivy being worked up occasionally, and turning out very beautiful, but this can only be very seldom, as the wood rarely grows to any size, excepting about the root; and this portion, it is said, when large enough, produces a "richer variety of spots than any wood that is used."

Though the ivy is but little used now, as we have before remarked, yet in our Christmas decorations "holly and ivy" were inseparable in the olden time, while mistletoe is but rarely alluded to.

"Get holly and ivy to deck up thine house,"

sings simple-minded old Tusser, in summing up the preparations necessary for the Christmas festival, and the burthen rings over again like the pealing of a bell in many of the works of our early poets. Then, there is a capital poem in the Harleian Miscellany, written in the form of a dialogue between Holly and Ivy, each contending for the superiority. The holly reproaches the ivy with only producing berries which are eaten by the birds; the ivy says that the holly branches are worthless, excepting to be browsed on by deer; and so the contest is carried on through several stanzas, in which each claims the supremacy.

Holly was formerly called Yule, from Christmas, and amongst the lower order of the Londoners is still called Christmas. It is as common to send for "a penn'orth of Christmas," to decorate the house at the old December festival, as it is to send for the plums to make the Christmas pudding. A cockney came the other day into our garden, and the first thing that struck him was the holly hedge. "I know this," said he, "but have forgotten its name;" then plucking off a leaf, he exclaimed, "Why, it's Christmas, to be sure."

COMMON WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

Byron calls ivy "the garland of Eternity ;" and wreathed, as it often is, around ancient ruins, and looking as fresh now as it no doubt did centuries ago, there is something grand and sublime in the emblem, which expands while it is dwelt upon, reminding us of some of those inspired sentences of Scripture, which seem "meet utterance of the gods."

The sombre-looking yew is another tree that was used in festive decorations, and had not in former times such gloomy associations connected with it as have been woven round it within the last two or three centuries. The bold bowmen, whose limbs were "pastured in English mould," formed their elastic bows out of its tough stem; and there were "most biting laws" made to protect yew-trees in those ancient times, before "vile gunpowder" came into use. It was also a favourite garden tree, and our simple-minded ancestors delighted in bending it into the form of bowery arcades, under which they sheltered from the Summer sun, knowing nor caring nothing about what is called the "evil influence" of its verdure, which we believe is imaginary, although as food it is found to be injurious to cattle.

There is something very graceful in the tapering form of the yew; and as it is but a very slow grower, it retains its beautiful shape for many years, for wherever we see a flat, broad-topped yew, we are in the presence of an aged tree, that has looked down upon more changes than the oldest living man ever witnessed. In Spring, too, its dark green hue stands out grandly amid the pale budding vegetation, as if it were proud of having stood the wear and tear of Winter so well, and in the great windy struggle retaining the green garment which the Borean blast had battled for, while so many other trees had lost all. The wood of the yew

YEW.

is at times very beautiful, running into variegated shades of deep red, spotted with black, which serve to throw up the white as if it were ivory ; and many of our old arm-chairs, named, we know not why, from Windsor, are formed entirely of bent yew, excepting the seats, which are generally elm. We find the same shaped old-fashioned Windsor chairs made to figure in some of our oldest oil-paintings. Children and wasps are very fond of yew-berries ; nor are we aware that they ever did any harm to the former, unless it were through over-gorging themselves. It is, however, a dangerous experiment to eat the leaves, and, some say, has resulted in death.

“ 'Twas a noble tree in the days of old,
And furnish'd the bows for the archers bold.”





