







THE NETTLE'S STING

FLORAL FANCIES

AND

Morals from Flowers.

EMBELLISHED WITH

SEVENTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.



LONDON:
TILT AND BOGUE, FLEET STREET.

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P R E F A C E .

THE following Fables were written with a view to more purposes than one. They are intended to impart acquaintance with the economy and habits of some of the most beautiful or singular productions of the vegetable kingdom, and also to illustrate moral truths by analogies drawn from the same source. Through the medium of fiction, founded on fact, it has been endeavoured to invite attention to many wonders of creation, which are daily passed by

without notice, trodden under foot without heed, or, at best, admired without scrutiny; to point out the curious adaptation of means to corresponding ends, observable in the most minute of Nature's works; and, finally, to teach therein the goodness and wisdom of Nature's God.

In the Notes to each Fable no new information is pretended to be conveyed, their matter having been chiefly derived from acknowledged authorities, selected to suit the purpose of illustration, and also to invite pursuit of Botany, as a study adapted to refine and elevate, as well as to inform the mind. For such readers as possess no botanical knowledge, it may be advis-

able to peruse these Notes *before* the Fable to which they belong, in order to render the allusions of the latter more apparent.

It may, possibly, be objected that the characteristics of plants are too little known and too slightly marked to afford suitable materials for Fable; but, be it remembered, that the object of the following fictions is not alone to convey moral precept, but also to impress a knowledge of the natural facts on which they hang. Admitting the mine of vegetable history to be less rich in moral ore than that of the animal creation, the former yields a vein not yet exhausted; and novelty has sometimes been accepted as a

substitute for metal of more intrinsic worth. To pronounce judgment on the forms into which this metal has been wrought, and to determine whether they possess anything useful in purpose, or tasteful in decoration, is the province of the reader, to whose kind indulgence they are, with diffidence, submitted.



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FLORAL FICTIONS.

I.

THE NETTLE'S STING, AND THE STING OF INGRATITUDE.

Two superb butterflies, the one named Paphia, the other, Atalanta, tired of pursuing each other in graceful evolutions through the fields of air, alighted, by mere inadvertence, on the forbidding head of a way-side Nettle. The vain Paphia, starting as if her velvet bodice had been pierced, instantaneously rose again to seek a more agreeable resting-place; but her sister, Atalanta, either feeling more fatigued, or entertaining less fear of the vege-

table viper, retained her station, and even folded up her wings as if disposed to prolong her sojourn. The rough Nettle, whose morose nature seemed softened by the fearless confidence of the fair Atalanta, smoothed down his poisoned prickles, like a tiger in good humour sheathing his talons, and thus afforded a seat, soft as a downy cushion, to his unwonted visitor. Nor did his courtesy end here—"My pretty one," said he, "I thank you for coming hither to enliven my life of gloom; and yet more, for the generous absence of mistrust you have displayed towards a poor, calumniated, despised old Nettle. But how different the behaviour of your haughty and suspicious sister, who shrank from my contact as though my very touch were poison!" "Good sir," replied the butterfly, "I hope you'll excuse her, for she's somewhat timid; and, to own the truth, both she and myself had heard so much against you, that I really wonder at my own courage in having stayed

to discover, by experience, that you are not the wicked, dangerous creature that fame reports you." "Ah, my child," returned the old Nettle, "few have ever borne a worse name than myself, and all our persecuted race; and none, perhaps, have met with more ingratitude." "Indeed, sir," said the gentle Atalanta, with a sympathetic nod, "and may I ask, by whom, and how you have been thus maltreated?" "Why, first, my pretty one, we are sadly wronged by man; he, while we are yet in early youth, is glad of our tender shoots to make him pottage; but, when age overtakes us, he reviles, uproots, or mows us down, with hatred most inveterate. What can be more natural than that we should sting him in return; but, even when provoked to inflict a wound, we are always ready to afford a balm, wherewith its smart may be allayed. Nay, more—if our enemy show but the courage to approach and handle us with confidence, even towards him we prove gentle

and unoffending, as you at this moment find me." "Indeed, Mr. Nettle," returned the volatile butterfly, beginning to grow weary of her host's prosing—"indeed you seem to have been sadly used; and now I'll go, if you please, and tell my sister, and all our friends, what a good sort of body you are." "Stay a moment, fair one," exclaimed the Nettle, as Atalanta spread her wings for flight, "you have not yet heard half my story; I have told, indeed, of man's unkindness, but I have yet to speak of far worse ingratitude—the ingratitude of your own race continually shown towards us." "Really, sir," said the butterfly, tossing her plumes, "I didn't suppose——" "No, I dare say you were not aware that the nurses and supporters of your family have all been supplied by mine." The butterfly stared. "'Tis very true," resumed the Nettle, "and yet more, 'tis a fact, though you seem to have forgotten it, that it was from me—yes, from my very self, that both

you and your giddy sister received support and nourishment in your days of helpless infancy. Do but observe all my lower leaves reduced to skeletons, and know that it was by your own teeth, and those of your sister Paphia, they were brought to this condition.”

“No, no, Mr. Nettle,” exclaimed the butterfly, laughing most contemptuously, “you’ll never make me believe a tale like that; never tell me that *I—I* for whose delicate appetite the nectar of the sweetest flowers is scarcely fitting food—that *I* should ever have condescended to touch one morsel of your coarse, disgusting foliage—a good joke, truly! but it won’t do for me. So good morning to you, Master Nettle, and the next time I honour you with a visit, you’ll tell me something a little more likely. Oh! oh! oh! the very thought!” and the wings of the pretty Atlanta shook with laughter, as she expanded them for flight; but, ere she had time to rise, she felt, for the first time, a painful sting.

The Nettle could inflict no sharper wound, yet it was far less deadly than that with which the ungrateful insect had just pierced the friend and benefactor of her infancy.

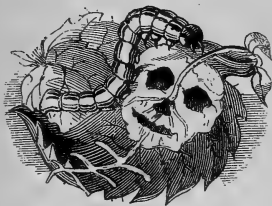
NOTES.

THE caterpillars of three of our most beautiful butterflies, viz., the *Atalanta*, the *Paphia*, and the *Urtica*, together with some other insects, are nourished by the leaves of the common Nettle. The stinging properties of this plant have been minutely investigated by Curtis (see the "*Flora Londinensis*"), by whose examination it appears that the Nettle is covered with small projecting prickles, which, when slightly touched, inflict a venomous wound. Each prickle is tubular, standing on a bag of poison, and perforated at the point, so that when gently pressed, vertically, the pressure at once forces the poison to ascend the tube, and enables the point to lodge it in the skin of the hand that touches it. Those who handle the plant roughly rarely feel the effect of its sting,

while others, from lightly touching it, experience the venom in all its force. This circumstance is happily expressed by Aaron Hill :—

“ Tender-handed stroke a Nettle,
And it stings you for your pains ;
Grasp it like a man of mettle,
And it soft as silk remains.”

The young tops of the Nettle are sometimes used as a pot-herb, and Haller tells us—“*Que son écorce se laisse filer, et on en fait en Europe et en Sibérie des toiles de fil d'ortie. On en tire le même parti dans les isles des Kuriles. On fait aussi d'assez bon papier avec cette écorce.*”



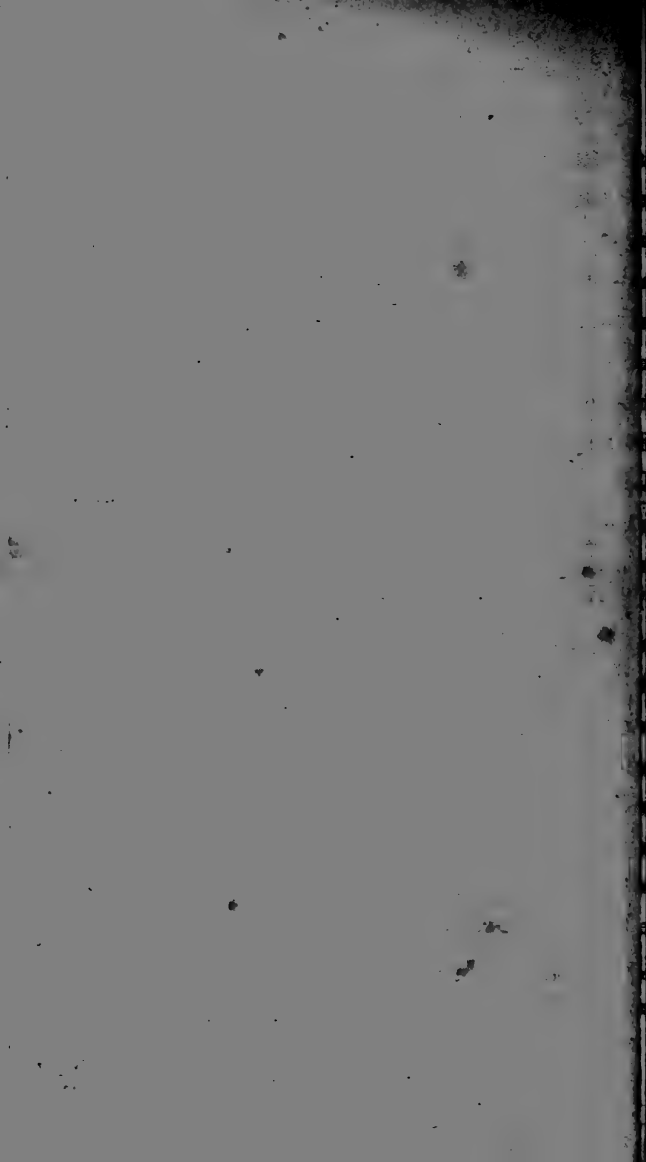
II.

THE FLOWER OF AN HOUR, AND THE FLOWER WITHOUT FRUIT.

A PERSIAN *Ranunculus*, beautiful and haughty as an Eastern sultana, chose, in the pride and emptiness of her heart, to insult a sister flower (a Venetian Mallow), who blossomed close beside her. It was not, however, for lack of beauty that the vain Asiatic could despise her neighbour, the charms of the latter being scarcely inferior to her own. Beside the glowing hues of the Persian, the delicate blush colour of the European might, indeed, seem faint, but then she was bravely adorned by velvet of royal purple, and crowned by a diadem of golden anthers. Nor was it for want of fragrance that the



THE FLOWER OF AN HOUR.



Ranunculus could scorn the Mallow, since she herself had never lent perfume to the passing gale. No—it was not for deficiencies like these, but it was for briefness of duration, that she, the flower of a few days, took upon her (forsooth!) to taunt with fragility the flower of an hour! A Bee chanced, meanwhile, to settle on the blossom of the Mallow. He sipped her honied sweets, and hummed gaily as he flew away, “Adieu! my pretty one, I will visit thee again to-morrow.” “To-morrow!” exclaimed the Ranunculus, scornfully (she was mortified, perhaps, by the Bee’s admiration of her neighbour): “‘To-morrow,’ says he? He little knows that for thee no morrow is in store. He little knows that, though when the sun arose this morning thy rare beauties had not opened on the light, they will be faded for ever before he reaches his meridian splendour.” “So be it,” replied the Mallow, meekly, “I am content to have beheld him in his early prime,

and care not to look upon him in his mid-day glory, or his evening decline. Thanks to its bounteous Giver, my existence, although a brief, has been a bright one, and fulfilled, I trust, its destined purpose ; for when my blossom perishes, I shall still live in the fruit I leave behind me, and the race of future flowers that will arise to supply my place." Even while she spake, the corolla of the delicate Venetian began to shrink before the scorching sunbeams, and speedily was closed for ever.

Autumn arrived, and found the seeds of the Mallow ripened and ready to seek the earth, there to abide till called from her fostering bosom by the voice of spring. And where was the proud *Ranunculus*? What vestige was remaining of her once glorious blossom? Nothing, save a dry and barren stalk. Other individuals of her race, who, on account of their inferior beauty, had been far less admired, had, indeed, like the Mallow, left fruit behind them ; but she, the double

flower of most glorious fulness—she in whom internal completeness had been sacrificed for external perfections—she had passed away from the earth, even as the glittering worldling, who lives but to please the eye.

Where was now the advantage of her boasted length of days over the Mallow's yet more brief duration? Let that question be answered by the aged man who has lived his threescore years and ten wholly for the world and the world's applause, for surely he can best reply whose existence has been more useless than the flower without fruit, and less important in the economy of creation than the flower of an hour.

NOTES.

THE Persian *Ranunculus*, whose rich and beautiful varieties are so highly ornamental to our gardens, produces from five to twenty flowers on

each root, of which there are single, semi-double, and full double flowered, the latter filled, like a double rose, with petals to the very centre, forming a globular body of admirable elegance, and displaying the most beautiful colours—plain, striped, and in every degree of shade. The full double flowers, in which the stamens are wanting, are consequently barren ; but unbounded varieties are produced from the seeds of those that are semi-double. They are also increased by offsets taken from the roots.

“ Few annuals are more admired than the Venice Mallow, or Bladder Hibiscus. The inside of the flower is of a delicate cream colour, having the centre embellished with a rich purple velvet, on which its golden anthers are proudly conspicuous.”
—Curtis’s Bot. Mag.

“ The Venice Mallowe, or Good Night at Noon, openeth itselſe (ſays Gerarde) about 8 of the clocke, and ſhutteth up againe at 9, when it hath received the beames of the ſunne, whereon it ſhould ſeem to reſuſe to looke ; whereupon it might more properly be called *Malva Horaria*, or Mallow of an Hower, which Columella ſeemeth to call Moloche in his verſe :—‘ Et Moloche prono ſequiter qua vertia Solem.’

‘The Venice Mallowe’s most brave and gallant flower,
Through heate of sunne, springs, shuts, and dies in an
hower.’”

Miller extends the life of this fair and frail blossom to a few hours.

Most species of *Cistus* also exhibit striking instances of quickly fading beauty, opening to the morning sun, and before night strewing the ground with their remains ; each day, however, produces a new succession of flowers, as with the Virginian Spiderwort, whose blossoms last but one day. The splendid blossom of the Night-blowing *Cereus* opens with the setting, and fades with the rising sun. The Peacock Iris shows its pride but for a day, and the *Tigridia Favonia* expands in the morning to wither at noon.



III.

THE ECCENTRIC ARUM.

A GROUP of gay young wood-flowers having met together one bright May morning, amused themselves by turning into ridicule certain peculiarities of their more grave and quiet neighbours. The sweet and humble Moschatelle, scarcely venturing to advance her head from the shelter of withered leaves which had protected her early youth, was laughed at for, what they chose to call, her awkwardness, and *mauvaise honte*. The Ophrys, in his sober suit of brown, they denominated a queer old sprig; but the chief object of their impertinent criticism was an unfortunate Arum, whose singular shape,



THE ECCENTRIC ARUM.

complexion, and habits, were each, in turn, made themes for animadversion.

“Who ever beheld such a stiff, awkward, misshapen flower?” said a Blue-bell, tossing her graceful head with an air of utter disdain. “Flower!” responded a Wood Anemone, “I wonder you can call him a flower at all! Why, it would puzzle neighbour Eyebright herself to tell what or who he is, with his face forever muffled in that great green cowl. If he’s ashamed of his ugliness, let him hide it, and welcome. All I say is, that he has no business to intrude upon our society, like a suspicious spy.” “I am exactly of your opinion, madam,” said a proud Purple Orchis. “Far be it from me to condemn another because he has the misfortune not to be as handsome as one’s self; but it is impossible not to suspect some lurking evil under a cloak of such extreme reserve and mystery. Why, let me ask, does he never abandon that monkish cowl? Why does he

always shrink from the sun's gaze? Wherefore is he provided with those barbed arrows? And, lastly, what mean those suspicious stains upon his weapons and his garments?"—Here, the dark Orchis paused and looked mysterious; while the fair Blue-bell, and her friend Anemone, both trembled on their stalks at the dreadful suspicions suggested by the words they had just heard, entirely forgetful that he who had uttered them bore on his own green garments, spots very similar in hue and appearance to those he had so invidiously noticed in his neighbour.

Thus, for no offence whatever, but that of being in habits and appearance unlike his fellows, was the unoffending Arum universally condemned; while the handsome, but atrocious Bella Donna, and the graceful and deceptive Bitter-sweet, were held in high admiration, and, perhaps, secretly regarded with envy by some of their fair compeers.

Little, however, did the upright Arum

regard the unmerited censure of those amongst whom he dwelt, though not as one of them ; he grew on, quietly fulfilling the part that Nature had assigned him, and, at last, disappeared from the place he had occupied, where his presence was scarcely missed.

The spring music of birds, the summer hum of insects, had both, in turn, been hushed, and the silence of the wood was now only broken by the sighing of the autumn wind, and the rustling rain of falling foliage. And what had become of all the Arum's gay companions? One by one they had gone, or were fast going, the way of all flowers. Some had long since sunk into the ground, or been swept from off its face. Of some, a few faded remains were yet visible, but existing only as melancholy relics of departed loveliness ; while others, from whose sapless veins life had quite departed, still preserved a skeleton resemblance of their perfect forms, bleached

by the last suns of summer, and now rattling in the autumn blast.*

And how fared it with the eccentric Arum? He was eccentric still, and, having assumed a garb more cheerful than before, he alone looked fresh and vigorous in the scene of decay and desolation. His hood was cast aside; his features altogether changed; for, in place of the unpretending blossom to which the name of flower had been denied, he now bore a cluster of berries, red and bright, seeming to smile amidst the death-like hue of vegetation.

Why did the Arum still stand alone? While the fellows of his spring-time had been expanding all their charms, and exhausting all their energies, in the brilliant glare of summer, he had disappeared, unheeded, from amongst them, to pursue, in retirement, the purposes of his creation, for the completion

* Such as the Carline Thistle, and many species of *Gnaphalium* or *Xeranthemum*.

of which he now reappeared in renewed beauty and vigour.

Let us seek a parallel to the habits of the eccentric Arum. May not such be found in the passage of a virtuous man through the giddy world of pleasure. He, like the plant in question, resembles not the multitude, and is, therefore, singled out as an object of its scorn, detraction, and suspicion. Wearied of beholding their vain pursuits and empty pleasures, he retires, in the maturity of his powers, from amidst the swarm of summer flies which buzz on regardless of his absence. Years roll over — the eccentric individual returns, perchance, to the scene of former days; and there, what does he behold?—the gay companions who scoffed at his singularities are either departed from their place, or are gay no longer. They have been keeping up, incessantly, the inflated ball of pleasure, till it has burst beneath the last effort of their wearied hands and sickened hearts;

whilst he, invigorated by the wholesome rest of religious retirement within himself—he alone, in the autumn of life, is enabled to display a cheerful, calm serenity, which, like the glowing berries of the Arum, is rendered doubly conspicuous by the surrounding gloom.

NOTES.

The tuberous *Moschatelle* is a modest, humble plant, with greenish, musk-scented flowers, which emerge from their bed of withered leaves in April or May; the blossoms are curiously arranged in five-flowered cubical heads. Linnæus found this plant plentiful, and very perfect, on a high mountain in Sweden.

The Bird's Nest *Ophrys* contrasts, by its hue of sober brown, with the usual brilliant colours of flowers. This very singular species of *Ophrys* is sometimes found in woods and thickets late in the spring. It has been thought parasitical, like the Broom Rape, which somewhat resembles it in

colour as well as form, and derives its name from the roots which, "crossed over one another verie intricately, resemble" (says Gerarde) "a crowe's neste made of stickes."

"Botanists who are acquainted with the history of the Arum (Cuckow-pint, Wake Robin, &c.), well know that it appears under two very different forms in spring and autumn; but the generality of people are not aware that the naked cluster of scarlet berries, so conspicuous in the hedges when summer is over, is the produce of that curiously sheathed or hooded plant, which (under the name of Lords and Ladies), attracts the notice of children, in spring, under most shady hedges. The sheath of this singular plant is called the spathe, and the upright stalk within, bearing the parts of fructification, the spadix. This spadix, or tongue, sometimes varies in colour; and both the spathe and leaves, which are sagittate, or arrow-shaped, are sometimes spotted with purple, or dark red. Several foreign species of the Arum have been introduced into our gardens and conservatories. Amongst these is the Arum Trilobium, a native of Ceylon, distinguished by the rich brown velvety appearance of its flowers, the length of its tapering spadix,

and a most powerful odour, the exact reverse of sweet. The *Pothos Foetida*, or Skunk Weed—an *Arum* of North America, which has the same unattractive property—bears a very remarkable resemblance to a shell.

The Blue-bell, Hare-bell, or English Hyacinth—whose sweet, drooping flowers are the chief ornament of our woods in May—has often had its name of Hare-bell erringly applied by poets to the round-leaved Bell-flower, or *Campanula*; for it is the elegant bell of the latter that trembles on its slender stalk on heathy mountains and on mouldy turrets; and this is the flower, no doubt, intended by Scott, when describing his *Lady of the Lake*: he says—

“E’en the slight Hare-bell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread.”

The bulbous root of the Blue-bell is full of a slimy, glutinous juice, which, in Gerarde’s time, was used “to set feathers upon arrowes instead of glew, or to paste bookes with, and to make the best starche next unto that of Wake Robin Rootes”—a main ingredient, probably, for stiffening the rigid ruffs of good Queen Bess.

The Wood Anemone, or White Wind-flower, an elegant plant, common in shady places in April

and May. The deeply-toothed leaves are sometimes dotted beneath; and the blossoms, which always fold up against rain, are sometimes tinged with rose-red, or purple.

Common Eye-bright frequently adorns barren heaths and pastures, especially in chalky soils, with its bright eye-like blossoms, to which, probably, it owes its ancient fame as a remedy for disorders of sight—even according to Gerarde—restoring it when lost. He adds, moreover, that “the herbe, powdered and taken in a cuppe of white wine, comforteth the memorie as well.” Under its name of *Euphrasia*, it is celebrated in Shenstone’s *Village School-Mistress*; and by Milton—

“Famed Euphrasy may not be left unsung
That gives dim eyes to wander leagues around.”

“The early Purple-spotted Orchis is a handsome, and one of our most common, species, with broad, purple-spotted leaves. It is a spring contemporary in our woods with the Cowslip, the Cardamine, and the *Adoxa Moschatelle*, which, diffusing its musky scent in vain, is trampled under foot in search of these showier flowers.”—*Sowerby’s Eng. Bot.*

The roots of this species of Orchis are most

commonly used for making a very nutritive kind of food, called salep.

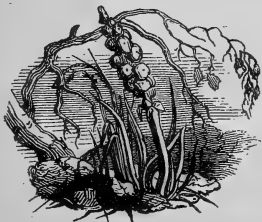
The *Atropa*, *Bella Donna*, *Deadly Night-shade*, or *Dwale*, with ovate leaves, and large, handsome, bell-shaped purple flowers, growing on a solitary stalk, was once frequent in the neighbourhood of London, though now extirpated by building. Indeed, it is now only rarely found in chalky soils ; a fortunate circumstance, on account of the highly poisonous nature of its black, shining berries, which were named to Curtis by a little Kentish boy, who had suffered from eating them, "*Naughty Man's Cherries*." In Blair's *Pharmacobotanologia*, is a curious account of the Scots, in the reign of the good Duncan,* using the *Deadly Night-shade* to poison, during a time of truce, the provisions supplied by them to the Danes, who, under Sweno, brother of Harold, had invaded Scotland. The poison was infused into wine and ale, of which the Danes drank plentifully, and, being fallen upon, in their state of intoxication, by the Scots, were, for the most part, killed ; the remnant, with their besotted king, escaping with difficulty to their vessels.

The name of *Atropa* is said to be derived

* Murdered by Macbeth.

from Atropos, one of the evil destinies; the Italian one of Bella Donna, because used by ladies in the composition of their face-paint. The juice of the berries stain paper of a beautiful and durable purple.

The Bending Bitter-sweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), or Woody Night-shade, adorns every damp hedge, in June and July, with its graceful clusters of revolute purple flowers, rendered lively by the bright yellow of the conjoined anthers—these being succeeded by oval, scarlet berries, fair to the eye, and, on first tasting, pleasant to the palate, but, subsequently, nauseous and highly poisonous to man, slightly so to animals. The root and dry twigs are used medicinally—the virtues of one part of the plant being found, as is often the case, to atone for the deleterious properties of another.



IV.

THE LINNÆA AND THE PINE TREE;
OR,
THE ABIDING PROVED PERISHABLE, AND THE
PERISHABLE MADE IMMORTAL.

A GIGANTIC Pine Tree had, for upwards of four centuries, reigned in solitary grandeur on the heights of a rocky mountain in Swedish Lapland. Beneath the snows of those 400 winters he had beheld the few vegetable productions which grew around him, repeatedly concealed, and frozen by their bitter blasts, apparently destroyed. He had sometimes even beheld man, the lord of creation, fall benumbed and lifeless at his feet; while he, still proudly defying the storm, grew on, full of sap and vigour.

The pride of this lordly Pine “grew with



THE LINNÆA & THE PINE.

his growth, and strengthened with his strength." Seeing nothing above him, he fancied that the world could not produce his equal; for ever ascending, he aspired to reach the highest heaven; and beholding every green thing, except himself, wrapt yearly in a shroud of snow, he even thought himself immortal. At the foot of this Alpine monarch grew a little trailing plant, buried each year beneath the snows of winter, and nearly concealed beneath the moss in summer. This little plant was so utterly unknown, that it could not even boast a name. When the magic breath of a Lapland spring had suddenly variegated with spots of verdure the barren site they occupied, two travellers were one day seen approaching the lofty Pine and his lowly companion. The former beheld them, while yet afar off, making their toilsome way up the rough ascent which led to the foot of his rocky throne. "Poor dwarfish creepers!" apostrophized the vege-

table giant; "ye are, doubtless, coming hither to offer homage to my greatness." As the two men drew nearer, one, indeed, looked up at the stupendous tree in seeming admiration; but the eyes of the other were chiefly bent towards the earth. On reaching the Pine's foot, the first individual began to take careful measure of its enormous circumference, while the attention of the second was engaged on a far different object—the little red and white blossoms of the nameless plant, of which he had just caught a glimpse through their dark green veil of moss. He stooped to gather; looked at them with delight, considered them with attention, and then pressed them with enthusiasm to his lips. In what opposite and what erring estimation did the Pine Tree hold the actions of these two travellers. Pleased at the notice bestowed on him by the first, he whispered, with proud complacency, "'Tis a pity, oh man, that thou shouldst be so frail a

creature ; since, weak and little as thou art, thou canst sometimes appreciate the great and powerful. But, as for thee, contemptible being !” he continued, apostrophizing the younger traveller, “ thy mind and body are alike—both low and grovelling—thus to waste thy silly admiration on a dwarfish weed, and disregard myself, the most stupendous object on the earth. Thou callest thyself creation’s lord !—ah ! ah ! ah !” and the Pine shook his sombre branches, as though laughing in derision. But the Pine would have trembled, and not have laughed, could he have looked into the thoughts of the elder traveller, the man whose taste he had commended, for he would have read therein his own approaching doom. That man, it is true, had scanned, with admiration, the colossal proportions of the tree ; but he had scanned them only with the calculating eye, and in the narrow spirit of a trader ; in plain terms, the elder traveller was a timber-merchant

of Lullea,* and, in his mind's eye, the Pine was already condemned; its career of fancied immortality cut short by the woodman's axe, and its trunk, the growth of centuries, transformed into "the mast of some great ammiral," or sawn into planks of red deal for some less noble purpose. In a far different spirit to his companion had the younger traveller lifted carefully from the ground, and admired the modest beauty of the weed without a name. He was an ardent naturalist; one who truly "looked through Nature up to Nature's God," and was gifted with a mind imaginative, even to a degree which the dull plodder might have termed fancifully enthusiastic. "Ah!" exclaimed he, addressing the little drooping flower, now, for the first time, drawn from its mossy shade, "how well dost thou represent my own early career! Even as I was, thou art—a little northern plant, flowering early, abject, de-

* Lullea, or Lula, a town in Swedish Lapland.

pressed, and long overlooked ; henceforth thou shalt bear my name." He who spoke thus was one of the brightest luminaries of science—the polar star* of botany—the great Linnæus ; and the Linnæa is the humble plant he then discovered.

How often has the ambitious man, occupying a position as elevated in society as that of the Pine in the vegetable world, whose life, like the existence of that ever-growing giant, has been one continued aspiration after greatness, been as suddenly swept from the face of the earth, falling equally undistinguished from his fellows ; while another, like the Linnæa, long an unnoticed and contented dweller in the shade, is all at once snatched from obscurity, and, perhaps, by no peculiar personal merit, but only as associated with some great event, or noted individual, leaves behind him an undying name ! So

* Linnæus was created a Knight of the Polar Star.

vain are restless aspirations after worldly celebrity, and so accidental the chances which confer what men denominate immortal reputation. Let us, then, seek a higher, better immortality—the immortal happiness and glory which shall endure when the earth has passed away, and all its stars are set for ever.

NOTES.

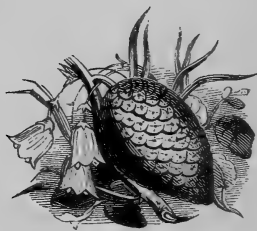
THE Scotch Fir, or Wild Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), lives to the age of upwards of 400 years, is extremely hardy, and delights in the most sandy, sterile situations. It attains the height of eighty feet, and furnishes the tallest and straightest masts for our navy. The wood of the Pine is called red and yellow deal, and from this and other species of fir are obtained tar, pitch, turpentine, &c. The resinous roots, splintered, are sometimes used in the Highlands as candles. “Fishermen make ropes of the inner bark, and hard necessity has taught the Laplanders and

Kamschatdales to convert it into bread, when ground and baked.”—Linnæus’s Lapland Tour. “The derivation of the generic name, *Pinus*, is involved in obscurity. Linnæus places it amongst Latin names of unknown origin. De Theis, however, deduces *Pinus* from the Celtic, and shows it to exist, variously modified, in all the dialects of that ancient language, its basis being *pin* or *pen*, a mountain or rock, whence we have Apennines, and the Penine Alps.”—Rees’s Cyclopædia.

The Linnæa Borealis, so named after Linnæus, grows in stony, dry, mossy woods. It is a small trailing plant, with drooping, bell-shaped blossoms, fragrant of an evening. It grows wild near Aberdeen, and was found as far north as Lulea, by Linnæus, who described it in his Lapland Tour. This great naturalist traced a fanciful analogy between it and his own early fate, calling it “a little northern plant, flowering early, depressed, abject, and long overlooked.” Linnæus was the son of a clergyman, born in 1707. At the age of thirty-four he was appointed Professor of Physic and Botany in the University of Upsal; afterwards physician to the king, who

created him a Knight of the Polar Star, and conferred on him a pension and patent of nobility.

Speaking of the nomenclature of plants, the accomplished Sir William Jones says, in addressing the Asiatic Society, "Nor can I see, without pain, that the great Swedish botanist considers it as the supreme and only reward of labour in this part of natural history, to preserve a name by hanging it on a blossom. Yet his excellent works are the true basis of his just celebrity, which would have been feebly supported by the stalk of the Linnæa."







THE FLOWER OF NIGHT & THE FLOWER OF DAY.

V.

THE FLOWER OF NIGHT AND THE FLOWER OF DAY.

“Poor forlorn Sephálíká! wherefore dost thou droop, and, like a self-denying Dervish, refuse to taste the pleasures spread around thee?” So spake a twining Cámalatá, whose wreathed blossoms of “rosy red” were thrown, like a vivid ray of sun light, over the dark foliage of an Indian hedge; and her words were addressed to a tree of humble growth and unattractive form, called the Sorrowful Sephálíká, or Indian Mourner. “I droop not for sadness,” quietly returned the latter, “and as for pleasures, though of a far different description, I possess a store of them which I would not exchange for thine. ’Tis true, I bask not, like thee, in the glare of

mid-day ; but I drink in delight from the dewy moonbeams. I waste not my fragrance on those who heedlessly flutter in the sun, but I convey perfume into the very souls of those who love to contemplate the starry heavens. Such are the pleasures I enjoy, and such the delights I impart to those who seek me." "And prythee who would seek thee ? and where are the boasted pleasures in thy power to bestow ?" asked the Cámalatá, scornfully ; "do they lie hidden beneath thy drooping leaflets, or are they imprisoned within thy closed and scentless flower buds ? Behold yon Bee directing his flight towards us. Let him be judge of our respective merits, and see how he will choose between us." The Bee's election was presently made, for, after hovering for a moment over the mourning Sefhálícá, he settled on the gaudy Camálatá. There he sat, and sipped her luscious nectar till his cloyed appetite required some new excitement, in

quest of which he then proceeded. Roving from one sweet to another, he spent the live-long day; but when almost every flower was folded in sleep, and ceased to exhale its odour, then whither went the tired insect to seek for quiet and repose? His latest flight was winged towards a spot from whence the dewy air came laden with the richest perfume. It was the same spot he had visited in the morning, that occupied by the rosy Cámalatá and the sorrowful Sephálíca: but now, what a change was there! the Cámalatá looked no longer rosy, and the Sephálíca appeared no longer sorrowful. The white and orange blossoms of the latter, now widely expanded, and pouring forth their jasmine fragrance, shone brightly conspicuous through the twilight gloom. It was now the turn of the Cámalatá to be passed over with indifference, for the Bee was glad to reverse his mid-day choice, and, nestling in the sweet tubes of the Sephálíca, was soon buried in delicious slumber.

Let the rosy Cámalatá of our fable represent Pleasure in her gaudy robe, and let the night-blooming Sephálíká, misnamed "the Sorrowful," be permitted, as she appeared by day, to personify Religion. Then may the honey-seeking Bee find his prototype in Man, who, like the busy insect, intent on profit or on pleasure, passes heedlessly by the tree of life, because, in the sunshine of his days, it appears all bloomless and uninviting. But when satiated with the honied cup of worldly enjoyment, or wearied of amassing golden treasure, he turns, in the evening of life, to the support he once neglected, then, if, like the Bee, he return in time, he will find the consolations of Religion, like the night-flowers of the Sephálíká, open for his reception: like these, they will shine brightly through the darkness closing round him, and, lulled by their heaven-ascending perfume, he will sink peacefully to his everlasting rest.

NOTES.

THE Sad Tree or Indian Mourner (*Arbor tristes*) is thus described by Gerarde : "Its sweet yellow flowers open and flourish of a night—in the daytime look withered and with mourning cheere. The leaves also shrink, and hang lowring and hanging, as if loathing the light, and not abiding the heate of the Sunne. Poetic Indians say that this tree was once the faire daughter of a great lord or king, and that she rejected the addresses of the Sun, who was in love with her. It is a native of the East Indies, and is called by the Persians Gul." The "mourning cheere" of this tree's mid-day appearance seems, however, somewhat exaggerated by our old author, on comparison with the account given of it by Sir William Jones, who says, "This gay tree (for nothing sorrowful appears in its nature) spreads its rich odour to a considerable distance every evening, but at sunrise it sheds most of its night-flowers, which are collected with care for the use of perfumers and dyers. My Pandits unanimously assure me that this plant is their Sephálíká, thus named because Bees are supposed to sleep on its blossoms."

The Sorrowful Nyctianthes and Arbor Tristes are the names given by Linnæus to this fragrant inhabitant of India, of whose native country, Dr. Roxburgh, in his *Flora Indica*, tells us he is doubtful, having always found it in a state of cultivation. He describes it as a shrub or small tree, with blossoms of exquisite sweetness, resembling new honey (their tubes orange, and borders white), opening at sunset, and falling off at sunrise. When destitute of blossom, he says it has but an indifferent appearance.

The Sorrowful Nyctianthes does not alone dispense its fragrance to enhance the luxury of the bright moonlight nights of India, and our own country produces several such flowers, elegantly termed by Linnæus, *Flores tristes colore et odore*. Their colour is generally pale and sickly, inclining to greenish or yellowish-brown. One of this kind is the night-flowering Catchfly, whose petals, rolled up in the day, are unfolded, and grow sweet of an evening. This movement is repeated several days, while the flower lasts. It has been supposed that the action of light upon the surface of each petal may cause it to contract. "Such flowers," says Sir J. Smith, "are a curious phenomenon, and furnish a subject for philo-

sophic musing when the mind is best disposed for the contemplation of the Author of nature's works."

The Indian names of the *Ipomea Quamoclit* of Linnæus, are *Cámalatá* and *Surga-cauti*, or Sunshine. "This plant," says Sir William Jones, "is the most beautiful of its order, both in the colour and form of its leaves and flowers : its elegant blossoms are 'celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,' and have justly procured it the name of Love's Creeper (*Cámalatá*). If ever flower was worthy of Paradise, it is our charming *Ipomea*. Many species of this genus, and its near ally, the *Convolvulus*, grow wild in our Indian provinces."



VI.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT AND HER TWO PHYSICIANS.

A DELICATE *Mimosa*, an inhabitant of the hot-house, and one of the most sensitive of her tender tribe, had long been subject to a variety of nervous disorders. The Balm and the Balsam having afforded her no relief, she at last laid her distressing case before the Healing Hypericon, or St. John's Wort, as this celebrated vulnerary of ancient renown is more commonly called. This vegetable doctor by no means resembled a court physician; he was rather of the Abernethian school, for his exterior was rough, and his character of upright rigidity. His healing celebrity had, moreover, been chiefly acquired



THE SENSITIVE PLANT.



as the "balm of the warrior's wound," and this was the first time he had ever been called on to assuage the less palpable ailments of the fair and tender. What wonder, then, that the delicate Mimosa shrank from his touch, when he attempted to feel how the sap circulated through her veins. "Ah! learned sir!" she feebly whispered, "I implore you to handle me less roughly. You little know the exquisite sensibility of my nervous system."

"Perfectly, madam," returned the Hypericon; "and I also know that your natural weaknesses have been augmented tenfold by indulgence." "Indulgence!" exclaimed the Mimosa, her hitherto closed and drooping leaflets suddenly rising and expanding with surprise and indignation; "why 'tis by care alone, or what you are pleased to term indulgence, that my frail existence is prolonged at all. But what, then, may I beg to know, sir, are the habits you would please to

recommend?" "In the first place, leave this stifling hot-house for the refreshing air." "Air!" cried the affrighted Mimosa; "to me, who shudder at the slightest breath admitted through these windows, talk of the out-door air! It would presently annihilate my very being." "Only try it," responded the imperturbable Hypericon, "and then the refreshing showers"—— "Showers!" interrupted the delicate patient, "a single drop of water is more than I can stand." "Very likely; but a vapour-bath of dew, or a shower-bath of rain, would do you all the good imaginable. Only try it, I repeat, and you'll soon get rid of all your fancied ailments."

"Cruel physician!" sighed the sensitive Mimosa.

"Impertinent rascal!" cried a stout, red-flowered Balsam, the professor of healing already in attendance on the fair Sensitive. "How dare you thus insult this tender plant

by scoffing at her, alas! too serious disorders?" The Hypericon deigned not to notice this address, but, turning to the Mimosa with quiet dignity, "Madam," said he, "may you have strength to digest my medicine, the bitter, but precious pill of truth; and so I take my leave." With these words the upright Hypericon bent stiffly to his dissatisfied patient, but, in so doing, he chanced to touch, inadvertently, the arm of his brother doctor, the irritable Balsam. Hereupon, whizzing like shot about the head of the astonished Hypericon, came a volley of pill-like missiles, discharged from the seed-pockets of his angry rival; but though slightly wounded, the former resolutely kept his ground, even till the ammunition of his cowardly adversary was all expended. As for the Mimosa, she fell back in a fainting condition, at sight of the mischief she had occasioned; but, far as ever from following the advice of the honest Hypericon, her over-

wrought sensibility went on increasing. To what pitch it might have at last arrived, is impossible to tell, but for the occurrence of an event at which she shuddered as a mighty hardship, but which proved, in the end, an important benefit. Through the judgment or caprice of the gardener, she was removed, after a season, from the hot-house to the open air. Soon fortified by exposure, she no longer shrank from the slightest touch, trembled at the breath of the gentlest zephyr, or sank beneath the weight of the lightest rain-drop. Her general appearance, and character of growth, became also completely changed, for the disposition of her tender leaflets, hitherto for ever in extremes, either widely expanded to the sun, or closed in seeming moodiness at his absence, now most usually held a happy medium between the two. She could now drink the dew-drops with delight, and receive fresh vigour from the summer breeze. Restored, herself, to a

state of nature, she was now rendered capable of enjoying the precious boons that nature bestows. As she looked back with horror on her late enervating prison, she also remembered the wholesome advice she had once thought so cruel ; and, convinced by experience, could not help confessing that Doctor Hypericon had, indeed, told her truth.

Let us apply this truth to the over-sensitive children of luxury, whose natural weaknesses of mind and body have been fostered in the hot-bed of indulgence. Perhaps some honest physician, or sincere friend, may recommend a more bracing air, or a less luxurious mode of living. What does the adviser gain ? Perhaps a character for inhumanity, or even abuse, at the hand of some sycophantish friend. And how acts the advised ? In all probability, exactly as he did before ; possessing not the will, and feeling, perhaps, as destitute of power to quit the lap of ease,

as the Sensitive Plant her shelf within the hot-house. But let, what is commonly termed, some cruel change of fortune remove the pampered complainer from the artificial atmosphere of indulgence, into the healthful air of exertion, his bodily and mental powers become strengthened and improved. Then, with self-upbraiding, he confesses the wisdom of the advice he slighted, and, with gratitude, acknowledges the mercy of that dispensation he once murmured at as most afflictive.

NOTES.

THE common Sensitive Plant (*Mimosa pudica*) is a native of the Brazils, usually kept in our hot-houses. The singular irritability belonging to this genus, has been a subject of interest to the curious observer, and of investigation to the scientific.

Professor Martyn says—"These plants are more or less susceptible of the touch, or pressure,

according to the warmth. Those kept in a warm stove contract on being touched with the hand, a stick, or from the wind blowing upon them; when removed to a cooler situation, they do not contract so much; and those exposed to the open air have very little motion, but remain in one state, neither expanded nor closed, but between both, especially in cool weather; nor do these shut themselves at night, as those which are in a warm temperature."

It is not the light which causes them to expand, as some have affirmed; for in the long days of summer they are generally contracted by five or six o'clock in the evening, when the sun remains above the horizon two or three hours longer; nor do they continue shut until the sun rises in the morning. When any of the upper leaves of these plants are touched, if they fall down and touch those below them, it will occasion their contracting and falling, so that by one touching another they will continue falling for some time. When recovering, their motion is vibratory, like the index of a clock.

Some sorts are so susceptible, that the smallest drop of water falling on their leaves will cause them to contract.

Sir Hans Sloane, in his "Natural History of Jamaica," describes a species of *Mimosa* growing plentifully in the savannas, which he says is "so very sensible, that a puff of wind from your mouth will make impressions on it. I have, on horseback," he continues, "wrote my name with a rod, in a spot of it, which remained visible for some time."

This remarkable property of shrinking from the touch has been said to be owing to the plant being strongly saturated with oxygen gas, which it disengages upon the slightest provocation, and its place, for a short time, is supplied by atmospheric air, which retiring, the leaves resume their former appearance.

The foliage of these plants is usually of peculiar elegance, but a remarkable contrast to this, their prevailing character, is afforded in the *Mimosa Hispidula*, a single-leaved species of great rigidity, harshness, and asperity, a native of New Holland.

A most extraordinary sort of Sensitive Plant is the Sensitive *Hedysarum*, a native of Bengal, which is, indeed, one of the most wonderful productions in the vegetable world. When the air is very warm, and quite still, its leaves are in

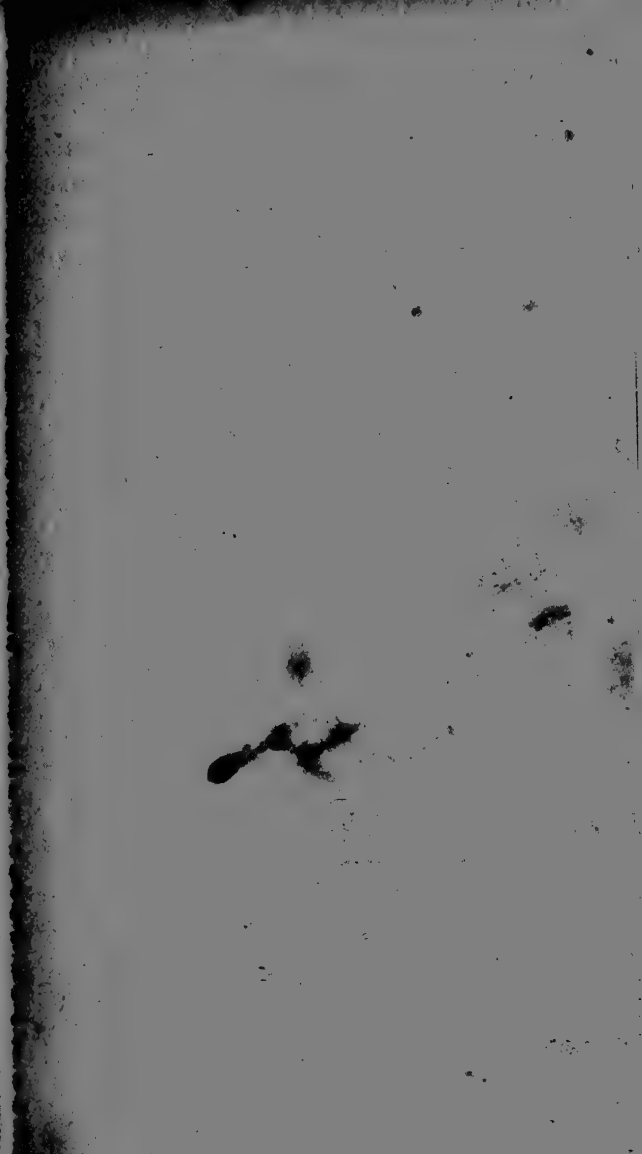
continual motion, some rising, some falling, and others whirling circularly, by twisting their stems. The cause of this irritability seems very different from that of the common *Mimosa*, its motion not being influenced by touch, or exterior stimulus.

The Balsam is called *Impatiens*, and *Noli me Tangere*, because the elastic valves of the seed-vessel curl up, when ripe, and fly asunder at the slightest touch, so as to discharge the seeds. The capsules of the Wood-sorrel also dart forth their little shining seeds, by means of an elastic arillus containing them; and another of these touch-me-not vegetable productions is found in the Cardamine *Impatiens*, or Impatient Lady's Smock, the pods of which, bursting elastically, discharge their seeds with great force on the least touch or motion.

All the species of St. John's Wort, or *Hypericon*, many of which are natives of England, have acquired a high ancient renown for their healing properties, whence the name of Tutsan, Toute-saine, or All-heale. These virtues are expressed by the author of Gondibert, in the line, "Balm of the warrior's wound, *Hypericon*." The common, or perforated St. John's Wort, is gathered by the peasantry of France and Ger-

many on St. John's day, who hang it in their windows, as a charm against storms, thunder, and evil spirits ; a custom arising, probably, from an ignorant interpretation of the name *Fuga Dæmonum*, given it by some medical writers, who supposed the plant a good medicine in maniacal disorders. The dried plant, boiled with alum, serves as a yellow dye for wool.







THE TRUMPET FLOWER.

VII.

THE TRUMPET FLOWER AND THE HUMMING BIRD.

THEIR plumage sparkling with the hues of amethyst and emerald, ruby and topaz, what gems of earth can rival those feathered jewels of the air, the tiny Humming Birds, which, in their native climes, are for ever on the wing amidst flowers scarcely less brilliant than themselves? Perceptible to the ear by the rushing sound of his pinions, but so swift and agile as almost to elude the eye, an insect-like bird of this description (a native of Carolina) had passed the live-long morning in flitting from flower to flower, and sipping, while he rested on the wing, the delicious nectar of which his food consisted.

His eccentric flights conducted him, at length, to the neighbourhood of a lofty tree, which appeared at a little distance flourishing in verdant health, and adorned with gaudy blossoms; but, on approaching nearer, our Humming Bird discovered that those blossoms were not its own, and that its seeming verdure was only a borrowed cloak, concealing a withered, sapless trunk. The tree had long ago been dead, and the living leaves and flowers which entwined its skeleton were those of the Bignonia, or Trumpet Flower of Carolina. The long crimson and yellow bells of this splendid climber were after the Humming Bird's own heart; and he was just on the point of thrusting his slender bill into the pendulent tubes before him, when a little feathered friend—one who had lived several summers longer than himself—suddenly flew between the eager bird and the tempting blossom. The eyes of the disappointed flower-sucker flashed as brightly as his

plumage at what he considered a prodigious affront, and he turned fiercely to resent it. "My dear comrade," said his friend, "prithee pardon my apparent rudeness; but I only baulked thy appetite in order to preserve thy liberty and life. Beware of yonder flower! Seest thou not that death stands wrapped within its shining foliage? and, believe me, destruction is also lurking within that honied cup thou wert about to taste." "And taste it I certainly shall," returned the other, knocking aside his friendly monitor by an impatient jerk of his extended pinion—"you would only reserve that flower for your own entertainment; but I can easily see through such pretended kindness." "And I, also, can foresee your coming fate, to which, with pity, I must leave you," said the elder Humming Bird, cutting through the air; and, before the sound of his pinions was lost in distance, the little foolish flutterer, who despised advice, was struggling to escape from the Trumpet

Flower, into which he had thrust, not only his bill, but his silken body. Sticking midway in the crimson tube, he strove in vain to burst it by repeated efforts; till, at length, tired of striving to regain his liberty by force, he had recourse to supplication.

“Lovely, but cruel flower,” hummed he, in his softest notes, “’tis hard to punish me for only worshipping too fondly thy sweetness and thy beauty.” The *Bignonia*, deaf to his supplication, merely replied by closing her elastic tube more tightly around her victim. At that moment an Indian girl happened to pass beneath the withered tree: she looked up, and, attracted by its unusual motion, her eye instantly rested on the Trumpet blossom, from which protruded the struggling form of the captured Humming Bird. For her, he was a prize ready taken in the toils. With an agile bound, she reached the little prisoner and his prison; and, seizing both together, pulled the latter from its stem.

In another instant the flower was torn open, the bee-like bird had breathed its last beneath the rude grasp of his new captor, and a few more minutes saw him hung, like a jewelled pendant, to her ear. Thus did the Bird and the *Bignonia* meet the fate they had provoked; the one, by his obstinacy, the other, by her want of pity.

NOTES.

HUMMING BIRDS are, for the most part, natives of the West India Islands and the continent of America, where their elegance of form and brilliancy of colour add a high finish to the beauty of the western landscape. No sooner is the sun risen, than numerous kinds are seen fluttering abroad; their wings are so rapid in motion that it is impossible to discern their colours except by their glittering; they are never still, but continually visiting flower after flower, and extracting the honey with their forked

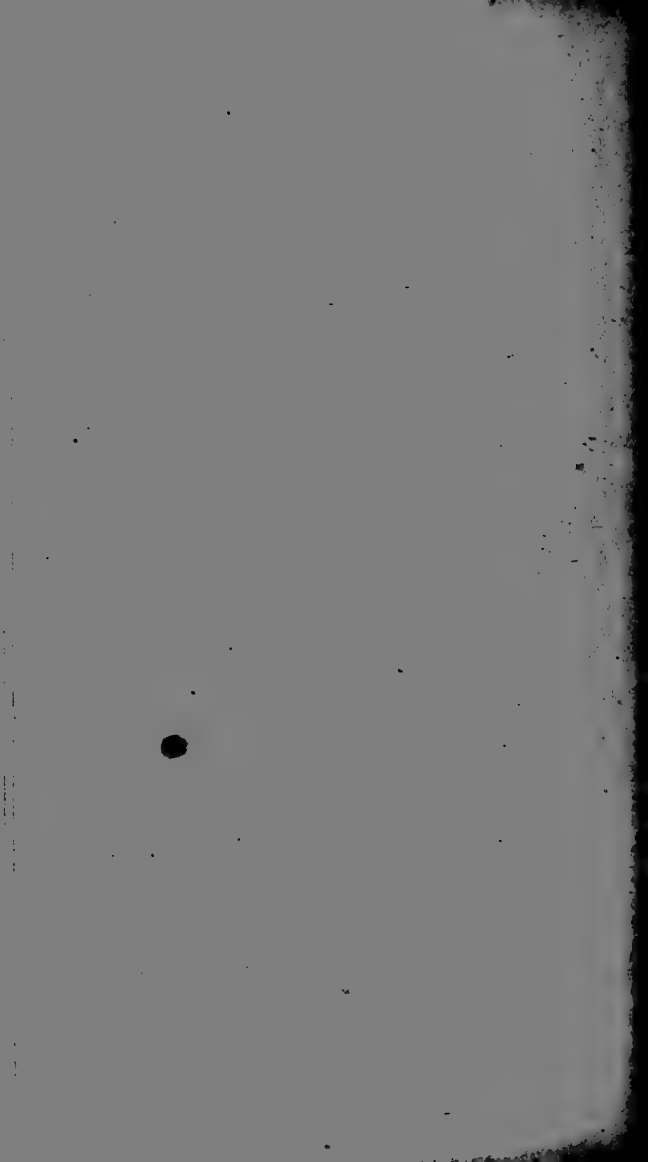
VIII.

THE CONTEST BETWEEN THE HOUSES OF ROSE AND TULIP.

How the kingdom of England was once divided by the wars of the Roses, all have read who read anything ; but how the kingdom of Flora was once rent in twain by a somewhat similar struggle, is not, perhaps, so generally known. Man, who (to his shame be it spoken) not only delights in contention with his fellows, but is also a frequent fomenter of quarrels among the lower orders of creation, was the prime agent in this feud among the flowers, who, but for him, would, doubtless, have continued to bloom peacefully, side by side, without a thought of rebellion



THE ROSE & THE TULIP.



against their liege lady the Rose. It was a certain native of Holland who first took it into his stupid head to prefer the gaudy tulip, set it up as the idol of his worship, and so pamper and flatter its vanity, that the inflated flower would, at last, acknowledge no superior, and actually laid claim to supreme sovereignty. In every state there are many discontented subjects, who, glad of an occasion to seek redress for their own real or fancied grievances, readily take up the arms of rebellion, and hide them with the cloak of patriotism, in order to compass their own selfish ends. So it was in the vegetable kingdom; and several influential flowers, who thought themselves slighted by their Queen, pretended to doubt the legitimacy of her title, and joined the party of her usurping rival. Some, indeed, were more easily tempted to desert the reigning Rose, because, being well stricken in days, she had exhibited many alarming symptoms of decay; and

though Flora employed her messenger, the Iris, to mediate between the parties, her olive branch fell to the ground, and each side prepared to take the field. What a din of preparation resounded through the floral ranks!—The Thorn sharpened his spears, the Grasses their blades, the Arrow-head his darts; while the Balsam and the Woodsorrel, both excellent sharpshooters, put their spring guns in the best possible order. Honeysuckle Trumpeters attended each army; the Standards were entrusted to the Pea tribe, and Monks'-hoods were seen accompanying the belligerents in the priestly character. In the eager spirit of party, order was forgotten, the distinctions of class abolished, and families were divided against each other. Well, to it they went, and many a field was left bestrewn with flowery fragments. Fortune, with her usual fickleness, fluctuated between the parties. Sometimes the honour of the day was left with

General Snapdragon, who commanded for the Queen; sometimes with Field-marshal Dent-de-Lion,* who conducted the rebels. When and how this lamentable contest might have ended, it is hard to say, but for the intervention of a superior power. Queen Rose and Prince Tulip (for so he chose to call himself) each accompanied their respective forces, but neither were permitted to risk their persons in the fight. The floral Sovereign, whose reign (as already noted) hastened to its close, was accompanied by the Princess Royal, her eldest daughter, a promising bud, just about to burst into maturity. These distinguished personages occupied an elevated spot in the rear of their army, the rebel Tulip uplifting his insolent head on a rising ground, directly opposite; but the latter stood alone, not being able to boast a single offset from his root.

One evening, after a day of desperate

* Dandelion, a corruption of the original name.

conflict, the tired combatants laid their drooping heads upon the field; the royal Rose, alone, more wakeful than her subjects, sat on her emerald throne, watching the stars as they disappeared, one by one, behind a curtain of heavy clouds, which gradually overspread the heavens; while, from time to time, the voice of a low moaning wind gave warning of an approaching storm. But there was no shelter for the doomed head of the aged Rose; she saw her threatened fate, and prepared to meet it like a true scion of her glorious race. She awoke her daughter, who was already wrapt in unconscious slumber, within the half-closed curtains of her calyx. "My child," said she, "before to-morrow's dawn I shall be no more; my withered leaves are even now falling, and the tempest which approaches will scatter them far and wide upon the earth; but I rejoice in the coming storm, because I know it is sent, in mercy, to lower the proud heads of our rebel-

lious subjects, and make them render obedience to the throne I leave thee ; only be sure to fill it worthily, and Flora will have thee in her keeping." The venerable Rose had scarcely ended, ere a part of her prophecy was accomplished ; the dark canopy of heaven was rent by lightning ; heavy torrents of rain and hail descended ; and her faded leaves were borne away upon the howling blast. The stiff-necked Tulip was one of the first to share the fate of his injured Sovereign ; for the morning saw his mutilated remains stretched upon the ground, a great part of his army having also been destroyed. The Royalists, from having occupied a somewhat more sheltered situation, were less extensive sufferers. Daylight, indeed, revealed to them the loss of their revered Monarch ; but, expanded by the bright beams of the morning sun, the royal Rosebud, of the preceding evening, had burst into a glorious Rose, well worthy to fill the vacant throne.

The faithful subjects of the departed Queen all hastened to pay the homage of their perfume to her youthful successor; and the crest-fallen relics of the rebel army were glad to offer submission, and sue for pardon. A general amnesty was accorded; and, spite of a few futile attempts on the part of upstart Dahlias and pampered Camelias, the empire of the Rose has, ever since, remained firmly established.

NOTES.

THE Rose, according to some authorities, has a name so ancient that its derivation is lost in the obscurity of ages, but others have traced it from the Celtic Ros, Rhod, or Red. From time immemorial the effusions of poets and the lessons of moralists have been adorned and pointed by the short-lived flowers and the prickly thorns of the glorious Rose.

The following epigram on a White Rose being

presented to a Lancastrian lady, is a very sweet blossom of early English poesy, though sprung from the blood, and watered by the tears of civil warfare :

“ If this fair Rose offend thy sight,
It in thy bosom wear ;
T’will blush to find itself less white,
And turn Lancastrian there.”

For its beauty, the Rose was dedicated to Venus ; as an emblem of youth, to Aurora ; of fugacity, to Cupid. By the latter it is fabled to have been given as a bribe to Harpocrates, the god of silence, from whence, perhaps, arose a custom, described by Rosenbergius as prevalent among the northern nations of Europe, of suspending a Rose from the ceiling over the upper end of their tables, to signify that the conversation which might take place should be kept secret, whence doubtless the expression—“ under the Rose.”

Golden Roses were considered so honourable a present, that none but crowned heads were thought worthy to give or receive them, and they were, sometimes, consecrated by popes, and presented to monarchs. Henry VIII. is recorded to have received such a precious gift from

Alexander VI. The flower was considered an emblem of the mortality of the body ; the metal, of the immortality of the soul.

Every means has been adopted to render these flowers double ; hence the Hundred-leaved Rose and all its rich congeners. All the species (says Humboldt) are included between the 70th and 20th degrees of northern latitude, except one in Mexico, in 19° N.L., at 9300 feet above the level of the sea.

In 1797, only five species of Rose were recognised as British ; in 1829, twenty-two were enumerated by Sir J. Smith, to which several have since been added. The fragrant Eglantine, or Sweetbrier, is a British Rose growing wild in dry and chalky soils. The well-known Dog Rose of our hedges, as well as some other species, is remarkable for large mossy protuberances occasioned by an insect—the *Cynips Rosa*. Water distilled from wild Roses is said to possess by far the most delicious odour. The Eastern Attar, or Essential Oil of Roses, though now of easy purchase, was formerly sold at an enormous price, even in Persia, the land of Roses. Tavernier sets the value of an ounce at fifty crowns.

The Garden Tulip is a native of Turkey, and,

in the middle of the seventeenth century, became an object of most extravagant admiration in Europe, especially in the Low Countries, where, during the height of this tulipomania, enormous prices were demanded and given for the roots.

Even in our own country and our own days (at least, in 1832), a famous Tulip, named after Fanny Kemble, was sold for £100 by a Croydon florist. The Tulip claimed by England as a native, is generally found in old chalk pits; it has yellow flowers, which droop before opening, and which possess the attribute of sweetness, denied to the most valued favourites of the garden.

Most of the splendid varieties of Iris have been introduced into our gardens from Persia and the Cape, but our common native species, the Yellow Flag, or Fleur-de-luce, is a very handsome plant, highly ornamental to our ponds and marshes.

The common White Thorn, or May, has true thorns or spines adhering to the wood of the plant, as distinguished from prickles, which adhere only to the bark, as in the bramble, and many species of Rose.

Almost all the numerous grasses which form the clothing of the earth, possess the property

of increasing by their roots as well as seeds, and are not injured by cropping. Out of no less than 118 species, natives of Britain alone, none have been found poisonous, except the Bearded Darnel (*Lolium temulentum*), whose seeds are said to be intoxicating and pernicious in bread. Its name of *Lolium* has been supposed to have given rise to the term Lollard — heretics or weeds in Christ's vineyard. Linnæus divided the vegetable world into nine casts or tribes, of which grasses make one; and, by analogy to the different ranks of society, he fancifully called them the plebeians of creation; while the Palms were the princes, and the Lilies the nobles.

The common Arrow-head, with sagittate leaves, and white and purple flowers, is one of our handsomest aquatics. In China it is much cultivated for the sake of its edible root.

The Balsam and the Wood-sorrel discharge their seeds forcibly on the slightest touch; the former by the elastic bursting of the capsule; the latter by the action of a strong spring-like arillus. (See note, page 51.)

In all leguminous or papilionaceous plants, to which the Pea tribe belongs, the corolla is usually divided into five petals, the upper one

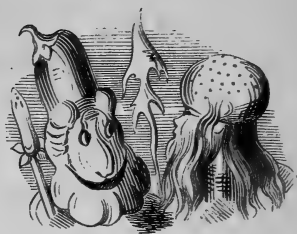
which covers the others being called the standard, the two side petals the wings, and the two lower, which are mostly soldered together, the keel.

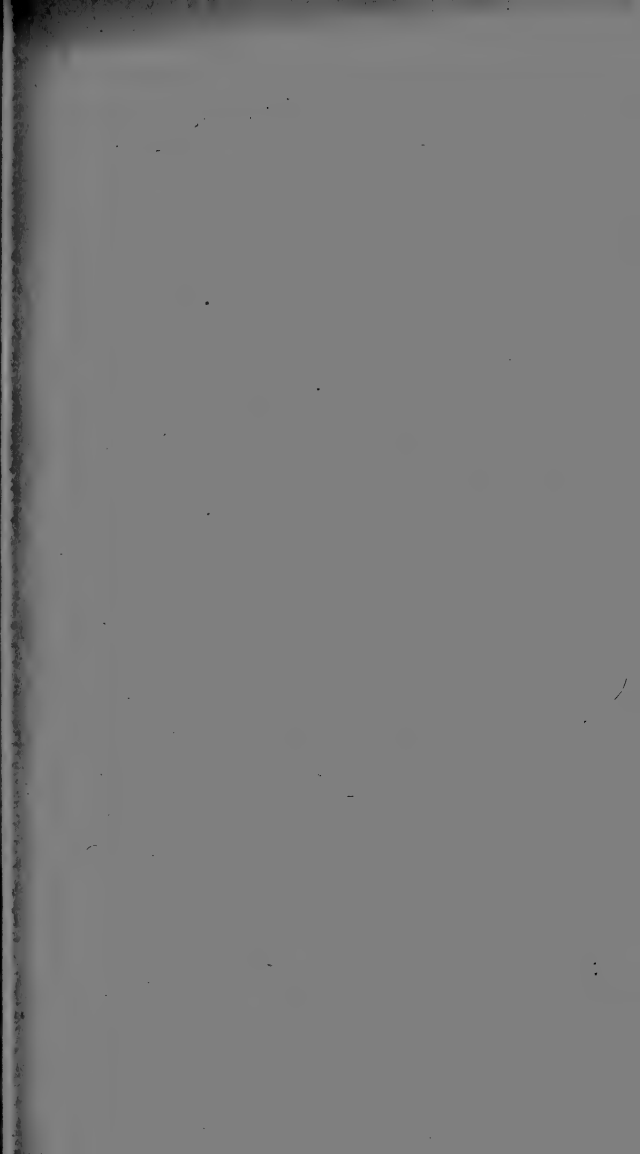
The Monk's-hood, or common Wolfsbane, is described by Gerarde as "universally known in London gardens and elsewhere" above 300 years ago. It has since been discovered naturalized in England, but our old author assigns it to "Rhetica, and sundrie partes of the Alpes," calling its blossoms, "faire and goodlie blew flowers, in shape like a helmet (or cowl), which are so beautiful that a man woulde thinke they were of some excellent virtue, but (he wisely observes) *non est semper fides habenda fronti.*"

Snap-dragon, or Toad-flax, so called from the resemblance of the mouth of its corolla to that of a Toad, and from its gaping widely on lateral pressure. The seed-vessel of some species, when ripe, forms a curious representation of an animal's skull. The great yellow Toad-flax, called by children "eggs and butter," is a handsome native species.

The Dandelion, Dent-de-Lion, Leontodon, or Lion's Tooth, so called from the indented leaves, which have been fancifully compared to the jaws of a Lion.

From the bald appearance of the receptacle, after the seeds have been dispersed, it is sometimes called Monk's-head. This is an excellent flower for the examination of young Botanists, to give them a good idea of the structure of compound flowers; and on such examination the student must be led to confess that no artificial piece of mechanism, however ingenious, can compare with the wonderful construction of this nature's clock, as he used in childhood to call the "downie blow-ball of the Dandelion."







THE HOLLOW FRIEND.

IX.

THE HOLLOW FRIEND.

DAY had closed over one of the mighty forests of Carolina; but the darkness of night only added one shade of gloom to its deep recesses, where, excluded by lofty trees and tangled underwood, the cheerful sunbeams strove in vain to penetrate. All nature was wrapt in silence, broken only at intervals by the plaintive cry of the Whip-poor-will, the distant bellow of the Bull-frog from an adjacent swamp, and the humming voices of two neighbour Fire-flies, who sat side by side upon a leaf, their lanthorns glowing each moment with increased intensity, as the dark-

ness of night grew deeper. While engaged in sociable gossip, the brilliant insects were also, from time to time, regaling themselves by making prey of such unwary Mosquitoes, as, attracted by their light, chanced to fly within its fatal focus. "Hush!" whispered one of these supper-eating friends, suddenly breaking off the conversation, and letting fall the half-devoured leg of a Mosquito—"Hush! heard you not a rustle in the leaves above us? 'Tis the leap of the Green Tree Frog; our enemy's abroad, and 'tis high time for us to be flying." "You're right," returned the other, "we'll instantly be off; but follow me, and I'll conduct you to a place of perfect safety." With these words, both insects spread their wings, and, guided by the last speaker, directed their course towards a swampy savannah, where they alighted on a Mancaneel tree. "Well," said the elder of the Fire-flies, he who had followed his companion's guidance, "where,

pray, is the safe asylum which you spoke of? Our enemies are far more numerous here, and we are in no wise better protected than in the place we flew from." "Stop a bit," returned the other; "can you not discern there, just below us, growing by the water, a plant, with long leaves and drooping yellow flowers? That plant is of a most benevolent nature, and extremely partial to our race. I made acquaintance with him a little while ago; and 'twas but the other day, he told me that, if either myself or friends were ever hard pressed by cruel foes, bird or reptile, I had only to apply to him, and he would willingly afford the shelter of his leaves, which, as he showed me, are round and hollow, and closed at top by convenient doors, shutting out every intruder." "Ay, and shutting in every fool silly enough to be entrapped by his deceitful wiles," hastily rejoined the elder Fire-fly, shaking his head. "Well do I know that treacherous plant, in whose smooth

and dangerous caverns I was once well nigh entrapped myself. Take warning from my experience, and have nothing to do with such a hollow friend, ten times more dangerous, believe me, than an open enemy." Scarcely was this counsel given, when the leap of the Green Tree Frog was again audible, and with it the chirping cry of "Chit! chit! chit!" the voice of the Fire-flies' foe, or, perhaps, a score of them, lurking in the very tree they occupied. "Away! away!" cried the older and wiser insect; "follow *me*, this time, and trust, as *I* shall, to your wings, alone, for safety." But the silly youngster heeded not; and, while his prudent companion was darting swiftly through the night air, like a streaming meteor, he merely descended from the tree to the plant he had pointed out beneath. "I have come," cried he, "to claim your promised shelter." "'Tis freely granted," replied the *Sarracenia* (for so was named the plant in question); "my

leaves are ever open to a friend in jeopardy." The Fire-fly had no time for thanks; his agile pursuer was at his heels; the cry of "Chit! chit! chit!" resounded in his ears, and he gladly crept into the tube-like leaf, whose door, or lid, was instantly flapped down upon him. "Chit! chit! chit!" again almost screamed the little Green Tree Frog, in a prodigious passion at being thus baulked of his prey, whose light was still provokingly visible through his half-transparent asylum. After the lapse of a few minutes, the listening Fire-fly found, by the decreasing loudness of the reptile's chirp, that his enemy had departed, and then, for the first time, took a glance round his place of refuge, illumined, as it was, by the light of his own brilliant lanterns. What, then, was his consternation at beholding, beneath him, a well of water, on the top of which were floating the lifeless bodies of several insects, whom he recognized as kindred or acquaintance? His

heart sunk within him, but he thought it most prudent to try and conceal his fears. "My excellent host," cried he, in a voice as cheerful as he could possibly assume, "I owe you a thousand thanks for this timely protection, but will trespass not a moment longer on your kindness; I await but the lifting of this trap-door above me, to bid you good night, and pursue my journey." "Oh! pray make yourself perfectly at home," returned the perfidious Sarracena; "your last journey's ended, and you see I have provided you with a cold bath, to refresh yourself after its fatigues." "Let me out! let me out!" cried the doomed Fire-fly, beating his wings, in passionate agony, against the sides of his leafy prison; but vain were all his desperate efforts to escape, and he sank, at last, exhausted, into the watery grave prepared for his reception. The last moments of the expiring insect were further embittered by reflecting on the slighted counsel of his old

companion. "Ah!" sighed he, in his dying struggles, "would I had trusted to my own wings for safety; for truly have I found, by sad experience, that an open enemy is ten thousand times less dangerous than a hollow friend!"

NOTES.

THE Whip-poor-will, a species of Goatsucker, which never appears but at night; its melancholy cry is fancied to resemble its familiar name. "The Indians say these birds were never known till a great massacre of their country folks by the English, and that they are the souls of departed spirits of massacred Indians. Many people (in Carolina) look upon them as birds of ill-omen, and are very melancholy if one of them happen to light upon his house, or near the door, and set up his cry (as they will sometimes upon the very threshold), for they verily believe some of the family will die soon after."

The bellow of the Bull-frog, common in the swamps of America, may be heard a quarter of a mile off.

The Fire-fly, common in most parts of America and the West Indies, is "a perfect phosphorus for a considerable portion of its life, most of its internal parts being luminous, and the head furnished with two glandular spots, placed behind the eyes, whence it emits streams of light for a great part of the night. The smallest print may be read by them, if the luminous spots are moved over the letters: eight or ten are sometimes put in a phial. This insect is seldom seen in the day-time, but wakes in the evening. As they are attracted to one another, the Negroes catch them by holding up one, or deceive them by a lighted candle or stick waved up and down."—Brown's Hist. Jamaica. "They abound everywhere in the savannahs and woods. Women work by them, and the Indians travel with them fixed to their feet and hands. They kill the Mosquitoes, for which reason the Indians carry them to their houses more than for light."

The Green Tree Frog of Carolina catches Fire-flies and other insects, adhering to the smoothest leaves by its round fleshy concave feet, somewhat

like the mouth of a leech, thus cleaving by suction. These creatures seldom appear by day, but at night are very active, hopping from spray to spray on the tallest trees, catching Fire-flies, and chirping—‘chit! chit! chit!’ They will even stick fast to a looking-glass, and are found adhering to the under side of green leaves, which they do to conceal themselves from their rapacious enemies, as birds, snakes, &c.”—Catesby.

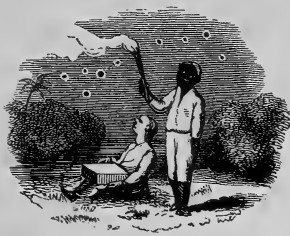
The Mancaneel Tree produces, beneath its bark, a white milky juice of a highly poisonous nature, which renders it dangerous even in the felling. The wood is esteemed for tables and cabinets.

The *Sarracena Flava*, or Yellow Side-saddle Flower, is a common inhabitant of the swamps of North America, from Florida to Carolina. It is an object of curiosity on account of the remarkable structure both of its leaves and flowers. The stigma of the latter is of a most singular shape, covering the parts of fructification like an umbrella; between the angles of which the flaccid petals hang down, somewhat as a woman’s leg over the pommel of a side-saddle; whence, probably, the origin of the name given by the first English settlers. The leaves being hollow tubes

capable of holding water, Linnæus ingeniously considered their curious conformation as a metamorphosis of the leaf of the *Nymphaea* into a form fit for receiving and containing rain water ; and we are told that “the hollow parts of the leaf have always water standing in them, and the top or ear is supposed, in hot dry weather, to shrink and fall over the mouth of the tube, serving as a lid to prevent the exhalation of the wet. In great droughts, birds and other animals repair to these plants.” “There would be more probability in this hypothesis, if these plants were found growing in dry places, but they will not live except in wet situations, where the roots can readily find water without the aid of these supposed reservoirs. The real purpose of this curious construction is, probably, not yet discovered.” So says Curtis’s *Botanical Magazine* ; but later writers on vegetable physiology have supposed that the stores of putrefying insects caught and drowned in the reservoirs of the *Sarracena* and *Pitcher Plant*, or imprisoned in the traps of the *Dionea*, may evolve a sort of air beneficial to their vegetation.

Catesby, in his *Natural History of Carolina*, tells us that the overarching cowl part of the

leaf always partially hangs over the mouth of the tube, which otherwise would be filled with rain, and fall by the weight of the water. The leaves of the Purple Sarracena, though somewhat differently shaped, also retain water, and serve as an asylum for numerous insects from the Frogs that feed upon them.



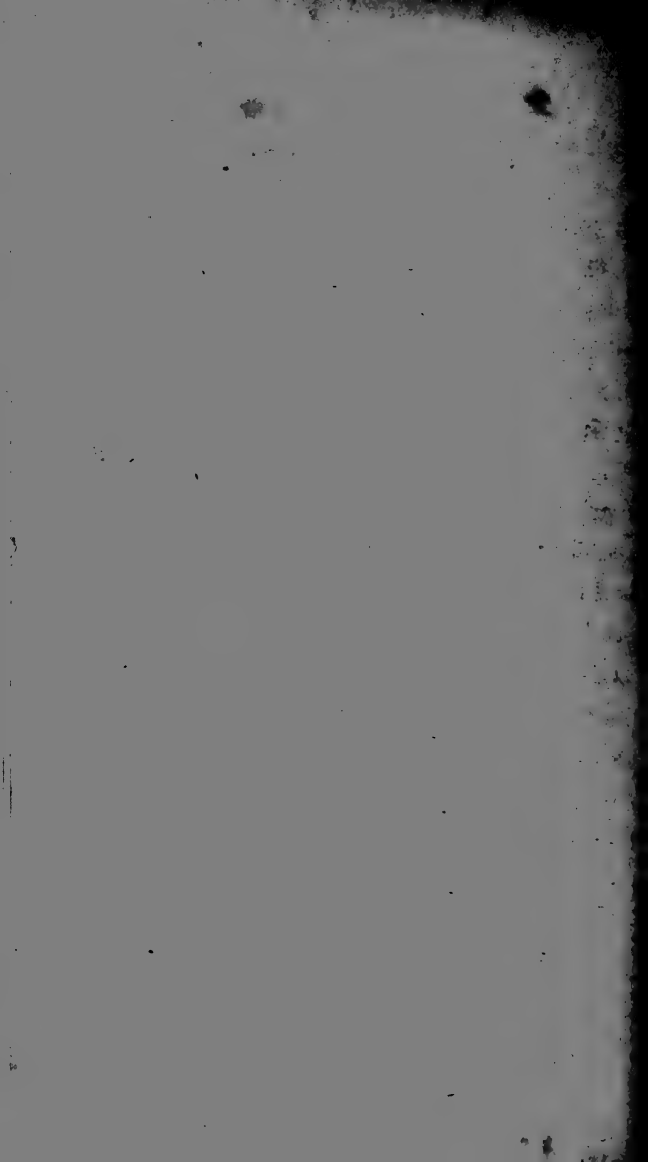
X.

THE CHAMELEON FLOWER AND THE SLAVE.

SOME years ago, and before the happy abolition of slavery in our West India Colonies, there lived in Jamaica a little English boy, who had been taught to regard the sable natives of Africa as a race some few degrees inferior to that of his favourite monkey. Walking early one morning with his black attendant, a negro slave named Dinah, the child's fancy was mightily taken by the large milk-white blossoms of a Changeable Hibiscus, or Martinico Rose, a few of which he stopped to gather. Towards the middle of the day, the boy being then carried in a palanquin near the same place, he made his bearers stop, and calling to Dinah, who walked beside



THE CHAMELEON FLOWER



him, bid her go and fetch him another handful of white flowers, like those he had plucked in the morning. A slight smile parted the thick lips of the negress, as she hastened to obey; and presently returned with a bunch of deep crimson blossoms, which she put into the hand of her young master, her white teeth becoming again visible as she did so. The child angrily told her that those were not what he meant, and that he was sure she had gathered them in another place. "No, 'deed, massa," said the negro woman, "me know dis be de very same flower, only him be turn red." "You lie," cried the spoiled boy, "and take me for a baby to tell me such a story!" and his cheek changed, as he spoke, from sickly white to a crimson deep as the flowers which he threw passionately in Dinah's face. The Slave had been too long accustomed to the insolence of her young tyrant to show, or even feel, resentment; but she ventured to repeat her assertion, adding, "Ebbery

morning in de cool, him flower be lily white; when de sun shine hot, him turn rosy red, and ebbery night him put on darky coat, to mourn for daylight. 'Deed massa, Dinah tell you true." So she did, but her little master would not believe; and, though forbidden by his parents ever to expose himself to the scorching noonday sun, he insisted on getting out of the palanquin, to see for himself. He found it exactly as the negro woman had told him—the white flowers were all turned red; yet, for all that, he would not confess himself wrong, and, what was more, still persuaded himself that he was right, even against the evidence of his own eyes. He was sure, he said, that the good-for-nothing Dinah had brought him to the wrong place, or else she had spitefully gathered and thrown away all his favourite white flowers. Accordingly he hunted about, and made his slaves do the same, for what, in reality, no longer existed, till the burning heat compelled him to relin-

quish his search, though his little mind, as obstinately impenetrable as the Iron-wood of his island, remained closed against conviction.

When evening came, our young gentleman commanded Dinah to attend him again on another search after the White Hibiscus, which the Slave knew would not be found again till morning; nor were the red blossoms any longer to be seen, for their mid-day crimson having gradually grown less brilliant as the sun declined, had now faded to a dingy purple. "Lookee!" cried the slave, "him put on him darky coat—massa see now Dinah tell no lie." The boy had noticed so well the exact situation of the red flowers at noon, that he could not help inwardly confessing that Dinah must be right; but this conviction, so far from making him sorry for his former obstinacy and injustice, only raised redoubled anger and mortification at finding one he so much despised possessed of knowledge superior to his own. With a long switch of ebony he

had just been cutting, he struck at the poor Slave with all his puny strength, at the same time exclaiming passionately, "Hold your tongue, you saucy creature, and don't pretend to teach me. What should a black nigger know about flowers or any thing else?" "A great deal more than the little ignorant white boy who fancies himself her superior, and who merits the lash more than the idlest negro on his father's estate." So spoke a benevolent old planter who, at that moment, suddenly appeared through an opening in a hedge of Flower Fence, from behind which he had been a witness of the young tyrant's behaviour, both on the present occasion and in the morning. "Take a double lesson, my young master," he continued, "from this day's occurrence. Learn, in the first place (indeed you already feel it), that this poor negress is wiser than you, having shown herself perfectly acquainted with the habits of this curious plant; and, no doubt,

many other interesting facts in nature, which common observation ought to have taught you, to say nothing of your advantages of education. Learn further, that, with Botanists, the colour of flowers is, of all their distinctions, by far the least important.—Whether, as in this Hibiscus, the hue changes in the same individual blossom, or, as more commonly occurs, varies on different plants of the same kind, it makes no distinction of species, class, or order.—Whether white, red, or purple, the flower is the same. So with a human creature, whatever be the colour of his complexion, he is the same in the eye of his Creator; and, unless distinguished by more important characteristics, superior goodness and wisdom, the white man ranks no higher in the scale of creation than his black brother of these our colonies, or the red Indian of the neighbouring continent.

NOTES.

THE Changeable Hibiscus (*H. mutabilis*), or Martinico Rose, is a native of China, Japan, and various parts of the East Indies, where, as well as in the West Indies, it is much cultivated for the beauty of its flowers, both double and single, which are remarkable for altering their colour. "At their first expansion they are white, then deep red, or rose colour, turning, as they decay, to purple. In the West Indies these alterations occur in the course of one day, which, in this hot climate, is the longest duration of the flowers; but in England, where they last nearly a week in perfection, the changes are less sudden."—Classes and Orders of the Linnæan System Illus.

A yet more remarkable Chameleon flower is the Changeable Cape Gladiolus (*G. versicolor*), thus described in Andrews's Botanical Repository—"Strange to tell, it is brown in the morning, and continues to change from that colour till it becomes light blue by night. During the night it regains its pristine colour, and this change is effected diurnally whilst the flower is in full vigour; but upon the decay the change is less

powerful, gradually fixing in a dark brown, which, however, does not take place in less than nine or ten days. This is the only flower we have ever noticed to regain the colour that once forsook it."

Colour in flowers is very variable, changing with temperature, climate, soil, and culture. It has been remarked, that red most readily changes into white and blue ; blue into white and yellow ; yellow into white ; white into purple.

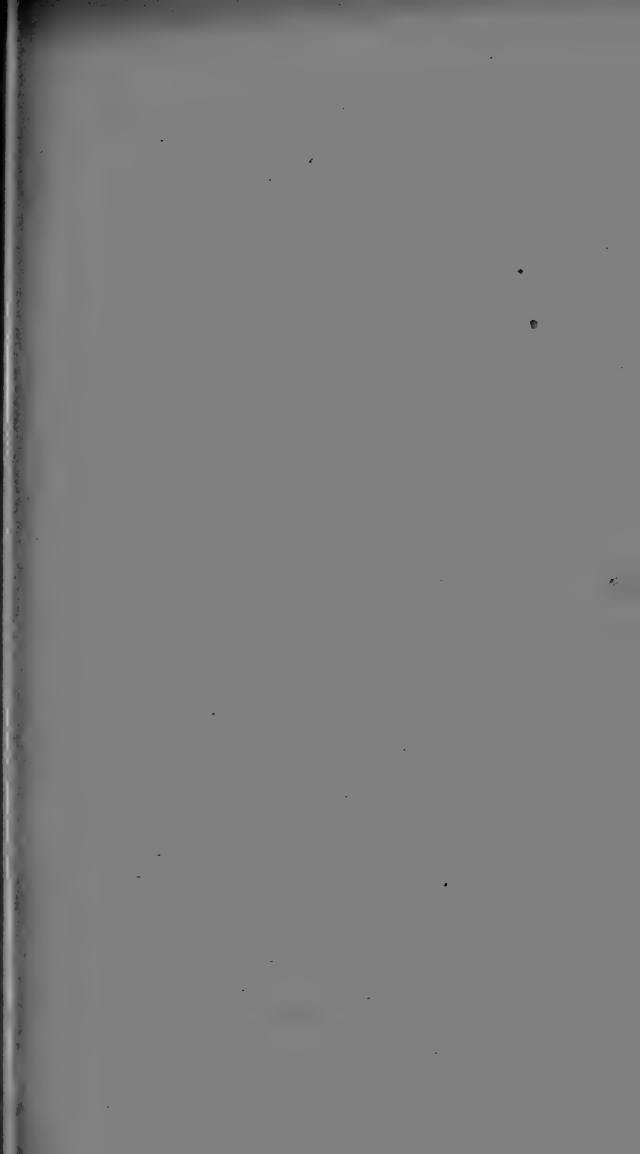
The island of Jamaica produces many sorts of valuable trees, remarkable for the heavy, compact, and impenetrable nature of their timbers, such as Iron-wood, *Lignum Vitæ*, Log-wood, Pigeon-wood, &c.

The Ebony Tree of the West Indies, with yellow papilionaceous flowers, and wood of a greenish-brown, capable of a high polish, and much prized in Europe, is quite different to the true black ebony of India. The slender branches of the Jamaica Ebony used to be employed for scourging slaves, and also as riding switches.

The Barbadoes Flower Fence is a most splendid shrub, with fine red and yellow papilionaceous flowers, with a scent like Violets. The English name expresses the use to which it is frequently

applied in the West Indies. Jacquin remarks that a hedge made of this plant forms the most beautiful fence imaginable. The Chinese admire and call it Peacock's Crest.







THE HIGHEST OF VIRTUES.

XI.

THE HIGHEST OF VIRTUES; OR, THE JUDGMENT OF THE SAGE.

A CONTENTION once arose between the subjects of Flora's kingdom, as to which of them was endowed with the most estimable quality, and, in order to set at rest their conflicting claims, it was agreed, that each should bring forward his respective merits, and lay them before a hoary Sage, who was to pronounce judgment on their several pretensions. The Winter Aconite was the first to vaunt his courage in facing the snows and blasts of winter. The Sensitive Plant made a merit of the extreme tenderness of her feelings. The Bean, and various other individuals of stiff and stately character, osten-

tatiously boasted their generosity in affording support to their weaker brethren. The Violet for once laid aside her modesty to advance her claim to humility. The Pimpernel and Daisy both prided themselves on their prudence in foreseeing and providing against the approach of stormy weather; and the Thrift advanced her claim to superior merit, on the ground of contentment and a cheerful readiness to accommodate herself to every situation. "Wheresoever," said she, "it may please Providence to place me, be it on the loftiest mountain-top, or in the depths of the lowliest valley—in the most secluded solitude, or amidst the busy haunts of men, I make myself equally contented; and, blessed with the sunshine of a cheerful heart, neither pine in the gloom nor pant in the scorching glare: mankind even have recognised my peculiar virtue, and call me Thrift, because everywhere I thrive." The sage arbiter seemed to attach considerable weight to the

pretensions of the last claimant, and each of the other candidates awaited, in trembling anxiety, the sentence that should fall from his lips.* “My friends,” said he, “I allow you each your respective merits, and admit the quality of contentment especially to hold no mean place in the scale of excellence. A contented mind, however, though highly conducive to the happiness of others, may be said more peculiarly to bring its own reward; it is generally also a gift of nature, independent of exertion on the part of its possessor, and ranks, therefore, more as a passive than an active virtue.” The Thrift’s fellow-claimants now raised their heads with increased confidence that to one of them, at least, the palm of virtue must needs be awarded. After a moment’s pause, the Sage resumed, looking round the assembly, “My brethren,” said he, “I see not here, amongst you, one lowly plant, whose humility, doubt-

* The Sage is a labiate or lipped flower.

less, has prevented her appearance here ; yet whose attributes I, nevertheless, consider as constituting by far the most amiable character in the vegetable creation—I mean the sweet and useful Thyme. With a portion of the Thrift's contentment, she is satisfied to dwell either on the barren wild or in the despised kitchen garden : her dress and demeanour are simple and unassuming : like the Rose, she preserves her sweetness even after death ; and, above all, she sets an example of returning good for evil, by exhaling her perfume most strongly at the moment she is bruised and trampled under foot. To the humble Thyme, therefore, must I award the palm of most exalted virtue, that of meeting injuries in a Christian spirit !”

NOTES.

THE leaves of the cultivated Sage are of a whitish green, the calyx being slightly woolly ;

the corolla purple. It belongs to the family of labiate or lipped flowers.

The Winter Aconite puts forth its blossoms in January.

The Sensitive Plant. (See note, page 48.)

The stalks of the Bean, besides giving support to the Dodder, are frequently seen entwined by the Wild Convolvulus and Climbing Buckwheat.

The Violet, the poet's favourite and the spring's sweetest pride, is a native of every part of Europe; and in the palm groves of Barbary, the blue and white grow together in the winter. It was found in Palestine by Hasselquist, and in China by Loreiro. The epithet of "violet eyelids," used by the Greek poets, alludes (says the *Flora Londinensis*) to a well-known custom, still prevalent in Greece, of colouring the eyelids blue. "A Grecian girl is painted blue round the eyes; and the insides of the sockets, with the edges on which the eyelashes grow, are tinged black." —Chandler's Travels in Greece. Translators tell us, on the margin of our Bibles, that Jezebel, a native of Zidon, *put her eyes in painting*, a custom censured by Jeremiah, ch. iv. 30, and Ezekiel, ch. xxiii. 40. A curious method of preserv-

ing the scent of this flower has been left by the great Bacon :

“Take violets and infuse a good pugil in a quart of vinegar ; let them stand three quarters of an hour, and take them forthe and refreshe the infusion with like quantity of violets seven times, and it will make a vinegar so fresh of the flowers as if, a twelvemonth after, it be broughte to you in a saucer, you shall smell it before it come at you. *Note.* It smelleth more perfectly of the flowers a good while after than at the first.” Haller, speaking of the Violet, says, “Que l’odeur en est si pénétrante, qu’une demoiselle de qualité est morte pour avoir amassée une quantité de ces fleurs dans sa chambre.”

The Scarlet Pimpernel, or Anagallis, is said to have derived the latter name from the Greek verb to *smile*, for the singular beauty and liveliness of its flowers, opening only in fine weather, and infallibly closing against rain, hence justly called “the shepherd’s or poor man’s weather-glass.” This property, a precaution taken by nature to preserve so delicate a blossom from the injuries of weather, is possessed, though not in so high a degree, by many plants of the same class, also by the Daisy and others. The Pimpernel is fur-

ther remarkable as being the only British plant, the Poppy excepted, with scarlet flowers.

“Thrift,” says Mr. Lightfoot, “is at once the most humble and most lofty of plants, growing frequently upon the sea-shore and the summits of the loftiest mountains. Its constitution is so accommodating that it grows well even in the smoke of London, in and near which it is frequently used for edgings. From its readiness to thrive, is probably derived its English name.” It grows even where the surface of the earth has been rendered sterile by copper-mines.

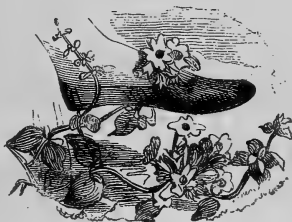
The trailing and tangled branches of the wild Thyme, growing on heathy hillocks, form an elastic turf, and the bruised leaves, when trodden upon, diffuse a warm aromatic odour most attractive to Bees, for whose sake the ancients were in the habit of planting it. “This plant,” says Curtis, “is subject to uncommon varieties of character. In its natural state, on dry, exposed, and chalky downs, it is small and procumbent; and when growing among furze or other plants, which afford it shelter, it runs up with a slender stalk to a foot or more in height.” Sheep do not eat Thyme or other aromatic herbs when they have a free choice of pasture.

The Thyme's property of most strongly imparting its odour when bruised and trodden on, is also possessed in a high degree by the Chamomile; and in laying hold of such an attribute to illustrate the moral of our fable, we have but Anglicised the beautiful sentiment and comparison of an Eastern poet, who, writing three centuries before the Christian era, pronounces the duty of a good man, even in the moment of his destruction, to consist, not only in forgiving, but even in a desire of benefiting his destroyer, as the Sandal Tree, in the instant of its overthrow, sheds perfume on the axe which fells it. Hafiz, the Persian poet, has illustrated the same maxim in some elegantly fanciful verses, thus translated by Sir William Jones :—

“ Learn from yon orient shell to love thy foe,
And store with pearls the hand that brings thee woe.
Free (like yon rock) from base vindictive pride,
Imblaze with gems the wrist that rends thy side.
Mark where yon tree rewards the stony shower
With fruit nectarious, or the balmy flower :
All nature calls aloud, Shall man do less
Than heal the smiter, and the railer bless ?”

It may here be observed that, although a few “ wise men of the East” had previously taught

this sublime precept of morality, it was reserved for the Author of Christianity to give it the stamp of truth, and to render it, by his divine example and authority, influential on the lives of all his true disciples in every age and nation.



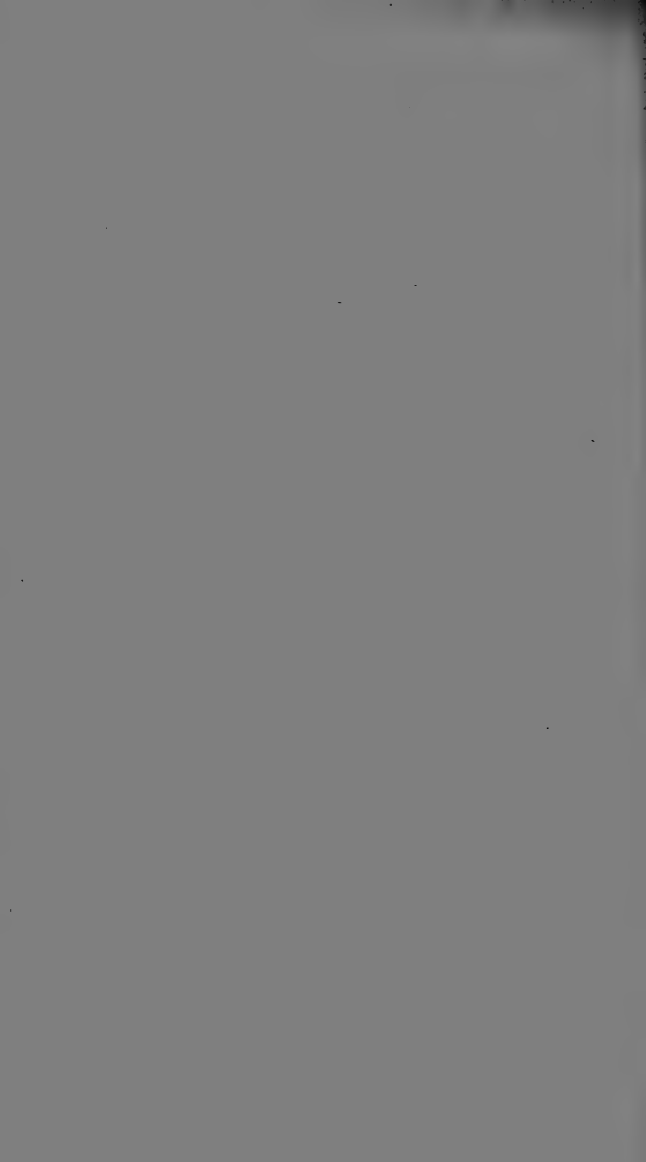
XII.

THE INSECT BEE AND THE FLOWER BEE.

A ROVING Bee had attained the summit of a high chalky hill, whose surface, rich in a profusion of Wild Thyme and Marjoram, afforded a harvest sweeter than he could gather from the most luxuriant garden, and amply repaid him for the distance he had flown from home. Whilst humming his satisfaction, and busily working his way from flower to flower, he saw (as he supposed) two or three other Bees employed, like himself, upon a plant growing near. "Oh! oh!" thought he, as he flew past, "that flower must needs furnish some marvellously fine treat; but let them keep it all to themselves—I'll soon find another like it." On



THE INSECT BEE, & THE FLOWER BEE.



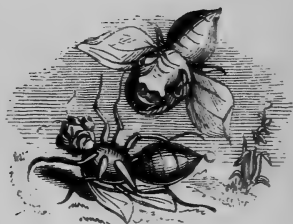
he went, and presently espied a similar plant, but that, likewise, seemingly occupied by Bees. "This is too bad," murmured he, "not to allow me even a taste of all their dainties!" So alighting on a neighbouring furze-bush, "Come, my masters," cried he to his seeming brethren, "prythee let's have a sip of that honey you're taking all to yourselves." Not one of them stirred. "You greedy creatures!" cried our Bee, getting angry, "if you won't move, and give me a peep, at least, of those flowers you are hiding with such mighty care, I'll see if I can't make you." The immovable Bees stirred neither leg nor wing. "Ah!" buzzed our little labourer, getting out of all patience, "you're determined to provoke me, and, since you won't move for civil asking, just take the consequence." Thereupon our irritated hero of the hive put himself in a posture for attack, drew his barbed weapon out of its sheath, and flew with fury upon the nearest

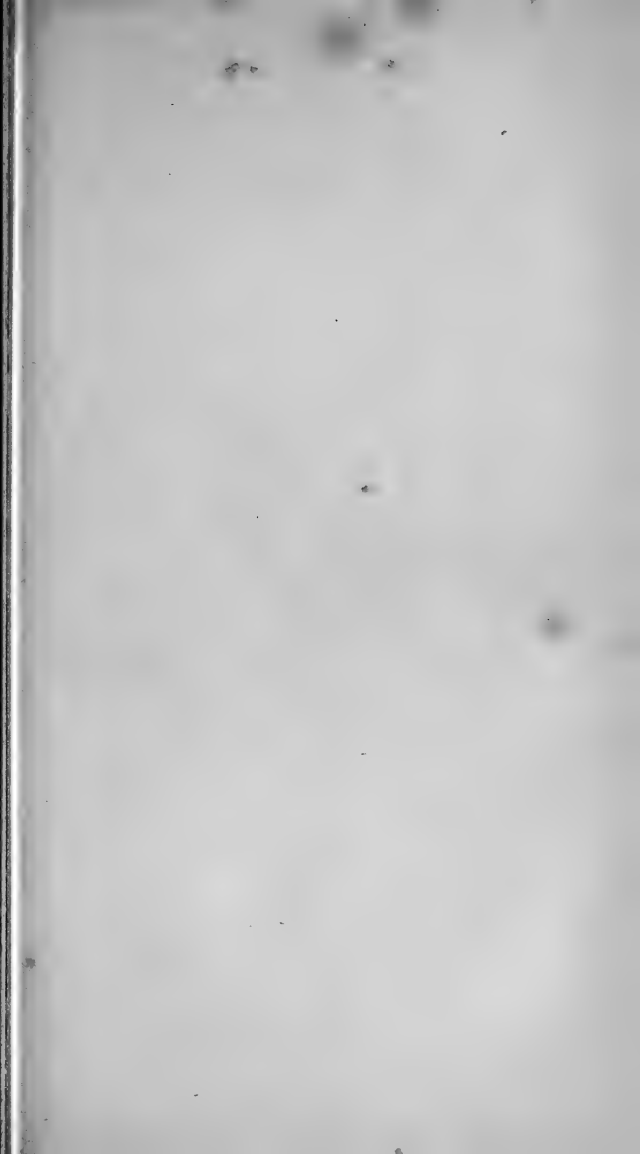
of the apparently greedy flower-suckers ; but, alas ! his rage only injured himself, while it fell impotently upon the objects of his indignation, whom (when too late) he discovered to be only inanimate images of himself formed by the bee-like blossoms of an Orchis. The flowers were pierced, but little injured by their assailant's sting, which, in his wrath, he left behind him. His death was the fatal consequence, aggravated by the reflection that he owed his fate to his own temper and precipitancy ; for, had he persevered in the use of gentle means with his seeming fellow-labourers, and approached them more closely for the purpose of persuasive entreaty, instead of angry threatening, he would have found out his error before the mistake was irretrievable.

NOTES.

THE Bee Orchis (*Ophrys apifera*), from being so generally admired and sought for on account of its curious resemblance to a Bee, has become very scarce in the neighbourhood of London and large towns. It is, however, found occasionally in dry pastures, chiefly in a chalky soil. Several species of the genus *Ophrys* furnish remarkable imitations of insect forms, such as the Spider and the Fly, but in none is the likeness to animated nature so striking as in the Bee. "Botanists," says Curtis, "have often been at a loss, in classing plants, to find some resemblance by which they might distinguish their particular species, but in this plant the case is far otherwise; the flower is so like the insect that gives it its name, that it strikes every beholder with admiration. What useful purpose is intended by it, we do not at present know, though some future observer may, perhaps, discover; for they who will examine nature have much to see."

Old authors have often improved trifling resemblances of this nature to an exaggerated degree, very perceptible in their wood-cut figures.







THE JEALOUS WILD FLOWERS.

XIII.

THE JEALOUS WILD FLOWERS.

ON the first introduction of exotics into our gardens and conservatories, many native plants grew envious of the universal preference shown to these foreign intruders. It may seem strange how the secluded dwellers in wood and wild could ever have learned what was going on in the fashionable world; but they derived this dangerous information from a vile garden outcast, who, having travelled all the way from London in a dung-cart, chanced to grow up among our simple rustics, and poisoned their heads with news and notions never before dreamed of. For awhile, however, the malcontent flowers only pined in silent jealousy, till, one fine summer's

day, a large body of them met together, and consulted how they might best assert the national rights they considered so shamefully invaded. A spirited Viper's Buglos first addressed the assembly. "I move," said he, "that a chosen party of us should forthwith go up to London, and make a determined stand against the insolent pretensions of these contemptible foreigners. Once fairly matched against theirs, our superior merits cannot fail to be acknowledged; and if any should dare to dispute them—by the name of Flora!!!" Here the vegetable orator concluded with an abrupt pause, as the most emphatic expression of implied threatening, and wound up all by shaking his formidable spike, and raising his azure crest, with the bold bearing of an old English knight, eager to challenge all competitors. His heroic resolution was warmly applauded, and, in the violent clapping of leaves which immediately ensued, the opposition of two only dissentient flowers, the

retiring Violet and the modest Daisy, was completely drowned. Several of the Buglos party rose to second their leader's proposal, and branched out into fine flourishes about their patriotic desire to uphold the honour of their native soil. Nothing else, they declared, would have induced them to undertake the danger and trouble of the projected expedition. Perhaps, however, if these flowers of eloquence could have been thoroughly investigated, a few grains of personal vanity might have been found clinging to their roots. Several of the individuals who were to accompany Sir Viper Buglos had, indeed, long panted for a wider field wherein to display their respective attractions. The pheasant-like eye of the handsome Adonis, weary of gazing at the rustic beauties of the corn-field, flashed fire at thoughts of conquest over fair and graceful foreigners. The lovely Nymphaea Alba* daily viewed her image in her liquid

* Water Lily.

mirror, and, with pardonable pride, felt herself a queen of waters; while the poetical Narcissus, like his ancestor of old, was more than satisfied with his own appearance. Then, what dress of "purple and pall" could bear comparison with the Lady's Mantle of silvery satin, unsullied as the snow of her native mountains? Others, again, of appearance less striking, prided themselves on their personal accomplishments. The Shaking Grass was a most light and graceful dancer on the breeze; and the musical powers of the Reed had been acknowledged from the days of Pan, though his waving plumes had never been half sufficiently admired. How the floral party travelled is a matter of uncertainty, though clearly not, as in modern days, by post or rail-road; suffice it, that they arrived in town, or its vicinity, and the day afterwards made their appearance at a grand exhibition of exotics, to which they gained admission through the interest of some re-

lations, who as yet continued to hold high places in the flower-garden. But, alas! for our native candidates, when their merits came to be weighed (how fairly we attempt not to determine) against the foreign pretensions they had so imprudently challenged. Then, blighted in the bud were all their aspirations, even like the hopes of many a sanguine son of genius, who, having left his native shades for metropolitan celebrity, is overlooked in the crowd, or shoved aside by more confident competitors.

Oppressed by the impure and heated atmosphere of a crowded show-room, and withered by the neglect or scornful comparisons of nearly all the spectators, how did our disappointed aspirants droop for the refreshing air of their quiet glades. Even their bold leader, Sir Viper Buglos, was compelled to lower his azure spike before the emerald lance of an African *Gladiolus*. The fiery eye of the handsome *Adonis* sunk, for the

first time, before the bright blue orbs of the Peacock Iris. The pure classic beauty of the *Nymphaea Alba* was completely eclipsed by the dazzling charms of an Amazonian queen of Indian waters. The white satin sheen of the Lady's Mantle found but few admirers, contrasted with the velvet robes of crimson and purple which glowed around. The graceful evolutions of the Shaking Grass could not even be displayed for want of air to move his slender footstalks. As for the tuneful Reed, he soon discovered that the breeze was no less a necessary agent in his instrumental performance; and, could even his æolian strains have been awakened, the prevailing taste for foreign airs, as well as foreign flowers, would have caused his silvery tones to have fallen unheeded on fashionable ears.

Thus terminated the wild flower's silly attempt to obtain distinction by abandoning the stations wherein nature had placed them,

and to which, convinced of their folly, they were glad enough to return. They have ever since bloomed contentedly within their native recesses, thinking it no hardship to "waste their sweetness on the desert air." But in the most secluded spot, where foot of man has never trodden, why should the wild flower be said to waste its fragrance? for, even there, may not its very perfume minister to the enjoyment of millions of sentient beings, from the Bird and the Butterfly down to those tiny existences which dance in every mote of the summer sunbeam, and sport in every drop of teeming water?

NOTES.

English Plants.—The Viper's Buglos, with long rough spikes of brilliant blue flowers—"a magnificent weed, which has been called, by inhabitants of the tropics, 'worthy to decorate the gardens of the gods.'"

The Corn Adonis, or Pheasant's Eye, so called from its fine crimson flower marked with purple at the base of each petal. This flower was once cried about the streets of London under the name of Red Morocco.

The Nymphaea Alba, or White Water Lily. "Neither the Palm of India, nor the Magnolia of America," says Sowerby, "exceeds our own Nymphaea in magnificence." The stalks of this aquatic plant are full of large tubes, the flowers scentless, and soon fading. When double, this queen of our rivers is sometimes called the Water Rose.

The Poetic Narcissus, or Purple-circled Daffodil, is found in our sandy fields and heaths. The flower is snow-white, upright, and very fragrant; the cuplike crown edged with scarlet.

Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla Alpina*) grows on most rocky mountains in England and Scotland. In proportion to the barren openness of the situation it occupies is the rich silvery satin of the back of its leaves, rendered conspicuous by agitation of the wind.

Shaking or Quaking Grass. The branches of the panicle in this elegant grass are so slender that the spikes, which hang from their extremities,

tremble at the slightest agitation. Gerard tells us that it took its name of Phalaris from "a cruel, trembling tyrant" so called.

The Common Reed, after flowering at Midsummer, ornaments many a dreary fen in autumn with its waving silvery plumes, consisting of long down within the husks of the calyx.

Foreign Plants.—The Gladiolus, or Flowering Rush, is a very handsome British aquatic; but the species here intended is one of the yet more showy natives of the Cape.

The Peacock Iris (*I. pavonia*) is a beautiful Cape species, with white petals, each marked at the base by a brilliant eyelike spot of blue.

The Armed Indian Water Lily (*Anneslea spinosa*) is described in Andrews's Botanical Repository (1821), as flowering in all its grandeur in the Marquis of Blandford's Aquarium at White Knights—unrolling its enormous orbicular leaves from six to eight feet in circumference, and raising its numerous heads bristling with spines, and adorned with flowers of purplish-crimson. "In vain (says our author) do we review the plants of its natural order for any analogy to its thorny exterior. The Nymphs and Naiads (*Nymphaea* and *Naiades*) are not more conspicuous for their

elegance and beauty than for their mildness ; but the *Anneslea*, like the Panther, seems to unite the extremes of ferocity and beauty." The petioles of the *Nymphaea Nelumbo* are, however, also prickly ; and the flower and leaf stalks of the wonderful *Victoria Regina* (see Note to Fable XVI.) are described as studded with sharp, elastic prickles, about three quarters of an inch in length.

The prejudice in favour of exotics, or rather the prejudice against our English plants, as too common for the garden, has certainly excluded many a beautiful native well worthy of the flower parterre, and admitted many an ordinary looking foreigner, whose sole recommendation has consisted in coming from "beyond sea." So it was, even in the days of good old Gerarde, who, speaking of the Persian Lily, says, with his usual quaint simplicity, "If I might be so bold with a stranger that hath vouchsafed to travel so many hundreds of miles for our acquaintance, we have, in our English fields, many scores of flowers in beauty far excelling it." And he might have added, in our English lakes and streams—the aquatic plants of Britain rivalling, perhaps, in a higher degree than their brethren on land, the beauty of exotics. Witness the

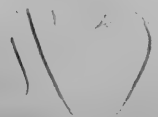
Flowering Rush, the Fringed Buckbean, the Water Lily, the Water Violet, with many more ; and, on terra firma, the stately Mullein, the elegant Foxglove, the smiling Pimpernel, and a flowery host of native charmers.

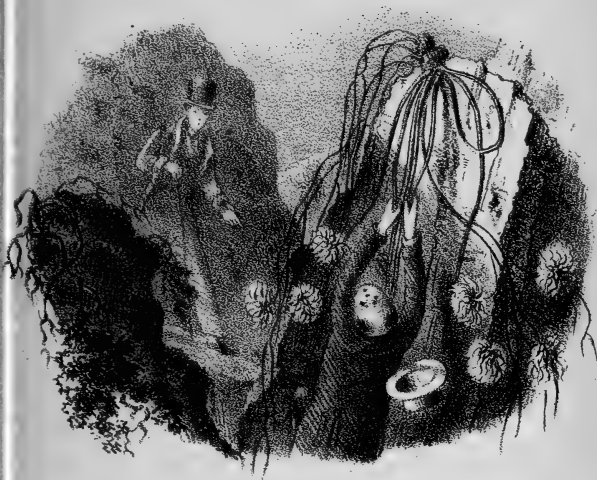


XIV.

THE TRAVELLER'S JOY.

Two brothers, the elder a Merchant, the younger an Artist, had once occasion to take a journey, which they chose to perform on foot, from the metropolis to their native village. The tastes and characters of these men were as widely different as the professions they followed, the latter being an ardent lover of nature and the beautiful; the former a devout worshipper of Mammon, and what he termed the useful. The man of business thought only of reaching the place of destination; the man of observation found objects of interest in all he saw upon the way. To the one, their passage through a romantic country was as a mere causeway





THE TRAVELLERS JOY



of communication ; to the other, it was a pleasant path, hung profusely in metaphor, as well as reality, with sweet tufts of Traveller's Joy. One glorious August morning, our brothers having nearly reached what was once their home, found themselves following a narrow sheep-track skirting the edge of a chalky precipice, whose broken sides were studded with spots of emerald green, varied by the enamel blue of the Viper's Buglos and the golden yellow of the fugacious Cistus.

The Painter was restored to his native element—the sweet air he had breathed in childhood ; and he drank in pleasure through all his senses—pleasure tempered indeed, but not poisoned by recollections of sadness. His eye rested with more than professional delight on the lovely landscape beneath him, for it was the scene on which he had first essayed his untaught pencil. Not only his ear, but his very soul, felt music in the tinkling sheep-bell, because it sounded like the

very same he had listened to in boyhood ; and the rich perfumes, with which the air came laden, recalled to his memory, perhaps more forcibly than all, the summers long ago when he had been used, on holidays, to visit that chalky hill for the purpose of collecting fossils, or gathering the rarer species of Orchis, in both which treasures it abounded. Wrapped in a web of musing (the warp, the past—the woof, the present) the artist lingered awhile behind his companion till roused by the voice of the Merchant, who, having trudged onwards at his usual business pace, had got considerably in advance of his brother. “Come, Frank,” exclaimed he, with some impatience, as he applied his yellow bandana to his glistening forehead, “what the deuce can you be loitering there for in this broiling sun ?” The Painter saw his brother’s mood, and made no reply but by hastening to rejoin him. Both proceeded for awhile in silence ; presently, however,

Frank again stopped involuntarily on the edge of the cliff, just above a root of Wild Clematis, whose trailing arms, proceeding from a knotted stump of unusual age and bulk, curtained the rough surface of the cliff with elegant festoons of green, and clusters of fragrant blossom. "Well, what's the matter now?" asked the Merchant, on perceiving his companion's second pause. "Only look, my dear Ambrose, look!" returned the other, pointing to the Clematis. "Well! and what is there to look at? I'd much rather look just now at a clean white breakfast cloth, or even a field of turnips. A fig for your ornamental plants—your rubbishing creepers and twiners. I'd have every one of them (except the hop and the vine) rooted from off the face of the earth." "Oh! but, Ambrose, don't you remember that the Clematis was our mother's favourite flower? This is the very plant I used to come and strip every Saturday, to fill her bow-pot.

I can never look upon the Traveller's Joy, even in our London squares, without being reminded of home, and here"— Frank paused, and brushed his hand across his eyes. Ambrose walked on quicker than ever, and took a pinch of snuff. Presently, however, the Merchant turned, and took his brother's hand. He had not a bad heart, this man of business, though money-seeking and money-making had blunted its finest sensibilities. "You're a silly fellow, Frank," said he, "you'll never be a man, always running your head upon some childish rubbish—flowers and poetry—and such useless nonsense, to say nothing of painting, which hasn't brought you any vast good either."

Another half hour's walk conducted the brothers to the place of destination, their native village. The business which brought them there is none of ours; we shall merely notice that the Merchant took this opportunity of raising the rents of a small paternal

property, and the Painter raised a simple monument to the memory of his mother. The season having now advanced to November, the brothers agreed on returning to London by a coach which started in the evening from a neighbouring town. It was growing dusk when they set out to walk the intervening distance, and, by the time they reached the chalky hill before-mentioned, it had become so dusk as to render the narrow winding track along its crest a path of some peril to an inexperienced foot. Frank, who, in his boyhood, had scanned and learned by rote its every turning, could have safely passed it blindfold, but it was not so with Ambrose. The artist, conscious on this point, at least, of possessing more acuteness than his worldly-wise brother, offered the guidance of his arm, or, at all events, to lead the way; but the Merchant, who was an independent sort of fellow, and who, moreover, felt a kind of absurdity in the idea of so

careful a man as himself following the guidance of one whom he had always looked upon something in the light of a mad-brained fool, persisted in walking on in advance.

“Mind, Ambrose, keep more to your right,” cried the Artist; but the Merchant went straight on: he was thinking of a probable rise on Indigo, and quite forgot a possible fall over the cliff’s edge. “For heaven’s sake, stop!” exclaimed Frank; but, before the words were ended, the figure of Ambrose had disappeared. Another second brought his terrified companion to the spot left vacant, and he almost shuddered to look, as far as growing darkness would permit, down the face of the precipice; but his fears were groundless: the worthy Merchant’s speculations had not been overturned for ever, or his portly person dashed to pieces, as assuredly must have been the case, but for a something that had arrested his downward progress to the depths below. That providential stay

was none other than a natural cable composed of the strong ropy stalks of the Wild Clematis—of that very plant whose flowers had once been his mother's, and were still his brother's joy. Directed by the Creeper's silvery seed-plumes, clearly discernible even in the gloom, he had caught, in his downfall, at the friendly support by which he now hung suspended above—destruction. His rescue from this awkward position was but a moment's work for his active companion. When they had both safely ascended to terra firma, "Now, my dear fellow," said the Painter, with a smile, though his eyes glistened and his voice trembled with grateful joy at his brother's preservation—"I hope you'll confess, that ornamental plants are not always without their use in creation—since (Providence be praised!) the wayfarer's safety has, for once, been found dependant on the Traveller's Joy."

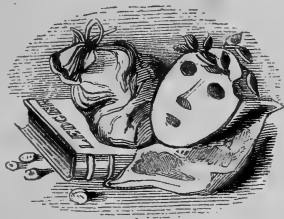
NOTES.

THE Clematis Vitalba, or Traveller's Joy, grows plentifully in chalky soils, covering hedges and the broken precipices of limestone rocks with rich tapestry, sweet to the traveller for its fragrance in summer, and in autumn and winter for the beauty of its silvery seed-plumes, whose feathery tufts make (says Gerarde) "a goodly shewe." To these it owes another familiar appellation, that of Old Man's Beard.

The common Viper's Buglos, though a common, is a magnificent weed, despised only for its frequency, especially in chalky soils, yet (says Sowerby) "it has been called by inhabitants of the tropics, worthy to decorate the gardens of the gods." In some parts of Cambridge and Norfolk the fields are blue with its long spikes of brilliant flowers.

The common Dwarf Cistus, with yellow flowers, is a small shrubby plant found in chalky and sandy pastures. It blows in July and August, each of its delicate blossoms scattering its petals early in the afternoon of the day they open. The stamens of this flower are possessed

of a singular irritable property, especially in calm warm weather, when, upon the slightest touch, they retire from the style, and lay down upon the petals.



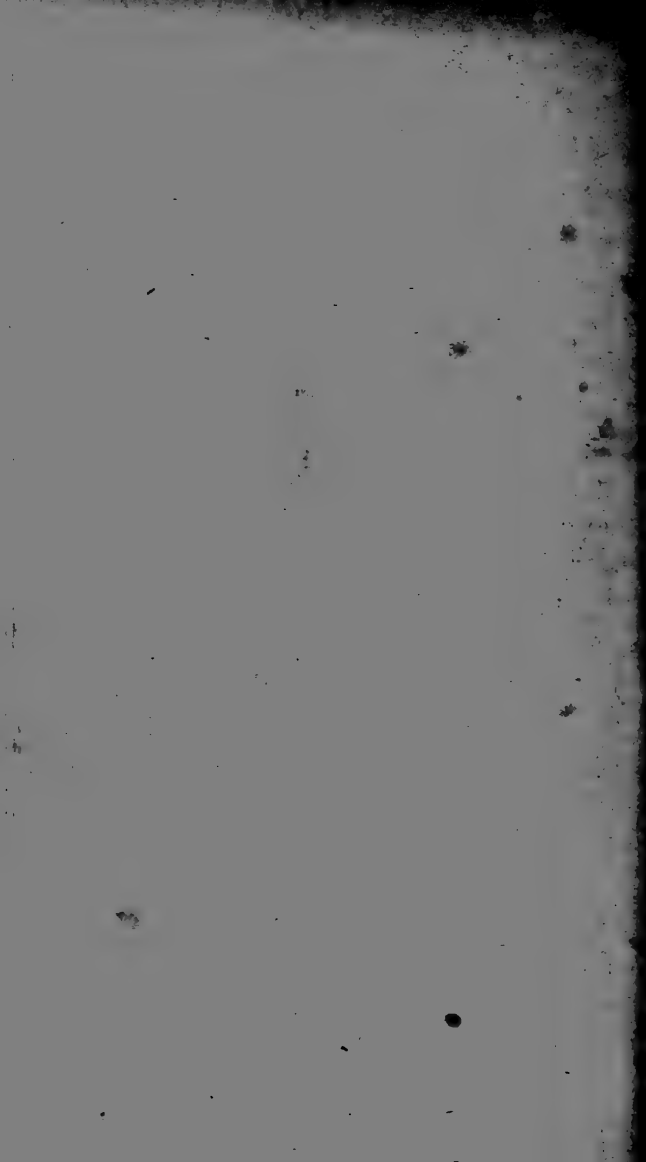
XV.

THE MISANTHROPIC THISTLE.

A THISTLE, in a field of Flax, was piteously bemoaning his unhappy destiny. "Am I not," said he, "the most miserable of created plants? Is not our race perpetually condemned to dwell on the most barren, waste, and desolate places? or if, like my wretched self, cast by accident on more cultivated ground, are we not abhorred, uprooted, or cut down, our remains left to wither on the ground, or thrown with contempt upon the dunghill? Even here, I feel myself an intruder, and live in momentary fear of man's exterminating hoe; for man, the friend and fosterer of your family (here the complainer turned to his surrounding neighbours of the



THE MISANTHROPIC THISTLE



Flax field) — man is my bitterest foe!" Finding themselves thus addressed, one of the Flax plants took upon her to reply for herself and her companions. "Truly," said she, "we have little reason to boast the friendship of man, since, like the beasts of the field, we are only nurtured, tended, and protected, to serve his own selfish purposes; and cut off in our prime, our sinews, torn, mutilated, and beaten, are converted into articles for his use and adornment. But, mind you, neighbour Thistle, we bend submissively to our appointed destiny, and would only show you by comparison that your fate differs but little from our own." "There you are utterly mistaken," returned the Thistle, sharply; "you have a compensation for whatever you endure by knowing yourselves to be of use, whereas I (though, perhaps, as ready as you, with all your vaunted disinterestedness, to be a sacrifice for the good of others)—I, wretch that I am!

living or dead, can serve no earthly purpose in creation." The Thistle, we must here observe, spoke thus not from any real feeling of the noble sentiment his words expressed, but because he was glad to justify his discontent by an assumption of exalted virtue, either feigned to deceive others, or fancied to deceive himself. He was presently furnished with another subject of complaint, for, the wind having freshened, a few of his feathered seeds were carried off, and floated down the breeze. "Ah! woe is me!" he bitterly exclaimed, "see how my hapless progeny, instead of taking root and growing up around me, fall a prey to every ravishing zephyr, and are borne away, I know not whither, or for what intent!" Scarcely had the murmurer ceased, when a passing Goldfinch stayed his flight, and made a demand on the Thistle for his favourite repast of down. "Now," said the Flax plant, "you must confess your seed at least to be of some use in

its generation." "Use!" growled the Thistle, "what's the use of supporting a parcel of noisy idle creatures quite as worthless as one's self?" The Flax was silent, seeing that the thread of her discourse, however lengthened, and however strong, would be insufficient to draw the stubborn Thistle down to reason; but the murmurs of the latter were soon to be hushed for ever, and his usefulness in the scale of creation most conclusively attested by a forcible argument he was allowed no opportunity of refuting. Before he had time for another murmur, a roaming Donkey, who had broken into the Flax field, spied out his bristly head, and cropping it, without the least ceremony, made a most satisfactory dinner off the Misanthropic Thistle.

NOTES.

"THE Thistle," as Withering observes, "often affords a shelter and protection to other plants,

and is the first to grow in places where many would not otherwise thrive." This is one of the discernible uses of this execrated plant in the economy of nature, besides that the seeds of many species are eaten by small birds, especially goldfinches. The shoots and buds of the Sow Thistle, a favourite food of hares and rabbits, are also said to be esculent as a substitute for spinach. The Carline Thistle is reputed to have been pointed out to Charlemagne as a remedy for the plague by which his army was attacked. Of this genus we have the Cursed Thistle, so named in order to warn the farmer of its peculiarly pernicious qualities; the Holy, or Mary's Milk Thistle, a large handsome species, with leaves covered with a net-work of milk-white veins, and the Melancholy Thistle, a dweller in Alpine wastes, allied, doubtless, to the Misanthropic of the fable. The most formidable of this formidable tribe for the strength and sharpness of its prickly armour, is a species common on road-sides near London, called by ancient Botanists, Thistle-upon-thistle—by modern, the Most-prickly.

In the common Thistle, as soon as the seed is ripe, the first hot day opens the heads and expands the pappus, or seed-down, whose use is to

transport them to a distance on the breath of the slightest wind.

Various and wonderful are the numerous contrivances by which seeds are dispersed. "Who," says Sir James Smith, "has not listened, on a calm sunny day, to the crackling of Furze Bushes, caused by the explosion of their elastic pods, or watched the down of seeds floating on the summer breeze, till a shower stops their flight, and prepares them for germination?" Children aid this purpose in blowing away the "downie balls" of the Dandelion; others, furnished with hook-like appendages, are dispersed by adhering to the coats of animals; or as fruit, being eaten or partially devoured by them or birds.

Whirlwinds have been known to scatter over the south coast of Spain seeds ripened in the north of Africa. Water is also an agent in their dispersion, seeds with closed capsules being frequently carried to a great distance by torrents, rivers, or the sea. Cocoa Nuts, Cashew Nuts, and the long pods of a species of Mimosa, with many other fruits of the tropics, are cast upon the coast of Norway, where they would vegetate but for climate.

Other seeds again, such as the Balsam, Wood-

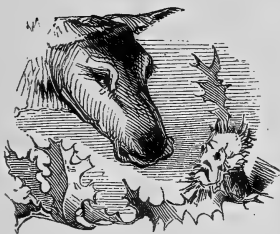
sorrel, Catchfly, and Fraxinella, assist in their own dispersion, by their capsules opening with a spring.

Common Flax (*linum*), whence the term linen, has elegant blue flowers beautifully veined, with smooth and slender stalks. It is found growing naturally in fields and waste places, and is cultivated for the well-known purposes of manufacturing thread from its fibres, and expressing Linseed oil from its seeds. Old Gerarde tells us, that it had anciently the reputation of burning the ground, as testified by Pliny and Virgil—a verse from whose Georgics he thus curiously translates :—

“ Flaxe and Owtes sowne consume
The moisture of a fertile field ;
The same worketh Poppie, whose
Juice a deadly sleepe doth yeelede.”

Flax is mentioned as cultivated in Egypt (Exodus, ix. 31), for which reason Antiquaries have been surprised to find the vests of Mummies made of Cotton. It is probable, however, that mankind made thread of Cotton before the use of Flax was discovered—Cotton being found in a state ready for spinning, whereas Flax requires a long process before it can be brought to

that state. In the simplicity of former times, when families in England provided themselves with most of the necessities and conveniences of life, every garden was supplied with a proper quantity of Hemp and Flax ; but the steeping which was necessary to separate the threads, was, in many places, found to render the water so offensive and detrimental, that, in the reign of Henry VIII., a law was made that “no person shall water Hemp or Flax in any river, &c. . . . where beasts are used to be watered, on pain of forfeiting, for every time of so doing, twenty shillings.”



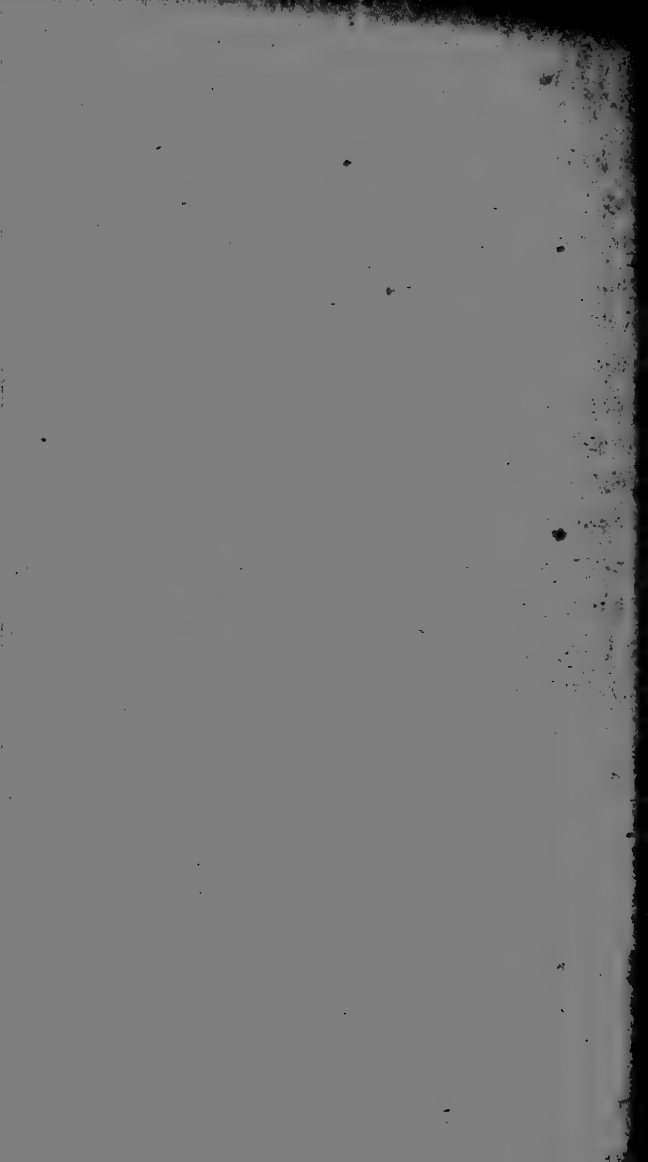
XVI.

THE SACRED LOTUS AND THE PITCHER PLANT.

A LONG and severe drought had prevailed in Hindostan. The earth's riven surface presented a multitude of thirsty mouths opened imploringly towards heaven, while her vegetable family, whose wants she could no longer supply, hung drooping and dying on her bosom. The water plants alone, as yet, held up their heads, and amongst these, a Sacred Lotus, who occupied a shallow lake adjacent to the Ganges, exulted in her favoured position, and looked with contemptuous indifference on the sufferings of her sisterhood on land. "Poor miserable creatures!" cried she, insultingly, "see what it



THE SACRED LOTUS.



is to be, as I am, a sacred flower, favoured by gods, and idolized by men!" "Be not too secure," said an aged Palm Tree, who had long waved over the glassy pool, "more than once have I seen the bed of this lake dry as the sand upon its banks." "And even if it were so," returned the Lotus, "think you that my sacred person would be allowed to suffer? Would not the great goddess of waters take heed to supply my wants; or men, my humble worshippers, would they not hasten to my aid with reverential care?" Thus spoke the Lotus; but, as the drought continued, the shallow lake began to feel its influence, and, as the water lessened, the arrogance of the sacred Flower became also diminished; so that, at last, when left upon dry ground, she was glad to look around for the sympathy and commiseration she had refused to others. On one of these occasions she espied, near the adjacent bank, a plant she had never before deigned to notice. It

was now rendered unusually conspicuous by an appearance of freshness remarkably at variance with the withered aspect of surrounding vegetation, and was, at all times, distinguished by a singularity of form sufficient to draw attention from any one less wrapped up in selfish pride than our imperious Lotus. There was nothing, indeed, of gaudy show in this plant's exterior, but attached to its leaves hung a curious appendage, in the shape of which our Lotus, dying as she was of thirst, now instantly discovered a resemblance to those earthen pitchers she had often seen filled from her own lake by the Hindoo women. "Water! water!" murmured she, as the tantalizing object rendered her more painfully alive to her present privation; and at that moment, glancing in the morning sun, a portion of the coveted liquid met her view, contained within the pendent vessels of her neighbour. The *Nepentha*, for so was the latter named,

heard the Lotus's imploring cry, but took no further notice than by shutting down the half opened lids of all her pitchers. "Water! water!" again sighed the hapless flower of the lake. "Where is thy goddess Ganga? where thy devoted worshippers?" returned the Nepentha; "wherefore haste they not hither to supply thy wants?" "Cruel Nepentha!" returned the humbled Lotus, "forbear thy taunts, though I have, in truth, deserved them. But prythee tell me, wherefore thou hast water in thy pitchers, while all around is dry as dust? Is it by the gods or men that thou art thus highly favoured?" "Listen," said the Nepentha, "it is not to men, nor yet to their senseless idols, that I owe my abundance in this hour of scarcity. Vainly, as thou, might I have called on Ganga, goddess of waters, or Indra, god of showers; but the great God of Nature, the wise Creator of all things, has been pleased, by a bountiful provision, to furnish me with a hidden source

of inward refreshment and support, though all without have failed. 'Tis to him, at whose bidding we were formed, and to whose praise we grow, that thou must look up for succour. He alone can save thee from perishing, and even now, perchance, he will." The pride of the Lotus, already humbled by suffering, was completely subdued by the words of the Nepentha. Rain fell that night, and the next morning beheld the broad round leaves of the water queen again floating on her native element. Her gorgeous blossom had, indeed, been withered, but her root was unimpaired; and when the return of another summer restored her wonted splendour, she no longer scorned her humble neighbours, or treated with indifference the distress she had been taught to pity by experience.

NOTES.

THE sacred Bean Lily of India, the *Nymphaea Nelumbo* of Linnæus, is a splendid Indian water plant, most generally known in Europe under the name of Lotus. The natives of Hindostan, by whom it is most highly venerated, call it *Támará*; the people of Ceylon, *Nelumbo*. It has sometimes been confounded with the Lotus of Egypt, the *Nymphaea Lotus* of Linnæus. "This celebrated plant is found growing in still pools or shallow lakes near the margins of running streams. The leaves, which, when at full size, are two or three feet in diameter, of a beautiful green above, and purplish beneath, float, while young, on the surface of the water, above which they afterwards rise on prickly stalks, as do also the flowers, which (says Roxburgh) are large and beautiful beyond description, particularly in the rose-coloured variety. They are about nine or ten inches in diameter, and nearly inodorous. What chiefly distinguishes this plant is its peculiar mode of propagation. The capsule, or seed-vessel, greatly resembles a wasp's nest, and, when the seed becomes ripe, this capsule separates from its

stalk, and falls into the water with all the seeds in their respective cells, which, beginning to vegetate, present a cornucopia of young sprouting plants, which, after a time, loosen from their cells, and, falling down, take root in the mud."—Classes and Orders of the Linnæan System Illustrated.

This holy and beautiful plant makes a conspicuous figure in the mythology and poetry of India, where, from remote antiquity, it has been worshipped, chiefly as a symbol of fertility, under the Sanscrit name, Padma. Magnificent as are the blossoms and leaves of the Indian Bean Lily, and several other species of *Nymphaea*, they all sink into pigmy insignificance compared with the gigantic vegetable wonder discovered in British Guyana, in the River Berbice, or rather, a currentless basin formed therein, by Mr. Schomburgh, in 1837. The flower of this queen of waters, *Victoria Regina*, is described as covering a calyx of thirteen inches in diameter with numerous white and pink scented petals, with orbicular-rimmed leaves, green on the upper, and red on the under side, and measuring from five to six feet in diameter.

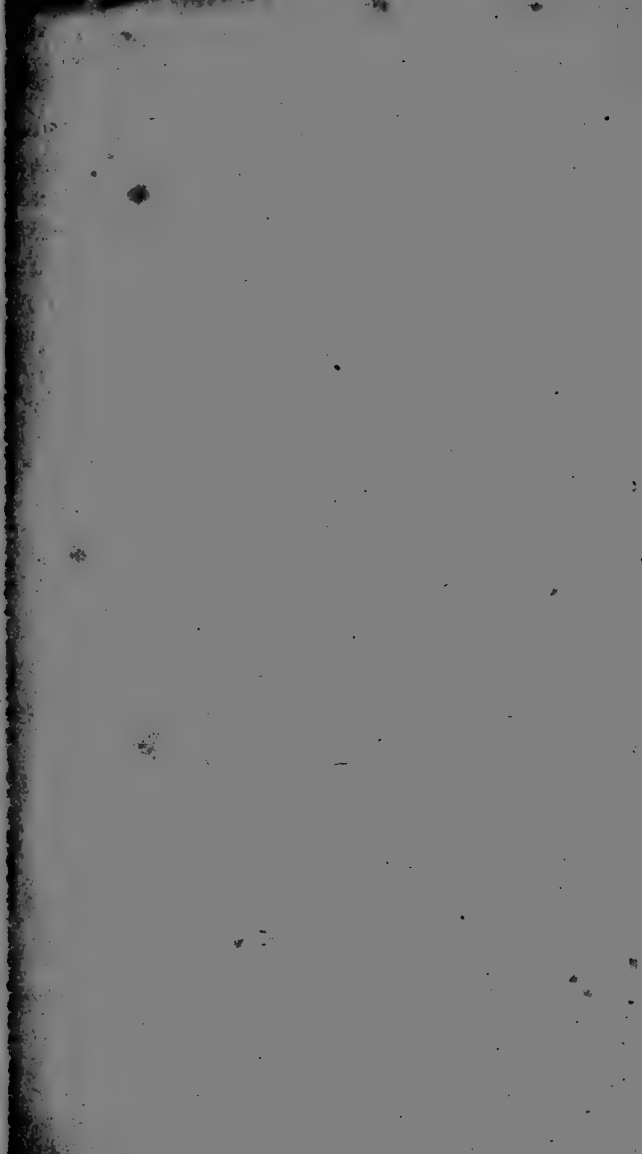
Contrast this vegetable leviathan with some of the least of all perfect plants, the little Mouse-

ear Chick Weed, or the Chaff Weed (*Centunculus minimus*), growing, almost overlooked, on watery heaths in England—or with the least of all known trees, the Least Willow, raising its dwarfish stature of two inches on the highest mountains of England, Wales, and Scotland.

The Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes distillatoria*), a native of many parts of the East Indies, grows chiefly in obscure uncultivated places near the banks of rivers, and in marshes. The leaves of this singular plant have the middle nerve extended into a long tendril, usually twisted, to which hangs a hollow receptacle or bag four or five inches long, whose aperture at the top is covered with a leaflet representing a lid. This receptacle is generally half filled with a sweetish fluid as clear as water. Some Naturalists have asserted that this fluid, which evaporates or exhales in the daytime, is again restored by the secreting power of the plant; but others declare, that the water once evaporated is not renewed. The uses for which this curious pitcher is designed, are also matter of dispute. Linnæus supposed it to be a reservoir of water to which animals might repair in time of drought. Rumphius thought it designed for a habitation of a sort of shrimp fre-

quently found therein. Sir James Smith conjectured it to be intended as a trap for insects, the putrescence of which was converted into food for the plant. The last theory concerning this mystery of nature, and that, perhaps, least open to objection, is that of Dr. Wallich and Mr. Lindley, who think that the pitchers are a contrivance to enable the plant to get rid of its excess of oxygen, which is known to be destructive to vegetable life.







THE WICKED CUDWEEDS.

XVII.

THE WICKED CUDWEEDS AND THE HEN AND CHICKENS.

A HEN was taking out her infant brood for their first walk. Whilst proudly conducting her chirping train, plucking a seed for one, scratching up a grain of sand for another, encouraging a third, and scolding a fourth, the attention of Dame Partlet was suddenly arrested at sight of a tall straggling plant in the meadow where she wandered. Now we do not mean to imply that our hen was a learned hen. We cannot even affirm, with any certainty, that she had the slightest knowledge of botany, beyond such practical acquaintance with the science as enabled her to choose the good and shun the bad amidst

the various seeds offered to her acceptance. Nevertheless, as already noticed, her attention was powerfully diverted, for a season, from her downy brood to the down-coated foliage of the plant in question. The fact was, that the said plant presented an unusual characteristic, which could not fail to be very striking, and exceedingly shocking to one so well acquainted with what belongs to maternal dignity and filial subordination as Dame Partlet. The old and central stem of the plant (evidently the parent stalk) was crowned by a cluster of full-blown flowers, but rising high above it were seen the youthful branches bearing their "budding honours," and looking down, as it were, in scorn upon the reverend head of their parent. A strange anomaly! enough to excite observation, even from mankind, with whom, alas! parallel instances are by no means of rare occurrence. That a Hen, therefore—a mere feathered biped, into whose simple head it

could never enter that a Chicken could be a greater bird than a Fowl—that a Hen should feel astonished at an order of things seemingly so unnatural is not to be at all wondered at. Combined with her surprise, Dame Partlet felt also a kind of complacent pity as she proudly contrasted the behaviour of her own children with that of the Cudweed's offspring. “Poor creature!” said she, with a commiserating cluck, “I am quite concerned at seeing you thus insulted and domineered over by your wicked children. How is it possible you could ever allow their insolence to grow to such a shocking head? Only let them look at my young family for a pattern of dutiful behaviour; for, though it doesn't become me to boast, I'll engage they'll always treat me with respect;” and here she called her scattered brood around her in proof of their obedience. “Madam,” replied the Mother Cudweed, “I thank you for your pity, but assure you it is quite thrown away;

nor are my children worthy of your blame. 'Tis true they have risen far above me in the world, but it is to my support they owe their exaltation, and it joys my heart to see them thus promoted. The difference between our families is simply this: your children are looking up to you for support and protection, whilst mine have attained a position which enables me to look up to them." Thus ended the discourse between the parent Flower and the parent Fowl, the latter being fairly puzzled, though not at all convinced by the maternal Cudweed's fine talking. The Hen soon pursued her way homewards, followed by her Chickens, who continued to obey her voice as long as they needed her assistance; then (though by no means more undutiful than many other young bipeds) they gradually ceased to be guided by, and, at last, did not even acknowledge the guardian of their infancy. How Dame Partlet bore her children's desertion we cannot tell; but one day

(long afterwards) she happened to take a solitary ramble by the spot where grew the old Cudweed and her wicked progeny. There they were, still living together, only the younger members of the family had attained a yet more exalted position than before. On this occasion, however, Mother Partlet, for reasons best known to herself, did not venture to make any further observation. Just as she was turning to go away she saw a spotted Cow marching up to the Cudweed, two or three of whose topmost and youngest branches instantly fell victims to her devouring jaws; the ruminating animal then passed on, leaving the aged and less lofty head in perfect safety. It was now the old Cudweed's turn to boast. "Dame Partlet," said she, "you once pitied and blamed me for what you thought the undutiful behaviour of my children, and now, when yours have long since deserted you, behold how mine stand by me! And

did you not, this moment, behold how some of them protected their poor old parent, even at the expense of their own green lives? Be not, then, again hasty in your judgments, or think all families ill-managed, because they are not conducted exactly like your own."

NOTES.

THE common Cudweed (*Gnaphalium Germanicum*) grows abundantly in dry sandy pastures. It first throws up an erect woolly stem, about a span high, terminated by a solitary round head of flowers; but from beneath this original head soon spring several branches which, pointing upwards, flower and branch in a similar manner, so that the offspring exalting itself, as it were, above the parent, has given rise to the name of Herba Impia, or Wicked Cudweed. This plant, whose leaves are woolly, is supposed to encourage rumination in cattle, hence called

Cudweed. Gerarde says, to the same effect, "Those flowers which appeare first are lowest and basest, and those that come after growe higher, as children seeking to overgrowe or top their parents (as many wicked children doe), for which cause it hath been called *Herba Impia*."



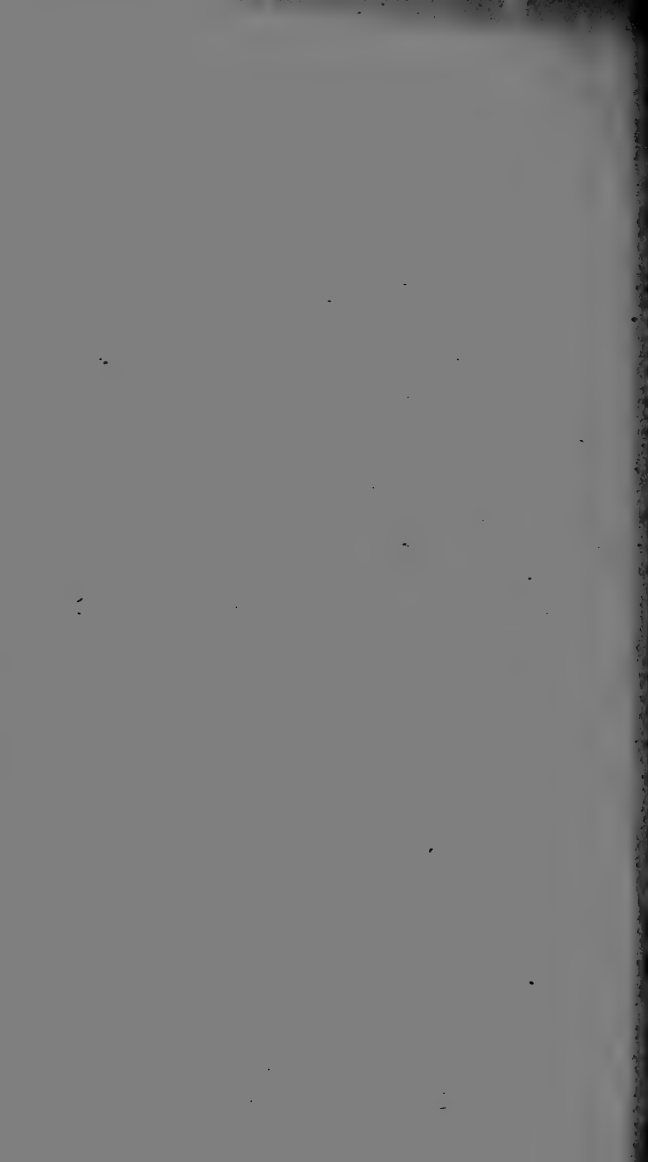
XVIII.

THE COCKSCOMB AND HIS COPYIST.

A YOUNG Double Daisy, sprung of an ancient border family, put forth, in growing up, some most inordinate sprouts of restless vanity. He was for ever drooping at his humble station, and, above all, at his undistinguished position as merely one of a long line of simple relatives, standing, like a row of sentinels, to guard the nobility of a flower parterre. He detested their red and white uniforms, of which nature told him his own was only a copy, and longed to exchange it for some more novel and showy "cut." But, although thus dissatisfied with his own exterior, he had never yet beheld in another anything that precisely corresponded with



THE COCKSCOMB.



his idea of what a smart young flower ought to be. At length, one sunny day, he unexpectedly perceived, standing close beside him, a stranger gallant, attired in crimson velvet, bold and erect in bearing, and distinguished by a lofty crest, which seemed to curl in proud defiance of all rivalry. This showy stranger was a Cockscomb of foreign extraction, and reared in the lap of luxury, who, for temporary change of air, had been removed from his usual station in the greenhouse to a place on the gravel walk edged by our discontented Daisy and his companions. The beau-ideal of the former was now realized. He would give all the dewy diamonds in his flowery world to resemble the handsome foreigner. In mental acquirements, or moral progress, to will ardently generally goes far to accomplish the object of desire ; and though it be usually far otherwise with external endowments, the law of nature seemed to be, for once, departed from

in the case of our ambitious Daisy. His strivings to attain augmented bulk and consequence resembled the well known efforts of the Frog in the fable; but, instead of being immediately followed by the like fatal results, they appeared, on the contrary, to be attended with a measure of success. By dint of repeated stretching and swelling, his head became distended to an unnatural size, altogether lost its star-like form, and assumed a similitude in shape, as well as colour, to the crest of the envied Cockscomb; while his slender stalk, losing its symmetrical roundness, grew into a flat unshapely trunk, of proportions suited to the additional burthen it had to sustain. The simple Daisy, so long a Cockscomb in desire, had become a Cockscomb in reality.

Soon after the completion of this wondrous change, our metamorphosed flower had the pleasure of beholding his altered person in a passing streamlet left by a heavy sum-

mer shower. There was the Daisy edging reflected in all its primitive monotony, only that now, distinguished from his fellows, the Cockscomb towered above the rest, like a feathered Cavalier in the midst of Round-heads. "Now," thought he, "I shall surely attract particular attention, and be no longer, as heretofore, completely overlooked amongst the common herd." At that moment several visitors to the garden made their appearance on the Daisy-bordered walk. Their steps were directed towards the self-complacent Cockscomb, whose newly acquired crest expanded with proud anticipation. A lady of the party stooped down close beside him. "How pretty," said she, "are these Double Daisies! I love them only one degree less than their simpler brethren of the field—the 'modest, crimson-tipped' flowers of my favourite Burns. But what is this?" she suddenly exclaimed—"what a strange ugly misshapen thing!" pointing, as she spoke, to

the complacent Cockscomb. "Oh!" replied a gentleman present, "that deformed Daisy is what we Botanists term a monster!"

Such was the coveted distinction won, at last, by the Cockscomb's copyist; and not very dissimilar is the notice obtained in society by the conceited fop and affected beauty—by all those, in short, who, instead of aiming at distinguished worth and excellence, only seek distinction above their unpretending neighbours by showiness of attire or singularity of demeanour.

NOTES.

THE Cockscomb, a plant nearly allied to the Amaranths, is a native of Asia and America. Its flower spikes vary much in form, size, and colour, the latter being red, purple, yellowish, and white.

The Cockscomb Double Daisy is a red and

white variety, in which the flowering stem rises up preternaturally flattened and enlarged, and carrying on its summit a long extended ridge of flowers, frequently of an enormous size. "This monstrous production (says Curtis) seems to arise from the coalescence of two or more flower stems; and as it is of accidental occurrence, so we find a Daisy which has been a Cockscomb one year, shall lose that appearance the next, and out of a long edging of Daisies growing luxuriantly, new ones shall here and there arise." Another singular variety is the Proliferous or Hen and Chicken Daisy, in which a number of flowers, standing on short footstalks, spring circularly out of the main flower. This originates in great luxuriance, and is found wild and cultivated.



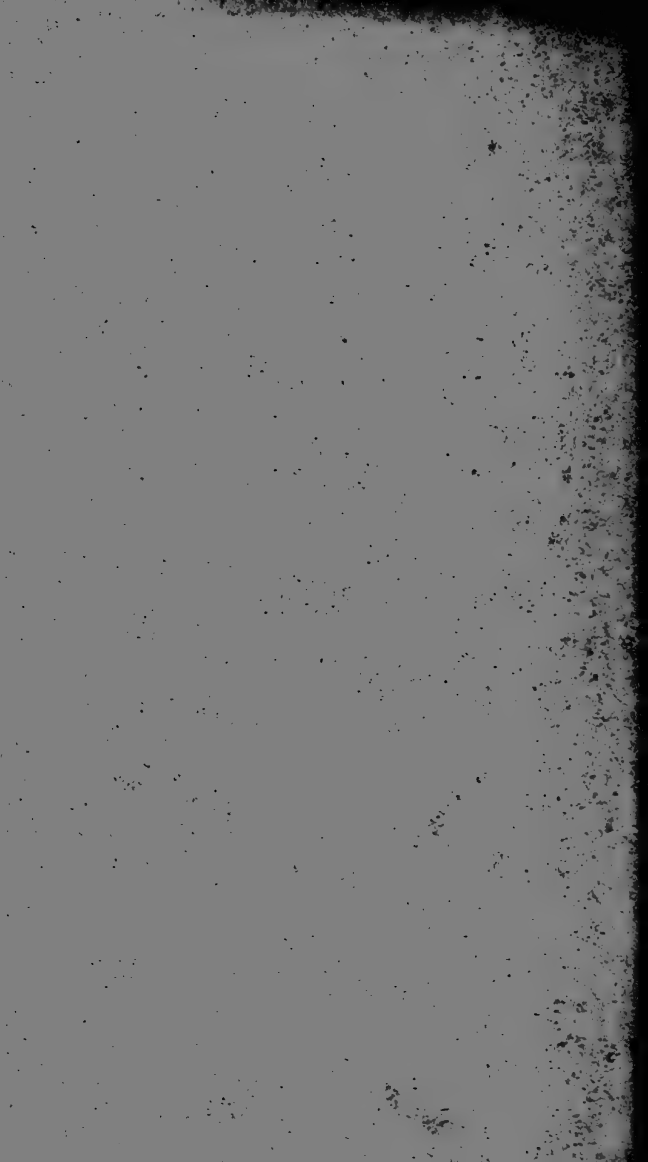
XIX.

THE EMBLEM OF IMMORTALITY.

SUMMER had departed—the sun of flowers was set, and the stars of the vegetable world, the Asters, the Dahlias, the Chresanthemums, and the Michaelmas Daisies, had risen to supply its place. Amidst these bright constellations, and almost eclipsed by their rich and glowing rays, appeared an unpretending flower of pearly whiteness. Her gaudy companions did not even deign to notice her, till a marvellous rumour got afloat concerning the unobtrusive stranger. By busy Bee, or chattering Bird, it had been whispered in some “Cowslip’s ear,” that the silvery fair one was gifted with a nature altogether differing from the generality of her fleeting race ; that



THE EMBLEM OF IMMORTALITY.



instead of, like them, being placed on this pleasant earth only to blossom out their little month, or week, or day, or hour, her life would be extended to what, by comparison, seemed eternity; that the biting frosts, before which even their longest survivors were to shrink and blacken in death, would leave her bloom uninjured, and her brightness undiminished; and that even from mankind she had hence received the appellations of Everlasting, and Live-for-ever. Rumours such as these were, of course, sufficient to render the harmless Everlasting an object of envy and dislike, mingled with a sort of superstitious fear, as of something supernatural. Little, however, did she heed the suspicious glances of her companions; and even when one, bolder than the rest, ventured to taunt her, she would gently reply, with conscious superiority—"Take heed but to fulfil your own destinies, and leave me to accomplish mine."

Ere long, the showy crowd in which she lived (but not as one of them), began rapidly to diminish—some ending their brief career in the common course of nature, others suddenly cut off by the hand of man, or the icy fingers of the frost; expiring in the cold darkness of night, or in the suffocating glare of a floral show or ball-room; and when November came, the silvery Everlasting was alone.

When January followed, the Winter Aconite, seated on her emerald throne, was seen raising her golden crown above the surrounding snow. Not even the snow's own flower had ventured to pierce its fleecy shroud, and the Aconite expected to find herself, as usual, sole sovereign of the dreary scene, when, to her surprise, she beheld a rival in the Everlasting, already by her side. "What dost thou here?" said the haughty Aconite. "How great is thy hardihood in thus braving the icy blasts which not a flower,

save myself, ever dared to face with impunity. But thou wilt speedily suffer for thy boldness, even as I have beheld others, when tempted into premature expansion by a fictitious spring. Already do thy blossoms look parched and whitened by the wind, and soon they will fall withered from thy stalk." "I fear no such fate," returned the Everlasting; "for though, to all appearance, living, I am insensible alike to nipping frost and cutting wind. Whilst thou wert yet beneath the earth, I was companion of many a gaudy flower long since perished. I beheld both the beginning and the end of their brief careers, as I shall, perhaps, of thine." The Aconite smiled in contemptuous incredulity, and the next day absolutely laughed in scorn at the pretensions of the Everlasting, on beholding her suddenly plucked off by a human hand. "Ah! ah!" cried she, "where is now thy boasted longevity? and which of us two, prithee, is likely to be the survivor?"

So, in her ignorance, spoke the foolish Aconite, not knowing that, even in death and separation from earth, the precious attribute of immortality—of unfadingness—was yet preserved by the Everlasting. And why was the fadeless flower gathered? Was it to adorn a winter bow-pot? or were those pearly blossoms intended to gem the hair of some blooming maiden? No; they were meant to fulfil a more tender, and yet a more exalted purpose; they were plucked to adorn the grave of a beloved child, whose mother's hopes, once manifold, were now comprised in one—the glorious hope of immortality. To symbolize that blessed expectation, she had hung the white Everlasting above the mouldering remains of her darling, whose innocent spirit was, she well knew, destined to live for ever.

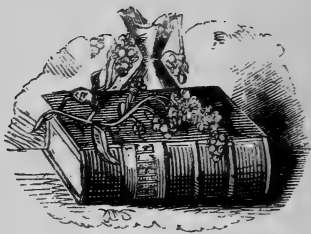
NOTES.

THE Pearly Everlasting, or American Cudweed, is found growing, naturally, in moist places near rivers; but, owing to its being extremely common in America, some have supposed it originally imported from thence. This flower, from its purity and durability, has been considered an emblem of immortality, and, as such, is frequently planted in the churchyards of South Wales. It is also a favourite in cottage gardens. Gerarde tells us that this small silvery Everlasting, a double species of *Gnaphalium*, was called by the English women of his time, Live Long, or Live for Ever.

The Yellow Winter Aconite, distinguished by its golden blossom sitting close upon a seat of leaves, is generally the first flower to make its welcome appearance in our gardens above the snow. It grows wild in the mountains of Lombardy, Italy and Austria. Gerarde says, "the colder the weather, the deeper the snowe, the fairer and larger the flower."

The Snowdrop is thus beautifully described by Mrs. Barbauld :—

“ As nature’s breath, by some transforming power,
Had changed an icicle into a flower,
Its name and hue the scentless plant retains,
And winter lingers in its icy veins.”





VENUS'S FLY TRAP.

XX.

VENUS'S FLY TRAP.

THE Goddess of Beauty was one day reposing in her bower, when an impertinent Fly had the curiosity to enter, and, mistaking the cheek of the lovely sleeper for the sunny side of a melting peach, settled upon and pierced it with his tiny dart. Venus started, woke, and attempted to lay her hand upon the audacious intruder; but the agile insect escaped, and went boastfully buzzing to his fellows. Silly trifler! he little suspected the dire vengeance about to fall upon his head. The offended Goddess, whose cheek was slightly scarred, kept in memory the Fly's offence long after the irritation of his skin-deep puncture had passed away, and related

what had befallen to her cousin Flora, who chanced, on the same morning, to pay her a visit. The latter would, probably, have cared not a rush about the matter, only it so happened that she herself had received very recent provocation from the tribe of Flies, whom she had detected in numerous acts of petty larceny on the honey bags of many of her favourite subjects. "My dearest Venus," said she, "prithee take not so much to heart the insolence of your little tormentor, or fear that he or any of his fellows will ever again molest your slumbers. I will plant around the entrance to your bower certain living Fly Traps, chosen from among the subjects of my flowery kingdom, who will not fail to seize on and punish the first winged idler who may dare approach. Both by day and night shall they keep watch, since, even in the shades of evening, many a rakish Gnat and Fire-fly are always abroad on no good errand."

Flora kept her word, and the precincts of Venus's bower were presently covered with a profusion of most beautiful flowers, spreading their honied fragrance to a considerable distance. Allured by the attractive perfume, swarms of flutterers, from far and near, came hastening to the spot, and sported around the lovely blossoms.

Who has not heard of learned sages, and even of rigid censors, forgetting their wisdom, and laying aside their virtue, when assailed by temptation in a flowery garb? Was it, then, likely that poor simple insects should suspect aught of evil beneath an exterior so bewitching, or refuse the nectar offered in so fair a vase? They tasted—sipped—then sipped again—at first, however, cautiously—for the flowers, though sweet, were strange; and even Flies are, doubtless, endowed by protecting nature with a degree of instinctive prudence, if they will only follow its friendly guidance. But, alas! encouraged by impu-

nity, they soon left off sipping, and, eager for a deeper draught, plunged their trunks to the very bottom of the intoxicating flower-cups. Then, too late, did they discover that to withdraw was no longer in their power, the treacherous Fly Traps having so closed around their victims as to render escape almost impossible. The invader of Beauty's slumbers, and the peculiar object of her ire, was the first to suffer, and die a death of sweet but lingering torment. Some few, only, gifted with more than ordinary strength, contrived, by violent efforts, to burst from their luscious thralldom, though not without serious injury to wing or limb. Taught by sad experience, these failed not to forewarn their heedless comrades of the danger of resting on the fatal flowers, or even of exposing themselves to the temptation of a near approach. Flies, however, have always loved honey more than good advice; and, though a few of them determined to take only two or

three harmless sips, they all ended by drinking deep enough for destruction. Their fate served as little in the way of warning as that of their brethren who were the first to perish; and even now the vicinity of Venus's bower continues to be crowded by swarms of foolish flutterers, who daily fall victims to her ingeniously constructed Fly Traps.

NOTES.

THE plant commonly called Venus's Fly Trap is the *Dionea Muscipula*; but that alluded to in the preceding Fable is the *Apocynum*, or Fly-catching Dogsbane, preferred for "pointing a moral" on account of its honied attractions and superior beauty. This flower, which perfumes the air to a considerable distance, is most curiously constructed for entrapping insects, which are always found caught in its blossoms, usually by the trunk, rarely by the leg. Four or five are sometimes found in one flower, some dead, others

endeavouring to disentangle themselves, in which they are now and then so fortunate as to succeed.

The *Dionea Muscipula*, or True Fly Trap of Venus, is, as well as the preceding, a native of North America, inhabiting the swamps of Carolina. "This plant exhibits a very remarkable instance of vegetable irritability. The leaves, which are at the bottom of the footstalk, are each divided into two lobes, the lobe at the extremity having long teeth on the margin, like the antennæ of insects, and, within, armed with six spines, three on each side. These leaves lie spread upon the ground round the stem, and the lobes of each are so irritable that, when a fly happens to light upon the spines of one, that part of the leaf immediately folds up, and crushes the fly to death; and this irritability is great in proportion to the slightness of the pressure on these spines. It is observed, from the same cause, no sensible contraction ensues in cold weather; in warm weather, and at noon, it is particularly strong."

An experiment has been made to supply one of this species with fine filaments of raw beef, and the plant so supported was more luxuriant than any other. It seems, therefore, probable,

that the decomposition of animal matter is peculiarly favourable to its economy ; and the singular structure of its leaves may be designed to supply it with insects whose putrescence may act as similar decompositions do, when applied to the roots of other plants.



XXI.

THE SEDITIOUS REEDS AND THE PATRIOT SANDAL.

AN Indian forest, now no longer in existence, was once reigned over by a royal Palm. The magnificent Dillenia, the golden Mesua, and the verdant Nancea, trees which, in form and foliage, almost rivalled their sovereign, represented the nobles of his court, each of them attended by his dependant parasite, and adorned by the embraces of some fair and fragrant twiner. The Indian God Tree (in its humble origin and enormous growth no unfitting emblem of the Church of Rome) might have been regarded as the priestly hierarchy; the dark Ebony, the durable Teak, and fruitful Mango, of character more useful,



THE SEDITIOUS REEDS.

if less showy, ranked as the middle class; while, lowest in the scale, a dense population of Indian Reeds, or Vansas, occupied the forest ground, and formed the "commonalty of this sylvan empire." Nor were the dominions of the Palm King destitute of defenders; for armies of gigantic climbers, headed by the thorny Cactus and horrid Tragularia, extended their strong and formidable arms from trunk to trunk, and constituted an almost impenetrable barrier against invasion. Indeed, from time immemorial, this mighty forest had been allowed to flourish undisturbed by man. There, no murderous axe had been ever laid to the root of the useful Teek Tree. No agile Hindoo had there ever ascended the columnar trunk of the lofty Cocco; and there, for once, the beautiful and juicy Tamarind had been permitted to perfect her unplucked fruit.

Thus, untroubled from without, and favoured within by a luxuriant soil and glow-

ing sun, one would have naturally supposed that the members of this forest community might have grown together in perfect harmony to the end of time ; but, amidst all this outward luxuriance and seeming tranquillity, there were latent embers of discord and destruction smouldering within. These elements of mischief existed chiefly in the lowest and most numerous of the classes above enumerated ; namely, the Indian Reeds, or Vansas, who, like a discontented populace stirred to rebellion by the breath of every factious demagogue, uplifted their murmuring voices with every breeze, and struck against each other in rude collision, as though at variance also amongst themselves.

The heads of the forest, the sovereign Palm, his gorgeous aristocracy, and the priestly God Tree, wrapped up, for the most part, in their own importance, troubled not their lofty heads concerning the murmurs or dissensions of the plebeian crew, nor dreamt

for a moment that their own safety could be implicated therein. The Sandal Tree, alone, prompted by the innate worth and sweetness of his disposition, looked down with anxiety and concern on the disturbed state of the reedy commonalty, whom he strove to calm and conciliate. "Wherefore, my friends," said he, "are ye thus for ever murmuring? Is it on account of your lowly situation? Remember, that in this humble position consists your greater security against the fury of the storms to which our height exposes us. Do ye complain because we, who are loftier than yourselves, receive a larger portion of the glorious sunlight, of which we serve, in some measure, to deprive you? 'Tis true—but do we not, in return, afford you our protecting shade, and preserve for you the genial moisture so essential to your existence? Above all, wherefore do ye quarrel amongst yourselves? I will tell you the source of all these evils—it consists in your permitting

the breath of every factious Zephyr to excite you to contention with one another, and to murmurs against those above you." So spoke the patriot, Sandal; but his words were far too moderate either to influence or please the hollow multitude, who continued to be stirred up, as usual, by their great agitator, the Wind. Things were in this position when the notice of the noble-hearted Sandal was one day attracted by the unusual movements of a Baya, or Indian Grosbeak, a little bird who had long been in the habit of resorting to his shade. He observed it continually wheeling round the heads of the loftier trees, and screaming in a harsh and melancholy voice, which sounded like a note of warning. At length she approached the Sandal Tree himself, and, resting on his topmost branches, cried aloud, "Delight of the forest, beloved Chandana, beware, beware!" "What mean you?" asked the Sandal. "An awful tempest is at hand," was the bird's reply. The

mighty Marut is about to unloose his winds, and Iswara the Destroyer will ride upon the storm. Already have I warned your haughty monarch and his prouder satellites, who only scoff at my assertion. I have left them to their fate, but thou art wiser and better than they, and now listen to what I tell thee:—Look at those pernicious Vansas—the restless Reeds below us. They are now, indeed, motionless and silent in the noon-day stillness; but the elements of fire, so long smouldering within their hollow hearts, will, this night, be kindled to an all-destructive blaze. Come out, then, from amongst them. Say but the word, and my power shall transport thee to a grove of safety.” “Thine!” said the Sandal Tree, incredulously. “Yes, mine,” returned the bird. “Know, that beneath this diminutive form I preserve both the prescience and the magic skill I once exercised in the human shape of a learned brahmin. Taught by the former, I foretel the storm,

and, aided by the latter, I would save thee from its fury." "Friendly Baya," replied the Sandal Tree, "I thank thee for thine offer: but many are the tempests I have stood unharmed; and, whether destined or not to survive another, I would not quit the station wherein the great Brahma hath placed me, or desert, in the hour of danger, my old companions, and the young who have grown up around me." "Farewell, then," said the bird in a low and plaintive voice; "I respect thy motives, and will urge thee no further." Then, spreading his pinions, the little Baya flew away, but not with his usual swiftness; and so dead and deep was the stillness which now pervaded the forest, that even the light flapping of his delicate wings was long distinctly audible. Towards sunset, the clouds assumed a lurid, threatening aspect: low, hollow murmurs succeeded the late unusual calm: the predicted destroyer, the evil genius of the Vansas, was abroad, and, in measure as he

drew nigh, their agitation augmented, till rustling, clashing, now bending to the earth, now suddenly rebounding, they resembled conflicting armies in the angry turmoil of a fight. Soon, this similitude to a battle-field became fearfully heightened, for, struck forth by their own fierce collision, innumerable sparks of fire, like flashes of musquetry, issued from their ranks, and showed more vividly as the darkness augmented. A short time sufficed to wrap the reedy multitude in one entire blaze. Thus were the rebellious, murmuring Vansas the first victims of a combustion kindled, indeed, by the whirlwind's breath, but only because its materials had been long existent in their flinty hearts. Shooting from the mass of flame by which they were consumed, arose spiral tongues of fire, which, encircling the proudest nobles of the forest, made speedy prey of all their blown and budding honours. From the regal Palm downwards, not one escaped.

Involved in the general destruction fell the patriot Sandal, sharing, as he had desired, the fate of his less noble brethren; but, drawn from his burning relics, many a wreath of perfumed incense ascended towards heaven, and attested his virtue, most pre-eminent in the hour of death.

NOTES.

THE Palmeira Palm, the *Borassus* of Linnæus, is justly entitled the king of its order,—which the Hindoos call *Trína Druína*, or Grass Trees. An intoxicating and very delicious liquor is extracted from this tree, which, according to Rheede, also produces sugar.

The *Dillenia Indica* is one of the most magnificent of all tropical trees. In the woods of Malabar it is said to attain the height of about fifty feet, growing in full vigour for upwards of fifty years.

The Iron Mesua of Linnæus merits much more,

according to the description of Sir William Jones, the appellation of *golden*, having flowers of silvery white, with anthers like gold ; its native names of Champéya, Chancana, &c., being also expressive of the costliest of metals. “It is,” says the same author, “one of the most beautiful trees on earth ; and the delicious odour of its blossoms justly entitles it to a place in the quiver of Cámadeva.* In the poem called Naishadha, there is a wild but elegant couplet, where the Poet compares the white of this flower, from whence the Bees were scattering the pollen of the numerous gold-coloured anthers, to an alabaster wheel, on which Cáma was whetting his arrows, while sparks of fire were dispersed in every direction.”

The oriental Nauclea is one of the most elegant and beautifully verdant of Indian trees, and is considered holy by the Hindoos.

Various parasitic plants of great beauty grow upon the forest trees of India, which, in many cases, they injure as well as ornament. One of these is the Loranthus, with beautiful flowers resembling a Honeysuckle, which is so injurious to the various trees which afford it support, that all that part of the branch above where it grows

* The Indian god of love.

becomes sickly, and soon perishes. An elegant plant of this kind is the retuse-leaved *Epidendrum* of Linnæus. The flowers are very fragrant, and resemble shells or enamel. Though attaching itself to trees, it is an air plant, and lives in a pot without earth or water.

Beautiful climbers, some of gigantic growth, and nearly all of extreme beauty and fragrance, entwine the more sturdy natives of Indian forests with embraces less dangerous than those of the parasitic race. Amongst these are the Bengal *Bannisteria*, and the twining *Asclepias*, with various species of the elegant *Convolvulus* and *Ipomea*.

The Indian Fig or God Tree (*Ficus Indica*) has been celebrated, from the most remote antiquity, for its remarkable property of letting its branches drop and take root, thus extending itself, so that a single tree forms a curiously arched grove.

The true black Ebony Tree of India (quite distinct from the West Indian Ebony, with brownish wood) has a trunk from twenty to thirty-five feet high. Only the centre of large trees is black and valuable, which part is more or less in quantity, according to the age of the tree. The outside

wood is white and soft, and soon destroyed by time and insects, the black being left untouched. The ripe fruit is eaten by natives.

The useful Teek Tree is a native of various parts of India. Its trunk is erect, of immense size, and furnishes a light timber, easily worked, yet strong and durable.

The fruit of the Indian Mango Tree is universally eaten, and esteemed the best in India. Old trees are sometimes from ten to fifteen feet in circumference. Roxburgh describes a grove of this size, growing before his door, as a most noble sight.

The different species of Indian Reed, or Bamboo Cane, are applied in India to a variety of useful purposes, amongst others, building houses, by the natives. Some are thorny or armed, others unarmed. The Bamboo Vaccifera, or Berry-bearing Reed, is said, by M. Pierard, to yield more or less tabasheer, a siliceous crystallization, and sometimes the cavity between the joints is nearly filled with this substance, called, by the natives, choona, or lime. "In the great heat of the East Indies, it is not uncommon for large tracts of Reeds to be set on fire in their own motion by the wind, which probably arises from

the flinty surface of the reeds rubbing against each other in their agitation. In the works of Sir William Jones is an elegant Sanscrit stanza describing the effect of Bamboo Canes often taking fire by the violence of their collision, with the allegory of a Sandal Tree as a virtuous man dwelling in a town inhabited by contending factions. It is thus translated : ‘Delight of the world, beloved Chandana (Sandal Tree), stay no longer in this forest, which is overspread with rigid, pernicious Vansas (Bamboo Reeds), whose hearts are unsound, and who, being themselves confounded in the scorching glare kindled by their mutual attrition, will consume, not merely their own families, but this whole wood.’ These facts cannot but excite the mind to admiration of the boundless laws of nature, by which, while a simple vegetable secretes the most volatile and evanescent perfume, it also secretes a substance which is an ingredient in the primeval mountains of the globe.”—Classes and Orders of the Linnæan System Illustrated. Nothing, indeed, can be more strikingly different than the nature of the various secretions in the same plant, as in the Peach Tree ; the gum is mild—the bark, leaves, and flower, bitter and dangerous—the fruit, acid, sugary, and aromatic. A flinty sub-

stance has been discovered in some grasses—in the cuticle of the rough Horse-tail, imported from Holland under the name of Dutch Rush, for polishing, and also in common Wheat straw, which, when burnt, yields a powder used for the same purpose.

The Indian Cactus is armed with long straight thorns, surrounded by tufts of short bristles. From the upper edges of the joints, which are oblong and compressed, issue large bright yellow flowers, which are open only in the daytime. It is common in forests and road-sides near Calcutta.

“The *Tragularia Horrida*,” says Roxburgh, “common in Indian forests, makes excellent impenetrable fences, and, when fairly caught in its trammels, it is no easy matter to get extricated, the prickles being so numerous, strong, crooked, and sharp.”

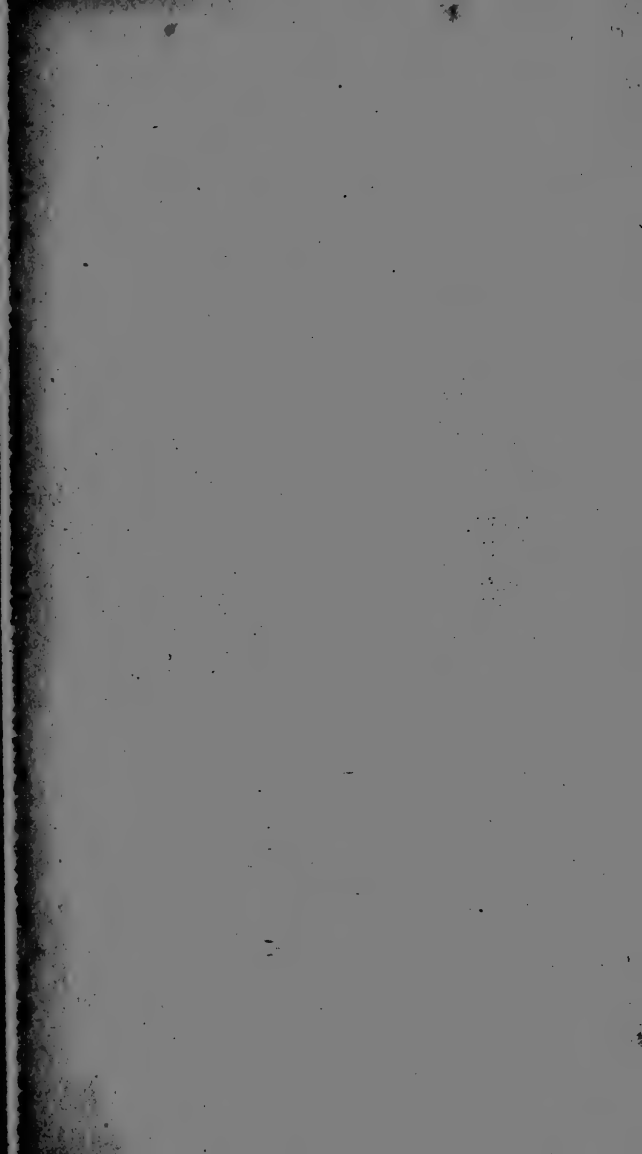
The Coco Nut Tree, or *Palma Indica*, is planted in all the hot parts of the East and West Indies, but found wild most plentifully in the Maldives and desert East India islands. Its uses are almost innumerable: the wood serves for masts, planks, &c.; the leaves for covering houses, making sails, shading palanquins, &c.; the outward skin for ropes, oakum, &c.; the nut and

milk for food, its hard shell being carved into drinking cups, spoons, &c. Lopez states that the first letter sent to the King of Portugal from Calicut, was written on a leaf of this tree, from which, also, a wine has been made by tapping.

“The flowers of the Tamarind Tree,” says Sir William Jones, “are exquisitely beautiful, the fruit salubrious for making an acid sherbet, the leaves elegantly formed and arranged, and the whole of the tree magnificent.”

The fragrant Sandal Tree is a native of the East Indies, its wood being the white and yellow Sanders, used medicinally. Both sorts are the produce of the same tree, the central part of the trunk acquiring a yellow colour, great fragrance and hardness, while the exterior is less firm, white and scentless.







THE PRETTY MOUNTAINEER.

XXII.

THE PRETTY MOUNTAINEER.

NEAR the summit of a wild mountain in the north of England, dwelt a hardy tribe of Perennials, and in this retired spot, close beside the root of her parent, flourished a young plant of peculiar promise. Her form was slight and elegant, and her complexion the finest red and white imaginable. For several summers this rustic beauty had "blushed unseen," and would certainly have "wasted her sweetness" also "on the desert air," only it so happened that the charm of fragrance was not amongst the number of her endowments. Who might have been her first admirer—whether the Alpine Thistle grew melancholy for her sake, or whether the

Whortle Berry dropped his ruby offerings at her feet, these are matters which must remain hidden in the mists of the cloud-capped mountain. The first individual recorded to have paid her particular attention was a London tourist, a man of taste, and eke a Botanist of some renown, whose admiration was attested by more than passing looks, for, when he returned to the metropolis, the mountain flower was his companion. What degree of difficulty he found in detaching her from her native soil; what pearly dew-drops were shed on the occasion, or how she bore what, in those days, must have been a long and tedious journey, we are not competent to say. Suffice it that she neither pined long nor drooped heavily when once settled in the spot to which she had been transported. Yet how different was the scene to that which she had left behind! In exchange for the pure keen air which had been used to wave her slender footstalks, she now breathed the dust

and smoke-laden atmosphere of a miniature flower-plot in a London suburb ; and, instead of a few distant scattered neighbours, she found herself in the midst of a motley crowd of strangers, some of whom looked down upon her with contempt. Amongst these, however, she, one day, recognised an old acquaintance, the Dwarf Gentian ; and though, to say truth, she had, when at home, always despised her as a mere nobody, it was now with exceeding pleasure that she caught sight of the little somebody she had known before, shabby as the Gentian's blue gown had been rendered by accumulated dust and smoke. After mutual salutations the conversation of the quondam neighbours turned naturally upon those they had left behind, and the Londoner then proceeded to inquire how the recent comer liked her change of residence. "Vastly well, indeed," returned the latter ; "only one thing makes me very un-

easy, and that is, the not being able to send an account of my welfare to my friends in the north." "Oh! if that be all your trouble," said the Gentian, "I believe I can assist you, for I am in the habit of holding correspondence with my own relations." "And how pray do you manage it?" "Oh! nothing can be easier—to me, at least," replied the Gentian, who was a bit of a blue. "When I want to send a letter I merely apply to a certain clever Caterpillar of my acquaintance, who, under my dictation, inscribes on a leaf all I may desire to say.* My epistle, thus completed, I commit to the charge of some friendly bird who may chance to be travelling northwards, and who undertakes its safe delivery. I will readily put you in the way of

* The leaves of some plants are not unfrequently found inscribed, as it were, with white hieroglyphics, the work of a small Worm or Caterpillar, which partially eats away the green pulpy substance between the leaf's upper and under skin.

doing the same." The simple mountaineer heartily thanked the accomplished Gentian, and thought to herself what clever things were to be learned in London. Ere long, by the aid of her friend, and her friend's amanuensis, she contrived to manufacture a letter (a green scroll with white characters), which was duly despatched by a flying post-man to her friends in the country. Of this singular production we have not, as yet, been able to procure an autograph copy, but having picked up a few lines, apparently added by way of postscript, and accidentally torn from the body of the leaf, we subjoin a translation for the benefit of the curious in epistolary remains; it ran as follows:—

"P. S. I almost forgot to tell my dear parents one little particular, which, even now, I quite blush to mention, and hope you will not think me proud for naming it. It is that, since I arrived in this great city, my new

friends have given me a new title instead of our family name, Saxifrage, for they always call me (now pray don't think me vain)—they always call me London Pride, or None so Pretty!”

NOTES.

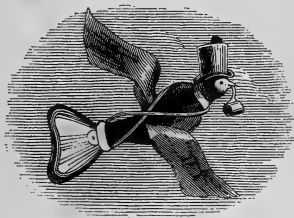
THE great English Soft Thistle, an inhabitant of Alpine pastures, is also called the Melancholy Thistle.

The Whortle Berry is a shrubby plant, with flesh-coloured flowers and red berries, growing on Alpine heaths.

The Dwarf Gentian, with flowers of brilliant blue, nearly stemless, is a native of the highest mountains of England and Wales, though a ready grower in our flower gardens.

Most species of the elegant genus *Saxifraga* are Alpine plants, and capable, with pure air, of bearing an extreme degree of cold. The Saxi-

fraga Umbrosa, commonly known by the names of London Pride, or None so Pretty, is found on mountains and in woods in the north of England, and also in Ireland. This plant thrives in London better than the generality, and flowers earlier.



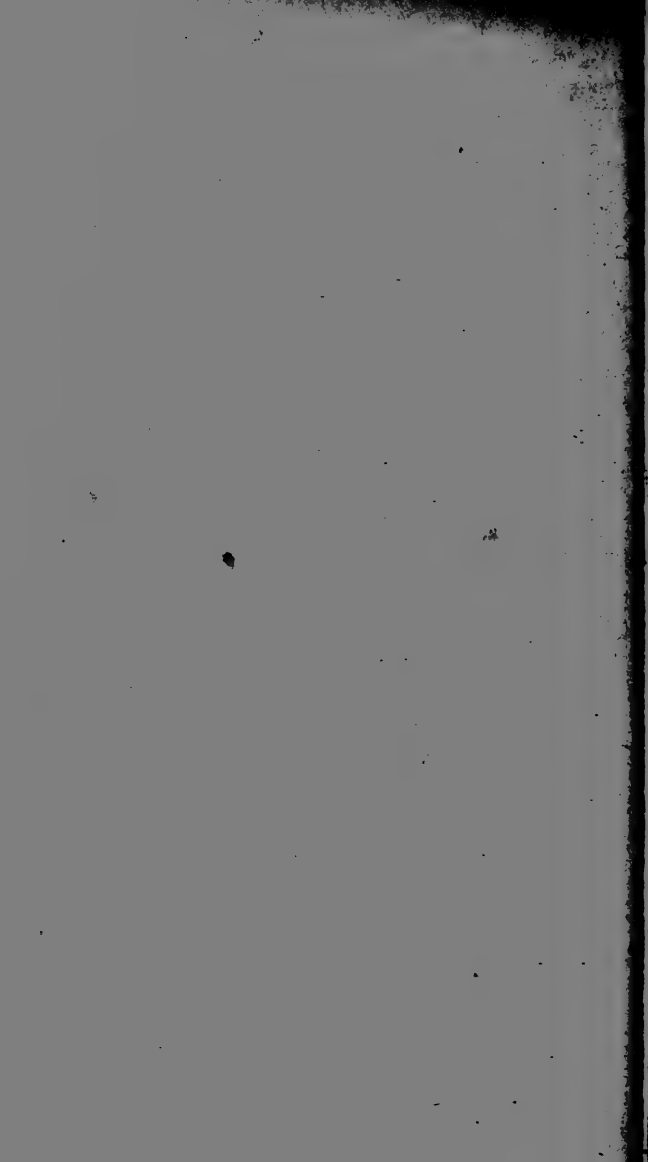
XXIII.

THE SHEPHERD'S PURSE AND THE FAIRY.

A SHEPHERD, who was of an unfortunately discontented turn of mind—one who was much fonder of reclining lazily on a sunny bank, than of viewing his own lot on its sunny side—was one day moodily watching his flock, wishing himself all the while its owner, instead of guardian, in other words, a richer, and, as he foolishly supposed, a happier man. His faithful dog lay beside him, and every now and then licked the hand of his master as it hung listlessly by his side, then looked up in his face, as if to read his thoughts; but the Shepherd was in no humour to stroke the shaggy hide of his friend Keeper, his envious musings having



THE SHEPHERD'S PURSE.



been diverted to the sleek coat of his master's hunter, which had just bounded with its wealthy rider over an adjacent hedge. The sullen tender of flocks was all at once roused from his reverie by the small silvery voice of a sprightly little Fairy. "What ails thee, my good man?" said she, tapping his shoulder with her wand; "you seem mighty melancholy. Have you met with any disaster?—lost anything?—perhaps your wife?" "No such luck." "Or some of your sheep?" "What should I care? they're my master's." "Your purse, then?" "Purse!" growled the Shepherd, "no great loss if I had, for it's always empty." "Ah! ah!" cried the Fairy, "I think I can guess what's the matter; you are wishing to be rich, and discontented because you are poor. But prithee now listen to me. Once upon a time, when we Fairies used to mix much more with mankind than we do at present, we learnt many of their pernicious customs; and seeing the high

store they set by money, and the uses to which they applied it, we (in an evil hour) resolved to have money of our own. Nature had ready coined it to our hands in the gold and silver seeds of flowers, and these we stored up and made our circulating medium. Then came amongst us, envy, avarice, dishonesty, and cunning. Instead of being, as heretofore, the protectors of the beautiful flowers, we became their ravagers; and instead of the most benevolent and happy little creatures in the world, we became a discontented, malevolent, and restless race. We began to dislike our native dells and dingles, and to haunt more than ever the habitations of men. We knew well enough, however, that the cause of all our misery had been our foolish imitation of their practices, and, with a view to revenge, many a sorry trick and mischievous prank did we delight to play them, as, doubtless, you may have often heard. This, however, availed us nothing, and, at

last, growing tired of such profitless vengeance, we made up our minds to return entirely to our shady recesses, and, what was better, to our ancient habits. Truly, it cost some of us not a little to part with our stores of golden treasure, but, at last, we all agreed to throw away our money, and having then no further use for our purses, we hung them up, as memorials of our folly, upon the most ugly and worthless weeds we could discover, where you may even now behold them."

The Fairy, as she spoke, pointed out to the Shepherd some mean, ragged-looking plants which grew beside him; and, sure enough, there he saw suspended the little triangular pods or purses of which she had been speaking. They proved more useful to him than they had done to their former possessors, for the common weed to which they were attached, could never, in future, cross his path without reminding him of the lesson of his fairy monitress, taught by which, he soon

found that, in the enjoyment of a contented mind, a light purse need not always make a heavy heart.

NOTES.

SHEPHERD'S PURSE (*Bursa pastoris*) or Wedge-shape Treacle Mustard; one of our commonest road-side weeds, varying greatly in the size and form of its leaves. "It flowers from spring to the end of autumn, and ripens copiously its triangular pods or pouches, whence its name, distinguished from all other British plants. The root is tapering, and exhales a peculiar smoke-like scent when pulled out of the ground. Small birds are fond of the seeds and young flowers."—Sowerby's English Botany.







THE CROAKING CRITIC.

XXIV.

THE CROAKING CRITIC.

TOWARDS sunset, on a summer's evening, two Frogs, mother and son, who lived on the banks of Windermere, were sitting side by side, among the rushes, looking out upon the glowing prospect. Not far from their retreat, grew a beautiful Lobelia, her pale purple flowers raised above the surface of the water, while her tufted leaves rooted in its gravelly bed. "Prithee, look, my son, at that lovely flower!" said the elder Frog, who, from her long residence by the lake's side, had acquired a wonderful taste for the beauties of nature. "I see nothing to look at," returned her son, an impertinent young reptile, who, though his judgment was about as shallow as

the pools wherein he loved to bathe, pretended to be a mighty criticiser of all he saw. "I see no beauty in that flower at all, only plenty of defects." "Ah! my son," cried the old Frog, "you never allow anything to be handsome but that yellow face of yours, which you're for ever looking down at in the water. And pray what fault do you please to find with that elegant flower?" "Oh! a hundred," returned the croaking critic; "and to mention only one, her heads are all so bedizened with purple finery that she can't hold them upright." "You know nothing about the matter, child," said his mother; "I've studied these things more than you, and can tell you that the weight of her blossoms has nothing to do with their drooping. Look at yonder moor-hen, her wings falling over her sedgy nest. Is it, think you, because she is not strong enough to hold them up? No. She does but spread them to warm and preserve her cherished eggs.

So it is with yonder flower, whose bells are turned downwards to protect the germs of her future progeny from wind and rain." While the mother Frog was thus holding forth on natural philosophy, her undutiful and careless son was thinking of nothing but his natural appetite, already devouring, with his eyes, a large worm he had destined for his supper. The consequence was, that his wise parent's instruction was, as usual, quite thrown away, in proof of which, some few weeks afterwards, he again began making his ignorant observations on the then altered appearance of the Water Lobelia. "Look there, mother," cried he, swelling with conceit, "I really believe that flower must have heard and profited by what I said, for see, she has taken off her purple finery, and now holds her head almost as upright as my own, though, without her frippery, I can't say she's much left to be proud of." "Son, son," croaked the mother Frog, despairingly,

when shall I ever teach thee to learn humility, and gather wisdom by observation? Pray do not flatter thyself that yonder flower has been influenced by any of thy silly remarks. I told thee before that she drooped not for heaviness, but for the sake of preserving her future progeny, and now, though her head has grown many times more weighty, she is taught to raise it for a like purpose, the protection of her ripening seed, which would else fall and be scattered on the water. What I tell thee, my child," continued the aged Frog, "I have only myself learned from close observation; and if, instead of being always so ready to find fault, you would but try to discover the cause and purpose of all you see, you would perceive that every movement, even of the meanest herb, is meant to accomplish some useful end; and is directed by that unerring Power which created them, and us, and all things."

We fear the foolish young Frog continued

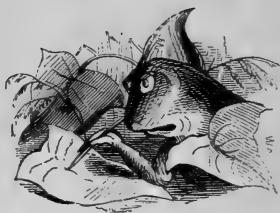
to regard his mother's counsel only as the prosing of a tiresome old croaker. May her lessons prove more useful to a multitude of shallow critics, to whom they are, at least, equally applicable.

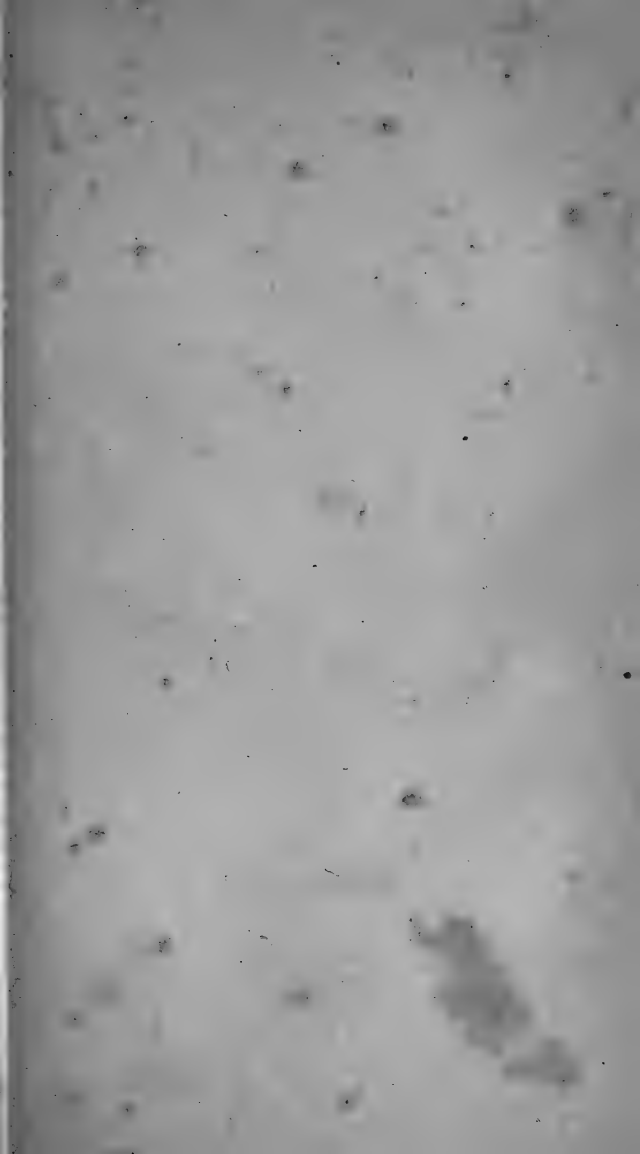
NOTES.

THE Water Lobelia, or Lake Lobel, is an elegant and singular plant, with pale purplish flowers, abounding in the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, the tufts of leaves rooting in their gravelly bottoms, the flower-stem alone rising above the water. The flowers are drooping, but the germen* in ripening becomes erect, affording an example, among many others, that it is not the weight of blossoms that causes them to droop, the fruit of such, though much heavier, being almost always upright for the purpose of

* The rudiment of the young fruit and seed.

retaining the seeds till ripe, and then scattering them more widely, while the inclined corolla shelters the pollen from wet.—Sowerby's English Botany.







THE ASPIRING CONVOLVULUS.

XXV.

THE ASPIRING CONVULVULUS.

A YOUTHFUL plant of the Great Bindweed, or Wild Convolvulus, sprang from his mother earth with a more than usual share of the family propensity for climbing. The station which nature had assigned him was a secluded nook in a tangled copse-wood, where, as he grew up, rapidly ascending in spiral evolutions, he looked down with serpent-like pride on the humbler wood-flowers, and, forgetful that it was only by help of a supporting Hazel that he towered above them, regarded even the stately Mullein and the graceful Fox-glove as objects of contempt. Self-satisfied in his swollen vanity, he was contented for awhile in his native shades,

nor dreamt, indeed, of any sphere beyond them. One day, however, a gossiping Gad-fly chanced to settle on his snow-white corolla, and described to him, in glowing colours, the splendours of a flower-garden she had just quitted, and where, she added, "I have been visiting one of your relations." "A relation of mine! How do you know that?" "Oh! by the strong family likeness; he has your shape and air precisely, only instead of always wearing white, he is attired in a striped vest of the most beautiful red and purple imaginable. I assure you he's a prodigious favourite with the owners of the garden, who pay him the greatest attention, and have even provided him with a lofty pole for climbing. However, for my part, I think you much the handsomest, and 'tis only a pity you should live in this out-of-the-way place." With this, away flew the Gad-fly, but her idle buzzing had quite sufficed to set on fire the dormant embers of

the wood-flower's ambition, and his late contentment springing, as we have seen, only from the sands of vanity, was at once uprooted. "That Gad-fly is perfectly right," thought he; "I always felt myself thrown away in this solitary wilderness, and have now discovered where my station should have been. But who can tell whether a place may not yet be mine in that lovely garden of which she speaks? This very night, when all the chattering birds and prying insects are asleep, I will inquire into my future destiny." The prophetic seer, whom our ambitious climber had in view, was an aged Witch Elm, who lived close at hand. Her bark was cracked and wrinkled by the sun and wind of centuries; two of her main branches, scathed by lightning, were outstretched in withered bareness, and her dark matted head, uplifted to heaven, seemed to hold mysterious communion with the stars. All was hushed in the deep stillness of a summer night even

the Grasshopper had ceased his song, when the Convolvulus, creeping closer to the Elm, invoked her, in the voice of flowers, to reveal his future fate; above all, whether he was destined ever to quit his native shades? "Thou art," whispered the leaves of the old wood sybil. "And when?" "To-morrow night thou shalt stand in the garden beside thy painted, pampered cousin—he whose lot is the chief object of thy envy." The inquirer was content, and, with perfect reliance on the Witch Elm's prophecy, passed the following day in restless speculations as to its probable mode of accomplishment. The shades of evening were closing, when a rustle was heard within the deep recesses of the wood; a human form intrudes upon the solitude, seizes with one hand the tall hazel rod round which our Convolvulus is twined; grasps with the other a glittering blade, and, by a few deep gashes, severs at once the woody stem and the soft climber by which it

is embraced. Attracted in the dusk by the large white blossoms of the *Convolvulus*, a gardener, in search of stakes, had been led to select for his purpose the hazel-bough they decorated, and, having cut off the branching twigs, took not the trouble to tear off the embracing Bindweed. The stake, thus fashioned, he carried to his garden, and drove into the ground that very night, for the support of a young Hollyhock planted in the same bed as the coloured *Convolvulus*, the wood-flower's envied relation. Thus was the Witch Elm's prophecy accomplished, and the ambitious climber lived long enough to feel the misery of its completion. He was now, indeed, an occupant of the gay parterre, but only as a disfiguring weed, parched in the sultry sun as he hung dying on his stake, an object of contempt to his cousin *Convolvulus* and the rest of his blooming companions. Even the flattering Gad-fly flattered him no longer; and, instead of staying

to whisper, "'Tis a pity you're not living in a garden," she only hummed contemptuously as she flew past, "'Tis really a pity you ever left the wood!"

NOTES.

THE Great Bindweed, or Wild Convolvulus, though very mischievous to the gardener and farmer, is a plant of extreme beauty, its dark, arrow-shaped leaves and large white bell flowers being highly ornamental in our woods and hedges, as is also the smaller species, with pink blossoms elegantly striated. Both kinds have long fibrous roots stretching far into the ground, with smooth, weak, twisted stems twining round every support; the greater sometimes to the height of twelve or fourteen feet. The corolla of the Convolvulus is curiously plaited, and folds up before rain.

The Mulleins are a very handsome tribe of plants, especially the Hoary—one of the most magnificent natives of Britain. The leaves and stem, which rise to a height of four feet, are downy and powdery. When in blossom, it forms

a golden pyramid, a yard high, consisting of many hundreds of flowers with bright red anthers. The Dark or Moth Mullein, so called from being much resorted to by moths and butterflies, is another handsome species. Old Gerarde speaks of a variety called the *Æthiopian*, "with wool so long, as one may with his fingers pull the same from the leaves, even as wool is pulled from a sheepe's skinne. It groweth," he says, "in my garden."

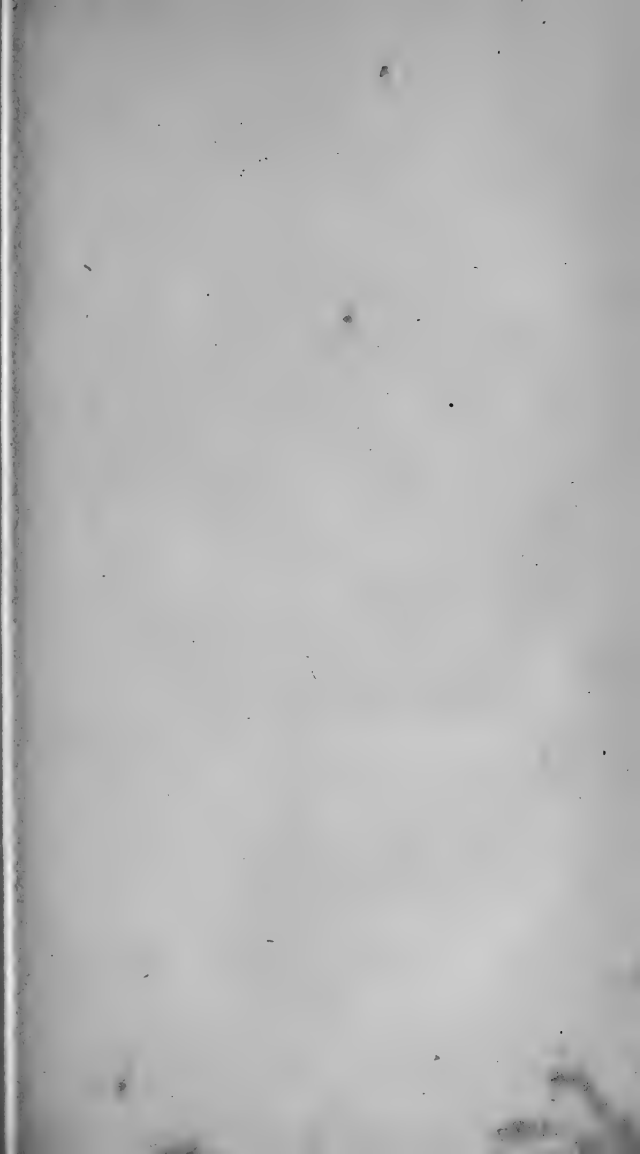
Common Fox-glove (*Digitalis*), is so named, says Gerarde, because its long bells are like finger-stalls. This appellation was given by Fuch, a German Botanist, hence Fuch's Glove, or Fox-glove. It has been justly noticed as strange that no old English name should exist for so striking and beautiful a plant. "How delicate," says Curtis, "are the little spots which ornament the centre of the flower! How pleasing to behold the Bee hide in its pendulous blossoms! The interior of the flower is no less worthy of admiration, and, from the size of the parts of fructification, particularly adapted to the instruction of young Botanists. This plant is very valuable in medicine when used with caution; and so great an opinion have or had the Italians of its virtues as

a vulnerary, that they have the following proverb concerning it:—‘*Aralda tutte le piaghe salda.*’ Fox-glove cures all wounds.”

The Smooth-leaved or Witch Elm is so called from having been used formerly for magical purposes. The wood was also used for making long bows of an inferior sort; but the timber is not so hard or valuable as that of the Common Elm.

The *Convolvulus Major* of our gardens is a native of Asia and America. Climbing plants have various modes of raising themselves, viz., by tendrils, as in the Vine; by holdfasts, as in the Ivy; by twisting of the leaf-stalks, as in *Clematis Viticella*, and by its own twisting, as in the *Convolvulus*, which always twines from right to left; whereas others, as the common Black Bryony, always turn from left to right.







LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

XXVI.

LOVE LIES BLEEDING; OR, CUPID IN THE FLOWER GARDEN.

EVERYBODY has heard of Cupid's mischievous doings amongst mankind. These, therefore, we shall leave to poets and romancers, and confine ourselves to the relation of an incident which occurred, one summer's morning, when "Love, in idleness," was amusing himself in a flower garden by converting the tender blossoms into targets for his arrows. "What was sport to him, was death to them," and cruel was the havoc wrought on this fatal occasion; but let the weaknesses of our favourites remain hidden "under the Rose." Suffice it, that, from the inflammable Fraxinella to the frigid Ice

Plant, none were proof against the archer's prowess ; and that from beneath the monastic Monk's-hood, no less than from under the helmet of the Military Orchis, many were the amorous glances cast around. Amongst the sufferers was a youthful Eglantine,* who, transfixcd by one of the little god's arrows, grew enamoured of a Bella Donna Lily, a flower, by the way, not at all distinguished for modesty, because she loves to display her charms unshaded by that veil of green so becoming to all her sisterhood. No wonder that she proved false as fair, and soon turned from her rough but sincere admirer to bestow her smiles on a smart young cousin of her own, recently landed from Guernsey, and flaming in military scarlet and gold. Stung by mingled rage and disappointment, the deserted Eglantine, having first torn the laced coat of his dashing rival, determined to wreak his deadliest vengeance on the first

* Brier Rose.

cause of his pain, the mischievous author of his love and mortification. So, choosing one of the longest and sharpest of his thorns, he aimed it at the sportive archer, who was blind only with laughing at his own prowess. The weapon took effect, and pierced the white shoulder of the god, who dropped his bow, and ran away, screaming with pain. His mother, Venus, who was not far off, in the same garden, decking her hair in her favourite Looking-glass, heard his cries, and flew to the assistance of her darling. Lifting him in her arms she bore him to her bower; then hastily plucking some of the soft bunches of the drooping Amaranth, spread them on the ground as a couch for her wounded boy. She then proceeded to extract from his shoulder the prickly lance; and, as she drew it out, the blood rushed forth in crimson torrents, and dyed the bed on which he lay. The urchin's wound was healed, too speedily; but the crimsoned flowers of his couch then

acquired the name and hue transmitted to their descendants, who are still chiefly known by the appellation of Love Lies Bleeding.

NOTES.

FRAXINELLA, or White Dittany, a native of Europe, and commonly cultivated in our gardens for its agreeable citron-like odour, is remarkable for exhaling an inflammable vapour, perceptible in the dark. Haller, who speaks of this plant as growing in the environs of Basle, says, "Quand on place à son pied une bougie allumée, alors il s'élève tout à coup une grande flamme qui se répand sur toute la plante. La famille royale s'amuse quelquefois à ce spectacle, dit M. Buchoz, et par cette raison on cultive des carrés entiers de Dictamné Blanc dans le jardin du Roi."—*Histoire des Plantes Suisses.*

The daughter of Linnæus is said to have been the first discoverer of this inflammable property in the Fraxinella.

For Monk's-hood or Wolfsbane, see note, page 71.

For Military Orchis, see note, page 240.

For Eglantine, or Sweetbrier Rose, see note, page 68.

The Bella Donna Lily was imported from Portugal in 1712, introduced into that country probably from Brazil. Old Botanists, indeed, call it a native of India; but by this, they sometimes mean the East Indies, America, or even Africa. The corolla of this beautiful flower is rose colour, variegated with greenish-white.

The Guernsey Lily, as it is most commonly called, is a native of Japan, from whence roots are said to have been introduced into the garden of Johannes Morinus at Paris, in which it flowered in October, 1634. Of its subsequent introduction into the island of Guernsey, the following account is given by Dr. Morison:—"A Dutch or English ship, it is uncertain which, coming from Japan with some roots of this flower on board, was cast away on the Island of Guernsey. The roots were thrown upon a sandy shore, and so, by the force of the winds and waves, soon buried. Thus they remained for some years; and afterwards, to the surprise and admiration of the inhabitants, the flowers appeared in all their pomp and beauty, and having found a soil and situation apparently

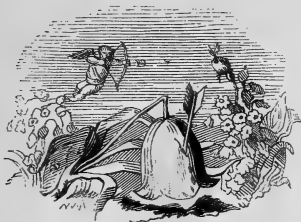
congenial to their own, have ever since flourished in that island, from whence some of them soon made their appearance in this country." The flowers, which last about a month, are inodorous, but make up for this deficiency by the superb splendour of their colour. Dr. Douglas thus describes them:—"Each flower, when in its prime, looks like a fine gold tissue wrought on a rose-coloured ground, but when it begins to fade, it looks more like a silver tissue upon pink. When we look upon the flower in full sunshine, each leaf appears to be studded with thousands of little diamonds, sparkling and glittering with a most surprising and agreeable lustre; but if we view the same by candle-light, these numerous specks, or spangles, look more like fine gold dust."

Both Kæmpfer and Thunberg agree that the roots are poisonous. In England, it is usual to plant the bulbs in pots of sand or light loam, and place them in a parlour-window, or green-house, where they blossom in September or October.

Venus's Looking-glass, or Corn Gilliflower, growing naturally in chalky fields, and also cultivated, is a small trailing plant, with wide-spreading, bright purple corollas, tending, as old Gerarde has it, "to bluenesse, very beautifulle."

The flowers, he remarks, "are wide open in day-time, and at sun-setting, shut up, and closed fast together in five corners, as other bell flowers."

Love Lies Bleeding, and Prince's Feather, are two varieties, the former with drooping, the latter with upright spikes of purplish-crimson flowers, intermixed with coloured scales. Its name of *Amaranthus* signifies, not to wither or wax old. The Italian appellation of *Fior Velluto*; the French, *Passe Velours*; and the English, *Flower Gentle*, all express the soft velvety appearance of its flowery clusters. We have a small native species, with greenish flowers, common in fields, called *Amaranthus Minor*, or *Small Strawberry-blite*.



XXVII.

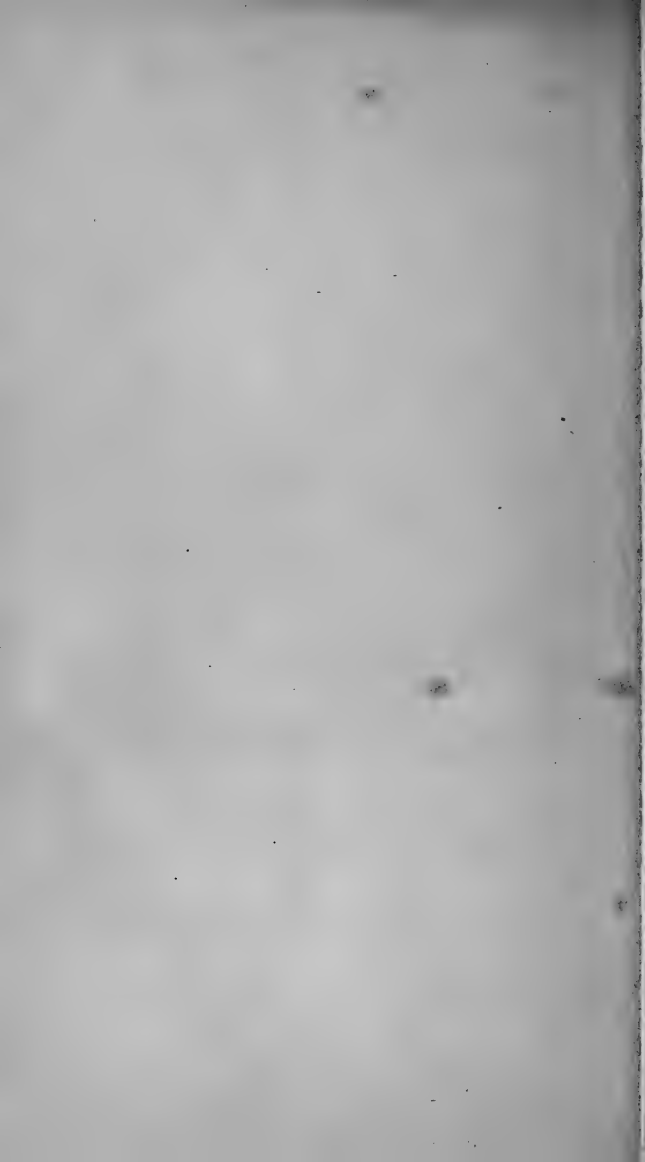
THE DAISY, THE HEMLOCK, AND THE LADY-BIRD.

NEAR the foot of a tall, gloomy-looking plant of Hemlock, grew a pretty, pink-edged Daisy. One morning, when the bright little flower had thrown her petals wide open, and was looking up at the eye of day, a Lady-bird alighted on her golden bosom. The flower and the insect were delighted with each other, in fact, the best friends possible; though, as it was shortly to prove, only fair-weather ones.

The roving Lady-bird told the stay-at-home Daisy all the news she had collected in her morning calls from flower to flower; how one of the Miss Catchflies had betrayed an



THE DAISY, HEMLOCK, & LADY BIRD.



unwary young flutterer by her honied wiles ; how a sister of this fair deceiver was in the strange habit of sleeping all day, and being awake all night ; and how a very suspicious scent of brandy had been detected in the yellow gown of the water-drinking Mrs. Lily ; then, casting a significant glance on the adjacent Hemlock, the tattling insect declared herself sorry to find that the Daisy herself had a near neighbour who bore a very infamous reputation—one, against whose dangerous poison she must caution her, as a friend, to stand upon her guard. The Daisy thanked the Lady-bird for her kind caution, and begged, in return, that she would never scruple to make use of her, as a resting-place, whenever she flew near. As for that vile Hemlock, it wasn't likely she would ever notice him.

In the midst of these mutual civilities, the sun, which had been shining with intense brilliancy, hid himself behind a heavy cloud ;

and, in proportion as it grew darker, the Lady-bird felt her seat on the Daisy becoming every moment more uneasy, as the latter, thinking only of self-preservation, began to close up her petals, in preparation for the approaching storm.

All at once, down came the pattering rain-drops. "Pray, dear Daisy," cried the Lady-bird, "don't push me away; only let me stay while the storm lasts, and shut me in with your red and white curtains." "A likely matter, indeed!" returned the other; "why, such a great creature as you would tear them all to tatters! Fly away, Lady-bird, and come again in fair weather." The Lady-bird looked up at the sky, and saw that the increasing rain and hail would batter her wings to pieces if she attempted flight. She looked down to the ground, and saw that the growing pools threatened to drown her. In this extremity, who should come to her rescue but the poor abused Hemlock. "Come,"

said he, kindly, "if you can but manage to creep up under it, you are welcome to the shelter of my umbrella." The Lady-bird was glad enough to accept his friendly offer, and, climbing into the proffered place of refuge, hid her head at once for safety and for shame.

NOTES.

THE common Spotted Hemlock is a tall, umbellate plant, with a smooth, shining, spotted stalk, much branched, bearing umbells of white flowers in summer, and seeds in autumn; the leaves are glossy, and of a strong foetid odour. This is one of our most poisonous plants growing on dry ground, the greater number of such being found near water. It is, however, used medicinally in desperate disorders, and the seeds afford nourishment to birds, some having been found by Ray in the crop of a Thrush. Umbellate flowers are those grouped together, and forming a compact

head upon stalks of equal length, diverging like the supports of an umbrella.

The common Daisy (*Bellis*, signifying pretty) flowers from the beginning of spring to the end of autumn, and, in mild weather, even in the midst of winter. At night it always closes, also in wet weather, whence its English name of Day's Eye, or Eye of the Day. It is remarked by Curtis, that our old Poet, Chaucer, was, perhaps, the first to notice the *Horologium floræ*, or opening and shutting-up of flowers at a particular time of day, and that Etymologists agree with him in the derivation of Daisy: when noticing her "feare of nighte," he says—

" Well by reason men it calle maie
The Daisie, or else the Eye of the Daie."

Rowley notices a similar property in the Marygold—

" The Mary-bud that shutteth with the light ;"

the flowers of which are said, by Linnæus, to open from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon. Skakspeare also speaks of—

" The Marigold that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping."

“Of other plants in the same natural order of Compositæ, or Compound Flowers, the Dandelion opens at five or six, and closes at nine; the Mouse-ear Hawkweed at eight, and closes at twelve; the Sow Thistle at five, and closes between eleven and twelve.”—Classes and Orders of the Linnæan System Illustrated.

It is remarked by Curtis, that farmers probably pay dear for their “enamelled meads, and daisied carpets,” as horses and sheep refuse, and probably cattle do not willingly crop the Daisy. Its estimation in the medical world (where we believe it has a place), must have greatly declined since the days of Gerarde, who tells us that “Daisies do mitigate all paines.”

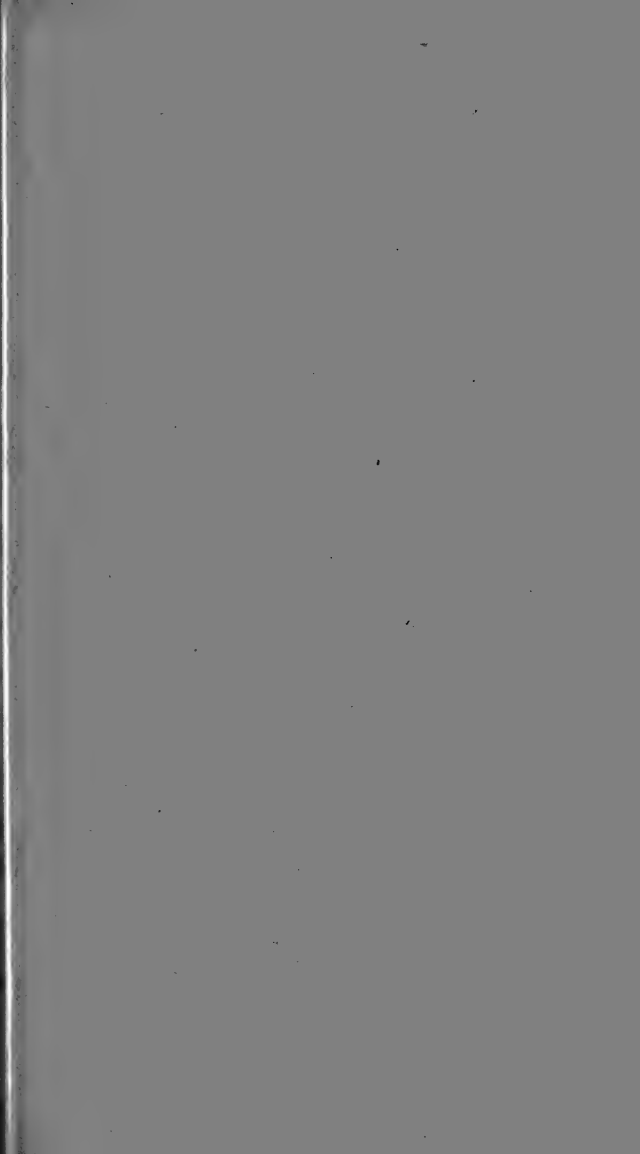
The Red Catchfly, common in gardens, and rarely found wild, has straight, jointed stems, with a clammy, viscid substance under each joint, by which insects are plentifully caught. It is conjectured that this, and other insect-catching plants, derive from their decaying bodies, an air salutary to vegetable life.

The Night-flowering Catchfly—a variety, with cream-coloured blossoms, found wild in sandy fields—rolls up its petals every morning, and unfolds them of an evening, when it also becomes

sweet. This operation is repeated while the flower lasts, which is several days. "Does the action of light upon the upper surface of each petal cause it to contract? Such flowers are a curious phenomenon—a subject for philosophic musing, when the mind is best disposed for contemplation of nature's works."—Sowerby's Eng. Botany.

The Yellow Water Lily (*Nymphaea lutea*) is a large showy plant, not uncommon in rivers and large pools. The flowers smell like brandy, whence they are vulgarly called, in Norfolk, Brandy-bottles.







THE EPERGNE.

XXVIII.

THE EPERGNE.

IN the centre of a table prepared for a splendid banquet, stood a richly ornamented silver basket, or Epergne, containing a gorgeous and tastefully arranged group of freshly gathered flowers. Gold and silver plate, porcelain and cut glass, formed into various shapes of elegance, were displayed around. Painted lamps, suspended from the ceiling, shed forth a warm, soft lustre, which was in perfect harmony with the rich magnificence of each artificial object; but the flowers seemed oppressed by the heated though chastened glare. A few only of the more pampered exotics—the symmetrical Camelia and the luscious-scented Tuberose, appeared still

in their native element; their wax-like forms looking almost like copies wrought by Nature from the works of her own pupil, Art: but the simpler natives of the garden looked wan and faded, and drooped their heads over the chased sides of the Epergne. In so doing, a young Narcissus was the first to observe, not a reflection, but a solid image of himself in the embossed wreath of silver flowers which festooned the basket. His vanity (inherited, doubtless, from his classic ancestor) was highly flattered, and he immediately whispered his discovery to his drooping fellows, who, each perking up his head, sought to find or fancy his own likeness in the silver wreath, or some other of the surrounding objects. Nor was this difficult, where flowers and foliage, either in high relief, or exquisitely painted, or skilfully woven, formed the prevailing decorations on table, floor, and ceiling. Some even detected the imitation of their elegant forms in those of various

pieces of plate and porcelain. Cups, plates, salvers and flagons bore no imaginary resemblance to their delicately moulded calyxes and corollas. The Bell flowers saw themselves repeated in the crystal wine-glasses and goblets; and the broad-based, columnar style of the Lily seemed to have suggested the form of the candlesticks.

These flattering resemblances, first pointed out by the vanity of the young Narcissus, were improved into a theme of profitable reflection and consolation by the wisdom of a mature Sage. Addressing his comrades, most of whom were shedding tears of sap at separation from their parent stems, and at the same time bewailing the cruelty of man, "Cheer up, my friends," said he, "and cease your unjust repinings. Man, after all, is more our friend than foe. 'Tis true, indeed, he sometimes shortens the thread of our always brief existence, but, in so doing, he preserves us from lingering decay; and, what is more, does he not con-

struct noble monuments to our memory, and, as you have already noticed, perpetuate our fragile forms in the most durable materials? Let us, then, fulfil our destiny without a murmur, and cheerfully exhale our dying perfume in the service of no ungrateful master."

NOTES.

MANY of the most useful and beautiful works of art owe their origin to an imitation of the graceful forms of nature. In architecture, the elegant Gothic arch was, doubtless, suggested by the interlacing boughs of the stately avenue, and the rich adornment of the Corinthian capital sprung from observation of the leaves of the Acanthus. Cups, lamps, salvers, urns, and vases, as noticed in the Fable, all find their models in the vegetable kingdom. The scroll-like form of shells has furnished a pattern for the car, the couch, and the carriage; and amongst these productions of the sea must not be omitted the

Nautilus, from whose primitive little boat the early mariner first learnt—

————— “To sail,
Ply the swift oar, and catch the rising gale.”

In the tail-piece illustrative of the Epergne, No. 1, is the seed vessel of the Teek—2, that of the *Lecythis Grandiflora*—3, that of the Poppy—4, a leaf of the Pitcher Plant—5, an Acorn cup—6, the Cup Moss; and 7, two or three species of *Erica* or Heath.



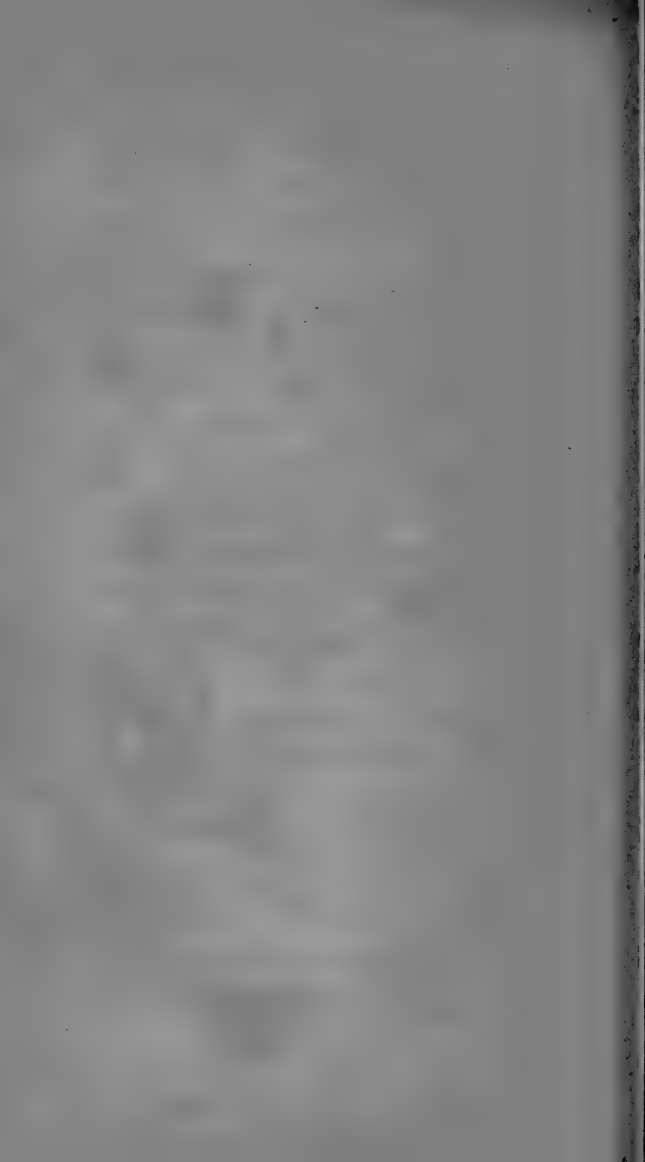
XXIX.

THE FAIRY FREEBOOTERS.

ACCORDING to the most approved legendary lore, the Fairy race, whatever their enmity towards mankind, were amongst themselves a peaceable people. Once, however, a party of young and turbulent spirits, who, on several occasions, had defied the authority, and broken the ordinances of Queen Mab, brought themselves, by such proceedings, to the condition of proscribed outlaws; and then, for their own protection, as well as with a view to further aggression, thought fit to assume the arms and discipline of regular soldiers. Their light garments of peace were laid aside; but none among them having learned the trade of armoury, they



THE FAIRY FREEBOOTERS.



boldly attacked the stores of the floral kingdom, in order to furnish their equipments. By help of this expedient they were soon armed *cap-à-pée*. The helmets of the Aconite made them excellent head-pieces; the silvery scales of the Knapweed, admirable coats of mail; the leaves of the Penny-wort, capital shields; the Grasses left them at no loss for formidable two-edged swords, or the Shepherd's Needle, for spears; while the Red-handed Orchis completed their equipments by spurs of tremendous length and sharpness. So far, their audacity was successful; and, owing to the vast extent of her stores, and the occupation of other weighty matters, Flora, for a time, either did not perceive, or chose to wink at the lawless proceedings of the pigmy depredators; but, encouraged by impunity, their ravages increased, at last, to such an extent, as to call for repression and punishment. Not satisfied with having obtained what they re-

quired for absolute use, these pert little *militaires* were for ever capriciously changing the fashion of their accoutrements, and new regulation helmets, new regulation sabres, belts, and breast-plates, were continually the order of the day. Their consequent robberies on the vegetable race became most serious, and Flora was compelled to take up the defence of her rifled subjects. The gentle Queen of Flowers was, at first, however, desirous to employ conciliatory measures; and one day, when the Fairy Freebooters were ransacking, and plucking, and trampling, and pulling, with all the coolness imaginable, she sent one of her Ladies of Honour with a civil message, begging that the little gentlemen would please to desist from their depredations. The tiny warriors, who, to lighten their unlawful labours, had been drinking brimful cups of nectar, only laughed at the message, and, what was worse, behaved with great freedom and rudeness to

Flora's pretty messenger, who immediately took to flight, the whole troop of elvish soldiers following in pursuit. The Maid of Honour, having much longer legs, had greatly the advantage of her pursuers, till, on passing through a tangled wood, the brambles caught, first one and then another of the Lady's Slippers, of embroidered yellow satin, which, being unfortunately rather too large, she was compelled to leave behind. At this juncture of her flight, several of her Fairy pursuers actually reached her, and, rudely snatching at her fair white hand, endeavoured to detain it in their united grasp, but on she pressed, and left behind a sad token of her resolution in the Lady's Finger, which, changed into a flower, yet attests her firmness. Still she flew forwards, the Freebooters laughing and shouting at her heels,

“Through moss and through mire,
Through brake and through brier.”

Such a chase was never known before. On the top of a lofty mountain (a prey to the wind) was abandoned the Lady's Mantle.* This was bad enough, but worse remains to tell; for, on passing over a watery marsh, the unfortunate Maid of Honour sank into a swamp, from which she escaped with the greatest difficulty, being compelled to abandon all her mud-soaked garments, even to that part of her apparel vulgarly known by the appellation of Lady's Smock. After all her sufferings, the hapless messenger of Flora at last reached her mistress's court, where the sensation created by her appearance is indescribable. How the gods frowned and vowed revenge; how the goddesses blushed and offered assistance; how they hastened to place the luckless nymph in a warm bath of rose-water, and kindly administered a comfortable posset of mulled metheglin; these and other such interesting

* See note, page 114.

particulars are, doubtless, fully recorded in the chronicles of Olympus. But who shall paint the indignation of Flora, thus insulted in the person of her messenger? That very night she despatched a formal embassy to Queen Mab, demanding that the delinquent Freebooters should immediately be seized, and condemned to condign punishment. Her Fairy Majesty returned a courteous answer, disavowed all countenance of the aggressors, and promised to spare no efforts for bringing them to justice. The Queen of Fays found it no easy task to fulfil her promise, for, as long as their stores of stolen armour lasted, her outlaw subjects came off victorious in every encounter with the royal forces. At length, however, their mail and weapons being neither of the most durable materials, were injured by repeated conflicts; and so strict a watch was now set over the formerly rifled flowers, that no new supply could be obtained. The Fairy Freebooters were thus,

at last, all seized, and, for punishment of their long-continued course of crime, were taken to a chalky eminence, ignominiously stripped of the remains of their stolen armour (except their helmets), and hung up, *in terrorem*, to the stalks of the Soldier Orchis, where, being immortal, their living bodies are still seen suspended.

NOTES.

THE hollow, arched, and open upper petal of the *Aconitum Napellus*, Wolfsbane, or Monk's-hood, called, likewise, English Helmet Flower, exactly resembles a helmet in shape; as do, also, in a greater or less degree, the upper lips or petals of the Dead Nettle, and many other labiate flowers.

The globular pericline of the Knapweed, the Blue-bottle, and many other compound flowers, is covered with a sort of silver-edged, scaly armour.

The leaves of the Marsh Penny-wort are a perfect specimen of the orbicular or shield-shape form.

The oblong fruit of the Shepherd's Needle, or Needle Chervil, is remarkable for a very long, straight beak, to which it owes its familiar appellation.

The spur of the Red-handed Orchis, or Gnat *Gymnadenia*, is linear, long, and sharp.

The Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium*), so called from the singular resemblance of the large inflated lip of the flower to a shoe, is considered, for its beauty and rarity, the Queen of English *Orchidæ*. It is seldom now found in the neighbourhood of London or large towns, but chiefly in remote and little frequented woods in the north of England, and in the gardens to which it has been transplanted, in which, however, it rarely thrives. It seems not to have been known as a native in the time of old Gerarde, who, under the name of *Calceolus Maria* (Our Lady's Shoe), assigns it to the mountains of Germany, Hungary, and Poland, adding—"I had a plante thereof in my garden, received from Master Garret, apothecarie, my verie good friend." The shoe-like part is yellow, spotted with red. There is an elegant species of this plant, mentioned by Catesby in his *History of Carolina*, offering a yet closer imitation of a slipper, together with a

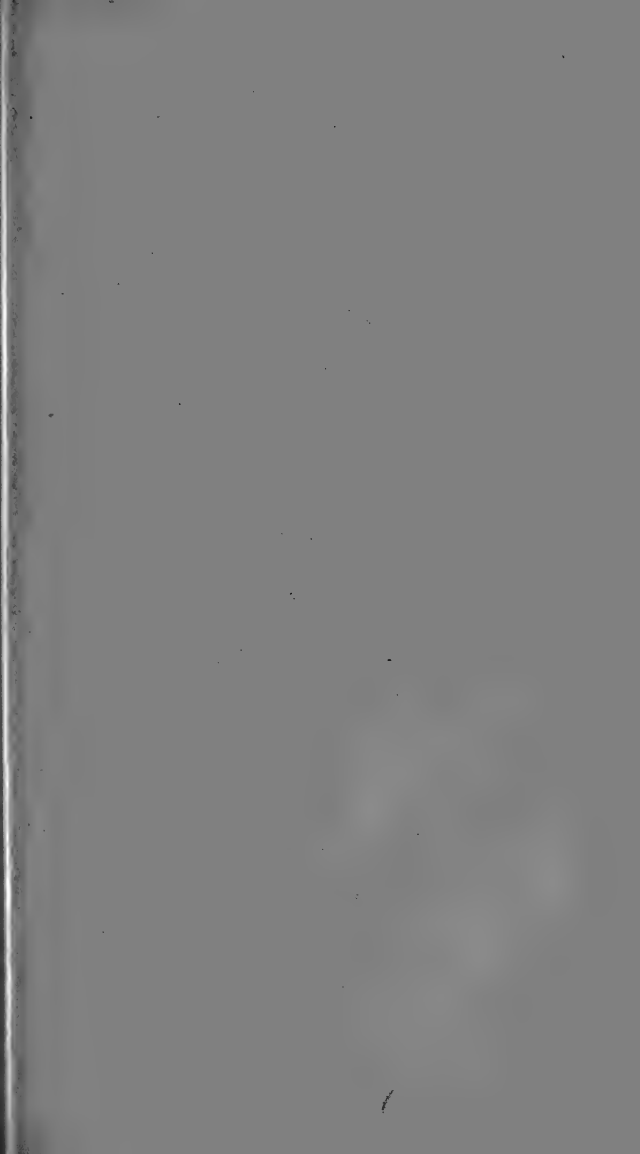
variety called *Le Sabot des Indes*, and, by the Indians, the *Mocassin Flower*.

Lady's Finger, or *Podded Kidney Vetch*, a leguminous plant, with yellow flowers, growing in chalky and sandy pastures—so called from a fancied resemblance in its long slender pods.

The "*Lady's Smock*, all silver white," which "paints the meadows with delight" in April and May, is supposed to have derived its English name from the white appearance given by its blossoms to the damp meadows where it abounds, resembling linen bleaching on the grass,—“when maidens bleach their summer smocks”—a practice very general, formerly, when families spun and bleached their own linen.

The *Man or Soldier Orchis* represents in its flower-lip the figure of a man, helmeted by the petals.







THE TRANSPLANTED PRIMROSE.

XXX.

THE TRANSPLANTED PRIMROSE.

Two Primrose roots grew side by side, near the foot of a wood-covered hill. Sheltered from the northern blasts, they were ever the first to welcome returning spring, and were themselves always greeted with delight by groups of merry children who resorted to the warm nook they occupied. These flowers ought to have been as happy as Primroses could be, and one of them, indeed, bloomed in perfect contentment. The other, on the contrary, was silly enough to give ear to the suggestions of a poisonous Nightshade, which overshadowed her; and, growing dissatisfied with her own quiet dwelling-place and simple attire, began

drawing comparisons between herself and others. The flaunting Poppy, and the lofty Mullein, became especial objects of envy; and though her gentle sister tried to cheer her, this foolish flower drooped her head, and grew paler and paler as more gaudy blossoms sprung up beside her. One day who should come to the Primrose bank but a skilful Florist, in search of roots to convert, by culture, into Polyanthuses. Our discontented murmurer was one he happened to select for his purpose; in a moment she was uprooted, and, with a portion of earth, conveyed to the collector's basket. The sudden shock of removal disconcerted her tender ladyship not a little; but a fragment of the poisonous Nightshade, which still clung round her, whispered that she was now about to be promoted to high honours, and on the very point of obtaining that distinction after which she had so long been pining. Though somewhat consoled by such flattering assurances,

our poor Primrose soon found that she had been taken out of her native element. The rich compost of the bed wherein she was now placed, felt heavy in comparison with the light, sandy soil in which her roots had been accustomed to play; and the unsavoury steams drawn up around her by the sun, were a sorry substitute for the dewy fragrance of her late mossy couch. These *désagréments* had, however, their compensation (such as it was), in the fulfilment of some of her late ambitious aspirations. By degrees her form became expanded, her colour grew richer, and, in time, behold the simple Primrose of the wood transformed into the velvet-clad Polyanthus of the border. Prized by her cultivator—admired by the visitors to his garden, she might, indeed, have seemed arrived at the summit of her wishes; but happiness attained is an ideal point which the envious and discontented never reach. Raised as the Primrose was, this her very

elevation brought her in competition with the Tulip and the Rose, and they looked down upon her. Still she was a prodigious favourite with her cultivator, who intended her for exhibition at a horticultural show. For several days previous he paid her almost hourly visits, to inspect her progress towards perfection, and guard against the intrusion of spot or stain upon her velvet gown.

The eve of the flower-show arrived, and, before retiring to rest, the Florist once more sought his favourite—the perfect Polyanthus, which was to win him the morrow's prize: but, alas! a Canker-worm had been there before him, and the late symmetrical petals of the flower, now notched and disfigured, attested but too clearly the work of the ravager. The Florist looked aghast; then, giving way to a transport of rage and disappointment, tore up by the roots the unfortunate Polyanthus—trampled her beneath his feet, then threw her on a heap of rubbish.

From thence a few of her mutilated remains were borne upon the wind, even to the mossy bank where she had flourished in humbler, happier days. There the contented Primrose still bloomed in all her native simplicity, and shed a dewdrop of pity over the fate of her hapless sister.

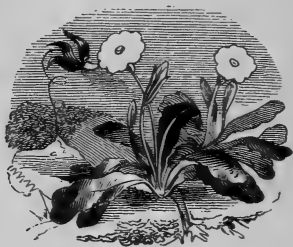
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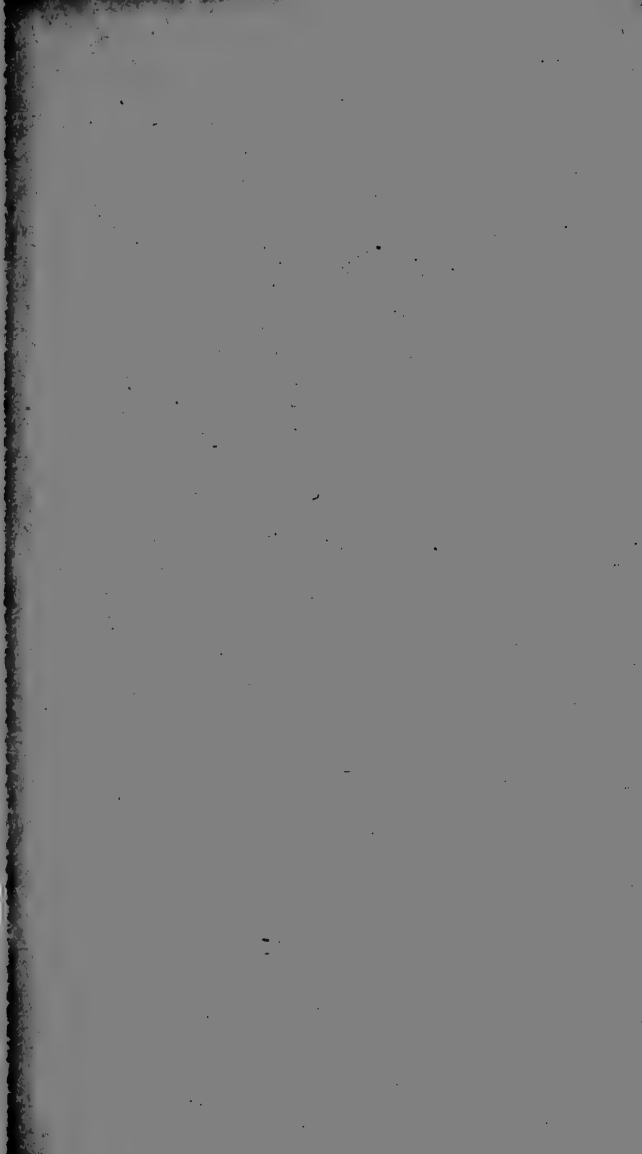
THE common Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), the Poets' favourite theme, and harbinger of spring, is distinguished from the Cowslip by the rim being concave in one, and flat in the other. Linnæus considered these plants as only varieties of each other, but most Botanists reckon them distinct species. "The contemplative mind," says Curtis, in his *Flora Londinensis*, "feels a complacency in surveying the improvements which Providence permits to take place in that part of the animal and vegetable world which mankind have brought under their own care and

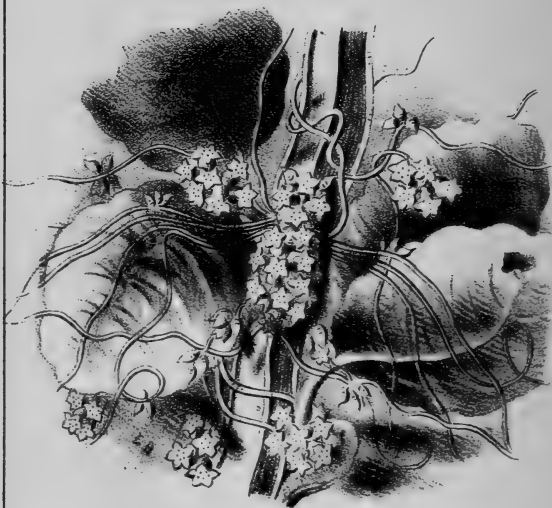
protection. Many instances of these might be adduced from the more useful and necessary productions, but it is not those only that amend under our care ; we are permitted, also, to gratify our sight with the endless variations that flowers put on when cultivated by the curious ; nor in any one instance does—

‘ The exulting florist mark,
With secret pride, the wonders of his hand,’

more than in the boundless luxuriance that Polyanthuses assume ; their parent Primrose being a native. Cowslips also change, in cultivation, from yellow to orange-tawny, and, finally, to deep red.”







THE VEGETABLE VAMPIRE.

XXXI.

THE VEGETABLE VAMPIRE.

A YOUNG plant of Dodder had scarcely risen from the bosom of his mother earth, when, with the natural tendency of his parasitic race, he began life by seeking among strangers for a foster-parent and patron. With this view he made gradual advances towards an unsuspecting Bean, and, at last, ventured to embrace him with a show of the greatest affection. Deceived by his gentle, inoffensive exterior, the Bean most readily afforded that assistance and support which the weaker plant seemed so much in need of; but no sooner did the latter obtain a firm hold on his benefactor, than he forsook altogether the parent soil by which he had hitherto been nourished, and began, like a vampire, to suck the very life-blood, in other

words, to draw out the sap of the unfortunate Bean, converting it into nutriment for himself. So gradual, however, were the traitor's operations, that their victim (like the unconscious sleeper fanned to deadly slumber by the leathern wings of the Indian Bat) remained for a season perfectly unsuspecting of his danger, and even felt a generous pride in supporting the slender but graceful stalks of his youthful dependant. But, ere long, the exactions of the parasitic Dodder growing with his growth, and strengthening with his strength, the unfortunate Bean found his substance proportionably wasting, and becoming daily more inadequate to supply the rightful claims of his own branches. Vain now, however, were all his efforts to throw off the treacherous stranger, whose twining grasp rendered him helpless as the powerful Buffalo in the folds of the scaly Boa. Nothing was left him but submission, and, having incurred his misfortunes by no fault of his own, save too great a measure of un-

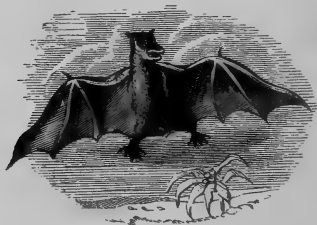
suspecting confidence, the sting of self-reproach was not added to his misery. The suffering alone had hitherto been his; the sin rested with his insidious enemy. No revenge was in the power had it been in the will of the injured Bean; but that provision of unerring nature which, for some good and useful purpose, had rendered the Dodder an instrument of his destruction, involved the destroyer in the fate of his victim.

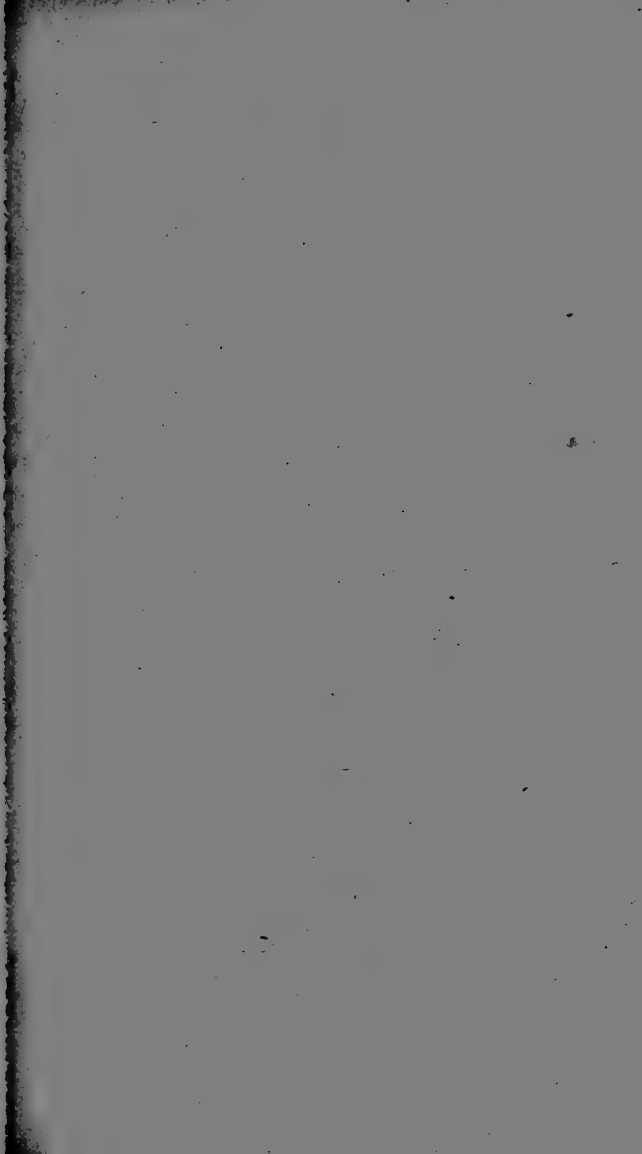
As the vital juices of the more powerful plant became gradually exhausted, the nourishment of his craving dependant was, in like measure, cut off; and, before the Bean was wholly bereft of existence, the withered arms of the Dodder were seen to hang loose and lifeless around his shrunken stalk.

NOTES.

THE Dodder tribe is composed of most singular parasitical plants, which derive their entire

nourishment from those vegetables about which they twine, and into whose tender barks they insert small villous tubercles serving as roots; the original root of the Dodder withering away entirely as soon as the young stem has fixed itself to any other plant, so that its connection with the earth is cut off. It is, sometimes, gathered on common Heath, Nettles, Flax, Beans, Thistles, &c. Gerarde describes it as “a strange herbe, altogether without leaves or rootes, like unto threds winding themselves about bushes and hedges, and sundrie kindes of herbes; the threds reddish, here and there round heads or knops bringing forth, at first, small white flowers, afterwards seeds.” The tubercles of the parasite insinuate their points into the bark-pores of the supporting plant, burst the vessels of which it is composed, and receive the extravasated nutritious juice.







THE EVENING PRIMROSE.

XXXII.

THE EVENING PRIMROSE, THE BUTTERFLY, AND THE OWL.

A SUPERB Empress of Morocco, glittering in gold and purple, alighted, one fine summer's morning, on an open Sunflower, whose glorious disk seemed to emulate the orb of day. The splendid flower and the gorgeous insect were worthy of each other, and, for a brief season, the volatile Empress seemed to bestow as much adoration on the constant Peruvian, as he on the god he delighted to honour and attend. She soon, however, grew tired of his honied fragrance, and deserted him for an Evening Primrose which grew near. Having settled on one of the sulphur-coloured buds of the flower in ques-

tion, she then, for the first time, perceived them to be all closed. "Hey-day!" cried the vain, imperious insect, impatiently tapping with her foot on the flower's folded petals; "what do you mean by being asleep at this noon-day hour, when all the world is stirring? Come, make haste, undraw your curtains, and let me have a sip of your nectar, if, indeed, you've any worth the tasting." Not the slightest notice was taken of this authoritative mandate. The drowsy flower either did not hear, or thought he might have been addressed with more civility. "Just as you please, impertinent varlet!" exclaimed the angry and disappointed Butterfly; "the next time I honour you with a visit, you'll behave with a little more respect;" so saying, the offended Empress tossed her plumes, and extended her painted wings for flight; but, ere she had time to rise, she was startled by a strange voice from the midst of a neighbouring Ivy-bush.

“ Too-whit ! Too-who ! How do you do ? ” were the words addressed to her by a cunning old Owl, who, between sleeping and waking, had been, all this time, blinking his yellow eye at the Empress’s proceedings, and thinking that if Butterflies, as well as Moths, flew abroad at night-time, he should have a greater variety of delicacies for his supper. “ Too-whit ! Too-who ! How do you do ? ” repeated he, and then continued, in his softest voice, “ Believe me, fair lady, I feel truly concerned at the uncivil treatment you have received from that impertinent, lazy flower. I know, however, that he makes it a rule never to receive visitors by daylight, or dispense his perfume, except of an evening ; but if you come again towards nightfall, I’ll answer for your meeting with a different reception.” “ Much obliged, sir, though I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance,” returned the Empress, rather contemptuously ; “ but as to coming hither

again, I shall scarcely think it worth my while, since, shut or open, I'm sure this paltry flower has neither beauty nor sweetness to repay the trouble." "Pardon me, madam," said the Owl, "for his beauty, when displayed, is of no mean order; and as for his fragrance, it is exceedingly fine and delicate, as your fair cousin Moth can testify by her own experience." "My cousin Moth!" exclaimed the Butterfly, pricking up her feelers. "So, so, he can bestow his sweetness upon her, and yet deny it unto me; but I won't believe anything of the sort." "Well," responded the Owl, with dignity, "'tis no business of mine; indeed, such trifles are beneath my notice; but if your ladyship doubts my word, you had better come this evening and see for yourself." "Indeed, I shan't trouble myself!" said the Empress, and away she flew. The Owl laughed in his feathery ruff at the Butterfly's last words, for, being a bird of wisdom, he knew they meant nothing,

and felt quite sure that the pique and jealousy he had roused would bring her there again at night. His sagacity was proved by the event. Instead of, as usual, retiring to her leafy couch at sunset, the Butterfly kept her eyes open, and by the light of a rising moon found her way to the abode of the Evening Primrose, who was then wide awake, and looking up at the stars, the air around being laden with his fragrance. "Well," thought the Empress, "my friend in the Ivy-bush was quite right, it seems, in one part of his information; but let's see if cousin Moth is here before me." Thus soliloquizing, the Empress, whose wings drooped heavily with the falling night-dew, was glad to rest upon the now expanded corolla of the Evening Primrose.

At that moment the Owl's voice again resounded from the Ivy-bush: "Too-whit! Too-who! I'm a match for you!" and darting open-mouthed from his place of ambush, he

swallowed the royal Butterfly with quite as little ceremony as he had recently employed in making an end of her cousin Moth.

How often, like the cunning Owl, do they who design us evil use our own tempers and weaknesses as materials wherewith to form a trap for our destruction.

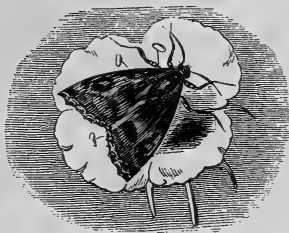
NOTES.

THE Greater Sunflower, or Peru Marigold (*Helianthus annuus*), also called Flos Solis, "taking that name," says old Gerarde, "from those who have reported it to turne with the sunne, the which I could never observe; but I rather thinke it was so called because it doth resemble the radiant beams of the sunne, whence Corona Solis and Sol Indianus." We have it, however, on more modern authority, that those flowers which imitate the sun in form, as the Sunflower, Daisy, Marigold, &c., are particularly sensible

to the effect of light, and that the former does follow the luminary of day. (See Smith's Introduction to Physiological Botany.)

The common Evening Primrose (*Ænothera biennis*) has large yellow flowers, open in the evening. This species is found naturalized in waste places. Sowerby, in his English Botany, tells us that his specimen was gathered on an extensive dreary sandbank on the coast near Liverpool, brought thither, perhaps, from the opposite shores of the Atlantic.

"One species, the *Ænothera Fruticosa*, a native of Virginia, differs from its congeners by remaining expanded the whole of the day which follows its opening."—Curtis's Bot. Mag.



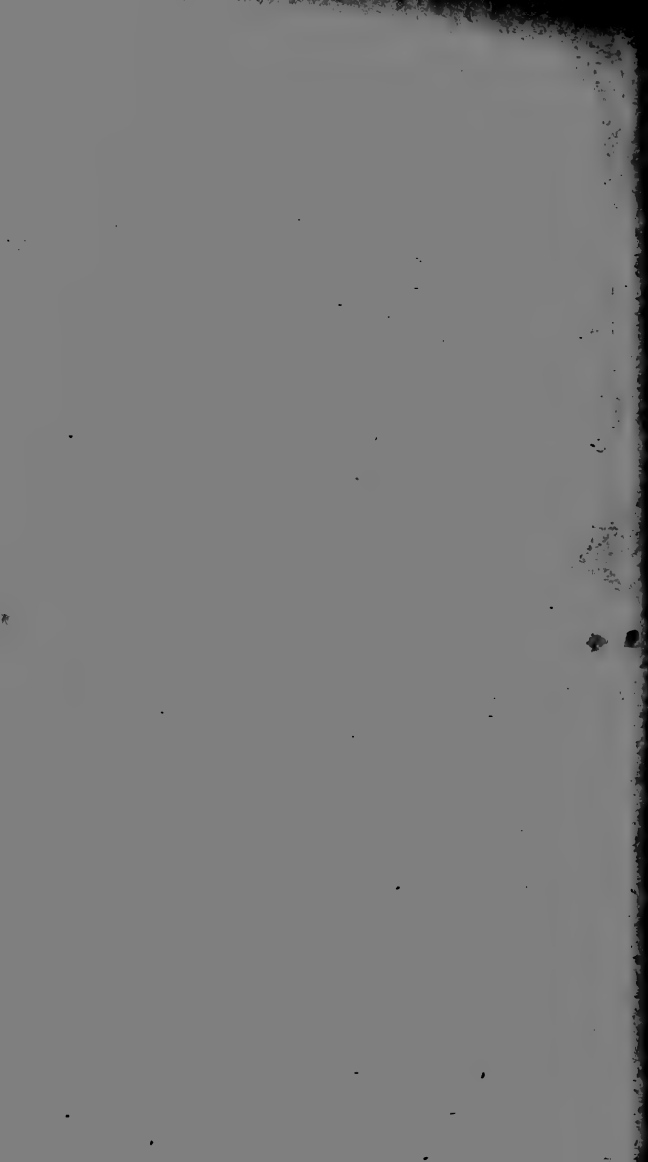
XXXIII.

THE SCORPION GRASS, OR FORGET-ME-NOT.

A GALLANT knight and the lady of his love were walking one fine summer's eve, in the olden time, beside a shady streamlet, whose banks were rich in many-coloured wild flowers, but chiefly abounding in the Water Scorpion Grass, with its hairy leaves and clusters of blue golden-eyed blossoms. The lady looked very sad, and the knight very grave, for the latter was to depart for the crusades on the morrow. It matters not what was said on one side, or sworn on the other; suffice it, that the last words spoken by the lovely lady beside that quiet stream, were "Morris, forget me not," and, as she spoke, she stooped, and, plucking a cluster of the bright blue flowers, placed them in her lover's



THE SCORPION GRASS.



hand, from whence they were presently transferred to his bosom.

A year past over, the blue flowers had faded, and were again renewed upon the streamlet's bank, as the lady walked beside it, alone, and thinking of him who was far away.

And where was he, the brave crusader ? He was still in that sunny clime where the flowers were gaudier than in his native land, but where the Forget-me-not was utterly unknown. He too, was walking, and near a cooling fountain in an eastern garden, but not alone, for an eastern fair one, a flower of brightest bloom, was by his side. Still, withered as it was, the little blue herb of Europe retained its place beneath the breast-plate of his coat of mail. Of late, indeed, he had sometimes felt annoyance from the touch of the dry and shrivelled plant, and on this day it seemed to sting him like a very scorpion. "Why," thought he, "should I

foolishly preserve this worthless perished weed in memory of one who has, doubtless, long ago forgotten me?" Thus striving, in his own false-heartedness, to deceive even himself, he removed the cause of his annoyance, and threw the withered plant, leaf, flower, and seed, beside the fountain in the eastern garden.

Another summer came, the English knight again wandered near the fountain with his Syrian bride. Why does he start and push her abruptly from his side? He has seen a little blue flower which never bloomed before beneath an eastern sky.

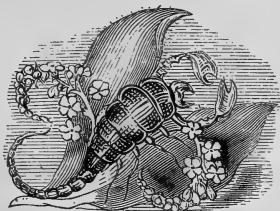
He has seen the tender "Forget-me-not" of the lovely lady—the stinging Scorpion Grass of her faithless knight.

NOTES.

THE Water Scorpion Grass (*Myosotis palustris*) has a creeping perennial root, the funnel-

shaped calyx being covered with straight rigid hairs. The flowers are of a brilliant enamel blue, with a yellow eye, the leaves rather rough. The flowers of the Meadow Scorpion Grass are smaller, and purplish before full expansion. The racemes, or flower-stems, are revolute before blossoming, afterwards erect, "the whole branches," as Gerarde expresses it, "turning themselves rounde, like a scorpion's taile," whence doubtless the name.

This plant is a general and deserved favourite for elegance of form and brilliancy of colour, no less than for its proverbial name of "Forget-me-not," originating probably in its remarkable beauty, which few, who have once admired, are ever likely to forget. There are several species of *Myosotis*, but the flowers of that which grows beside rivers and ditches are the largest and most conspicuous.



XXXIV.

VULGAR COUSINS ; OR, ALMACK'S IN THE FLOWER GARDEN.

ONCE upon a time, several flowers of aristocratic pretension formed themselves into a sort of select society, from which they determined to exclude every plant of plebeian origin or vulgar exterior. At the head of this flowery Almack's figured, as lady patroness, the stately Lily, who reckoned her nobility as stainless as her vesture ; and she was, on all occasions, supported by the haughty *Planta Genista*,* who, remembering with pride his alliance to a royal race, entirely forgot the humility of which his ancestors had been the badge. There were many candidates for admission into this distinguished coterie ; amongst others, the Garden Bean,

* Or Broom.



VULGAR COUSINS.



who, although scented like a very Narcissus, and wearing a surtout of black velvet, such as none of his brother beaux could boast, was scornfully rejected as a vulgar kitchen garden resident. A few of the select were, however, independent enough to support his pretensions, and thence arose a rancorous strife between his favourers and opponents. The period of this dispute was a short time after the decease of the great Linnæus, whose spirit, after it had passed from earth, used frequently to revisit the flowery shades where he had loved in life to wander. One glorious summer's evening, the floral grandees having met in full assembly, the shade of the mighty Naturalist appeared in the midst of them: in one hand he held the despised Bean, the rejected candidate, in the other, a useful plant, but one so vulgar, that even its very name is an offence to ears polite. He approached a corner where the lofty Lily and the proud *Planta Genista* were

engaged in an animated discussion on the disputed admission of the Bean. "A sorry pot-herb!" cried the Lily, tossing her head, "to think of his becoming one of us! Why we shall have the families of Leek and Onion pretending next to a place beside us!" "Not pretending, my lady Lily," responded the Linnæan shade, "not merely pretending, but claiming most justly on the score of near relationship. And allow me to present you, madam, to another of your kindred of equally close propinquity.* My lady Lily, your cousin Garlic; Mrs. Garlic, your cousin Lily!" Then turning to the Spanish Broom, "Let me make you also acquainted with a member of your family. My Lord Plantagenet, your cousin Bean; Mr. Bean, my Lord Plantagenet!"

* Both belong to the class and order of Hexandria Monogynia.

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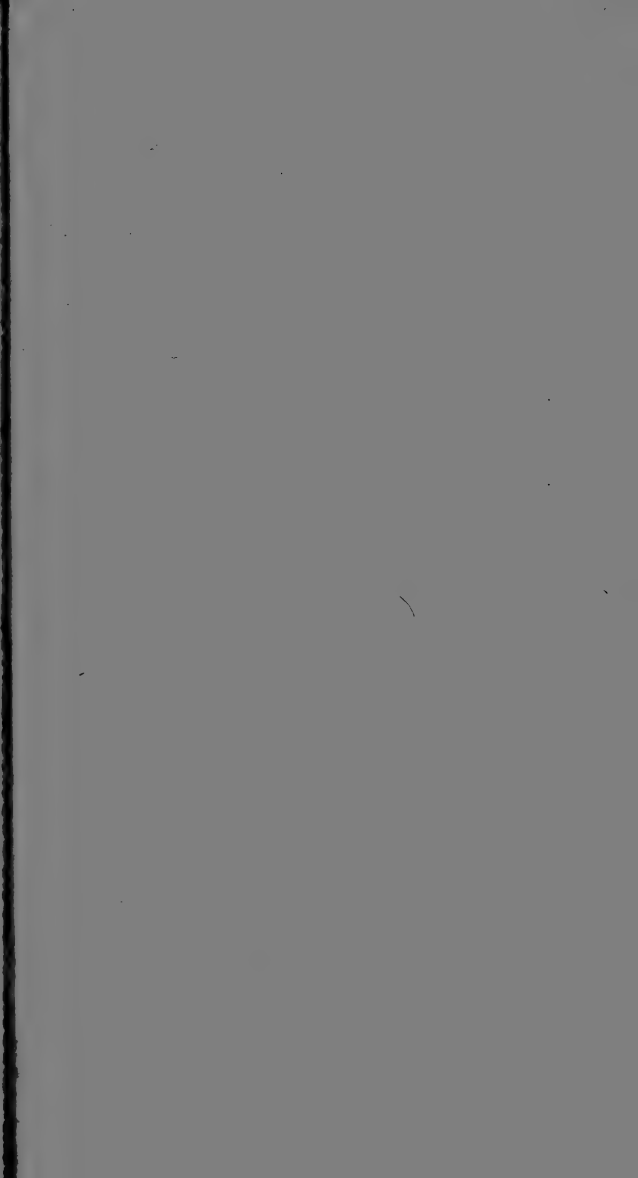
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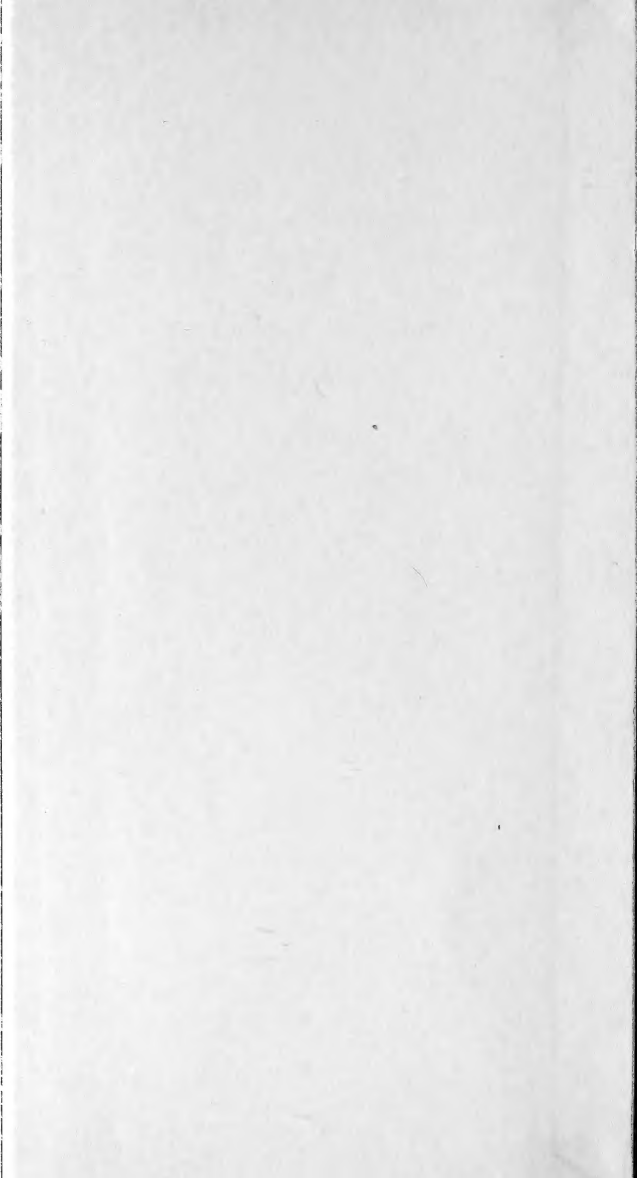
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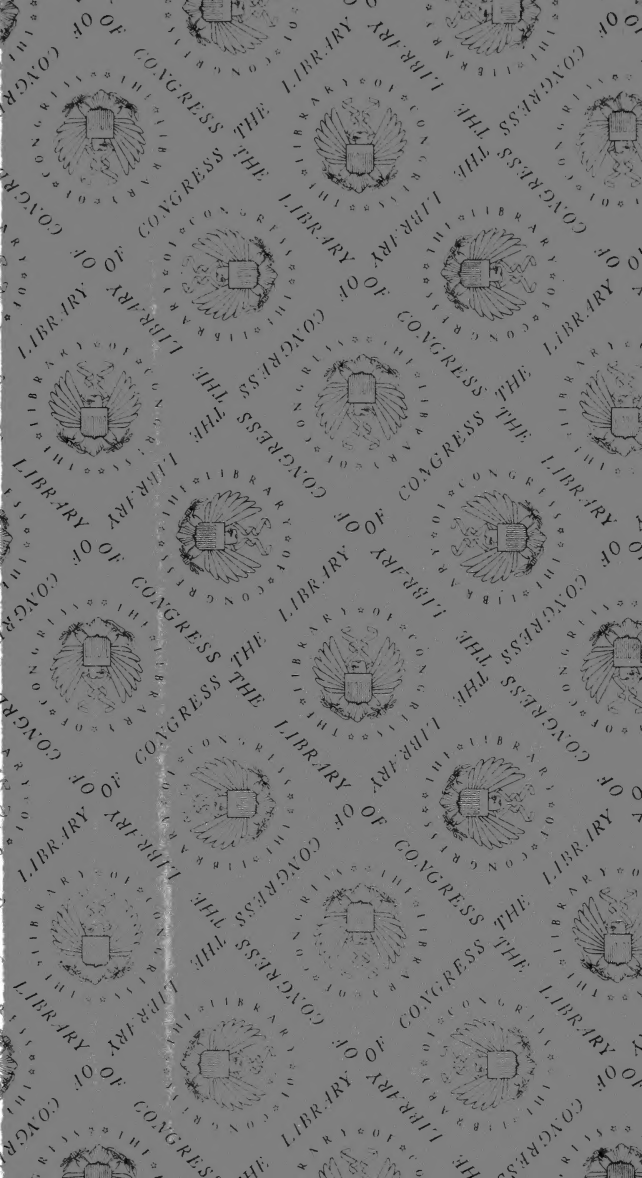


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