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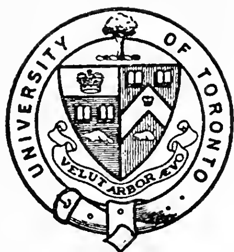

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THE

GARDEN FLOWERS

OF

THE YEAR.

"For wonderful indeed are all His works,
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight."

LONDON:

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

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PREFACE.

THE Author of the following pages, in treating of the Garden Flowers, has acted on the same principle as that adopted in the volume on Wild Flowers, which preceded it. In selecting a few from the thousands of flowers which have been introduced into Britain, those are chosen which are most commonly seen in the garden, rather than those which are of more choice culture. No instructions have been added as to the mode of rearing them, as many inexpensive and valuable treatises are already before the public, which are well calculated to aid the amateur gardener in his pursuit. A few simple things respecting cultivated flowers, somewhat of their history, their uses, and their relations to scriptural allusions, are here stated.

The writer has also sought, as occasion presented itself, to point the reader to the connexion existing between the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of heaven: since our knowledge would be but of little worth, though we could name every herb of the field, or rear every flower of the garden, or classify each tree of the forest, if we were ignorant of the living "Plant of Renown."

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JANUARY.

> "Here spreads a range of level plots,
> Of box-fringed beds, where lurking knots
> Of buried flowers repose, to bring
> Kind greeting to the early spring."—Bishop Mant.

Vegetation makes little progress now, for the earth seems waiting for the breath of spring. The seeds lie dormant till some access of heat shall cause them to germinate, and the roots abide underground, till the coming thaw shall enable them to put forth their fibres, and to send their young green shoots into the light of the upper world.

Yet, even at this time of the year, the garden is not absolutely forsaken of leaves and blossoms, for God has given us winter flowers, and, like those cheering hopes of future joy, which spring up in the heart at the bidding of our heavenly Father, during the season of gloom, they smile even on darkest days, and give assurance of fulness and beauty, such as we should deem impossible if we looked only on the present appearances of earth and sky. The buds gradually increase in number, and grow larger on the branches of the trees. The evergreens, with their many dark green leaves, or with their lighter hue, like the laurel, reflect, on their shining surfaces, the noonday

sunbeams, and the laurustinus and the rosemary bring their flowers to form the winter nosegay.

There is a sweet fragrance in the rosemary. So thought our forefathers when they used it at table, and infused it in their ale. George Herbert considered it a good addition to cookery, for while he says that the country parson should be well skilled in the knowledge of plants, he recommends this and other herbs. "As for spices," says he, "the parson doth not only prefer this and other homebred things before them, but condemns them for vanities, and so shuts them out of his family, esteeming that there is no spice comparable for herbs, to rosemary, thyme, savory, and mint; and for seeds, to fennel and carraway seeds." The troubadours, too, prized the winter fragrance of the rosemary, and regarded both this flower and the violet as emblems of constancy. In many parts of Germany it is still grown in large pots, that small sprigs of it may be sold during winter and the commencement of spring, as it is used there for some religious ceremonies.

From the cottage maiden, who wore a wreath of this plant to the altar, to the royal bride of the king, the rosemary was once the customary ornament of the wedding ceremony; and in funerals it was often used. Its sprigs mingled in the coronal which bound the hair of Anne of Cleves, on the day when she became the wife of the tyrannic Henry; and it was intended

as an emblem of a happiness which she was not destined to enjoy, with that inconstant monarch.

The flowers of the rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) are of a bluish lilac colour, and are on the shrub from this month until April. The plant has been from time immemorial common in the English garden, and grows wild in the south of Europe. It is found, too, on some parts of the dry deserts of Africa. Dr. Shaw saw the rosemary, and the dried stems of the myrtle, used by the Moors in Barbary, for heating ovens; and was reminded of the words of our Saviour respecting the flower of the field, which "to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven."

If the weather be mild during January, the snow-drop (*Galanthus nivalis*) droops its head over the earth. The Italians call it snow-bell. It is a wild flower in our land. The Russian snow-drop (*Galanthus plicatus*) is not found in our native fields, but is common on the lands of the Crimea. This species is smaller than the English snow-drop, and continues in blossom later in the year.

One or two of the various species of snow-flake, especially the spring kind, (*Leucojum vernum*,) are also common now. They are pretty bulbous-rooted plants, natives of various parts of Europe, and abundant in Switzerland. This flower was formerly known as St. Agnes' flower.

With a blossom of a reddish purple colour,

the round-leaved cyclamen (*Cyclamen Coum*) often salutes the opening year. The name of this genus, taken from the Greek, and signifying circular, is expressive either of the leaves, or, more probably, of the numerous serpent-like coils, into which the fruitstalks entwine themselves. The bulbs of this and the other species of cyclamen are as large as a Guinea-fowl's-egg. They contain a great degree of acridity. In the north of Italy swine feed upon them, hence the name by which this plant is often called of sow-bread. It is not till the beautiful flowers of the cyclamen wither away, that the stalks assume the coiled form before alluded to; when, screwing themselves round, they inclose the rudiments of the fruit in the centre, and lying down among the foliage, remain in that position till it comes to maturity. This early cyclamen is very general in the south of Europe.

The Persian cyclamen, (*Cyclamen Persicum*,) which blooms two months later, and is far less hardy than this, is a native of the isle of Cyprus, and was introduced into this country rather more than a century since. One rarer species, the ivy-leaved (*Cyclamen hederæfolium*,) has a most fragrant odour, and sometimes enlivens the window among the white and lilac primroses, which are cherished in flower-pots at this season.

Large patches of the broad-leaved candy tuft (*Iberis semperflorens*) are now on the garden-plot, with clusters of pure white cross-

shaped blossoms. Most of the species were brought hither from Spain, and their Latin name, from its old appellation of Iberia, reminds us of their origin. All the species are common on the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Some of the later blooming kinds are abundant on the rocks of Gibraltar, and afford a relief to the eye, wearied with gazing on their barren surfaces. The early flowering cress (*Arabis albida*) is not unlike these plants, and blooms from this period till autumn. It is a native of Caucasus.

Winter is not the season for odours, and few breathe their sweetness in the frosty air; but there is one plant in flower, which is so powerfully fragrant as to fill a small garden with its perfume. This is the scented colt'sfoot, (*Tussilago fragrans.*) Its stem rises but a little height from the ground, and it has many and large leaves. If the growth be not restrained, it sends out so many young suckers from its root, that it will cover the garden and overrun the more delicate flowers. The blossoms are white, and their scent is like that of almonds. It is very abundant on some lands of Italy, and flowers in that lovely climate during the winter months.

The brightest flower of the winter garden, the very gem of January, till the crocus comes to rival it, is the winter aconite, (*Eranthis hyemalis.*) Its glossy yellow cups, growing near the earth, gave it its name, which, taken from the Greek, imports earth-flower. Its leaves

are much like those of the aconite or wolf'sbane. This flower belongs to the ranunculus tribe; and, like all plants of that order, it is very acrimonious and also poisonous. A person known to the writer, once thoughtlessly ate a small piece of this pretty blossom, and experienced so violent a burning sensation in his throat for some hours afterwards, as to be seriously alarmed. It is a frequent flower in the shady woods of Italy, and is found in wooded spots very generally in the midland countries of Europe; while a species very similar, but which has not yet found a place in our gardens, the Siberian eranthis, grows most plentifully in Siberia. The old writers called it yellow wolf'sbane, and winter wolf'sbane. Clare well describes this flower—

"The winter aconite,
With buttercup-like flowers, that shut at night;
Its green leaf furling round its cup of gold,
Like tender maiden muffled from the cold."

FEBRUARY.

"A tale of spring around the distant haze
Seems muttering pleasures with the lengthened days;
Morn wakens, mottled oft with May-day stains,
And shower-drops hang the grassy sprouting plains;
Or on the naked thorn of brassy hue,
Drip glistening, like a summer stream of dew;
The woodman in his pathway, down the wood,
Crushes with hasty step full many a bud
Of early primrose; yet if timely spied,
Sheltered some old half-rotten stump beside,
The sight will cheer his solitary hour,
And urge his feet to strive and save the flower."—CLARE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the usually dreary aspect of this month, yet still there are days on which

nature seems to tell a tale of spring. And cheering it is, at such brief intervals to welcome its approach, and to persuade ourselves that snow and rain and frost have left us, and that the early flowers will soon cluster about us. But again the clouds return after the rain; the white fleeces from heaven descend, as God "sendeth forth his snow like morsels," and we find we have yet to wait longer before the leaves shall cover the boughs, and the herbs, with all their myriads of blossoms, shall silently praise the hand of Him who made them.

But by the end of the month the snows are generally disappearing, and then we see how, under their covering, the young leaves and buds have found a shelter from the frosts. Many a green thing has been thriving beneath the snow. In the northern countries of Europe, the grass not only lives, but daily grows under it; and the Norway peasant, who longs that the verdant land shall yield him food for his cattle, scatters the ashes over the white surface, that the young blade may rise to the sunshine. And mercifully has the great Creator thus ordained it, for in those more rigorous climates the snow seldom leaves the earth till the sun of April has, in our warmer regions, smiled out upon the fields, and made them gay with many colours.

First and brightest of February flowers we must hail the crocus, standing forth in its deep bright raiment of "cloth of gold." Several

species of yellow crocus bloom now, but the kind especially termed the spring crocus (*Crocus vernus*) which often opens in January, has usually white flowers tinged with purple, or is striped with purple and gold, or with a delicate tinge of lilac, softening into pure white. This flower, which is a native of Switzerland and Italy, is called by the French *le safran printanier*. The true saffron crocus, however, blooms in autumn. The species which blooms earliest in the spring, is the Scotch crocus, (*Crocus biflorus*,) striped with white and purple. The beautiful kinds of feathered crocus, are varieties altered more or less by cultivation, but all included under the names of party-coloured crocus, (*Crocus versicolor*.) This flower is a native of southern Europe, and very abundant on the hills of Greece. Rich saw both pink and yellow crocuses growing wild in Koordistan, all over the roads. Gardeners enumerate about a hundred kinds of the crocus. It was introduced into England about the time of Queen Elizabeth. Gerarde says of it, "That pleasant plant that bringeth forth yellow flowers, was sent unto me from Robinus of Paris."

Then the mezereon, (*Daphne mezereum*,) though a shrub of our native woods, is rare enough to be planted in our gardens, because it flowers at this early season. The Pontic Daphue, too, (*Daphne Pontica*,) with its dark evergreen shining leaves, and its wreath of green winter flowers, often finds a place there.

It is a native of Asia Minor, and is supposed to be one of the plants which, with the rhododendron, poisoned the honey of the bees, and caused the death of the soldiers, in the famous retreat of the "ten thousand" recorded by Xenophon.

It is remarkable that the nectar of some flowers should yield a honey poisonous to those who eat it, but quite innoxious to the bees; yet it is undoubtedly the case. Professor Lindley observes of the rhododendron, kalmia, and andromeda, that they have not only noxious leaves and branches, but that their very honey is poison, "as has been too fatally experienced by those who have fed on the produce of the hives of Trebizonde."

There are in our gardens two varieties of the common mezereon, one with red, the other with white flowers ; and the twin-flowered spurge laurel, though a wild plant of Britain, is commonly cultivated. The sweet-scented mezereon (*Daphne odora*) is a pretty shrub, but needs the shelter of the greenhouse.

Several kinds of daphne are used in the south of Europe to dye wool yellow ; from other kinds cordage is made ; and a soft paper is manufactured from the bark of a species common in Nipal. The inner bark of one kind, called the lace bark tree of Jamaica, (*Daphne lagetto*) is so beautifully formed into a network, that it is worn as lace. It has a white shining surface, like silk, and when taken carefully from the plant, the hand may be put

into it as in a stocking. Sir Thomas Lynch, who was governor of Jamaica in the time of Charles I., presented that monarch with a cravat made of this material. The shrub will not grow in the English garden.

The highly-poisonous berries of the mezereon are given in Sweden to kill wild animals. The women of Tahtary rub them on their cheeks, and by causing an irritation, produce the temporary effect of rouge. Some writers think that the scent of every species of daphne is deleterious, and that if kept in rooms it will cause head-ache and fainting.

The two varieties of hepatica are among the prettiest flowers of the winter months. Some are of a deep rose pink, others of a brilliant blue colour ; and they bloom very brightly among their ivy-shaped leaves. This plant was once called noble liver-wort, and herb Trinity. The colour of the buds is very deep, but the outside tint of the petals of the blue variety is a pale grey. "The hepatica," says the author of the "Backwoods of Canada," "is the first flower of the Canadian spring ; it gladdens us with its tints of azure, pink, and white, as early as April, soon after the snows have melted from the earth. The Canadians call it snow-flower, from its coming so soon after the snow disappears. We see its grey flowers in the open clearings, and the deep recesses of the forest : its leaves are also an enduring ornament through the open months of the year : you see them on every grassy

mound and mossy root. The shades of blue are very various and delicate, the white anthers forming a lovely contrast with the blue petals."

The lilac double primroses are now very ornamental, as are also the red, white, and flesh-coloured varieties. All the primroses are valued for their early bloom, but our own wild sulphur-coloured kind is the prettiest of them all, though it is seen to more advantage blooming in the wood among the withered leaves than in the garden bed.

In some gardens the dark red flowers of the species of gladiolus called Watson's corn-flag, (*Gladiolus Watsonius*,) are already in bloom. It is a native of the Cape of Good Hope. This tribe of plants is obtained almost solely from Southern Africa, and the large bulbous roots are a common food of the Hottentots.

The brightly-blushing flowers of the Japan quince (*Cydonia Japonica*) redden among the dark leaves of the bush on which they grow. This is a beautiful plant, with flowers of all tints, from the faintest pink to a rich deep scarlet colour. It is a favourite shrub of the Japanese, who are remarkable, not only for their general love of flowers, but for the attention which they have paid to the science of botany. The traveller Siedbold, who spent some time in this island, says that in no country out of Europe is botany so much regarded as there and in China. He enumerates ten Japanese books on the science, which have been printed and illustrated by coloured plates.

A very pretty little spring flower is not uncommon even in this month. The bulbocodium (*Bulbocodium vernum*) is like a small dark purple crocus. It is a native of Spain. Two or three species of the elegant corydalis bloom, too, as early as February. They are very similar to the fumitory. The bean-leaved species (*Corydalis fabacea*) has purple flowers, and is a native of Germany; and the solid-rooted kind, with its pink flowers, grows wild in British woods, but its size is increased by culture. The most common species is the glaucous corydalis: it is a North American, an annual, and may be sown so as to flower at almost any season of the year.

The list of February flowers is short indeed. A few more weeks and they will have increased tenfold, yet we shall scarcely value them more than we do these few and early blossoms, for these come, with the voices of the robin and the thrush, to whisper of brighter days in store for the lover of nature. These come to remind us that God's hand is yet working gradually, even as it did when the earth was first robed with verdure, and when each successive day witnessed the fresh and luxuriant growth of primeval vegetation.

MARCH.

"How many a thing that pretty is, delays
The wanderer's steps beneath the sun's soft rays.
Gay daffodils bend o'er the watery gleam,
Doubling their flickered image in the stream;
The woody nook, where bells of brightest blue
Have clothed the ground with heaven's ethereal hue;
The lane's high-sloping bank, where pale primrose,
With hundreds of its gentle kindred blows;
And speckled daisies, that on upland bare,
Their round eyes opening, scatter gladness there:
Man looks on nature with a grateful smile,
And thinks of nature's bounteous Lord the while."

JOANNA BAILLIE.

WHEN the fruit-trees are covered with flowers, when the peach on the wall puts forth its lilac blossoms, and the apricot's faint blush, and the dark red streaks on the apple-bloom, attract our notice, then we feel fully that spring has arrived. Not yet, however, can we mark these blooms. The sun must have greater power, and the winds be gentler, too, before these tokens of spring shall revisit the garden. Meantime the almond-tree becomes clad with its rose-like flowers, and its sweet fragrance is delightful in the open air. Like the blossoms of many other of our fruit-trees, its scent is far from innocent: a poison lurks, not only in the juices and leaves of the plant, but even in its odour; and, as it is with many of the attractive pleasures which open to the spring-time of life, a snare lies hid in its dangerous beauty.

Could we at this season visit the land "beloved for the fathers' sake," the beautiful Palestine, we should find the almond-blossom covering the trees in every part of the country,

on both sides of the Jordan. Even as we see it in our spring garden, the mind involuntarily adverts to the place and period when Aaron's rod "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds;"* and when the bowls used in the Holy Temple were made in the shape of the almond; or where Joseph's brethren carried up into Egypt, as a present to Pharaoh, its sweet-flavoured kernels.† The early-coming flower is spoken of by their prophets as emblematic of haste, or of the head of age; to the ancient Hebrew it told of things of which we take little cognizance; yet still we may listen to its silent voice of remembrance, and be led by the almond-flower to thoughts of God.

The common almond-tree (*Amygdalus communis*) and the bitter almond, (*Amygdalus amara*,) especially the former, are the species chiefly cultivated in our gardens and shrubberies for the sake of their flowers. Their fruits need a warmer climate to bring them to maturity, but in France and Spain, as well as in the Mediterranean isles, these shrubs are planted for the kernels. We receive our sweet almond of commerce chiefly from Malaga; and the bitter from Magadore. These two species are so alike in their form and flowers, that they are distinguished chiefly by the flavour of their fruits; but the bitter almond contains the larger portion of hydrocyanic or prussic acid;

* Numbers xvii. 8. † Gen. xliii. 11.

and a distilled water made from it is as injurious as the laurel water.

The profuse flowering of the almond-tree was formerly considered as indicative of an abundant harvest. This is alluded to by Virgil—

> "Mark well the flowering almond in the wood;
> If odorous blooms the bearing branches load,
> The glebe will answer to the sylvan reign,
> Great heats will follow, and large crops of grain.
> But if a wood of leaves o'ershade the tree,
> Such, and so barren, will the harvest be;
> In vain the hind shall vex the threshing floor,
> For empty straw and chaff shall be thy store."

In Egypt a paste made of almonds is used, through which to filter the water of the Nile, when muddy, at the time of the annual flood, and by this mode of filtration it is rendered sweet and pleasant, even to those who, but for some process of this kind, could not drink it. At the Cape of Good Hope the wood of the almond-tree is made into heels for shoes.

One or two pretty flowering shrubs, of the genus coronilla, are daily putting forth more blossoms. The nine-leaved species (*Coronilla valentina*) is a great ornament of the greenhouse, with its pretty yellow, butterfly-shaped flowers; and, like the seven-leaved species, (*Coronilla glauca*,) blooms both in winter and summer, though it flowers most freely in this and the following months. The latter plant has bluish green leaves, and its flowers are fragrant during day, though scentless at night. The most frequent of our garden kinds is the scorpion senna, (*Coronilla emerus*,) which

blooms in April, and is a native of most parts of the continent. A dye is obtained from this plant which is litle inferior to indigo. The small tufted coronals of flowers gave to this genus of plants the name of coronilla.

The daffodil is now nodding to the breeze, and sending its strong scent on the air. The old writers called it Lent lily, chalice flower, and daffy-down-dilly. Our gardens have a great variety of this flower, as the Tradescant's daffodil, which is the handsomest kind; the nonsuch; the yellow incomparable, and many others. They are all in blossom during this month; some of them remain through April, and they all grow wild in the fields of southern Europe. Our old writers appear to have included under the general name of daffodil, the smaller jonquils, and indeed all the narcissus tribe. Some of those which we call narcissus are very pretty flowers of the early spring, but the jonquils are most fragrant; the latter were sometimes called, in former times, by the name of rush daffodil. The narcissus was much esteemed by the ancients, and is still greatly admired by the Asiatics, being found throughout Syria, as far as India. The common name of two of our species, Bazelman minor, and major, is evidently of Eastern origin. The polyanthus narcissus is much celebrated in the east, as is also the poets' narcissus. The former (*Narcissus tazetta*) derives its name from the Italian tazza, a cup; and is called in France *Le narcisse de Constantinople.* Its scent is plea-

sant, and it is used in China in some religious ceremonies, and its flowers are annually sent to various parts of that kingdom, from Canton, where it is cultivated for sale. The poets' narcissus, called in France *Janette des contois*, is a wild flower, too, in some parts of England.

> " And some faint odours o'er the vernal dew
> Shall tempt the wanderings of the earliest bee
> Hither, with music sweet as poetry,
> To woo the flower whose verge is wiry gold."

Thus Elliott describes the polyanthus, which, with its red, or claret-coloured, or lilac blooms, decks every cottage garden, and looks up, too, from the choicest flower border. The polyanthus much resembles the auricula, and is simply a variety of our common wild primrose. Thomson speaks of it as

> "The polyanthus of unnumber'd dyes."

It differs from the primrose, not only in hue, but in flowering in clusters, instead of having each flower on a stalk. The leaves and roots of this and other species of primrose are sometimes grated and used as snuff, or taken internally as a medicine.

The bright flowers of the garden anemonies have a very gay and cheerful aspect, dazzling the eye by their brilliant scarlet, or pleasing it no less by their softer purple or lilac tints, fading into white. These flowers have been brought us from the east; and some of the fields of the Levant are, in early spring, quite radiant with their varied and beautiful tints. In the soft climate of Provence some most

lovely anemonies are scattered thickly over the lands. Our handsome garland, or poppy anemone, (*Anemone coronaria*) is the parent of the finest florists' flower, and comes from the hot and dry plains of Syria and Asia Minor. The flower is white, with a red ring round its centre. The star anemone (*Anemone stellata*) is purple; and the kind called garden anemone (*Anemone hortensis*) is purple, with a white centre; and all the numerous varieties which we have in our gardens spring from one of these three kinds. The anemone is another flower much prized in the eastern bouquet. D'Herbelot mentions a Persian work, a collection of moral essays, which was called, in the figurative language of that people, "The Garden of Anemonies." In former days this flower was believed to possess such magical virtues, that the sages of old times recommended every person to gather, in spring, the earliest anemone he saw, and keep it as a preservation from pestilence. For this purpose it was carefully wrapped in scarlet, till spring again brought the fresh anemone, to allure to hope, and often to lead on to disappointment. And well is it for us that our destiny in this life is not thus placed in our own keeping; for man, blind man, should choose the evil sometimes when he sought the good; and while he carefully shielded himself from sickness and every affliction, should perhaps put far from him the very means of moral improvement, the very trial which might be sent in mercy to

bear him from this world, and draw him to God.

One or two of the many species of the star of Bethlehem are already in flower, especially that handsome kind called by gardeners the great flowery star, (*Ornithogalum Arabicum*) which is a native of Egypt. The most frequent garden flower of the genus is that termed common star of Bethlehem, (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*,) which flowers about a month later, and is found, though rarely, in the English meadow. It is called by the French, *La Belle d'onze heures*—Eleven o'clock Lady, as it opens at that hour and closes at five. Its white flowers grow but few in a cluster. A particular interest is attached to this plant, from its having been considered by Linnæus, and other writers, as the dove's dung of Scripture. That the roots of this and other species are cooked and eaten in many parts of the east, there can be no doubt ; and this species is common throughout Palestine, and in the neighbourhood of Samaria. It is so generally used for food, that it would naturally have a high value in a time of scarcity, like that described in Scripture, when a small quantity was sold in Samaria for five pieces of silver.* This flower grows wild in Caucasus, Taurus, and Northern Africa ; and it is expressly stated by Dioscorides, that its bulbs were sometimes cooked with bread, and were also

* 2 Kings vi. 25.

often eaten raw. They were, too, in former ages, the common food of the peasantry of Italy and Southern Europe. The French term the Star of Bethlehem *Epi de lait*, (milky blade.) The yellow kind is a pretty and common flower. One species of this plant, the officinal squill, (*Ornithogalum squilla*,) is the medicinal plant mentioned by the ancient Greeks, and one of the very few named by them which is used in modern times. It blooms in April and May : it has white blossoms, and is common in the Greek islands. Its root is of a great size, and is said by Loudon to be often as large as the human head, and shaped like a pear. The leaves—often a foot long—continue green all the winter, and die away in spring; after which rises the tall stem with its pyramid of white blossoms, that continue in flower two or three months.

That pretty little favourite flower, the dog's-tooth violet, is now opening in the garden border. Unlike the violet in all but its early appearance, it is a lovely little vernal bulb, with petals of deep lilac, reddish stem, and twin spotted leaves. The species now in flower it the common kind, (*Erythronium dens canis*.) Its drooping flowers are sometimes quite of a deep purple, but sometimes vary to white; and a species with yellow flowers, (*Erythronium Americanum*) is found in our gardens a month later. This latter flower requires skill and management with us, but in its native forests it is very luxuriant and beautiful. There its

pendant yellow blossom is described as "delicately dashed with crimson spots within, and marked with fine purple lines on the outer part of the petal;" while a variety of this species is of a pale crimson colour, without any spots or lines; and a second is of a deep glowing yellow, its anthers of a reddish orange colour, and thickly strewed with fine powder. These flowers grow freely in Canada, and cover large tracts of land, mingling their faint odour with that of the sweet wild roses which grow there, and with the fragrance of the flower called by the colonists the milk weed, which has the delicious perfume of a stock, and which, with a few other powerfully scented blossoms, compensate, in some measure, for the want of odours in the Canadian violets, which grow in profusion in their forests.

The dark brown or yellow wallflower (*Cheiranthus cheiri*) has been cultivated for many centuries in our gardens, and furnished many an allusion for the songs of the troubadours. The Alpine wallflower is generally thought handsomer than our common species, on account of its larger and more compact flowers, but it must yield to the former in sweetness of scent. This plant is a native of France and Spain. The wallflower grows wild on the old walls of many an eastern city, whose proud palaces are crumbling to dust. Lamartine marked its blossoms, too, on Carmel, whose "excellency" still remains, for it retains its beautiful vegetation to a greater degree than,

perhaps, any other mountain in Syria. Growing wild upon its heights, may yet be seen the bright blue hyacinth, the yellow jonquil, the varied anemone, and the golden cup of the poets' narcissus; while thyme and wallflower, and a variety of odoriferous herbs, yield to every pressure of the traveller's foot an exquisite perfume; and the luxuriant vine, trailing its broad leaves over its slopes, contributes, with the flowers and shrubs, to render it yet worthy of its Hebrew name of Carmel, which signifies, a country of vineyards and gardens. Its laurels are ever green; its olive-trees ever fruitful, from the rivulets which wander down its heights; while on its very summits grow the tall dark pines of the north, and the hardy oak of our climates.

The wallflower is prized highly by Asiatics, especially by the Persians. It will ever be a favourite flower with us, for the fragrance which it yields before the rose and other summer flowers yet please us with their odours. Its pungent leaves are very wholesome for cattle, and on this account it is often planted in pastures destined for their food. It bears the smoke of cities better than some other flowers, and is, therefore, frequently seen in the little plot of ground which in the large towns is devoted to the culture of flowers. The botanic name—taken from the Greek—signifies hand-flower, because it was gathered so often for nosegays; and as we see it in the pent-up garden, or the balcony which fronts the city

window, where smoke somewhat impairs its lustre, we are reminded of Elliott's lines :—

"But mourning better days, the widow here
Still tries to make her little garden bloom,
For she was country born. No weeds appear
Where her poor pinks deplore their prison-tomb;
To them, alas, no second spring shall come!
And there in May the lilac gasps for breath;
And mint and thyme seem fain their woes to speak,
Like saddest portraits painted after death;
And spindling wallflowers in the choking reek .
For life, for life lift up their branches weak."

The magnificent tribe of tulips, so often the pride of the cottage garden, will now be coming forth, one after another, as the spring advances, but it will not be until May that the florist can exhibit them in all their varieties, and congratulate himself on their perfect forms and clear colours. One of the earliest blowing species, is that which is now found in many a cherished garden plot, and is called by gardeners Van Thol. (*Tulipa suaveolens.*) Its red and yellow streaked cup glows in the fields of southern Europe.

The French formerly called this flower *Tulipan*, which, as well as our own name, is derived from the Persian *Thoulyban*, the word used in Persia for the turban. The tulip was introduced into England about the year 1557, and was, for the next century, a source of considerable traffic in the Netherlands, as well as an object of gambling. Growers of tulips, during the Tulipomania, purchased the bulbs at enormous prices, and most remarkable speculations were carried on by merchants with the tulip-roots.

The flower is still much cultivated in Holland, from which country all the rest of Europe are supplied with bulbs. The varieties of tulip, and the names given to them by florists, are, like the different anemonies, nearly endless. The kind which is considered as the "king of florists' flowers," is the common tulip, (*Tulipa Gesneriana,*) which was named after Conrad Gesner, the celebrated Swiss botanist; and which has had more culture bestowed on it, than perhaps any other flower in the world, if we except such as are cultivated for the food or other useful substances their plants may furnish. Though this flower grows wild in the Levant and Syria, and is occasionally seen in the fields of Constantinople, yet the Turks have for many centuries cultivated it in gardens. It was brought to us from a garden of Turkey, by Busbequius, and was first described by Gesner in 1559. It appears, however, to have reached England two years earlier, for Gerarde, at that time, mentions the pains taken by one of his "loving friends, a curious searcher of simples and learned apothecary," who undertook, if possible, to find out the number of sorts; "but," adds the writer, "he had not done this after twenty years, not being able to attain to the end of his travail; for that each new year bringeth forth new plants of sundry colours, not before seen; all which to describe particularly, were to roll Sisyphus' stone, or to number the sands."

An anecdote which is recorded of an occur-

rence during the prevalence of the tulipomania, shows the value which was attached to their bulbs at that time. A merchant having given a herring to a sailor, who had delivered some goods, left him to his breakfast. The man seeing some tulip-roots lying near him, mistook them for onions, and ate a part of one of them with his fish. The narrator observes, that this single root was so valuable, that the sailor's meal cost the merchant more money than if he had entertained a prince.

The tulip is much admired in the east, and as it grows wild in Palestine, it is one of the flowers which have been considered as the "lilies of the field" of Scripture. The Turks, as well as the Persians, hold annually a feast of roses; and the former people have also a yearly festival of tulips, when the grand seignior exhibits a display of oriental magnificence.

And now the large drooping bells of the crown imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*) hang in garlands under the coronal of leaves which surmounts the stem. It was formerly called Persian lily, as it is a native of Persia. Its sweet honey is said to be poisonous to bees. The light purple bells, too, of the early blooming Penstemon (*Penstemon campanulata*) are coming into flower. This species is a native of Mexico, and all the kinds of this plant have reached us from the various parts of America, where they are common flowers.

The bright blue flowers of the periwinkle

(*Vinca major*) have been open here and there all through the winter, but are much more abundant now, and during the summer months. They are the common ornaments of cottage gardens, and sometimes grow wild by streams or in woods. Hurdis describes them—

> "See where the sky-blue periwinkle climbs
> E'en to the cottage eaves, and hides the wall
> And dairy lattice, with a thousand eyes
> Pentagonally formed, to mock the skill
> Of proud geometer."

This species is wild in all the countries of southern and middle Europe.

But some of our garden periwinkles are not blue. There is the Madagascar periwinkle, (*Vinca rosea*,) of a beautiful pink colour; which, like our common species, blooms during the greater part of the year, and bears its twin flowers, and twines luxuriantly among the trees and bushes of Hindoostan. Then there are the silver-striped, gold-striped, white-flowered, and several others, some of their varieties produced by cultivation from our common blue species, and others introduced from India. The name of *vinca* is derived from *vinculum*, a bond. The French term the flower *pervenche*. Its old Anglo-Saxon name was *peruince*, and Chaucer calls it by another; thus, he says,

> "There sprange the violet al newe,
> And fresh pewinke rich of hewe."

It was supposed, in the olden times, to cure the cramp, and wreaths of its twigs were wound round the limbs for this purpose.

The violet, the lowly violet, belongs to the wild flowers, yet it is valued now in the garden, when lavender and other fragrant plants are yet waiting for sunshine to bring forth their scents. The dark blue double sweet violet, is merely a variety of our woodland flower, and the Russian and Neapolitan violets are a great addition to our garden bed. The Neapolitans

"Now in sweet profusion spring,
Haunting the air."

This is a winter flower, too, for it has been in blossom from October, and will still bloom on till May. Many of our garden violets are brought from the fields and woods of America, and are cultivated by our gardeners for the beauty of their flowers, as they are not fragrant. There is one species very common on the high mountains of Pennsylvania, with small chocolate flowers and hairy roundish leaves. The rich vegetable mould of some of these beech forests, is very favourable to its growth, and like our native violet, it seems to seek seclusion, rejoicing not alone in the quiet of the woods, but often blooming quite hidden among the dead leaves, which the high winds have scattered from the leafy boughs. This flower is on this account called the clandestine violet, (*Viola clandestina.*) It is a common remedy for wounds, among the dwellers in the forests, and is called "all heal." The bruised plant is applied with great success for similar purposes in several parts of North America, and, like most of the violet tribe, its roots contain an

emetic property. Botanists have stated that a larger number of species of violets are found in North America, than in any other portion of the globe.

Besides the tufts of violets of various kinds which are found in our spring gardens, we might enumerate the large tribe of heartsease or pansy, which flower is, in fact, a violet, and is the *Viola tricolor* of the botanist. A few only of these flowers are found within the tropics. Many are from America, and several from Siberia. Some very pretty pansies grow on the cliffs of Northern Europe. Linnæus, in his work on the flowers of Lapland, says, "Here and there, among the rocks, small patches of vegetation were to be seen, full of a variety of herbaceous plants; among others, *Viola tricolor*, of which some of the flowers were white; others, with the upper petals blue and yellow, and the lateral and lower ones blue; while others, again, had a mixture of yellow in the side petals. All these were found within a foot of each other, sometimes on the same stalk."

The striped flowers of the Chalcedonian iris (*Iris Susiana*) now wave gaily over the borders. Its flowers are the largest and handsomest of this most beautiful genus, and it was called by the old writers, the Turkey flower de luce. The various species of iris are chiefly European. Several are from different parts of Asia, and a few from America. The pretty Persian iris, (*Iris Persica,*) with its fragrant and bright-coloured

blossoms, is a native of the country which its name denotes. We have also some pretty Chinese species. The dark purple, almost black kind of iris, called snake's head, (*Iris tuberosa*,) is common in the Levant. The very lovely white species, the Florentine iris (*Iris Florentina*) is called by the French *la flambe blanche*. It grows wild in the south of Europe.

Milton describes these flowers, with their various colours, as

"Iris all hues."

Among the ancients an iris was the symbol of eloquence.

Some species of iris have large bulbous roots, and many of the African kinds are commonly eaten as food by the Hottentots. "The *Iris edulis*," says Thunberg when speaking of the Cape of Good Hope, "a plant which grew here in great abundance, and decorated the fields with a variety of white and yellow and blue flowers, was brought in great quantities by the slaves. These bulbs were eaten either roasted and boiled, or stewed with milk, and appeared to me to be both palatable and nourishing."

The Hottentots live not only upon this root, but on a great variety of bulbous-rooted plants, with the bright blossoms of which the desert is strewn. Bulbous plants are very generally found in spots, which, at some parts of the year, are dried up, and which would produce no vegetation were it not for some such provision as is contained in the bulb. "Thus,"

says Professor Lindley, "in places like the hard dry Karroos of the Cape of Good Hope, where rain falls only for three months in the year; in the parched plains of Barbary, where the ground is rarely refreshed by showers, except in the winter; and on the most burning shores of tropical India, beyond the reach of the tide, and buried in sand, the temperature of which rises to 180°, bulbous-rooted plants are enabled to live and enliven such scenes with periodical beauty." The succulent stems and leaves of other plants of the sandy deserts afford a similar provision, by their power of absorbing and retaining the dews which water the desert; and shall we not say with the psalmist, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works!" The ignorant Hottentot knows not how to till his land, nor will its arid soil admit of culture. He cares not to provide beyond the morrow, yet is he cared for by the God who feeds the fowl of the air, and instructs the bird of the wilderness.

And now every day the garden-trees seem to produce more young buds, and the buds are expanding so fast, notwithstanding the easterly winds, and the blights which they bring with them, that there will be shade enough by the time when the sun shall drive us to seek it. The winds yet whistle shrilly through some half-clad branches, but Nature seems to be rejoicing, and to be gradually putting on her strength and beauty; and the green of the half-expanded

foliage, though exhibiting less variety than the hues of later seasons, has a beauty of its own—a beauty of youth and freshness. It seems like the untried feelings and hopes of the young life of human beings; and were we not certain that it should again bloom in another spring, we should sigh as we remembered that it must turn to the withered leaf, as surely as the early hope shall change to disappointment. But there are hopes which may grow brighter and brighter as seasons and years move onward; and bloom in freshness through a long eternity; and bring forth that joy which fadeth not away—hopes which shall be consummated in an eternal spring, for they are founded on those promises of God which are immutable.

APRIL.

"Is there a heart that beats and lives,
To which no joy the spring-time gives?
Alas, in that unfeeling heart
No love nor kindliness hath part;
Or chilling want, or pining care,
Must brood, or comfortless despair:
Blest, who without profane alloy,
Can revel in that blameless joy;
More blest in every welcome hour
If spring-time smile, or winter lower,
Who round him scattered, hears and sees
What still the excursive sense may please;
Who round him finds, perchance unsought,
Fresh matter for improving thought;
And more, the more he looks abroad,
Marks, owns, and loves, the present God."—Bishop Mant.

The white and blushing blossoms of the fruit-trees render the April garden a grove of flowers.

Among the most abundant and the brightest in tint, are the apple-blossoms, which thicken and redden until by the close of the month their redness turns to paleness. The apple which they produce is among the most valuable of British fruits; and as the tree may be grown in any soil or climate, and will bear its bright blossoms and its ruddy store for many years, it is not surprising that it should be so generally cultivated. Though only twenty-two kinds of apple were known to the Romans, several hundred varieties are now reared in this land. The blossoms of none are more beautiful than those of the Siberian crab, (*Pyrus prunifolia*) which is now in flower, and the small cherry-like fruits of which, though harsh to the taste, are the most deeply coloured and ornamental of any of the species.

That this tree was cultivated by the ancient Britons in the earlier days of this country, there is little doubt. Our English name for the fruit seems to have been derived from the Saxon aeppel, while the cider made from its juice is a slight abbreviation of the name of seider, given by the early Britons to some beverage which they had in common use. In later days the apple juice has been used as a cosmetic, and the old physicians estimated its odour so highly that they often directed their patients to hold in their hand "a sweet apple," as a remedy in some of those alarming infections, which, like the plague, once preyed upon the inhabitants of this land.

The apple is familiar to us as a plant named in Scripture. Thus the prophet Joel, describing the mournful condition of the land of the patriarchs, when lying under the wrath of Jehovah, says, "The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth, the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the forest are withered, because joy is withered away from the sons of men." Some of our best commentators, however, are of opinion, that the word translated apple, ought rather to have been rendered citron, as the handsome appearance of this latter tree, both while in flower and fruit, seems particularly suited to the allusions of the inspired writers. The fruit, too, is highly valued, while the apple of Palestine is of an inferior quality.

Some very ornamental trees of the pear kind are now putting forth their blossoms, and are cultivated by our gardeners for their beautiful flowers. A species of pear (*Pyrus salvifolia*) with downy leaves, something like those of the sage, and with white flowers, is one of the prettiest kinds. Several of these plants have long silvery white leaves, others narrow silky leaves, like the willow; while one species (*Pyrus nivalis*) has round leaves, as white as its snowy flowers. These trees are beautiful in form, but their fruits are not fit for eating. The ornamental plum-trees, too, are numerous, with their white flowers; and the pretty flowering shrubs of the cherry-tree tribe, have a good effect in the garden or shrubbery. Several of

them have large double flowers. One kind of cherry, the perfumed cherry-tree, (*Cerasus Mahaleb*,) often found in gardens, has a sweet scent, like that of the clematis, which is perceptible at a considerable distance. Its hard round fruit is used for beads by Catholics, and the wood is scented by the French, and manufactured into various articles of furniture. The manufacture is carried on chiefly at the village of St. Lucie, near Commercy, and hence this wood is called by the French, *bois de St. Lucie*. With us the tree is planted for its profuse and fragrant flowers.

> "Shade-loving hyacinth, thou comest again,
> And thy rich odours seem to swell the flow
> Of the lark's song, the redbreast's lovely strain,
> And the stream's tune."

Thus sang Elliott to our woodland hyacinth, which now is blooming. Our garden hyacinths are much like the wild species, but are double, and have a variety of tints. Some are dark blue or pale azure, others are of pink, amethyst, white, or primrose colours. This flower is the eastern hyacinth, (*Hyacinthus Orientale.*) It has long shed its beauty on the in-doors' room, from the water vase, and now flourishes freely in the open air. It has one advantage when grown in the water above its growth in the ground, inasmuch as we can there see the fibres from the root, which are almost as beautiful as the flower itself, while, in the garden, these are concealed from our view. A variety of names have been given by florists to these

favourite flowers. The species thought to have been earliest introduced into our gardens is that called the King of Great Britain. Like the tulip and narcissus, this flower has been much cultivated by the Dutch, and is still among them an article of commerce with other nations. They were the first European cultivators of the hyacinth, and raised it in their gardens as early as the commencement of the sixteenth century. About the latter end of that century, there were seven or eight varieties known in England, while Miller says that in his time—rather more than a hundred years ago — the Haarlem florists had above two thousand kinds. The passion for hyacinths which once existed in Holland, has, like many other popular follies, greatly subsided; but the beauty of the flower will ever make it valuable; and above four hundred kinds are annually brought into England, by seedsmen, from Holland. The garden hyacinth is a native of the Levant and of several parts of the east. It grows wild in abundance in some parts of Syria, flowering in February, and its roots and blossoms are much larger than those with us. It is said to be very beautiful on the lands lying by the coast of the Jordan, from the Dead Sea. Schubert, describing his course from this part of Syria, along the border of the Lake of Gennesaret, says, "Whoever desires views really extensive and beautiful, and lilies, tulips, hyacinths, and narcissuses, must in the spring season visit this district, where also

the garlic assumes a size and beauty which might render it worthy of becoming an ornamental plant in our gardens."

In Russia the hyacinth has been found wild, with bells of deep yellow. The roots of all species of hyacinth are more or less poisonous. This flower is much admired in the east, and some years since, the favourite apartment of the Sultan at Constantinople was called the chamber of the garden of hyacinths. Dr. E. D. Clarke contrived to gain admittance into this retired spot. He describes it as a small garden, neatly arranged in a number of oblong borders, edged with porcelain or Dutch tiles. Not a flower was to be seen in this cherished parterre, save the eastern hyacinth, and this waved its thousands of bells; but, by its monotony, the garden was rendered less pleasing than gardens in general, and had a dreary and unvaried aspect. One would have imagined that the powerful odours from a garden of hyacinths, borne upon the warm air of the south, would have rendered the neighbouring apartment neither healthful nor agreeable; yet here, gazing upon the flowers, the Sultan spent a great part of his time.

The starch hyacinth, called also grape hyacinth or grape flower, (*Muscari racemosum*,) received its former name from Curtis, on account of its strong odour of starch, and the quantity of thick mucilage which exists in the plant. The old writers termed it tassel hyacinth, "because," says Parkinson, "the

whole stalk, with the flowers upon it, doth somewhat resemble a long purse tassel, and thereupon divers gentlewomen have so named it." It is in some parts of France called wild onion, on account of its ovate, bulbous root. The flowers are composed of a thick compact cluster of small purple or ash-coloured bells. The species called musk-grape hyacinth, is a handsomer flower than the starch kind. It has narrow leaves, more than a foot long, and grows wild in southern Europe. The feathered hyacinth (*Muscari comosum monstrosum*) is an exceedingly pretty border flower. It blows during April and May. Several kinds have an odour of musk, hence their Latin names from *muscus*. This substance is called misk by the Arabs. The flower is very general in the east, and one of the commonest in the Syrian field.

> "In spite of nipping sheep and hungry cow,
> The little daisy finds a place to blow."

Clare writes thus of our field flower, and the garden daisies keep pace with it. Indeed all the double, and quilled, and hen and chicken daisies, which have, for centuries, ornamented the edges of flower beds, are merely varieties of the common daisy, (*Bellis perennis.*) The Germans have raised a great number of varieties of this flower, differing especially in all the shades of red and white; but the dark crimson daisy, so often clustering with the London pride around the cottage garden bed, is the most beautiful in hue. There is a

garden species called the annual daisy, (*Bellis annua,*) which is much like our British daisy, and which grows wild as commonly as that, in the fields of Italy, Spain, and France. The large white Portugal daisy (*Bellis sylvestris*) is the common ornament of the meadows in the land from which it derives its name.

Some of our most elegant spring border flowers are the saxifrages. They are chiefly Alpine plants, growing wild on rocky or stony places. One of the most common kinds is that which is in flower during this month, and sometimes as early as February. It is the thick leaved saxifrage, (*Saxifraga crassifolia.*) It has pale purple blossoms, and large showy foliage. During autumn the leaves of this plant wither, and the stem turns quite black, and forms fibres, which constitute the root of the plant which is, in the following spring, to enliven the garden. This flower is a native of Siberia, growing among the snows of that inclement clime, and blooming far up the hills of those dreary regions. The variety called the thick heart-leaved saxifrage bears larger blossoms. The London pride (*Saxifraga umbrosa*) is the hardiest and most common of the genus. It grows wild on some of our mountains. The French term it *Amourette.*

Nearly sixty species of saxifrage bloom in the English garden. Though mountain flowers, they will flourish on plain and valley; and many, like the London pride, will bloom amid the impure airs of the great metropolis. A

few are difficult to rear. They can bear the cold spring winds, for their native haunts are the high peaks of the mountains, and the Alps and Pyrenees are made beautiful by their blossoms, which open even on the limits of perpetual snow ; but our winter, with its frosts, injures them, for they have not at all times a thick covering of snow over their roots, and a wet season renders them still more sickly. On their ice-clad regions they bloom unhurt, and the snow gradually makes room for their blossoms to show themselves. Mrs. Sigourney has some lines addressed to mountain flowers well suited to them:—

> "Man, who panting toils
> O'er slippery steeps, or trembling treads the verge
> Of yawning gulfs, o'er which the headlong plunge
> Is to eternity, looks shuddering up,
> And marks ye in your placid loveliness,
> Fearless yet frail, and clasping his chill hands,
> Blesses your pencilled beauty! 'Mid the pomp
> Of mountain summits rushing on the sky,
> And chaining the rapt soul in breathless awe,
> He bows and binds you drooping to his breast,
> Inhales your spirit from the frost-winged gale,
> And freer dreams of heaven."

The pyramidal saxifrage (*Saxifraga cotyledon*) is by no means an uncommon garden flower, but its large handsome spikes of flowers do not open till June. They are white, spotted with rose colour, and grow on the Pyrenees. The saffron-coloured saxifrage (*Saxifraga mutata*) with its yellow flowers, requires shelter from the frost, and is among the least hardy of the tribe. It grows wild on the high lands of Switzerland and Italy.

One of the prettiest species is the round-leaved, (*Saxifraga rotundifolia*,) which blooms later in the summer, and is most abundant on the rocks and in the valleys of Piedmont; those valleys made deeply interesting, not only by natural scenery, but by the faith of many, who have in these seclusions died martyrs for the truths of the gospel. A flower allied to the saxifrages, and called golden saxifrage, grows there too, and is eaten by the Piedmontese.

The purple flowers of the opposite-leaved saxifrage, and the white-flowered granulated kind, often bearing double flowers, are very common in the garden during April. The former was much admired by Dr. Clarke in Norway. The most beautiful and scarce plants were, he says, here pendant among the cliffs: this species of saxifrage especially, and a kind of gentian peeping above the snow. The clustered Alpine, the starry, the larger mountain, and the opposite-leaved species, also grew in great beauty; and "nothing," he adds, "can be more elegant, than the hanging clusters of the last, like pendent pearls upon the rocks."

The bright flowers of the double furze (*Ulex Europæus*) are very fragrant now. It is merely a variety of our common moorland furze. It is not often that double flowers are found wild in this country, but this was discovered some years ago to be growing on some uncultivated moors of Devonshire, and has since been propagated by cutting in the nursery

ground. The larger kind, called Irish whin, is a very luxuriant plant for the garden or shrubbery. It has no spines, and is often eight feet high. It must be propagated by cuttings, as it has never been known to ripen its seeds. The wild furze is common on our English heaths, and Stephens saw it growing in great profusion in central America, on the ruins of some of those interesting ancient cities, on whose history books throw little light, yet whose origin and decay are deeply interesting to the philosopher.

In many gardens we now find in flower one or two species of arum, as the purple and Virginian arums. All kinds of this plant are sufficiently like our wild flower, called lords and ladies, to be recognised without difficulty as belonging to the same genus. They all have a central column, called by botanists a spadix, on which the flowers are found. The roots of all, like those of the wild arum, are pungent and acrid; but some of them are milder, and, as well as the leaves, are nutritive, when cooked. The celebrated yam of the isles of the southern ocean is the root of one of them. They are very abundant, and of various species in hot climates, and are used as common food by the natives of the West Indies. One species cultivated in our gardens, and growing wild in many parts of southern Europe, is the common dragon flower (*Arum dracunculus*) called by the French *la serpentaire.* It is a remarkable plant, and

reminds one of a snake, by its leaves spotted with purple and brown. The flower has so strong an odour of carrion, that few persons can bear to approach it. Still more offensive is the odour from a species of arum which grows in ditches, about the Straits of Magellan. This plant has the appearance of an ulcer, and so powerful is its odour of decayed meat, that the flesh-fly deposits her eggs on its flowers.

Dr. Lindley, treating of the acridity which exists in the roots of the arum tribe, names one which has a singular and dangerous poison. This is the celebrated dumb cane of the West Indies and South America. This plant grows to the height of six feet. "It has," says this writer, "the property, when chewed, of swelling the tongue and destroying the power of speech." Dr. Hooker relates an account of a gardener, who incautiously bit a piece of the dumb cane, when his tongue swelled to such a degree that he could not move it. He became utterly incapable of speaking, and was confined to the house for some days, in the most excruciating torment.

More than a dozen species of arum have been introduced into the gardens of England, but they are, on account of their unpleasant odour, but little in general cultivated, and chiefly left to the gardens of those who value them as curiosities. One very lovely kind, however, is often found gracing the hall or parlour, and has a sweet fragrance. It is sometimes called the horn flower, (*Calla Ethiopica.*)

It has a large white flower, shaped like a leaf, and looking like an alabaster vase, while from the centre rises the bright golden column. Leaves of glossy surface and bright green colour, sometimes two feet in length, add to its beauty, and it is so like the wild arum that it will not be doubted as being of the same tribe. It is very common at the Cape of Good Hope, having a most magnificent appearance on any moist portion of that arid soil, and growing even in ditches.

Several species of arum afford medicines, and the roots of some kinds, when boiled in milk, are thought to have been very useful in consumption. The dumb cane yields a juice which gives a permanent dye to linen. Some of the newly-gathered leaves are used in Demerara as blisters. One kind, very abundant in the woods of North America, is called the Indian turnip, as the Indians eat its boiled root. This is the *arum atropurpureum*, which has handsome leaves tinged with blue, and which is a vegetable of great service to the European settlers in these vast forests. The soft, silky leaves of some species are used in some hot countries as plates and dishes.

One or two species of spiræa are now beginning to put forth their blossoms on the shrubs. The smooth-leaved spiræa (*Spiræa lævigata*) is one of the earliest, and is a native of Siberia. Its flowers are of a pale rose colour. The pretty flower, commonly called Italian May, (*Spiræa hypericifolia,*) is a very well-known

species, with its large bunches of small white flowers, among its dark green leaves, and it is an under-shrub in the tall American forest, blooming with us in the month from which it has its familiar name. About the same time, too, we see the bridewort or queen's embroidery, with its spikes of pinkish lilac flowers, looking much like some piece of finely-wrought needle-work; and a little later the Virginian Guelder rose, and the Californian species, with its loose clusters of feather-like white flowers, floating up and down to every summer breeze, may be seen decking the summer bed, delighting most in a moist soil, and flourishing to fullest perfection in the garden through which a stream meanders.

Nor is this genus destitute of those herbaceous plants, those lowlier flowers, which sometimes find room on beds which could not admit of the more spreading shrub. The meadow sweet (*Spiræa ulmaria*) is often brought from our wild fields into the garden; the goat's beard, (*Spiræa aruncus*,) a Siberian species, is very ornamental with its white flowers in the month of June; and the dropwort of our meads (*Spiræa filipendula*) is very pretty in the garden, when its blossoms have, by culture, been rendered double.

The bladder-nut (*Staphylea pinnata*) is a hardy plant of North America, now in bloom. Its flowers are white, and the brown seeds are enclosed in a large inflated capsule or bladder. The hard smooth nuts, bitter as they are, are

eaten in some countries, and in Catholic lands, are strung as necklaces and rosaries.

During this and next month we may see the flowers of the numerous varieties of auricula, (*Auricula primula.*) Most of them are kept in pots, but some common kinds are found in the garden, blooming beside the early hyacinth and other spring flowers. This flower has received great attention from florists, and innumerable varieties, differing both in blossoms and foliage from each other, have been the result of their pains. Several volumes have been written solely upon its culture, their authors recommending a great number of modes of treatment. The artisans of Lancashire have long been celebrated for the beauty of their auriculas, and Loudon observes, that it is no uncommon thing for a mechanic of that county, who earns from eighteen to thirty shillings per week, to give two guineas for a fresh variety, in order to raise seedlings from it. This flower was long known as the mountain or French cowslip. It deserves its former name, for it blooms above the snows of many alpine regions of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. It is also found wild in the neighbourhood of Astracan. The old botanists termed it bear's ear (*Auricula ursi*) from the shape of its leaves, and gardeners have many fanciful names for the varieties they have raised. In its wild state the auricula is generally of a red or yellow, sometimes of a purple colour, and occasionally variegated, or scattered

over with a mealy powder. In the garden the darker kinds have usually more or less of this white powder on their blossoms, and sometimes, too, on their foliage, as Thomson describes them—

> " Auriculas enriched
> With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves."

The expressed juice of the leaves of the auricula, was, in former days, a valued medicine; and Ray gravely says of it, that if mingled with the milk of a *red* cow, it will cure the most intense headache.

A pretty flower, called Greek valerian, (*Polemonium reptans*,) is already in bloom. It has light blue flowers, and is a native of America. A much more frequent kind is the species generally called Jacob's ladder, (*Polemonium cæruleum*,) which blooms in almost every garden in the month following this. It has numerous blossoms, either of a light blue, or varying in all the shades of blue and bluish white, to a pure snow-white tint. This flower is in Staffordshire called charity; and the familiar name of Jacob's ladder was probably suggested by the form of its leaves, which consist of a number of leaflets, opposite to each other, on the stem, and not unlike steps. This was sufficient to lead our forefathers to adopt it as an emblem of something scriptural, at a period when monks and friars were the chief cultivators of plants, and the great discoverers of their virtues. The ancient writers held in great repute a plant which they termed *polemonium*. The name is

taken from the Greek word signifying war, and Pliny relates, that it received this designation from its having been the cause of war between two kings, each of whom claimed the merit of having discovered some medicinal properties which it was supposed to possess. Great indeed must its virtues have been, if its good to mankind could have at all compensated for the ills brought on by war, and its attendant miseries; but if the plant we now call Greek valerian, is the same as that which occupied so much attention in ancient days, the discovery was indeed of little value, and its remedial effects of small power. It is not improbable, however, that the old name has descended, in this instance, to another flower than that to which it was originally given.

And now several of those ornamental plants of modern gardens, the flowering currant and gooseberry bushes, are hanging their abundant blossoms to the sunshine. These shrubs were unknown to us a century since, though now so many species are common. One of the most general of them all is now in blossom. This is the red-flowered black currant, (*Ribes sanguineum.*) Several varieties of this species are cultivated, distinguished chiefly by the colour of their blossoms. The dark-tinted variety is the prettiest. This plant was brought hither from California, where it grows wild, beneath the shade of the wood. It is found wild, too, most frequently, and in greatest luxuriance, in the neighbourhood of streams. Mrs.

Loudon observes, that "the colour of the flowers varies very much according to the soil on which the shrub is grown: the darkest and brightest hue has been observable in those plants which are grown on calcareous soils, and the palest and least brilliant are those grown on sandy soils." All the different species of flowering currant are hardy plants, and bloom early in the year.

Perhaps the most ornamental of all the common species of *ribes*, is the snowy-flowered gooseberry, (*Ribes niveum*,) with its hanging bells as white as the purest wax, and its dark purple fruits of the later season, which are very agreeable to the palate. Then there are other species, with red bells and long stamens, like the fuchsia; and others with pale green or gold-coloured blossoms; while one beautiful kind, the wax-leaved currant, (*Ribes cereum*,) has round leaves covered with a thin layer of a wax-like substance, and well deserves its distinctive name. The fruits of these flowering currant bushes are all wholesome, and some of them agreeable to the taste. They are purple, scarlet, or black in colour. Several of them, however, will not ripen in this country, and others have a harsh and crude flavour.

Many species of berberry are daily becoming gayer with their pretty yellow flowers, nor will they be less ornamental to the garden, when, in the autumnal season, their dark red pendulous fruits will glitter among the branches. Our common kind (*Berberis vulgaris*) is well known,

but it is in very ill repute with the farmer, as it is believed to be injurious to corn. How far this reproach is merited, is a question still much discussed by botanical writers. The injury is supposed to originate with an insect, which is very fond of the berberry tree, and very generally found upon it, and this is thought to cause a kind of powder, which, being scattered over the neighbouring cornfield, alights upon the wheat and barley, and produces a sort of fungus, rendering the plant unhealthy, and giving it the appearance of mildewed corn. Several naturalists of eminence have advocated this popular opinion. The flowers of the common species possess stamens of so irritable a nature, that Linnæus observed them all to tend towards the central column, or pistil, if touched ever so lightly by the bee; and their singular sensibility may be easily seen, by touching one of the stamens with a pin, when they all immediately curve and meet at the point. There is a great degree of acidity in the red fruits of this plant, and they are considered to afford a good medicine in cases of fever; while they hang untouched by the birds, which do not relish their sour flavour. These fruits are used for preserves, for garnishing dishes, and, enclosed in sugar, are prepared as comfits by confectioners. A great degree of the acidity is also found in the bluish green leaves of the berberry. The roots yield a yellow colour, which is much used in Poland for dying leather; and the astringent bark and stem are

valuable to our manufacturers in their colouring preparations. Sometimes the fruits of the common berberry are of a yellow colour, and occasionally they are purple in hue.

That pretty little border flower, the Venus's looking-glass, (*Campanula speculum*,) with its white or purple circular blossoms, is very common. From its shape, like that of the ancient mirror, this flower derived its familiar name; and as the astronomical sign of Venus (♀) was a figure of the old mirror, and the handle by which it was held, so the flower bears, too, the name of the fabled goddess. The root of this plant, like those of most other species of *campanula*, contains a milky juice. The flower grows very freely in the cornfields of southern Europe, and is very common in France and Italy, though on the former lands it is not usually quite so large as we see it in our gardens. A new species of Venus's looking-glass (*Campanula Lorei*) has lately been introduced into the English nursery grounds. The flower is called in France *la doucette*, and it was formerly known in this country as the corn-pink and corn-gilliflower.

Some of the more hardy kinds of that singular flower the fig-marigold, are, by the end of the month, glittering on the stone or rock-work of the garden, and are the heralds of the hundreds, which shall, as the season advances, put forth their starry flowers. This handsome tribe has been brought to us from the Cape of Good Hope, and with its singular beauty

and variety of colours, enlivens the dreary deserts of Africa. Their common name was given on account of their fruit, which is shaped like a fig, and which is eaten by the Hottentots ; while the marigold is a good type of the form of most of their blossoms. From the flowers opening chiefly at mid-day, and never expanding but to the sunshine, their botanic name is derived from the Greek words mid-day flower.

The most common and hardy of all this large genus of flowers, is the great yellow-flowered kind, (*Mesembryanthemum pomeridianum*,) with its showy golden starry blossoms, opening in June. One of the hardy kinds is now in bloom. This is the long-horned fig marigold, (*Mesembryanthemum corniculatum*,) with flowers of pale yellow. All these plants require to be kept very dry, their succulent leaves deriving and retaining from our humid atmosphere, more than enough moisture to nourish them. Some of their leaves are most singular and even grotesque in form. They are described on the deserts of Africa as having the appearance of masses of spotted stones or shells. The colours of the flowers are not exceeded in brilliance by any tints of the vegetable kingdom; they are yellow, pink, scarlet, violet, amethyst, purple, and indeed of every tint of the rainbow.

Two kinds of fig-marigold, though requiring shelter during the greater part of the year, are very popular plants, and often deck the cottage window, beside the fuchsias and

geraniums, which preside there. These are those curious species, the ice plants, which even on the warm summer day, seem as if winter had condensed his icicles on their succulent stems and leaves. One of these, the ice plant (*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*) is a biennial plant. The common frozen plant (*Mesembryanthemum glaciale*) is an annual. They have both white flowers, but it is for the beauty of the crystallization on their foliage, that they deserve culture. They were brought into our gardens from Greece.

The leaves of several species of this plant contain soda. One kind especially, the knot-flowered fig-marigold, which is a native of some of the dry plains of Egypt, is burned for the great quantity of potash to be found in its ashes. This plant, as well as another species, burned for the barilla or soda which they contain, are, by the Arabic writers, comprehended under the general name of *ghasool*, signifying the washer or washing herb, and they are common not only in the deserts of Arabia, but also in various parts of Syria. The ashes of this and a similar species, yielding alkaline substances, are supposed to be referred to in Scripture under the word translated "soap" in our version. "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap," said the prophet Jeremiah, "yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God." For the evil heart of Israel had led him astray from God, so that he had become polluted in

the eyes of Jehovah, and no appliance of man's device could cleanse him, till he turned and submitted himself to God. As it is in our day, so it was then, man could not atone for past pollution or present sin, and the only means of purification and forgiveness was that which the Holy Scriptures reveal.

The roots of some of these flowers, especially one termed the edible fig marigold (*Mesembryanthemum edule*) are very valuable to the Hottentots, who often pull them up from their sandy soils. One species of this plant is abundant in the very different climate of the Canadian woods. When the soil is sandy it covers the earth like a thick mat, and when it encroaches on the spot which the colonist has appropriated for a garden, it is a most troublesome weed. It is a variety of the hour-blowing fig marigold, and sends forth a constant succession of yellow star-shaped flowers from among its thick green trailing stalks and its juicy foliage.

Kitto speaks of these flowers on the Arabian deserts as exceedingly numerous, and as exhibiting every playful variety in the form of the leaves. He says that "their aspect often presents a delightful contrast to the comfortless waste around, and the arid soil beneath them."

Not the less beautiful, because it is very common, is the lilac tree, (*Syringa vulgaris*,) which graces alike the poor man's cottage door, and the highest cultured garden of his

rich neighbour. The old name of this plant was pipe-tree, and pipe-privet, by either of which it was known to the botanists of queen Elizabeth's days ; and it was called privet because it was usually grafted on stocks of that shrub, while its name of pipe originated with the Turks, as the stems were often used by them, for their long pipes. It is called in Barbary by the name of *sirinx*, and hence we have probably the name of *syringa*. This flower is a native of Persia and other parts of the east, as well as of Hungary and the shores of the Danube. The Turks, who, in addition to the love of flowers which they possess in common with all the people of the east, have an enthusiastic regard for a flowering tree, were the people from whom we first received this beautiful addition to our gardens. It was brought from the gardens of Constantinople, in the sixteenth century, by the ambassador Busbequius, and planted in the gardens of Vienna. Being a plant which will bear a considerable degree of smoke, it was soon a favourite in the London gardens ; nor is any shrub or tree more common than this, now, in the plots which lie around the dwellings in the suburban villages of our metropolis, where it flourishes exceedingly well. Even the courts and back yards of the crowded streets are often enlivened by its green leaves, though its purple clusters refuse to bud in an atmosphere so laden with fog and soot. It probably was introduced during the reign of Henry VIII.,

as when Cromwell caused an inventory to be made of the plants which grew in the garden of the palace of Nonsuch, there were enumerated "six lilackes, trees which have no fruit, but only a pleasant smell." Gerarde, in 1597, says of the white and blue lilacs, "I have them in my garden in great plenty." Our common English name is merely a corruption of that by which this shrub is usually called in its native Persia, where it is known as the *lilag*, which word signifies a flower. The French, too, term it *le lilas*. There are several common varieties of this species, as the blue lilac, (*Syringa v. cærulea*) and the purple lilac, (*Syringa v. violacea*) called the Scotch lilac; and as beautiful as either are the large thick clusters of the white lilac, now contrasting with the darker-coloured species, and which unfolds its fair flowers a week or two earlier than even its deeper-tinted companion. There are also two varieties with reddish purple flowers, called by the French gardeners, *le lilas de Marly*. Cowper had noticed its many hues.

> "Various in array, now white
> Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
> With purple spikes pyramidal; as if
> Studious of ornament, yet unresolved
> Which hues she most approved, she chose them all."

Scarcely less frequent in our gardens, and easily distinguished from the common kind, is that species termed the Persian lilac, (*Syringa Persica.*) It is on the hills and plains of the lovely Persia still more general than is the larger kind. Its leaves are long and pointed,

while those of the common lilac are broad and heart-shaped. Its clusters of flowers are less compact, but blow loosely about in the southerly winds of April, diffusing an odour, delicious in the outer air, but which would render the atmosphere of an apartment faint and sickly. In Persia its delicate lilac flowers are much admired ; and it often mingles with the rose, the narcissus, and the jonquil, in those bouquets which are sent by eastern letters as expressions of sentiment.

The Persian lilac was, long after its introduction into Europe, termed Persian jessamine, and the Italians called it German jessamine. This plant is sometimes grown in pots, and made to flower at Christmas, but by this process it quite loses its fragrance.

There are, in our garden, two or three varieties of the Persian, besides some other species of lilac. The Chinese lilac, with purple flowers, is, as its name implies, a plant growing wild in the celestial empire: while another species is found wild on the mountains about Pekin; and a third smiles in beauty in Kumaon, near the lofty mountains of the Himalaya. These will, probably, some day grace our English gardens, as they seem likely to bear our climate.

MAY.

"All the flowers that gild the spring,
Hither their still music bring;
If Heaven bless them, thankful, they
Smell more sweet, and look more gay.

"Though their voices gentle be,
Streams have too their melody;
Night and day they warbling run,
Never pause, but still sing on.

"Wake, for shame, my sluggish heart,
Wake and gladly sing thy part;
Learn of birds, and streams, and flowers,
How to use thy nobler powers."—HICKES.

How wonderful appears the change which a few weeks have now made on the face of Nature, if we compare this month, and its aspects and productions, with the comparatively bare and gloomy appearance of the garden during February and March! How has the Almighty's word been working as surely in bringing forth the bright verdure and radiant flowers from their wintry darkness, as it did when he framed this beautifully organized world out of chaos. In the northern countries of Europe, where the change is greater and more rapid, the effect is less pleasing than in the gradual transition of our winter to spring. Laing, speaking of this in Norway, says, the snow is painfully bright to the eyes under "the sunshine. When it melts, vegetation bursts forth at once; but the patchy, unpicturesque appearance of the country, with a knob of a rock here, and a corner of a field there, appearing through the white covering, deprives us of the pleasing impressions of an English spring. The rapid advance of vegetation is

more astonishing than pleasing. It is not agreeable to step thus, all at once, from dead winter to living summer, and to lose the charm and interest of the gradual revival of all that has leaf or wing."

In many tropical countries the change from the winter to the early season is little marked, for when the trees are evergreen, and the flowers always bright, there is less variety in the aspect of the season. The gradual coming of leaves and flowers in our climate, and their no less gradual decline, is to the year what the morning and evening twilight are to the day. We should never estimate the shortness of life were it not for the changing aspects of things around us; and whether this change be sudden or slow, whether the flowers go and come in a few hours, or a few weeks, yet as we mark these beautiful objects to which the Scripture has compared our mortal lives, we should adopt the words of David: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am."

May is universally hailed by the poets, as the loveliest month of the year, and its coming seems to revive in some the freshness of life, and to make them feel young again. Many sweet and familiar flowers now spring up day by day on the garden bed; and some very beautiful shrubs are dressed in their garlands of blossoms. The scarlet hawthorn blushes like the rose, and it is merely a variety of our wilding May. The dark lilac still contends with

the snowy balls of the guelder rose; and on the low boughs of the Judas tree (*Cercis Siliquastrum*) the beautiful pink flowers are clustering in abundance. Its large showy leaves are eaten on the continent in salads, as are also those of the Canadian species, by the settlers in the woods. The flowers have a slight and agreeable acidity, and are in France fried in batter and eaten; while the wood, finely veined with black and green, takes so good a polish, as to be well adapted for the cabinet maker, and the young branches are used for dyeing wool.

Not less beautiful than either of the preceding flowers are the golden clusters which now hang down from the laburnum, (*Cytisus laburnum.*) This plant, which grows very abundantly on the Swiss mountains, is called by the French *Cytise des Alpes.* The wood of the laburnum is so very valuable, that it has been a matter of surprise that the tree should not have been cultivated for its timber. Even though growing to a comparatively small size in our country, it is very useful for many purposes. The Romans thought this wood next in value to ebony, and though this is not so hard as that wood, yet, from its durability, furniture made of it is stronger than that manufactured of mahogany. The blossoms of the laburnum are very fragrant, and their hue gave to it the common country name of golden chain. Many persons are affected with head-ache by their odour, and the seeds have

a powerful influence on the human constitution. Happily they have not the pleasant flavour which might render them attractive to children; yet the writer of these pages once saw two little ones rendered very ill by having eaten laburnum seeds, and it required the prompt use of medical remedies to prevent more lasting effects on the constitution.

Another species of the laburnum, commonly called in our country the pigeon pea, produces seeds which are much eaten by the negroes and poor people of the West Indies, while they are often given to horses and other cattle, which thrive exceedingly well on them. In the island of Martinico they are served at table as a dish for the rich, who prefer them even to the green peas of our country. Both our wild and cultured broom plants are by many writers considered as species of the cytisus. The Scotch laburnum (*Cytisus alpinus*) has larger leaves and flowers than the common kind. It is frequent in our gardens, and blossoms a month later than that. The Italians name it after this month, as we do our hawthorn; for with them it blooms in May.

A very common flower, to be found indeed in almost every garden, is the red spur flower, or red valerian, commonly termed Pretty Betty. It has long been known to botanists as *Valeriana rubra*, but is now called *Centranthus rubra.* It varies in all shades of red, from crimson to palest pink, and is sometimes of a

pinkish or yellowish white. Its large clusters of blossoms are composed of a great number of small flowers, and they are to be seen through all the summer months, as late as September. It blooms on the heights of Mount Vesuvius, and enlivens the ashy soil of the barren spot by its cheerful tint. It has been seen too by the British traveller in northern Africa, and awakened reminiscences of the garden plots of his native land. The scent of this species, as well as that of some other kinds, is very fragrant.

Another species called the Celtic nard, or nard valerian, (*Valeriana Celtica*,) has a root far more odorous than this, and which is stronger when the plant is growing on its native Alps than in the moister soil of our garden-ground. It is a native of France, Italy, and Switzerland. Its roots, which are black, are imported from the mountains of Austria into Egypt, whence it has been carried both into Africa and Asia. It is valued by the orientals as a sweet-smelling drug, and much used, especially in Egypt, for perfuming the baths in which the people of that country spend so much of their time. There seems much reason to believe that the spikenard of the ancients, as well as the fragrant root called by the modern Hindoos nard or Jatamansi, is the root of a plant of the Valerian family, and thus this plant is by some writers considered to be the spikenard of Scripture, which Solomon describes as "sending forth a pleasant smell," and which was one of

the sweet essences with which Mary anointed the dead body of our Lord and Redeemer.

The root of our common wild valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) possesses very great medicinal power, and its odour is very strong, but disagreeable. It is cultivated in Derbyshire for medicinal purposes, but the root is preferable in its wild state to that under cultivation.

Some very pretty species of lobelia are in blossom in May; several of this genus are among the handsomest of our garden flowers. Some are lowly-looking, simple blossoms, scarcely peeping from above their leaves; others are tall and showy. A few of them are blue; but the greater number are of a bright scarlet or pink colour, while some among their number are of a full yellow. One of the most common, and also of the most striking beauty, is that called the cardinal flower, (*Lobelia cardinalis*,) with its long slender leaves, and spike of blossoms, so bright in hue as to have reminded the originator of its name, of the scarlet cloth of Rome; while its shape is not altogether dissimilar to the hat of the Romish ecclesiastic. It is a native of Virginia, and was described by Parkinson, in his "Garden of Flowers," where he calls it a "brave plant." The species brought from Mexico, the fulgent lobelia, (*Lobelia fulgens*,) and that brilliant flower called the splendid or shiny lobelia, (*Lobelia splendens*,) with a tint outrivalling that of the brightest poppy, and its foliage marked with purple spots, is another Mexican species, and

these are the handsomest of the tribe to be found in our gardens.

Almost all the lobelias are natives of tropical climates, many of them being the wild flowers of the West Indian islands. Several of them have been brought from the Cape of Good Hope, and others grow in the warmer regions of South America. A few of their number require to be kept in the greenhouse.

A milky fluid, in greater or less quantity, exists in every individual of this species of plant, and it is of so acrid a quality that the whole tribe may be considered as of a dangerous nature. One species, (*Lobelia tupa*,) a native of Chile, yields a virulent poison; and one of the most powerful medicines used in North America, is the juice of the inflated lobelia, which, unless given only in small doses, proves fatal. So deleterious is the beautiful white lobelia, (*Lobelia longiflora*,) that when taken internally it causes death ; while if the hand which has touched it, be unguardedly placed on the eye, it produces a violent inflammation. This flower grows wild on moist places, and by stream sides in the West Indies. Like the common reed of our native land, (*Arundo phragmitis*,) its presence is, most probably, indicative of an unhealthy atmosphere, as the moist spots in the West Indies are always unfavourable to health. It adds much, however, to the beauty of the lands where it flourishes, and delights the lover of flowers by its beauty, but it also renders the pasture very dangerous to horses, which are

sometimes allured by the verdure around it, to graze upon these plants, and soon fall victims to its powerful poison. This is so often the case, that the Spanish Americans give it a name significant of its destructive effect on those animals. Our beautiful cardinal flower contains a dangerous poison. One species of lobelia is smoked by the negroes, and termed Indian tobacco.

A very common border flower now, is the spider wort, (*Tradescantia Virginica*,) which, as its name implies, is a native of North America, and very general in several parts of that country. It is there often called by the name of the "life of man;" because, like that, though beautiful it is brief, for it soon withers. Its botanic name stands as a record of John Tradescant, gardener to Charles I., who introduced several plants into England, and this among others; and whose museum of curiosities is celebrated as the earliest collection of that kind, made in our land. It is now in the Ashmolean museum of the University of Oxford.

We have several garden species of spider wort. None are found wild either in Europe or Northern Asia, but several are brought from the East Indies and Ceylon, and others from America. Some of them have rose-coloured blossoms, but they chiefly vary in all the shades of blue. They are not a very handsome tribe of flowers, and our common species is as ornamental as any, its dark blue petals and yellow anthers showing to advantage among its glossy green leaves.

During May, and the following months, the different species of viper's bugloss exhibit their handsome purple, violet-coloured, or pale blue flowers. None are more beautiful than our wild kind, (*Echium vulgare*,) but many are very ornamental. The red viper's bugloss, which, however, is not yet in flower, is a showy plant, though the stems and leaves are rough with bristly hairs. It grows on the steppes of Russia, for those vast regions approaching the Black Sea, though dreary from the absence of trees, are enlivened with a variety of flowers, of which this is among the most conspicuous. Dr. Clarke says he saw it here, and it was in other parts of Russia more common. It grows chiefly among corn. The women of the Don use it in painting their cheeks, the root, while fresh, yielding a bright vermilion tint. Gmelin recommends its transplantation and the application of its colouring properties to objects of more importance. The reddish brown substance contained in this plant, is now much used by dyers; and one species of the viper's bugloss, which has been naturalized in Brazil, is used, like our wild borage, to give coolness to liquids in which its leaves are steeped. Some species were used by the Romans for dyeing.

We have more than twenty species of bugloss in gardens. Blue is the prevailing colour of their flowers, but some which have reached us from the Cape of Good Hope, the Canary and Madeira islands, have red or white blossoms.

The geraniums, or, as they are more properly called, the pelargoniums, flower throughout the summer. We have about six hundred distinct species, but most of them are grown either in the greenhouse or in the in-doors apartment. We received the plant from the Cape of Good Hope, where their handsome flowers are in great profusion ; but new varieties are every year raised from seed in England. The myrtle, too (*Myrtus communis*) is opening its fragrant white blossoms. It has several varieties, of which one of the best is the Roman myrtle. This shrub grows wild in the south of France and Spain, in Italy and Greece, and in northern Africa ; while in many parts of Syria it is very abundant, as we might infer from the numerous allusions made to it in the sacred writings. All travellers in the east notice its luxuriance. On the hills which lie about Jerusalem, forming its natural protection, and which were to suggest to the Hebrew the remembrance that God was thus round about his saints, the white myrtle spray is seen in profusion, amid its dark green boughs. Banks of rivers, hill sides, wide plains, and valleys among mountains, are all rendered sweet by its odour. Mrs. Piozzi admired the beauty of this shrub too, near Pisa in Italy, where, she says, the mountains are mountains of marble, and the bushes on them bushes of myrtle, as large as the hawthorn. In Devonshire the myrtle thrives well in the open air : Carrington thus notices it :—

> "And there in liveliest green attired,
> Smiling like hope, and cheering the glad eye,
> The meek, unsheltered myrtle sweetly blooms."

The poet adds, that several houses in Marychurch, and indeed in almost every village on the southern coast of Devon, are profusely bespread with it.

By the middle of the month, the Peruvian heliotrope (*Heliotropium Peruvianum*) shows its delicate lilac flowers, and perfumes the air with its scent—a scent so powerful, that it is scarcely to be borne in a room. It resembles that of new-made hay, or of cooked fruit. It was termed by the Latins, *verrucaria*, because its expressed juice, mingled with salt, was used to cure warts. We have other species of heliotrope, but this and the species termed European (*Heliotropium Europæum*) are the most general, and the latter is more hardy than the Peruvian. Its flowers are paler, and it is a native of southern Europe. The ancients named these plants from the sun and "to turn," and the old writers assert, that the blossoms always follow the sun. The heliotropes require protection during winter.

Our common marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) is indeed so common, that we almost regard it as a weed in the border, and the gardener eradicates many of the young plants, which have arisen from the readily dispersed seeds of the last summer. Some of the double varieties of the common marigold are very handsome flowers, and so also are the deep orange coloured blossoms of the starry marigold (*Calen-*

dula stellata.) The common species grows wild in fields and vineyards in Italy, and pretty generally in cultivated lands throughout the countries at the south of Europe. It is called by the French, *souci du jardin*, and by the Germans *goldblume*. It is still mingled by cottagers with soup and broth, but was once much more generally used for that purpose. The idea that it tended to "comfort the heart and spirits," recommended it not only as a medicine, but induced good housewives to dry its yellow petals as a store for winter. Its properties are sudorific, and it was deemed a preventive to infection. A distilled water, a conserve, and a kind of vinegar, are still obtained from its blossoms, but its young leaves are not now eaten as they formerly were for salads.

Our old poets call this flower golde and mary budde, as well as marigold. This last name it received from the absurd and popular tradition that the virgin Mary wore the flower in her bosom.

Elliott alludes to the use which the cottagers make of the marigold.

"There is a flower, the housewife knows it well."

And thus describes its closing during wet weather:—

"It hoards no dew-drops, like the cups of May,
But rich as sunset, when the rain is o'er,
Spreads flaming petals from a burning core;
Which, if morn weep, their sorrowing buds upfold
To wake and brighten when bright noon is near."

This closing of the flower during the rain, as well as its habit of folding up its petals early in the afternoon, while it does not open them till after nine in the morning, was remarked not only by Linnæus, but had rendered the flower a theme of various comparisons to the older poets. Thus Herrick, alluding to the approach of evening, says:—

> "No marigolds yet closed are,
> No shadows yet appear;
> Nor doth the early shepherd's star
> Shine like a spangle here."

The marigolds received their name on account of their flowering during the calends of each month. The common marigold, indeed, is in bloom in every season, except when snow covers the ground, and is often among the brightest flowers of the garden in December and January.

The Cape marigolds are natives of that part of Africa after which they are named. The small Cape marigold, (*Calendula pluvialis*,) which is the commonest of them, was called the rainy marigold, by Linnæus, because it is always closed, not only during rain, but under a cloudy sky. The rays of this flower are white inside, and of a dark purple on the outer surface. It blooms from June till August.

The French term the marigold *souci*, (care,) but in the reign of Henry VIII. it was called souvenir, and ladies wore wreaths of these flowers, intermixed with the pansy, whose name,

derived from the French word *pensee*, (thought,) was also indicative of remembrance.

And now in this pleasant month we see the different mallows assume their tints of deep red or purple, pink or white, and more rarely, of yellow or orange. They are beautiful flowers, and all possess more or less the mucilaginous property which renders some so useful in medicine. They are of easy culture, and some so hardy as to grow on any soil, in any situation. Several of the most handsome species are brought from the Cape of Good Hope, and the fields of southern Europe have supplied us with others.

The Egyptians, Chinese, and Syrians, are said by travellers to use some kinds of mallow as food. Thus Biddulph, an old writer quoted by Dr. Royle, says, " We saw many poor people collecting mallows and three-leaved grass, and asked them what they did with it, and they answered that it was all their food, and that they boiled it and did eat it." The leaves of the common mallow of our road-sides, (*Malva sylvestris*,) a plant which is found wild from Europe to the north of India, is still used in Hindostan for food. It is well known that at the table of the ancient Romans, some kinds of mallow were served up as vegetables. Notwithstanding, however, that mallows have been, and still are eaten, in many parts of the east, yet, for various reasons, most of those writers who are best acquainted with oriental botany, have arrived at the conclusion, that the plant

named in Scripture, and which is rendered mallow in our version, is not referable to one of the mallow tribe. The patriarch, when describing the former straits and necessities of some, who now when sorrow had fallen on him, prided themselves on their worldly prosperity, says, They "cut up mallows by the bushes."* Authors have arrived at various conclusions as to the plant intended. The Scripture word *malluach*, is thought to denote a saltish plant, and several herbs whose ashes contain soda, have been adduced by writers. The learned Bochart is of opinion that a shrubby species of orache, or atriplex, is intended; another suggests that it may be a species of fig-marigold; while a third considers it to be the Jews' mallow, (*Corchorus olitorius*,) which is planted in great quantity in the neighbourhood of Aleppo for food, and of which the Jews boil the leaves to eat with their meat. It is well for us that we do not live in those times when such discussions would render us liable to ecclesiastical censure, and that we need not fear such blame as St. Augustine denounced upon a bishop of his times, who having, as he considered, wrongly translated the name of a plant mentioned by the apostle John, was declared to be "a falsifier of the Holy Scripture." Still it is most important that we rightly discern the correct rendering of the inspired word.

Many of our common garden mallows

* Job xxx. 4.

produce, in autumn, very beautiful specimens of skeleton leaves and calyxes, the green parts having withered away, and left bare the bundles of vessels which form the framework. Of the macerated fibres of some of these plants, a cloth and stuff have been made, superior even to those made of flax. This is the case especially with the ivy-leaved mallow, (*Malva mauritiana*,) whose pink flowers are sometimes found in English gardens, and were brought from the south of Europe. The curled mallow (*Malva crispa*) of Syria, and the Peruvian mallow, (*Malva Peruviana*,) both of which are cultivated in England, have been used for the same purpose. The former species was once planted in kitchen gardens for food. It affords remarkably strong fibres, which have been manufactured, not only into thread for spinning, but also into cordage for vessels. The French chemist, De Lisle, gave great attention to the mallows, and recommended that the fibres of various kinds should be used instead of rags in making paper. So interested was he in this project, that he had a volume printed on paper made wholly of the fibre of the mallow, and presented it to "L'Académie des Sciences." But the members of the academy, while they admired the skill and science of the experiment, did not consider the mallow paper as likely to be generally useful.

These plants, boiled as food, were formerly considered so wholesome, that Horace commends them for their salutary properties. They were

eaten by the Romans and Greeks with lettuce, and "were used," says Baxter, "to decorate the graves of our ancestors." "So indispensable," adds this writer, "were they deemed to each domicile of the living, that as a matter of ill omen, the poet exclaims:—

'Alas when mallows in the garden die!'"

This planting the grave with flowers was alluded to not only by profane writers, but may also be inferred from the Scripture. Job spoke of the clods of the valley which should be sweet about him. This beautiful practice, of high antiquity, is supposed to have originated in the belief of the resurrection of the body, a doctrine, which, if not so plainly taught in the Old as in the New Testament, yet is in various passages plainly indicated in the former part of the volume. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead."* This was the promise uttered by the evangelical Isaiah; and the Rev. Samuel Burder thinks that the custom of decking the grave with flowers, was likely to have its origin from this passage; or, if practised earlier, suggests that this custom might have been present to the mind of the prophet, when, directed by the Holy Spirit, he thus taught the consoling doctrine, that in the flesh we shall see God.

* Isa. xxvi. 19.

The plants termed lavatera, are very similar to the mallows in general appearance. There are some showy annual species common in gardens, and the shrubby kinds are very ornamental. The species which is most generally cultivated is the sea-side lavatera, (*Lavatera maritima*,) which is a native of Spain and the south of France, and will bear the open air of this country if slightly guarded from frost. The tree-mallow (*Lavatera arborea*) has a magnificent appearance when covered with its large purple rose-coloured flowers.

The beautiful delicate flowers of the large number of exotic heaths are, during this and the next month, unfolding their bells on their brittle stems, and the greenhouse is quite gay with their flowers. They are, with few exceptions, natives of the Cape of Good Hope, where they grow chiefly on the tops and sides of mountains, and in the crevices of rocks. This genus of flowers is quite of modern introduction into this country. Miller, in 1768, enumerates but five species. They are now very numerous. "Till the latter end of last century," says Loudon, "this genus consisted of three or four humble British shrubs, and the heath of Spain, (*Erica Mediterranea*,) a slow-growing tree; but when the Cape of Good Hope fell into the hands of the British, collectors were sent out, and soon brought to light some hundreds of species. It may serve as an easily recollected date, to say, that all of them were sent home during the reign of George III. Some of the

heaths are very fragrant, and our common British heaths are, as well as the exotics, very beautiful flowers.

> 'Sometimes with bells like amethysts, and then
> Paler and shaded like the maiden's cheek
> With gradual blushes;—other while, as white
> As rime that hangs upon the frozen spray.'

These bear the bleakest winds of the moorlands, and all heaths, growing as they do, when wild, on open lands, require so much air and light, that, as has been said of them, 'it may be taken as a proverb, that heaths like to feel the wind between every leaf.'"

The andromedas, some of which blossom in this month, are very similar to the heaths, and are very ornamental little plants, or low evergreen shrubs, chiefly natives of North America. Several of them grow wild in Lapland. The moss-like species, (*Andromeda hypnoides*,) which has the appearance of a beautiful moss, spreads over immense tracts of ground on the higher regions of Lapland, adorning them with its red blossoms, which, with many other lovely blooms, thicken their surfaces, and are included by the Laplanders under the general name of ren-blomster, or reindeer flowers, as that animal feeds on the pasturage where they grow. The marsh species (*Andromeda polifolia*) is a native of some parts of Great Britain, and is the most common in the garden. Linnæus found it in Sweden, and names it as decorating the marshy grounds during summer, in the most agreeable manner. The flowers he describes as of a

bright red colour before expansion, and when full grown of a flesh colour. Scarcely any painter's art can, he says, so happily imitate the beauty of a fine complexion. This great botanist portrays in a very interesting manner, in his "Flora Lapponica," his discovery of another species, (*Andromeda tetragona*) which he found on the celebrated mountain Wallivari, in the district of Lulea. "Whilst I was walking quickly along, facing the cold wind, at midnight, if I may call it night, when the sun was shining without setting at all, still anxiously inquiring of my interpreter how near I was to a Lapland dwelling, which I had for two hours been expecting, though I knew not its precise situation, casting my eager eyes around me in all directions, I perceived as it were the shadow of this plant, but did not stop to examine it, taking it for the empetrum, (*Crow-berry.*) But after going a few steps farther, an idea of its being something I was unacquainted with, came across my mind, and I turned back, when I should have again taken it for the empetrum, had not its greater height caused me to consider it with more attention. I know not what it is that so deceives the sight on our Alps, during night, as to render objects far less distinct than in the middle of the day, though the sun shines equally bright. The sun being near the horizon, spreads its rays in such a horizontal direction, that a hat can scarcely protect our eyes; besides, the shadows of plants are so infinitely extended, and so confounded with each other, from the

tremulous agitation caused by the blustering winds, that objects, very different in themselves, are scarcely to be distinguished from each other." Linnæus describes the flower as shaped like a lily of the valley, but with five sharper divisions. Barren and dreary as are some lands in the north of Europe, yet many beautiful flowers are found on their hills, or in their dark pine forests. Linnæus speaks with rapture of the verdure and flowers of his native land, and Olaus Rudbeck was so well satisfied with its beauty, that, instead of thinking that the garden of Eden lay amid the palm-trees, and the roses and jessamines of eastern lands, he discovered that one part of Sweden had certainly been the scene of the original Paradise.

And now the large dark purple bells of the climbing cobæa (*Cobæa scandens*) hang over the trellis of the arbour, and its foliage helps to cover the garden wall. The Mexicans, among whom this handsome plant grows wild, call it by a Spanish word, signifying the violet-bearing ivy. It received its botanic name from Barnardes Cobo, a Spanish Jesuit and naturalist of the seventeenth century. It is very remarkable for its rapid growth. Even in the open air this is very striking; while in a conservatory, it has been known to increase in length, two hundred feet in the course of a summer. This was long the only species cultivated in Great Britain; but in 1840, the seeds of two others were sent to England from Mexico, by

one of the collectors of plants for the London Horticultural Society.

And now if the border be tolerably well sheltered from the north and east winds, the splendid tiger flower (*Tigridia Pavonia*) will spread its handsome petals to the sunshine. Its colours, so like the skin of a tiger, originated its name, and this plant with its variety, (*Tigridia Pleona*,) and the *Tigridia conchiflora*, are among the most magnificent flowers of this month. They are all natives of Mexico, and if the bulbs are kept dry, they may remain in the ground all the winter. Their tints are red and orange, and their flowers very abundant, but also very frail, lasting but a few hours. The edging to the garden plots, which are composed of thrift, are now very gay with the pink tufts of blossom.

The box too has now its green flowers, so often said to be poisonous to the bee which sucks their nectar, and it is a far better plant for the garden border than either thrift, Virginian stock, or any other substituted for it. In addition to its being an evergreen, it is very hardy, and when once a good edging is made, it will last for many years, needing little attention from the gardener, except the annual midsummer clipping. If we wander through the deserted gardens of some ancient castle or mansion, whether in England or almost any other part of Europe, where the flowers of the olden time waved their petals to the summer wind, we find some of their hardiest successors, as

the wall-flower, the pansy, and the columbine. And there too we see the wide box edgings, planted by hands which have long since mingled in the dust, and their borders perhaps, though they are not in such trim order, are as healthy and as verdant as they were a century ago, when the dwarf box was extolled for "bordering up a knot," and was considered "a marvellous fine ornament to a flower garden." The species used by gardeners for this purpose is the dwarf box, (*Buxus sempervirens nana*,) being merely a variety of the hardy box tree of our native woods, which too seems to have been in the gardens of England from the earliest period. It was formerly cut, especially by the Romans, into those various figures in which the gardeners of the olden times so much delighted. Few of them apparently would have agreed with Lord Bacon: "I, for my part," says he, "do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuffe; they be for children." Modern taste, justly preferring the graceful wildness of nature, rejects the custom of clipping trees into the shapes of birds or animals, or of cones and pyramids, yet the old yew or box, which still retains its place on the terrace of the ancient dwelling, has a charm of its own, whispering to the heart of other days, and leading the mind to dwell on England in the olden years, and to muse on the changes of things and feelings, which time is ever making, as he marches onwards to mingle into eternity.

The box grows wild, not only in England,

but almost throughout Europe. It attains a great height in Switzerland, and is abundant in France. It is found too in America, and many parts of Asia, growing wild on Mount Caucasus, and extending even to the Himalayan mountains. On the slopes of the lofty Lebanon its green stiff leaves exhibit themselves, when the sun has melted the snow from its boughs. The names of various places in our own land remind us, that it was even much more general and abundant than it now is. Boxley in Kent, Boxwell in Gloucestershire, and Boxhill in Surrey, were all named from the quantity of this plant which was formerly found in the neighbourhoods. The ancients used its wood for musical instruments, and Virgil mentions that it was often inlaid with ivory. It is still of great value to the turner and engraver on wood.

The box is often alluded to in Scripture. In the beautiful description given by the prophet Isaiah, of the glory of the latter days of the church of God—a glory yet remaining to be looked and longed for, we find the inspired writer declaring in the powerful imagery of holy writ, that "the glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious."* The prophet also enumerates it among the myrtle and other trees which are to flourish in the waste places of the wilderness,

* Isaiah lx. 13.

in those happy days, when "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." It is well known now to the Arabs.

May and the three following months, are the season at which the different species of the evening primrose tribe make their appearance. Only the yellow and white kinds truly deserve the familiar name, but these seem to give welcome to a cloudy day, or to the evening twilight, by opening just at the period when other flowers are closing. The common evening primrose (*Œnothera biennis*) expands its pale yellow flowers at about six o'clock in the evening. It was termed by Parkinson the primrose of Virginia, and is now often called evening star. Its roots are eaten in the same way as olives, and make wine more agreeable, thereby adding drunkenness to thirst. In many countries the plant is cultivated for these roots, which are boiled and eaten at table. The great flowered species (*Œnothera grandiflora*) is delightfully fragrant. It was introduced into England from America, by Dr. John Fothergill, and has also pale yellow blossoms.

The evening primroses are annual, biennial, or perennial plants, and there is a great variety of them in common culture. The purple flowered kinds, still called by gardeners *œnothera*, are by botanists now termed *godetia:* some of them are showy tall plants, the handsomest of which are the annuals, introduced from California. Their colours are most brilliant when grown in a poor soil.

And now the garden bower is covered not only with numerous sprays of green leaves, but odours from the sweet-scented clematis invite us to linger near it, though as yet the sun is scarcely so warm as to make the shade valuable. The commonest and most fragrant garden species, is that called the sweet-scented virgin's bower, (*Clematis flammula,*) which is very similar in the appearance of its flowers to the wild traveller's joy of our woods. This plant is remarkably acrid in its nature, and indeed some portion of acridity exists in every species of the genus. Millar says of this, that if a leaf be gathered on a hot day, and after being bruised, be put to the nostrils, it has the scent of a flame, and will produce in the person who smells it the sensation of having been scorched. The bruised leaves applied to the skin, will also raise a blister on its surface. The large-flowered species, (*Clematis florida,*) with white flowers, is commonly admired; and the more hardy *clematis azurea*, with beautiful violet blue flowers, though well fitted to bear the open air, is still often found ornamenting the conservatory. Some of the common species are of a dark dull purple; others bright blue, or white; while the evergreen virgin's bower, (*Clematis cirrhosa,*) which is a native of Spain, has green flowers, which bloom very early in the year, and a few have yellow blossoms. The common Japan corchorus, (*Kerria Japonica,*) which is still very generally called by gardeners corchorus Japonicus, is a good

flower, either for the shrubbery or garden, because it is seldom quite out of bloom ; but if the winter be mild, has here and there a flower on its branches, even to the season least favourable to vegetable beauty. Its yellow stars are now in great profusion on the weak straggling branches which reach over the sunny wall. They are composed of rays, and round, like dandelions or marigolds, but of a darker and less brilliant colour, and the long notched and deeply-veined pale green leaves, grow thinly over the weak boughs. This plant is sometimes upright, being merely fastened to a stick; but it is much better adapted for covering the garden or house wall. It grows wild in Japan, and was named after Ker the botanical collector, who, some years since, introduced into our gardens several plants from China.

Some very pretty flowers of the ranunculus genus are blooming on the border. There is the common bachelor's button, (*Ranunculus acris flore pleno*,) with its double yellow flowers, which are to be seen in every garden, and which is merely a variety, rendered double by cultivation, of our wild flower, the acrid crowfoot of the meadows. There are also the pretty double blossoms of the white-flowered bachelor's button, (*Ranunculus aconitifolius*,) a long-standing ornament of the British parterre, but which in its native haunts, the high mountains of Switzerland, rears its snowy flowers, and varies the monotonous tints of ice and snow with its dark green leaves. This flower

is often called Fair Maid of France, and it has been said it was so named by our gardeners, because the French emigrants who were in this country during the revolution were very fond of the plant.

Some of the tall and showy asphodels are conspicuous flowers in May and June. This flower is commonly called king's spear or king's rod ; the French term it, *verge de Jacob*, or *baton royal.* The most ornamental species are the yellow asphodel, (*Asphodelus luteus*,) which grows wild in the fields of Sicily, and now blossoms in our gardens; and the upright asphodel, (*Asphodelus albus*,) also blooming now with its spike of white flowers, and which is also common in the south of Europe. St. Pierre quotes a touching inscription from an ancient tomb, around which the hand of affection had planted the favourite flowers: "Without, I am surrounded with mallow and asphodel; within, I am but a corpse:" and the corpse to the ancients, was but the name of a decayed and withered remains of what was once lovely, and not, as with us, the seed of the more glorious resurrection body which is sown in hope.

The yellow flower of the perennial adonis (*Adonis vernalis*) deserves a place in any garden. It begins to bloom as early as March, and is still bright. It is a wild flower in many parts of the continent of Europe, and especially abundant on the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean, and it is of very easy culture. The dark crimson flowers of the flos adonis, or

pheasant's eye (*Adonis autumnalis*) are equally hardy. This last species is generally known in France by the name of *goutte de sang*, and is the flower fabled by ancient poets to have sprung from the blood of Adonis, which, according to their legends, had a wonderful faculty of giving a red tinge to natural objects, and was said to have coloured the river of Lebanon, called Adonis, whose waters are red from the soil over which it flows.

Common as the humblest flower of our garden ground, is the columbine, (*Aquilegia vulgaris*,) which sometimes grows also in our native woods, and wears its hues of blue or pink, or purple or white, at this pleasant season. In the wild state it is generally blue, and is called by country people, blue starry. Our fathers fancied that the lion was fond of it, and hence its old name of *herba leonis*. The double-flowered variety is almost as general as the single flower. The prettiest of the garden species is the Alpine columbine, which also nods its head to the winds as they rush through the valleys of the high Swiss mountains. It has blue flowers tipped with yellowish green, and is, probably, but a variety of the common columbine.

A syrup is sometimes made for children of the flowers of the columbine, but it has been denounced by Linnæus as highly dangerous; and he even asserts it to have proved fatal to children. This plant was called culverwort by old writers.

The pæony is now bursting forth into conspicuous beauty, with its red rose-like flowers. The double red variety of the common pæony (*Pæonia officinalis*) is that most frequently cultivated; but the double white and the delicate blush-coloured, are by no means rare, and one variety, the rose-scented, is sweetly fragrant. The common species grows wild in China and Siberia, as well as in various parts of Europe, and is said to be very beautiful on Mount Ida. The handsome flower called the Chinese tree-pæony, (*Pæonia moutan*,) the flowers of which expand during this month, and are, in the different varieties, of various tints, is sufficiently hardy to bear the open air of our winters. The most beautiful variety of the flower is the single poppy-flowered tree-pæony, which has large white petals with a dark purple mark at the base. From its coming out of the ground so early in the year, this plant is liable to be injured by frosts, and, therefore, requires to be planted in a sheltered part of the garden, where it is not much exposed to the morning sun. The tree-pæony is a cherished flower in China, and is said to have been cultivated in the Chinese gardens for fourteen hundred years. It is believed to have been brought originally from some of the mountains of that empire. A few years since it was so choice a flower in this country, that the price of a plant was six guineas; but it is now to be procured at a small expense.

The more slender species of pæony (*Pæonia*

edulis,) is much used by the Mongolian Tartars as food. These people boil the roots in their broth, and grind the seeds to a powder, which they mix with their tea.

And now, if we wander through green lanes white with hawthorn clusters, we find them fragrant with the odours of the honeysuckle. In the garden also,

> "The creeping honeysuckle weaves
> Its yellow horns and verdant leaves."

Our common kind (*Caprifolium Perycly-menum*) is also called woodbine; and this is one of its oldest English names. Milton calls it too by our common name:—

> "I sate me down to watch upon a bank
> With ivy canopied, and interwoven
> And flaunting honeysuckle."

But besides that our lovely wilding flower is often cherished in the garden, we have here several other species. One of the most general is the Italian honeysuckle, (*Caprifolium Itali-cum*,) which throws its long branches luxuriantly over the hedges of southern Europe, and a variety of which, called by gardeners the red honeysuckle, is very beautiful.

Another very handsome and common garden species is the trumpet honeysuckle, (*Capri-folium sempervirens*,) which, though it equals, or perhaps exceeds in beauty, any other of the common kinds, yet wants their fragrance. This elegant shrub is a native of North America, and flowers very freely with us from this month until August. The sweet and

pretty plant called Chinese honeysuckle, and the gold and silver honeysuckles, are much more tender. They are natives of China, and are among the many flowers on which the Japanese bestow so much regard. The bark of most of the species is very astringent, and that of one kind is used in China for dyeing black.

The French term the honeysuckle *maire sauvage.* Its old English names were suckling and caprifoly; and with the Germans this climber is so great a favourite, that they have bestowed upon it at least a dozen familiar names. *Caprifolium* is a poetic word used for it by old botanists, because the leaf, or rather stem, climbs over the high places where the goat fears not to tread. It must be confessed that this origin is rather remote; but the word *chevre feuille,* (goat leaf,) by which the peasantry of France often call the plant, has the same origin.

And now those handsome plants the rose bay or rhododendrons, come into blossom, and deck both garden and shrubbery with their handsome flowers and hard evergreen leaves. Numerous kinds blossom during this and the coming month, but by far the greater number are varieties of the common species, (*Rhododendron Ponticum,*) which is found wild on the coasts of the Black Sea, from the range of Caucasus through Armenia and Georgia to the western parts of Persia. This species grows in moist woods, but not on high mountains, and

is said to be that which, by the nectar in its flowers, poisoned the honey of Asia Minor, though some writers ascribe this rather to a species of azalea. Another hardy species, the *Catawba rhododendron*, is very abundant in America. Some species of rose bay are described to be as abundant as the furze of our native island, growing in clumps on the grassy plain or hill, and, with their purple flowers, gladdening many a dreary and lonely place. Then we have several very pretty dwarf species, hardly more than a foot high. Two of these, the rusty-leaved rose bay, (*Rhododendron ferrugineum*,) and the hairy kind, (*Rhododendron hirsutum*,) with rose-coloured flowers, abound on the high mountains of Switzerland; and Dr. Gilly records the beauty of the rhododendrons in the interesting valleys of Piedmont. In Dauphiné they are very luxuriant and beautiful; and near the lofty summits of the magnificent Alps, they bloom in profusion, and are the highest woody plants of these regions, terminating all vegetation but that of lowliest herbs and mosses. To them the mountain herdsman is often indebted for his only fuel, and their branches crackle on the hearth of the solitary *châlet*. The lofty trees gradually diminish or dwindle near the heights of the mountains. They will grow in the valleys below, but cannot bear the snow-storm and bleak hurricanes, which leave these plants uninjured. And on the hills of some of these Alps, the lonely Piedmontese, as he gathers

them for his fire, or sits by its light, ponders on the days when his fathers were rolled over the craggy heights, to join the "noble army of martyrs," because their enlightened spirits forbade them to join in idol worship. The white hares of the mountains, whose coats were given them of the snowy colour to help them to elude the pursuer, often feed on the hard bark of these plants, when the severe weather has covered up the green things of lower growth, but the leaves and branches are thought to be poisonous to animals in general.

Though a large number of the rhododendrons are American plants, in the warm regions of Asia they are also often found in great beauty, with crimson, purple, white, or rose-coloured flowers. The Daurian species (*Rhododendron Dauricum*) is almost peculiar to the subalpine tracts of eastern Asia, and is common in the pine woods. One of the most beautiful plants in the British conservatory is the Nepaul species, (*Rhododendron arboreum*,) which is sometimes twenty feet high, with large bunches of flowers, of a dark crimson or scarlet hue, and the blossoms are so full of liquid honey, that when the tree is shaken, it falls down in showers. This species has large leaves, with glossy under surface, as white as silver, and has a variety with white wax-like flowers. The name of rhododendron, taken from the Greek, signifies rose and tree ; and the French term it *la rosage*.

And now, when the clouds seem literally "to

drop fatness," and the "little hills and pastures to rejoice on every side," how sweet are the odours from the flower-bed, on which the gentle pattering of the rain-drops has just been heard! Now it comes breathing from the hawthorn, or the lilac, or more powerfully from the honeysuckle, or the clustering flowers oI the syringa, (*Philadelphus coronarius.*) This plant is often called mock orange, not only from its blossoms, so similar to the orange-flower which the English bride selects as the fitting ornament to the wedding attire, but because its odour, though far more powerful, resembles that of this blossom. The leaves have both the scent and flavour of the cucumber. Cowper admired its flowers among others of this month.

> "Laburnum rich,
> In streaming gold, syringa, ivory pure."

This plant is of easy culture and very general, but its native place of growth is unknown. It has been found in Italy, apparently wild, in some uncultured lands, but not so far from the villa, with its luxuriant garden, as to enable the botanist to pronounce it indigenous to the soil. A different species has been discovered on the Himalayan mountains, growing at the height of six or seven hundred feet, and it is thought very probable that our common syringa may exist still farther to the north-west, and that it may be one of those plants which, some centuries since, were introduced from Persia, into the gardens of Italy and the other countries of southern Europe.

We have several other species in the garden, resembling the common kind both in scent and appearance. They are chiefly North American shrubs. Those called the myrtle-leaved and sweet syringa, are both natives of the thickets of New Zealand. The young shoots of one of them were made into a tea by the sailors of Captain Cook's crew, and the infusion taken as a remedy for some of those complaints engendered by long voyages. It was, while fresh, very pleasant to the taste. The dwarf variety of the mock orange has been found in Carolina.

The garden persicaria (*Polygonum orientale*) is a common flower, with its spike of dark red blooms. From its bearing so well the smoke of cities, it is often called London persicaria. It was brought originally from the garden of the monks of Mount Ararat, where it is cultivated, not only as an ornament to the parterre, but also for its medicinal properties. One or two species of this plant are sown in China for dyeing cloth of a beautiful blue or green colour. Another species yields a yellow dye, and one of the strongest astringents of the vegetable kingdom is yielded by some plants of this genus. The roots of several kinds are eaten in Lapland and Tartary; and about the neighbourhood of Manchester the young leaves and shoots of one wild species, termed patience dock, are boiled and eaten as food.

The dark blue flowers of the common monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*) ought not to be welcomed in the garden, as persons unacquainted

with their properties frequently bind them up with the nosegay, and their scent is very deleterious. Linnæus says that the leaves are fatal to many animals, and mentions the case of their poison, recorded in the Stockholm Acts, in which a surgeon, little acquainted with the nature of plants, prescribed the use of this as a medicine to a patient. The invalid refused to take it, and the medical adviser, in order to convince his patient of the safety of the remedy, took them himself, and fell a victim to his experiment. Orfila states that the juice of the leaves occasions death in a very short time; and the root of the plant is still more powerful; while instances are on record, in which long fainting fits have been the result of merely smelling the flower. It would be well if this poisonous plant were quite banished from the garden, but gardeners should certainly be careful not to throw it with other refuse, from the ground into the public road, as the lives of children are often thus endangered. This flower was formerly called purple helmet flower. The English name of wolfsbane is given to some of the genus. They grow on the lofty pastures of the Swiss mountains, as well as on many other mountainous regions of Europe and North America. The roots, when pounded, are mixed with food, to form a bait for wolves and other animals. The yellow monkshood (*Aconitum anthora*) is a more ornamental flower than the purple kind, and a very pretty species; the hairy wolfsbane (*Aconitum barbatum,*) with pale

yellow flowers, a native of Siberia, is a frequent flower of the garden border.

The aconites are regarded as a highly poisonous tribe of plants, but no other species, not even the purple monkshood, can be compared for its virulence to an Indian kind, (*Aconitum ferox.*) The root of this is the celebrated substance called *bikh*, or *bish*, and is a poison of the most deadly nature. The great yellow aconite, (*Aconitum lycoctonum,*) which grows wild on the Alps, and is very common in Lapland, is said by Linnæus to be boiled and eaten as greens in that country, but it cannot be recommended. It grows in some districts of Lapland, he tells us in his "Flora Lapponica," as commonly as heath or ling. It is called by the Laplanders *giske*, and not being eaten by any kind of cattle, it thrives luxuriantly, and increases in proportion as other herbs are devoured. The wife of a clergyman of Lulea, on whose accuracy the great botanist says he could place the greatest dependence, assured him that at a post-house where she dined, she saw great quantities of this aconite collected and brought to table cooked as greens. As she knew the plant to be used as a poison to flies, she expressed some surprise that it should be eaten. The maid-servant of the house, however, laughed at her fears, and told her it was too good to be slighted.

Many very pretty species of stellaria, some of them much like our common stitchwort, adorn the garden beds at this season, and by

their profusion of starry white flowers cover the stones of the rockwork.

The rose acacia (*Robinia hispida rosea*) is now profusely flowering, and its long blushing wreaths of flowers droop from among its light sprays of leaves, rendering it a truly graceful shrub. By persons unacquainted with flowers, it is commonly called pink laburnum, as its blossoms are formed like those of that tree. Its roots require much room, so that it is an inconvenient plant for a small plot, but no large garden should be without its beauty. It is a native of Carolina.

Several other beautiful species of the plant called acacia are to be found in the garden, while the locust-tree, or false acacia, (*Robinia pseudacacia*,) is very general, and lends its shadow to the lawn, or hangs its pendent blossoms in the shrubbery. Some of the Jesuit missionaries gave to this plant its name of locust-tree, from the mistaken idea that its seeds were alluded to in Scripture, where the forerunner of the Messiah is described as eating locusts and wild honey. Its flowers are generally either white or tinged with pink and purple, but it is one of those trees which remain the longest in spring, waiting to be clothed with the verdant foliage; and this, as well as the very brittle nature of its branches, which snap and break away in the high winds of spring, is a great disadvantage to its beauty. With us it is more commonly a low than a very high tree, but in the North American woods its

branches reach the height of a hundred feet. It grows well in the neighbourhood of London, and is, with the lilac and the laburnum, among the commonest flowering trees in the gardens of the villages around the metropolis. It is one of the first trees which reached us from the American forests, and it has always been valued there for its hard and durable wood. Cattle are very fond of the young shoots, and some botanists have recommended the culture of the plant for forage. Their nutriment is owing to a saccharine principle, which exists also in the roots. With us its flowers are ornamental, and very pleasing by their fragrance, while the natives of St. Domingo make from them a distilled liquor, said to have a very agreeable flavour.

The false acacia has so long been termed acacia, that it is often confounded with the true plants of that name, which, however, are very different in appearance. These latter flowers are called in Australia by the general name of wattles. More than three hundred kinds have been introduced into England, but few species remain in culture. The greater number of these are natives of New Holland; they are nearly all evergreens, and their flowers are little yellow balls or tufts, like down. The gum arabic of commerce is derived from the acacia vera, a plant found in every part of Africa. In our country they nearly all require to be treated as greenhouse plants, and several are commonly planted in pots and kept in rooms.

The author of "The Picture of Australia" remarks, that the acacias in all their varieties are very elegant, and says that "they are among the few plants in the Australian forest which an European would be disposed to consider ornamental. There are more than one hundred species scattered over Australia, and of these a considerable number belong to the leafless kind. Their flowers are very beautiful, and the leafless variety is probably not found in any other part of the world."

Some pretty species of the flower called lousewort, are now opening in gardens, but they mostly require considerable care in their culture. Their leaves are cut into fine segments like those of our wild kinds; and their flowers are chiefly pink or purple, but sometimes yellow. When the white, red, and yellow colours mingle in their blossoms, they are said by Loudon to give to the flower the tints of flames of fire. They generally grow on very elevated situations, and are found more than a thousand toises above the level of the sea. Notwithstanding their acridity the mountain goats browse on them in the pastures where they are plentiful. One species of this plant will not grow in the English garden, though some pains have been taken to raise it from seeds sent from the north of Europe to the botanic garden of Cambridge. It was a flower which much interested Linnæus and other Swedish botanists. This is the flower called Charles's sceptre, (*Pedicularis sceptrum Carolinum*,) a name given to it by

Rudbeck, in 1697, in honour of Charles XII. of Sweden. This monarch having visited Tornea to observe the appearance of the solstitial sun above the horizon at midnight, was so struck with the beauty of the plant, that he carried it about in his hand. Its large golden flowers, with ruby lips, are described as rising in tiers one above another, to the height of four or five feet from the ground. It is abundant in Norway, and found in Lapland, though less luxuriant in the latter country.

By the latter end of this month one of the gayest of our garden flowers, the escholtzia, is expanding its large yellow or orange-coloured upright bells. It was, at its first introduction into this country, termed Californian poppy. This flower is, among several others, included by gardeners in the name of Californian annuals, and they were brought from California, on the north-west coast of America. Many of them were sent home by the indefatigable botanical collector, Douglas, who was sent out by the Horticultural Society of London, and who, in the enthusiastic pursuit of his object, lost his life by falling into a bull pit. The escholtzia has pale sea-green leaves, covered with a fine bloom ; and the flowers are very brilliant, though destitute of fragrance. When the blossom opens, the calyx, or flower cup, instead of gradually unfolding at the summit, like the calyxes of flowers in general, separates at its base from the flower, and comes off in the form of an extinguisher. This is one of the most

hardy of the Californian annuals; for though these flowers bear the open air of our winters well, yet they are generally liable to be injured by the heat of our summers; and if by any accident their roots become exposed to the sun, they will often die in the course of a few hours.

JUNE.

"The shining pansy, trimmed with golden lace;
The tall topped lark-heels, feathered thick with flowers;
The woodbine, climbing o'er the door in bowers;
The London tufts of many a mottled hue;
The pale pink pea, and monkshood darkly blue;
The white and purple gillyflowers, that stay
Lingering in blossom summer half away;
The single blood walls, of a luscious smell,
Old-fashioned flowers which housewives love so well;
The columbines, stone blue, or deep night brown,
Their honey-comb like blossoms hanging down;
Each cottage garden's fond adopted child,
Though heaths still claim them, where they yet grow wild;
With marjoram knots, sweet briar, and ribbon grass,
And lavender, the choice of every lass."—CLARE.

If from among the many flowers which deck the June garden, we were bid to select one which should seem its peculiar ornament, the mind would involuntarily recur to the rose.

"The roses laden with the breath of June,"

are now found both in the hedgerow of the lane, and in the lowliest and richest garden. They are ever favourite flowers, nor were they less so in the olden time.

Many hundred years have passed since the rose was first the theme of praise, and time, with his many changes, has not deprived the queen of

flowers of her pre-eminence. In the east generally, and in Persia especially, it points the moral of the sage, and inspires the song of the minstrel. Not only did Hafiz and Khusroo sing of its beauty and odour, and tell how the nightingale, "the bird of a thousand songs," utters her plaintive lament when it is gathered, but even to the present day, the Persian song would seem incomplete did it make no reference to "the garden of Gul in its bloom."

It would be vain, in so small a volume as the present, to attempt to enumerate the various roses under culture in our country. More than a hundred distinct species are known, and about two thousand varieties are said to be the objects of care to the British gardener. The rose, in some one or other of its species, is a wild flower in almost every country of the northern hemisphere of the globe; from Sweden to northern Africa; from Kamschatka to Bengal; and from Hudson's Bay to the lofty mountains of Mexico: but neither South America nor Australia can boast the rose-bush, either on mountain height, or in deepest valley. In the countries at the north of Europe, the flower, in its wild state, is single, like our wilding rose; but in Italy, Spain, and Greece, it is often double.

The two species of rose which were earliest cultivated in the British garden, appear to be the cabbage or Provence rose, and the musk rose. The former (*Rosa centifolia,*) is well known by its numerous petals, closely folded

over each other, like the leaves of a cabbage. Every cottage plot can show a bush of this sweetest of roses. It was long thought to be a native of France, but this seems doubtful. In some low woods on the eastern parts of Caucasus, it is certainly wild, and its odour perfumes the air. Dr. Clarke speaks of its fragrance and profusion in the isle of Rhodes. Upwards of seventy kinds of this rose only, are under culture, and our pretty moss roses, which blush so beautifully from under their verdant mossy veil, are varieties of the Provence rose. It is remarkable of these flowers, that, when removed to the milder atmosphere of southern Europe, they lose the mossy covering, which seems so suited, in our climate, to preserve the delicate young bud from the morning or evening chills. The cabbage rose is planted both in England and France for the sake of its petals, which are gathered, when fully blown, for making rose water, and also for the conserve of roses sold by the druggist.

The musk rose (*Rosa moschata*) is found wild in the north of Africa, and the warmer portions of Spain. It blooms in autumn, and its musky odour is most powerful in the evening. Its large bunches of flowers would weigh down the slender branches, were they not supported. The kinds of musk rose are not numerous, as there are not above a dozen sorts. This flower is thought to be the rose represented by the Persian poet as the delight of the nightingale of the east, whose songs, sweet

though they are to oriental ears, are described by English travellers as far inferior to those of our bird of night.

The French rose (*Rosa Gallica*) is also a common flower in our gardens. It has large open flat flowers, on stiff stalks. It grows wild in some parts of France, and at Geneva ; and is found in Austria and Piedmont. This rose is easily scattered by the winds, and forms a great contrast to the compact, closely-folded cabbage rose. Though wild in France, it is cultivated at the little town of Provins, and also at Fontenay aux Roses, near Paris, for the conserve made of its petals. The York and Lancaster, with its flowers variegated with red and white, is one of the varieties of the French rose. It delighted our forefathers, by blooming at a season when they deemed it an auspicious token that the civil wars should cease, and the union of the two emblematic roses, in the persons of Henry VII. and Elizabeth of York, should bring peace and happiness to the long distracted nation. It is said that the significant colours of red and white, were never, till this period, seen united in the symbolic flower of England, and great crowds went from the city to witness this natural prodigy.

The damask rose too, (*Rosa Damascena,*) is common with us, and if it is not a native of the neighbourhood of Damascus, yet it was planted many centuries since in that ancient city, whose name it bears; and now, both in its red and white varieties, it still decks the gar-

dens there. It appears to be, certainly, wild in some parts of Syria. The Parisians are very fond of this flower, and it is one which is most commonly sold in their flower markets. The French, indeed, prize the roses generally, and it is an old custom in some villages of France, to present, on a certain day in every year, a rose to the cottage maiden who is thought, by her conduct, to have merited the esteem of her neighbours, and who for the following year is termed *la rosière.*

Then, too, we have the numerous varieties of the delicate China, or monthly rose, (*Rosa indica,*) which sometimes half cover the cottage wall, or grace the bush of the town garden. But the dim air of the city is not good for roses, and even these look pale and sickly if compared to the country flowers, while our yellow roses will not thrive at all near the smoke of a crowded neighbourhood. The most beautiful of this family of roses are the tea-scented, or noisette roses. The China rose grows wild about Canton, in China.

The dark velvet petals of the Bourbon rose (*Rosa Bourboniana*) render it much admired, and its fragrance is remarkably sweet. We have, too, some pretty roses, with their tiny buds and little sprays of leaves, called the *roses de Meaux,* and these are a variety of the cabbage rose. There are, besides, the white Scotch roses, and the maiden's blush roses, and the yellow double and single roses, and that lovely kind of briar rose, called by the Italians, *Rosa*

Perla, which blooms all Europe over, and which awakened feelings of deep emotion in Rich, when he saw it flowering wild in Koordistan, just as it did in the hedges whence he had gathered it near his home. But we must pause in the list of the sweetest of flowers, and leave unnoticed many others, familiar to those who, like Eve, tend the plants, as Milton describes our first mother as doing in earth's fairest garden.

> "Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood
> Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
> About her glowed; oft stooping to support
> Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay,
> Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
> Hung drooping, unsustained."

The rose is much cultivated both in Egypt and Syria. It is in many parts of the Holy Land found wild in abundance, yet it is not so general as to render it an object of so frequent reference as the myrtle, the palm, and the olive, which are far more widely distributed in that country. There exists, however, a tradition that the name of Syria is a corruption of Suristan, the land of roses, which it was once called, from the profusion of a species of rose termed Suri, that grew in some part of the land.

Very beautiful yellow roses have been found flourishing among the ruins of Baalbec, and the hills which lie on the road from Joppa to Jerusalem, are still gay with the white or pink rose. In the desert of St. John, the gardens of the little village of that name abound with

these flowers, and the bushes are described as "forming small forests in the gardens." Burckhardt found roses in plenty among the ruins of Bozra, beyond the river Jordan.

There seems little doubt that the isle of Rhodes derived its name from *Rhodos*, the Greek word for this flower, on account of its lovely roses. Dr. Clarke speaks with delight of the fragrant atmosphere of this island, and says that, in addition to the odours of the rose, every gale is scented with citron and orange trees, and that numberless aromatic herbs exhale at the same time such profuse fragrance, that the whole atmosphere seems to be impregnated with its spicy perfume. The pagan writers said of this island, that Jupiter poured on it a golden shower.

And now, when the sun shines brightly, the eye is absolutely dazzled as it gazes on the glowing flowers of the scarlet lychnis, (*Lychnis chalcedonica.*) Pliny observes that this flower was in his time called *flammea*, from its colour so like to the flame of fire. He speaks of its having been brought from Asia. It appears to have been introduced hither from the Russian gardens, in the year 1596, and it is generally thought to have been sent into Europe from Asia, during the period of the crusades. The large clusters of this brilliant flower, growing on a stem often three feet high, render it a valuable addition to the garden. It blooms also for three or four months. The white and double-flowered varieties are equally handsome,

and are much cultivated in Holland, but are not so frequent in our gardens as the common scarlet kind.

Two other very beautiful species of lychnis are not rare. The red flowers of the Chinese lychnis (*Lychnis coronata*) are much valued in China and Japan ; and the splendid lychnis (*Lychnis fulgens*) is a native of Siberia. Both plants are well worth the care which the gardener must bestow on them during the frost.

Several smaller kinds of border flowers, as the ragged robin, the pink bachelor's button, and others, are species of lychnis ; and the flowers termed catchfly are very nearly allied to them. Of these we have a great number in the garden, and several grow wild in our fields. As Dr. Clarke observes, the weeds of one country are the flowers of another ; "accordingly," says he, in his account of Sweden, "we found the common poppy and the night-flowering catchfly cultivated with great care, as ornaments of the little garden of the inn where we rested."

More than seventy kinds of catchfly are in British gardens, and they are all more or less covered with a glutinous substance, which, having a sweet taste, is attractive to insects, and prevents their escape from the flower. The old writers called the plant limewoort. Lobels catchfly (*Silene armeria*) is common in most gardens, and the clammy species, *Silene viscosa*, well deserves its name.

The flowers of the two species of fraxinella

shoot up on tall branches, and the leaves, so like those of the young sapling of the ash tree, are very elegant. From this resemblance the flower is termed fraxinella, or little ash. The red species (*Dictamnus fraxinella*) has pale pink flowers, marked with purple. These plants have a number of small brownish red glands on the flower stalks, which exude a viscid juice of a resinous nature. When slightly rubbed, a pleasant odour is diffused, like that of lemon-peel; and if the plant be wounded, the fragrance is much more powerful. The resin from the glands renders the plant very clammy to the touch, and it is also inflammable. It is well known that this plant may be lighted up by the flame of a candle, but it is generally thought that the light can be seen only during darkness. On a fine summer evening in June, before even the twilight had commenced, the writer of these pages once tried the experiment. On holding the light at about half an inch from the flower, the vapour which it emitted took fire, and a beautiful blue flame ran over every part of the plant, which was about three feet high. It occupied about half a minute in its progress, and the strong balsamic odour which at that time arose from the plant, was almost overpowering, and perfumed the air of the garden for some distance. This same fraxinella bloomed for days and even weeks after, and its pink flowers and feathered foliage seemed as fresh as before the flame had passed over them. Both the red and the white species (*Dictamnus*

albus) are natives of Germany. The root is used in medicine, and contains a powerful opiate. They are hardy perennial plants, and will thrive in almost any situation, or on any soil.

Sixty years since, the lovely tribe of fuchsias were unknown in Great Britain, and now they hang their crimson bells in our gardens, or bloom among the flowers which deck the window-sill, smiling even in the dim atmosphere of London, but looking greener and gayer in the little garden-pot of the country cottage parlour. We have now several species, and many others will probably yet be brought from the wild places of Peru and Chili. The most interesting as well as the earliest introduced, is the scarlet fuchsia, (*Fuchsia coccinea*) which is wild in Chili, and was brought into this country and presented to the royal garden at Kew, in 1788; the remaining species of the genus not having been introduced before 1823. This fuchsia was long considered a very delicate plant, and was kept in the greenhouse, and known only to the rich; but it is found to be so hardy as to be now also the poor man's flower. The richly coloured tints of its crimson calyx, and the purple corolla within, rolled up like a ribbon, enable the scarlet fuchsia to vie in beauty even with the brighter scarlet of the splendid fuchsia (*Fuchsia fulgens*) and others recently imported; while it is far superior in beauty to the pale flesh-coloured and green varieties, now cherished by the curious. The slender fuchsia, (*Fuchsia*

gracilis,) which is a crimson and purple flower, is one of the best for the garden bed. It is a handsome slender shrub, about four feet high; its leaves, like most of the fuchsias, veined with red. This was introduced from Chili in 1823, and though usually a shrub, may be trained to a single stem. The smaller plant, the globe fuchsia, (*Fuchsia globosa,*) is also very hardy.

The fuchsias were named after Leonard Fuchs, a well-known German botanist, who published some valuable works in the sixteenth century. Their fruit is a dark berry, which when ripe is agreeable to the taste. These plants are often, when in the garden, five feet high; while in the greenhouse it is no uncommon thing to see them nine or ten feet in height.

The French honeysuckle has long been an ornament to our gardens. Parkinson, who published his "Garden of Flowers" in 1596, calls it the red satin flower, and the red-flowered fitchling; and adds, "some foolishly call it the red or French honeysuckle." The numerous species of hedysarum are all hardy flowers, and one which grows wild in various parts of Asia, the prickly-stemmed species, (*Hedysarum Alhagi,*) is celebrated as being the shrub which produces manna.

Many beautiful poppies are expanding their crumpled petals to the sunshine, and though their unpleasing odour renders them little suited for nosegays, yet they are very brilliant additions to the parterre. The brightest of them all is the large scarlet eastern poppy,

(*Papaver orientale*,) which was first found by Tournefort in Armenia, and soon dispersed throughout Europe, by the seeds which he sent to the Garden of Plants at Paris. It is of the most dazzling colour, and on summer evenings bright flashes of light have been seen to emanate from its fire-coloured flowers. The large bracted poppy (*Papaver bracteatum*) is no less splendid a plant, and is now very generally cultivated. It is a native of Siberia.

Some pretty delicate poppies, called carnation poppies, are in flower by the end of the month, and continue blooming till August. So frail are they, that it seems as if a shower or a rude wind would scatter them all away, yet, like the delicate cobweb with which the spider enwreaths the hedges, the light shower of summer only brightens them by its spangles, and the soft winds only ruffle them to display their beauty. Still, however, they are frail flowers, even where all are frail; and a long-continued rain will so beat them down, that they cannot rise after it. Sometimes they are like white gauze; again they glow in brightest scarlet, or deepest crimson; or their white petals are traced with a blush-coloured streak, or edged with a rim of rose colour. These are all varieties, produced by culture, from the common poppy of our cornfield.

The yellow poppy, often called Norway poppy, (*Papaver nudicaule*,) with its bright orange-coloured flowers, is very handsome, and has a sweet fragrance. It is a native of Siberia and Russia.

And now the pretty minor convolvulus (*Convolvolus tricolor*) is beginning to blow, and its large cups of deep azure will soon cover the branches. This species grows wild in southern Europe, and the blossoms have usually rays of white. Sometimes they are pure white or blue, rayed with yellow in the centre. This flower is not very similar to the climbing plant, called by gardeners the major convolvulus, (*Ipomœa purpureā.*) This, in its different varieties, of purple, white, pink, or lilac, is a beautiful American plant. In its native woods it is very luxuriant, twining so among the branches of the trees, and so mingling itself with its neighbour plants, that the Americans term one species of the flower "busy body." With us it will sometimes climb ten feet high, but in Jamaica its bells hang from the loftiest trees of the forests. All the species are ornamental. That known by the name of indigo convolvulus (*Ipomœa nil.*) is of the clearest blue tint. The Italians term it *campana azurea*, and as, unlike the others of the convolulus tribe, it opens at night, it has also the name in Italy, of *fior di notte.*

Many species of the ipomæa are to be found in our hot-houses, and comparatively few can bear the winter in the garden.

Our wild species of convolvulus are among the most graceful plants of the hedges, and so also are other species in the hedgerows of Italy, as well as in tropical lands. A beautiful climber of this tribe, (*Quamoclit angulata*,)

produces, in the Mauritius, an immense profusion of scarlet flowers, which hang about the shrubs, and render them so bright, that it has obtained the name of fire-in-the-bush. The scammony, the jalap, and other medicines are the produce of plants of the convolvulus tribe, and the sweet potato (*Convolvolus batata*) is a well-known food in tropical countries. Backhouse, when in the Mauritius, saw some of the poor people collecting the long stems of this plant, and binding them together in bundles. This formed a simple net, which, when thrown into the sea, and presently drawn ashore, was full of small fishes. The stems extended many yards along the sandy coast, and produced a very pretty convolvulus flower in great abundance.

The various kinds of nasturtium, or Indian cress, make a great show in the garden. Linnæus named the flower from *tropæum*, a trophy, because of its helmet-like shape, and because, like too many of the trophies of man, it wore the dark red stain of blood. The round leaf, too, is like a buckler. The French term the flower *la capucine*, and the Italians, *caprivola*. Until the year 1823, two kinds of nasturtium only were known in this country. These were the large and small-flowered common species; and owing to the more showy flowers of the larger kind, the smaller has been little cultivated. Several varieties have, of late years, been raised from seed, and one of the most handsome and generally known is the dark red-

brown nasturtium, (*Tropæolum major atrosanguineum.*) A flower which, until the last few years, was deemed unfit for the open air, is now a common and beautiful climber on the wire or trellis-work of the garden. This is the canary bird flower, (*Tropæolum peregrinum,*) the little delicate fringed flowerets of which seem hovering over the green sprays, as if some pale yellow bird were alighting there beneath their chequered shadows. The nasturtium is quite a Peruvian genus. The flowers of our common species are sometimes eaten as salad, and both these and the young succulent leaves and shoots have a pungent property, which renders them very wholesome. The seeds are very commonly pickled and used instead of capers.

During this and the two following months, the plants called slipper wort, but more generally known by their botanical name of *Calceolaria*, are either flowering in the greenhouse or on the garden plot. They are half hardy plants, requiring care in the winter. The greater number have yellow blossoms, and in all, the lower lip of the flower is inflated like a bag, and the form of the whole suggests the idea of a slipper. A few of the species have purple or pink flowers, and sometimes the dark brown tint mingles with the yellow, as in the common wallflower, or they are of a dark rich brown. The different species grow as wild flowers in almost every variety of climate, owing to the various elevations on which they are found. The whole family are natives of South

America, and abound, either on the western side of the Cordilleras, or the southern parts of the continent, or in the contiguous islands. Some grow at such a height on the Andes, that their yellow flowers vary the somewhat monotonous tint of grey lichens and green mosses which are found in these elevated regions ; while some smile among the flowers of the lowliest valleys. In Chili, and on the mountains of Peru, they grow in thick profusion, so that they are said to give a peculiar character to the vegetation. In 1820, six species only were known out of the number now to be found in Britain. The species most common in gardens, and the most hardy, is the little shrubby rugose slipperwort, (*Calceolaria rugosa.*)

Several pretty kinds of veronica, with blue or white flowers, all in some degree resembling the wild speedwells of our meadows, are blowing in the gardens in the month of June, while the eye is almost unable to gaze on the bright scarlet patches of the vervain, which now cluster in glowing colour. These flowers are better known by their name of *verbena*, and though the botanist may perceive that they bear much resemblance to our wild vervain, yet the unpractised eye might not discern the resemblance. The scarlet species, (*Verbena atrosanguinea,*) is the most intense in colour, and absolutely pains the eye by its brightness ; but the most common species, the scarlet verbena, is, in some of its varieties, little less brilliant than this. Several of the species have purple

flowers ; some pale lilac, or rose-coloured, or white. These flowers are chiefly natives of North or South America.

The shrub generally called sweet-scented verbena, (*Aloysia citriodora,*) does not properly belong to the vervain tribe. It has panicles of small pale lilac flowers, and its highly fragrant leaves are well known. This is a native of South America, and tolerably hardy, requiring protection only when the frost is very severe.

The pea-shaped blossoms of the pink, blue, white, and yellow lupins, are among our prettiest and well-known border flowers. They are some of the oldest annuals of the British garden. The yellow kind, (*Lupinus luteus,*) is sweet scented.

The great tree lupin, (*Lupinus arboreus,*) when trained beside a wall, in a sheltered situation, will often grow six feet in height ; and the changeable lupin (*Lupinus mutabilis*) is a handsome plant, branching like a tree, and frequently five feet high. The white lupin, (*Lupinus albus,*) is much cultivated in the Levant, and called fig-bean. Our small blue lupin is a native of the south of Europe, and the common yellow species grows wild in Sicily.

Among the sweet odours with which the air of June is laden, there is perhaps scarcely any more pleasant than that of the sweet scabious, (*Scabiosa atropurpurea.*) This is the dark, rich mulberry-coloured flower, often called musk rose, and termed by the French, *fleur de veuve*, and *scabieuse des Indes*. It is an old

ornament of our gardens, so old that we know not whence it came originally, though it is generally thought to be a native flower of some part of India.

The lily, interesting to us by its historical associations, and leading us by its very name to think of the tender charge of our Saviour to the trembling disciples, "Consider the lilies,"—the lily, the tall white lily, (*Lilium candidum*,) may now be seen in its beauty and purity, towering above all the other flowers; and we can say with Bernard Barton,

> "Ye loftier lilies, bathed in morning dew
> Of purity and innocence, renew
> Each lovely thought."

Dr. Royle quotes Dr. Bowring's description of a lily, which that writer terms the lily of Palestine, and heard called *Lilia Syriaca*, and which grew in great profusion about Galilee. Yet our white lily is not likely to be the lily of the field, or the lily of the Song of Solomon, or the prophets of the older Scriptures. The white lily is not known to exist as a wild flower in Syria. None of the natives of Palestine can give any account of its growing wild there, but it is cultivated in pots, and regarded as a rare exotic. The fields of Palestine are, however, full of liliaceous plants, and Sir J. E. Smith and Dr. Kitto both consider that a species of amaryllis was intended, the golden flowers of which are common in fields of Palestine, or the Levant. Dr. Bowring plainly indicates the scarlet martagon lily, which was in

former days called the Byzantium lily, and which grows from the Adriatic to the Levant. It is commonly called Turk's cap, or turn again gentlemen, and is the *Lilium chalcedonicum* of botanists. This species of lily is in flower during this month in our gardens, and as it is in bloom at the season when our Saviour spoke his sermon on the mount, Dr. Royle concludes that this is most probably the lily of the field, of which the disciples were to learn a lesson of faith, and this invests this flower with fresh interest. The common white lily has been planted from time immemorial in the English gardens, and its mucilaginous roots boiled in milk form an old remedy for wounds.

As long since as the days of Dioscorides, the martagon lily has been known as a flower of Asia, and he mentions its having been found at Antioch, in Syria. The lily of the Old Testament has shared with the lily of the field, in having a variety of flowers assigned as the lily intended by the Hebrew name Shushan. The violet, the rose, the jasmine, and many other sweet flowers of the Holy Land, have been said to be the lily. Whatever it may have been, it was doubtless a flower much esteemed in the east.

The sweet flowers of the white and purple stocks are fragrant now. The old favourite red or carmine stock, called queen's stock, (*Mathiola incana*) is called by the French *giroflée des jardins*; by the old writers, purple gilliflower. Its rosettes are sometimes of a pale pink, or

variegated hue. The Brompton stock is a variety of this, and was probably improved by the skill of some Brompton florist. The wild flower, from which many botanists consider the garden stock to have been derived, is, indeed, a blossom very inferior in beauty to this, and few would detect, in the small purple flower of our sea-side cliffs, the parent of this beautiful ornament of the cultivated ground. The annual, or ten-week stock, is called by the French, *la violette d'été*. It is generally about two feet high, with white, red, and variegated varieties, both single and double. It grows on the cliffs of southern Europe, and, like all the species, flourishes best near the sea.

There are, besides, some cinnamon-coloured stocks, and the night-blowing stock is of a dingy brown. The bright pinkish lilac annual, called Virginian stock, which is planted round the garden bed, is not a species of this plant. It grows wild in the Mediterranean isles, and is called by the French, *giroflée de Mahon*. Some of our most beautiful stocks are reared from seeds brought from Germany and Russia, and are hence called German or Russian stocks.

Several species of campanula bloom now from the various pretty little flowers, which, with their blue and white bells, cover the rock-work to the tall pyramidal campanula, or the Canterbury bell, and throatwort. One of the kinds frequently seen in gardens, is the peach-leaved bell-flower, (*Campanula persicifolia,*) often called paper flower, with blue and white spread-

ing blossoms. It grows wild in the south of Europe. The fan-shaped branches of the pyramidal campanula, (*Campanula pyramidalis,*) are thickly covered with their numerous blue flowers, but more often grace the hall, or window-seat, than the garden bed. The Canterbury bell and great throatwort are very generally cultivated; the latter is a native of Europe, as well as of Japan, and some parts of Asia. It is wild in some parts of Britain; the Scottish poet speaks of it, as growing on the heath of his native land:—

> "He laid him down
> Where purple heath profusely strown,
> And throatwort with its azure bell,
> And moss, and thyme, his cushion swell."

The French call this species, *la cloche.* The lesser Canterbury bell, (*Campanula medium,*) is a native of Germany, but was by Gerarde deemed a British flower.

Very beautiful are the blossoms of the passion flower, (*Passiflora cœrulea,*) which, with its twining branches, and dark-green leaves, now climbs over the front of the dwelling, or the garden arbour. It is the only species which is quite hardy. Its fruit ripens in England, and is not unwholesome. It is a wild flower of the American wood, climbing up to the highest bough of the tall forest tree, and hanging its rich festoons from one branch to another. It is called by a name similar to our familiar one, in most of the countries of Europe. The Spaniards, when they first saw its flower, regarded it as a token that the Indian should

be converted to Christianity, for they fancied that its several parts indicated the various accompaniments of the crucifixion. In the five anthers, the monks saw a resemblance to the wounds on the body of our Lord; the triple style, they considered emblematic of the three nails by which he was fixed to the cross; the central column, of the pillar to which he was bound; while the rays of the flower figured to their minds the rays of light which the old painters always represented as surrounding the Saviour; or were by some regarded as the sign of the crown of thorns, which sinful man placed around the brow of man's Redeemer. Exaggerated descriptions and figures of the marvellous passion flower were soon circulated throughout Europe; and "there are cuts," says Sir J. E. Smith, "to be found in some old books, apparently drawn from descriptions, like the hog in armour upon our signs, to represent the rhinoceros, in which the flower is made up of the very things themselves."

The common passion flower grows very rapidly. Its shoots are said, by Loudon, to make fifteen feet in the summer. The fruit is about as large as a mogul plum, but its flavour is not agreeable. The species first cultivated in Europe, was the rose-coloured passion flower, which is a native of Virginia. All the species are very handsome flowers, and their fruits are much valued in tropical countries.

A very popular flower of this month is the common sweet pea, (*Lathyrus odoratus,*) which

equals in fragrance almost any flower in the British garden. Its butterfly-like blossoms are streaked with white and red in the kind called painted lady; but another variety has petals of a dark rich purple. Linnæus says that the pink and white sweet pea is to be found in Sicily, while the purple kind grows wild in the magnificent hedges and woods of Ceylon.

The everlasting sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius,*) is considered a wild flower of Great Britain, but it is a doubtful native. Its large rich blossoms, growing on stems sometimes seven or eight feet high, add much to the beauty of the shrubbery, while the still larger flowers of the perennial pea (*Lathyrus grandiflorus,*) are remarkably showy. Gerarde calls the former kind, pease everlasting, tare everlasting, and chickling.

A very pretty border annual is the Tangier pea, (*Lathyrus Tingitanus,*) which is said to be a native of Barbary. It is a tall-growing plant, with small dark purplish brown flowers. The light blue pea, now sometimes seen in gardens, is a perennial plant, remarkable, not only for the colour of its flowers, but also for its beautiful foliage. It is to be regretted that it is not more commonly cultivated.

The odour of the sweet pea, delicious as it is, is injurious to a close apartment; and an instance occurred in France, in which a person, owing to carrying a small bunch of these flowers in the mouth, on a warm summer's day, was seized with convulsions.

Another sweetly fragrant flower is the common white jessamine, (*Jasminum officinale.*) It is a very old garden flower, and Gerarde says, in 1597, that it was in common use for covering arbours. The white flowers are often used for making a fragrant oil. Cowper well describes it:

> "The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
> The deep dark green of whose unvarnished leaf
> Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
> The bright profusion of her scattered stars."

A few, besides the common species, bear the open air, but many jessamines require the hothouse. The Italian yellow jessamine (*Jasminum humile,*) is a border flower, and the curled yellow jessamine, a native of Nepaul, grows well against walls. The sweet night-blowing Arabian jessamine is most fragrant during night. Its powerful fragrance renders it a favourite flower, both in the East and West Indies. Loudon remarks of this plant, that it grew in the Hampton Court garden at the close of the seventeenth century, but being lost there, it was known in Europe only in the garden of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, at Pisa, where the plant was placed under guard, that no cuttings might be stolen.

But no species of the jasmine tribe is more interesting than that called the tree of mourning, (*Nyctanthus arbor tristis,*) which, however, requires to be grown in a stove in this country. It is an Indian tree, and the Hindoo women use its flowers to decorate their hair. It is deliciously fragrant, the blossoms having the scent of fresh honey, but the brightness of day

must have faded into the dim light of evening, or the darkness of night, before they unfold, a circumstance which makes this tree the frequent allusion of the poet :—

> "The timid jasmine buds that keep
> Their odour to themselves all day;
> But when the sunlight dies away,
> Let the delicious fragrance out
> To every breeze that roams about."

Both because of its blowing in darkness, and from its ragged and melancholy appearance when its flowers are withered, the plant received its poetic name.

Some of the monkey flowers are showy ornaments of the borders. They bloom from early spring, and several of them as late as August. They are natives of North and South America, and received their familiar name because the front of the seed is curiously marked, and resembles the face of a grinning monkey. They are nearly all hardy flowers, and two common species, the cardinal and the musk monkey flowers (*Mimulus cardinalis*, and *Mimulus moschata*,) will bloom for many successive summers without needing winter shelter.

The species called the gaping monkey flower, was the earliest introduced, and was first cultivated in this country in 1759, and numerous kinds are now in British gardens.

Our wild marjoram, so common on the chalky hills, is often planted in gardens for its fragrant flower, which is so delightful to the bees. The Oregon territory is said to have received its name from the abundance of

marjoram which grows there, and which the Spaniards term *origano*. The sweet or knotted marjoram, (*Origanum majorana*,) cultivated for seasoning dishes, is a native of Portugal. The hop marjoram (*Origanum dictamnus*,) has pink flowers, on green cones, something like those of the hops : it is a native of Candia, and though more frequently grown here in pots than on the garden bed, is quite hardy. This plant is the celebrated dittany of Crete of the ancient writers. It clothes, in profusion, the rocks of Candia. It is an excellent stomachic, and the ancient physicians considered the air of Candia especially healthful, on account of the fragrance with which it is imbued by the marjoram. Its balsamic odour is very lasting.

The tribe of larkspurs which now arise, of almost every colour except yellow, the blue, white, pink, and even scarlet larkspurs, have a gay effect on the flower bed. The double larkspur has, however, a somewhat formal appearance, and must, perhaps, yield in grace and beauty to the more simple single blossom. It is to the latter kind only that the familiar name of larkspur can be applied, for the spur becomes lost in the multiplied petals of the double flower. The common blue larkspur (*Delphinium consolida*,) grows wild almost throughout Europe, and is very frequent in some of the fields in Cambridgeshire. It is said to be an ingredient in those cosmetics used by French ladies, the frequent application of which proves so destructive to the skin. These

flowers received their Latin name from their resemblance to the imaginary dolphin, which, with griffins and other strange animals, figure in heraldic inscriptions. It was formerly called also lark's heel or lark's foot. It is probably from the sceptre-like appearance of the double flower, that the Italians call it (*Fior regio*) king's flower. It is an old inhabitant of the British garden, and is mentioned by the herbalists of queen Elizabeth's time.

Far more beautiful than the common species, are the handsome Siberian larkspurs, with tall stems, dark green leaves, and deep blue flowers; which, as Mrs. Loudon observes, seem to have a metallic lustre, the hue of which resembles that of silver that has been tarnished by fire. These, both in their single and double varieties, are now in bloom. The bee larkspur (*Delphinium intermedium*) is also a flower of great beauty, with blossoms of intense blue, and petals so curiously folded, that they present the appearance of a bee or blue-bottle fly.

Another of the Californian annuals, which, like the escholtzia, has of late years become very common in gardens, is the clarkia, with rose-coloured, white, or lilac flowers, of a very singular shape: and the different kinds of cistus are now very handsome and frequent plants. There is the frail gum cistus, (*Cistus ladaniferus*,) smiling for a day, with its white petals, each ornamented with a dark crimson spot at the centre. Both this and the many-flowered gum cistus, (*Cistus ledon*,) furnish the

odoriferous drug termed ladanum, so much employed in the east. This ladanum is of old repute, and is thought by many writers, to be the substance called myrrh in Scripture.

But besides the gum cistus, we have a variety of plants of this genus now in full flower. There are several shrubs covered with blossoms, while clumps of lovely flowers of the cistus kind, nod to every breath of wind which ruffles the leaf. The pretty purple-flowered species, (*Cistus purpureus*,) is quite a popular shrub from the south of Europe. This flower blooms not only during this and the next month, but, if the autumn be mild, will bloom again at that period. The lower growing cistuses, of orange, red, yellow, or other colours, are often seen on the bed. The old writers called the larger cistuses ***Rosa alpina*** and ***Rosa montana***, while Parkinson terms them holly roses. Several of the herbaceous species are used as ornaments to the rock-work, and have evergreen leaves. The different plants of this genus were well known to our old botanists and gardeners, and Gerarde mentions that, in his day, there were thirty-eight kinds cultivated in England. They are all natives of the southern countries of Europe, where even if the winter brings some chilly days, yet the summer season is hot and dry. Their perfume exists rather in their leaves and young buds, than in the flowers. A beautiful greenhouse species, the oblong-leaved cistus, (*Cistus vaginatus*,) often grows five feet high, and has rose-coloured

flowers, sometimes as large as the monthly rose. It is wild on the rocks of Teneriffe.

The flowering raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*) is covered now with its large red flowers, and the beautiful Californian bramble (*Rubus spectabilis*) invites our attention, not only by its dark purple flowers, but by its sweet odour; while the American raspberry looks among the bushes and trees of the shrubbery like some bush spattered with snow, from the abundance of its white single rose-like flowers. This last plant is very plentiful among the bushes and trees of the forests of the new world.

That very elegant plant the single-seeded broom, (*Spartium monospermum*,) with its blossoms like snow-white butterflies, seated on its long pliable branches, is now frequent in gardens. It is a native of Portugal, and is said by Osbeck to grow along the shores of Spain, like the willow tree, as far as the flying sands can reach. Few plants will thrive so well near the ocean, and its roots are most useful in binding down the sands; while the swine which frequent these shores, and the goats which browse on the surrounding cliffs, seek some relief from the scorching sun, beneath its shadow. Its foliage, too, is much relished by the latter animal, and the peasants make baskets of the long twigs, in which they carry their provisions to market for sale. It grows also in Arabia and Syria, and along the sandy coasts of Barbary.

The Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*) is,

as its name implies, a native of the same land as the one-seeded species. Both in France and Spain it is cultivated as fodder for sheep, and its fibres are woven into a kind of cloth, and still more often made into cordage. Its handsome flowers are often double, and are of the same bright golden hue as the broom of our heath lands, which Cowper describes as

"Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloyed.'

The handsome petunias, now so general, have been but recently objects of culture in this country. When first introduced they were treated as greenhouse plants; now some are found to be quite hardy, and others, which must be raised on a hot bed, may yet flower in the open air. The petunia earliest brought to England, was the white flower, (*Petunia nyctaginiflora*,) now so common in gardens and flower-pots, and whose odour is so sweet in the air of the summer evening. This is a native of Brazil, whence it was brought in 1823. It was thought to resemble the tobacco plant, and as the "fragrant weed" of America is known in Brazil by the name of petun, so this flower gained its name. About seven years after the introduction of the white species, the equally common purple kind (*Petunia violacea*) was brought from Buenos Ayres. Since that period the British gardeners have produced from them a great variety of flowers, of white, of all shades of purple and red, and streaked with many beautiful tints. The dwarf shrubby petunia,

which will thrive only in a greenhouse, is a native of Panama.

The white and yellow prickly poppies are now blowing freely. They are fit only for a large garden bed, for their showy flowers and spreading foliage occupy much room. The yellow Mexican poppy (*Argemone Mexicana*) is a most annoying weed in the West Indies, springing up in the plantation, and attaining a luxuriance of growth which it requires constant care to check. Its fruit is something like a fig, closely beset with prickles. It abounds in a thick white juice, and contains seeds which are said to be even more powerfully narcotic than opium. The thick juice, when exposed to the air, becomes hard and yellow, and can scarcely be distinguished from gamboge.

Besides the common fox-glove, we have some other handsome species on the garden bed. The yellow fox-glove (*Digitalis ambigua*) grows wild on the hills of Switzerland, and is less general than the smaller yellow species, (*Digitalis lutea*,) which is as common in the woods of France and Germany, as is our purple species with us. Then we have the iron fox-glove, (*Digitalis ferruginea*,) which has short globular bells of rust colour, and is common in the countries at the south-east of Europe, and also in many parts of Asia.

The handsome Madeira fox-glove (*Digitalis sceptrum*) requires to be kept in the greenhouse during winter. It grows wild in the woods of Madeira, and when cultivated by florists in the

neighbourhood of Ghent, has been known to grow to the height of ten feet. It has large yellow bells, sometimes varying to a bright orange.

JULY.

> "The cottage garden, most for use designed,
> Is not of beauty destitute. The vine
> Mantles the little casement, and the briar
> Drops fragrant dew among the July flowers;
> And pansies rayed, and freaked with mottled pinks,
> Grow among balm, and rosemary, and rue;
> There honeysuckles flaunt, and roses blow,
> Almost uncultured—some with dark green leaves
> Contrast their flowers of pure unsullied white;
> Others like velvet robes of regal state,
> Of richest crimson; while in thorny moss
> Enshrined and cradled, the most lovely wear
> The hues of youthful beauty's glowing cheek."
>
> CHARLOTTE SMITH.

How beautiful, in this season, are the dew-drops which at morn and evening glitter on half-opened flowers, or twinkle on every blade of grass, or bestrew every leaf with their pearls! Truly the dew of heaven, even if it brought not with it the "fatness of earth," would at least delight the eye with its lustre. In our own land we see the appropriateness of the numerous comparisons which are made to the dew by the inspired writers; while in the hotter regions of the earth, its greater copiousness renders them still more striking. Some lands, like Egypt, would not be habitable but for the dews, and the driest deserts of earth are watered by the dews of heaven. "He shall be as the dew

unto Israel," said the prophet Hosea,* as he foretold how the Spirit of God should again revive the withered graces of the erring Israelites, who might well be compared to dying flowers. And when the psalmist would liken to some natural object, the sweetness, and blessedness, and cheering influence of brotherly affection, no more fitting image could have been presented to his mind by the Holy Spirit, than the dew of Hermon, and the dews which descended on the mountain of Zion.† And while we look at the dew on the flower, it would be well that we remembered, that it has been likened to the momentary feeling of goodness, which, though lovely to look upon, was frail and transient; leaving no trace of holiness upon the character, more permanent than the drop which glitters on the rosebud; and that the glow of devotion, which is soon drowned in the act and habit of worldliness, is recorded by the angel of God, as the morning cloud, or as the early dew, which passeth away.

The sweet lavender (*Lavandula spica*) is fragrant in the garden, and the cottage dame will soon gather it to lay in her drawers among her store of linen. It was named from *lavare*, to wash, because the ancients used it in baths, and the fragrant perfume which it yields in distillation, is both pleasant and useful. The flower is called, in Provence, *l'espic*, and hence the foreign oil of lavender is often termed oil of spike. The lavender is found on the deserts

* Hos. xiv. 5. † Ps. cxxxiii. 3.

both of Asia and Africa, diffusing its most welcome odour when little expected by the traveller. It grows wild too in southern Europe. In our gardens it is too well known to need description, and it is still brought to market for the purposes to which Shenstone describes his school-mistress as applying it.

'And lavender, whose spikes of azure bloom,
Shall be erewhile in arid bundles bound,
To lurk amidst the labours of the loom,
And crown her kerchiefs clean, with mickle rare perfume."

Fields of lavender are cultivated at Mitcham, and Henley-on-Thames, as well as in Kent, for the oil of commerce. An ounce of oil is said to be yielded by sixty ounces of the blossoms.

There is no summer month from May to September, in which we may not find some species of phlox decking the garden. On the prairies of America, as well as in the woods of Canada, it grows to a great height, and is very abundant; but most of the purple kinds, like many flowers of the American forest, are scentless. The large white-flowered or scented phlox (*Phlox suaveolens*) is now, however, in bloom, and has a very pleasant odour. A very pretty variety of this species has pure white flowers, with a pink star in the centre, gradually fading as it approaches the edges.

All the species of these handsome border flowers are natives of America. The fine-leaved phlox, (*Phlox setaceæ*,) with flesh-coloured blossoms, and its snow-white variety, are among the earliest blooming species. They

are low trailing perennials, blooming in April and May. The Canadian species has pale blue flowers, and grows about a foot high ; and the ovate phlox has purple flowers, and is, like the former, a spring flower.

The panicled phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) is one of the most popular species. It is a tall plant, sometimes four feet in height, with numerous clustered flowers of pale lilac. This flower is very conspicuous on the plains of America. It has been an inhabitant of the British garden for more than a hundred years, and blooms in autumn.

And now that frail and beautiful flower, which blooms but for one day, then droops and dies, the lovely day lily, may be seen opening its yellow vase to receive the dew-drops of the morn. The French term it *La belle d'une jour*, and some of their writers call it the asphodel lily. Frail as it is, it is long ornamental to the garden, for though one flower may die to-night, yet to-morrow's sun shall gild another, and the root will bloom for one or two months. Both the yellow lily, (*Hemerocallis flava*,) and the copper-coloured species, (*Hemerocallis fulva*,) were known in England in queen Elizabeth's time. The latter species is a native of the Levant, and is a much taller flower than the yellow kind, being sometimes four feet high. The flowers generally called Japan lilies, are natives of China and Japan. They bear the open air well, and are handsome, and most of them fragrant flowers. The blue Japan lily is

quite hardy; the white species require some protection.

Several species of hibiscus are in bloom during this and the next month. They are very nearly allied to the mallow. The shrubby kind, called Althæa frutex, (*Hibiscus Syriacus*,) is very generally cultivated. A large number of species of hibiscus are known to botanists, and they are an interesting tribe of plants, not only because of the beauty of their flowers, but on account of the various uses to which they are applied in the lands where they are native. Abounding in the tropical regions, they are of great value to the people of those lands, but many of them, when transplanted to our country, need protection from its climate. In the hotter regions of the continent of Asia, in India and Ceylon, some of the most beautiful species are abundant. In Africa and South America they are also wild, and even in North America a few are found: while in the West Indies, as well as in other tropical islands, a great variety exist. Like the mallow, they are remarkable both for the mucilage which they contain, and for the fibres which their stalks yield on maceration. One species, the esculent hibiscus, called *ochro*, in the West Indies, is cultivated as an esculent vegetable, and is also used for thickening soups; but the English residents rarely like it as diet. In France it is planted for the pods, which are gathered while green, and either eaten in soups, or pickled like capers, and they are often spiced and made into a rich dish. In another species,

the flower cups are of a deep red colour, and are so acid that they are made into tarts. This flower is in the East Indies called red sorrel; while in the West India islands, the refreshing acid is used to make a drink resembling lemonade, which is much valued in the sugar colonies. From the bark of this and other species, the people of the Malabar coast manufacture, not only coarse cordage, but fine thread; while the acid leaves serve as a salad. Several species are cultivated both for food and for the manufacture of India matting ; while the seeds of several are, in Hindostan, used as a cordial medicine, and in Arabia are mingled with the coffee berry to heighten its flavour. Of one species were made the whips with which the slaves were beaten in the West Indies, ere British justice had declared that all the subjects of the British empire were a free people. The leaves of some species yield a good blue dye.

The beautiful flower called China rose hibiscus, (*Hibiscus rosa Sinensis*,) is a favourite flower in the hot-houses of this country, and is very common in China, where the plant grows to a high tree. Its flowers also grace the hedges at the Cape of Good Hope. It is one of the flowers often represented in Chinese paintings, on screens, and other articles of furniture. It is chiefly from its rich petals that the thick black substance is extracted, used instead of blacking, and which, from the purposes to which it is applied, has given to this flower, in its native land, the name of shoe flower. With

this colouring matter the women also blacken their hair and eyebrows.

One of the very few plants of the hibiscus tribe which is quite hardy, is the common bladder ketmia, (*Hibiscus trionum*,) or Venice mallow, sometimes called buff-coloured mallow, from its flowers, which are also striped with brown veins. It is a native of Italy and Austria, and was called by the old writers, "Good night at noon." If we are to believe Gerarde, however, still shorter than this name would imply, is its little hour of beauty, for he says, "it opens at eight in the morning, and closes again at nine." Many persons who have had it in their gardens have never seen it flower, for though it is sometimes open so late as three o'clock in the day, yet, unless the weather be clear and bright, many days will pass by, and it will remain folded up, waiting for the sunshine.

The common corn flag (*Gladiolus communis*) is too tall a flower to be overlooked, and it has a long spike of bells, of elegant shape and bright pink colour. Several varieties of this species are in cultivation, but some of the less general kinds are more brilliant in colour. The superb corn flag (*Gladiolus cardinalis*) has rich scarlet flowers, spotted with white, and the different orange-coloured species are very showy. Almost all our garden gladioli are natives of the Cape of Good Hope; but these flowers are not limited to that part of Africa, but are to be found scattered over the vast deserts of that country. Backhouse describes

one which he saw in Caffraria, which had dense spikes of flowers, of a dingy hue, covered with minute purple spots; and other travellers have named them as blooming in all shades of yellow, pink, and brown colours, among the brilliant blossoms which enliven these arid lands. They have bulbous roots and long sword-shaped leaves; the latter suggested their botanic name, from *gladius*, a sword.

The common bladder senna (*Colutea arborescens*) is a pretty shrub, now covered with its clusters of butterfly-shaped yellow flowers; nor is it less ornamental in autumn, when its large inflated pods stand thickly among its foliage. It is remarkable as growing and flowering on Mount Vesuvius, even on spots quite near to the crater. It is wild in many parts of France, and its leaves afford a grateful food to cattle. Both seeds and leaves are used medicinally. The smaller species, the oriental bladder senna, (*Colutea cruenta*,) is a much prettier shrub than this. Its flowers are of a reddish colour, and it is a native of the Levant.

The blue commelina, (*Commelina cœlestis*,) as well as the other species of this flower, is a native of South America. And very brilliant is the tint of its blossoms, which are now open. Far less showy are the flowers of the basil, but the air is quite perfumed with the odours of this plant. The blossoms are shaped like those of the lavender, but are either purple or white. The common sweet basil, (*Ocymum basilicum*,) notwithstanding that its native soil

is Persia or India, is a hardy annual. In Persia the basil is planted on graves, and is a favourite addition to the bouquet. Both in India and on the continent of Europe it is much used as a culinary aromatic plant. The Hindoos attach a superstitious veneration to some of the species; they use them in religious ceremonies; and one kind, known in Calcutta by the name of *toolsy*, is much cultivated there. The ancient Greeks held the strange superstition that this plant flourished best when planted amid railings and angry words; and it seems strange, that as both Greeks and Romans so highly prized its fragrance, a malignant custom should have been connected with it. In former days many persons in our own land refused to plant it in their gardens, from the absurd notion that smelling it infected the brain, and that it produced scorpions. This idea was so prevalent, that sir Thomas Browne thought it worthy of his notice, and attempted to refute it in his "Inquiry into Vulgar Errors," where he affirms that the Africans deemed it a remedy against the bite of a scorpion, and that if any one has eaten basil he is safe from danger, should a scorpion inflict a wound. And thus this learned writer displaces one error to advance another.

Although the stately hollyock (*Althæa rosea*) is too large a flower for the smaller garden, yet on a large space of ground it well repays its culture. It is said to be a native of China, and is undoubtedly of eastern origin. The French term it *rose d'outre mer*, and it was long known

in this country as the outlandish rose. It was well known to the ancients. Pliny describes it as a rose growing on stalks, like the mallow. This, as well as some other species of that plant, has been cultivated for its fibres, from which thread has been manufactured. Phillips states that, in the year 1821, about two hundred and eighty acres of land were planted with the common hollyock, with the view of using the fibres of the plant instead of those of hemp or flax, and converting them into thread. It was discovered, in the progress of the manufacture, that the plant yields a fine blue colour, little inferior to indigo.

The common hollyock is a biennial plant. It sometimes attains the height of ten feet. Its varieties are of many hues, from the bright clear white, to the rich dark purple which gardeners call black. It is a native, not only of the east, but of Siberia, and the southern countries of Europe ; and the single yellow hollyock has been found wild in Africa.

That common, but handsome flower, the French willow, (*Epilobium angustifolium*,) often termed rose hay willow, is now very conspicuous. It is, by its height, well fitted for the shrubbery, but it is often seen, too, on the garden bed. So far from requiring any culture, it is a most troublesome flower in the garden ; for the long pods which contain the seeds produce a great abundance, and each seed is crowned with a tuft of down, which facilitates its dispersion, so that the gardener finds considerable trouble in eradicating the numerous

young shoots. This flower is occasionally found wild in Great Britain, and is a native of most parts of Europe, from Lapland to Italy. In no country, however, is it so luxuriant as in Lapland. Dr. Clarke says, that it there attains a magnificence, compared with which it seems in other lands but a stunted plant ; and adds, that among the many gay flowers which decked the river sides of that land, its gaudy blossoms shone pre-eminently. Its high clusters of purple lilac flowers acquire a prodigious size among the rocks and stones. This traveller observes, that it may be considered as the garland of Lapland ; often attaining the greatest magnitude, when every other sign of vegetation diminishes. The Lapps call it *almoke*, and among the inhabitants of Dalecarlia, the flower is familiarly termed heaven's grass.

The French name this flower *laurier de St. Antoine.* Its young shoots may be eaten, and the pith, bitter as it is in its fresh state, becomes, when dried, very sweet, and, by a certain process, is made into ale ; while, by a farther process, the Kamschatctales derive vinegar from it. It is also used as fodder for cattle, and the goat is glad to come to the cliffs by the river, to eat its foliage. The great quantity of down which exists in the pods, has been mixed with fur or cotton, and made into stockings and other articles of wearing apparel. The little red Alpine willow herb is a pretty ornament for rock-work, and several species are among our wild flowers.

A very pretty Californian annual is now blooming. This is the shady nemophila, (*Nemophila phacelioides.*) Its flower is of brightest blue, and its name, taken from the Greek words, to love, and shade, indicate that this genus is to be found chiefly where trees and bushes cast their shadow.

Among the many odours of this season, few are more pleasant than that of the pinks, which flowers are now in perfection. It was, perhaps, for its fragrance, still more than for its beauty, that the pink was called the divine flower. The carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) is thought to have had its origin in the wild clove pink of our land, and which also grows on the Alps of Switzerland. At the commencement of the eighteenth century, four hundred varieties of the carnation were enumerated, and their numbers are now increased. They are all sweet and beautiful flowers, and their leaves, which gardeners term grass, are, from their evergreen nature, ornamental to the bed in winter or early spring. The plant called tree pink (*Dianthus arboreus*) is merely a kind of carnation, with a woody stem, and its pink flowers are found in the isles of Greece.

Many writers have considered the pink (*Dianthus plumarius*) as merely a variety of the carnation; and as it does not appear to be found in a wild state, it is probably derived, if not from the carnation, yet from some of the smaller pinks, which grow wild in various countries. Our native pinks are few, and chiefly inconspi-

cuous flowers, but a great variety bloom in the lands of southern Europe, and grow on the mountains of Germany and Switzerland at a great height. The kind of pink called laced pinks, is that cultivated so much by florists, and their flowers should be about two inches and a half in diameter, with white petals, rose-coloured edges, and a dark purple ring in the centre. It does not appear that this tribe of flowers was known to the ancients, for no poet of Greece or Rome has sung of their perfume or beauty ; and they are not mentioned by Pliny, or any other naturalist of those distant ages.

The sweet-william (*Dianthus barbatus*) is a clustered species of pink, and is called by the French, nosegay of pinks. It grows wild in Germany, and also on the hills of Normandy, but with much smaller flowers than it has in our gardens.

The China pink, (*Dianthus Chinensis*,) which seems neither exactly like a pink nor a sweet-william, is of a beautiful red colour, each blossom growing on a single stalk. It appears to have been introduced from China, into our gardens, about the middle of the last century.

The numerous species of groundsel have among them a few handsome flowers. One common and very ornamental species is now in bloom. The purple ragwort, or jacobæa, (*Senecio elegans*,) has sometimes double flowers, of rich velvet surface, and beautiful dark hue. It is a native of the Cape of Good Hope. One

species, the hawkweed-leaved groundsel (*Senecio hieracifolius*) is a most troublesome weed in newly-cleared grounds of North America, and is called by the Canadians fireweed, because it springs up from the ashes of the clearing flame. Its white flowers bloom in August. A yellow, creeping-rooted kind, which grows wild in Britain, (*Senecio Sarracenicus*,) was used by the Saracens in the cure of wounds.

Some species of groundsel are found wild in every part of the world, but a great variety exists in South Africa. Backhouse describes the groundsels of the sandy deserts as of purple or lilac, resembling those of our gardens. Humboldt found this tribe very numerous in the upper regions of the Andes, just below the limits of eternal snows, "where the sun has very little power, where hurricanes are incessant, and not a tree is able to rear its head."

The greater number of those handsome annual border flowers, the fair-eye, or coreopsis, are now common. The dyer's coreopsis (*Calliopsis bicolor*) is one of the most popular kinds. Its yellow flowers grow wild on the borders of the Missouri, and have been used in dyeing. The whorl-leaved coreopsis of North America, (*Calliopsis verticillata*,) which is a tall plant, often cultivated in our shrubberies, is in bloom now, and for several months. The colour contained in its flowers is used for dyeing cloth red.

Some of the species of sage which are now so generally cultivated for their blossoms, are

blooming during this and the following months. The well-known sage (*Salvia officinalis*) of the kitchen garden, would give little idea of the beauty of many of the exotic kinds of salvia which thrive with us ; yet there is so much similarity in all, not only in the shape of the blossom, but in the wrinkled foliage and aromatic odour, that the sage plants are plainly distinguished. Our common sage was formerly in great repute as a medicine. Eating a quantity of its leaves was supposed to avert sickness, and hence the old Latin proverb, "How can a man die that has sage in his garden?" The Chinese have a high opinion of the virtues of the common sage, and prefer it to the tea, whose stimulating properties are deemed so refreshing in our land. Indeed, the Dutch appear at one time to have been engaged in a very profitable commerce, for it is said that they carried a cargo of the sage leaf to China, and returned to their own country freighted with four times the quantity of tea. But though the Chinese thus valued the sage, yet they had a high opinion of their tea also, as a remedy. So early as the ninth century, travellers in China mention their custom of drinking an infusion of the leaves of a plant, which they termed *sali*, that was reputed as a medicine for all diseases, and which is proved to be the tea, which, from having been at first a luxury, seems now to have become a necessary article in the diet of an Englishman. With us the sage is much used as a condiment

for dishes. It grows wild in the south ot Europe.

There are between one and two hundred distinct species of sage in gardens, and the tints of their blue, purple, scarlet, white, or yellow flowers, are very bright. The apple-bearing sage, (*Salvia pomifera*,) with large azure blossoms, is among the handsomest kinds. This plant is subject to the puncture of an insect, which produces excrescences as large as oak-galls, and which contain an acid aromatic juice. These apples are much valued as food in the isle of Crete, where they are sold in the markets. Our common garden sage is also, in that island, covered with these substances, and they are called sage-apples. In all the Mediterranean isles, different kinds of sage are abundant. Dr. Clarke observes, too, that they flourish on the south coast of Crimea, and says that there the sage of our kitchen garden is the principal spontaneous production of the rocks and mountains. He observed, that here, as in the isles of the Archipelago, the sage plants attained to a very considerable size, being tall enough to be ranked as shrubs.

Several of our cultivated species are shrubs, as is the case in the bright scarlet kind, termed the shining-leaved salvia, (*Salvia formosa*,) which is a native of Peru. Some lovely species, as the tooth-leaved sage, have white flowers. One of the most ornamental is the fulgid sage, (*Salvia splendens*,) which is a native of Mexico. The gold-flowered sage, a native of

the Cape of Good Hope, has pale silvery leaves, and deep yellow flowers, and blossoms from spring to autumn.

The plants which we term clary, are also species of sage, and are cultivated not so much for their flowers, as for the deep red, purple, or violet colour, which some of their young shoots exhibit. The common clary, (*Salvia sclarea*,) a native of Italy, has a most powerful odour, and was once much used medicinally. Our common wild clary (*Salvia verbenaca*) has a still stronger fragrance, and is found in almost every land of the globe. Its seeds contain a mucilaginous substance, which, if it be placed under the eyelid, envelopes any grain of dust which may have settled on the eye, and brings it away. It was this which gave the plants the name of clary or clear-eye. A wine is made of the common clary, which, when boiled with sugar, is said to have the flavour of Frontignac, and is remarkable for its narcotic qualities. This plant grows wild in Syria, Italy, and Bithynia, and is one of the exotic herbs of longest standing in the British garden. Another species of salvia is used in Holland, to flavour Rhenish wines.

And now the awning is spread to keep the sun from injuring the full-blown ranunculus, (*Ranunculus Asiaticus*,) which glitters in every colour of the rainbow, and is streaked with each hue of nature. This is the month in which florists usually display them in a mass, and for this purpose they are planted late in autumn; but when planted in January, they

will bloom at an earlier season. Indeed, they may be made to flower at almost any part of the year. On the culture of this florists' flower much has been written. At the end of the last century, more than eight hundred varieties had been enumerated, and it would now be difficult to ascertain their number. These lovely flowers grow wild on the mountains of Persia, and are significant emblems in the eastern bouquet. They are very general in the Levant, and in many parts of Palestine; and, like our common buttercups, which are species of ranunculus, they have very acrimonious properties. The Turks cultivated them in their gardens for many centuries before they were known in the other parts of Europe. Gerarde speaks of them as common in his time, and says, they flourish here, as well as in their own country.

The love of the marvellous, and the consequent watchfulness for it, have so declined in modern days, that the marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis jalapa*,) now no longer excites any degree of wonder. Gerarde thought it ought to be called the wonder of the world, and its changing hues, varying from white to red, purple, or yellow, as well as the circumstance of its opening at night, excited the astonishment of the older botanists. This flower is not a native of Peru only, but is also a common wild flower in China and India, and grows both in the West Indies and in Africa. Some of the old writers called it the Mexican jasmine, and the specific name was given to it from the

idea that this plant yielded the true jalap of commerce. The forked marvel of Peru is a smaller flower, of a reddish purple colour. It is called, in the West Indies, the four o'clock flower, as it opens at that time of the day. The white sweet-scented marvel of Peru expands only at night; and its odour of musk is so powerful, as to be disagreeable to many persons.

A large number of plants are blooming in the garden, of the genus *Centaurea*, with flowers many of them something like thistles. Two very common flowers, long included in this genus, but now removed into another, are the purple and yellow sultans. The purple sultan (*Amberboa moschata*) grows wild in corn-fields in the Levant, and is also a native of Persia. Parkinson, who wrote his work in 1629, thus mentions it: "As a kind of corne-flowers, I must needs adjoyne another stranger of much beauty, and but lately obtained from Constantinople; where, because it is said the great Turk, as we call him, saw it abroad, liked it, and wore it himself, all his vassals have had it in great regard, and it hath been obtained from them, by some that have sent it from these parts." He adds, that it was also called the blackamoor's flower. The tint of this sultan is purple, white, or flesh-colour, and its odour of musk very strong. The French term it *fleur du grand seigneur*.

The common yellow sultan (*Amberboa suaveolens*) has a much more pleasant fragrance, but differs little, except in colour, from the

purple kind, and is wild in the corn-fields of the same countries.

The tall flower, termed yucca, or Adam's needle, (*Yucca gloriosa*,) with its pyramids of large pendent bells, is now very conspicuous. Its blossoms are greenish-white, and its evergreen leaves, like those of the aloe, are long and pointed. The natives of St. Domingo call the plant *yuca*. It grows both in these islands and on the continent of America. Its pointed leaves have been compared to a needle; but, as Dr. Lindley observes, it better deserves the name of needle and thread plant, for "by soaking in water, the fibres of the leaves may be separated from the pulp, without being torn from the hard sharp point, so that when properly prepared, the leaves do really become needles, ready provided with a skein of thread." Two other hardy species of yucca are commonly cultivated in England. They flourish well by the sea-side, and are very suitable ornaments to the grounds of marine dwellings.

The dark rich velvet zinnias unfold their stars. They are annuals. The red zinnia (*Zinnia multiflora*,) is a native of North America, and its purple-red blossoms seem as if a shower of gold had alighted on its petals. The whorl-flowered zinnia, (*Zinnia verticillata*,) and the elegant zinnia, (*Zinnia elegans*,) are both wild flowers of Mexico. The former species has double red blossoms, and the latter has red flowers, which change as they decay, to a deep violet hue. The zinnias have very

thick stems. They were named by Linnæus, in honour of John Godfrey Zinn, a German botanist.

Somewhat similar in colour to these flowers, are the African and French marigolds; but the latter have been much longer in the British garden. The very unpleasant odour of these plants, is hardly compensated by the velvet suit of yellow and brown in which they are attired; but one of the African marigolds (*Tagetes lucida*) has a pleasant fragrances. Parkinson remarks of the flower, that it "smells like a honeycomb, and has not that poysonful scent of the other kinds."

The French marigold (*Tagetes patula*) is called in France *petit œillet d'Inde*, but it is not, as its name would import, a native either of France or India. Both this and the African marigold are cultivated in the gardens of India, China, and Japan. This species has great brilliance of colours, varying from a bright yellow to a deep orange tint.

The Italians term these plants *garofano Messicano*, and also death flower, *fior di morto*. All the species are American, and the Italian names have both probably a reference to the tradition which exists respecting them. It is said that these flowers sprung up on grounds on which had been spilled the blood of the unfortunate Mexicans who fell victims to the love of gold, and the thirst of power, which induced the Spaniards to destroy these unoffending people. And truly has the Scripture said, that "the love of money is the root of all

evil." The African marigolds appear to have been introduced into this country about the year 1573. They were named from a Greek word, principality, on account of their splendid and regal appearance. Some of the double varieties of the French marigold are very handsome.

The variegated balsams, with their clear succulent stems, and spikes of delicately-tinted flowers, bloom in July. The balsam grows wild in India, China, Japan, and the West Indies, and is used in Cochin China by the ladies, who make of its flowers an infusion, with which to cleanse and perfume the hair. The great attention paid by the females of the east to personal decoration, renders this a valued flower, for they tinge their nails with the deep pink dye which its petals, when mixed with alum-water, will furnish. The flowers are white, red, or purple, or variegated and striped with all these hues. Several of the species throw their seeds, with considerable force, from the seed-vessels.

Some very pretty grasses are admitted to the parterre, and are now in flower. There is the large quaking grass, or, as gardeners term it, the hop grass, (*Briza maxima,*) so like the pretty tothering grass of our fields, that every one may know it. If the hop-like cones are sucked, they are found to contain a sweet juice, resembling that of the liquorice root. There is also the tall reed-grass, looking almost like a bamboo, which the Italians call garden

cane, (*Arundo donax*,) and which they use for fences, for supporting the graceful festoons of the vine, or for fishing-rods. In Spain and Portugal it forms an important part of commerce, being used in those countries in looms, and for numerous purposes. The striped variety of this plant is well known by the name of ribbon-grass, and in Scotland is called gardeners' garters. The roots of several species of arundo are used in dyeing. And now as the soft wind blows, and the beautiful plumes of the feather-grass (*Stipa pinnata*) wave up and down, we do not wonder that the Russian poet celebrates it in his songs, and finds comparisons to it in the movements of feminine gracefulness. It grows freely on almost all the steppes of Russia, and waves to the winds which play around some alpine rocks of our native land. Ladies of former days wore it as an ornament to the hair, and it is now often used to adorn the mantel-piece, but, unless gathered just before the seeds ripen, it will fall into shreds; nor can its beauty be long preserved under any circumstances. A species of stipa is one of the grasses so much used by the Spaniards, under the general name of *esparto*.

The large handsome flowers and magnificent foliage of the sweet-scented or Virginian tobacco plant, (*Nicotian tabocum*,) may be seen in many gardens. The tubular flowers are of a purplish rose-colour. It grows wild in the West Indies, as well as in some countries of America.

AUGUST.

> "A drowsy indolence now hangs on all;
> Each creature seeks some place of rest, some shelter
> From the oppressive heat: silence prevails,
> Nor low, nor bark, nor chirp of bird is heard;
> In shady nooks the sheep and kine convene:
> Within the narrow shadow of the cot
> The sleepy dog lies stretched upon his side,
> Nor heeds the footsteps of the passer by,
> Or at the sound but raises half an eyelid,
> Then gives a feeble growl and sleeps again:
> No sound is heard but humming of the bee,
> For she alone retires not from her labour,
> Nor leaves a meadow flower unsought for gain."
>
> JOANNA BAILLIE.

If there is less variety in the flowers which during this month expand afresh, yet there is as great an amount of brilliant colouring in the garden, as in the more prolific season of mid-summer; for dahlias, sun-flowers, and amaranths, wear hues more deep and glowing than the rose or lily of June. A magnificent flower is the dahlia, and it is pleasant to think that its culture affords an innocent recreation to many a florist of humble life. The autumnal flower-shows in which it is exhibited, give evidence how wonderfully the skill of the florist has improved the stately flower, which, when it grows in its native land, is neither so bright nor so beautifully formed, as the blossom to be seen in the humblest garden. The dahlia grows wild on the sandy plain, as well as on the mountains of Mexico; and was introduced into Europe by the great naturalist Baron Humboldt. He, in the year 1789, sent it to Professor Cavanilles, of the Botanic Garden of Madrid, who in that year presented it to the

Marchioness of Bute. This lady kept it in the greenhouse, and from this species (*Dahlia variabilis*) nearly all the numerous varieties have been obtained. In the field of Mexico it is a single flower, not remarkable for the brightness of its purple or lilac tint, and growing to the height of about eight feet. Few flowers vary more in colour when under cultivation, and we have now the dark purple and richest puce, with every shade of scarlet, crimson, and pink; while the dahlia of pure white, or delicate yellow, grows beside others streaked with the variegated hues of the tulip or ranunculus: though that great desire of florists has not yet been fulfilled in any approach towards a blue dahlia, nor is it often of unmingled whi . More than two hundred varieties have been raised from the seeds of the common purple flower.

In 1802, two other species of dahlia were added to that already in the garden. They were both procured from Mexican lands. The barren, rugged dahlia, (*Dahlia frustranea*,) and the scarlet flower, (*Dahlia coccinea*,) both, however, produce smaller blossoms and fewer varieties; and the variable dahlia, which was first brought into our land, is still the favourite flower of the florist. A species of recent introduction, (*Dahlia excelsa*,) called the tree dahlia, is said to attain, in Mexico, the height of thirty feet, with a stem proportionably thick.

The Mexicans boil and eat the tuberous roots of the dahlia; but even could we spare

them for such a purpose, they are not palatable to European taste.

A handsome American plant is now equally conspicuous on the parterre. This is the tall and brilliant sunflower, (*Helianthus annuus*,) which is a native flower of Peru and Mexico, as well as of Canada, and several other parts of North America. In the Canadian woods it grows to a great height, and the blossom is as large as a dinner plate. On the prairies, Catlin observes of it, that it often taunted them by striking against their faces, as they made their weary way through the tall grass. Dr. E. D. Clarke also saw it in abundance on the steppes of Tahtary, growing very tall and large. The ancient Peruvians, when found on their native plains by the Spaniards, were worshippers of the great natural light of day. They had their temple of the sun, and the maidens who officiated in the service of their god, were crowned with wreaths of sunflowers, made of purest gold, while they wore on their breasts similar emblems of the idol of their worship. The holier faith professed by their conquerors, as yet was not accompanied by that spirit of love, and truth, and justice, which we who read our Bibles know to be its sure fruit, but which in times of papal darkness was understood but by a few, and the sight of these golden ornaments, while they aroused their hatred of idolatry, appealed but too surely to their covetousness. And when, at a later season, the Spaniards saw the fields bright with the same golden hue, and

observed these magnificent flowers on hill and valley, by wood and river side, Peru must have seemed to them a land of glowing gold.

The seeds of the sunflower are recommended as an excellent food for cattle, and the settler in the woods of Canada gathers and stores them for a winter supply for his poultry. In the United States the flower is cultivated to a great extent for the oil procured from its seeds, which is as good as Florence oil. The whole plant, and especially the golden blossom, exudes a thin, clear, resinous substance, the strong odour of which resembles that of Venice turpentine. The sunflower is not found wild in any part of southern Europe, but in Asia and Africa a few species are to be met with. Several double varieties are cultivated in the garden.

The numerous clusters of the garden hydrangea (*Hydrangea hortensia*) bloom in the autumnal season. This flower is often called the Chinese guelder rose, as it is much cultivated in the gardens of China, as well as in those of Japan, but its native place of growth is unknown. The flowers are usually of a pale rose colour, but are sometimes blue. Great pains have been taken by cultivators to discover under what conditions of the soil the blue colour may be insured. The yellow loam of Hampstead heath will produce it, as does also the peat of the bogs near Edinburgh, and the soil in the neighbourhoods of Berlin and of St. Petersburgh. Water impregnated with alum, steel filings, carbonate

of soda, or common salt, has been known to give the blue to the hydrangea ; but on no one of these can any certain dependence be placed. Inglis says that this tinge is very general in the flowers of this plant in the isle of Jersey. The hydrangea is there seen growing as a shrub at every cottage door, or in one of those gardens which are always planted by the houses of that island. It is often twelve feet in circumference and five in height, and is tall and branching enough to form a shade, under which one might find shelter from the sun of August. "These beautiful shrubs," says Inglis, "here almost as trees, form the avenues in the neighbourhood ; and at the season in which they are covered with their large blue flowers, the effect is indeed most captivating. I have nowhere seen the hydrangea so luxuriant in growth as in the channel islands, and the flowers are most commonly blue, not pink, as we are accustomed to see them in England."

As the different flowers, called everlasting flowers, bloom during this and the two following months, they may here be noticed together. The yellow flower, called love everlasting, has been long known to botanists as the eastern everlasting, (*Gnaphalium orientale*,) but it is now very generally included in the genus *helichrysum*. It grows wild in abundance on some of the mountains of Asia, and the pilgrims who visit the flowery Carmel, and the lofty Lebanon, gather it from their sunny slopes, as memorials of their pilgrimage. Another kind

which has been introduced into England, the blood everlasting, (*Gnaphalium sanguineum,*) is generally gathered by those who, when treading the Mount of Olives, wish to carry thence some record of a visit to so sacred a spot ; and the durable nature of the chaffy petals of the lowly floweret, render it a very suitable one. Few flowers, indeed, preserve their beauty like this, when brought from a warmer climate; and to these blossoms the description of the poet is applicable—

"They look as infants do, who smile when dead."

A species of cudweed grows in great profusion on the steppes of Tahtary, and the Cossacks drink an infusion of its yellow flowers as a cure for the jaundice.

The brilliant everlasting flowers, which, as they have no English name, we must call by their botanic one of *helichrysum*, are so named from two Greek words signifying sun and gold. They are chiefly natives of Africa, especially of the southern parts of that continent. The handsomest, as well as the hardiest kind, is the waved-leaved species, (*Helichrysum bracteatum,*) which grows wild in New Holland. This has yellow flowers. Some species are white, and one beautiful kind has its flowers tipped with pink, and is brought from the colony of the Swan River. Backhouse writes thus of one species, which he saw at Cape colony: "In the course of the day I walked to the top of a hill, on which the *helichrysum proliferum*, a beautiful crimson everlasting,

was growing in profusion among low rocks and ferruginous sandstone. The plants were about the size of gooseberry-bushes, covered with flowers, and as fine as I ever saw them, when highly cultivated, in an English greenhouse. This is not generally the case with wild shrubs; they are broken by storms and cattle, and overgrown one by another, in the situations where they grow naturally; but when cultivated, they are carefully protected from injury."

Another genus of flowers called purple everlasting, and whose blossoms retain their beauty for many years, are the xeranthemums. They are popular annuals, and their Greek name signifies dry-flower. There are but few species, and all are natives of southern Europe. They are purple, red, or white, and one is yellow. Some of the species are small shrubs. The flowers of all these kinds of everlasting, when mingled together, form a beautiful and permanent bouquet for the winter season.

A flower which is equally well entitled to the name of everlasting, is the globe amaranth, (*Gomphrena globosa.*) Milton has immortalized this lovely flower in his Paradise Lost, where he describes it as encircling the brows of angels—

> "To the ground,
> In solemn adoration, down they cast
> Their crowns, inwove with amaranth and gold,
> Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
> In Paradise fast by the Tree of Life
> Began to bloom."

Nor is the mention of the amaranthine wreath

peculiar to our great poet. Homer had long before told how, at the burial of Achilles, the Thessalians wore it in honour of the warrior, and it appears to have been often worn at funerals, in the early ages of Greece. In Sumatra, where this flower grows wild, its purple globes, which seem as if sprinkled with gold, are worn as garlands around the head; and both in Portugal and in Paris, these flowers are mingled with the wreaths made to deck the shrine of the saint, or the tomb of the dead. In the former country, churches are adorned with this flower, and the French term it *violette immortelle.* The plant, though separated by modern botanists from the amaranth genus, is very nearly allied to it.

A large number of amaranths are cultivated in this country, one of the most common of which, is the flower called love-lies-bleeding, (*Amaranthus caudatus,*) the flower gentle of the old writers. It was known to Gerarde by this name, and also by that of florimor. He says of it, "It has exceeded any skill of mine to describe the excellency and beauty of this rare flower." It has variegated leaves. It grows wild in Persia, China, and India.

The prince's feather, (*Amaranthus hypochondriacus,*) with its long velvet plume-like flowers, is equally common, and blooms also at this season; and the three-coloured amaranth, which blooms from June to September, and is called by the French *fleur de jalousie*, is a very pretty species. It is a native of the East Indies,

and was known to the old English gardener by the name of *passevelours*. The leaves of some species are eaten, and the foliage of several is boiled as spinach, in the East Indies.

The coxcomb amaranths are very curious flowers, and notwithstanding a certain formality of appearance, are much prized for the deep purple or red of their silky or velvet blossoms. The crested amaranth (*Celosia cristata*) is a native of many parts of Asia, and is said by Thunberg to be cultivated to such perfection in Japan, as that the heads of flowers are often a foot long, and of equal breadth. There are many varieties of this amaranth, and the scarlet species are extremely beautiful. Several are natives of China.

The strawberry blite, or Indian spinach, is now red with its juicy fruits, by which it is known to us, rather than by its less conspicuous greenish flowers, which bloom in April. These fruits are something similar to our wood strawberries, but are neither so handsome nor so palatable. Their juice flows very freely, often staining with its deep red the hand which touches them, and the juice was formerly used by cooks in colouring puddings. The berry-headed species (*Blitum capitatum*) is the most ornamental; it is a native plant of southern Europe. There are three species in our gardens; they are commonly called strawberry spinach. Their name, blitum, taken from the Greek, and signifying fit only to be thrown away, would suggest the thought that they were

not ornamental, yet their berries render them so in a good degree, nor is their handsome spinach-like foliage unworthy of admiration. The crimson berries are covered, like those of the strawberry, with small seeds.

The strawberry blite is one of the greatest ornaments of the summer woods of Canada, and it grows in great profusion in those forests, where

> "The hiccory, the sumach, and the red maple,
> The fringe-tree, and the acacia triple-thorned,
> Temper the ardour of the burning sun,
> And on the locust's violet-breathing flowers
> Cast the pale yellow of its meekened fire."

The author of the "Backwoods of Canada" mentions having gathered branches a foot in length, thickly studded with its crimson berries, and regrets that the beautiful fruit should, by its insipidity, be unfit for eating: she adds, that on the banks of creeks and in rich ground it grows luxuriantly, "sending up twenty or thirty branches, drooping with the weight of their magnificent burden. As the middle and superior stems ripen and decay, the lateral ones come on, presenting a succession of fruit, from July till the frosts nip them off, in September."

The Canadian Indians are said to be fond of these unpalatable berries, and they use the juice as a dye, and make it into ink. The writer before quoted, states, however, that this ink is liable to fade unless mixed with alum. She mentions the circumstance of a lady, who sent a letter from Canada, crossed with the red

ink made from the juice of this plant, without having first taken the precaution of fixing it with alum. The epistle from the far country reached its destination, but the ink had faded, and the writing become illegible; and the friend who had anxiously longed for the intelligence which it was to convey, had to wait some months before a more permanent liquid should record the good news, which the Scripture has described as in its effects like cold water to a thirsty soul.

The tribe of rudbeckia are annuals of great beauty, but their large size excludes them from the smaller gardens. This is exclusively a North American genus. They have all starry blossoms, and are yellow or purple. The purple rudbeckia, (*Rudbeckia purpurea*,) which was known to our gardeners as early as 1699, and is very hardy, is a singular looking flower. Phillips observes of it, that its petals being pendulous, and curling inwards, have the appearance of so many pieces of narrow ribbon, notched at the end. The colour of this flower is of a purplish crimson. One or two of the species are fragrant. This genus was named in honour of Rudbeck, an enthusiastic botanist of Sweden, who, having just completed a work entitled "The Elysian Fields," was so distressed at witnessing the destruction by fire of this cherished production of his mind, that he died of grief, in 1702. During his last days, however, his son laboured diligently to re-write this work, and it was published in the course

of the year of his death, and that which preceded it.

If we were to go now into the fields, we should see the milfoil, or yarrow, scattered in plenty over their grassy surface, and the garden yarrows are blooming too on the border. They are a vigorous family, with yellow, red, or white flowers, the ornaments of the pasture lands of southern Europe. One of the prettiest kinds, which is also one of the most general, is the woolly milfoil, (*Achillea tomentosa*,) which has pale yellow flowers, and blooms from May to October. The red-flowered kind (*Achillea tanacetifolia*,) is also a pretty flower, and grows on the Swiss mountains; while the double variety of our wild milfoil is no less ornamental. The musk-scented yarrow is the *genipi* of the Swiss, who use the plant medicinally; while the herdsmen of the hills value it much for their cattle. The Laplanders and Finns mix some species of yarrow with their tobacco, for smoking. The golden yarrow of our gardens, which is not more than six inches high, and has an abundance of rich yellow clusters, is a beautiful plant for the edging of a border.

The sweet-scented golden rod, (*Solidago odora*,) is another of the few fragrant flowers which we find in the garden at this season. The odour is diffused from the leaves, and is compared to the mingled scent of sassafras and anise. It is often planted in the garden or shrubberies, and is sometimes called Aaron's rod.

SEPTEMBER.

"Whither be the violets gone,
Those that bloomed of late so gay,
And in fragrant garlands strown,
Decked the blooming flower-queen's way?
Youth, alas, the spring must fly,
Yonder violets withered lie.

Whither are the roses fled,
We so gaily singing bound,
When the brow of shepherd maid.
And the herdsman's hat was crowned?
Maiden, summer days must fly,
Yonder roses withered lie."

JACOBI.

ALMOST all the flowers of the last month bloom also during September, yet now, as their number will seem gradually to diminish, we are pleased to mark the bright foliage of the evergreens, and to look on the pale greenish flowers which hang among the branches of the arbutus or strawberry tree. The common arbutus is now generally enumerated among British plants, but several others, as well as this species, are cultivated in this country. The oriental arbutus (*Arbutus andrachne*) is scarcely less general than the common kind, though requiring more care. It blooms some months earlier than that, and may be distinguished by the greater beauty of its foliage and flowers, its broader leaves, which are also less notched at the edges, and by its red bark which peels off, and leaves much of the trunk smooth and brown.

This arbutus is a native of the Levant. In the isle of Cyprus it attains an enormous size.

In a great part of this island, no other tree is large enough to cast any extent of shadow, and the inhabitants sit in parties beneath its boughs. Both this and our common arbutus are abundant in many parts of Palestine, and growing to a much larger size, they are very picturesque objects, the oriental species flowering in spring, and our common kind in autumn. The arbutus, in the lovely valleys, is often found with a stem six feet in circumference, and, with the oak and the fir, is said to be one of the trees which principally give a wooded character to the hills of Gilead and Bashan; So too, in southern Judea, these shrubs form an important part of the woodland scenery, mingling with the Scotch fir and the oak; and although the olive still is, as it ever was, the characteristic tree of Palestine, yet the arbutus is so general as to attract the attention of all travellers who observe the scenery of the Holy Land. Its fruits, too, are more beautiful and conspicuous than its flowers, and they may be safely eaten. A very showy species from the Canary isles is kept in the greenhouse, and we have also a handsome Peruvian kind.

And now clumps of the China aster, (*Callistephus,*) with their large stars of white, lilac, pink, purple, or variegated blossoms, are among the most attractive of the autumnal flowers. This is one of the flowers which the Chinese prize and cultivate so highly, and in China it is much larger than in our gardens. Several kinds of starry flowers, under the general name

of aster, among which are this genus, as well as that commonly called chrysanthemum, receive especial care in China. By this people, their large water-lily, the *nelumbium*, is esteemed as the very chief of flowers, and though it grows wild in their streams, yet it is brought into their enclosed grounds. Next to this, in their estimation, come the fragrant olive (*Olea fragrans*,) and the innumerable varieties of star-like blossoms which glitter in golden beauty, or are shaded off to most delicate tints; and which, arranged on terraces, one above another, offer every variety of hue.

The Michaelmas daisy, or Christmas daisy, arrayed in its sober tints, is a very useful flower now, when flowers seem gradually going, and brown leaves rustle on the spots where zephyrs lately played among soft green branches. The common Michaelmas daisy, (*Aster Tradescantia*,) and the Alpine species, (*Aster Alpinus*,) are among the handsomest kinds. Like most of the genus, these flowers are natives of the fields of Virginia, and the common kind was named in honour of the celebrated naturalist John Tradescant, who introduced it in England among several other plants, the seeds of which he brought from America.

Far more beautiful in colour are the brilliant bell-shaped blossoms of the gentianella, or large flowered dwarf gentian, (*Gentiana acaulis*,) which are now blooming for the second time in the year, and seem to be as vigorous at the autumnal season, as in the early months. This

beautiful flower grows in profusion on the Welsh mountains, and has been found on some of the highest of the Swiss Alps. Its large flowers are of the colour called mazarine blue, and they are sometimes used as an edging for the border. It is less difficult to cultivate than most of the gentians. These flowers, inhabiting naturally the high mountain regions, require conditions of atmosphere not to be found in the lowland garden. A pure and rarefied air blows over the lofty height where they grow wild, and the bright light of the summer season on the mountain can never be rivalled on the plain. The effect of a bright light on colour, has been well ascertained by dyers, who cannot produce the most brilliant tints under a cloudy sky; while it is equally evident in its effects on the plants which exist under its influence. Our winters too are often unfavourable to mountain flowers; for though the cold of elevated regions is far more severe, yet the snow remains much longer on the earth, and thus the plants are not subjected to the alternate frosts and thaws to which they are exposed in the winter and early spring of our country.

We have in our fields a pretty gentian, (*Gentiana campestris*,) which, however, attains a greater degree of perfection in some other countries, and in the month of October covers the tops of the hills of Norway. In Sweden too it is abundant at the same season, and it is described as one of the most beautiful flowers of the alpine pastures of that land, its blossoms

clustering among the short grass, and studding all the surface of the mountain. "The whole plant," says Dr. Clarke, "was scarcely an inch in height, and seemed to consist of little else than the petals of its flowers, which, in size and luxuriance, were out of all proportion to its diminutive leaves and branches."

The taller yellow gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) is also a species which can be well cultivated in the British garden. This flower, besides being handsome, is valued for the bitter medicine afforded by its root. It grows wild on the mountains of all the central parts of Europe, and is gathered for the French and English markets. The root also contains an abundance of sugar, and a spirit is distilled from it called *enziangeist*, or bitter snaps, which the peasants of the Swiss Alps drink, under the idea that it will preserve them from the injurious effects of the fogs and damps sometimes prevalent on these regions. Wherever this bitter plant abounds, the pastures are untouched by cattle, and large tracts of land which the herdsman would value, remain unused, because of its bitterness. It is this principle, however, which renders it so useful in medicine, and it is one of the medicines of greatest antiquity. In the West Indies, where the European constitution becomes languid by the heat of the climate, it is customary to take a preparation of gentian before meals, in order to assist the appetite.

Some other gentians may also be seen commonly in the garden. The small Alpine

species, (*Gentiana nivalis*,) which delighted Linnæus when on the Pyrenees by its blue blossoms, is tolerably hardy; and the kind termed Calathian violet, succeeds well. These have both blue flowers. The name of Gentius, a king of Illyria, is preserved to memory by these flowers, as this monarch is said, by Pliny, to have discovered their tonic virtues.

The different kinds of autumnal crocus open as the season advances. The purple species, which is so general in this and the next months, is the saffron crocus, (*Crocus sativus*,) the stigmas of whose flowers form the saffron of the druggist. This flower has long been cultivated in many parts of Asia, as well as in Greece. In Persia and Cashmere, large plantations of this crocus are general, and some of the lands of Smyrna are said to be quite purple with it, while its flowers are in great abundance in the gardens of Aleppo. In Europe it seems to grow wild on the south of the Tyrol, and on the Alps of Savoy; but its occasional appearance in our British meadows does not prove that it is indigenous there. Dr. Clarke found the plains of Tahtary covered with its gay flowers, and its bulbs were deeply seated in the black vegetable mould which forms the soil of these wide plains. Notwithstanding that the saffron crocus is cultivated in England, yet we receive our chief supply of the drug from France and Spain. In the latter country the cultivator of this flower is much annoyed by a fungus found upon it, and which the French call *mort de*

safran. Saffron was formerly much employed as a medicine and condiment, and is still so used in the east. The ancients esteemed it as a perfume ; and so high an opinion of its cheering and stimulating powers was once prevalent, that when a man was merry, he was said to have slept on a bag of saffron.

And now when the meadow saffron is, by its purple crocus-like flowers, turning our wild pasture lands into a gay carpet, we find too in the garden several cultivated species of this plant. Like the wild colchicum, the leaves of all wait for the following spring to make their appearance. Our garden colchicums are of many colours, and several varieties have double blossoms. None, except the wild colchicum, is of much value to the druggist, but great quantities of the roots, seeds, and blossoms of this are annually collected for medicinal purposes. Though very similar to the saffron crocus, so much so, that an inexperienced observer would mistake the one for the other, yet one simple and obvious distinction exists, in the fact, that the crocus has only three stamens and one central column or pistil, whereas the colchicum has six stamens and three pistils. This distinction might seem of little worth, yet it is truly valuable; since though the crocus is a plant which is perfectly innoxious, yet all the species of the colchicum possess an acrimonious quality, which in the meadow saffron of our fields is highly poisonous. Our garden species are some of them from the isles of Greece, and some

from Hungary and Russia. They were termed colchicum from the ancient Colchis, interesting to the classic reader, by its association, in the legends of ancient Greece, with the expedition of the Argonauts.

OCTOBER.

"The little bird, yet to salute the morn,
Upon the naked branches sets her foot,
The leaves now lying on the mossy root;
And there a silly chirruping doth keep,
As though she fain wonld sing, yet fain would weep;
Praising fair summer, that so soon is gone,
Or mourning winter, too fast coming on."

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

EVERY gust which blows thins the scanty foliage yet left on the boughs, and the leaf is broken as it waveth to and fro, while each bright sunbeam seems to leave its red or yellow tinge on the leaf ere it quits it. The humble flowers which yet remain of the summer are pale and wan: even the taller dahlias are drooping; and were it not for the Michaelmas daisies and the Chinese chrysanthemums, and the verdure of the evergreens, the scene would be already desolate. Of these, however, it may even now be said, "They are green before the sun, and their branch shooteth forth in the garden:"* yet still we can see that our Saxon forefathers had appropriately designated this month, when they termed it winter fyllith—winter beginning.

But though no straggling flower needs to be

* Job viii. 16.

tied to its support, and no luxuriant growth has to be restrained by the hand of the cultivator, still this month too brings its work to the gardener. It is now that the autumnal transplanting of the shrubs takes place, and most practical gardeners seem to prefer this season to the spring for these removals. Suckers of the rose, the lilac, and other trees are to be taken, and a pleasure is felt in the culture of these plants,

> "Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel."

Much has now to be done too in the greenhouse:

> "The surplus branch
> Must fly before the knife; the withered leaf
> Must be detached, and where it strews the floor
> Swept with a woman's neatness, breathing else
> Contagion, and disseminating death."

The interest which has in all periods of time been taken in the culture of plants, would of itself prove that the care of a garden is calculated to afford to many persons a source of delightful enjoyment. This is confirmed, too, when we remember that when God planned the earthly happiness of man, he placed him in a garden, in which were made to grow, not only "every tree that was good for food," but such also as were "pleasant to the sight;" while the employment of our first parents in their state of innocence, was to "dress the garden and to keep it."

The odour of the chrysanthemum is now very sweet, and it seems as expressive of the autumn, as the violet is of spring. Several

star-shaped flowers are by botanists placed under the general name of chrysanthemum, but our winter flower is the Chinese chrysanthemum, (*Chrysanthemum Sinense*) which, however, most modern botanists term pyrethrum. The most aromatic of all the species is the old-fashioned small red kind, which was the first cultivated in the gardens of this country; but this has little beauty compared with those of modern introduction, the flowers of which are very large, and have an odour like honey. The chrysanthemum is brought to great perfection in the Chinese garden ; and figures there in every variety of garden pot, from the elegant vase, to the uncouth little round pot which we often see figured on their paintings; while the poet of China sings the praise of the chrysanthemum, as the minstrel of Persia tells the delights of the rose. The Japanese value the flower equally with the Chinese, and it is a favourite ornament of their saloons and gardens.

In the year 1795, the chrysanthemum was brought into the English garden, though it appears to have been cultivated here at an earlier period, but to have been lost. Receiving it from a warm region, our cultivators naturally thought that it would require great care in our colder climate, and it was long deemed unfit for the open air. Now every garden sends forth its sweet fragrance, at a time when it is almost the only fragrant flower of the border. The Chinese are said to cultivate more than fifty varieties of this plant, for each of which they

have a distinct name. In England many varieties are enumerated, and the number is increasing; and the beautiful quilled species which have of late years been introduced, will, probably, originate many more. The varieties indeed are perpetually changing; but Mrs. Loudon has observed, that they may all be classed in one or other of the following divisions: the ranunculus flowered; the incurved; the China aster flowered; the marigold flowered, the clustered, the tasselled, and the quilled. The best annual chrysanthemum is considered to be the chrysanthemum tricolor, which has yellow, white, and purple flowers; and equally hardy, and worthy a place in every flower garden, is the yellow chrysanthemum coronarium.

The Greeks gave the general name of chrysanthemum to several flowers of a similar form to this. It signifies gold flower, and was given from the bright colours of some species known to them.

Some species of feverfew, with flowers something like those of the camomile, bloom late in the year. The roots are used in medicine, and several of the kinds which have double blossoms are very ornamental. The flowers of the double variety of our common feverfew (*Pyrethrum parthenium*) look like little tufts of snow on its branches, but the odour is very unpleasant. One or two yellow-flowered kinds are handsome, as the milfoil-leaved species, which is a native of Caucasus; and some very pretty ones grow wild on the Peak of Teneriffe.

The cotoneasters are now assuming their red, or in some species, their purple berries. Their pretty white or red blossoms come out in early spring, but they are so small as to be little conspicuous, and the plant is far better known to us by the beads of coral with which it is studded during autumn and winter. The common kind (*Cotoneaster vulgaris*) often grows in gardens. It is a frequent shrub in southern Europe, and was introduced into this land in 1656. The other species are of comparatively recent introduction, and are natives of India. The plant was named from the cottony down which invests the young shoots and fruits. Some of the Nepal species are handsome, especially the taper pointed and the downy kinds. They are all hardy, and may be grafted on the quince or hawthorn.

Although the sweet mignonette (*Reseda odorata*) is truly a summer flower, yet it may, by a little management, and without the aid of the greenhouse, be made to flower almost throughout the year. Indeed, the hardy plants which are self-sown, are often numerous at this season. If the mignonette be wanted for a winter flower it should be sown in July, and kept well watered. It is very fragrant, and the Parisians and the inhabitants of our own metropolis alike value its odours, for it may be seen in both cities where

> "The sashes ranged
> Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
> The Frenchman's darling,"

send forth sweet odours on the air.

It is rather remarkable that we in England should call this flower so exclusively by its French name, from *mignonne*, little darling, when the Frenchman terms it *la resede d'Egypte*. The Spaniards, who are also fond of this flower, retain for it the endearing name of *minoneta*. This plant is much cultivated by the gardeners who supply the London markets, on account of its use for balconies; and its delicate scent is rarely disliked. It is generally thought to be a native of Egypt, and to have been first sown in the gardens of the south of Europe, whence it was sent into England about the year 1752, when it was cultivated by Miller in the Botanic Garden of Chelsea, and soon became a popular flower. The mignonette has been found apparently wild in some parts of Barbary, but it seems probable that it may have sprung up from seeds borne by winds or other means from the Moorish gardens, where many flowers are cultivated. The plant was termed, by the ancients, *reseda*, from *resedo*, to calm or appease; because it was in former times applied to allay the irritation accompanying wounds. Pliny tells that it was regarded as a charm, and gives an account of a superstitious form of words which preceded its use as a remedy.

The tree mignonette (*Reseda odorata frutescens*) was long considered as a species distinct from the fragrant herb, but it is merely a variety produced by the cultivator. This perennial shrub retains its sweet odour during winter, and

is obtained in the following manner. A vigorous plant of the annual mignonette is, during April, transplanted into a garden pot, and the young blossoms nipped off while in the bud. A stick is then placed in the pot, to which the plant may be attached ; and in the autumn all the lower shoots and leaves are stripped off, so as to give the plant the appearance of a miniature tree. It must then be removed to a warmer room. As winter advances the stem gradually becomes more woody ; and if the plant be allowed during summer a free access of air, it may thus be grown for several years in a room.

The attempt to render this plant a perennial, renders it necessary to prune away the seed-vessels as soon as they appear, as, if allowed to perfect its seeds, the tree mignonette would soon lose its vigour.

We have a number of species of the mignonette in the garden, but the common fragrant one is by far the most valuable. Most kinds grow wild in the south of Europe, and a few of them in the sands of Africa.

And now some sweet violets bloom again at the close of the year. This is often the case with the common purple March violet, and its double variety ; while the sweetly-scented Neapolitan violets and the Russian violets are at this season in full perfection. The Parisians contrive to obtain at almost all seasons the flowers of the common violet, which they so much prize. This is done by checking the

early blossoms that hide among the leaves in spring, and thus

"The violets, whose looks are like the sky,"

may be found in their flower markets, from early spring till winter has long begun his reign.

Old prejudice and superstitions induced our forefathers to undervalue this second fragrance of the violet. Wellsford, in his "Scents of Nature," records that, "when roses and violets flourish in autumn, it is an evil sign of an insuing plague the year following, or of some pestiferous disease;" and so the blooming of a flower, which might have told of God's love, was enough to trouble a man's mind, and to presage ills which should have no existence but in his own imaginings.

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

The withered leaves bestrew the garden path,
  Made miry with the fall of fleeting showers;
The sun emits a feeble ray, which hath
  No power to warm or cheer the gloomy hours,
  The robin only sings among the bowers,
Now bare and desolate, his simple lay:
All other birds are mute and sad, or they
  Have flitted with the spring and summer flowers;
Yet are the borders not entirely bare,
  For many tinted asters still remain,
And bright chrysanthemums nod here and there
  Their heads, to chilling blast and pelting rain.

H. G. Adams.

A change has come rapidly over the garden during the last few weeks, and few and faint are the tints which variegate the winter landscape.

He "who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields," calls too for "the whirlwind out of the south, and cold out of the north."* Even the crystal brooks are now, in the descriptive words of the patriarch, "blackish by reason of the ice, wherein the snow lies hid;" and of a great portion of the day it may be said, "Now men see not the bright light by reason of darkness." The progress of the early year seems to breathe a call to energy and exertion; but its gradual decline seems to bid us "stand still and consider the wonderful works of God."

The Chinese or monthly rose (*Rosa indica*) yet puts forth its delicate and odorous blooms, which, if they have not quite so bright a tint or so powerful a perfume as in midsummer, are not less valued now, when gayer roses have left us. Like all other species of rose it requires a pure air, and will not thrive well in the crowded city. More than two hundred varieties of the China rose are known, and Villaresi, the royal gardener at Monza, is said by London, to have raised upwards of fifty varieties of this species, which have never reached Britain. The China rose flourishes much better in France and at the south of Europe than in our country, and some of the varieties alluded to are described as quite black, others much resembling a ranunculus, and many of them as highly odoriferous. The pretty noisette, or tea-scented roses, varieties of the China rose, are sold at

* Job xxxvii. 9; Job vi. 16.

Paris in small bouquets, wrapped round with coloured papers. The monthly rose, as its name might import, is in bloom almost throughout the year, but has most beauty and vigour in the months of June and July. The stem and leaves are of a light green, and the flowers semi-double, and its colour varies from a blush colour to a deep red. In order to secure a good number of autumnal blossoms, the young flower buds should be cut from the tree in June.

The winter cherry (*Physalis alkekengi*) is now in full lustre, as its bright red, glossy fruit shines through the thin, fibrous, bladder-like calyx which encircles it. The white flowers of this plant open in July, and are ornamental, but it is for the sake of the beautiful fruits that the plant is valued. When the calyx is macerated, either by exposure to the rains of the winter season, or by steeping in water, it forms a very pretty addition to the everlasting flowers, and the evergreens which are placed in the winter vase. The fruit, which is slightly acid, is wholesome, and was esteemed by the ancients for some valuable medicinal properties which they considered it to possess. In Spain, Switzerland, and Germany, it is a common fruit of the dessert. In all these countries it grows wild, as it does also in China. The fruits of the eatable winter cherry, (*Physalis Peruviana*,) a native of South America, are sometimes cultivated in this country for tarts.

The winter cherry was known by its Arabic name of *Alkekengi* to the botanists of queen Elizabeth's time. Gerarde says of it, "The red winter cherrie groweth upon old broken walls, about the borders of fieldes and in moist shadowie places, and in most gardens, where some conserve it for the beautie of the berries, and others for the great and worthy vertues thereof." Modern physicians think little of the properties ascribed to these plants.

Sometimes the bright stars of the anemones enliven the borders, even in December, while the laurustinus, and the Christmas rose, are the common flowers of every parterre. The former plant (*Viburnum tinus*) is a shrub of much beauty, and justly prized for its winter blossoms, which are of a purplish red colour, when half expanded, and which grow in large white clusters among its evergreen leaves. Dark blue berries succeed the flower. The shrub was introduced into the English garden in the year 1596, and though so hardy as to bloom amid winter winds and nipping frosts, is a native of the soft climates of the south of Europe, and an ornament to the hills and plains of northern Africa. It was known to the ancients by the name of Tinus, and, because its leaves, like those of the laurel, are evergreen, it was called laurustinus ; while the name of viburnum, from *viere*, to tie, was applied to it on account of the flexible branches of many species, which are used for binding boughs together. Our wild, wayfaring tree, which

country people of Kent call the cottoner, is used for making baskets, and is also a species of viburnum. Several varieties of the laurustinus are known in our gardens. The hairy kind has its leaves hairy underneath, and on the margin, and is found in the neighbourhood of Spain and Portugal, and near Nice ; and the shining laurustinus has larger and more glossy foliage, and is not in flower until spring. It is abundant about Algiers, and blooms freely in the classic soil of Mount Atlas. When the leaves of these plants decay, they should be carefully cleared from the shrub, if it is growing near a house, as in addition to the injurious effect of an atmosphere tainted by a decayed vegetation, this withered foliage diffuses a remarkably fetid odour.

And now, at Christmas time, we may gather from our gardens a flower as beautiful as any which the summer produces. The Christmas rose, (*Helleborus niger*,) in form like a large white rose, standing among its dark evergreen leaves, is the hardiest of all flowers. It is wild on high mountains, and its abundant growth in the isle of Anticyra, as well as its repute in the cure of mental disorder, originated the proverb of the ancients, "Send the lunatic to Anticyra." This species, as well as another, the eastern hellebore, (*Helleborus orientalis*,) is still in use among medical practitioners, but the powerful effects of these plants render this a remedy requiring great caution. The latter hellebore grows abundantly in the Levant, and

is very similar to our common winter flower, except that its blossoms are purple.

Many superstitions were connected by the ancients with the Christmas rose. In their dread of the presence and power of demons, they had a number of charms, which they considered effectual in guarding them from ill, and when the winter covered the ground with the white flowers of the hellebore, they strewed them over their floors, that thus they might hallow their dwellings; and so they introduced a real evil into their homes, instead of an imaginary one, for the perfume of this plant is highly injurious to health. When the ancients brought in these roses, and scattered them thus, they sung aloud hymns of praise to their pagan deities—the gods whom their own hands had made, while they entreated their aid, to keep them from the devices of evil men. The root of this plant was formerly powdered and taken as snuff, and the ancient Gauls are said to have been accustomed to dip their arrows in the herb. All the species of hellebore contain an energetic medicinal principle.

The moist climate of our island agrees well with the evergreens. Enabled, as they are, by a peculiar structure, to withstand a moderate proportion of heat and drought, yet the hot and dry summers of the greater part of the continent of Europe are unfavourable to them. The thick tough leaves of the evergreen shrubs and trees, are covered with a harder cuticle or skin than those of most other plants; and are also

characterised by having fewer evapoıating pores on the surface. The old leaves of this enduring foliage do not drop from the trees till the spring or summer, when the thickening new leaves of the well-clad branches are so many, that we are not conscious of the fall of the leaf. To our gardens the evergreens give a cheerful appearance, as contrasted with cold naked boughs ; but in countries as in Australia, where the trees are almost all evergreen, the traveller wearies of their monotony, and longs for the changing tints which variegate our foliage with the changing seasons.

Our most common and hardy evergreen is the holly, (*Ilex aquifolium*,) which is now glistening on the wild hedge, as well as in the garden. We have, however, under culture, several varieties of this plant, some of which have yellow berries; others, leaves variegated with pale yellow, or several tints of green ; but none is more beautiful than the common kind. The laurel, too, (*Cerasus lauro cerasus*,) looks bright under the clear sky of a frosty noonday. Both this and the Portugal laurel (*Cerasus Lusitanica*) blossom early in the spring. The first account which we find of the laurel in England, states, that it was planted in the garden of a London merchant, who used, in winter, to cover it with a blanket. It is a native of the south of Europe. The leaves are sometimes used to flavour custards, but it should not be forgotten that they are very poisonous in their nature.

The laurel of the poet is the sweet-bay,

(*Laurus nobilis.*) In former days its branches enwreathed the head of the priestess of Delphi, and were hung about the gates of the Roman emperors. The victorious general, too, who had carried the proud eagle to the conquest, was congratulated by letters wrapped in the fragrant bay leaves; and the soldiers who fought under him, entered the imperial city, carrying triumphantly the branches of the bay tree. It is a native of Italy, and of the southern parts of Asia. The perfume of its bruised leaf is very pleasant, and was once supposed effectual in relieving the symptoms of many diseases.

The handsome evergreen thorn, (*Cratœgus pyracantha*,) with its profusion of scarlet berries, vies with the mountain ash in winter splendour, and its dark foliage brightens in the sun. It is a native of North America. Some of the garden species of broom, too, retain their verdure, and the rhododendrons are still green; and the hardy alaternus (*Rhamnus alaternus*) glows with as bright a tint, and looks as fresh, even in the middle of the smoky city, as if it were flourishing under the clearest sky.

And thus amid all the changes of nature, God has given to earth, to its wild woods, and its sheltered gardens, a voice to praise him. "For who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?" Job xii. 9.

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY: INSTITUTED 1799.

WILD FLOWERS

OF

THE YEAR.

'Instruct us, Lord,
Thou Father of the sunbeam and the soul
E'en by the simple sermon of a flower
To live by thee."

LONDON:
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
Instituted 1799.

PREFACE.

In giving some account of the Wild Flowers of each month, the author has selected those which are most common, and most likely to be known by name to the general reader. To have enumerated each flower of each month, would have occupied so much space, as to render these few pages no more than a floral dictionary. The writer would regard the work as a little guide-book to the fields, and lanes, and woods; designed to direct the attention of the lover of country walks, to the lowly flowers, which he may be most likely to find in his path.

> "For not to dwell at large, on things remote
> From use, obscure and subtle; but to know
> That which before us lies, in common life,
> Is the chief wisdom."

The scientific name of each flower is added, in order to assist any who may wish to study

Botany. The author however, is not one of those

"Who *allium* call their onions and their leeks,"

and would rather recommend to the unscientific their simple English names. Many of these are connected with old times and old customs; or convey some idea of the uses of the plants to which they belong. Our pretty English May, or Hawthorn, gains nothing by its Botanic name of *Cratægus oxyacantha;* nor can the expressive Day's-eye, bring to us a pleasanter idea, even by its Latin name of *Bellis perennis.*

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WILD FLOWERS OF THE YEAR.

In watching the progress of vegetation, as, month by month, it expands before us, we are struck with the regularity with which the flowers and fruits of earth visit us at their appointed times. More than five thousand years since, the promise of God was recorded, that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease,"* and every season attests its fulfilment. They who mark most closely the changes of nature, know best how fully and faithfully God has kept his word. As said the inspired psalmist, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."†

Nature presents to us, even in the history of a simple blossom, some striking marks of God's skill and goodness. The devout Fuller has told us in what way we should look upon the flowers. "A flower," says he, "is the best complexioned grass, as a pearl is the best complexioned clay;

* Gen. viii. 22. † Psalm cvii. 43.

and daily it weareth God's livery, for he clotheth the grass of the field. Solomon himself is not outbraved therewith, as whose gallantry only was adopted, and on him; theirs innate, and in them. In the morning when it groweth up, it is a lecture of Divine Providence: in the evening, when it is cut down, and withereth, it is a lecture of human mortality."

The argument so often applied to the various works of creation, that an instance of design necessarily implies a designer, is so obvious, that a child can understand it. That there is a God who created, and hourly regulates this world of ours, with all its changing seasons, its coming flowers, and falling leaves, seems so direct a conclusion, that the more we examine the works of nature, the more entirely we feel the truth of the declaration of the psalmist, that it is the fool who "hath said in his heart, There is no God."*

Let us consider only the structure of the very commonest plant in the world; the meadow grass, which trembles at the touch of the butterfly, and bends before the sweeping wind. Destined for every soil and every situation, it is provided with a root composed of numerous slender fibres, so that it can penetrate, not only into the solid ground of the field, but can find its way into the scanty portion of earth at the top of the cliff, in the crevice of the wall, or on the loose sand. Its slight and hollow stem might be snapped by the high winds which pass

* Psa. xiv. 1.

over the most elevated spot of its growth; but the stem is strengthened by knots, at intervals, and by a coat of flint, which gives to it that solidity, furnished to the animal structure by means of the bone. Instead of receiving injury from the continual cropping of cattle, its leaves increase the faster for being broken; while its parts of fructification, which are to serve for its increase by seed, are carefully protected in a chaffy case, so minutely and beautifully perfect, that its fitness can only be seen by means of a microscope.

Advancing another step in the consideration of nature, we remark how constant the Almighty is to his original plan, in every subsequent growth of even the simplest flower. How, through all ages, the myrtle has its dark-pointed evergreen leaf, and its sweet odour; and the wood-sorrel, its triple quickly-withering leaf of palest green, and acid flavour. How the almond-tree, which first put forth its bloom to the inhabitants of Palestine, and covered over the branches with its gradually whitening blossoms, so as to serve as a figure for the silver hairs of the aged man, still blooms and grows white, as it grows older, just as it did in the days of Solomon. How, in closely looking at the small cup, or calyx, of a flower—a cup so small that even a drop of dew might fill it—we find that the thread-like ribs with which it is marked, are, in the calyx of one family of plants, ten in number; and in another, only five; and this in all the individual blooms which have come and

gone, since Adam first looked out on the flowers of Eden.

The wonderful fertility of plants in the immense number of seeds which they produce, and the plans by which they are scattered, affords another remarkable instance of goodness and skill. Sharon Turner states that "a common scarlet bean yielded a hundred pods, with five full formed beans in each; making in such stalks, from three to five hundred from the single bean sown." What is the end of all these numerous seeds? Why this profusion? Is it that five hundred plants may be produced by each one, and so the earth be overrun with a luxuriant vegetation, that man may find no room for himself and his home? No. The great Creator has provided the seeds, not only for the reproduction of the plant, but for the food of man and animals, and for the birds; yea, even for the meanest. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." He, in preparing for their wants, knew how many of his creatures should live upon seeds: how the corn should be even the very staff of life; how the apple, and the cherry, and a thousand other fruits, in which the seeds lie embedded, should refresh his frame, and gratify his appetite: how the silky thistle-down and the black ivy-berry should give food for the birds, and how "the cattle upon a thousand hills" should be nourished by the grass of his fields. He knew that the rains would destroy many seeds; that many would be blown by the

winds on unkindly soils; that myriads would lose their germinating powers, by falling on the waters; and he has thus enriched the plant, that after all that are eaten and that are wasted, there may yet be enough left to sow the earth with fruits to feed us, and flowers to delight us. How many, as the seeds of the pea, or bean, are inclosed in pods as impervious to rain, as if they were little bags of canvass; yet drying up as the seeds ripen, and, just at the time when they are fit for sowing, rolling round like a crumpled parchment, and letting their seeds fall out upon the land. See the hard shell of the cocoa-nut—so hard that, when we wish for the fruit within, we must employ the sharpest and firmest instrument to obtain it; yet it lies in the ground, and, after a while, the shell opens, and a tender green sprout rises into the air, and grows into a goodly tree; giving its shadow to the land, and the music of its waving leaves to the ocean. And why has the cocoa its hard shell, but that, growing as it does near the sea, it may be fitted to swim away to a distant continent; or to the island of the ocean, or the coral reef, which as yet is unclothed with vegetation; but, in the progress of years, is to present a green spot in the waste of waters, where the birds of song shall find shelter, and man shall come to eat the fruits of the land? So light is the down that fills the thistle-tuft, that the very faintest summer breeze raises its millions of feathers into the air; and let a stronger blast arise, and away the numerous

seeds of the ash are scattered far and near. Under the bough of the horse-chestnut tree, lies the nut wrapped in its green and prickly covering, till sun and rain have decayed its outer coat, and left it free to find its place in the soil; and the autumnal damps rot the hard woody cones of the fir-apple, and the seed, so carefully guarded till it is matured, finds its way into the land, and the dark forest of the north rises and thickens with its thousands of trees. Innumerable are the means which the great Creator employs in spreading fertility; from the gentle summer wind which ripples the waters, to the storm which lashes the waves into fury; from the humble and unintentional ministry of the fowl of the air, to the thoughtful plan and the unwearied pursuit of it, which characterises the works of his great masterpiece—man.

There are few who are disposed to resist these evidences of a Supreme Being, or to deny his power and beneficence as shown in creation. Though on looking around we see so much practical infidelity; though many are living and dying, and God is not in all their thoughts; yet most would acknowledge the fact of his existence, and welcome the proofs of his omnipotence. Far more general is the notion, that we can learn so much of God in his works, as that we need not study his Holy Word. We may listen to the sweeping winds with solemn awe, and a rapt and subdued feeling may take possession of our souls, and we may fancy it is devotion; yet not one holy or spiritual emotion may be

called into action, which shall enable us to go forth resisting the temptations of sin, or which shall really constitute communion with God. We may look on the broad landscape, smiling in summer beauty, and speak with delight of the "temple of nature," and say with the poet

> "The turf shall be my fragrant shrine,"

and follow with reverence the man of science, as he displays God's wisdom in the creation of the universe; and yet there may be no sense of God's holiness—no true penitence for sin—and no pleading of that atoning blood—without which, prayer cannot be acceptable to the majesty of God.

But though the knowledge of eternal life is not to be gathered from nature, yet we may not only trace God's love in the "flower of the field," but we may be reminded, by rural sights and scenes, of many portions of Scripture truth. Our Saviour himself bade us look upon this material world for this object. "And thus," says that pious old writer, George Herbert, "our Saviour made trees and plants to teach the people: for he was the true householder, who bringeth out of his treasury things new and old: the old things of philosophy, and the new of grace, and maketh one to serve the other. And I conceive," says he, "that our Saviour did this, that, by familiar things, he might make his doctrine slip more easily into the hearts even of the meanest; and that labouring people, whom he chiefly considered,

might have everywhere monuments of his doctrine; remembering in gardens, his mustard-seed and lilies; in the fields, his seed-corn and tares; and so not to be drowned altogether in the works of their vocation, but sometimes lift up the mind to better things in the midst of their pains."

JANUARY.

> "And not a leaf or sprig of green
> On ground or quaking bush is seen,
> Save grey-vein'd ivy's hardy pride,
> Round old trees by the common side:
> The sparrow too, a daily guest
> Is in the cottage eaves at rest;
> And robin small, and smaller wren,
> Are in their warm holes safe again
> From falling snows, that winnow by
> The hovels where they nightly lie;
> And ague winds that shake the tree
> Where other birds are forced to be."—CLARE

IN the cold and frosty January, where are we to look for the wild flowers? Their roots and seeds are safely covered by the snow, and if a bright clear sky, and a frosty air, should spread their influences, yet few will open to a January sun. Man has, by skill, brought the flowers of other lands to enliven our winter; even at that season when the Almighty "scattereth his hoar-frost like ashes," and none "can stand before his cold;" the golden clusters of the winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) have been brought us from the mountains of Italy, and their buttercup-like blossoms are bright as gold: the Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*) stands like a flower of snow among its dark shining leaves; and the bright pink, and deep blue

blossoms of the hepatica, are already putting forth their buds; and the laurustinus, so plentiful in the south of Europe, is almost as common in our gardens as in the wild hedges there.

Not more than three or four kinds of wild flowers can be found, even as occasional visitants of the English field, at this season. In our southern counties, indeed—in the warm and moist climate of Devonshire, for example—a few flowers, elsewhere considered as belonging to the spring, are in bloom in winter. Thus Carrington speaks of our vernal blossom, as the flower "that cheers Devonia's fields," and

"In her maternal clime,
Scarce shuts its eye on Austral suns—and wakes
And smiles in winter oft—the primrose—hail'd
By all who live."

The daisy that "never dies," is the flower which we are most likely to find on a January day, when the sun has melted the snow from the grass. In the north of England, this blossom is distinguished from the large ox-eye daisy, by the name of dog-daisy; from a notion that a decoction of its juice, if given to young dogs, prevented their growth. The simple daisy was once a flower of great renown, and was called in England, either herb Margaret, or Day's-eye; and it still bears the name of Marguerite, in France. It was the device of the unfortunate Margaret of Anjou, and when that queen was in prosperity, her nobles wore it in wreaths in their hair, or had it embroidered on their robes. That noble-minded woman Mar-

garet of Valois—the friend of Erasmus and of Calvin—she who could retire from the admiration and glitter of courts, to study her Bible and her own heart—she too had the daisy-flower worn in her honour, and was called by her brother Francis I., his "Marguerite of Marguerites."

The daisy grows in fields throughout Europe, and is as common in the Italian meadows as in ours. The children of Italy gather it as an early favourite, and call it *Pratolina*, (meadow flower.)

But leaving the daisy—which, after all, is rather the occasional blossom of the winter mead, than its accustomed ornament—we may wander to the heath-land, to search for the winter-furze, or gorse, (*Ulex nanus*,) when this low and prickly shrub is covered with golden flowers, which defy the winter frost. This species is of much lower growth than the common gorse, (*Ulex Europæus*.) On the latter, indeed, we sometimes espy a bright blossom in winter, and it is described as "the never bloomless furze;" but the peculiarity of the dwarf furze, is, that it exhibits its flowers solely in the autumnal and winter months, beginning to blossom in August, and remaining in full beauty till the end of January. It is very similar to the common species, but not nearly so general. It often grows on high lands, and the Pentland hills are covered with the mountain gorses,

> "They whom God preserveth still,
> Set as lights upon a hill:
> A token to the wintry earth, that beauty liveth still."

The grass lands look less beautiful in December and January than in any other months. As soon as February has commenced, the leaves of several spring plants unfold, and trail over the hedge-bank, or shoot among the grass, and the verdure begins to show a gradual increase. But the January grass is almost stationary, and, if we are to believe the old proverb, it ought not to grow at all during the month.

> "If the grass grows in Janiveer,
> It grows the worse for it all the year."

The fact is, that a premature spring is injurious, not only to pasture land, but to vegetation generally.

The common chickweed (*Stellaria media*) is another little blossom which may be found in this early month, when the snow is off the ground. It is too commonly gathered for the tame bird to need any description. Its small white flowers may be seen, on richly cultivated lands, at almost any season. Our song birds, especially the tribe of finches, are much indebted to this plant for food; as they eat, not only its numerous seeds, but its young tops and leaves.

Thus small is January's wreath! The trees, as yet, are leafless; but the shining dark buds of the horse-chestnut promise us a speedy foliage. One would wonder where the little birds found shelter, but the sparrow is twitting still, and the robin, though silent during the frost, will have a merry song to greet us on a

mild day. The thrush is commencing his tune; the storm, or missel thrush, sings loudly from the mistletoe; the wren unites her voice; and that sweetest of birds, the lark, is far up in the blue sky, pouring out a strain of melody from a joyful heart.

But we cannot, in noticing the vegetation of January, omit the holly and the mistletoe; for though their flowers are not now in bloom, yet they are so much more noticeable from their berries than their blossoms, that they seem to belong to the winter. The holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) intersperses its dark leathery leaves, sharp with spines, among the bare branches of many a hedge-row. Whole forests and woods of this beautiful evergreen, flourish in several parts of our country; and some fine spots of clustering hollies may be seen in Medwood Park, in Staffordshire. This plant was once called scarlet oak; and our present word, holly, is a corruption of holy-tree, by which name it was formerly known, on account of its old use in decking churches at Christmas time. In many parts of England it is very common in the hedges; and Carrington, among the other plants of Dartmoor, notices

> "The holly pointing to the moorland storm,
> Its hardy fearless leaf."

The flowers of this shrub appear in April. They are white, and look as if cut out of wax. The holly wood, which is very hard and white, is used by turners; and the boxes and

screens on which paintings are so often made, are formed of it. In the pretty Tunbridge-ware, which is ingeniously made of various woods, the holly is extensively used. The viscous substance found in the bark, is used for birdlime; and the tough leaves afford food for the caterpillars of one of our loveliest butterflies—the azure blue insect, which is known to naturalists as the *Papilio Argiolus.*

The silvery modest mistletoe (*Viscum album*) cheers the wood, and with the holly adorns our houses. The Druids, probably, first used these plants as the indoor winter ornament; and we dress our houses now, because the custom reminds us of the olden days; and on the same principle

> "As the ear
> May love the ancient poet's simple rhyme,
> Or feel the secret charm of minster's distant chime."

We use the mistletoe chiefly at Christmas; but, even a few centuries ago, its branches were carried about from house to house, on the first day of January, by young men and maidens, as a new year's gift of friendship; and to the present time, the French preserve a relic of this practice. Our forefathers, at a very early period, cherished the mistletoe as a plant which, when gathered with some superstitious rites, would cure disease, avert the influences of the evil eye, and preserve from many dangers; and earlier still, when our country lay in all the darkness and ignorance of Druidical superstition, this plant was reverenced and almost worshipped, and associated with practices at

which humanity shudders, and which, though professedly in honour of God, were as far removed as possible, from the great truth which Christianity teaches, that "God is love."

We cannot now trace exactly the origin of placing the mistletoe-bough in houses and churches. Some authors have thought that an idea prevailed among the ancient Britons, that the sylvan spirits took shelter in it, when the trees of the wood were leafless. Others trace the custom to the fact, that the feast of Saturn was held in December, when the priests compelled the people to celebrate it by bringing in branches from the woods. The earlier Christians are supposed to have adopted these as signs of joy and gladness; and as Christmas-day was their festival, they, on this day, decked their houses and churches.

FEBRUARY.

"There is at times a solemn gloom,
Ere yet the lovely spring assume
Sole empire, with the lingering cold
Content divided sway to hold;
A sort of interreign, which throws
On all around its dull repose;
Dull, not unpleasing; when the rest
Nor snow, nor rain, nor winds molest;
Nor aught by listening ear is heard
Save firstfruit notes of vernal bird,
Alone, or with responsive call,
Or sound of twinkling waterfall;
Yet is no radiant brightness seen
To pierce the cloud's opposing screen,
Or hazy vapour to illume,
The thickness of that solemn gloom."—MANT.

The chilly month of February, though it

seems scarcely propitious to the growth of flowers, yet shows some little token of coming spring, by a small increase in their number. The leaves on the gooseberry-bush unfold themselves, and the purple-tinged leaves of the honeysuckle may be seen. The ancients accounted the mulberry as the wisest of trees, because it never put forth its foliage till winter snows, and spring blasts, were fairly over; and the oft-nipped young green leaves of the elder tree, in this month, shows that an early leafing tree is subject to a few injuries from the weather. But He who "made everything beautiful in his time," the God who "made summer and winter," has given Nature such abundance, that though a few young shoots may be nipped by frosts, yet the leaves on the main branches are uninjured, and the shoots which the early winds had withered, are not missed in the plentiful canopy of the summer tree.

The banks which border the lanes and roads, are now putting forth the leaves of many flowers of spring. The foliage of the early speedwell is daily growing larger. The deeply-crimsoned stems and young shoots of the Robert-leaved cranesbill, brighten the hedge; and the five-fingered leaves of the creeping cinquefoil, are clothing their long trailing stems. The fragrant leaves of the ground-ivy may be gathered now, and are often collected by country people as a cure for the coughs so common in this month of alternate snow and thaw.

The snow-drop (*Galanthus nivalis*) is the

herald of the flowers. It is not, strictly speaking, a wild plant; but it has, for so many centuries, established itself in many orchards and green lanes, that it is commonly enumerated among British flowers. A lane near Newport, in the Isle of Wight, is so full of its pure white blossoms, that it is well-known as Snow-drop lane.

The red dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*) is common on sheltered hedge-banks in February. Its leaves are of a dull green, slightly tinged with purple, and its reddish purple flowers are not beautiful. It is an old remedy for stopping the effusion of blood, and a very good one. This plant is in blossom all the summer, until October, throughout England; though it is little noticed by any, but those who, in taking cognizance of the flowers, omit not the humblest. Its foliage has some little similarity to those stinging plants, the true nettles; and this and the other species are termed dead, or blind-nettles, because they have not the venomous powers of their neighbours, the stinging-nettles.

The dandelion, (*Leontodon Taraxacum*,) "the Sunflower of the Spring," as Elliott calls it, illumines the moors and pastures of the early year, and holds a store of honey for the bee, and those other insects which soon will glitter "with wings of sunbeams," across our path. The dandelion root is a medicine used in England, but still more generally in France and Germany. The leaves are sold in the markets of the former country for salad, and, at Gottingen,

the young roots are roasted for coffee. The Scotch call the dandelion, the hawkweed gowan. Every one must have noticed its downy ball of seeds, which are so well adapted for flying in the air, though they need the breeze to scatter them; for if the plant be gathered, and brought into the house, the little shuttlecock-shaped seeds remain firmly fixed in their place. The French term this flower, *Couronne de prêtre.*

The dandelion seeds are eaten by birds: and another plant still more valuable to them, is now blooming. It is the common groundsel, (*Senecio vulgaris;*) this not only affords food to birds, by its feathered seeds, but they eat also the young foliage: and as few berries, except those of the ivy, are now in perfection, it is of much service. And who that delights in the woodland walk, and listens to the full-hearted song which is poured forth in varied notes, and considers their innocent enjoyment, but must feel glad that a provision is made for the necessities of the birds? What would our spring and summer woods be, if the birds were wanting, and we lacked the spirit-stirring influences of their music and motion? As Hurdis says of the songsters—

> "I love to see the little goldfinch pluck
> The groundsel's feather'd seeds, and twit and twit,
> And soon, in bower of apple blossom perch'd,
> Trim his gay suit, and pay us with a song·
> I would not hold him prisoner for the world."

The groundsel is one of those plants which seem to follow man wherever he sets up his habitation. It was originally a native of some

parts only of Europe, and of the southern countries of Asia ; but there is, perhaps, hardly a European settlement in the world, in which it does not grow upon the land which the colonist is bringing into culture. Its seeds must be disseminated among the grain, which the European takes with him to the foreign land. Similar circumstances are known to have occurred with some other of our wild flowers. The Canadian flea-bane (*Erigeron Canadensis*) was planted, about a century since, in the gardens of Paris, having been brought thither from its native Canada. Its seeds have now not only crossed the channel, to deck our wild landscape, but have spread themselves over France, Germany, Holland and Italy, and brought forth their flowers in the Isle of Sicily. So common is the flea-bane, during the autumnal months, in the southern counties of our native land, that botanists class it among our wild flowers.

Our common groundsel has a remarkable power of softening water, if it is poured, while boiling, on the plant; and this fluid forms a pleasant wash for the skin, irritated by the winter wind.

The groundsel is one of the largest tribes of flowers which is known throughout the world. No less than five hundred and ninety-six species having received each a distinct name from the botanist. There are nine British kinds, and many hundreds are cultivated in the gardens of this country.

By the latter end of February, the road-side,

and the neglected field, are gay with the bright yellow rays of the coltsfoot, (*Tussilago Farfara.*) It is almost the only instance of a wild flower which appears long before its leaves are unfolded. This plant is a certain indication of a clayey soil, and its large angular leaves sometimes abound on the moist clay grounds in the middle of summer. Loudon says of this plant, that "it covers the clay soils on the pestilential Maremmas, in Tuscany, where scarcely any other plant will grow; and the traveller on these desolate scenes, must rejoice even at this sign of vegetation. We can, indeed, hardly find a spot of earth on which some plant peculiar to the soil will not take root."

The coltsfoot is, in some country places, called bull's-foot, or horse-foot. The cottony down, under the leaves, is often gathered in villages for tinder; and the feather of the seeds, which is of a more woolly texture than that of the dandelion, is used by the Highlanders for stuffing mattresses. The coltsfoot leaves, previously dried in the sun, will, if dipped in a solution of saltpetre, burn like linen rag. The flowers are infused as a remedy for coughs, and were smoked through a reed by the ancient Greeks, as a cure for asthma. The leaves are, in modern times, the chief ingredient of the British herb tobacco, and are often smoked by country people.

By the cold river-side may be found the flowers of the marsh marigold, (*Caltha palustris;*) its sturdy stem unbroken by the winds, which make wild music, on the harp of reeds,

fringing the edge of the water. Unless the weather be unusually fine, we must not expect it to blow before the end of the month, but by that time it is very common on marshy grounds. It is often the flower which enlivens the mountain streams of Scotland in the early year, and is very common in France, where it is called *souci d'eau*. It is well known in villages as the water-blob and water-boot. In Lapland and Sweden, whole plains are yellow with it, and its opening is eagerly watched, as it is the first flower which blooms wild in the northern fields, from which the snows are seared by the spring; though it is not till May that it expands there. Few flowers are more abundant on the marshy lands of Holland, than this. It is not a good plant for the pasture, as the cattle reject this and the other species of ranunculus, except when herbage is so scarce that they have little choice. The blossoms of the marsh marigold, when boiled in alum, give a good dye to paper.

MARCH.

"What though the opening spring be chill,
Although the lark, check'd in his airy path,
Eke out his song, perch'd on the fallow clod
That still o'ertops the blade! Although no branch
Have spread its foliage save the willow wand
That dips its pale leaves in the swollen stream!
What though the clouds oft lower! these threats but end
In sunny showers, that scarcely fill the folds
Of moss-couch'd violet, or interrupt
The merle's dulcet pipe, melodious bird!
He, hid behind the milk white sloe-thorn spray,
Whose early flowers anticipate the leaf,
Welcomes the time of buds, the infant year."—GRAHAME.

The old proverb that "March comes in like

a lion, and goes out like a lamb," though belonging particularly to the month under the old style, is yet generally true. There is scarcely any time of the year, in which a few weeks effect a greater change in the appearance of nature, and the state of the atmosphere, than at this time; when, both in morn and eve, "the still increasing day" grows on the darkness, at the command of Him who causeth "the day-spring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth."*

The vegetation of this month is not only rapidly assuming the brighter colours of spring, but daily becomes less thin and scattered. The winding sprays of the honeysuckle are pretty well covered; the spiry branches of the Lombardy poplar look quite green, and the flowers of the ash are coming out on its leafless boughs. The well-cased foliage which has been hid in the resinous buds of the horse-chestnut tree, bursts out from its winter shield, and the green flowers of the gooseberry invite the bee to their nectar. The blossoms of the apricot tree slowly unfold on the garden wall, and that beautiful plant, the almond tree, is putting forth its delicate blushing flowers so quickly, and so much in advance of all the other trees in the garden, as to remind us of the haste and vigilance of which it was an ancient symbol. "What seest thou?" said the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah, and he said, "I see a rod of an almond-tree. Then said the Lord,—Thou

Job xxxviii. 12, 13.

hast well seen: for I will hasten my word and will perform it."*

The redbreast and the blackbird already sing their welcome to the spring; and foremost among the flowers are the bright blossoms of the mezereon, (*Daphne mezereum.*) Long before the rough winds have subsided, its odours greet our sense, and its beauty adorns our gardens. It is also a wild flower, and grows in many woods of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, and other counties; although it was introduced from Sweden, into the English garden, many years before a better acquaintance with our native botany had led to the knowledge that it belonged to England's Flora. Its purple clusters are out before the leaves appear, which Cowper has noticed.

> "Mezereon too,
> Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
> With blushing leaves investing every spray."

The mezereon grows in woods throughout Europe; from the forests of the cold Lapland, where it looks gay among the dark firs and the stunted birch trees, to the richly-decked groves of the bright islands of the Mediterranean sea; and in some islands of the Levant, it is so plentiful, that a silver-leaved variety is commonly used for brooms, and called broom plant, (*Herbe aux balais.*)

Almost every part of the mezereon is acrid. Its one-seeded berries are highly poisonous. Dr. Thornton records the case of his young

* Jer. i. 11, 12

sister, who died in consequence of eating but a small number of these bright fruits. Yet, poisonous as they are to man and animals, in general, the Great Creator has adapted them to the use of some of his creatures, for to the birds they are palatable and nourishing; and the thrush and the blackbird search for them eagerly, and haunt the neighbouring trees and hedges where these bushes abound.

A small piece of the mezereon bark, bound down upon the skin with a plantain leaf above it, is used in villages to raise a blister. In France, the use of plants, in their simple forms, is much more common than with us; and the physician directs his patient to gather his remedy from the wood or field; and the herbalist collects a quantity of plants, which are hung, dried on strings, and sold in the shops of Paris. There we may find the mezereon bark, for the blister; and the mullein, the melilot, the mallow, and fifty others, ready for medicinal or surgical purposes. Both in France and England, the mezereon-root is used for toothache, and a yellow dye has been obtained from its branches.

This plant, and the several kinds of Daphne, are often termed laurel, from the similarity of the leaves of some species to those of the shining laurel tree. Our old names for the mezereon, are olive spurge and mountain pepper, and the French call it *laureole gentille*. In Italy, it is a favourite flower, and called *Biondella*, (Little fair one.)

Our other wild Daphne is much more general

than the mezereon in our woods, and, like the former plant, blooms very early in the year. This plant, the spurge laurel, (*Daphne laureole,*) is about three feet high, and having circular rows of leaves around its stem, its mode of growth somewhat resembles that of a palm-tree. It has pale yellowish drooping flowers, which hang in clusters under its dark glossy leaves. Like the mezereon, it has an acrid property, and its bluish black berries are poisonous. It is also an evergreen, and looks as bright in the winter wood, as when summer's sun shines upon it.

The bright celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) is showing its golden glossy stars by the middle of this month. A large number of flowers spring from one root, and its heart-shaped leaves are spotted with a whitish green colour. Very beautiful it is, but very injurious to most lands. Linnæus thought that agriculturists should endeavour to extirpate this pretty flower, as he considered that it injured all the plants growing near it. Its blossoms shut up before rain, and, even in fine weather, are late in unclosing, for they never look out upon the sun before nine o'clock; and by five in the evening, they are folded up for the night. The roots are highly valued as a medicine, in Cochin China; but they are very bitter and acrid, and must require caution.

On old walls, and on pastures where the soil is of a rocky nature, may now be found the small white blossoms of the common whitlow

grass, (*Draba verna.*) Its little flowers are cross-shaped, its stem about two inches high, with a small circle of slender leaves around its base. Each individual plant is so very small, that flower and foliage might all be hidden by a shilling piece, but it grows in patches, and is therefore conspicuous above the low green moss, which so often protects its roots. The old writers on herbs commended it as a cure for whitlows, and it was also called nailwort. The Swede is interested in observing this plant, for he waits for its appearance to sow his barley, as he judges that, when its flower opens, the spring is sufficiently advanced to favour the germination of his seeds.

A small flower which blooms throughout the summer, begins to blossom in March. Perhaps few but botanists, would call it a flower; most persons would speak of it as a weed, yet like all the works of Him who made it, its structure is beautiful when seen through a magnifying power. It is familiarly known by the name of shepherd's purse, (*Capsella bursa pastoris,*) on account of the little heart-shaped seed-vessels, which are closely set upon its stem, and somewhat resemble the old-fashioned purses. It may easily be known by these pouches, and is also commonly called pick-purse. Insignificant as the plant seems, it appears to have attracted some notice in the olden times, for it was called shepherd's scrip, case weed, St. James's wort; and its name of "poor man's parmacetic," would suggest the idea that it was deemed of some

value in the healing art. *Fleur de St. Jacques* is also its old name in France, and it was, doubtless, dedicated to some patron saint, in the days when men sought the intercession of some departed man, like themselves, of a sinful nature, but renowned for deeds of piety, instead of seeking God, in the only appointed way which he has himself revealed. A small green flower the gloryless, or moschatel, (*Adoxa Moschatellina,*) may be gathered now in the wood, or on the shady hedge-bank. The stem has four or five flowers at its summit, and the leaves, two or three in number, are on very long stalks. It is not particularly pretty, but is remarkable for its musk-like scent, which, however, is little perceptible during the day, though strong when the plant is wet with the pearls of morn and evening dew.

The woods, so beautiful in the coming month, begin to show here and there a woodland flower, which peeps above the withered leaves and green wintry mosses. The primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) is to us what the Italians call the daisy, flower of spring. The violet too, (*Viola odorata,*) that long noted favourite of the poet, half hidden among its broad green leaves, betrays itself, by its sweet odour, to the rambler in the woods. The old naturalist Pliny had so high an opinion of the virtues of this flower, as to state, that a garland of violets, worn about the head, prevented headache, or dizziness. Modern writers hold a far different opinion; for it is a well-known fact, that a great number of violets,

in a small apartment, have, in several instances, caused convulsions. The leaves of the violet are frequently applied to bruises; and the flower was so highly esteemed as a remedy for weak lungs, that a conserve, called violet sugar, or violet plate, was, in the time of Charles II., sold by apothecaries, and continually recommended by physicians, to their consumptive patients. A decoction of the heartsease, which is a species of violet, is still much used as a medicine on the continent. The violet imparts its colour also to liquids, and vinegar derives not only a brilliant tint, but a sweet odour, from having violets steeped in it. It is, however, from its beauty and scent as a wild flower, that the violet will ever derive its chief attraction. It has been said, that "the wise read nature as the manuscript of Heaven," and we may trace a legible handwriting of the Great Creator, even in the lowliest blossom that the Divine Hand has streaked and pencilled.

> "The coy anemone that ne'er uncloses
> Her leaves until they're blown on by the wind,"

is now coming into blossom. The wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) is generally common in England, yet unknown in many parts of Essex, and some other counties. The old name of wind-flower is still retained in France, where it is called *l'herbe au vent;* and its English name is taken from *anemos*, which the ancients gave it, because its delicate flowers quivered in the fierce breezes of March, and its shining seeds were carried about on the air.

It is still more abundant in the April woods than now; and though frail when gathered, and dying quickly, yet it continues in bloom during a longer period than many other flowers. The blossom of the wood anemone is white and star-shaped, and its stem has about its middle, three dark smooth green leaves, of a very beautiful form, with the veins tinged with crimson. This flower is poisonous to cattle, and, if bruised, will raise a blister on the skin.

The daffodil (*Narcissus pseudo narcissus*) blooms in March, not only in gardens, but also in a few moist woods, and in meadows watered by streams. This flower, though admired by us chiefly for its early appearance, was a great favourite with the old poets; and it was one of the flowers, called by Spenser, Michael Drayton, and other early writers, by the name of "lily." The poets' narcissus, also, (*Narcissus poeticus,*) grows wild in some sandy fields of England, especially in Kent and Norfolk, but does not flower till May. Its colour is pure white; in former days it was called "primrose peerless." It is the flower so celebrated by the ancient Greek writers.

The scent of both these, as well as of every other species of narcissus, is strong and deleterious. In Holland, where this flower, as well as many others, receives a great degree of attention, some of the more delicate species of the narcissus tribe are cultivated in rooms, and the odour from these rooms is a frequent cause of sickness. This scent is probably more powerful

in the damp air of that country, than it would be in our land; a fact of which we may form a good idea, by observing how strong are the odours from the field, or wood, just refreshed by a heavy shower, and which float upon the damp air then evaporating from the surface of the earth.

But the daffodil is a rare wild flower, compared with one which we now find in bloom under hedges and in woods. The common arum, (*Arum maculatum*)—better known by its familiar names of lords and ladies, wake robin, or cuckoo pint—has large broad glossy leaves, often marked with black spots. From the centre of these leaves, rises a kind of column, sometimes of a green, or often of a rich violet colour. On this is the blossom, and on this cluster, the bright orange berries which in winter make so conspicuous an appearance, and which, though highly poisonous, are relished by birds. The root of this plant is about the size of a nutmeg, and contains a farinaceous powder, which has been applied to a variety of purposes. In former times, when not only ladies but gentlemen also, were attired in ruffs, so starched and stiff, that on looking at their portraits we wonder how they contrived to bow their heads, a thick starch was much valued; and clear-starching was regarded as an elegant feminine accomplishment, in which gentlewomen liked to excel, and for the teaching of which they often paid a great price. The starch found in the arum root, was, in those days, highly prized as an excellent stiffener of linen, but the

use of it so irritated and chapped the hands, that the less glutinous root of the wild hyacinth was preferred, when it could be obtained.

The root of the arum, while in the fresh state, is highly acrid, though a favourite food of the thrush; but drying, or any application of heat, dissipates its acrimonious quality, and it is then good for food. In Portland island, where the plant grows in great abundance, the dried roots are much eaten by the peasantry; and both there, and at Weymouth, the powder, or flour, derived from them, is sold, and considered as good for making bread as the corn flour. This powder is also sent to London, and sold by the London chemists under the name of Portland sago: in times of famine, it has been very extensively used, instead of flour, by the poor, throughout England. The fresh root is taken as a medicine, both in this country and in France; and the renowned cosmetic, known by the name of cypress powder, is made from the arum root.

The cranesbills, of which we have seventeen kinds among our wild flowers, succeed each other as the summer advances. The earliest blossoming species is very common now, and may be found until autumn. It is the dove's foot cranesbill, (*Geranium molle.*) It has a small upright bell-shaped flower, of a deep rose-colour, and round leaves; which, as well as its stems, are so covered with soft hairs, that it is like velvet to the touch. The French also term it, *pied de pigeon.*

And now, as an old poet sings, the "palms put forth their braverie," and the early willows are covered with their grey, or yellow catkins, around which, on a bright day, the bees hum perpetually. The willow commonly called palm, is the great round-leaved willow, (*Salix caprea,*) and its golden balls are a beautiful ornament to the woodland scenery. They are called by country children yellow goslings; and the old custom of decking the houses with the willow branch, in the week succeeding Palm Sunday, is still retained in villages. It is often, also, carried about at this season of the year, as a representation of the palm branches, which the children strewed in the way when our Saviour entered Jerusalem. It is not easy to guess why this tree should have been selected to represent the oriental palm, as it is altogether unlike it. If we except the weeping willow, (*Salix Babylonica*)—which, though common in this country, is not indigenous,—there is little beauty in the willows generally; but they are very useful trees to the tanner and basket-maker, and are valuable for poles and fences.

The hazel (*Corylus avellana*) is now decked with its hanging tassels, and the wind, as it rushes on, in playful gusts, through the woods, stirring up the streams, waves also the boughs of the alder, which are becoming covered with their dark gloomy foliage. The alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is a sombre tree. Its leaves are singularly glutinous; so much so, that if placed between the teeth, one might fancy, on biting

them, that a coating of Indian rubber lay between their two surfaces.

APRIL.

"The smooth sweet air is blowing round,
It is a spirit of hope to all:
It whispers o'er the dewy ground,
And countless daisies hear the call.

"It mounts and sings away to heaven,
And 'mid each light and lovely cloud;
To it, the lark's loud joys are given,
And young leaves answer it aloud.

'It skims above the flat green meadow,
And darkening sweeps the shining stream;
Along the hill it drives the shadow,
And sports and warms in the skyey beam."

STERLING.

The "showers that water the earth," alternating with the sunshine and soft airs, render this a month of spring flowers. Primroses, anemonies, and violets are spread like a gay variegated carpet over the woods, and the scentless dog violet, (*Viola canina,*) with larger blossoms than the darker tinted sweet violet, blooms in great profusion. Its flowers do not, like those of our old emblem of modesty, hide among the leaves, but flaunt gaily on their longer stalks before the breeze.

And now God "quieteth the earth by the south wind,"* and all nature looks calmly beautiful. The swallow knoweth the time of his coming, and the voice of the dove is heard in the wood. The hedges are white with the

* Job xxxvii. 17.

blossoms of the early sloe, or black-thorn, (*Prunus spinosa.*) Its dark brown branches are thick with the snowy wreath, long before the leaves appear, and, as the spring advances, the leaves take the place of flowers. The white blossoms are very beautiful, and very common in the English coppice. The little harsh fruit, in flavour something like the unripe damson, is relished, perhaps, by none but the school-boy: it is, however, often gathered into jars and bottles, and after lying buried under-ground till winter, makes a very tolerable preserve. The sloe is much used in the adulteration of port wine, and the leaves are said to be sometimes mingled with the tea-leaf, and sold as Chinese tea. An infusion of the flowers, made by pouring boiling water on them, is a common village medicine.

But leaving the woodland boughs, with their half unfolded beauty, we may pass on to the green lanes where many flowers already grace the hedge-bank. Foremost of these, as most common and conspicuous, are the bright blue flowers of the germander speedwell, (*Veronica chamoedrys,*) sometimes called eyebright and cat's-eye. Ebenezer Elliott calls it by the former name.

> "Blue eyebright! loveliest flower of all that grow
> In flower-loved England! Flower whose hedge-side gaze
> Is like an infant's! What heart does not know
> Thee, cluster'd smiler of the bank, where plays
> The sunbeam on the emerald snake, and strays
> The dazzling rill, companion of the road."

The old English names of this flower, were

"Paul's betony," and "fluellin:" but, in former times, all the species of speedwell were so highly admired by the Dutch for their real, or supposed virtues, that they called them "honour and praise." The germander is of a most brilliant blue; so bright that it cannot fail to attract the notice of those, who, in early spring, walk in the country; and its notched leaves, in shape not unlike the leaves of a rose, but growing opposite to each other on the stem, sufficiently mark the species. We have in our fields, woods, and hedges, thirteen species of them, but only three other kinds are to be found now in bloom. The ivy-leaved speedwell, (*Veronica hederifolia,*) which has thick green leaves, shaped like the ivy-leaf, is now a very common weed in gardens, and runs profusely over some corn-fields among the early blade; its long slender stems entangling in each other, or in those of the plants near it. Its flower is very small, but most brightly blue, and the seed-vessel which succeeds the blossom, is formed of two lobes. Similar in colour is the blossom of the speedwell now to be found commonly on walls, (*Veronica arvensis,*) but the whole appearance of the plant is different as it grows upright; and the grey field speedwell (*Veronica agrestis*) has a small blossom not quite so bright as those of the other species, while its notched leaves and stems lie along the cultured field, or cover over the waste bank. All these are smaller than the germander speedwell, and they all bloom from spring to autumn.

As summer progresses, the remaining speedwells come into blossom. One species, the common speedwell, (*Veronica officinalis,*) is in flower in May, and is very frequent in dry woods and pastures. It grows upright, and has a pale blue spike of flowers. The leaves are bitter and astringent, and are often made into tea, especially on the continent. Indeed the French call this flower, *Thé de l'Europe.* An old Danish writer once contended very warmly, that this plant was the identical tea of China; and before the Chinese tea had acquired a settled reputation for its superior flavour and stimulating qualities, this, as well as several other plants, were recommended by herbalists as a more safe and pleasant beverage. The Swedish and German writers of the present day, have a very high opinion of the speedwell tea.

A small flower, the lamb's lettuce, (*Valerianella olitoria,*) is now very abundant on banks and in corn-fields, especially on a light soil. As this flower blooms when flowers are few, it is more likely to be observed than if a blossom of the summer. It has very thick compact clusters of tiny lilac flowers, its stem is about half a foot high, and the branches spread out over a good space of ground. The leaves are of a pale green, and they are considered by many people to have, if eaten when young, the flavour of lettuce. The plant was formerly cultivated for salad, and is still called by the French, monk's salad, (*salade de chanoine.*) Its English name suggests the idea of its growing at

the season when these beautiful spring animals, lambs, are seeking their food on the mead. Our forefathers called it white pot-herb; and Gerarde, the old botanist of queen Elizabeth's time, says of it, "In winter and the first months of spring, it serves for a salade herbe, and is with pleasure eaten with vinegar, salt and oile, as other salades be, among which it is none of the worst."

One would scarcely suppose that a plant so insignificant as to be overlooked by many who must often pass it, could have been at all important as food; but vegetables, either for cooking, or salad, were, in those days, little cultivated in our country, and brought to so little perfection, that the lamb's lettuce would be a less contemptible dish then than now.

The fragrant leaves of the ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) are winding now on their long stems by every wayside, and, if bruised, diffusing their sweet odour, while their whorls of purplish lilac flowers are daily becoming more abundant. This is another plant which was more highly valued some centuries since, than in modern days, though it is still used in making a tea for the cure of coughs. The "herbe women of Cheapside," who, in queen Elizabeth's time, were very numerous on that spot, walking up and down the street with their baskets of "simples" on their heads, had, at all seasons, either the newly-gathered, or dried ground-ivy, and regularly cried it for sale about this and other streets of London. They called

it by the now almost-forgotten names of ale-hoof, tun-hoof, cat's-hoof, hay-maids, and gill-by-the-ground; and the latter name is still used for it in some counties. Ray mentions several cures wrought by the ground-ivy, and warmly recommends its use.

One can now hardly walk into the corn-field, without finding the spray of fumitory, (*Fumaria officinalis.*) The flower is of a deep purplish rose-colour, with a small black spot upon it, and a number of these small tubular blossoms grow on the upper portion of the stem, forming a spike of flowers about an inch long. The leaves are divided into slender segments, and are so like those of the bright yellow garden escholtzia, that the gardener scarcely distinguishes the young leaves of the weed from those of the flower. They are of a pale sea-green colour. In summer the neglected corn-field is often quite red with the blossoms of this plant. This plant retains all its properties when dried. It has a very strong saline flavour, and is particularly wholesome for cattle. It is called in the northern counties earth-smoke.

The dark red stems and leaves of the herb Robert, or Robert-leaved cranesbill, (*Geranium Robertianum,*) are gay with its pretty pink flowers, which mingle on the hedgebank with the blue germander speedwell. The cranesbills received their name from the Greeks, because the seed-vessel is long and pointed like the bill of a crane. The different species are now becoming numerous; and a less conspicuous

kind than the Robert-leaved, is quite as common as that flower. It has round deeply jagged leaves, and its blossom is a small pink bell. This is the *Geranium dissectum*. One of the cranesbills, found wild in North America, (*Geranium maculatum,*) has so astringent a root, that it is called alum-root, and used in that country, instead of that mineral, to fix the dye of the manufacturer.

Every day now adds to the charms of the meadow land. "Blessed be the Lord for the beauty of summer and spring, for the air, the water, the verdure, and the song of birds." This was the exclamation of Linnæus; and who, in looking on the April mead, is not ready to respond, Blessed be God for the green earth?

Every one knows the pretty and sweet-scented meadow clover, (*Trifolium pratense,*) and most of us have gathered it from the summer meadow, or the purple field, on which it is sown, and sucked the honey from its petals, while hundreds of bees were humming over the clover-field, intent on sucking it too.

The farmer has not, on his land, a more valuable herbage plant than this and the white Dutch clover, (*Trifolium repens.*) He has commonly two crops of it, the one in spring and the other in autumn. The name of trefoil has been given to it for its triple leaflets, and the French term it *tréfle*. The plant was called "clœfer-wort" by the Saxons, from *cloefer*, to cleave—probablyon account of its divided leaves. The Dutch term it "klafer;" and in our country

it was, of old, called "cock's head" and "honey-suckle."

The white Dutch clover is no less common than the purple species; and it is interesting, as being most commonly considered to be the shamrock, the national emblem of the Irish; though some writers consider that to be the leaf of the wood-sorrel.

In the beautiful valley of Sharon, so renowned in Holy Scripture, Monro found the Dutch clover to be most abundant, covering the grassy plain with its white blossoms, and there, as with us, inviting swarms of bees to gather over it.

Besides the white and purple clovers, we have several other species of trefoil, though many of them bloom rather later in the summer. The little common yellow trefoil, (*Trifolium filiforme,*) with its small flowers, not larger than a green pea, meet our eye in every country walk, blooming on every pasture land and wayside. The hop trefoil, (*Trifolium procumbens,*) a yellow flower, somewhat larger than the last-named species, is less common than that kind, but readily distinguished from it by its oval, hop-shaped blossoms. We have besides, on gravelly heaths, and on banks and pastures, some very pretty downy purple trefoil, one of which, the hare's-foot trefoil, (*Trifolium arvense,*) took its name from the soft silky whitish tuft of which its flowers consist, and which resembles the foot of the hare. This is very common on pastures, and in corn-fields,

during July and August. A less frequent but very singular species, is the strawberry-headed trefoil, (*Trifolium fragiferum,*) which has purplish red flowers an inch in diameter, and is often so coloured as to bear a considerable resemblance to a strawberry. It may, at a glance, be distinguished, by this circumstance, from the other trefoils; it is found in meadows during the middle of summer. A calcareous soil is that on which clovers flourish best; and it is well known that, if lime be strewed on some soils, a crop of clover will arise on lands from seeds which were scattered over them by the wild winds ages since, and which only needed this stimulus to arise and cover the earth.

The leaves of all trefoils are very sensitive to a moist atmosphere, and close their leaflets when the sun goes down, drooping low beneath the drops of evening dew. They also close and droop when the rain is coming on, and the clover field presents a singular appearance during a heavy shower. The ancients remarked, that they closed and trembled before a tempest; but, probably, the movement of gradually enfolding leaves was regarded as a trembling; or, perhaps, the fierce winds, which precede the storm, shook them so much as to originate this idea.

On dry soils, in warm climates, several species of clover attain a great degree of luxuriance; though clovers generally are best adapted to temperate regions. In Buenos Ayres clover grows to such a height, that "men and cattle

cannot see each other while passing through a plain covered with its flowers."

Blooming beside the clover, and nodding far above it, we may find the "fragrant dweller of the lea," the yellow cowslip, or paigle, (*Primula veris,*) and also the yellow oxlip (*Primula elatior.*) This latter plant is less common than the cowslip, and much like it, but it has larger flowers. The leaves of both are like those of the primrose. The cowslip was formerly called "petty mullein," and "palsy wort;" and as the French still term it, *herbe de la paralysie,* it probably had some old renown as a medicine. An ointment of cowslip leaves has long been used to remove tan and freckles from the sun-burnt complexion.

The cowslip is a great ornament to our spring meadows. Nightingales are affirmed by some ornithologists, to have a peculiar predilection for these flowers. It has been said that they are only found where cowslips are plentiful. "Certainly," says Mr. Jacob, in his "Flora of Devon and Cornwall," "with regard to these counties, the coincidence is just:" but the writer of these pages knows a copse, much frequented by nightingales, and from which a chorus of their songs issues in spring, but around which cowslips cannot be found for some miles.

Another meadow flower, the cuckoo-flower, (*Cardamine pratensis,*) with its pale lilac blossoms and pungent leaves, is now abundant in moist meadows; as are also several other species of cardamine, too closely allied to each other to be easily discriminated. The little dark-

blue flower, which, though called the autumnal gentian, (*Gentiana amarella,*) blooms in spring, may now be found in the meadow, especially where the soil is composed of limestone. It is about three inches high, and its bell-shaped flowers grow in clusters. It is not quite so common as the species called field gentian, (*Gentiana campestris,*) which much resembles this, and is very abundant on chalky, hilly pastures, in the month of October. We have several other wild species of gentian, but all are rare.

The little wild pansy, or heartsease, (*Viola tricolor,*) is now in blossom on banks and cultivated fields. It is sometimes purple, at other times, yellow with purple streaks, but most commonly all its petals are of a pale sulphur colour. It is a species of violet. The numerous and beautiful pansies cultivated by florists, are mostly natives of Siberia, and the northern countries of Europe, and America; though a few like our sweet violet, are found within the tropics.

The early scorpion grass, (*Myosotis collina,*) with very small but very bright blue blossoms, is also a spring flower, and is common both on sterile fields and cultured lands; and now, on marshy meadows, we may see the butter-bur, (*Petasites vulgaris*) which may easily be described. This plant has a thick stem, with a crowded cluster of pink, or rather flesh-coloured flowers, and is apparently destitute of leaves. Like the coltsfoot, to which plant it is nearly allied, its blossoms long precede its foliage; but when this appears, it is very conspicuous,

as the leaves are larger than those of any other wild flower.

By the latter end of April almost every woodland displays its stores of blue wild hyacinths, (*Hyacinthus non scriptus*.) Some of the old herbalists, as Gerarde, term this beautiful flower the harebell; but the nodding blue-bell of the heath-land is the harebell of modern poets, and probably, also, of most of the older ones. The Germans call our woodland flower the *Englische* hyacinth; but it is a native not only of every county of England, but of every land of Europe. The roots contain a great quantity of starch, which, in former times, was used, not only by the laundress, but also instead of gum for pasting books and setting feathers on arrows. The fresh root is said to be very poisonous. Our garden hyacinths, called eastern hyacinths, (*Hyacinthus orientale*,) are very abundant in Palestine. Lamartine found them in great beauty on the plains, at the foot of Mount Lebanon. Kitto, in his "Pictorial Palestine," says, "the narcissus, the hyacinth, and the violet are in flower in the Holy Land in the beginning of February. One species of narcissus is cultivated in the open fields, by the people of Aleppo, and towards the end of winter, certain Arab women are seen in the streets, carrying baskets of the flowers for sale, and chanting as they walk along 'How delightful its season! its Maker is bountiful.'" The Holy Land has also the grape hyacinth and the blue grape hyacinth in its corn-fields.

The starch grape hyacinth (*Muscari racemosum*) is sometimes found in grass fields, and among ruins, in this country, but many botanists think that it is not indigenous. The circumstance that a flower is found among ruins, renders it probable that a garden was formerly in the neighbourhood, and that the flower was once cultivated there. This flower is well-known by being so common in gardens. It resembles a bunch of dark purple grapes, and when bruised a quantity of clammy starch-like substance issues from it. The flower has also the odour of wet starch. It has a large bulbous root.

Very nearly allied to the hyacinth is the vernal squill, (*Scilla verna*,) which is now in flower on rocks by the sea-side. It is about four or five inches high, with blue bells and long slender leaves. It is common on the coasts of the northern and western parts of Great Britain, and frequent in the Orkney and Shetland isles, where the bleak winds are so unfavourable to vegetation that few flowers will flourish. The bulbous root contains a very useful medicine, but as it is also a powerful poison, it should never be taken but under the direction of a medical adviser.

The large greenish yellow blossoms of the two species of wild hellebore now stand out boldly under the hedges. These are the green hellebore, (*Helleborus viridus*,) and the stinking hellebore, (*Helleborus fœtidus ;*) the latter species is clearly distinguished from the other, by the purple colour at the edge of its green

cup. They have both large leathery leaves, and, as well as the garden hellebores, among which is the Christmas-rose, are extremely poisonous.

The white balls of the guelder-rose *(Viburnum opulus)* now thicken on the shrub, its

> "Silver globes, light as the foaming surf,
> Which the wind severs from the broken wave;"

being ornamental both to the shrubbery and the hedge-row. These flowers, however, are not so globular in their wild as in their cultivated state, when in the garden; they contrast with the bloom of the lilac-tree, and well deserve their common name of snowball. The guelder-rose derived its name from having been planted and flourishing profusely in Guelder-land, in the Low Countries; but the plant is a native of almost every country of Europe, and quite common in our wild hedges. The berries are among the most beautiful of our autumnal fruits. They are of an elliptical shape, very juicy and brilliantly red. They have a very nauseous taste, so much so, that one can only wonder how they can be so palatable to the Swedes; yet the people of Sweden relish them greatly when made into a paste with flour and honey. In Siberia, they are not only eaten thus, but a spirit is distilled from them by fermenting the berries with flour. The young shoots are made into tobacco-pipes and whip-handles.

The box shrub, (*Buxus sempervirens,*) so well known in its dwarf state as an edging to the garden border, puts forth its green flowers in

April. It was formerly used for decking houses; for in olden times, not only was the Christmas holly placed on the chimney-piece, but every season gave its proper flowers, or shrubs, to adorn the English home. Thus the old poet Herrick records these long-lost customs:

> "When yew is out, the birch comes in,
> And many flowers beside;
> Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,
> To honour Whitsuntide.
>
> "Green rushes then, and scented bents,
> With cooler oaken boughs,
> Come in for comely ornaments
> To re-adorn the house."

About this time we may search for the beautiful dark-purple silky stars of the pasque-flower, (*Anemone pulsatilla.*) It grows on chalky pastures, or on banks, and, sometimes, though more rarely, in woods; and the rare wood-anemone, (*Anemone ranunculoides,*) with its soft yellow flowers, springs up in some few sequestered woods at this season. It has been found in several parts of Kent and Hertfordshire.

Among the most common, and certainly one of the prettiest flowers which we in this month gather from the woodlands, is the wood-sorrel, (*Oxalis acetosella,*) though, unless the spring be forward, we shall not find it till the latter end of the month. While we admire the pencilled beauty of this blossom, we observe too the delicate light green-tripled leaf. We have not a wild flower which can rival the sensitive plant of warmer regions—that plant, the consideration of whose mysterious sensibility, is

said to have driven the ancient philosopher to madness,—yet if any British flower might be called a sensitive plant, it is this. Not only does its foliage close and droop at the approach of the evening dews, but at the coming rain, even before the "storm sings i' the wind," the wood-sorrel compresses its leaves, and even when handled roughly in gathering, it shrinks from the touch. The wood-sorrel grows especially around the trunks of decayed trees. That pleasing poet Charlotte Smith, describes the flower-gatherer,

> "Who from the tumps with bright green mosses clad
> Plucks the wood-sorrel, with its light green leaves
> Heart-shaped, and triply-folded; and its root
> Creeping like beaded coral!"

The plant is generally most plentiful in the thickest part of the wood.

Wood-sorrel is abundant on the Alps and other mountains, and is found as far to the north of our globe as travellers have ever yet penetrated. In Lapland, it is so plentiful and so much used, that Linnæus says the natives of that country take scarcely any other vegetable food than sorrel and angelica. The great botanist adds, that it is in Norway the *primula*, or first flower of spring.

The old herbalists had a variety of names for the woodland flower. It was called wood-sower, stubwort, wood trefoil, cuckoo's meat, and alleluya. Gerarde says of it, "Apothecaries and herbalists call it alleluya and cuckowe's meat; either because the cuckowe feedeth thereon, or

by reason when it springeth forth the cuckowe singeth most; at which time also alleluya was wont to be sung in our churches." It is still known both in Spain and Italy by the name of alleluya. It is much used on the continent as a fish-sauce, and was, among our ancestors, in great repute, as the chief ingredient in the "green sauce," which, in former days, always accompanied fish on the table.

The acid flavour of the sorrels, renders them generally palatable to children, and, if taken only in small quantities, they are not pernicious; but no one should, at one time, eat more than a handful of wood-sorrel. The expressed juice of this plant is used to remove spots and iron-moulds from linen. It is also diluted with milk and given as a febrifuge in our English villages, and still more commonly in Russia.

A yellow species of the wood-sorrel (*Oxalis corniculata*) is occasionally found in shady places, but it is rare. The plant which is most commonly known as sorrel, and which may be seen in any summer meadow, is the field dock-sorrel, (*Rumex acetosa.*) It is most abundant on the sandy soil. Its acidity is less than that of the wood-sorrel, and its spikes of dark red flowers often rise above the grass, and may be seen very plainly on the pasture land. The sheep's sorrel, too, (*Rumex acetosella,*) is scarcely less frequent on open places, and its flowers are similar to those of the field-sorrel, but much smaller. These two sorrels are not in bloom until June and July. They resemble the wood-

sorrel in their acid flavour only: botanists class them among the dock plants. A red dye is procured from the field-sorrel. The smaller species is an invariable indication of a dry soil. Both kinds are very nutritious to cattle.

From the old wall, the sweet wallflower (*Cheiranthus cheiri*) now greets us with its odour. Many are the flowers which we value for their fragrance, but scarcely one is sweeter than this. It is much prized in the east.

The common white bryony (*Bryonia dioica*) is now abundant, its large vine-shaped leaves covering the hedges, and twining among the bushes, both by their twisting form and by the numerous and long curling tendrils which grow on every stem. It is often called wild hop; but those who live in the counties in which hops are cultivated, know it to be very different from that plant. We have no wild trailing plant, which better than this merits the old name of white vine. The flowers are marked with green veins, and though not showy, are when examined found to be very beautiful; but it is the luxuriant growth of the bryony, which renders it an elegant plant. The stems often extend four or five feet, and grow much faster than those of plants in general. Their rapid growth is attributed, by Linnæus, to the immense size of its white branching root, which was formerly much used as a medicine. It is very acrid, while fresh, but, when dried, it yields a flour which has often supplied food to the poor in

times of scarcity. Its properties are not, however, so certainly known as that it can be recommended as food.

Happily for us, we are not subject to those occasional seasons of dearth which were formerly experienced in this country, when the poor were compelled to seek vegetable food from wild roots and seeds. An old writer, speaking of the dearth which prevailed in England in 1555, says: "At this time plenty of peas did grow on the sea-shore, near Dunwich, in Suffolk, never set or sown by human industry; which, being gathered in full ripeness, much abated the high price of the market, and preserved many hungry families from perishing." The plant which thus appeared at so needful a season was the sea-side pea, (*Pisum maritimum*,) which is a native of our shores, but not usually very common or abundant. It is a pretty wild pea, sufficiently similar to the sweet pea of the garden to remind us of that flower. There is a tradition that the plant sprang up in consequence of the wreck of a vessel near the coast, on which the seeds were washed by the waves: but this is scarcely probable, as the bitterness of this pea renders it unlikely that it had been of sufficient value for exportation; and the sea-side pea is so different from all other kinds, that the flower could not have been the produce of the seed of any other pea. Like the writer just quoted, we must attribute its growth to the providential interference of God, but cannot account for the means employed for its production.

This food was a tolerably wholesome one, and formed a far better substitute for corn than the diet to which many of the French peasantry were reduced in 1817. At this season, the heavy rains which fell over the greater part of France, had, in some departments especially, prevented the ripening of the corn, and it became so dear as that the rich only could purchase it. The poor were compelled to live on wild sorrel, nettles, thistles, and even on the boiled leaves of trees. This food sufficed to preserve life; but a large number of those who lived on it, were afflicted both with dropsy and other complaints. During the disastrous campaign of Napoleon's army at Moscow, the unfortunate soldiers boiled and ate the common grass of the field, and delirium was the consequence of this wretched food.

Our wild bryony abounds with a fetid juice, which is most abundant in its berries. These may well be termed coral-berries, for they are not clear like those of the nightshade, nor do they glisten like them; but they are perfectly round, smooth, and unpolished, and of the most beautiful red colour. Notwithstanding their poisonous nature, they are eaten by birds; and while no other animal but the goat will feed on the branches of the bryony, these are to him a delicious repast; he will leave untouched all other vegetables to feed on this. Several kinds of bryony are much used in India, and other countries, as medicines.

MAY.

"Grateful 'tis,
Ah passing sweet, to mark the cautious pace
Of slow-returning Spring, e'en from the time
When first the matted apricot unfolds
Its tender bloom, till the full orchard glows;
From when the gooseberry first shows a leaf,
Till the high wood is clad, and the broad oak
Yields to the fly-stung ox a shade at noon,
Sun proof." HURDIS.

From about the middle of March until summer is fairly ushered in, vegetation makes such rapid progress that we every day observe some changes. This is particularly the case if we walk among the woods, for never are the woods so bright nor so full of those flowers which love the shade, as during April and May. The spring colouring of the trees, too, has its own emerald beauty, though differing from that of the richly variegated autumn.

There is also something peculiar in the life and activity of the spring woodlands, which contrasts with the stillness of the autumnal season in the same spots—when no birds are singing, and when the winds are still, the influence of their shade and silence is like that of the starry sky, soothing and calming to the mind; but the spring wood is all so joyous and so full of voices, that they who wander thither, leaving their hearts open to the impressions of nature, feel that its songs and soft green light, and delicate shadows inspire to gladness. A wild thrill of delight is among the trees. The storms of March have left behind, the lilac clouds and the bright gleams of sunshine, and, as yet,

the quivering leaves hide not the light, and a thousand mingled voices hail the coming of summer. Happy are they to whom God has given hearts attuned to the utterances of nature, and whom the cares and follies of the world have not weaned away from its teachings! Happy too, if in the seclusion of the woodland, their hearts can be lifted up to God, with wonder and admiration of his providential goodness to those of his inferior creatures which sport and sing in the woods; and more blessed still, if they can recognise that God, not only as their Creator and the Father of their spirits, but commune with him as their Friend and their Guide, and, like Adam in the brighter bowers of Eden, hear the voice of God among the trees.

The turf which enamels the ground of the wood is rich with a variety of flowers,

> "As if the rainbows of the fresh wild spring
> Had blossom'd where they fell."

The hyacinth, the anemone, the violet, and the wood-sorrel, are as beautiful as during last month, and many of the large tribe of orchis flowers are coming into bloom. A very singular one is the brown bird's-nest orchis, or tway-blade, (*Listera nidus avis.*) One might see it growing, and on passing it hastily, take it for a withered flower; but on gathering it, we see that, brown as it is, it yet has life and freshness. It is just of the colour of some drooping oak-leaf, which is fading on the autumn bough, or strewed among multitudes on the winter earth. It is not, however, on account of its colour, that it

received its familiar name. Unlike the generality of our British orchises, its root is not formed of bulbs, but of a number of fibres, crossing and entangling each other, like the sticks of a crow's nest. Its common companion in the wood, is another species, the green twayblade, (*Listera ovata*,) with its broadly ovate leaves and spike of small yellowish-green flowers. They are both of the orchis tribe, and persons accustomed to this family of plants would easily recognise them as belonging to it.

More conspicuous than these, and more beautiful also, is that species of orchis commonly called the lady orchis, which is the brown-winged orchis of the botanist, (*Orchis fusca.*) It is during May, very common in chalky woods, especially in Kent, and is the handsomest of our wild orchideous plants. The stem is sometimes two or three feet high, and the large and thickly set flowers form a cluster of the size or a bunch of grapes. The upper part of the blossom—the helmet as it is called—is of a dark brown purple colour, but the lower lip is white and beautifully spotted. Gay enough it is to represent a lady delicately attired—for "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these,"—but in what other respects it resembles a lady, it would be hard to tell. A similar remark may be made of the man orchis, (*Acceras anthropophera*,) which is as much like a man as an animal, and far more like some of the smaller insect tribe, as the gnat. One month later, and we may find on the chalky down

two or three species of the orchis plant, which certainly much resemble the insects from which they are named. These are the bee, the fly, and the spider orchises. The latter, however, is so similar to the bee orchis, that many writers consider it merely a variety of the same plant.

The bee-orchis (*Ophrys apifera*) is abundant on some chalky and clayey soils, yet is so confined to peculiar spots, that it can hardly be called a common wild flower; in Scotland it is almost unknown. In many parts of Kent and the Isle of Wight, it flourishes in profusion. The blossom is nearly as large as an humble-bee, and so like that insect in form and colour, that it might mislead the passer-by into the belief that a bee was hovering on its stem. It never deceives the bee himself, for, on a warm day of June or July, a number of these busy creatures settle upon it, and rob its nectary of the sweet juice which it contains in abundance. The fly-orchis, too, (*Ophrys muscifera*,) grows on similar spots, and as nearly resembles the fly as this does the bee.

The resemblance of insects is far more striking in the orchideous plants of tropical countries. One species, the butterfly-orchis, (*Oncidium papilio*,) is so similar to our tortoise-shell butterfly, as continually to deceive the eye of the traveller. There is something so remarkable in these resemblances that the lovers of flowers usually feel much interested in the orchis tribe, and many exotic orchises have been of late years introduced into this country.

Our native orchises, which though not in bloom till next month, are now sending up from the earth their long glossy leaves. There are more than thirty species of our wild flowers, not all called orchis, but all of the orchideous tribe, and all much alike. The two most common species, which are found in almost every English county, are the early purple orchis, (*Orchis mascula*,) and the green-winged meadow orchis, (*Orchis morio*.) The former has its leaves marked with dark purple spots, and is very frequent in the woods in May. The latter is found in meadows at the same season. They are both of a pinkish-purple colour, and the wood species is sometimes deliciously fragrant. The meadow orchis often grows pretty thickly among the grass, and has been found with fawn-coloured blossoms. The roots of both these flowers are perfectly wholesome and nutritious. The marsh orchis, (*Orchis latifolia*,) and the spotted palmate orchis, (*Orchis maculata*,) are also common, but on moist places only. They have pale tinted lilac, or white flowers, and are thus quite distinct from the two kinds just mentioned. They are also taller and more slender, but by no means so general. In Essex and Cambridgeshire, they are abundant. On the bogs about Tunbridge Wells, they are among the most common flowers; yet in many districts in Kent, famous as it is for orchis plants, and possessing peculiarities of soil necessary for their production, not a single plant of these two species can be found

The butterfly-orchis (*Habenaria bifolia*) is another flower which by its beauty and frequency claims our notice. It has white fragrant blossoms, the scent of which is considerably increased in the evening. It blooms in June in the moist copse, and though much like a butterfly, yet resembles some smaller and more slender winged insect. No hothouse flower is more delicately beautiful than this simple tenant of the woods, which so often lives and dies unseen by the eye of man.

A very pretty but very small species of orchis, called ladies' tresses, (*Neottia spiralis,*) is common on dry hilly pastures, but so uncertain in its appearance, that we cannot depend on finding a single plant in the next summer on a field decked this year with thousands. A field in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, was, in the summer of 1843, so full of it, that one might gather it at almost every step. In the August following, not a stem or leaf indicated that it had ever grown there. This flower had several old names. It was called sweet-cods, sweet-cullins, and stander grass.

In considering the orchises we have rather anticipated the season of the year, as several of them grow in the later months. We may, however, with tolerable certainty expect to find in the May woods, a pretty and well-known blossom the wild strawberry-flower, (*Fragaria vesca,*) which blows both now and in June. The patches of this meek white flower lie among its leaves on the grassy bank which skirts the wood, and

are still more numerous beneath the shelter of the overarching boughs. This flower is of the rosaceous family of plants, its shape being like that of the wild brier-rose, and all fruits growing on a plant bearing this shaped flower, may be safely eaten. A more wholesome, or a sweeter fruit than this, cannot be gathered. The wood-strawberry is common throughout Great Britain. It is equally so in the woods of France ; and the Parisians esteem this small fruit, and that of the equally small alpine strawberry, as far superior to the hautboy.

The different kinds of strawberry are natives of temperate, or cold climates, and are common in Europe, and the greater part of America. They also often present themselves to the eye of the traveller, on the hill-sides of Asia and Africa. In cold countries, berries generally are more abundant than in warmer regions, and the wild strawberry grows in great quantities in the woods of Sweden, and is much valued for desserts. Linnæus considered it the most wholesome of all fruits, and records that he, in two instances, was cured of fits of the gout by eating wild strawberries. It is commonly carried about the towns of Sweden for sale, and the great botanist desired his servants to purchase, at all times, the strawberries which were offered at his door, however large the quantity. Hoffman thought that, if eaten in the early stage of consumption, they would arrest the progress of that malady.

The hautboy strawberry (*Fragaria elatior*)

grows in several of our wild woods and hedges, and is reckoned among British plants, yet it can be scarcely considered indigenous. It is, by most writers, thought to be a native of the American woods, but it was commonly cultivated before the time of Henry VIII.—a period in which few fruits were reared in England, until after Catherine of Arragon had had them imported. The beauty both of the fruit and flower of the strawberry had attracted the notice of lord Bacon. Speaking of a flower-garden: "Trees," says he, "I would have none in it, but some thicket made of sweetbrier and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses; for these are sweet, and prosper in the shade."

How beautiful now are the delicate bells of the lily of the valley, (*Convallaria majalis,*) as they grow, half-hidden in the shade of their two broad green leaves! These flowers are now brought in baskets for sale, into the towns, and often planted in town gardens, there to pine away far from their native shades. The root of this flower is bitter, and has medicinal properties, and the juice of its leaves, prepared with lime, yields to the manufacturer a beautiful dye. By its side may sometimes be seen the wax-like drooping blossoms of the Solomon's seal, (*Convallaria multiflora,*) with their delicate green edges. Its root, called whitewort, is used for bruises, and certainly removes their blackness. Superstitious people, a few years ago, thought

that the great botanist and naturalist, Solomon, had given this virtue to the plant, by stamping it with his seal; in proof of which, the herbalist would point to the marks which are to be found on the knotted root, and claim for his remedy a wondrous efficacy.

The sweet woodruff, (*Asperula odorata,*) with its clear white cluster of small flowers, and its rings of green leaves, is now in bloom around the roots of trees. Its fresh leaves are almost scentless, but we have no native flower which so long retains its odour when dried. Withering says of it, that its strongly aromatic flowers, infused in water, make a beverage which far excels all the teas of China. The dried leaves, when mixed with snuff, are also said to give to it the sweet odour of the Tonquin bean—without being, as that seed is, prejudicial to the eyesight—while the scent is more lasting.

A very singular flower, called herb Paris, (*Paris quadrifolia,*) now grows in moist shady woods. From the summit of the stalk proceed four broad leaves, which form a cross. The flower, which is green, consists of four petals, and the leaves of the calyx, or cup, are four; this arrangement is so peculiar, that the flower may easily be known by this description. On account of its four cross leaves, it has the name of true-love knot. Green flowers are always of a suspicious nature; a poison often lurks in their blossoms, leaves, or fruit; nor is the herb Paris an exception. It has, however, been used medicinally, and Linnæus recom-

mends it to the attention of the faculty. The leaves and berries partake of the narcotic principle of opium, and the juice of the berry is applied to remove pain in the eye. As a flower, the herb Paris is rather singular than beautiful, but we admire it as an instance of the wonderful variety which exists in "the flowers of the field."

The common bugle (*Ajuga reptans*) is another flower generally found in the woods in May. A hardy plant it is, its purple blossoms sometimes venturing forth in January, though less vigorously than at their proper season. It also grows on moist hedgebanks, and varies with a pale lilac, or even white blossom, the shape of which is much like that of the ground ivy. It was formerly called sicklewort, or carpenter's herb; for, in former times, when the labourer was cut by the sickle, or other sharp instrument, some plant which grew near him was employed to cure the wound, and this was found very serviceable, and is still a common remedy. A proverb was very common in France concerning this and another wood plant, "He needeth neither physician nor surgeon who hath bugle and sanicle." This latter flower, however, is known to be a positively injurious application, especially if it grow in a moist place, which, indeed, is the situation in which it flourishes most.

The white flowers of the holly are now in full beauty, and the spindle tree (*Euonymus Europæus*) is covered with its small green blossom.

Then there are the white clusters of the cornel, or dogwood, (*Cornus sanguinea,*) coming out upon the red twigs of the bush, and blooming occasionally all the summer, till winter is fully in; its leaves turning red at the season when those of plants in general turn yellow. It is found more especially on chalk, or limestone soils, and its wood has often been burned as an ingredient in making gunpowder. This shrub was also called gaten tree, and Chaucer speaks of its fruit as the gaten berrie. Its hard wood was anciently used for martial instruments; and Virgil has celebrated the plant as "the good and beautiful cornel."

In some few of our native woods, we may find the red and black currant bushes, and the gooseberry also, all of which flower in May. The fruit of the black currant (*Ribes nigrum*) is, in Kent, called gazel, and was known there, by this name, in the time of queen Elizabeth. All these bushes grow in cold climates, and are abundant in the snowy woods of the north. The black currant is common in the woods of Russia and Siberia; not only do the Russians make wine of its berries, but the Siberians make a tea of its strongly scented leaves. The red currant (*Ribes rubrum*) is planted in Essex for making wine.

But quitting the woodland, and coming away into the open field, the eye is greeted by the beautiful field of saintfoin (*Hedysarum onobrychis*) which is now most brilliantly red, and on which an unclouded sun throws a dazzling

lustre. But the saintfoin, though cultivated in fields, is an English wild flower; it is not, however, common in Scotland. It springs up naturally, on dry and chalky soils only, its long roots penetrating between the crevices in the rock, or chalky cliff; and it is upon this kind of soil that it can be cultivated to most perfection. On several of our moors, as Royston Heath and Salisbury Plain, it is plentiful. It is not till the latter end of May that the saintfoin is in full flower on the field, and it then contrasts beautifully with the light green of the corn-field, and the deeper tint of the meadow. It was formerly called cock's head grass, and French grass. Fuller, commenting on the vegetable productions of the different counties of England, says of it, "It is called saintfoin, or holy hay. Superstition may seem in the name, but there is nothing but good husbandry in the sowing thereof. It was first fetched out of France from about Paris, and since is sown in divers places in England, especially at Cobham-park, in Kent, where it thriveth extraordinary well on dry, chalky banks, where nothing else will grow." The plant is, in the present day, very plentiful as a wild flower, and decks the hedge-banks of some of the lovely green lanes which lie around the ancient hall of Cobham.

A most singular instance of spontaneous motion is exhibited by a species of saintfoin called the moving plant, (*Hedysarum gyrans.*) This is a handsome flower of a purplish pink colour. It grows on the banks of the Ganges, and is

called by the natives of India, *Burram chandali.* No sooner do its young leaves shoot out of the ground than they begin moving up and down; now with sudden jerks, now with a gentle waving motion. By day or night, in sun or shower, the plant is never at rest; and if the beholder grasp it with his hand, and compel it to be still for a moment, it is no sooner released than it recommences its action with more rapidity than before, as if trying to regain the time it had lost while under pressure. The leaves are composed of three leaflets. Sometimes one leaflet will wave up and down while the others are motionless, and sometimes the three leaflets move simultaneously; but it has been observed that the whole plant is seldom agitated at one time. This flower is a universal wonder, no botanist being able to account for its voluntary movement. The well-known irritability of the sensitive plant, the Venus's fly-trap, the sun dew, and others, is caused by the touch, and is considered by botanists as similar to the action of muscular animal fibre, under the influence of galvanism. But this plant needs no approach of external objects to impel its action, nor is it influenced by electricity in the air, or by any perceptible cause. In our hothouses, the plant loses some of its acting power, and has only a faint tremulous motion. It is also, in India, sometimes nearly quiet during the middle of the day, but its agitation is, in its own climate, generally as unceasing as that of the heaving ocean, or the beating heart.

The singular movement of this plant, and the others just referred to, has often been adduced in support of the theory, that vegetables are endowed with sensation. Wordsworth has said,

> "It is my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes."

In modern times, this belief seems almost left to the poet; but a few years since, it was held by the philosopher.

We can now scarcely walk a step from the paved ways of the city, without seeing the small reddish-white blossoms of the knotgrass, (*Polygonum aviculare.*) This little plant is as familiar to our view, as the meadow grass. Forming green patches by every wayside, on the borders of the public highway; shooting up under the walls of the crowded city, or even between the stones of the street. Commoner than even that common flower, the daisy; yet it is scarcely known by name, to any but the botanist. Milton speaks of it, as

> "The knotgrass dew besprent;"

and George Herbert, in giving his advice to the country parson, on the choice of wholesome and medicinal herbs, enumerates this. Notwithstanding its former repute, no "simpler" of modern times would gather it; and the lover of wild flowers often treads over it daily, without any regard. This plant, though called grass, has little more affinity to the true grasses, than that elegant white flower, which, from its beauty, has been termed the grass of Parnassus.

Several plants have been called grass; but the true grasses have characteristic marks, which, when once known, are obvious even to those unacquainted with botany. They have all long slender leaves, hollow jointed stems, and green flowers. Swine are so fond of the knotgrass, that it is, in some counties, commonly called swine's-cress, or hog-weed; and the plant strewed so abundantly over our land, forms, by its seeds and young buds, a good store for the birds. From Milton's lines we may suppose it to be a pleasant food for sheep, as he speaks of the evening, when,

> "The chewing flocks,
> Had ta'en their supper of that savoury herb,
> The knotgrass."

Several of the true grasses flower during May, though the greater number are not decked with their green and purple panicles, or their silvery pyramids, till the later months. Among the early blooming grasses, we may mention the common foxtail-grass, (*Alopecurus pratensis,*) which grows on almost every spot of pasture; and is a very useful grass for cattle, blooming twice in the year; and being ripe for the scythe even as early as this month. Its long yellow-greenish blooms are covered with silvery hairs. The bulbous meadow grass, (*Poa bulbosa,*) and the annual meadow grass, (*Poa annua,*) are now commonly in flower; the latter, on all green places, in all countries. We have fourteen species of the poa grass. One common kind, the tallest of our native grasses, the reed meadow

grass, (*Poa aquatica,*) is often six feet high. It has a long creeping root, and grows either by the sides of ditches, or on other moist lands. In the fenny districts of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, it is a very valuable plant of pasturage; but when it grows in rivers, its tangling roots and luxuriant growth make it very troublesome, and it soon fills up a river which has not a rapid current.

Meadows are, at all seasons, pleasant spots. In the dreariest months of the year, their fainter greenness is agreeable to the eye, which has lately looked but on the cold plain of snow, or the leafless trees. But when May comes, and the grass twinkles in the sunshine; and the daisies open their round eyes by thousands among it; and the buttercups gleam in rich profusion, then is the time fully to enjoy the meadow. These simple flowers give delight to the many "who long in populous cities pent," now wander forth into the fields. Nor would we forget the joy which they afford to children. Children spring up, like the buttercup, everywhere, and are linked by strong ties to almost every human heart; and those who can look back to rural walks of early life, when

"Thoughts themselves were birds, and stars, and flowers,"

are disposed to sympathize with the joy of the little ones, as they gaze on the yellow field.

The buttercup is a species of ranunculus. The kind which blooms at this early season, is the bulbous crowfoot, (*Ranunculus bulbosus,*) and may be distinguished from the other flower-

ing kinds, by its bulbous root. The May buttercups have not passed away, before the creeping buttercup, (*Ranunculus repens,*) and the acrid crowfoot, (*Ranunculus acris,*) make their appearance. These bloom on, till the end of August, and here and there, a few of the latter species may be found under the hedges, till time, with his autumnal scythe, has mowed down every flower, and the stormy winds proclaim the winter.

In the hedges which border the field, or afford their shade to the green country lane, the flower which receives its name from this month—the May, or hawthorn, (*Cratægus Oxyacantha*)—is radiant in beauty. Very rarely is it in bloom by the first of May; though by the first of May of the old style, which is twelve days later, the hedge is often white with its pearly blossoms. A decoction of the fragrant flowers of the May is said to counteract poison.

The hawthorn bough was formerly hung over every door of England, on the May morning; and brought in from the woods with May-day rejoicings; and it still, in Athens, on that day, graces every doorway of the classic city. The custom of going on May mornings, at break of day, into the woods, to bring away the boughs and flowers, was much discountenanced by our reformers. They regarded it as the remains of an evil superstition; for it had its origin in the spring rites paid by the heathen to Flora; and they also disapproved of the noisy and profligate revelling with which it was often accompanied. They

preached continually against "doing observance to a morn of May," and were greatly the means of suppressing May-sports, and May-gatherings. The first day of this month was also called Robin Hood's day; and the sincere and earnest bishop Latimer complained, that once when he was about to preach in a town on that day, he could get no audience; because all the young men and maidens, "were gone a maying." "I found," said he, "the churches fast locked. I tarryed there half an houre or more, and at last, the key was found; one of the parish came to me and says, 'Syr, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you let them not.' So," as the good bishop observes, "he was fain to give place to Robin Hood, and his men."

An infusion of the hawthorn-bark gives a yellow dye; and, if mixed with copperas, yields a fine black colour.

The common hawthorn was the distinguishing badge of the royal house of Tudor. Miss Strickland thus states its origin: When the body of Richard III. was slain at Redmore Heath, it was plundered of its armour and ornaments. "The crown was hidden by a soldier in a hawthorn bush; but was soon found, and carried back to lord Stanley; who placed it on the head of his son-in-law, saluting him by the title of Henry VII.; while the victorious army sang *Te Deum*, on the blood-stained heath.

'Oh Redmore, then it seem'd thy name was not in vain!'

"It was in memory of this picturesque fact, that the red-berried hawthorn once sheltered the crown of England, that the house of Tudor assumed the device of a crown in a bush of fruited hawthorn. The proverb of 'Cleave to the crown though it hang on a bush,' alludes to the same circumstance."

The wild-cherry, the apple, the pear, and the mountain ash; are all now in bloom in hedge-row, or copse; while the common is bright with the yellow flowers of the furze, (*Ulex Europæus.*) Unheeded by those who can delight only in the flower brought from afar, it is ever an object of admiration to the lover of simple beauty. Linnæus fell on his knees, and thanked God for its loveliness, when first he beheld it. Among the plants of his native land, he knew not one which could equal it; and he attempted in vain to introduce it into Sweden. Hardy as it is, and capable of bearing the winds which sweep over the bleak moorland, or by the sea-shore; yet it would not grow in the northern land, and even in the garden in which Linnæus planted it, it sickened and died. Dillenius, too, looked upon our heath-lands, covered with its profusion of golden flowers, and said that he could not find words to express the pleasure which the sight of this plant had given him. The furze is also an evergreen. Its flowers last from May till summer is ended; and even during nipping frosts, the bush is sometimes thick with its half-expanded flowers, which seem only awaiting the sunshine, to stand out like so

many glittering butterflies upon the spiny branches.

The furze is used for hedges, and its young tops are eaten by animals. To the poor it furnishes winter firing, and is often gathered from the heath, and stacked by the cottage-door for that purpose. In former times, large tracts of common were cultivated with the shrub, in various parts of Devonshire, to supply the winter fuel. The numerous pods which hang on the summer bush, are soon cleared away by the birds, and a store of honey is furnished to the bees by their fragrant pea-shaped flowers. The summer wind bears to the traveller a delightful odour from the common covered with the furze; and so beautiful is it that we have not a wild flower which better deserves the praises that the poets have lavished upon it. The French call this plant, *jonc marin*, because it bears the sea-breeze so well. The name of Ulex is derived from a Celtic word, signifying a sharp point; in Scotland, it is usually termed gorse, or whin. The Russian cultivates it in a green-house, as one of his rarest flowers. A double variety of furze grows wild on the heaths of Devonshire, and is a handsome and fragrant addition to the bushes and trees of the shrubbery.

On many a hedge may now be seen the graceful flowers of the plant, called, familiarly, traveller's joy, or virgin's bower, or wild clematis. It is the *clematis vitalba* of the botanist. The Greek word from which its

name is taken, signifies the young shoot of a vine, or tendril, and indicates its twining nature. The clematis, though rare in the northern portions of this country, is very abundant in the greater part of England, especially in the south, and on limestone, or chalky soils, where, in May, or June, its clusters of greenish white are thickly scattered over the hedges. The flowers are succeeded by a quantity of seeds, crowned with tufts of silvery down, which look very beautiful through the greater part of the winter. and the plant may well be abundant, for these feathered seeds are exactly suited for flying on the air, and are often carried about by birds. In winter these little tufts of down are stripped off by the harvest mice, which make of them and other materials, soft little nests, as warm as a feather bed, and not unlike the nests of a bird, and there, leaving their cheerless little dwellings in the earth, they come and spend a part of their time.

The stems of the clematis often extend more than twenty feet over the hedge; and, although it is destitute of the curling tendrils, which, like those of the vine, support the plant, yet its flexible branches answer the purpose more fully. The young stems are, in this month, of a purplish green colour, but become brown and hard in the course of the summer; and then they serve the cottagers instead of pipes, for they are often smoked by country people. Bishop Mant has some lines on this pretty flower:—

"The Traveller's Joy,
Most beauteous when its flowers assume
Their autumn form of feathery plume:
The Traveller's Joy! name well bestow'd
On that wild plant, which by the road
Of Southern England, to adorn
Fails not the hedge of prickly thorn,
On wilding rose-bush, apt to creep
O'er the dry limestone's craggy steep,
There still a gay companion near
To the way-faring traveller."

The old herbalist, Gerarde, gave the flower this name. He says, "This is commonly called, *Viorna quasi via ornana*, of decking and adorning waies and hedges where people travel, and therefore I have named it the Traveller's Joy."

Growing in small groups, on hedgebanks, or on heaths or woods, the whortleberry bush is now coming into blossom. There are four wild species of this plant, but the most common is that called the bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus.*) This shrub is low and straggling, seldom found alone, but generally clustering on different spots of the land on which it appears. Indeed, this tribe of plants is never found growing singly. We do not meet with an individual plant, but it always grows in numbers, and generally abounds in the neighbourhood for some miles. This species is an elegant little plant, its leaves are of a beautiful green, and its small red flowers hang among them like so many waxen cups. Children are fond of the bilberry, or hurtleberry, as it is often called; and, in some of the northern counties, this fruit is sold in the markets for tarts. The people of Devonshire eat the ber-

ries with their rich clotted cream; and they are also the autumnal food of the moorfowl. They are taken both in Poland and the Scottish islands as medicine. This species is abundant on many heaths and woodlands, but is very local, and, sometimes, is not found over half a county.

Of still lower growth than this, and scarcely more than a foot high, is the red whortleberry, or cowberry, (*V. vitis idaca,*) which we can hardly call a shrub, though it wears its green leaves all the winter through, and its stem does not die away. Its foliage much resembles that of the garden-box, and its flesh-coloured flowers are found in May and June. The berries are not so well flavoured as those of the common bilberry, but in Derbyshire, they are used for tarts. They are stated by Linnæus to be sent, in great quantities, from West Bothnia to Stockholm, for pickling. The Swedes, too, use a jelly with all kinds of roast meat, and the cowberry jelly is considered superior to that of the red currant. This plant also serves, in Norway, the purpose of the box, and is used as an edging to the garden plot.

One of the loveliest flowers of May, and one which adorns the hedges in greatest profusion, is the stitchwort, (*Stellaria holostea.*) It is, in most parts of England, a very common flower, and is the companion of the violet and primrose in the May copse and hedge. It grows most plentifully on loamy soils. It was formerly called white-flowered grass, or all-bones, though

it is one of the most delicate and tender plants in its structure. It is very brittle, and often said to have no root; but the fact is, that the stem is so frail, that on attempting to pull up the root, it separates itself just above the fibre, leaving that in the ground. The flower is white as the driven snow, and not much smaller than a primrose. Then the periwinkle (*Vinca major*) lends its graces to the May hedge, throwing its bright blue flowers on bush or bramble, and its large glossy leaves, glistening in the sun with so bright a green as to deserve its name of little laurel, by which it was formerly known.

Springing from out the crevices of the wall, and throwing its many leaves and blossoms over the gray ruin, the ivy-leaved toad-flax, (*Linaria cymbalaria*,) is now very frequent. It may easily be described. Its blossoms are shaped like those of the snap-dragon, of a delicate lilac, marked with a small portion of yellow; and the leaves are thick and fleshy, and have their under surfaces coloured with a purplish crimson hue. It is often hung up in a flower-pot from the cottage ceiling, and the long stems hang down all around it. It sometimes, too, mingles with the house-leek and stone-crops which grow upon the cottage roof. The wall-pellitory (*Parietaria officinalis*) is now in blossom on old castles, churches, and walls. It was formerly called *perdiceum*, because partridges are said to feed upon it; and the housewives of old times knew it by the

name of *vitraria*, "because," says an old writer, "it serveth to scour glasses, pipkins, and such like."

Several very rough-leaved plants bloom during this month, and are much allied to each other, not only by their prickly foliage, but by their medicinal properties. The small bugloss, (*Anchusa arvensis*,) with its bright blue flowers, is not uncommon in corn-fields and on hedge-banks. Every hair, or bristle, on its leaves is seated on a white tubercle, and is very strong and sharp. The flowers of this plant are particularly attractive to bees, and the roots contain a great quantity of mucilage. With us, this flower is little used; but in China, where it is abundant, the roots form an important medicine. Another species (*Anchusa tinctoria*) was formerly used for painting the face, by ladies who were not content with the beauty which God had given them; and it must have imparted a more permanent stain than the rouge of modern times. It is still cultivated in the south of France for its red dye, and is used by druggists for colouring various salves, and by vintners for adulterating port wine.

Most closely allied to this plant, though blooming some months later in the year, is the common borage, (*Borago officinalis*,) which grows on waste places, and on heaps of rubbish, and which bears beautiful blue flowers. It has been discovered by a chemist that a decoction of the leaves of this plant, evaporated to a syrup, and kept for some days, yields salt

crystals, partly in form of needles, and partly cubical; and that the needle crystals were found to be perfect nitre, and the cubical ones sea salt. If a dried piece of this plant be held in a flame, it emits, while burning, a kind of cornscation, accompanied by a slight detonation. This is caused by the nitre which it contains, and which renders it suitable for match-paper, of which it is sometimes an ingredient. We see something of those small sparks in burning the dried stalks of lavender; and one of our wild reed plants,—the great bur cat's tail, (*Typha latifolia*)—will produce a flash of light if a candle be held near it.

The borage grows round about Aleppo in such profusion as to attract the attention of travellers; and its flowers are, in the east, larger and of a deeper blue than ours. This plant was once thought to strengthen the frame, and give courage and spirit to those who partook of it. The old English bowl, called a cool tankard, and made of cider, lemon-juice, and water, was considered to derive its refreshing powers from the borage-blossoms which were steeped in it; and as may easily be ascertained, they certainly possess the power of imparting coolness to liquid. Any part of the plant will also give its peculiar flavour to water in which it is placed; though few, perhaps, would relish its strong taste. The leaves are very rough, but, when young, are sometimes eaten as salads; and were once highly esteemed as improving the flavour of cresses and chervil. Indeed the

borage was, with the rue and rosemary, gathered not only for present use, but was stored by the prudent housewife against the season when the fresh plants were not to be procured; and, like the two former, was praised for that it kept "seeming and savour all the winter long." "Those of our time," says an old writer, "doe use the flowers in salads, to exhilarate and make the mind be glad. There be also many things made of them, used everywhere for the comfort of the heart, for the driving away of sorrow."

Another very rough-leaved plant, the comfrey, (*Symphytum officinale,*) is now in blossom, chiefly by the river-sides, or other moist grounds. It has clusters of yellowish white drooping bells, and the leaves are so rough that they cannot be touched by the naked hand with impunity. The root, which abounds in mucilage, is much valued by villagers, who use it as medicine. The lungwort (*Pulmonaria officinalis*) is showing its purple bells with their young pink buds in the woods. The rough foliage is spotted like the animal lungs, and hence it was inferred that it was designed to be useful in pulmonary complaints. It was formerly called sage of Bethlehem, and spotted comfrey, and is known in France as *l'herbe aux poumons*.

On field-borders, commons, and other waste lands, the pea-shaped blossoms of the rest-harrow (*Ononis arvensis*) are, by the end of the month, covering the spiny stems. This pea-like blossom is called by botanists, *papilion-*

aceous, or butterfly-shaped; and as it is always found that plants whose flowers are of this form, bear their seeds in a legume, or pod, they are also termed leguminous. The structure is remarked by Dr. Paley, as a beautiful instance of contrivance on the part of the great Creator of the universe. After having adverted to the importance of preserving from injury the parts of fructification in a plant, which are usually lodged in the centre of a blossom, he says, "The pea, or *papilionaceous* tribe, inclose these parts within a beautiful folding of the internal blossom, sometimes called, from its shape, the boat, or keel, itself also protected under a penthouse formed of the external petal. This structure is very artificial, and what adds to the value of it, though it may diminish the curiosity, very general. It has also this farther advantage, and it is an advantage strictly mechanical, that all the blossoms turn their backs to the wind whenever the gale blows strongly enough to endanger the delicate parts on which the seed depends. I have observed this a hunlred times, in a field of peas in blossom. It is an aptitude which results from the figure of the flower, and as we have said, is strictly mechanical, as much so as the turning of a weatherboard, or tin cap, upon the top of a chimney."

The flowers of the rest-harrow are usually pink, but sometimes white, and the plant is usually very spiny, but the number of spines seems affected by the nature of the soil on which it grows. On calcareous soils these

prickly appendages are few and small; while on the plants which flourish on a soil whose substratum is gravel, they are very strong and sharp.

On similar places to that on which the rest-harrow flourishes, the low juniper is often found. The common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) now bears its bloom. In England, it grows on sandy, or chalky soils, or on open downs; but it is a plant common to the whole of Northern Europe, and, in some countries, is abundant on high mountains. In Sweden and Norway, it is applied to a variety of domestic purposes. In Norway—that land of good housewifery—the bowls of the dairy are daily washed with a decoction of the juniper branch, which is remarkably effectual in keeping them sweet. Then the Norwegian dame strews the young tops of the juniper over her floors, as our country people strew the sand on theirs; and the juniper is regularly sold in the streets for this use. When about to consign to the dust the remains of the dead, the juniper twigs are scattered plentifully from their houses to the church-yard, and a number of its green sprigs thrown on and around the grave; and the twigs may be seen lying on many a tomb, still keeping their greenness long after they were strewn there by the hand of love and friendship. The Swedes make a conserve of the berries, and eat it in their meals: they also drink juniper beer, and take the plant medicinally. In Germany, the berries are used

to flavour the *sauer kraut*, which is so unpalat able a dish to all but Germans; and in that land they are burned in sick rooms and hospitals for the purpose of fumigation. In our country, they are chiefly used for giving the flavour to gin, and large quantities are imported from Holland, Germany, and Italy, for making this liquor. The juniper bush is, with us, low and small, seldom so large as the furze; but where it attains some size, the wood is very firm and compact. In former times, spits and drinking vessels were made of it, as it was thought to impart a pleasant flavour to meat, or liquid. The sandarach, or pounce, which is used to strew over manuscripts, is made from a gum which oozes from the old juniper plants.

We read in the first book of Kings, xix. 4, that the prophet Elijah lay and slept "under a juniper tree;" but the word so translated is thought by recent commentators to be a species of broom. Three kinds of juniper, however, are said by Kitto, in the "Pictorial Palestine," to be common in the Holy Land. "On Mount Hor," on which Aaron died, says this writer, "and where his tomb is still honoured, it grows even to the summit; nor is it wanting in the renowned valley below, in which the metropolis of Seir is entombed." Many writers think that one species of juniper, (*Juniperus oxycedrus,*) rather than that of the so-called cedar of Lebanon, is the cedar wood so famed, in former times, for its durability, and of which

statues were made before the use of marble was introduced. The wood of our common juniper is said to burn so well, that a fire made of juniper boughs may, by constant replenishing, be kept burning for twelve months, without the addition of any other fuel.

Though our juniper grows low on the ground, yet some species of juniper attain, in other climates, the height of trees, and afford a welcome shade from the sun. Both lady Sale and lieutenant Eyre describe the refreshment which they experienced, when they and their fellow-captives reposed under the shadow of the juniper arbours, during their melancholy imprisonment in Afghanistan; and the people of Syria often sit in groups around the trunk of the juniper, delighting in the shade of its green and fragrant boughs.

Under hedges, by the side of meadows, and in thickets, on high situations especially, the bitter vetch, (*Orobus tuberosus,*) is not uncommon. This plant has pea-shaped blossoms of a pinkish purple colour, and marked with purple veins. The flowers are on long stalks, and the stem, which is about a foot high, has three or four pairs of leaflets. This flower is very common in Surrey. In the Highlands of Scotland it is also abundant, and is much valued by the Highlanders on account of its tuberous root, which has the flavour of liquorice, and is called by them Cormeille. These roots they dry, and chew with their liquor, in order to improve its flavour. They also consider

that a very small quantity of the cormeille will enable them to repel hunger and thirst for many hours. In some parts of Scotland, the roots are bruised and made into a fermented liquor. They are very nutritive, and have been used, when boiled, both in England and Scotland, as food in times of scarcity. In Holland and Flanders, they are commonly roasted as chestnuts, and have a very similar flavour to that of this fruit; yet in our country they are scarcely known to be of any value, and are quite neglected by villagers, though the flower is often gathered for the wild nosegay. It is known by the names of wood-pea and heath-pea, and, in Scotland, generally called by the name of knapperts.

During this month and the next, a number of vetches and vetchlings come into flower. They may be generally described as plants with butterfly-shaped blossoms, mostly of a purple, or red colour, though a few of them have yellow flowers. They have slender leaves, and twining, or straggling stems, some of them with tendrils. The pretty crimson vetchling, or grass-vetch, (*Lathyrus nissolia*,) with its slender grass-like leaves, is in bloom this month, on the green borders of fields; and the spring vetch (*Vicia sativa*) is not unfrequent now on roads and pastures; but these are difficult to describe without the use of botanical terms.

Several species of vetch yield good herbage for cattle; and as they all have legumes, or pods, full of seeds, they afford food for birds. The

vetches were formerly called fetches: thus, in Milton's "Comus," the lines which now stand,

> "If all the world
> Should, in a fit of temperance, feed on pulse,"

stood originally, "feed on fetches."

The red pottage, for which the weary hunter, Esau, sold his birthright to his brother Jacob, was made of the seed of a species of vetch, or tare, the lentile, (*Ervum lens.*) The lentile is still highly prized in eastern lands; and in Egypt, and throughout Syria, the bean is parched in frying-pans, and sold in shops. The mess of red pottage is still an esteemed dish, as it was when Esau coveted it, and sinned, by undervaluing his birthright, in order to procure it;* and it is now, as it was then, a very important article of diet to the labouring classes, and often cooked, too, for the rich. Dr. Shaw relates, that "lentiles dissolve easily, in boiling, into a mass, and form a pottage of a red, or chocolate colour, much valued in Egypt and Western Asia." The yellow flowers of the plant called familiarly kidney vetch, or lady's finger, (*Anthyllis vulneraria,*) are blooming on dry pastures by the latter end of this month, and continue in bloom till August. These flowers grow in heads, or clusters, two clusters on each stem, and may be known from any other of our papilionaceous plants by the quantity of white silky wool in which they lie as in a nest. The flower, which, in Kent and most

* Gen. xxv. 31, 34.

other counties, is always yellow, grows in Devonshire, and in Wales, with cream-coloured, white, or red blossoms. Linnæus observed of this plant, that in Œland, where the soil is a red calcareous clay, the flowers are red; but that on the white chalky soil of Gothland, they are white.

From every hedge we may now gather the flower called treacle mustard, (*Erysimum alliaria.*) It grows to the height of two or three feet, has small white flowers of the shape termed by botanists, cruciferous, and forming a cross, like those of the wallflower. The leaves are as large as those of the nettle; and, when broken, yield a most powerful odour of garlic, which renders the plant very offensive in a nosegay, and which even scent the dried specimens in an herbarium. It was formerly cultivated in kitchen gardens, as a salad plant.

A large number of yellow cruciferous flowers, as the wild cabbage, or coleseed, (*Brassica napus,*) the common turnip, (*Brassica rapa,*) and the various kinds of mustard, now show themselves among the young spires of the green corn-field; and in neglected fields, threaten destruction to the blade. The charlock, or wild mustard, (*Sinapis arvensis,*) is, too, common on the cultured land, and gives much trouble to the farmer. Its seeds are pungent and acrid; and are often mixed with those of the species cultivated especially for mustard. It is called in the different counties, charlock, garlock, or chadlock; and in Yorkshire is commonly known

as runsh. The foliage is rough, and the flowers large and yellow. The kind chiefly planted for the table condiment, is the black, or common mustard, (*Sinapis nigra,*) which is also a wild flower on waste places; but the seeds of all the species are hot; and afford, on expression, a pungent oil; or when dried, a stimulating powder. Our word, mustard, and the French word, *moutarde,* are corruptions of the words, *mustem ardens,* (hot must,) as the French prepare the mustard used at their tables with the sweet-must of new wine.

All the plants which have cross-shaped flowers, contain, in greater or less degree, the acrid, volatile, oily principle, which is so abundant in the mustard-seed, and the root of the horseradish; and is less perceptible in the common wall-flower, or the water-cress. In all cases, cruciferous plants may be eaten with safety; but, in many instances, the acrid principle must be reduced by culture, or by blanching, before they become palatable. When the texture of a cruciferous plant is very succulent and juicy, it is always eatable; as in the case of the common cabbage-leaf, and in the radish, or turnip.

The sight of any of our numerous wild mustard plants will often suggest to the reader of Scripture the words of our Saviour, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and

becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."* A great variety of opinion has been entertained as to the species intended in this text. The eastern mustard, (*Sinapis orientalis,*) has been often considered as the Scripture mustard. It is very common in Palestine, and very similar in its appearance to our charlock. The warmth of the climate, however, renders it far more luxuriant; and it attains the height of a shrub, or even a tree; but as it has not a woody stem, or branches, and it dies down to the ground every winter, it can scarcely be called a tree. Here again, we must refer to that valuable work, the "Pictorial Palestine." The author of this book quotes from the travels of captains Irby and Mangles. Speaking of vegetable productions in the neighbourhood of the Dead sea, these travellers say, "There was one curious tree, which we observed in great plenty; and which bears a fruit in bunches, resembling in appearance the currant, with the colour of the plum. It has a pleasant, although strongly aromatic taste, exactly resembling mustard; and, if taken in any quantity, produces a similar irritability of the nose and eyes, to that which is caused by taking mustard. The leaves of the tree have the same pungent flavour as the fruit, although not so strong. We think it probable that this is the tree our Saviour alluded to, in the parable of the mustard-seed, and not the plant we have in the north: for although, in our

* Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

journey from Bysan to Adjeloun, we met with the mustard plant growing wild, as high as our horses' heads; still, being an annual, it did not deserve the appellation of a tree; whereas the other is really such, and birds might easily, and actually do, take shelter under its shadow." Kitto, commenting on this quotation, remarks, "The Jewish writers speak of a mustard-tree common among them, in quite corresponding terms; seeming to show that a species of the *sinapis* or some analogous genus, existed in Palestine, with which we are not well acquainted; and which may very probably prove to be that which captain Mangles has pointed out."

One of our wild species of mustard, the broad hedge mustard, or London rocket, (*Sisymbrium irio,*) is exceedingly common on waste grounds, in the neighbourhood of the metropolis; and is remarkable as having sprung up immediately after the great fire of London, in 1666, and quickly covered the ground where the city had stood. So profuse was this flower, in a few weeks after the fire, that it was supposed by the botanists of those days, that a greater quantity existed on that one spot, than could have been collected from over the whole surface of Europe; and it is a singular instance of vegetable growth, for which no naturalist has ever been able to account.

A peculiar circumstance connected with a flower of this, and the coming month, is, that it has bloomed for centuries on a lone place in the sea, and is almost unknown as a wild flower in

every other part of England, this is the wild peony, (*Pæonia corallina,*) which lifts its red blossom on the island in the Severn, called Steep Holmes. It is stated by Gerarde, to have been found, in his time, near Gravesend; but if it grew there in those days, it has disappeared since. The rev. W. Lisle Bowles thus notices it :—

> "The cliff abrupt and high,
> And desolate, and cold, and bleak, uplifts
> Its barren brow! barren; but on its steep
> One native flower is seen—the peony—
> One flower which smiles in sunshine and in storm.
> There still companionless, but yet not sad,
> She has no sister of the summer field,
> None to rejoice with her, when spring returns.
> None, that in sympathy may bend its head
> When evening winds blow hollow o'er the rock
> In autumn's gloom!"

This flower is distinguished by the name of the entire-leaved peony, because its leaves, unlike those of the garden species, have straight uncut edges; the blossoms too are single.

The dark purple flag, or iris, (*Iris fœtidissima,*) called, when planted by gardeners, the gladwyn iris, may be found in May and June, on meadow lands and in thickets, in the south and west of England. In Devonshire it is a very common flower; it is not unfrequent in some parts of Kent. In the northern and midland counties, it is rare, and has not been known to grow wild in Scotland. This flower has a strong odour of roast beef; the leaves and roots steeped in beer, are taken as a medicine.

One or two species of *Lychnis* are now in bloom; and in meadows and corn-fields, the bright flowers of the red lychnis, or campion,

(*Lychnis dioica*) are very common. This is a flower shaped a little like that of the primrose, but the stem, when on moist lands, often rises two or three feet in height. There are many species of wild lychnis; one is very commonly known, from its jagged petals, by the name of ragged robin, or cuckoo flower, (*Lychnis flos cuculi*;) it is frequent by streams, and its pink flowers are very similar to those of the common garden *Clarkia*. It is also called bachelor's buttons, because, as Gerarde says, "the similitude which these flowers have to the jagged cloth buttons, anciently worn in this kingdom, gave occasion to our gentlewomen, and other lovers of flowers, in those times, to call them bachelor's buttons."

The flower called golden saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) is now in bloom by river sides; and several of the true saxifrages, of which there are twenty-one wild species, are in flower during this month. The golden saxifrage is remarkable for its medicinal virtues, and is much esteemed as a salad, in the Vosges, where it is termed *Cresson de roche*. Several species of saxifrage grow on rocks or stones; one very common kind is often found on old walls, this is the rue-leaved saxifrage, (*Saxifraga tridactylites*,) which flowers in May; it has small white blossoms, and the leaves and stems are covered with thick viscid hairs. The white meadow saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*) is not uncommon now in meadows and on hedge banks; it has a much larger flower than the last species, and is remarkable for its root,

which consists of a number of small knobs, strung together, and of so bright a red as to resemble a string of coral beads. But the best known species is the flower called London pride, or none so pretty, which is so often the ornament of the cottage garden border, and which, perhaps, received the former name because it will grow on the little soil which borders the paved yards of the city, and is uninjured by smoke or fog. In Ireland, it is called St. Patrick's cabbage, and its old name of "queen Anne's needle-work" is expressive of its flower, which resembles a most beautiful embroidery, and well repays examination with a microscope.

The flowers of May may be concluded with some account of a plant, so fragrant and useful, that although it has not ornamental blossoms, its flower being on a catkin, or cone, yet it well deserves the notice of all who value our wild plants. The sweet gale, or Dutch myrtle, (*Myrica gale,*) grows on boggy, or moory grounds; its fragrance resembles that of a myrtle, but is much more powerful, and not only scents the air while growing, but, when gathered, perfumes the room. The Highlanders lay its branches in their linen chests, to scent their clothes, and to drive away the moth. The Welsh place it under their beds; and, in some parts of Scotland, it is strewed with the heather for the nightly couch. In Sweden it is used for a variety of purposes; a dye is made from it, and a common medicine, and it serves instead of hops to give the preserving principle to beer; but it is less wholesome than the hop.

In some parts where this plant is common it is used for brooms, and in the Isle of Ely it is so very abundant, that it is burned instead of common fagots.

The sweet gale is generally considered much like the myrtle in appearance; but the lighter green of its leaves, and the more crowded growth of the stem, lessen the resemblance. Like that plant, it is a small shrub. It is plentiful in Devonshire, and is commonly called the Devonshire myrtle; it grows in quantities on the dreary Dartmoor. When the sweet gale is boiled, a kind of wax, like bees' wax, rises to the surface of the water, and may be collected in large pieces. Tapers are sometimes made of this wax, and are so fragrant while burning, that they are very agreeable and salutary in a sick room. These candles are so much used in Prussia, that they are burned constantly in the royal household. The berry is about the size of a pea, and has, both when fresh and dried, a most grateful perfume.

JUNE.

"For who would sing the flowers of June,
Though from grey morn to blazing noon,
From blazing noon to dewy eve
The chaplet of his song he weave,
Would find his summer daylight fail,
And leave half told the pleasing tale."

The present month has a different character from that of the last. The flowers are even more numerous, the leaves thicker, the grass and foliage of a deeper green. Spring has quite yielded to summer. Nature, too, wears a

calmer and more settled aspect; and, at noon-time, on a June day, the birds sing but little, and few sounds are heard in the wood, save the humming of that busy little chemist, the bee, which is distilling honey from the flowers. And now, on the open land, we see that clear trembling vapour, which the Scripture describes as "the clear heat upon herbs," and which quivers and dances in the sunshine till the eye aches with gazing upon it.

There is no month in the year in which the early morning and evening are more delightful than in this. It is in June that we see the appropriateness of the beautiful simile of the psalmist, when he spoke of the "Hope of Israel:" "He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." * "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth."†

Every part of a rural landscape in June is profuse in leaves and flowers. Even the surface of the stream is covered over with the green leaves of various plants. The white crowfoot still adorns the silver current; the duckweeds, (*lemna*,) which consist of thick and succulent green pieces, like leaves—called by botanists *fronds*—and of threads which descend from them, and hang floating in the water, form a thick herbage on the stagnant pool. The ducks and waterfowl, as they glide among it, gather plentiful meals from its juicy

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. † Psa. lxxii. 6.

substance, and innumerable insects find a covert under it. The lesser species (*lemna minor*) is very common, and has small compact leaves, very thick in their texture, and slightly convex beneath. It grows so rapidly, as sometimes to be a troublesome plant in the pond; but it has been discovered that it converts hydrogen gas into air fitted for respiration, and thus renders the exhalation from the stagnant pool less injurious to the neighbourhood. The flowers of the duckweed are so inconspicuous, that few would observe them, and the greater duckweed, (*lemna polyhriza*,) though sometimes covering our ponds with its purple fronds, is not known to flower in Britain.

Several species of the plant, called pondweed, (*potamogeton*,) are now wearing their green flowers, which rise above the water, while the whole of the foliage is immersed, and floats about on our clear streams, looking as beautiful as the delicate green seaweeds which lie in the ocean. These plants are often very thick in the pools, and when the current is slow, are sometimes several feet in length; but they grow in the Swiss lakes so much larger and thicker, that they look like large woods under the water, and are frequently twenty fathoms in length. Like other aquatic plants, they shelter many insects, and swans and ducks are very fond of them.

Loudon quotes professor Martyn's observation on water plants generally, that the "respiration of these truly aquatic vegetables must

be different from those which inhale atmospheric air, as the breathing of fishes is from that of birds." "Accordingly," adds this writer, "they are of a different texture, pellucid, like oiled paper, harsh and ribbed, but often very brittle; and their surfaces, like that of aquatic animals, destitute of down, or hair of any kind." This remark applies to those plants which live wholly in the water, and not fully to those which grow to some height above its surface.

Waving its bright yellow petals above the stream, and forming in and around it a thick sedgy mass, with its sword-like leaves, the yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) is a beautiful flower in June. It is often called flag-sedge, and corn-flag, and, in Scotland, is named water-skeggs. The French term it *la flambe aquatique.* Country people value its long acrid root as a cure for the tooth-ache. It is also used for dyeing a black colour, and for making ink, and is dried and ground for snuff. Its juice is made into a cosmetic, and its seeds roasted for coffee. This flower is sometimes found in moist woods.

We have but two wild species of iris, and the other was named on a preceding page. Our common purple iris is the *fleur de luce,* and it derives the name from Louis VII., king of France, who, when setting forth on his crusade to the Holy Land, chose this flower as his heraldic emblem. *Fleur de luce* is merely a corruption of *fleur de Louis,* and it is now more often called *fleur de lis,* or lily flower.

The forget-me-not, or water scorpion-grass, (*Myosotis palustris,*) is in blossom in June, and continues flowering till August. Two or three of our wild flowers are occasionally honoured with this sentimental name. In queen Elizabeth's time, it was often applied to the ground-pine, a small yellow flower found on sandy banks, or gravelly fields, with its blossoms so hidden among a profusion of leaves, as somewhat to resemble a pine. In our days the germander speedwell is sometimes designated as the forget-me-not; but it is seldom so called by persons well acquainted with flowers, and it probably originates in its being mistaken for the myosotis. Whether the species of myosotis which grows in the fields, (*Myosotis arvensis,*) the small brilliant blossom of which looks like a cluster of blue turquoise, or the large kind, which grows on the stream, be the true olden forget-me-not, may be disputed. Botanists, however, in France, Germany, and England, seem to agree that it is the latter kind. The water scorpion-grass grows plentifully in most country streams. Its long cluster of pinkish-coloured buds, bending nearly into a circular form, before expanding, procured for all the species, their name of scorpion-grass. Our forefathers, acting upon their usual principles of analogies, inferred, from the shape of the young shoots, that it was a remedy against the bites of scorpions; under which name they seem to have included snakes, adders, and various other reptiles. The old legend of the knight who was drowned, while

attempting to gather for a lady some of the flowers from a stream in which the current was rapid, and whose dying words are said to have given the name to the flower, must now yield to an apparently more authentic account of its origin. Miss Strickland, in her late work on the queens of England, has given us a statement of the cause of the name, forget-me-not, scarcely less poetical than that which has, for centuries, been sung by poets of all the lands of Europe. Speaking of Henry of Lancaster, she says, "This royal adventurer—the banished and aspiring Lancaster—appears to have been the person who gave to the *myosotis arvensis,* or forget-me-not, its emblematical and poetical meaning, by uniting it at the period of his exile, on his collar of S. S., with the initial letter of his *mot,* or watchword, *Souveigne vous de moy:* thus rendering it the symbol of remembrance, and, like the subsequent fatal roses of York, and Lancaster, and Stuart—the lily of Bourbon, and the violet of Napoleon—an historical flower. Few of those, who, at parting, exchange this simple touching appeal to memory, are aware of the fact, that it was first used as such by a royal Plantagenet prince, who was, perhaps, indebted to the agency of this mystic blossom for the crown of England. It was with his hostess, at that time wife of the duke of Bretagne, that Henry exchanged this token of good-will and remembrance."

"Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?" was the question

of the patriarch Job; and as, in his day, the rushes and sedges crowded by the edge of the river, so it is now. Their long thin leaves form islets on the stream, or fringe its border with their greenness; and as a wind sweeps over the current, and ruffles it into waves, we are reminded of the denouncement, made by the prophet, to the wife of the wicked Jeroboam, "The Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water."

The tall bulrush, or clubrush, (*Scirpus lacustris,*) is now growing up; and, by the end of the month, bears its brown and fringed head. Its stems are much used for mats and chairs, and are gathered by country people for sale. The spongy stems are also useful to coopers, for filling up the crevices in casks; cottages are often thatched with them; and when pasturage is scarce, they are eaten by cattle. The salt marsh rush, (*Scirpus maritimus,*) and several other species, flower by the end of May. The roots of the latter kind are eaten in times of scarcity. The *Pi-tsi,* or water-chestnut, which the Chinese cultivate in tanks, and value as a dessert, is a species of clubrush. It is dried in the sun, and is eaten either boiled, or uncooked.

In former times, when rushes supplied the place of modern carpets, and when the ground over which the bride walked to the altar was strewed with their leaves, the sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*) was much sought for these purposes, and well suited to them, by its fragrant

leaf. The custom of strewing floors on festival days is still retained at Norwich; and the old cathedral is, on certain days, scented with the perfume of the sweet flag, profusely strewn over its floors. This plant is abundant in the fenny districts of England. The root is—especially when dried—so powerfully aromatic, as that it might be used instead of spice, for dishes. The Turks make a sweetmeat of this root, and think it valuable as a preservative against the plague. The sweet flag root, which is sold by druggists, is imported from the Levant; but our native species is quite as aromatic as that which is brought from afar. It is one of the oldest medicines known, and is much used in the present day. Linnæus says, that it is the only native aromatic plant of northern climates; the hot spices of foreign lands being invariably the product of the plants grown in the hot regions of the world.

The lovely flowering rush, (*Butomus umbellatus,*) often called water-gladiole, is now in bloom. The old writers termed it "grassie rush;" and one of them says, "It is of all others the fairest and most pleasant to behold, and serveth very well for the decking and trimming-up of houses, because of the beautie and braverie thereof." Its flowers grow in a cluster at the summit of its stem, and are of a delicate rose-colour, tinged with purple. The sharp edges of the leaves cut like a razor, and often wound the mouths of cattle.

That beautiful aquatic flower, the water-

violet, or feather-foil, (*Hottonia palustris,*) is a great ornament to streams, but it is, in some counties, very rare. Its white thread-like roots sink deep into the soil, at the bottom of the pond, and its leaves are all under water. The flowers rise above the stream, and seem to rest on its surface ; and their handsome clusters are either of a pale lilac or white colour. It affords a covert to several small shell-fish; among others, to the fresh-water periwinkle. It is to be regretted that it is not more general, as it is easily cultivated ; for if the seeds be thrown one summer into the stream, the flowers will appear in the ensuing season.

On the marshy sides of the river, grows that very pretty flower, the buck-bean, or bog-bean, (*Menyanthes trifoliata.*) It may easily be known by its triple-leaf, resembling in colour and shape that of the field bean. Its flowers grow in bunches, and are white, tipped with red, and most beautifully bordered with a delicate fringe. Its roots are so numerous, and so matted, that on bogs on which this plant grows in plenty, the ground is rendered firm by their interstices. It contains a bitter principle, and is used by the Swedes instead of hops. The roots, when ground to flour, are eaten by the Laplanders, but form a poor food.

But quitting the river side for the green lanes and fields, we find nature equally profuse. The bird's-foot trefoil, (*Lotus corniculatus,*) with its pretty yellow papilionaceous blossoms, is scattered all over the mead,

scarcely taller than the grass, but not hidden by it. Every hedge is now white with the flowers of the privet, (*Ligustrum vulgare,*) a plant which is green all the year, and, in winter, is covered with its numerous purple berries, which the birds leave untouched on the trees, and which are used by dyers. The honeysuckle (*Caprifolium periclymenum*) mingles its sweet breath with that of the hay-field. On calcareous and limestone soils, the flowers of the wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*) are a very conspicuous feature of the hedgerow. This plant is also called the mealy guelder rose, and it is well named by Mrs. Howitt, the wild hydrangea, for its general appearance is very similar to that of the garden plant. Its young shoots are covered with a cottony down, and its stems and leaves are thick and heavy. Its flat bunches of scarlet berries turn black in drying, and are used for making ink. In the Crimea, the young shoots are valued for the tubes of tobacco-pipes ; and in Germany, baskets are made of the pliable branches. This beautiful shrub is called, in Kent, the cotton tree.

The young shoots of the bladder campion (*Silene inflata*) peep up on the hedgebank, as early as April, and, in this month, the flower is blooming. The shoots are of a pale green, and have a powerful odour of green peas ; and they are sometimes gathered while young, and eaten at table. There is, however, a bitter flavour mingling with the sweet taste, which renders them less palatable than the green pea ;

but this flavour is quite removed by blanching. The plant is a common dish in several of the Mediterranean islands, and in Zante it is very general on the table in spring. In the year 1685, the injuries done by the swarms of locusts to the vegetation of the island of Minorca was so great, that the inhabitants were in a melancholy state of destitution, and were saved from starvation, entirely by means of this common wild flower.

The sweet-scented convolvulus (*Convolvolus arvensis*) hangs its delicate pink bells on the wheat-stalk, and the large white flowers of the larger bind-weed (*Calystegia sepium*) are winding among the bushes; and, by their side, sometimes springs the enchanter's nightshade, a plant with small pink flowers and heart-shaped leaves, found chiefly in damp and shady places.

The yellow agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*) blows both in June and July. The most frequent places of its growth are field-borders and road-sides. The flower has a sweet scent like that of an apricot, which is stronger when the plant is bruised; and, in early spring, before the appearance of the blossom, the root is also aromatic. Country people make much use of this plant both as an external application and a medicine. It was formerly extensively prescribed by physicians as a tonic, and considered by Dr. Hunter a valuable remedy in disorders of the skin. It is thought by some writers to be the flower called by the

ancients, *argemon;* and Pliny says, it takes its name from Eupator, the "finder of it out, and hath a royal and princelie authoritie."

The yellow avens, (*Geum urbanum,*) though rare in Scotland, is so frequent in rural places in England as to have obtained many familiar names. It is called herb Bennet, star of the earth, goldy flower, and its oldest name was, blessed herb. It probably received this because it was once much used by physicians as a febrifuge: Dr. Thornton thought highly of its virtue. It is a pretty flower, growing on a branched stem, and has large leaves at the root. Its root is prized on account of its sweet odour, and, in several parts of England, is collected and laid in drawers and chests, to give its scent to linen. It is also put into wine or ale, to impart to it a spicy flavour, and a water is distilled from it. It is remarkable that when this flower grows in damp places, the root does not possess this peculiar aroma. The water avens (*Geum rivale*) is the only other wild species, and is a much larger and thicker plant than this, with its flowers each about the size of a shilling, and of a deep purplish orange colour.

In the northern counties of England, and in Scotland, especially in the neighbourhood of mountains, the large round yellow blossoms of the globe flower (*Trollius Europæus*) are a very handsome ornament to the green lands. In the south, they deck our garden borders, but in Scotland, they are very general as wild flowers, and are called lucker-gowans, and cabbage-

daisies. This is a common plant on all the chain of the Alps, and seems by universal consent, to be used on the Continent as a flower of which to make garlands, on all rural festive occasions, and with which to dress houses on holidays. Miller says of the globe flower, "In Westmoreland, these flowers are collected with great festivity, by the youth of both sexes, at the beginning of June; about which time, it is usual to see them returning from the woods in an evening, to adorn their doors and cottages with wreaths and garlands."

The hound's tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) would attract our notice in the country lane, rather by its great number of leaves, than by its flowers. The dark crimson-brown tint of their blossoms is so rare among our wilding plants, that this alone may serve to distinguish it from others. This flower is altogether of a most sober aspect, and has nothing gay or bright about it. It rarely grows on pasture lands; but when it springs up there, the cattle most carefully avoid it. This is probably owing to its peculiar odour, which has been compared to that of mice.

The yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus crista galli*) intrudes itself in many pastures, but is rather local. In some parts of Kent, it is almost unknown; but around Tunbridge Wells, the fields are full of it. In the summer of 1839, it was unusually abundant in Essex, and found on many lands on which it had never before appeared. It not only grows in the meadows,

but even among the corn, and was a source of great annoyance to the Essex agriculturists. The newspapers of the county descanted on the unusual quantity of this plant; which was rendered the more troublesome, as it yields a great abundance of seeds. The country people of Essex had a remarkable prejudice against it, as they thought that its roots emitted some secretion of the plant, which burned the roots of the corn. This flower is about a foot high; the stem branched, and often spotted with purple. The plant is very conspicuous, when its flowers are over; for the flat seed-vessels are particularly large. When the seeds are ripe, they rattle in their large husks, whenever the wind blows, or they are shaken by the passing footstep; and when they rattle thus on the fields of Sweden, the peasant concludes that it is time to cut down his grass, and commence the labours of the hay field. This is not, however, a guide to the English farmer; for his hay is generally cut while the flower is in blossom, and is stacked by the time its seeds are ripened.

The dwarf red-rattle, (*Pedicularis sylvatica,*) and the taller red species, (*Pedicularis palustris,*) are both much prettier flowers than the yellow rattle. Their manner of growth, and the shape of their leaves, as well as the delicate rose-tint of their large blossoms, render them very ornamental, either to the heath-land, or the wet marshy ground, on which they are very abundant.

It is also on moist boggy soils that that lovely flower, the butterwort, (*Pinguicula vul-*

garis,) now droops its head. The leaves are of a very unctuous nature, and are used to coagulate milk. The Laplanders and Swedes pour the milk, warm from the cow, or the reindeer, on these leaves, which gives to it the consistency of cream. They then strain it, and keep it for several days, when it acquires that acidity which seems very agreeable to the natives of the northern lands. One spoonful of this substance will have the same effect on a fresh quantity of milk ; and thus this plant, which is very plentiful in these cold climates, is also very valuable to those who reside in them. The butterwort is more common in the north than in the south of England.

The large flowered species (*Pinguicula grandiflora*) blossoms in May, on marshy grounds, but is better known as a garden flower. "Few plants," says Dr. Hooker, "can exhibit a more beautiful appearance early in the year than a cluster of *Pinguicula grandiflora*, blossoming under the shelter of a common frame. It is a mass of large deep and rich purple-coloured flowers ; well contrasted by the pale, but bright tint of its leaves." A writer in the "Magazine of Natural History" says of the common butterwort, (*Pinguiculavulgaris*,) that, upon pulling up the plant from the earth somewhat roughly, "the flower-stalk, previously erect. began to bend itself backwards, and formed a more or less perfect segment of a circle. So also, if the specimen is placed in a botanical box, it will soon be found that the leaves have curled

themselves backwards, and now conceal the root by their revolution."

The creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*) weaves its tapestry of pretty leaves and yellow-velvet blossoms over the mead, or on the hedge-bank; and now, too, we may find the smaller blossoms of the tormentils, (*Tormentilla,*) which are very nearly allied to the potentilla, and the roots of which are used by the natives of the Orkneys and the Hebrides in tanning, and are considered to yield a better tanning material than even the bark of the oak. Loudon states, that in the isles of Tirey and Col, so much land has been destroyed by digging for these roots, that the inhabitants have been prohibited the use of them. In many countries, they are used for dyeing red.

And now, too, some of the flowers of the corn-field spring up, and tower above the daily lengthening corn. The viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) is seen from a distance on the chalky hill, the barren wall, or the heap of rubbish; and too often on the corn-lands. Crabbe, when naming the wild flowers, which are so unwelcome in the sterile corn-fields near the sea, gives to the bugloss a prominent place:—

"Rank weeds which every art and care defy
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye;
Here thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;—
Here poppies, nodding, mock the hopes of toil—
Here the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil:—
Hardy and high above the slender sheaf
The shining mallow waves her silky leaf:
O'er the young shoot, the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade."

That the bugloss "paints the sterile soil," is very evident from its places of growth; yet Loudon says truly, it is perhaps the handsomest of our native flowers. About Cambridge, where the country, by its barren soil and stunted vegetation, reminds us of the sea-coast, the bugloss is very common, and is called by country people, cat's tail.

The foliage of this flower is so thickly beset with prickles, that even those animals, which, like the donkey, browse on the thistle-tops, shrink from its spiny leaves and stems; and professor Martyn observes, that when the bees pause in their flight, to suck the honey from its rich blue bells, their delicate wings are torn, before they can make their escape from the plant. The same writer, speaking of its frequency in Cambridge, among the spring-corn, says, "that the agriculturists of that land, have remarked, that it appears most plentiful every third year, when the fields are quite blue with its flowers."

The general name of viper's bugloss is common to the plant in several countries of Europe. Thus the Spaniard calls it *herba de la vibora;* and the Frenchman *la viperine;* and it is amusing to trace the odd fancies which led to its being thus designated. The spotted stem resembles the skin of a snake, and the seeds are each like a viper's head; and our forefathers, who looked upon these marks as the signs of some corresponding virtues, inferred that the plant must heal the bite of a viper. On the

same principle the consumptive patient hoped for relief from the lungwort because of its spotted leaves ; and who, in those hopeful, trusting days, doubted that the pretty hepatica of the garden, with its lobed leaves, so like the liver, was created for the benefit of the sufferer under the gloomy liver-complaint? In looking over the works on plants, written a few centuries ago, one might infer that snakes, vipers, and serpents abounded in our rural districts; and so many specific remedies are given against their bites, that surely none but the ignorant need have suffered from their effects. The very sight of the viper's bugloss would, according to Gerarde, drive vipers away from the spot, and the seed of the larkspur had, he says, a still more powerful influence. "Its vertues," says he, "are so forcible, that the herbe only thrown before the scorpion, or any other venemous beast, causeth them to be without force and strength to hurt; insomuch that they cannot move or stir until the herbe be taken away." Yet Gerarde was a good botanist and an intelligent man, and these strange notions belonged rather to people of those times in general, than to an individual.

The corn gromwell, (*Lithospermum arvense,*) a plant about a foot high, with narrow-pointed leaves, covered with white hairs, and seeds hard as flint, is now very general in the corn-field: and a plant called the shepherd's needle, (*Scandix pecten,*) attracts observation by its peculiar seed-vessels. This plant is about a foot high,

with clusters of very small white flowers. When the flowers die, they are succeeded by bunches of seed-vessels, so large that no one would suppose that they belonged to so tiny a flower. The seed-vessels are often three or four inches in length, and they taper into a sharp point at the summit; hence the rural name of the flower, which is also called Venus's comb. It is believed that this plant was eaten at table by the ancient Greeks.

Several poppies are in bloom during this month, and in the course of July, all our six wild species of this beautiful flower enliven the fields. Ornamental as they are to the pastoral scenery, waving to and fro their large handsome heads, yet they are very annoying to the cultivator. The common red poppy, (*Papaver Rhœas,*) with its globular flower, is general in all parts of England, and sometimes called cheese-bowl, and head-ache. It is cultivated in Flanders, and several parts of Germany, for the sake of its seeds, from which an excellent oil is made, and used as a substitute for olive-oil. The ancients had a very different opinion of the poppy from that entertained in modern days; for, instead of regarding it as injurious to the corn-field, they looked upon its gay petals as a trophy of triumph to the land-owner, since no corn was thought good which had not an admixture of the poppy: and when the reaper offered to Ceres his thank-offerings for a good harvest, the brown ears of corn and the seeds of the poppy served for an expression of his gratitude.

All the poppies possess the narcotic principle in a greater or less degree, and the white poppy especially (*Papaver somniferum*) partakes it. It is now common in corn-fields. It is thought that this flower was originally brought us from some parts of Asia. It is, in several eastern countries, cultivated for the purposes of opium. Upon breaking the stem of this flower it may easily be seen to contain a quantity of thick white milk ; and the opium is made by wounding the poppy-stem, and leaving the milk to harden in the sun. It is then formed into flat cakes, and covered with leaves, and in this state we receive it from the east. The Turks mingle in their opium-cakes a variety of syrups made from several fruits, and stamp these sweetmeats with the words "*Mash Allah*," the work of God. Alas, that pious words should have so little real meaning, and should be used as a sanction to that degrading intoxication, and destruction of bodily and mental faculties, which is the sad result of opium eating!

The white poppy is planted in many fields of England for its seed-vessels, which are used in medicine and surgery. It was formerly called Joan silver pin.

Poppy seeds, in the east, are commonly sprinkled on the tops of cakes and sweetmeats. Several seeds are, indeed, used in this way, as we should use carraway-seeds, and even the bread is thus adorned with the seed of the poppy or some other plant. The cracknels spoken of in the first book of Kings, when

Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin, sent them as a present to the prophet Ahijah, when he asked of the fate of his sick child, are supposed by Kitto to have been a kind of cake, sprinkled over in this way with poppy-seeds, as the original word implies a spotted cake.

Poppies are found in all countries, and under all climates, from the north pole to the sandy deserts of Africa. Brilliant as is our wild scarlet flower, it is much brighter in some other lands. In the corn-fields, in some parts of France, it has a much richer tint than in the English field.

An interesting phenomenon is sometimes exhibited by red and orange-coloured flowers, and also, in a less degree, by yellow-tinted blossoms. It is that of a light of their own colour playing about the plant. This is not the result of an inflammable vapour igniting on the approach of a candle, but seems rather, as Sharon Turner has remarked, "an actual secretion of light additional to their usual show." The cause of this phenomenon has not been discovered, but it seems dependent on an electrical state of the atmosphere. It has not been seen during the bright sunshine, but has been observed after sunset, in several flowers, as the marigold, the different species of poppy, the scarlet geranium, and even in the heartsease.

A bright light is given out not by the blossoms alone of plants ; several roots show a brilliance in the progress of decay ; this, however, is of a phosphorescent nature. A luminosity so

powerful as to enable the bystander to read by it, issues from the common potato, when in a state of putrefaction; and professor Lindley mentions that an officer who was on guard at a barrack near Strasburg, during night, thought that the building was on fire, and, upon examination, found that the vivid light which had alarmed him proceeded from a heap of potatoes contained in a cellar. The vast coal-mines of Dresden are said almost to realize, by their lustrous illumination, the appearances described in the fairy tales of the east. In those spots, into which the sun's rays never penetrate, some species of fungus of the genus *Rhizomorpha*, growing over the roofs, pillars, and other parts of these subterraneous places, emit a light so brilliant and powerful as almost to dazzle the eye of the beholder; though it is sometimes so soft and subdued as to resemble a faint moonlight. This fungus is found in many other caverns besides those of Dresden, and adds greatly to the interest which such scenes excite in the traveller.

Among the flowers which, during this month, annoy the farmer, though they please the botanist, the corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*) is very frequent in the field; the corn cockle is named in the book of Job; thus the patriarch says, "Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley;"* but as the word which our translators have rendered cockle is expressive of an unpleasant odour, the poppy

* Job xxxi. 40.

is, by some commentators, thought to be here intended.

That very common flower, the scarlet pimpernel, (*Anagallis arvensis,*) is now smiling by the road side; it is perhaps better known as the poor man's weather-glass, or shepherd's barometer; both names given on account of its closing before rain. This peculiarity was noticed many years since, and Gerarde thus writes of the pimpernel: "These plants in summer, and especially in the month of August, at what time the husbandmen, having occasion to go to their harvest work, will first behold the flower of pimpernel, whereby they know the weather that will follow the next day after; as for example, if the flowers be close shut up, it betokeneth rain and foul weather; contrariwise, if they be opened abroad, fine weather." Though we must not expect so much from the pimpernel as this would promise, yet it is more to be depended on than other wild flowers, which close before rain. It must be remembered, too, that it closes up for the day by twelve o'clock, however bright the sunshine.

The flax (*Linum usitatissum*) is now in bloom in many wild places. The pale blue erect bell is very frail, falling off even at the touch. This is a plant of much interest. The strong fibres of its bark form the valuable flax of commerce; these fibres, when separated from the plant, compose the tow, which being spun into yarn, is afterwards woven into linen. The stalks require macerating, in order to separate

the fibrous strings from the more fleshy substance, and they are laid under water, either in tanks or ponds, or they are strewn over the grass field, for the dews and sunshine to prepare them for use. Fields of flax have been cultivated from the earliest antiquity, for making linen; and it appears from the Scriptures, that a numerous class of people were engaged in the manufacture, among the ancient Hebrews and Egyptians. The prophet Isaiah, when predicting the wrath of God, and the coming desolation of the land of Egypt, foretells that "they who work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded;" and the "fine twined linen, wrought with needlework," was ordered for many purposes, in the ornament and service of the tabernacle, which the Lord commanded that the children of Israel should make. The mucilaginous seeds of the flax are much employed in surgery, and the flower is so elegant, that it is frequently planted in gardens.

The small common white flax (*Linum catharticum*) is abundant by road-sides, both in England and France, and grows in such profusion about Versailles, that, small as are its pretty flowers, they make the field quite white by their number. It is often called mill-mountain: country people gather and dry it, as a cure for rheumatism; and professor Martyn says, "that it is an excellent medicine in that painful complaint."

Even the barren wall bears an aspect of

gaiety now, for it is thickly covered with patches of the bright yellow flowers of the stonecrop, (*Sedum*,) which cluster both here and on the cottage roof. The Latin name of the stonecrop is derived from the word "*sedēre*," to sit, because many of the species may be said to sit on the walls, clothing them like mosses. The yellow biting stonecrop, (*Sedum acre*,) now in blossom, grows also on sandy hills, and is often planted on rock work in gardens; it is very acrid, and when bitten, its juice leaves on the tongue a flavour as pungent as that of pepper, hence it is frequently called wall-pepper. It has also the old familiar names of gold dust, and gold chain. In former days, too, it was known as jack of the buttery, country pepper, pricket, and bird's bread. It is given in beer or milk to invalids: if laid on the skin, it will quickly raise a blister.

We have eleven wild kinds of stonecrop, which are, with one exception, very similar to each other in nature and habit, though several have red or white flowers. The plant commonly termed orpine, or livelong, (*Sedum telephium*,) differs much from the other stonecrops; it has a spotted stem, and instead of the closely imbricated foliage of the other stonecrops, has broad leaves; its purple flowers appear in July, on waste places, or field borders; its leaves are occasionally boiled and eaten. One would wonder at the taste of those who selected them for this purpose, as even after boiling, they retain a considerable portion of acridity and though

wholesome, are not more so than hundreds of common plants, some of which, like the chickweed and nettle, are used at the poor man's table.

One species of stonecrop, the white orpine, (*Sedum album,*) is pickled as samphire. A large white kind, called English stonecrop, (*Sedum angelicum*) is very ornamental to the rocks on the Highlands and Hebrides, scattering its white stars by thousands on their else barren surfaces, and supplying their want of verdure by its thick green leaves.

On the summit of the wall, or rock, or still more often at its base, we may now find the small nettle, (*Urtica urens,*) full of its green bloom; we have three native species, easily distinguished, even by persons unacquainted with botany, by the circumstances respecting them. The lesser nettle is seldom above two feet high, its leaves are small, and it is not a conspicuous plant; but the great nettle (*Urtica dioica*) cannot be overlooked, and grows by every wayside, often to the height of three feet. The Roman nettle (*Urtica pilulifera*) is not much unlike it, but is comparatively rare, and found chiefly near the sea; this is by far the most virulent of our stinging nettles, and the pain inflicted by its venom remains for several hours. The old English writers had a legend, concerning the introduction of this nettle into our country, which was very generally believed, though, as Ray observes, it is not very likely to be true. Our great antiquary, Camden,

records it in his "Britannia." The Roman nettle was known to have been found growing at Lidd, near Romney, and also in the streets of Romney. Julius Cæsar landed at Romney, with his soldiers, and remained there for some time, on which account the place is supposed to have been called Romania, of which its modern name is a corruption. The old antiquary relates, that "the soldiers brought some of the nettle seed with them, and sowed it there for their use, to rub and chafe their limbs, when, through extreme cold, they should be stiff and benumbed, being told, before they came from home, that the climate of Britain was so cold, that it was not to be endured, without some friction to warm their blood." No plant, certainly, could better serve to chafe and warm their limbs; but how far the glow would be pleasurable, even to the hardy Roman soldiers, must be questioned.

Though the nettles are not favourite plants with country ramblers, yet they are far from being useless. A decoction of nettle juice, mingled with salt, will curdle milk, without imparting any disagreeable flavour; the fibres of the stems are manufactured into cloth, ropes, and even paper. Some lovely kinds of butterfly feed on the nettle; the gay creature

> "Array'd
> In crimson, azure, emerald, and gold.
> With more magnificence upon his wing—
> His little wing—than ever graced the robe
> Gorgeous of royalty."

Much use is made in Russia of the large

nettle, and in Sweden, it is planted in rows for forage. The roots furnish a beautiful yellow colour to the dyers of Russia, and are very extensively employed by them for this purpose. It is a singular fact, that steel dipped in the juice of the nettle becomes flexible.

But there are still further uses to which this neglected and despised plant may be applied. Dr. Thornton, who has made the medicinal properties of our wild plants his peculiar study, states, that lint dipped in nettle juice, and put up the nostril, has been known to stay the bleeding of the nose, when all other remedies have failed; and adds, that fourteen or fifteen of the seeds, ground into powder, and taken daily, will cure the swelling in the neck, known by the name of goitre, without in any way injuring the general health.

The English word, nettle, is supposed to have been derived from the Anglo-Saxon word, *noedl*, or *noedle*. The pain caused by the sting of this plant arises from the poisonous juice, which lies in a small bag, at the base of each sting, or hair; the fine hair penetrates the skin, and the juice flows through an aperture at the point, into the wound which it has made, and thus gives a degree of pain, which would not be caused by the mere puncture.

The wild nettles are found everywhere, on the neglected garden, or field, on the crumbling wall, or towering cliff, or in the dim and gloomy forest. Like the evil passions of man, they need no cherishing; we have only to leave them

undisturbed, and they will take root and grow, and bear fruit abundantly.

The white dead nettle (*Lamium album*) is in appearance something like the true nettle, but its rings of white flowers at once distinguish it, as the blossoms of the true nettles are all green; its odour is very disagreeable, but Linnæus states, that, in Sweden, it is much employed as a vegetable for the table.

The flower so often praised as the handsomest of our native flowers, the tall and showy foxglove, (*Digitalis purpurea*,) graces the banks and hedges, during June and July. The spike of large purple, or white freckled bells, and its large leaves, render it so striking an object, that the artist frequently selects it to adorn his painted landscape; it contains a virulent poison, but is, when properly administered, a most valuable medicine. In some countries, the foxglove leaf is made into tea, for the sinful purpose of producing intoxication, and degrading the being, to whom God has given an immortal spirit, and a clear intellect, to a condition beneath that ot the brutes which perish. This showy flower is peculiar to hilly and rocky situations, and is but little known as a wild flower in some parts of England, as in Norfolk and Suffolk.

On the dry chalky soils, the burnet, (*Poterium sanguisorba*,) is blooming, with its heads of purplish-green flowers. It is called the salad burnet, because its leaves have the scent and flavour of the cucumber, and are consequently often used in salad; it is also, as well as the

borage, an ingredient in the drink, called a cool tankard.

Few persons could be found in the rural districts of England who are unacquainted with that common flower the mallow, (*Malva sylvestris.*) It grows by our every road side, and in almost every meadow, and its handsome lilac flowers and large and numerous leaves form a picturesque object. Common as it is with us, however, it is rarely found in Scotland. The flowers continue through this and the two following months, and its clumps of leaves remain in the hedges till winter has swept all the remnants of summer beauty before his rains and snows. There are few who have not, during childhood, picked the circular seeds of the mallow, and called them cheeses, and most can sympathize with the reminiscences of Clare on the subject :—

> "The sitting down when school was o'er,
> Upon the threshold of the door,
> Picking from mallows, sport to please,
> The crumpled seed we call a cheese."

Nor is this play peculiar to the English child, for the French children call them also *les petits fromageons.* Like all the other parts of the plant, they are used in medicines, not only by the cottager, but by the regular practitioner, though the greater power of the marsh mallow causes it to be more generally selected for use than this. The word mallow is derived from a Greek word, signifying soft, on account of the emollient properties of the plants of this tribe.

Another kind of mallow, not quite so gene-

ral as this, and easily distinguished from it by its lesser leaves and small pale lilac flowers, grows by waysides and on waste places. It is the dwarf mallow, (*Malva rotundifolia.*) It is not in bloom till July, and frequently remains in flower till September.

The only other native mallow—if we except the marsh species, which botanists distinguish by the name of *Althæa*—is the fragrant musk mallow, (*Malva moschata,*) which is not unfrequent on the gravelly soil of several English counties. In Essex it is very abundant. In many parts of Kent, not a single specimen could be found wild, but it is planted in gardens. The large rose-coloured blossoms of this species are very beautiful, and when a shower has fallen upon them, their musky odour is very powerful.

The bitter sweet, or common nightshade, (*Solanum dulcamara,*) throws its lurid purple flowers over every hedge; and that lovely flower the wilding rose is one of the sweetest adornments of the green lanes of June. The older writers depreciated this flower so as to call it canker, a name by which it is still known in Devonshire. It was called dog's rose and dog's thorn, because dogs are said to eat the hips. Its beautiful flushed petals have a slight odour, scarcely stronger than that which the breath of morning brings us from the dewy grass. "A great store of hips and haws," says Lord Bacon, "portends a cold winter:" a statement which, whether true or not, is gene-

rally believed by country people. These fruits are to the birds a continual feast, until the frost has rendered them tasteless, or the wind has scattered them under the hawthorn or brier. In the time of queen Elizabeth, the wild brier hips were made, "by cooks and gentlewomen," into tarts and conserves; and the conserve made from the scarlet fruits of the common dog rose (*Rosa canina*) is still sold by the druggist, and considered better than that which is the produce of the garden flower. From this flower, too, an excellent rose water is distilled.

The sweet brier rose, (*Rosa rubiginosa,*) the eglantine of the poets, is common in some parts of England, on open bushy places. It may easily be known from the dog rose by its smaller flowers, of a deeper pink colour, and especially by its fragrant foliage.

The several other wild roses, with the exception of two kinds, are so alike in general appearance, as that they cannot be easily described in a popular work, so as that the reader may distinguish them. Two common species, however, may be recognised. The little white flowers of the burnet-leaved rose (*Rosa spinosissima,*) grow plentifully on chalky or sandy soils. It is tinged with cream colour. Its leaves are much smaller than those of the dog rose, of a darker green, and not so glossy; and its stems are so thickly set both with long and short prickles, that it is difficult to gather a branch of its slightly scented flowers. The

hip is not scarlet, but of a brown, or purplish black colour, and full of a sweet purple juice. The tall Scotch rose of the garden is very similar to this flower, and probably only a cultivated variety of it.

The trailing dog rose (*Rosa arvensis*) is also very common in the southern counties of England. The bush is seldom more than three feet high, but its long winding stems extend to the distance of several feet. The flowers grow in large bunches, and are quite white. The prickles are not numerous on the branches, and the little round buds which cluster upon them are almost destitute of them. This flower is very common in Yorkshire, and has the repute of being the white rose of the Yorkists, at the time when civil wars desolated our land.

The broom, "the bonnie broom," (*Genista scoparia,*) with its myriads of golden flowers, is glittering on the dry hill, or heath-land. The farmer eyes it with complacency, for when the broom flowers freely it is generally regarded as a promise of a good harvest. It is an exceedingly beautiful flower, and one over which the bees hover incessantly, and beside which the wanderer on the heath is glad to make his couch, that its odour may sweeten his sleep. The French term it *le genêt à balai*, for, like us, they make brooms of its branches. It is said that the house of Plantagenet derived its name from this flower, and various traditions record the circumstance. The one most commonly believed is, that the name was assumed

by Geoffrey, earl of Anjou, the husband of Matilda, the haughty empress of Germany; who, having placed a sprig of the broom in his helmet on the day of battle, acquired the surname, and bequeathed it to his descendants. Perchance, before engaging in the contest, he had lain down among the fragrant broom, and had been struck by its beauty. Yet flowers seem ill suited to accompany the horrors of war. "Bring flowers," says Mrs. Hemans, "to deck the bride, and to crown the feast;" but bring them "to die in the conqueror's path."

The dyer's weed, or woad-waxen, (*Genista tinctoria,*) has blossoms very much like those of the broom, but they are not in flower till a month later. It is common on pastures and field-borders, and is used by dyers in giving a yellow colour to yarn. It is much valued in Russia as a cure for hydrophobia.

JULY.

"In the breeze
That wafts the thistle's plumed seed along.
Blue bells wave tremulous. The mountain thyme
Purples the hassock of the heaving mole,
And the short turf is gay with tormentils,
And bird's foot trefoil, and the lesser tribes
Of hawkweeds; spangling it with fringed stars."

How often do a few lines, like those which are placed at the head of this chapter, bring before us the pleasant scenes of the country! The wide-spread open down; the upland moor; the flowers which are springing in the fresh grass or on the brown summer turf of the heath;

how are they present to the eye of the mind, even while the bodily eye is gazing on the brick wall, or the city houses! The love of the country—the love of nature, affords, next to religion, the surest means of enjoyment; and may so well be connected with pious thought, that it is often the means of raising us above the world and its cares to the contemplation of God. It is very desirable that the young should cherish it; for he who has been taught to mark the beauties of the starry heavens, and the waving tree, and the wayside flower, has learned a better lesson than if he had been taught to gather gold.

The heath-lands are so beautiful in July, with their gorgeous array of flowers, that one can hardly imagine that the purple bells indicate that the soil is barren and poor. As the bleak winds chase over them in winter, they do, indeed, seem drear; but the seasons come round, and the Almighty causeth "it to rain on the earth . . . . to satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth,"* and then the heath becomes a spot of beauty, fitted to invite the footstep and to charm the spirit.

Our five native species of heath (*Erica*) are very lovely flowers, either of a dark purplish red, or of a rose colour, and are so little like our other wild plants that few would mistake them. The Highlanders thatch their cottages and make their beds of its sprays, and an old historian relates, that the Picts, who drank a great

* Job xxxviii. 26, 27.

quantity of ale, made it of the young heath-shoots. Carrington has some lines on this flower—

> "How many a vagrant wing light waves around
> Thy purple bells, Erica! 'Tis from thee
> The hermit birds, that love the desert, find
> Shelter and food. Nor these alone delight
> In the fresh heath. Thy gallant mountaineers,
> Auld Scotia, smile to see it spread immense
> O'er their uncultured hills; and at the close
> Of the keen boreal day, the undaunted race
> Contented on the rude Erica sink
> To healing sleep."

The ling (*Calluna vulgaris*) is included among the plants which compose the heather; it is more like a small shrub, and has lighter coloured and smaller flowers than the heaths.

The strong sweet scent of the wild thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) comes up now to the wanderer over the moor, and it is one of the sweetest of wild odours. Among the Greeks, this flower was an emblem of activity. The highest flavoured venison is furnished by the deer which feed on thymy lands, and sheep, too, thrive well on these places.

The bluebell, or harebell, (*Campanula rotundifolia,*) bends its azure drooping blossoms to the winds, on the chalky cliff or barren hill of England, or Scotland, and graces the solitary ridges. Professor Lindley remarks:—"On the mountains of Switzerland there are species of harebell, with corollas of a pale yellow, spotted with black. On the Alps of India are others of the deepest purple that can be conceived. On the rocks of Madeira lives one which was, formerly, not uncommon in our gardens, (*Mus-*

thia aurea,) whose corollas are of a rich golden yellow; and, finally, on the pastures of the Cape of Good Hope, are Roellas, the flowers of which are elegantly banded with streaks of violet or rose, passing into white."

A little white harebell, sometimes cultivated in pots, is very common in the meadows of France; and from its modest and pure appearance is called "the nun of the fields."

On the moist bog, or heath, we should now search for the bog-pimpernel, (*Anagallis tenella,*) with very tiny leaves, and comparatively large rose-coloured blossoms; and we may also find the bog or Lancashire asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) growing near it. The latter plant bears a spike of pretty yellow flowers, and is very similar to the true asphodel, (*Asphodelus,*) renowned as the asphodel of the Greek poets, and as the flower with which the ancients planted their graves, and which they used in funeral ceremonies. This plant covers large tracts of land in Apulia.

That singular and interesting flower, the sundew, (*Drosera rotundifolia,*) grows commonly on moist heathy grounds, and its white blossoms may be gathered in July. The curious structure of the leaf is well worth observation. It is covered with hairs tipped with pellucid glands, which exude a clear liquid; these glisten in the sunshine, giving the leaf the appearance of being sprinkled with dew, and by their sweet taste are very attractive to insects. These hairs are not only thick on the surface, but

around the edge of the leaf. The insect on alighting on the plant is held a prisoner by these clammy hairs, and the leaf immediately closes over it. Dead flies and other small insects may thus often be found captured by this irritable leaf. The foliage of this flower is very much tinged with crimson, and on drying it for the herbarium, this red hue colours the page through several sheets. The plant is so small as that the whole of it might be covered by the palm of the hand. It is very frequent on the downs near Tunbridge Wells.

The sundew is used as an ingredient in the celebrated Italian liqueur, termed Rossoli; it is, nevertheless, very acrid and caustic in its nature; when distilled with lime, it makes a highly stimulating drink, and, in former times, was much used as a tincture. The practice of expressing the juice, for the removal of the freckles and tan which the summer sun gives to the rustic maiden, has long been a common one; its juice is also said to curdle milk.

The various species of St. John's wort (*Hypericum*) are now common everywhere, and their bright yellow flowers, with the scent of rosin, are very pretty. The yellow bed straw, (*Galium verum,*) with its honey like odour, is, when growing in any quantity, a very great ornament to the heath.

The tall broom rape, (*Orobanche major,*) though not very beautiful, is too large and singular a flower to escape notice. This plant is a parasite, growing on the roots of the

broom and furze, and even sometimes on that of the clover; it very much injures the plant on which it fixes. On heaths it is very common; it is one, two, or even three feet high, with a stem as thick as a finger, without leaves, but with brown scales. Its flowers grow down about a third of the stem, and are of a dingy purple brown. It has the appearance, on a cursory glance, of being a withered plant. The broom rapes attach themselves particularly to plants which have butterfly shaped blossoms.

The waste places are now enlivened by the beautiful tribes of thistles, whose minute feathery seeds, flying so lightly on the breeze, seem in sufficient profusion to sow the whole land with their flowers. One cannot help remarking how, even when the curse was pronounced on Adam, good was mingled with the evil. God said, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread;" * yet who shall say that toil is an unmixed evil, or that labour brings not an enjoyment with it, when he is the least happy who spends his days in listless idleness? So even also the thorns bear roses, and the thistle brings forth lovely flowers.

We have more than a dozen species of wild thistle, difficult, however, to describe particularly. One species, the milk thistle, (*Carduus marianus,*) may be known by its large leaves, chequered with streaks of milky white. This is often called the Scotch thistle, but is not so,

* Gen. iv. 18, 19.

for common as it is in England, it is very rare in Scotland; almost the only spot of that country in which it is known to grow is on the rocky cliffs near Dunbarton castle; and tradition tells, that the unhappy Mary, queen of Scots, planted it there with her own hand. The beautiful cotton thistle, (*Onopordum acanthium,*) which grows by Scotia's highways, is cultivated by Scotsmen, as the Scottish thistle; it seems to have some claim to be regarded as the national insignia, for the hard and sharp spines well accord with the proud defiant motto which accompanies it. The adoption of this flower as the national emblem is said to have arisen from the following circumstance: the Danes were invading the Scottish nation, and, according to their usual practice, attacked them during night, when they were sleeping; they had just reached the Scottish camp, when a Dane placing his naked foot on the spiny leaves of a thistle, instinctively uttered a cry, which roused the slumbering warriors, who quickly chased the invaders.

Several thistles have a large quantity of cottony down on their stems and leaves, which, is picked off by country children for tinder; and their large number of seeds are eaten by birds, especially by the goldfinches, which feed almost entirely on the downy grains of flowers.

One of our wild thistles, the musk thistle, (*Carduus nutans,*) has beautiful purple blossoms, most powerfully fragrant in the evening; and a more common species, the carline thistle,

(*Carlina vulgaris,*) which is about a foot high, may easily be distinguished from all the others by its yellow flowers; it is frequent on dry and hilly pastures.

The sweet marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*) is now putting forth its clusters of chocolate-coloured blossoms, and shedding a sweet odour over the heath, or chalky bank; a very useful plant it is too, for the dried leaves make a wholesome tea, and are used medicinally. A piece of cotton dipped in the strong oil which may be expressed from it will often cure the toothache; and the young tops are used to dye cloth of a purple colour, and to give to linen a reddish brown. Its scent is very similar to that of the wild thyme, and the flowers are much like those of that plant, but they grow on a stem, one or two feet high, instead of forming tufts on the ground.

The corn is now fast ripening for the sickle, and very often the corn-field is covered with that bright flower, the corn bluebottle, (*Centaurea Cyanus,*) verging from a deep blue to a pale azure, or a faint blue tint; its colour is always beautiful and striking. In Scotland it is called blue bonnet, in France, *bluet;* in former times, it was termed in our own land, hurt sickle, "because," says an old writer, "it hindereth and annoyeth the reapers, by dulling and turning the edge of their sickles, in reaping of corn." A brilliant blue juice is obtained by expression from this plant, which gives its tint to linen, but the dye is not permanent.

This flower is a great favourite with German ladies, and they frequently wear it in their hair; it is the companion of the ripening and ripened corn in all the countries of Europe.

The several kinds of scabious are also pretty and common flowers now; the field scabious, (*Scabiosa arvensis,*) termed by botanists, field knautia, is very frequent on dry fields, and has large convex heads of flowers, of a beautiful purplish lilac; these flowers, if held in the smoke of tobacco, become of a delicate green colour.

The devil's bit scabious (*Scabiosa succisa*) grows in meadow lands, and is remarkable for its abrupt root, which seems as if bitten off; the fact is, that the top of the root actually dies away, and then a horizontal root is formed; but as no philosophy has yet accounted for the singular fact of this decay, we need not be surprised that, in olden times, it was believed that the great enemy of mankind bit it off in "envie because it had so many excellent vertues." "Unhappily," says Sir J. E. Smith, "this malice has been so successful, that no virtues can be now found in the remainder of the root or herb."

The blue succory, sometimes called chicory, or blue endive, (*Cichorium Intybus,*) grows alike in corn-fields and hedges, not only in England, but very generally on the continent. The Germans had an old name for it, which signified "keeper of the ways." It has large flowers, the size of half-a-crown, pale blue, and composed of rays, so as that it may truly be

called star shaped. In most of the chalky lands of England it is abundant, but it is generally rare in sandy soils.

The flower of the succory opens at eight in the morning and closes at four in the evening, and suggested some verses to a poet, true to nature.

> "On upland slopes the shepherds mark
> The hour, when to the dial true,
> Cichorium, to the towering lark
> Lifts her soft eye, serenely blue.
>
> Thus in each flower and simple bell,
> That in our path untrodden lie,
> Are sweet remembrancers, which tell
> How fast the winged moments fly."

Alas, we little heed those silent teachers, or the more emphatic monitions of holy writ, of the fleeting nature of our time! yet the flowers bloom in beauty, and preach their lessons to us as they did to our fathers; and the Bible gives us its more direct and solemn warnings; but men live on and heed them not, and pass their fleeting lives as if the world were their final resting place.

The common sow thistle, (*Sonchus oleraceus,*) a plant known to every schoolboy as the food of his tame rabbit, and which is equally relished by the wild rabbit of the warren, has the same properties as the succory; and, like that flower, is full of milky juice. Its young leaves are sometimes eaten. This plant is termed by the American settlers, gall of the earth, and is thought by them to cure the bite of the rattlesnake.

And now by every wayside and waste place

the large leaves of the common burdock (*Arctium lappa*) are spreading themselves out, and its dull purple flowers, something like those of a thistle, seem small when compared with its foliage. A few weeks later, and these flowers will have changed to balls of seeds, covered with spines, and these fruits well deserve the name Lappa, taken from the Celtic *llap*, a hand, for they catch at every passer by.

But it is pleasant, in these days of sunshine, to turn from the open and dry lands to the crystal stream, which wanders by the wood, giving the sweet tones of its ripplings to all who will listen.

The glassy pool reflects on its bosom some of our handsomest aquatics. The white water lily, (*Nymphæa alba,*) its rose-like flower sitting on the water, has for its companion the yellow water lily, (*Nuphar lutea,*) and both have large oval leaves, so smooth and shiny that the water runs over them as if their surfaces were oiled. Then by the side, and almost down in the water, the meadow sweet, (*Spiræa ulmaria,*) which, as a Kentish poet, Mr. Merritt, has said, has a flower of "lace-like embroidery," is so beautiful and so graceful that the wind which is too soft to stir the stream, bids it nod and rise up again, so prettily, that one might watch its motions and dream that it was some creature of gentle heart and elegant manners. Its odour is very fragrant, but it has too much ot the nature of prussic acid to be wholesome in a close apartment. An instance of the danger-

ous properties of the meadow sweet occurred in Kent, a few years since. Two young men, who had gone thither from London to spend a day in roving among hills and glades, and to gather the wild flowers from some of the sweetest nooks of that beautiful county, went, in the evening, laden with their nosegays, to a village inn. They had been struck with the loveliness of the meadow sweet, and had gathered a large store to take away with them. In the night both became ill, and the surgeon who was sent for detected, immediately on entering their chamber, a strong scent of prussic acid. This he found to proceed from a quantity of the withering flowers of the meadow sweet, which they had incautiously laid around and under their beds. Both suffered severely, and one of them so much so, that he remained ill for several weeks. This flower is sometimes called queen of the meadows, and the French too term it *la reine des pres*. The stems are used in some countries for dyeing.

We have several very pretty willow herbs, (*Epilobium*,) which with their purplish red blossoms deck the summer hedges; the handsomest of the tribe growing near streams.

The Kamschatdales are very fond of an intoxicating liquor made from some species, and they also prepare vinegar from them, and eat the young shoots as food.

The flowers of the willow herb are seated upon long pods, which contain a number of seeds crowned each with a tuft of down. These

seeds are most frequently the produce of rayed flowers, like the dandelion and thistle; but some few flowers, as the willow herb and clematis, send them forth also by thousands. The latter plant is so covered with them, that if in winter it grow near a town, the hedge looks as if the spiders had been diligently weaving their tapestry about the branches, and produced a drapery of cobwebs; or if it be far away among the wild woods, where the smoke cannot reach it, it seems as if the swan had bestowed its down upon it. The great quantity of down yielded by the seeds of the willow herbs has induced some writers to recommend their cultivation for manufactures. The down has been mingled with fur or wool, and made into stockings, with very good success.

A very pretty aquatic, the water arrowhead, (*Sagittaria sagittifolia,*) easily known from all our other water plants by its arrow-shaped leaves, is frequently found in the pools in July. It has white flowers, and its leaves lie in large masses on the surface of the stream. The root is most nutritious, and might well be used in this country as food; but in warmer climates, where the whole plant is more luxuriant, its large size renders it very valuable.

The "cresses, which grow where no man may see them," now often lie in abundance on the secluded stream. Our rural flora does not furnish a more wholesome salad herb than the water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale.*) The only danger which arises from eating this plant, is

that the incautious cress gatherer may have mixed with it some sprays of the water parsnip, (*Sium nodiflorum,*) a plant common in streams, and which is very poisonous in its nature. Inexperienced persons may mistake one of these plants for the other, but a little observation will detect the difference between them. In the water-cress, the leaf which grows at the termination of the leaf-stalk is rounder and larger than the other leaflets ; while that of the water parsnip is smaller than the rest. The blossoms of the water-cress are white, small, and cross shaped. This plant is now much cultivated in streams, near London, Paris, Edinburgh, and other large cities.

The salt marshes near the shore, and even the sands of the sea, now show a few blossoms. The white or pink heads of the thrift, (*Statice armeria,*) often called sea-turf, are very plentiful. The sea-lavender, (*Statice limomium,*) with its handsome spike of blue lilac flowers, and that elegant cypress-like shrub, the tamarisk, (*Tamarix gallica,*) with rose-coloured blossoms, which show to great advantage among its light and graceful foliage, often enliven the salt marsh, or the rocky cliff.

On some of our shores too, the tall sea-holly (*Eryngium maritimum*) makes its appearance on the sands. It is a stiff and rigid plant, with firm prickly leaves beautifully veined ; and, like those of the generality of our sea-side plants, of a pale sea-green hue. Its flowers are blue, and shaped much like the thistle's.

The roots have a pleasant taste, and are often candied for a sweetmeat, being considered stimulating and restorative in their properties. Linnæus says that the young shoots of this plant are eaten in Sweden, after being blanched, and are scarcely inferior to asparagus. He recommends their use in other countries.

The sea-weeds (*Fuci*) are always scattered over the shores, for they are little affected by the changing seasons. The bed of the ocean being less exposed to changes of temperature than the land, and the great body of water being never either completely hot, or cold, the plants growing in the sea do not experience that change of seasons which so determines the growth of land vegetation. In some seas, however, marine plants are much more luxuriant than around our island. In all countries, the base of the ocean is continually rising by the increase of plants, just as the site of the city rises in progressive years by the accumulation of soil.

Sea-weeds afford soda and colour for dyeing; and their gelatinous nature renders many of them nutritious and medicinal. Iodine, so often administered in cases of glandular enlargement, is procured from several species of sea-weed.

The woodland scenery is not so brightly green as during last month. Although autumn has not yet touched the leaves with brown, yet their verdure is of a duller cast, and here and there the slight tinge of yellow may be seen.

The flowers in the wood are also few now, compared with those of the earlier months. The tall teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) shows itself almost like a young shrub; and that pretty low flower, the red centaury, (*Erythræa centaurium,*)—its red blossoms growing in clusters, and shaped something like those of the garden jessamine, though smaller—is very common, both in woods, and on dry pastures. Its bitter principle is said to be equal to that of the gentian. This flower closes so early that only those who walk in the former part of the day see its beauty. By twelve o'clock it begins to shut up, and if a cloud is on the sky, it does not open at all. This is evidently because of the moisture of the atmosphere, even when it is not perceptible to us; for if the flower be taken in-doors and placed near a fire, it will expand fully.

The wood sage, (*Teucrium scorodonia,*) a common plant with spikes of green flowers, tinged with a brown hue, is now very plentiful on dry grounds. It has leaves wrinkled like those of the garden sage, and so bitter that they are very suitable for the purpose of mingling with hops in making beer—a use to which they are continually applied by the Swede, and sometimes by the English cottager. The betony, too, (*Betonica officinalis,*) is very generally in flower in this month. This flower has somewhat the appearance of the red dead nettles, though its purplish red blossoms are lighter and brighter than theirs. In some

parts of Kent it is commonly gathered in bundles and hung up around the ample fire-place of the farm kitchen, or suspended from the cottage ceiling ready for use. The whole plant gives a yellow colour to wool, and the root is extremely bitter.

The hedge wound-wort (*Stachys sylvatica*) is also very common in the hedge from June till August. It has around its stem a number of purplish red flowers streaked with white, and leaves something like those of the stinging nettle in shape, but very silky and downy. Its old familiar name distinguishes it as a plant often used for staying the effusion of blood. This flower was also called clown's-all-heal. When compounds and extracts from plants and minerals were less common than at present, an acquaintance with the virtues of plants was of more value than in modern days.

The common black horehound, (*Ballota nigra,*) with its whorls of dull, cheerless red flowers, and its dusty-looking foliage, was once thought a very useful plant, and is still sometimes made into a candied sweetmeat. Country people say, that the plant has an odour of graves, but its frequent growth in churchyards probably contributed to this idea. The catmint (*Nepeta cataria*) is another common plant, and it is really amusing to see how cats are excited by it, and with what avidity they devour it. Its scent is too strong to be agreeable.

The numerous tribe of mints (*Mentha*) all flower, either in this, or the following month,

and may be recognised by their strong perfume, which, in all the species, resembles, more or less, the common mint (*Mentha viridis*) used at table. The distilled waters made from these plants are well known. Some of the mints are handsome as wild flowers, and growing by river sides, or on field borders, look very beautiful on the summer landscape.

But leaving the less gay and showy flowers, for one of rich golden beauty, we may now see in full bloom the lovely yellow blossom of the rock rose, (*Helianthemum vulgare.*) This flower grows sometimes singly, more often in clumps, on rocky barren places; just such spots as are described in the parable of the sower; where if the sower were to sow his corn, it might spring up and wither away, because there is no deepness of earth. But many a dry and arid spot is clothed by God with occasional verdure and beauty; for he has fitted the flower to the soil, and given to all their appointed times and places. This flower is not of a bright glossy colour, like the buttercup, nor of the firm structure of that blossom; but the petals are of a paler tint, and velvet surface, and so soft and crumpled, that they seem as if they had been wrinkled by being crowded in the cup, out of which they expand. They are of the shape of the brier rose, or rather of the strawberry flower, as they are flat when fully open. It was termed Helianthemum from two words signifying the sun and a flower; perhaps, because of its golden beauty; but more probably, because of the old fancy that its flowers

always turned to meet the sun. Professor Rennie says of the rock rose, "If you take a small probe, or hog's bristle, and irritate any of the numerous stamens of this flower, you will see them fall back from the central column, and spread themselves upon the petals, exhibiting a very pretty example of vegetable irritability little less striking than that of the sensitive plant."

This simple flower has another point of interest, which is, that the rose of Sharon is thought by Linnæus, and many travellers in the east, to be merely a variety of our common rock rose. The *cistus roseus*, differing little from our wild flower, except in colour, is regarded as the rose of Sharon, because it abounds in that valley, and is scattered in such rich profusion, that it is one of the most striking objects of its vegetation; while none of those plants which are termed roses are found there, or in the neighbourhood.

In the old churchyard, or garden wall, the purple, pink, or white snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*) now waves to the soft wind. Children call it bull dogs and rabbit's mouth, and its flower has really an odd resemblance to the mouth of the latter animal. The author of the "Journal of a Naturalist," remarks, that these flowers are perfect insect traps; and "multitudes of small creatures," he adds, "seek an entrance into the corolla, through the closed lips, which, upon a slight pressure, yield a passage, attracted by the sweet liquor which is found at the bottom of the germen;

but when so admitted there is no return, the lips are closed, and all advance to them is impeded by a dense thicket of woolly matter, which invests the mouth of the lower jaw. But the snapdragon is more merciful than most of our insect traps. The creature receives no injury from confinement, but having consumed the nectareous liquor, and finding no egress, breaks from its dungeon by gnawing a hole at the bottom of this tube, and returning to liberty and light. The extraordinary manner in which the corolla is formed, the elastic force with which the lower limb closes and fits upon the projection of the upper, manifest the obvious design of the great Architect.

The French call the snapdragon *mufle de veau*, and the Russians highly value its seeds, which are very numerous. From these they express an oil little inferior in quality to that obtained from the olive.

A very common flower, with blossoms shaped like those of the snapdragon, the yellow toad-flax, (*Linaria vulgaris,*) is now conspicuous in hedges by waysides; for though it scarcely blooms till August, yet its stem of crowded slender leaves of a greyish green, cannot escape notice. Country people term this pretty wild flower, butter and eggs. The juice of the toad-flax is often expressed, and when mingled with milk, is set in an open dish, to attract flies, and its sweet flavour proves to them poison.

The vervain, once so renowned by the Romans, and praised by cur forefathers as the

holy herb, now shows its small lilac flowers near houses; and the tall yarrow, (*Achillæa millefolium*) is to be found in every meadow. This was formerly called nose bleed, but is now better known by the name of old man's pepper. Its leaves are very pungent.

The Highlanders make of it an ointment, and it was used for this purpose by the ancient Greeks, who told that Achilles discovered and applied its virtues.

Then the tall brown knapweeds and the handsome mullein are showy flowers now. The former are often called iron weeds, from the hard brown ball or cup, on which the purple florets are set. The flower of the knapweeds is much like that of the thistle, but it may always be known from a thistle, by its having no spines nor prickles upon it; except in one species, the common star thistle, which is indeed very nearly allied to the former tribe. The common black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) is a very frequent weed in meadows, and it is refused by cattle, both while it is growing, and when made up into hay. This plant stains linen of a bright blue colour, and its juice is expressed for ink. The common star thistle, (*Centaurea calcitrapa*,) or Jersey thistle, as it is often called, is found near the sea, and also on chalky or gravelly banks. It is singular from having on its calyx a number of large green spines, which, as the plant grows older, turn into hard wood. Hence this flower received its Latin name from the caltrops, or iron ball

of spikes, used in the early and middle ages, for throwing under the horses' feet in the field of battle. This flower is the caltrops of Virgil.

We have no less than seven native species of mullein now in blossom; the great mullein, (*Verbascum thapsus*) is one of the largest and most conspicuous of our wild flowers. The stems, both of this, and the hoary mullein, are about four or five feet in height; the flowers grow about one or two feet down the stem, and are of a pale yellow. The stem is very thick and woolly, and the large leaves which grow about the root, are so densely covered on both surfaces with wool, that Kentish people call the mullein, flannel flower; the wool is frequently picked off for tinder, and is recommended by many writers, as applicable to the purposes of manufacture.

The blossoms of the great mullein are sometimes laid to dry in the sun, when a soft unctuous substance exudes from them, which is spread on linen, and used by villagers as an application to the chest. This plant was formerly called high taper and torches; and the white mullein was termed candleweek flower. Nor are they unfitted to suggest the idea of the tapers which are burned before the images of saints, in those countries in which men are beguiled into what the apostle Paul calls "a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels," instead of holding the "Head of the church" as their only Advocate at the throne of God's grace.

The yellow hoary mullein (*Verbascum pulve-*

rulentum) has its hundreds of flowers so lightly set upon its stem, that a small blow given to it with a stick, will scatter them all on the ground. It has a quantity of mealy down on its leaves, which comes off on the hand if it is passed over them. The little moth mullein, (*Verbascum blattaria*) rare in most counties, but often found in Kent, received its name from its virtue, whether real or imagined, of driving from its neighbourhood the blatter or cockroach.

Two very poisonous flowers bloom during July and August on waste grounds, and near to houses or ruins. The thorn-apple and the henbane are both to be dreaded for their dangerous properties; yet the narcotic principle found in both, is useful when carefully administered, and will give sleep to the sufferer whose eyes have long waited for it in vain.

The thorn-apple (*Datura stramonium*) is rather a naturalized than, strictly considered, a wild flower; for our great herbalist Gerarde, having received a present from Constantinople of some of its seeds, dispersed it, as he says, through the land. It is one of the most common and troublesome weeds in America, and the colonists are at considerable pains to extirpate it, before they can transform the wild wastes or crowded forests of that country into fertile lands. Whenever any plants are brought into England from America, its seeds are conveyed in the soil, and it springs up plentifully around them. Its bell-shaped flower is very handsome, and its delicate beauty is shielded

from the dews of night by its leaves, which, when darkness comes on, rise close around the flower, and protect it from the damp air.

The henbane, (*Hyoscyamus niger,*) so often smoked by country people for tooth-ache, and so useful also to the physician, has a greenish yellow flower, pencilled all over with purple lines. The seeds found in its "belted pod" are often a plaything for children; and professor Martyn says he has eaten them without any ill effects, while other botanists affirm that the seeds have deprived persons of the use of their limbs, and even of reason. To all the inferior animals, except swine, they are poisonous. The whole plant is covered with hairs, and the peculiar odour that proceeds from it would at once point it out to the botanist as a poisonous flower.

Those curious plants the horsetails, (*Equisetum,*) now put forth their cones or catkins, some of them by river-sides, many under hedges, or in fields. They have long leaves, set in whorls round the stem, each leaf not thicker than a common cord. We pay but little regard to these plants, but to the housewives of olden times they were of great service. The pewter kitchen utensils were daily scoured into brightness with this plant, which was once called pewterwort. It was sold in the London streets, both for this purpose and also for cleaning those wooden platters and bowls, almost unknown in modern kitchens, but which, in other days, held the roast beef of Old Eng-

land. Sometimes the plant was called shave-grass; and comb-makers and other workmen who wanted a polish to the articles they made, rubbed them with its rough hard substance; but it was not known till recently that this hardness was caused by an abundance of flint in this plant. One species of horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*) is still much used by whitesmiths and cabinet-makers in their work, and also by the Northumbrian dairymaids in cleaning their milk-pails. It grows in our bogs, but not very generally; and as the swampy grounds of Holland furnish it in great quantities, it is imported hither from that country, and called Dutch rushes. Our great water horsetail, (*Equisetum fluviatile,*) very frequent in ponds, was a common article of food among the Romans. The reindeer, which will not feed upon hay, will eat this plant.

And now the white bunches of flowers on the elder tree, are gradually giving way to the green elder-berries, which in a few weeks will be quite black. The elder (*Sambucus nigra*) is very common in woods and hedges, and its wood is so hard that Pliny said of the plant that it was all skin and bones. The berries are poisonous to poultry, yet they make an excellent wine. The Romans were accustomed to stain their hair black with their juice; and these fruits, as well as the bark and leaves, are used medicinally. So highly did the celebrated physician of Leyden, Boerhaave, estimate the properties of this plant, that he never passed

it without taking off his hat—not so much, it is to be hoped, in veneration of the tree itself, as in thankfulness to the God who made it. The young shoots of this tree are often used as a pickle, and the elder flower ointment is so general an application, especially in villages, that most persons know it. The scent of the elder flower is very powerful, but not very pleasant. This is one of the few trees which are not hurt by exposure to the sea breeze.

Now, too, the pretty rose-like flower of the bramble, (*Rubus fruticosus,*) with its "gauzy satin frill," is waving on the long flexible sprays. To many, beside the poet, the bramble tells a tale of other days—a tale of youthful pleasures, when roaming in country lanes and fields, we gathered blackberries for our food, and when

> "The linnet from the self-same bush
> Came after us to dine."

And, in later years, when the graver concerns of life occupy us, and, perhaps, its trials weigh heavily upon the spirits, it is well to be recalled, for a moment, to the simple and inexpensive sources of joy which blessed our childhood. The bramble, or blackberry, is, when eaten ripe, a perfectly wholesome fruit. Country people often make this fruit into pies and tarts, and it forms a good and cheap preserve, as it requires not more than half the quantity of sugar which is used for other preserved fruits, and the coarsest sugar may be used in making it. The red muscat of Toulon, is said

to receive its red colour from the blackberry; and in several parts of the south of France this fruit is so large and juicy, that it is commonly called, *pinte de vin.* The bramble leaves and stems are used in dyeing, and the young tops and leaves were a common salad at the tables of the ancient Greeks.

One common use of the bramble stem must have often attracted our attention, when we have wandered in the quiet village churchyard. Its young shoots serve to bind down the sods, under which repose the "young men and maidens, old men and children."

> "O'er some of these
> The flight of centuries has passed—alas!
> Above the wept remains of others, yet
> The fresh-reared hillock waves not in the wind
> Its friendly robe of green."

The bramble was, of old, used for this purpose; for Jeremy Taylor, when commenting on the certainty of man's mortality, says, "The autumn, with its fruits, prepares disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases; and the spring brings flowers to strew upon our hearse; and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves."

The thorny branches of this plant exhibit many a reddish green spray of leaves in winter. It is a native both of cold and hot climates, and found wild in every country in Europe. Several species of rubus, known by the name of dewberry, cloudberry, and bilberry, are common in Britain; and the raspberry (*Rubus idæus*) is

occasionally found wild in our woods, and was known to the older writers as the raspis, or hindberry. The Arctic bramble, (*Rubus arcticus,*) so common in Sweden, bears a fruit much eaten by the people of that country.

The bramble is the subject of the oldest apologue extant, when Jotham, bitterly reproaching the men of Shechem for their ingratitude to his father's house, narrated to them, in the eastern manner, the parable of "the trees choosing a king."*

AUGUST.

"The scarlet pimpernel creeps here and there,
Amid the corn the crimson poppies blush,
Still on the brooks gleam water-lilies rare,
And purple loosestrife and the flowering rush:
Still honeysuckle blooms perfume the gale,
Where bryony leaves adorn the hedgerows green,
Where peep the scabious and the campion pale,
With trumpet-like convolvuli between;
The blue campanula and chicory wild,
And yellow toad-flax, variegate the plain,
And with a thankful heart and sense beguiled,
We look upon the fields of ripening grain."

H. G. ADAMS.

August, with its flowers and fruits, wears a rich and plenteous aspect. The brown corn, now ready for the sickle, is waving over the field; the broad and leafy branches of the trees afford a shade to the tired cattle; the golden cones of the hop are twining round the tall poles; and the orchard trees are laden with

* Judges ix. 8—15.

ruddy fruits. The flowers look gay and brilliant, for autumn flowers are mostly yellow, and they seem to cluster in such abundance that none would suspect that they are far fewer in variety than in the preceding months. Perhaps, twice the number of species of wild flowers might be found by the botanist during the month of June than he could find now; and though many summer blossoms still linger, yet those strictly peculiar to August are comparatively so few that we can but remark that the year is making rapid progress to its close.

One of the tribes of the plants most likely to attract our eye during this month, by the great number of its flowers, is the hawkweed. They form a family of plants very puzzling to the botanist, by the resemblance of the species to each other. The hawkweeds may be described generally as flowers shaped like the dandelion, their leaves are also often similar in form, but the whole structure of the flower is lighter and more delicate. Some of the blossoms are very small, others as large as a marigold, and they vary in all shades of yellow, from a deep bright orange colour to the pale lemon tint which distinguishes one of our commonest and prettiest kinds. This species is the mouse-ear hawkweed, (*Hieracium pilosella*,) and it may at once be known from the others by its paler hue, scarcely deeper than that of the primrose, and also by its creeping scions. It grows on dry pastures, and unless

the garden lawn be carefully cut, it will spring up there beside the daisy; for it commonly spangles the short grass, or turf, of that and similar spots.

When the Almighty, in his solemn arguings with Job, reproved him for presumption, he asked, "Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom?" and the unerring instinct which guides that strong and quick-sighted bird to his prey is a striking proof of the skill and power of the All-wise and All-powerful. The old tradition, that the hawk fed upon the hawkweed, and led her young ones early to eat this plant, that, by its juices, they might gain acuteness of vision, was believed, some centuries since, not only in our land, but throughout Europe; for the popular name of this flower in France is *L'Epervière,* and the Germans call it *Habichts kraut.* An American species of hawkweed is considered to possess great medicinal virtues, and commonly called, in America, poor Robin's plantain.

Several kinds of camomile are also blooming now. All the common sorts of this flower have yellow disks and white rays; but the oxeye camomile (*Anthemis tinctoria*) is wholly yellow. The plant which produces the fragrant flower sold by the druggists as a tonic is a native of Britain. It is the *Anthemis nobilis,* and is often cultivated for the purposes of commerce. The bed of camomile is frequently found in the cottage garden, and most fully do the villagers believe the old English proverb: "Camomile, the oftener it is trodden

upon, the faster it grows." The whole plant is very bitter, and its old name is derived from a Greek word signifying apples, because it was thought to have the scent of that fruit.

We have five wild species of camomile, and three of these are very common flowers. One kind, the stinking camomile, (*Anthemis cotula,*) has, indeed, the most disgusting odour. It grows by road-sides and waste places, and often blisters the hands of those who gather it.

A very pretty family of plants, the cudweed, is abundant in August. One species is well known, and may serve to guide to the others, though none of our wild kinds are so handsome as this. It is the flower called, everlasting love, and is familiar to those who have visited the celebrated cemetery of Père la Chaise, where wreaths of its blossoms, dyed of a deeper yellow, and intermingled with others dyed of a jet black, are thrown upon the tombs of the beloved, or celebrated, and sold in all the ways which lead to the ground. The Parisians term this flower *l'immortelle.* It is a native of Africa, and the *Gnaphalium Orientale* of the botanist. Our wild cudweeds are smaller than this, and their stems and foliage generally covered with woolly and cottony down. Most of the wild cudweeds grow on sandy or gravelly heaths, or pastures; some on mountains, and a few on bogs. One of the most frequent, the common cudweed, (*Gnaphalium Germanicum,*) is found on dry places, and as its mode of growth is very singular, it may, by this, be known from the

remainder of the species. The stem is about eight inches high, terminated by a globular head of blossoms, from beneath which spring two or three more branches, each having a head of flowers at the point, and these all rise above that which terminates the main stem. The old botanists called this flower, wicked herb, (*Herba impia,*) because it conveyed the idea that children were undutifully disposed to exalt themselves above the parent flower. It was also called, live long, chaff-weed, cotton-weed, and dwarf cotton.

The various kinds of spurge mostly produce their yellowish green flowers in this and the following month. The sun-spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*) is common everywhere, and is a good example of our native species, for they are all very similar in general appearance. It is found on waste-grounds, as a garden weed, and in corn-fields. Its stem is so full of thick white milk that it is often called churn-staff; and as this liquid is a common cure for warts, it will point out the plant to the reader. We have fourteen wild kinds of spurge, and a number of exotic species have been imported, but they have little beauty. The juice of all is acrid, and almost all our wild spurges are poisonous. One species, the caper-spurge, (*Euphorbia lathyrus,*) is rare in woods, but it is often planted in shrubberies. It has grey green leaves, and much resembles the true caper-plant. Indeed its seeds, which are about the size and colour of the caper-bud, are pickled and used in Paris as capers ; but there is reason to believe

that, if eaten in any quantity, they are very pernicious. A very common kind, the cypress-spurge, (*Euphorbia cyparissius,*) readily distinguished from the rest by its long, slender, numerous leaves, was formerly called, "Welcome to our house;" though on what account so dangerous a herb was so gratefully welcomed one cannot guess. The gum-resin, termed, *Euphorbium,* which is diluted for medicinal purposes, is obtained by incision from a common African species. Its fresh juice raises blisters on the skin; and the poor people employed in collecting it are so affected by the noxious properties of the withered branches of the plant, that they are obliged to cover their faces with a linen cloth when they approach it. One British species, the Irish spurge, (*Euphorbia Hibernica,*) is said by Dr. Hooker to be much used by the peasants of Ireland for poisoning, or rather stupifying fish. He adds, that its qualities are so powerful as that a small creel, or basket, filled with the bruised plant, will suffice to poison the fish for several miles down the river.

The corn-fields, which are now ripe and brown, add much to the beauty of the landscape of August. The healthful toil of the reaping peasant, and the busy employment of the rustic maid and matron, are interesting to every one fond of the country. To those whose minds are well stored with Scripture story, and who have associations formed between the scenes of nature and the descriptions of holy writ, the corn-field is connected

with the remembrances of by-gone ages. The pious attachment of the gentle Ruth, who chose to share the sufferings of her aged relative, and to follow her to the land, blessed with the ordinances of the God of Israel: those touching words of love spoken by her, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried:" all these things are brought vividly before the mind, as we mark the gleaner, who, like her of old, fills her apron with the brown ears of corn. The remembrance of the early disciples, who, being hungry, "plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands;" and the emphatic words of our Lord, who, when calling their attention to the state of the world, and the need of missionary exertion, said, "Look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest;" and that solemn comparison of the harvest to the end of the world, when "the reapers are the angels," and God shall separate the chaff from the wheat, will recur to the thoughtful reader of Scripture, to whom God has given feeling and imagination, and may fill the inmost recesses of his mind with trains of holy and devout imagery. Such a wanderer will not think it enough to exclaim, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord," but will add, with his whole heart, "and thy saints shall bless thee!"

Corn, in the state in which we have it, when cultivated, does not grow wild in any land; and

the field, of wheat, or rye, of oats, or barley, as well as the maize and millet-crops of other lands, attest, wherever they are found, that man has been there, not as the roving Arab or the restless Indian, but as the tiller of the soil and the settled inhabitant of the country. The corn-plants are termed the cereal grasses; and that species by which the people of the land is mainly supported is called pre-eminently corn.

The most showy flower of the corn-field, in this month, is the wild marigold, (*Chrysanthemum segetum.*) The old writers, and even our earliest British poet, Chaucer, knew it by the name of gold; and it is still called goules, or goulans, in some counties of England. It is quite as large, or even larger, than the garden marigold; which flower also grows wild in the corn-fields of Southern Europe, and is called by the Italians, the flower of every month. The corn marigold blossoms as early as July, and it bears the cold of winter better than many of our flowers; for if the autumnal and winter seasons are not very severe, it may be found bright and blooming as late as December, and

"Cheering through the shortening day
Is autumn with her weeds of yellow."

This flower is rather local in its haunts; it is by no means common in Kent, though abundant in some of the neighbouring counties. In the corn-fields, within a few miles of Paris, it grows so profusely, that the land is as gay with its golden flowers as our fields are with the charlock, or our spring meads with the butter-

cup. In Denmark, it is so common and troublesome a weed, that a law was made, some years since, compelling the farmer to eradicate it. The deep yellow juice of this flower is used, by the Germans, for giving a permanent dye to stuffs. The corn-marigold was formerly called St. John's bloom, yellow-bottle, and ruddes.

Early in this month we find that unwelcome intruder in the corn-lands, the spurrey, (*Spergula arvensis.*) This pretty little flower may be thus described. Its stem is from six to twelve inches high. The leaves are slender, scarcely thicker than coarse threads, and they stand in circles all around the stem. At the summit is a cluster of white flowers, each hardly larger than that of the chickweed. This plant, though an annoyance in the corn-fields, is so eagerly eaten by cattle, that when it grows occasionally on sandy heaths and pastures, it is a useful herb ; and, in Holland, it is sown in fields, for pasturage. It is named from *spargo,* to scatter, because it scatters an abundance of seeds. In Scotland it is called yarr ; but the Norfolk farmers, jealous of their corn-lands, term it pick-pocket.

In every hedge may now be seen the pale yellow spike of the wild mignonette, (*Reseda luteola,*) which is often called dyer's weed, as it has been used for dyeing, especially in France. The whole plant affords juice for this purpose, and its colour is good and permanent. The coloured paint, called by artists Dutch pink, is

obtained from it. Linnæus remarked, of this flower, that its spike of bloom always follows the course of the sun, even on a cloudy day: turning, at sun-rise, to the east; at noon-day, looking up to the south; in the afternoon, marking the west; and, with its half-closed flowers, standing at night, pointing duly to the north. It is very similar in appearance to that sweetly-fragrant plant, the garden mignonette, (*Reseda odorata.*) This latter flower is a native of Egypt, and was known, long after its introduction into England, by the name of the Egyptian's mignonette.

The tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) grows wild in some fields. It was formely called Athanasia by botanists, and the French still dedicate it to the saint of that name. The flowers of the tansy are in thick yellow clusters. Its strongly aromatic and bitter principle render it a useful plant in medicine; and its young leaves are made into puddings, cakes, and omelets, though the flavour is too strong to be generally palatable. A distilled water is obtained from this plant. This flower was formerly very general in gardens, but is left now for the cottage-ground, where, in the rustic plot, it still takes its place with the flowers which the poet Clare describes,—

"And where the marjoram once, and sage and rue,
And balm and mint, with curl'd-leaf parsley grew,
And double marigolds, and silver thyme,
And pumpkins 'neath the window used to climb;
And where I often, when a child, for hours
Tried through the pales to get the tempting flowers:

As lady's laces, everlasting peas,
True-love lies bleeding, with the hearts at ease;
And golden rods, and tansy running high,
That o'er the pale-top smiled on passer-by;
Flowers in my time, that every one would praise,
Though thrown, like weeds, from gardens now-a-days."

On a few sandy soils may now also be seen the plant called field-southernwood, (*Artemisia campestris,*) with its smooth green leaves and whitish flowers. It has been found chiefly on some lands of Norfolk and Suffolk, especially near Thetford and Bury. Then the old village remedy for numerous ills — the elecampane, (*Inula helenium*)—puts forth its bright yellow stars in the moist pasture or hedge. This is one of the largest of our wild flowers; and it was formerly much esteemed for its tonic properties. Its root is glutinous and aromatic; and from it is made the candied sweetmeat, called elecampane. The whole plant is downy, and its stem is about five or six feet high. A good blue dye exists in its juices.

The May-weed (*Pyrethrum inodorum*) is so truly an autumnal flower, that it is little entitled to its spring-like name. In August and September, when the corn is being cut down, and after it is gleaned, the fields are full of it; and it may be commonly seen as late as December, looking, indeed, somewhat the worse for wind and weather at that season, though in August it is a pretty flower. Notwithstanding its Latin specific name, it is slightly scented, and is considered to possess some good tonic properties.

One beautiful flower, growing by the riverside in this month, is very general and very

conspicuous. The tall hemp agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*) is often five feet high. Its flowers grow in crowded clusters of a pale flesh colour, and are not unlike those of the garden valerian, which is sometimes seen wild also on walls. The hemp agrimony is slightly fragrant, and has been used medicinally. Indeed it is of old renown, for Mithridates, king of Pontus, first discovered its good properties.

That very lovely flower, the grass of Parnassus, (*Parnassia palustris,*) blooms now in marshy grounds, and near streams, but, though common in Scotland, is rather a rare plant in the south. It is a large flower, of a yellowish white tint, situate on an angular stem, a few inches high, its leaves proceeding from the root on long footstalks, and heart-shaped. Its beauty may be inferred from the name with which it is honoured, and which it obtained not only because of its growing so often on hilly places, but also because it was deemed a fit flower for the muses.

One of the handsomest reed plants is now in flower, and it is common not only in England, but in almost every part of the world where streams are to be found. This is the great cat's tail, or reed-mace, (*Typha latifolia,*) and it is very flourishing along the borders of many ponds and lakes. Its long catkins are of a greenish brown colour, and its greyish green leaves are often an inch wide, and a yard long. The downy seeds of the reed-mace are used in stuffing pillows and mattresses, and they are a

good substitute for the feathers of the bird. Its leaves, besides being eaten by cattle, are useful for thatching cottages, and for making mats and baskets. Loudon also mentions that this is the plant which Rubens, and the later Italian painters, have represented in their pictures as the reed which was borne by the Saviour, when, in cruel mockery, it was given as a sceptre. Another writer says of this plant, "A weaver of velvet told me that, at Spitalfields and other places, the head of this rush is used for cleaning their work in preference to a common brush. Since then, being in the neighbourhood of Blackheath, I met a man carrying a large bundle of them, and upon inquiry, he told me that they would be sold to the poor at one penny each, for the purpose of a hat-brush. I see no reason to doubt their utility in either case, for their softness and elasticity render them very applicable to these purposes." This reed is very abundant in the swamps of New Zealand, and much used by the natives for thatching roofs.

The flowers which find their places by the shores of the ocean, though never numerous, are as many as in the former months. The horned poppy (*Glaucium luteum*) yet showers down its frail yellow petals on the mass of seaweed. The several kinds of sea southernwood (*Artemisia*) are dressed in their green flowers; the thrift still lends its pink tufts to adorn the crevices of the rocky cliff; and the saltwort (*Salicornia herbacea*) is so general on our

coast as to be known by most who visit the sea-side. The Italians call it *Erba Kali*. It is used in making glass and salted as a pickle.

The samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) is an excellent pickle, but this flower grows only on the southern coast of England. As it flourishes on cliffs and walls near the sea, the gathering of samphire is often a dangerous occupation. Its flower is of a greenish white colour, and is in bloom during August.

Some of the little sandworts blossom now by the sea-side. They are all much alike, except one species, which is often called sea-pimpernel, or sea sandwort, (*Arenaria peploides.*) Large patches of this plant grow on several parts of our coast. At Sheerness, in Kent, it is very abundant. It has stems, a few inches high, much branched and thickly crowded with succulent leaves. It has small white flowers, growing two or three in a cluster. The whole plant is pretty from its shining glossy appearance.

The sea-side convolvulus, (*Calystegia soldanella,*) with its pretty rose-coloured bells, flowers all the summer; and a less showy but very common plant, the sea-beet, (*Beta maritima,*) with its green blooms and large root, is now found near the sea. It has thick wavy green leaves, which, when boiled, are a good vegetable. It is very much like the beet of the garden, (*Beta vulgaris,*) which is well known as a culinary root, and as a pickle; and which is so often cut into the flowers used for ornamenting

dishes. There is a great quantity of sugar both in the wild and cultivated species.

The sea purslanes, (*Atriplex*,) and the common goosefoots, (*Chenopodium*,) are in this month plentiful near the sea, and are mostly in bloom. The leaves of the former are generally of a whitish green, and the plant often grows in such quantities as to present to the eye a grey green mass. The flowers are green, tinged with red, and grow in clusters of thick spikes, at the upper part of the stem. The goosefoots are very similar to these plants, and some of them are burned with the glassworts and other marine plants, for the soda yielded by their ashes. One kind is termed the good king Henry, (*Chenopodium bonus Henricus*,) and is cultivated in Lincolnshire as spinach, and its stems as asparagus. It is quite as good in its wild as in its cultivated state.

The woodlands are now full of boughs and leaves, and the summer-flowers of last month are blooming yet. Some very pretty ferns wave their luxuriant and feathery leaves, and the mosses are thickening into a soft pathway. The rare purple Helleborine (*Epipactis latifolia*) should be sought for now, and may be found in the woods of mountainous countries. Its flowers are a long lax spike, sometimes of a greenish purple, at others deep tinted as the purple grape of the vine.

SEPTEMBER.

"Summer ebbs—each day that follows
Is a reflex from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows,
Where the frosts of winter lie.

"He who governs the creation,
In his providence assign'd,
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

"Yet we mark it not;—fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loth to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known."

WORDSWORTH.

The September landscape is very beautiful, for though the changing tints of the leaves remind us that summer is going, yet they add to the glory and richness of the present scene. It is chiefly in remarking the flowers that we see the rapid advance of the coming winter. The flowers are now evidently lessening in number. One by one the blossoms of midsummer have disappeared; and though some, like the golden ragwort, are as bright as ever, and though others, more delicate than this, still bloom for us in some sheltered nooks, yet it would be an easy matter to count the species of flowers which open, for the first time, to the sun of September.

The tall and handsome golden rod, (*Solidago virgaurea,*) with its crowded clusters of flowers, does not unfold for the first time in this month, for it begins to bloom even as early as the end of July; but it may be found in great perfection

from now till the end of the year. It grows in woods and thickets, and is often planted in shrubberies. It was once supposed to be a cure for wounds. It was brought, in a dried state, from the woods of other lands, and sold in the London markets by the herb-women of queen Elizabeth's days; and, about that time, it was first discovered to grow wild in Hampstead woods. Botanists were not so numerous then as they are now; and this must account for the fact, that a flower which grows wild in several English counties had never previously been supposed to be indigenous. Fuller—who, in enumerating the "Worthies of England," introduces them to his readers, by an account of the vegetable productions of their native counties—speaks very highly of the golden rod, and censures its disuse:—"Some maintain," says he, "that every county cures the diseases which it causes, and bringeth remedies for all the maladies bred therein. An opinion which grant not true, yet may have much of truth, seeing that every county of England especially affordeth excellent plants, were it not partly for men's laziness that they will not seek them; partly for their ignorance, that they will not know them; and partly for their pride and peevishness, that because, when they are found, they disdain to use and apply them." He adds, that while the golden rod was brought, at great expense, from foreign countries, it was highly valued: but that it was no sooner discovered to be a native plant, than it was discarded from use.

Its bright yellow flowers have found for it an introduction into our gardens, and several of the species which we cultivate grow wild on the few green spots which lie about the rocky island of St. Helena.

The common flea-bane, (*Inula dysenterica,*) a star-shaped flower, as large as a guinea, and of as bright a hue, is very frequent now on moist lands throughout England; and we may be sure, when we find this in our country walk, that some quiet river, or stream, is gliding through the landscape. This flower is commonly called wild marigold, and it received both its familiar and scientific names from the belief that its odour was repulsive to fleas, gnats, and other insects. It seems strange that it was considered as obnoxious to insects, and worn about the person, or hung around the bed as a terror to them, while, in our days, its efficiency is totally denied. The Arabs extol this plant very highly, as a remedy for wounds. One of those traditions which a wandering people transmit from generation to generation records that this bruised flower was used by Job, as an application to those grievous diseases which he so pathetically laments. Hence the flea-bane is called by the men of the desert "Job's tears." Its stems and leaves are of a woolly texture, and of a whitish-green colour.

But directing our attention to the sandy shores, or the salt-marshes of the sea, we shall find a few autumnal flowers. The marsh mallow, (*Althæa officinalis,*) formerly called moor-

ish mallow, or white mallow—is not uncommon on salt shores, either of the sea or river. The name *Althæa,* to cure, was given to it for its healing properties, which are well known, bot to medical practitioners and to country people The flowers are very pretty, of a delicate rose colour; the leaves are very thick, and both surfaces are so soft and downy that they resemble a piece of thick silky velvet. Both leaves and root contain a great quantity of mucilage, which, in France, is made into a kind of paste, and forms the lozenges well known on the continent by the name of *Pâte de Guimauve.*

The Michaelmas-daisy, or blue camomile, (*Aster tripolium,*) though never, in our country, found on inland spots, is very frequent near the sea, or salt river. It is often called sea-starwort and blue daisy. It grows about three or four feet in height, and its lilac flowers are in bloom from August to November. Ancient writers on flowers reported of this, that it changed its colour three times a-day; hence it is termed *tripolium.* The Greek writers stated, that it was white in the morning, purple at noon, and crimson in the afternoon. An old English name of this flower is hog's bean; because its root, which is shaped like a bean, is eagerly rooted out and eaten by swine.

The common sea-wormwood (*Artemisia maritima*) is in blossom now, on salt marshes. This is not the wormwood once worn as a charm against ague. The species thus reverenced is that generally called mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris.*) It is a well-known plant of

waste places and hedge banks. The upper surface of its leaf is of a green as dark as that of the old ivy leaf, but it is quite white and cottony underneath.

The mugwort had, according to old writers, so powerful a spell, that the wayfaring man, who bore a branch of it about him, felt no fatigue. A species of wormwood is cultivated in some parts of Surrey for its seed, which is used by the rectifiers of British spirits; and our common mugwort is used, instead of hops, in the beer of Sweden.

And now, again, the fields are green with the after-grass, which springs up after the hay is cut down. The exquisite verdure given by the grasses to the fields—making the pastoral landscapes of England among the most lovely spots of earth, would lead us highly to value this important tribe of plants, even were they of no other use. The beneficence of the great Creator, in adorning the earth, is too little thought of. His goodness is recognised in providing us with plants for food and clothing, for shade and shelter; yet how seldom do we thank him that he has made the meadow green, and scattered the blossoms of beauty on every path. And yet how much real enjoyment is derived from the loveliness of the landscape! God might have provided for all our wants, and yet have placed us in a land destitute of beauty; and, surely, the profusion of the summer-flowers and the bright verdure of earth should make us not only glad, but grateful too.

In the grass tribe are included all the corn-

plants, the sugar-cane and the useful bamboo. When we consider that, in every land in which the corn-field exists, the flour procured from it constitutes the staple food of man, we form some idea of the value of this tribe ; and though the South Sea Islander may live on his bread-fruit tree, and the New Hollander, too idle to cultivate his land, may enjoy the produce of his native sago-palm, or the large root of the arum ; yet this food can be procured in few climates, while corn can be cultivated on the greater part of the globe. When we see the multitude of cattle enjoying the liberal supply of food spread over the green pastures, and when "the hay appeareth, and the tender grass showeth itself, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered," we see again, though indirectly, that the grass groweth for the service of man. When we behold how the grass, by its matted roots, binds down the sands which else would be floating far and wide, we have another instance of its value. In the Hebrides, the shore grass (*Arundo arenaria*) is made into ropes, and bags, and hats. The grass oil of India is highly valued for its aromatic properties, and the fragrant scent of our native meadow grasses, when they lie withered in the sun, is delightful to the wanderer in the hay-field. The sugar-cane of the west, and the bamboo of the east, are alike valuable. The native of Asia eats the soft shoots of the bamboo as we eat asparagus. The hollow joints yield him a refreshing drink ; its seeds are eaten as a

delicacy ; and a decoction of its leaves furnishes him with a medicine. The large stems are used for baskets and pipes. Its leaves are made into fans and coverings for roofs ; and from the plant, in various ways, are procured paper, writing-pens, furniture for houses, and every variety of domestic implements.

It is a circumstance worthy of remark, in our meadow grasses, that they possess the same properties for food as those which we cultivate in our corn-fields. The smaller size of the seeds renders them unsuitable for culture ; or bread, or malt, might be made from seeds of the common grass. There is, indeed, a great similarity in all the plants of the grass tribe. Every one of them contains sugar, and each one has on its stem a coat of flint. After the burning of a hay-stack, pieces of glass have been found lying on the ground around it, which the fusing properties of fire have converted from flint to this substance. The straw of barley is said, by professor Lindley, to be melted by fire into a glass of a topaz yellow colour ; and a wheat straw is stated to furnish a colourless glass, when fused by a common blow-pipe. One grass only is deleterious. The darnel, (*Lolium temulentum,*) when mingled with flour, is unwholesome ; but Lindley considers that its injurious effects may have been greatly exaggerated.

That singular flower, the meadow saffron, (*Colchicum autumnale,*) may be found both in this month and in October. It is a purple blossom, in shape resembling the common

crocus. The singularity of this flower consists in its blooming in autumn, while its leaves and fruit appear in the spring following. About the end of October the flower dies away, and no one, on looking at the plant, would observe any indication of its seeds. Yet these lie buried in the bulb while winter snows are around and above it ; but when the sun and showers of spring bring forward the early flowers of the meadow, the seeds rise up, ripen during summer, and in autumn produce the saffron flower. The colchicum is a powerful medicine. No cattle will touch the fresh plant; and the idea that it is fatal to dogs originated its French name of *morte aux chiens*. It probably, when made into hay, loses some of its noxious property, for it is very abundant on the high lands of Italy, and is regularly cut down, on the Alpine pastures, with the summer grass. With us it grows pretty generally on the pasture-lands of the north-western counties.

OCTOBER.

"Let me quit this spot,
And roam where Nature sheds a parting smile:
As yet the blue-bell's linger on the sod
That copes the sheepfold ring; and in the woods
A second blow of many flowers appears,
Flowers faintly tinged, and breathing no perfume.
But fruits, not blossoms, form the woodland wreath
That circles autumn's brow; the ruddy haws
Now clothe the half-leaved thorn; the bramble bends
Beneath its jetty load; the hazel hangs
With auburn branches, dipping in the stream
That sweeps along, and threatens to o'erflow
The leaf-strewn banks." JAMES GRAHAME.

The brown October is more fertile in fruits

than in flowers, and the wild nosegay gathered now is, indeed, a small one. Yet the pastoral landscape has not lost its charms, for its grass is still bright and fresh. It is not the decrease of flowers alone, however, which warns of autumn. The trees are now yellow, red, or of a withered brown, with his touches. Some, like the ash, and the great white poplar, are daily dropping so many showers of leaves, that we are anticipating that their naked branches will soon stand boldly out on the landscape. The swallows are congregating for their departure to other and warmer lands; and the loud twittering which they make on the great oak, or elm, has, to the naturalist, a sound peculiarly autumnal. All at once we miss the sound, and they are gone; and we are reminded of the allusion made by the prophet Jeremiah to the migration of birds, and the melancholy comparison which he draws between the wild bird and the instructed man. "Yea," says the prophet, "the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." * Alas! it is not alone to ancient Israel that the reproof belongs. The voice of nature, and the voice of Providence, and the voice of God's word, are still unheard by unthinking man!

The cultivated fruits of earth are now chiefly gathered in. The corn is brought into the garner, the fragrant hops are lying in the store-

* Jer. viii. 7.

house, the cherries are gathered and consumed, and the store of apples, destined for winter use, are either taken from the tree, or are ready for harvesting. But the wild berries grace the hedges by thousands, and glimmer among the rain-drops like jet and ruby mingled with crystal. The clear berries of the nightshade are outshone by the beautiful red clusters of the berries of the guelder rose, and contrast with the deep opaque red fruits of the bryony, or the more orange-tinted branches of the mountain ash. The scarlet haws and hips, the blackberries, the rose-tinted fruits of the spindle tree, lying open and displaying the bright orange-coloured seeds, are all plentiful now in the good greenwood; and when we consider the fruits of earth which are laid up for man, and mark the preparation of food for the fowls of heaven, may we not say with the psalmist, "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness?"

It has been observed of our native fruits, that white berries are commonly sweet, red ones sour; blue, of a sour, mixed with a sweet flavour; and black are either almost tasteless, or poisonous. But several of our scarlet berries are poisonous too, and should never be tasted by any who do not understand their properties.

The ivy, (*Hedera helix*,) which mantles over the old ruins, or climbs to the highest bough of the oak of the forest, is now displaying its clusters of green blossoms; and the bees which still venture to leave their retreats, when the morning sun shines out brightly, seem highly

to prize them. The French term this plant *la lierre,* and the Spaniards give the name of *yedra,* not only to the ivy, but to every plant which, like this, has a propensity to climb.

· Sheep are very fond of ivy, and its grey-veined leaves often yield them a winter repast. The Irish ivy, (*Helix vegeta,*) so often cultivated under the name of the giant ivy, has very large leaves; but in other respects differs little from our wild plant.

The question, whether ivy is destructive to trees, has been much discussed by botanists, but it seems the general opinion, that it is not so. Loudon considers that the ivy is the only plant which may be reared against houses, without rendering the walls damp, and the sole objection to be raised against the picturesque covert which it affords to the house wall is, that it harbours spiders and other insects, which will sometimes find their way into the dwelling.

That very handsome shrub, the strawberry tree, or bear berry, (*Arbutus unedo,*) is now gay with its greenish white flowers, which hang among its thick evergreen foliage like so many waxen bells. This shrub is very common in gardens, but it is usually enumerated among our wild plants, for it has been known to grow for many centuries in the south of Ireland; some writers, however, think that it was introduced there from Spain, by the monks of Mucross Abbey; and when we consider how many flowers and shrubs, as well as esculent vegetables, were brought into Britain, for the

use of the monastery lands, this is not improbable. At the lake of Killarney, so often celebrated by the poets for its beautiful scenery, the arbutus grows in great plenty, and attains a considerable size, in the woods on the shores of the blue waters. The fruit of the tree is as large as the common hautboy, but of a much deeper crimson, and of a firmer substance; it is very ornamental to the tree, and it appears to have been a common article of food among the ancients, as it now is in Spain and Italy; yet Pliny says, the specific name of the plant is derived from *unedo*, I "eat one," because he who ate one would eat no more. Its name of arbutus is also from the Celtic words, *ar boise*, "austere bush," because of the nature of its berries; yet to many persons their flavour is agreeable. The Spaniards make of them a conserve, and the Irish peasant children gather them for sale, from the bushes of Killarney.

Two other kinds of arbutus belong to our wild plants: the trailing, or black bear-berry, (*Arbutus alpina,*) which grows on the bleak Highland mountains, and whose foliage in autumn is remarkably beautiful, from its deep yet bright crimson colour; and the red bear-berry, (*Arbutus uva ursi,*) which is a common plant throughout the north of England, and on the Scottish Highlands. Its blossoms are of a deep rose colour; its berries smaller and more austere than those of the strawberry tree; and they afford excellent food for the moor-fowl.

The shepherd's spikenard (*Conyza squarrosa*) is among our latest blooming wild flowers. It has hairy leaves, and as its stem is often a yard high, it is not likely to be overlooked on the chalky or clayey pastures, where it abounds. Its radiate, or star-shaped flowers are yellow, and grow in clusters. It was, in former days, hung up in rooms to drive away gnats and other insects, and branches of it are still suspended from the cottage ceiling in the French village, for the same purpose. The spikenard is often cultivated in gardens, and the strong odour of camphire, which some exotic species emit, may probably have suggested its name, as many writers consider that camphor is the spikenard of the ancient writers, and the substance alluded to, under that name, in the Song of Solomon.

And now, when few flowers appear, we are glad to gather the second bloom of the purple violet from under its broad canopy of leaves, and to detect something like the spring odour in its flowers. That pretty bright yellow flower, with its pea-shaped blossoms, the hairy dwarf green weed, (*Genista pilosa,*) very generally blooms, for the second time, on the gravelly or sandy heath, during the latest months of the year. Several kinds of crocus too appear late in the autumn, and one species, the naked flowering crocus, (*Crocus nudiflorus,*) does not open its bright purple flowers until October, when it may be found in the meadows of some counties. How far any of the crocus tribe may be considered as truly indigenous, is a

point on which botanists differ. Some writers think that they are all natives of Asia, and have been naturalized in those spots where we find them growing wild. Dr. Hooker enumemerates five species in his "British Flora."

The largest of those pretty white flowers, the winter green, or pyrola, may still be gathered from beneath the shade of the autumnal wood; for though these plants begin to bloom as early as July, they are quite vigorous till now. The species which blooms the latest is the round-leaved winter green, (*Pyrola rotundifolia.*) It cannot be said of one of the winter greens that it is a common flower of England, though it is less rare in the north and in Scotland. The round-leaved species has white spreading flowers, and grows on moist copses. It is often found in Yorkshire, and, occasionally, in the Kentish woods. All the plants are exceedingly pretty, and are called winter-green from their unfading foliage. They all possess tonic properties.

And now, when flowers are few, the mosses attract the attention of the botanist, and are flourishing particularly on moist places. These minute plants are found in damp climates, in all parts of the globe, but are far more numerous in cold and temperate, than in hot regions. They are of little value in medicine, or manufactures, nor can we use them for domestic purposes. One species, the fir club-moss, (*Lycopodium selago,*) is used in the Isle of Skye instead of alum to fix the colour in dyeing.

Another species, the common club-moss, (*Lycopodium clavatum,*) which is a large moss frequent in England, and which covers immense tracts of moss land in Lapland, is used in the manufacture of fireworks. It often grows two or three feet in length, on heathy mountainous lands, and its seeds are remarkably inflammable. It is probable that this moss will be found of more service in dyeing than has hitherto been supposed; for it has been stated by a French botanist to have the property of imparting a brilliant blue to woollen cloths, if, afterwards, they are passed through an infusion of Brazil wood.

But though no single moss is of any very great value to man, yet the mosses in general are by no means useless plants. It would reflect no dishonour on their great Creator, could we discern no service which they render to us, and no particular purpose which they answer in the economy of nature. Enough it might be to claim our grateful admiration, that their soft green substance adds to the smoothness of the grassy path; that their scaly stems, or their small leaves, forming little stars of verdure, beautify the landscape. Enough it would be that they enliven the grey stem of the old oak tree, and furnish us with a cushioned seat at its foot. But mosses perform an important part in the vegetable kingdom. But for them, the mountainous regions would be barren indeed; for their patches of verdure cover up the seeds and roots of the Alpine flowers, and, as they

decay, improve the poor soils of rocks and hills. The trees are defended by them from the winter cold. The whole texture of mosses consists of cells, in which the summer shower, or the morning, or evening dew lingers, and renders the plant always moist; and thus the little moss preserves from drought the giant tree of the wood. Thousands of insects live on these plants, and hide beneath their shelter; and the bird, whose song gladdens the summer wood, gathers the moss for his nest. The bog and morass are gradually filled up, and in some instances become firm land by the growth and decomposition of mosses. They and the lichens are the first vegetation which spring up on the thin soil of rocks or islands, from which the sea has withdrawn; and the farthest and dreariest spot of earth which the foot of man has traversed was found decked with some of the moss plants. When mosses have ceased, vegetation is at an end, and the snows dwell perpetually on the high mountains, or northernmost point of land. About eight hundred kinds of moss have been discovered, and small as they are, each species has distinct characters, by which all the plants composing it may be recognised. No confusion exists in nature, and when the marks of one moss are clearly defined, the botanist may discover them in every plant of the species, whether he find it on a rock of England, or on some hill distant from our country by thousands of miles. We must look at them through a microscope, to see their full

beauty. Unlike the works of man, the works of God are always perfect, and most admirable when most examined. The finest cambrics, when seen through a magnifying power, will be discovered to have specks, and flaws, and uneven threads; but the smallest moss will be found full of symmetry and beauty.

There is something inexplicable in the growth of mosses and lichens on newly-formed soils. We can comprehend how the seeds of plants may have reached the summit of the highest ruin, but how can we account for them on new islands, where little specks of moss are seen struggling into existence, on barren and lifeless soils. Their seeds were never planted there by man; the waters cannot have borne thither these minute particles, for so much moisture would have destroyed the vital power of the seeds; the birds of the air can hardly have carried them so far; one would think they had lain in the earth since the creation, and were now bursting into light from their long night of darkness: it is mystery, all! But He who made the earth, and the dews which water it, has planted them there, and daily vivifies them with his fresh airs, and the showers of heaven. And while we see how unable we are to comprehend these his works, shall we wonder that some of the great mysteries of spiritual truth should be incomprehensible to finite minds; and if a little moss on a rock can suffice to make us feel our ignorance, need we, on the sublime things of the kingdom of heaven,

hesitate to say with Job, "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him!"*

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

> "Where is the pride of Summer—the green prime,
> The many many leaves, all twinkling?—Three
> On the moss'd elm; three on the naked lime,
> Trembling,—and one upon the old oak tree!"—Hood.

We may even yet cull a good nosegay from the garden, but our fields and lanes put forth no new blossoms for the dreary November, or the frosty airs of the closing month; not that the country is absolutely destitute of flowers, for a few autumnal blossoms, as the ragwort, are yet left; and the winter flowering furze is bright; and the pale yarrow still stays with us; and the starry daisy yet sparkles in the grass. Not only, in our rural walk, do we miss the many flowers, but the voice of the tuneful bird now rarely bids us pause to listen. The robin, however, that "household bird, with the red stomacher," sings every day more regularly, and with louder note; the sky-lark warbles a parting song, and the thrush has not yet forsaken the almost leafless woods, but on a bright frosty morning will cheer us with a song, as loud and sweet as even the strains of summer. The countryman finds employment in tending his farm; but the field labour is little now, for the Almighty

* Job xxvi. 14.

"saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work."*

The mushroom, or fungus tribe, with their leathery, or spongy textures, are some of them common on the decayed tree, or putrid substance. Some are of a grey green, others of lemon or orange colour, or red, or spotted with chocolate-coloured spots, and bright mulberry-coloured stains. Though several are poisonous, yet many are beautiful, and display, by their great variety, the Almighty skill.

Spring, and summer, and autumn, with their flowers, and fruits, and leaves, pass rapidly away. Other springs shall arise, but which of us can tell that we shall mark its flowers; the voice of the changing seasons is, to us, the voice of God; and well may the prayer of the psalmist suit us all, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."†

* Job xxxvii. 6, 7 † Psa. xc. 12.

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The Garden flowers of the year

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