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The Vase of Flowers.

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THE

FLOWER PEOPLE.

A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP.

BY A LADY.

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

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Snow-drop. Hyacinth. Crocus. Violet. Narcissus.

THE SNOW-DROPS.

ONE beautiful spring morning, when a soft south wind began to melt the snow and ice, a little blue-eyed girl ran into her mother's garden to look for Snow-drops and Crocuses, for April had come, and she knew it was time for her darling flowers to peep above the snow.

Little Mary loved all the flowers, but she loved Snow-drops best, for they came first, and their delicate white bells and green leaves told beautiful stories of spring and summer. Her little fingers soon removed the snow from the bed where they

grew, and she shouted for joy when she saw a whole troop of the little white sisters lift up their graceful heads and smile in the bright sunshine.

As Mary bent down, with her rosy cheek almost touching the sweet flowers, she heard a fairy-like little voice say—"Thank you, pretty one, for brushing away the cold snow and showing us this beautiful light. We have been trying for many days to lift it from our heads, but began to fear we should die without seeing the sun. It is very pleasant and warm, and I am sure your eyes were made of the blue sky when the sun was shining upon it. I have been humming to myself this morning the song I should sing to the sun when he would please to melt away the cold snow, but I love you best, now, and if you care any thing about us little Snow-drops, I will tell you our whole history.

“You look very much surprised to hear me talk, but I am so happy, and you look so gentle, that I will go on, and when you hear how unhappy I have been, I know you will always be my friend, and will come every spring to clear away the snow that covers us.

The Snow-drop suddenly stopped speaking; and her beautiful head bowed lower than ever upon its graceful stalk, and a sigh that burst from her, made all her petals tremble.

When she spoke again, all her joy seemed to be gone, and her voice was so mournful, that the tears started into little Mary's eyes.

“My dear little girl,” began the flower again, “this is a fine garden, and you and your mamma are very kind, for you never pluck us from the bosom of our mother Earth, but let us live and die together here. But ah! if you could see the sunny

valleys where our home is, you would not wonder that we are unhappy here, under this stone wall.

“I was born far away across the water in a country called France, where a very little snow falls in the winter, which we can easily pierce the first warm day in spring. We are not obliged to struggle there with such heavy crusts as have penned us up in this cold place. Yesterday I heard your little brother’s merry voice in the garden, and thought he was surely coming to find us, but presently a thundering sound over our heads nearly stunned us all. Some of my sisters fainted, and a large ball of snow that came rattling down, broke the stem of one, and we are afraid she will die. I was not able to think again till this morning, such was my terror, but now I suppose it must have been your little brother running over our snow-house. When we heard you coming we were very

much alarmed, but you do not look as if you ever could forget even a flower that you had once loved.

“In my own country they call us *Pierce-the-Snow*, (Perce-neige.) Perhaps you will go to France when you grow up, and if you go to Valence, you must get up early in the morning and walk out into the country on the southern side of the town, and you will soon come to a green knoll surrounded by trees. The clear river Garonne washes three of its sides, and there, early in the spring, you may see thousands of my brothers and sisters hanging out their bells above the snow. If you are not there in the spring, you will not see them, but you can look at the sweet river and the snow-capped mountains in the distance, and when you return you will tell me how beautiful they are.

“We were a happy family that lived side by side,

and we loved each other better than all the world of Snow-drops together. If they had only brought them with me I could be happy any where, but the most beautiful spot in the world could not be a happy one for me without them.

“My elder brother was taller than I, and when I looked up at our father, the Sun, I always met his kind eye. I used to tell him all about the butterflies that came to visit me after the snow had melted away—and all the stories the winds whispered to me about flowers in other countries. But the best of all was to tell him how dearly I loved him, and to hear him say that he loved me too. Sometimes the gentle breezes (for there are no cold winds there, such as we feel here) would lock our stems together—and sometimes we would stand still and silent many hours, watching the shining insects that sported round us, or gazing

into the deep river, where the golden fishes glided by in the day, and the moon and stars were reflected at night.

“I wish I could hear how he bore the loss of me. I was so rudely snatched away that I had not time even to look back and nod farewell at him. I was shut up in a tin box, and remember nothing more, till one day, on reviving, I found myself in a little earthen jar, riding over the earth in a flying castle. No green thing was to be seen but a few of my own leaves. There was nothing but the blue sky above me and the waters on every side. It was very desolate.”

After another long pause the little Snow-drop continued her story.

“A fine old castle stands close by the wood in my native valley, where lived a little blue-eyed girl like you, who loved Snow-drops very much ;

but I love you best, for she used to tear us up by handfuls and carry us into the house where we could not see the sun or drink the dew, but stood in glass vases many days, and there died for want of food.

“Pure cold water is not good for plants to drink, nor can we live long when separated from our roots. They suck up a great deal of nourishment from the ground, and we starve to death if we are plucked. I have lost many sisters in that way, but I hope you will not separate any of us.

“It is dreadful to be an exile. Perhaps you do not know what that means. I will tell you, for I hope your heart never will. It means to be far, far away from home, with the great ocean rolling between one and one’s native country.

“I belong to the Lily family, and after I have told you something about lilies, I will tell you who

our enemies are, for we and all flowers have enemies, though we never mean to do any harm.

“You may easily know one of the Lily family, for we all have six petals, and six stamens, and long, linear, lanceolate or lance-shaped leaves. Mine are very shining ; I always have two which spring up from the bulb. All Lilies have bulbs. They are composed of scales laid over one another, like tiles on the top of a house. They are very thick and juicy and serve for food to the young plant, and this food they draw up from the earth through long fibres or roots which extend far down into the ground. If you dig us up in the fall of the year and separate these scales, and plant each one singly, you will have a great many more flowers, and the larger our number is, the happier we shall be. When we have received all the nourishment we need from the bulb, the scales dry

up, having imparted all their life to our bells and leaves.

“A green and white sheath or spathe encloses our bells when we are first born, but our stems grow very tall, and if you will count them, you will see that we all have three large, white, concave petals, tipped with green, and three inner petals which are sometimes called nectaries ; but our nectar is really contained in the thickest part of our pistil, which you see is in the shape of a club and surmounted by a tapering stigma. On the end of each stamen is an anther, which is filled with fine dust or pollen, and that falls upon the stigma and goes through the pistil into the germ, which is triangular or three-sided, and contains our seeds. When the pollen reaches the germ the seeds begin to grow.

“Our petals are so white that they do not last

long. They reflect the sun very powerfully, throwing his heat in upon the germ, within which my spirit dwells, and from which I burst every spring with new vigor and joy.

“Little girl, did you ever hear of people called botanists? If you know any of them, I wonder if you dislike them as much as I do. One day last spring your mamma walked into the garden with a gentleman, and I heard her say to him, ‘you are a botanist, sir, and can tell me what to call these flowers.’ He stooped down and broke off a dear little sister of mine, and after looking at it a moment he said her name was *Galanthus nivalis*, and that these are Greek and Latin words—gala means milk, and anthus a flower—nivalis means snowy. I did not think the name so pretty as either my French or English one, and my heart ached when I saw him pull off my poor sister’s petals, and

throw them on the ground. He then said she was of the *class* Hexandria, which means, six stamens, and of the *order* Monogynia, which means one pistil. I think he told your mamma these were Greek words also.

“I was very much hurt at his saying that none of the Lilies were perfect flowers, because they had no proper calyx. I could have told him we had a spathe which answered all the purpose, but I found he knew that. I thought it very foolish in him to say we were not perfect flowers. I do not believe *he* could have made the spathe that so carefully encloses our bells till they are large and strong enough to burst forth. He might at least have said we had a spathe instead of a calyx. I never saw any one approach our bed before who did not say something kind about us. It is delightful to be loved, but as

soon as he told your mamma all these strange names, he threw down the remnant of my little sister, and I saw him a moment after break off a bright yellow Crocus and pull that to pieces.

“I see one at this moment trying to burst through the snow. If you will lift that large flake you will relieve my friend, and I do not doubt that she will tell you her history if you wish to know it. I will now enjoy with my companions the warm rays of the brilliant sun, and think of my own home where it is warmer still, and of my own sweet river that sings to the flowers as it rushes past them.

“I hope my dear brother is there still, and thinking of me. Who knows that some one may not chance to bring him here? Then I should be too happy, and I would call this my home, and I would

say what I once heard a gentleman say to a lady,
as they walked down this path together :

‘Where’er thou art is home to me,
And home without thee cannot be.’”

Again the gentle Snow-drop hung her head and sighed. Mary listened long, hoping to hear her speak again, and then ran to brush the snow away from the Crocus.

THE CROCUSES.

THE Crocus thanked Mary with a golden look, but did not speak till all her sisters were released from their cold prison. They were clad in robes of every color that crocuses wear—blue, purple, white and yellow. Mary hardly knew which to think most beautiful. Some of them were in full summer dress, others were still enclosed in a delicate gauze-like spathe that binds together the flower-buds and the long slender linear leaves, until the warm kisses of the Sun win them to let fall their veils and return his brilliant smiles.

As soon as all were in full enjoyment of the bright sunshine, the CROCUS, DRESSED IN CLOTH OF GOLD, again looked up to Mary and said—"And now sweet little one, I suppose you are impatient to hear my story, for I heard what my dear friend Snow-drop promised you. A beautiful poet who sang a long song about Paradise—"

Little Mary wondered how flowers could know any thing about poets.

"I know what you are thinking of," said the Crocus, "but do you not know that poets and flowers are born to know each other? I do not understand why it is, but whenever a poet comes near me, I always look up and speak to him, and see myself shine back again from two dear little looking-glasses, that are sometimes set in the brightest sapphire, sometimes in lustrous jet, and

sometimes like yours ; for you have these looking-glasses too.

“ But I must not forget to tell you about the poet of Paradise. Did you never hear him sing about the first house that ever was made ? I am sure there never has been one since half so beautiful. I have heard my mother say, that when men make houses now, they kill those tall trees, which are much too large for us Crocuses ever to understand, and cut them up, with a world of trouble ; but God himself made that first bower.

The roof

Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
 Laurel and Myrtle, and what higher grew
 Of firm and fragrant leaf ;—on either side
 Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
 Fenced up the verdant wall ; each beauteous flower,
 Iris all hues, Roses and Jessamine,
 Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
 Mosaic ; under foot the Violet,
Crocus and Hyacinth, with rich inlay
 Bordered the ground.

“ I love to think that my first parents lived in that sacred place where your mother Eve took care of us, who loved every flower and every green leaf, that

At her coming sprung,
And touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.

“ But I am very glad, too, that I live in your day. Do you know that the bright ribbon that is plaited round your dress, owes its saffron tint to one of my family ? In ‘ Araby the blest ’ they call me Zafaran ; and I suppose that is the reason that the Moors of Spain call me Asafaran and Safra, for they came from Arabia ; and that the English call me Saffron, for they found me in Asia, which is my native country. Some of my brothers and sisters, however, have been found in Savoy, and that sweet little cousin of mine who is dressed in white and purple, and whom the French call ‘ Safron printanier,’ is a native of Switzerland. She is always most merry

while the snow lasts, because it reminds her of her happy home, and she tells us wonderful stories about the mountains there, whose peaks are covered with snow even in summer! She looks really unhappy when the snow is all melted away, and dies very young. Her whole family is called Versicolor, which arose, I believe, from the variety of colors in which her brothers and sisters clothe themselves. I must tell you one thing more about them. The mothers in Switzerland tie them about the necks of their children, and then believe that nothing can harm the little darlings. I do not know why they think so, but I know that in very ancient times men used to pray that Saffron might grow over their graves to protect them. I do not know why they should think so much of their bodies after their souls had flown out of them, but perhaps they thought, if sweet flowers grew upon the graves of

their friends, men would tread tenderly over them, and remember the beautiful souls their bodies once contained."

"But God," said Mary, "with whom good souls go to live, is sweeter than all the flowers in the world, and more beautiful. I have a little hymn that says, 'He that made the Rose is more beautiful than the Rose. He is all lovely ; he is the delight of every heart.'"

There was a long silence, for Mary and the Crocuses quite forgot each other at that moment. Mary thought how happy she should be to go and live in Heaven, with him who made the Rose and all the flowers, and the Crocus was lost in gratitude for the gift of life, that thrilled through her delicate frame in the warm rays of that bright sunshine.

At last Mary said ; "you have told me about the

first name that you had, but why are you called Crocus?"

"My first name is the truest one," the Crocus replied, "for your first father who gave it to me knew best what all names meant. The Greeks called us Crocus, because a beautiful young man of that name was changed into a form just like ours—"

"Changed into a flower! how could that be?" said Mary.

"Oh! I am sure I cannot tell you that; for I do not know how my spirit finds in the dark earth such delicate stuff as I am made of, or why my father, the Sun, sends me such beautiful rays from his great globe to be made into smiles of all colors.

"I suppose the spirit of that young man, when he had laid his human body in the grave, did the same thing as my spirit does. Perhaps he wanted his friends to see him, and as they could not see a

spirit, you know, he wove such a robe as ours out of the dew drops and sunshine, to be seen by.

“I always wear a cloth of gold, and am distinguished by that name. I am one of those plants whose duty it is to cure the sick, and so botanists call me *Officinalis*. Those whose robes are white and purple, are a little different from me, for if you will observe my green leaves carefully, you will see they are narrower. These are the folds of my mantle. My robes are called petals.”

“Why do you call them petals?” said Mary.

“It is the flower-language we learnt in Greece. Petals mean spreaders. We spread our robes to receive the sun’s rays which rebound from them upon our anthers,—those three little yellow boxes filled with dust that hang upon the ends of my stamens. Our anthers are very precious, and are therefore called the flower of the flower, for anther

is the Greek word for flower. The yellow dust they contain is called farina."

"How I wish all the flower-language was English," said Mary, "and then I could understand it better." The Crocus smiled and continued.

"Each separate grain of that fine dust is like a balloon full of light vapor, which floats on the invisible wings of the air, or is carried by insects to the stigma which looks so much like the crest on the head of that great cock who crows so loud in the morning. Within the stigma it finds a drop of moisture, and when the balloon of air and that drop of moisture meet, the balloon bursts, and their spirits mingle together, and descending through the long pistil into the dark bulb, make new life in my seeds for another year."

"I do not like the bulb," said Mary; "it is ugly, and keeps in the ground where it should be."

“ Ah, my dear little girl, you must love with your soul and not with your eyes. The most beautiful things spring out of darkness and sadness. Don't you know that your own goodness often grows out of the tears of sorrow, and out of tryings to be good, which are not very pleasant at the time ?

“ My seeds repose quietly in the bulb till the spirit of life comes to quicken them, and then they begin to struggle upward ; but it is not till after these gay robes wither and droop, that the germ rises into the light and air to ripen its seeds in the sun. We are not then so beautiful to the eye of man, but our destiny is fulfilled, and we are happy in the consciousness of holding in our bosoms the splendors of another year.

“ My cousin Nudiflora does not put on her robes till autumn. She says the many-colored mantles of the forest trees then shed their glorious hues over

the country, a little while before they fall to the ground, but the clear bright days soon change into cold, and chilly, and cloudy ones, and she willingly drops again into the bosom of our mother Earth, to escape the winter storms, and await the call of our father Sun when spring returns. You may now see her germ bursting forth alone to ripen for her autumnal festival.

“It is of her that another beautiful poet once said,

And see—I’ve brought a little flower
No lingerer it of summer’s train—
Like Vesper star at Eve’s dim hour
It comes, to deck pale Autumn’s bower
And leaf-strown plain.

“I have many other beautiful cousins. There is the PALE STARRY CROCUS, whose tiny yellow garments you see striped with black. That is the CLOTH OF SILVER CROCUS, with three stripes on each petal. Here is one just bursting from the

spathe, that has on the inner folds of her robe a deeper shade, which gives her the appearance of holding a yellow cup within her corolla. That one dressed in rich purple is very much celebrated in the world; for it is her stigmas and part of her stamens, that when carefully plucked and dried, impart a beautiful color to every thing they touch. Her family has been so much cultivated and educated in Walden, in England, that the place is now called Saffron-Walden; her own name is *Sativus*.

“We are related to a very beautiful family of flowers called Lilies, some of which are very tall and splendid. But all Lilies are amiable, and the tallest and fairest do not forget to notice their little cousins who live near the ground.

“There are two ways of making us grow, if you wish to have a large and gay troop of us. You can

divide and transplant our bulbs, for each portion has, like a seed, a separate life, or you may plant our seeds in a shady place where there is plenty of fresh air, and sift the soil very carefully over us in the autumn of the first and second year. In the spring of the third year we will reward your care by looking as beautiful as we can."

At that moment Mary's little brother threw a snow-ball over the garden fence, which struck the stem of the Crocus dressed in CLOTH OF GOLD, and snapped it short off.

Mary screamed when she saw the sweet little story-teller lying upon the ground, and the cruel snow-ball scattered broken amongst all her companions. They were too much frightened to speak again, and at last she took up the pretty broken flower to carry it to her brother, and make him promise never to throw any more snow-balls into

the garden; for Charles was a good little boy, though he did love to throw snow-balls and run over the crust. He never meant to do any harm, but he was very thoughtless, and thoughtless people often do a great deal of mischief. I think Charley will be more careful in future, for he will be sorry to have all the Flower-people dislike him.

THE VIOLETS.

EVERY day, little Mary visited the Snow-drops and Crocuses, whose beauty spoke to her heart, even when she heard no sound of their sweet voices.

The glow of life soon melted the snow from around the Crocuses ; and Mary longed for the time when it should all disappear, that she might run down to the brook where the wild flowers grew.

One morning, she was waked early by the sound of rushing waters. She ran to the window, which her mother had already opened to let in the warm sweet air of the spring morning.

Earth's snowy mantle had vanished. The weather had been quite mild for a few days, and a warm rain had fallen in the night, and swept it all away. Mary could no longer see where the pretty brook tumbled merrily over the rocks in summer time, singing as it went. She could not even see the meadow through which it used to run. In the place of it, stood a large lake studded with trees. The river that had its source in the mountain, had been so swollen by the rain and melted snows, that it had overflowed its banks, and covered all the fields in the valley. The tall, graceful elms could alone be seen above the waters. Fences, bridges, hedges and shrubbery had all disappeared.

Yesterday, the brook and the river were chained fast by the ice. Yesterday, every thing in the country was cold and dead, except the Snow-drops, Crocuses, and the song of the South-wind in the pines.

But the Spirit of the Wind had breathed upon their fetters till they had burst, and to-day all was life and music. The rushing waters spoke from every hill, as they poured into the valley, and swept wildly through the meadow-land.

They told Mary these were the same fields she saw covered with snow the day before, and that when they were gone the grass would look green and the flowers bloom brilliantly. They told her how grateful they were to the Sun and the South-wind, for breaking their chains. They told of their home—the great ocean to which they were fast rushing, and how the Sun would draw them up into the clouds again, and let them fall upon the meadows in soft summer showers. They promised to come when the grass should be dry and parched, and the flowers thirsting for refreshment. And they told Mary not to be frightened, if they should come with

loud thunder and bright lightning, for these would cool the hot air and open its doors for fresh breezes.

For many days nothing was to be heard but the merry song of the waters ; but one pleasant afternoon Mary went out with her mother, and they opened the little gate at the bottom of the garden and walked into the meadow.

The river had returned to its bed. The brook was now tumbling over the rocks, and gliding through the grass, which already looked green, and the buds of the vines were just bursting into leaves. None of the forest trees had put on their mantles, except the pale green willows,—their long pendent branches kissed the sweet stream as it now glided gently along.

On every side, the blue Violets were peeping through the grass, and troops of Anemones had

climbed every hillock which the fresh breezes visited.

Mary shouted for joy. "Oh here they are, all blooming ready for me," cried the little girl. "Mother, do you think they will tell me a story?" and she threw herself upon the ground to catch the first accents of the flower-speech.

A little blue-eyed Violet looked up into Mary's eyes, and thought two large and beautiful Violets were looking down into hers. She was half hidden in the brown grass of the former year, but seemed to be happy in that lowly place, and not to envy her gay companions, the Anemones, who were dancing in the soft wind, with their pink and white garments on.

"I can tell you nothing," said the modest Violet, in a low sweet tone, "but what happens down here in the grass. It was a long time since I had seen

the blue sky and the brook, or my father the Sun, but his warm beams penetrated, many days ago, to my dark apartment, and waked me from the long winter night. When the snow melted, and the warm rain reached my roots, I breakfasted upon the sweet waters, and prepared to dress myself for this happy day. I am glad to see the new blades of grass begin to shoot up, for these stiff brown ones of last year are not so fragrant or so polite as the tender green ones which yield readily to the pressure of my leaves. I only wish to have room to look up at the Sun and the blue sky. My pale little sister, who is under that leaf by your hand, cannot even do that, and yet she says she is happy, it feels so good to be alive. I hardly think I should be happy if I were there, and now you have taken away the leaf, I suspect she will never be willing to live under it again

“How loving you look, dear little girl! I should like to tell you every thing in my heart if you would like to hear it. The butterflies and the bees often come to see me, and I like them very much, but they have a great deal to say about their flights and their honey, and never have time to listen to any thing I have to tell. I love to talk to you while your soul is looking into mine, and if I could talk in such language as your eyes speak to me, how much I could tell you of the sweet Spring and the warm Sun, and the soft winds that have called me out of the bosom of the dark Earth.

“I believe you know some of my cousins, for the bees have told me that there are a great many Pansies in your mother’s garden. They are more beautiful than I am, and have many colored garments on, and I believe they like to live in that fine place, but I had rather stay here in the grass

with the Anemones ; and the bees say they had rather come here to sip honey from my lips, for they are often driven from the garden. Why are they driven from the garden ?”

“ Because they sting,” said little Mary.

“ Do they,” said the Violet, “ and what is that ?”

“ They hurt people,” said Mary.

“ They never hurt me,” said the Violet. “ Perhaps they are obliged to sting, if people hurt them ; for they are so small that they would easily be killed if they did not defend themselves. They have a great deal of work to do, and if they hurt any one, I think it must be because they wish to finish it.”

“ Yes,” said Mary, “ God gave them their sting to defend themselves, and they never use it for any other purpose. The point is so very fine that we cannot see the end of it unless it is put under a glass, which makes things look hundreds of times larger

than they really are. 'The bees never hurt me, for I do not touch them."

"If any one should hurt me," said the Violet, "I could not defend myself,—but I am not of much consequence."

Mary thought it would be very cruel to hurt such a beautiful, sweet creature, but before she could answer, the Violet seemed to have forgotten that there was any danger in the world, and said ; "The humming-birds build their nests in that wild rose-bush, and I love to hear the song of the brook among the pebbles.

"Has my cousin Heart's Ease bloomed yet ? I should rather know her than any of the Pansies. I think if she knew what a beautiful prospect I have from the side of this sloping hill, she would wish herself here. She has sisters in all the countries in the world, and must know a great many stories.

I once heard your mamma talking of a cold country, far away from here, called Siberia, where many unhappy people are sent from their pleasant homes by a cruel king, who punishes them for being rich and good. She told a story of a noble and courageous daughter, who walked more than a thousand miles in that cold country, to ask the king to let her father return to his happy home. It was a very beautiful story, and when she said that the father of that good daughter would often twine my cousin Heart's Ease into the garlands he wove for his daughter's brow, I wished I could have been there too, to speak to him of the valleys of his native land, where Violets grow.

“How many beautiful cousins I have! do you wish to hear about them all? I have more than twenty in America. In Greece we are named Ion. They have a story there that a beautiful lady was

changed into a cow by one of her enemies, and we were named from her, because we sustained her life in that misfortune.

“ I have cousins too who grow in the palm-groves of Africa. The children of that land are not so happy as you are, but they love flowers, and wear us in garlands round their heads, and when they give us to each other they mean to say, ‘ I shall love you always ;’ for we are the emblems of constant affection. We grow in Asia, too, in the Holy Land where Abraham lived. In Paradise we decked the very bower of Eve, your first mother, as Crocus has told you.

“ My cousin Hesperus, who lives in England, keeps all her sweet fragrance to herself in the day, but at evening she sheds it upon the dewy air, and the nightingales come and perch upon the bushes near her, for they love sweet odors—and they thank

her with such beautiful songs that all the flowers wake to listen. Little girl, were you ever waked at night by sweet music? It is most enchanting then, when all other sounds are stilled, and the bright stars, or the soft moon, are shedding their tender light. When the sun shines, he is so brilliant and glorious that all my soul is gazing upon him; but at night I can listen, and when the sky is full of music, I think of the happy days I have spent with the bees, and the butterflies, and the Anemones. I think of the first days of spring, when we all burst into life and joy, and of the gay summer months when the Roses dress themselves in their splendid garments. I hope I shall live to see the Roses. Do not pluck me, little girl. I will tell you more about myself if you will not pluck me.

“I see you are looking at the green leaves of my mantle. They are spoon-shaped to catch the

falling drops of rain or dew. Violets first grew upon highlands or mountains where no brooks watered their roots, and we are provided with these to catch moisture from the air. When we live in the lowlands, the form of our leaves is changed, as we do not need so much moisture from the atmosphere.

“I hope you will never forget me, for it makes Violets as well as little girls very unhappy, to be loved and then forgotten. Wherever you meet with us in all the world, you may know us by our five-leaved calyx, by these five petals, and the five anthers which cling round the pistil. Botanists call us of the class Pentandria, on account of our five stamens. Roses have five petals, too, but they are all of the same shape, while one of mine turns backward.

“Many flowers which have five petals and stamens are poisonous, but Violets can do no harm in

the world. From the roots of my cousin Odorata, so named because she smells so sweet, a kind medicine is made, which will cure cruel pains."

Mary thought she should love to take medicine made of violets, for it must taste good; but she learned afterwards that the bitterest doses are sometimes made from the roots of the sweetest smelling flowers. She was glad God had made them so beautiful, because she could think of their beauty when she was taking the medicine her mother gave her, and forget how bitterly it tasted.

"Grandiflora," the little flower continued, "is the most lovely of all violets; she dresses in cream-colored and purple robes. Tricolor wears three bright colors in spring, but before summer is gone, they fade to the palest shades.

"If you will come again next June, you will see, behind that rock which juts into the brook at the

foot of that tall hawthorn, my water-cousin *Hottonia*. One who loves her has said, ‘ Her long, white, hair-like roots strike deep into the bed of the stream, her blue and white flowers rise upon their hollow stems, just above the surface of the water; and beneath, in the shade of her tufted leaves, the little *Periwinkle* moors his pretty shell.’

“ My own name,” said the little *Violet*, after a moment’s pause, is *Viola Velutina*. I think yours must be *Viola Celestina*.”

At that moment the sun sunk behind the hill, and the lowly flower drooped her head and ceased speaking ; but her fragrant words lingered on the air, and it was long before Mary turned from her celestial loveliness to the gay *Anemones* that were nodding their heads at her.

If Mary had been asked at that moment what flower she should like to be, she would surely have

said a Violet, so tenderly did Velutina's modest beauty, and sweet fragrance, and heavenly color, speak to her heart. She thought neither Grandiflora's cream-colored and purple garments, nor the three bright colors of Tricolor, nor the many tinted Pansies of the garden, could be so lovely as the delicate blue of Velutina's robes,—so like the happy sky which the Violet herself could not love better than Mary did.

But the bright blue Day was fast turning pale, at the approach of the dark-robed Night; the flowers were folding their robes for slumber, and as Mary turned homeward, her mother said; “I hope my daughter will be like that modest flower who never thinks of herself, but remembers all the goodness of others. Then every one will love my daughter as well as she loves the blue Violets.”

All night Mary dreamed that she was in the
meadow, listening to

“ Violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes,
Or Cytherea’s breath.”

Columbine. Autumnal Crocus. Anemone. Wild Geranium.

THE ANEMONES.

BEFORE the sun had climbed the wooded hill that bounded the valley, Mary was brushing the dew from the grass in the meadow. The wind had already waked some of the Anemones ; others still hung their beautiful heads, for fear the dew-drops should steal into their bosoms and chill the life that warmed them. Every leaf and blade of grass was weighed down by the beneficent moisture. These were grateful for the refreshment, and wondered how the flowers could turn away from it.

Suddenly a flood of light poured over the valley ;

every dew-drop became a diamond ; the windings of the river twinkled from between the trees on its banks, and a chorus of birds burst forth in a joyous welcome to the brightest of all earth's beauties. At this moment a light wind swept over the landscape, and every pink and white Anemone expanded to welcome it. So joyously did they wave in the gay breeze, that Mary clapped her hands and joined in the dance. It seemed as if a thousand rose-flakes were suddenly scattered over the grass.

At first they did not see her, for their first look, like their last, is always at their father, the Sun. All flowers love the Sun ; but some of his daughters so love the radiance of his countenance, that they never turn their gaze away from it. They follow his course through the heavens, as if they wished to behold no object of lesser glory. If a dark cloud

veils his face from them, they sorrowfully droop their heads, as if the light he had left upon other objects were not worth looking at.

But now Mary intercepted these bright rays, which the Sun was pouring upon the Anemones. Perhaps they would have drooped their heads in sorrow, if her sweet face, sparkling with joy, had not shone upon them like a little sun.

And soon a tiny voice came upon the breeze :
“Oh ! do not destroy our happiness,” said the flower,
“we love to look at the Sun during all the short days of our lives. I see clouds in the distant sky, so that I know our day will not be a long one ; for when it rains we must fold our petals over the germ where our life dwells, or its vitality will be destroyed.”

Mary stepped aside, that the Anemones might enjoy the warmth and brilliancy of the parent rays.

The happy flower smiled again. "I heard Viola telling you her name yesterday," she said; "I too was named in that land where men loved every thing beautiful. The people were beautiful themselves, as I have heard my mother say; and the hills on which Anemones used to enjoy the cool breezes of spring, looked down upon groves that were filled with forms still more lovely and glorious than their own. It was a great while ago. Then they were happy, and no rude sounds of war or discord ever came into that holy land.* When the soldier came to its borders, he would lay down his sword, and his soul was filled with high and noble thoughts, inspired by the beautiful forms that peopled every valley and crowned every hill. Now it is all despoiled. Wicked men have been there, and stained the grass with blood, and trodden down the flowers,

* Elis.

and broken the beautiful statues and temples that those happy men made.

“They call us Anemones, because we unfold our garments to the wind. I see the breeze playing with your hair and with the roses in your cheeks, and I know you love it too. It makes the blood bound through your veins, as it makes the living sap flow through mine.

“I wear these pink and white garments, because they are the favorite colors of the Sun. He keeps our anthers warm, which contain that precious dust of which you have heard flowers speak.

“Some of my cousins have umbelled flower stalks, so that they are never alone, even if their roots are far separated from others. They are very happy families, for they live and die together. Perhaps you do not know what I mean by umbelled flower stalks. They are exactly like the sticks of

your mamma's parasol, and on the end of each hangs a flower. I think such a parasol would be much prettier than hers, and it would not keep off the sun so much. Perhaps if she sees my beautiful cousin *Narcissiflora*, she will take her for a pattern."

Mary laughed, and wondered what the flower thought her mamma carried a parasol for, if it were not to keep off the sun;—but the *Anemone* loved the sun's warmth so much that it never thought any one could think he felt too hot.

"*Lancifolia*, *Alpina*, and several other cousins of mine, live alone as I do. But it is not pleasant to be solitary. Once I lived entirely alone in this meadow; but I did not enjoy the sun or the wind half as much as I do now when I am surrounded by my children. These are all my children, covering the meadow as far as you can see,—for my roots spread under the ground like net-work."

Mary wondered that the Anemone looked so young, when she had so many children. She certainly looked no older than the rest of them. The pretty flower blushed a still deeper pink, and was quite pleased that Mary thought she still looked so young and beautiful, for she loved the admiration even of the winds. "I know what your thoughts are, little lady," she said. "The reason I look so young is, that every year I put on new garments, and flowers never feel old, as people do. But I have had some sorrows," she added with a sigh, "for the cows sometimes trample upon my dear children. I see them all again every spring, to be sure, but it grieves me when their beautiful summer lives are cut short.

"I know that I ought not to complain, for I think I am much happier than the race of man. In that little cottage, on the edge of the meadow, there lives

a poor old woman, who was as young and happy as you are, when I first came to this meadow. The cottage is old and ruinous now, like herself. She used to dance over the grass as gaily as you do, and always came to see me every morning, and was as happy as I was when my children first grew up around me. And then beautiful children grew up around her, but they died, one by one, and were laid in the ground under yonder hill, where you see those little mounds. The poor old lady was then left quite alone, for her husband died too, and now she looks very sad when she walks in the meadow in the spring. Sometimes I hear her wishing that her children would come back, every year, as mine do. Then she looks up to the sky and seems to be talking to them, as if they were there. When she comes, we all dance as gaily as we can, to please

her, and sometimes she smiles, but I often think it only makes her more unhappy to see us."

Mary told the Anemone that she knew that poor old lady very well, and that her children were really up in the sky, where they were in a more beautiful world than this—and that sorrowing mother knew it, and was very willing that they should be there with God, but she was tired of staying here without them, and wanted to go too.

"Is there a better wind there," said the Anemone, "and more sun? and does it shine upon a prettier river?"

"Oh! yes," said little Mary, "every thing is better there, and God is there, who made every thing—the wind and the sun and the rivers—Oh! a great many, many suns, and that is where all good spirits go and are happy."

"I hope I shall go too," said the Anemone,—but

the next moment the flower seemed to forget that there was any happier world than this, for she began to dance and toss her pretty head about again.

“My other name,” she said, after a moment’s pause, “is *Nemorosa*. I am so called because I sometimes grow in woods and shady places. Most *Anemones* love to grow on the top of a hill, where they can feel all the winds that blow. When I am not in flower, you may know me by my leaves. They are in the form of a wedge, you see, and notched, and three always grow together. *Anemones* have many fancies about their mantles. *Thalictrioides*—I can hardly pronounce such a long word—has smooth, roundish, heart-shaped leaves, like *Meadow Rue*, from whom she is named. I should like this name better than that long Latin one. I wish flowers could name themselves. But it is very pretty, and grows on an unbelled flower-

stalk. *Lancifolia*'s leaves are lance-shaped, and scalloped on the edge. *Narcissiflora*'s are palmate, something like the shape of your little hand. *Alpina*'s are winged, and *Virginiana*'s are very much like mine. I have a cousin *Caroliniana*, who lives in warmer countries than this ;—sometimes she has twenty petals ! *Sylvestris* is often called a Snow-drop, her flowers are so white and drooping. Sometimes there are three, sometimes five, leaflets on one of her stalks.

“ Poppies are relations of mine. You often see them growing in your mamma's garden, I suppose. They were named from an ancient word, *papa*, meaning *pap*, because their juice used to be given to children to get them to sleep. It must have been very dangerous, for the juice of Poppies makes a very strong poison. Poisons were made to cure very bad pains, and you must always remember

that medicines are your friends, dear little girl, but never trifle with them."

It was God who made them, thought Mary.

"My cousins Hortensia and Coronaria love to grow in garden borders. I am sure I could not breathe there. They do not know what it is to live in such a pleasant place as this."

The Anemone had never talked so long before. She was quite tired, and her voice grew fainter and fainter. She always stopped dancing when she talked, and standing still seemed to fatigue her very much. With a sweet smile and kindly nod she seemed to bid farewell to Mary, as if she did not care for her society any longer, for Anemones are like some people, who are blown about by every wind, and always think the last breeze the best. So Mary, with her little brother, tripped over the meadow to hear some other flower-story.

THE HYACINTHS

MANY flowers of the garden had now spread their petals to the sun. The Crown Imperial proudly towered above them all, hanging out her dark yellow bells, each holding its mysterious and immovable gem. The Narcissus and Persian Iris varied the long ranks of gay Tulips, which, like soldiers arrayed for battle, dazzled the sight on every side. But it rested with most pleasure upon a troop of Hyacinths, whose deeper dyes were mellowed to the eye by the pale green leaves which shot up around them, and together with the more delicate hues there

displayed, reminded one of all the loveliest objects in nature. Every shade of blue, from the pale tint of the summer sky, to the deep blue of the deep blue sea ; all purples, from the faintest streak upon Elysian skies,

“Ne’er deepening into night,”

to the richest Tyrian dye of the eastern despot’s robe ; the softest flush of pink that arrests the short twilight of a tropical evening, and the whole alphabet of the spirit language of the Rose ; the golden glory of the evening sun, and the last streak of the pale yellow day retreating over the mountain tops—spoke from that little patch of ground.

One day a pink Hyacinth called Mary with her sweet odors to come and hear her story, for flowers, like all other *sentient* beings, love to talk of themselves to those who love them. Ever since the Snow-drop had talked to the little girl, all the

daughters of Spring had called her with their fragrance, and their bright looks, to hear their little histories. Even before they had burst from the ground, they must have heard the Snow-drop talking to the daughter of man, for as soon as they appeared above it, they seemed to seek with eager glances the eyes and the heart that loved them.

“You must surely know me,” said the Hyacinth, “for I was once of the race of man. My spirit then dwelt in a mortal form, beloved by Apollo, a deity of that far-famed Grecian land of which you have already heard so much. Let me tell you how I came to be a flower.

“Zephyr, as well as Apollo, loved the youth Hyacinthus; but Apollo dwelt in the sun, from which he brought the warm rays that quicken our spirits into this joyous life, and Zephyr is not so great a favorite with me as he is with the Anemones;—this

made him angry, and one day when I was sporting with Apollo, Zephyr blew a quoit against my head and killed my human form. But out of the principle of life, which dwelt in my blood, Apollo made a flower. I know not whether it is that the garments in which he arrays us are so beautiful to the eye, or that a mysterious sympathy with man links our souls together ; but in some lands, men have been willing to give nearly all their earthly possessions for one of my race.

“I dare say that you think this is the first time I ever saw the sun ; but indeed I have visited many lands, and been sold more than once, for many thousands of dollars. I was born on the shores of the Mediterranean sea, on the very spot where young Hyacinthus died. A merchant carried me to Holland, and placed me in a large garden, where I never heard the sweet plashing of any waters, or

saw the sun rise or set behind any hills. It is true that many other flowers lived in the garden, and we were a gay company, and no one was more carefully attended to than myself. I was placed in a beautiful vase, and sold to a princess, who kept me in a lovely bower that stood by a little lake, where I could see the sky reflected in the water every day,—but it was not so beautiful as my own Mediterranean. Many people offered large sums of money for me, but the princess would not part with me. I was so afraid that I should be carried back into the dry garden again, that I tried to look more beautiful to her eye every spring. I saw she soon grew tired of every thing she possessed, and that her dresses were often changed for new ones, though it seemed to me they were no less beautiful and becoming than at first. I feared that I should lose her favor in the same way, for we always fear

what we do not understand, and I could never discover any reason for her fickleness of mind. My presentiment was but too true. One day she exchanged me, and many of my sisters, for a Tulip, and I was thrown into a pit, from which I was afterwards drawn out, and sent, with many other flowers, to this country

“I never knew what Hyacinths had done to lose their value in the eyes of the world; but at the present day, we are only cherished by the lovers of nature. I do not mean to complain of this,” she added, “for such friends alone are lasting ones, but I wish I could understand why I was one day so valuable, and the next so insignificant.”

Mary was as much at a loss as the Hyacinth. She was not yet old enough to know, that the favor of the world depends upon the fashion of a day;

and that greater changes are sometimes known than the substitution of a Tulip for a Hyacinth.

But the Hyacinth, after a moment's pensive thought, resumed: "I believe my friend Tulip afterwards experienced the same vicissitudes of fortune that I did. She and her sisters were for a time the favorite of princes, and more valuable than precious gems, but now she is even more humbled than I am; for Hyacinths are still considered worthy ornaments of the bower of beauty. But I believe these reverses do not hurt her feelings so much as they do mine. It is true that I had rather live under the blue sky, and drink the waters of heaven pure from the beloved clouds, than to reside under the most splendid roof made by the hand of man,—but in this foreign soil, a slight neglect destroys my health and vigor, and often I have not strength to open my bosom to the blessed sun.

“We are all in fine spirits this beautiful spring, for your mamma loves us dearly, and that is the only consolation that exiles can have for the lost heaven and the lost earth of home. I often wish I were as hardy and as unconcerned as my friend Tulip.”

THE TULIPS.

A TALL Tulip, an "Incomparable Verport," so called from its cherry-colored cup and shining brown streaks, one of a family formerly very distinguished, and who had been listening to the gentle complaints of the sweet Hyacinth with an expression of some contempt, after waiting a few moments, with much ceremony, till she was sure her fair friend had ceased speaking, now addressed the little girl, who could hardly turn away for an instant from the hyacinthine smiles and voices and plum-like odors.

"I should like to know," she said, "how my

cousin *Orientalis Hyacinthus* knows my feelings, for I am not in the habit of communicating them to her. If she did not belong to the great family of Lilies, of which I also am a member, and whose motto is PEACE, I should say some things of her that I could say,—but I shall content myself with telling you my history, and leave you to judge which has the most reason to complain of their destiny. My native country is Persia, and my name is the same as that which is given to the head-dress of Persian princes and nobles. It is only in foreign countries that my family has ceased to be highly valued, for in my native land we are still held in honor. I was myself present at a feast of Tulips, in the Seraglio of the Sultan at Constantinople, to which I was sent from Persia by particular request. It is impossible to give you any idea of the splendor of that festival, for there never was any thing like it

in this country, or perhaps in any other. I was astonished, myself, at the number of my own relations ; many, whom I had never before even heard of, were there, and the ladies of the Seraglio, and the lords of the court, tried their very best to equal us in the colors of their robes and head-dresses. Miss Hyacinth never saw the like in her life, for it was not till she went to Holland that she was considered such a great personage. In Persia, Hyacinths are only little blue wild flowers, half hidden in the grass. Thousands and thousands of Tulips were at the feast ; and the most beautiful music was played to us, while the lords and ladies danced in honor of the Spring, who had called us into being. We are such favorites in our own country, that we are used as emblems of the most opposite sentiments. Those who love most deeply and ardently present us to the loved, as emblems of the intensity of their affection,

and if any one is faithless in love, we are sent to speak an angry reproof to the false one.

“In Holland I was no less honored than Miss Hyacinth, and for three hundred years was an object of desire and pursuit. Then I never had any thing to do with common flowers or common people, as my cousin well knows; and it was not very amiable in her to refer to the short-lived favor of that princess, who never loved any thing for its true value, but only in proportion as the multitude prized it. I have had enough admiration to satisfy any one, and I have too much spirit to be cast down because the fashion has changed. I know my own worth, and care for the love of no one, if I have plenty of room, and can see and be seen. There is not much to admire in this narrow garden, to be sure, especially for one who has lived in courts, but I can hold up my head over most of the weeds, and with my eye

upon the sun, can live pretty contentedly on the memory of past glory, hoping for better days than these.

“One advantage we derived from living in Holland, as well as our cousin Hyacinth; and I think she might have mentioned it instead of making such complaints. The fine care they took of us there, increased our beauty very much, and gave us strength to reflect many varieties of color. She has even more cause for gratitude than I have, for as I said before, in the vicinity of Bagdad, where her country relations live, Hyacinths are only of one color, while Tulips have a great many. We were carried from Persia to Constantinople by a Sultan, who chose us for our beauty, and not for merchandise.”

The Hyacinth replied, for all this was meant for her rather than for Mary, that she willingly owed that cause of gratitude to the Dutch gardeners; for

though she did not think they did it out of love for her, but rather that they might get a higher price for her, it was certainly true that the character of Hyacinths had improved, since they had been made by cultivation capable of receiving more various influences from the great source of light.

The Tulip, whose vanity alone was gratified by the improvement, held her head very stiffly, and pretended not to hear this remark. A slight curl of her lip alone gave evidence of the emotion with which she received it.

“I wish,” she said rather impatiently, “that the red-winged black-birds would come and eat up these flies who are preparing to lay their eggs in my bulb.”

Mary wondered how a flower that was so handsome could be so unamiable; but at that moment her eye was attracted by a little wren who ran up

the stately stalk of a Crown Imperial, and seemed to be much delighted with what he found in her pendent cups.

The Hyacinths followed Mary down the path with their sweet odors which seemed to say, "come back again."

THE CROWN IMPERIAL.

MARY crept as softly as possible, that she might not frighten the little brown wren; but birds have learnt that mankind are not always friendly to them, and the wren had often seen a being, with large eyes and long arms, firing at her friends in the orchard. Its delicate ears caught the sound of footsteps, and just as Mary thought her hand was upon it, away it flew. She would not have hurt it for the world, but it did not know that, and its wings were given it for safety, as well as pleasure.

The bells of the flower still trembled with the

motion the lively little creature had imparted to them; but on looking up into them, Mary saw a clear drop of water hanging in each, which even the trembling of the plant did not dislodge. Beautiful as it was, she wondered that the wren could approach near enough to taste it, so unpleasant an odor streamed from the flower. She immediately drew back, and thought she had rather hear the proud flower's story from a distance, for it seemed to her that she must be more like the Tulip than the Hyacinth.

The flower observed the motion, and mistaking the feeling she inspired for one of respect, said in a condescending tone, "you may approach, little girl, if you wish to know about those transparent drops within my bells. I hang them there for that little bird, who alone of all the feathered tribes comes to see me. This tall stalk which supports my flowing

robes, is nearly hollow, and the water which my roots imbibe from the ground rises through it to nourish my little friend. He breakfasts here every morning, for as fast as he sips one drop, another supplies its place.

“I have heard those flowers talking to you, and speaking of my country, where they seem to think they are of great importance. It is very true that the gaudy colors of the flaunting Tulips attract much attention, and the fragrance of the Hyacinths is very agreeable to some people. But the Tulips are very flippant, talking all the time of their former importance and the festivals in Turkey.

“Did you ever see a king, little girl? I have never seen one in this country, but in Persia they sometimes wear a crown to which I bear some resemblance, and from which I take my name. Botanists, I know, call me *Frittilaria*, from some fancied

resemblance of my petals to a chess-board ; but I much prefer the other name. Both remind me of happier days, when in my own country I was honored as becomes my rank and figure ;—for chess is a royal game, which was invented to amuse a Persian king. In that land I was taught how to preserve my dignity. The kings of Persia were the first kings in the world who felt it beneath them to be approached by common people. They are worshipped by great lords on bended knee.

“The Hyacinth talks of her love for the sun ; but she gazes upon him with very little respect. I have too much self-respect to boast, but it is not modest or becoming to gaze so. I never turn towards the sun, till he bids me look upon him, but reverently veil my face till the season arrives when my seeds must ripen in his rays.

“Do you observe the silvery stripes upon the

green folds of my mantle? They are the badge of the most distinguished branch of the Crown Imperial family."

A slight noise over her head made Mary look up. It was the bending of a twig upon which the little wren had just alighted, waiting for an opportunity to finish his breakfast. Mary, who did not love to hear the sweet Hyacinths reproached for their confiding love and adoration, stole gently back to them to say that she loved them still, in spite of what their proud compatriot had said. Preoccupied with a sense of her own importance, the haughty flower did not know that the soul which loves to gaze upon the light, becomes gradually assimilated to the nature of the parent Sun.

NARCISSUS.

A BED of the many-colored Narcissus stood near, whose coroneled cups attracted the little girl. They called to her, with many voices, to come away and talk to them ; and as they waved in the morning wind, they reminded her of the song of the poet.

“ I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
I gazed and gazed, but little thought
What wealth to me the show had brought.
And oft when on my couch I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude ;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the Daffodils."

There were many others, beside the golden "Daffydowndillys," (as flower-loving old Gerard calls them,) and Mary did not know at first which spoke. There was the MILK WHITE DAFFY, with its thick cluster of pure white flowers, and Daffies with purple coronets, that came from the Swiss valleys, and must know a great deal about glaciers and snow-capped mountains, which Mary loved to hear about ; and the KING'S CHALICE, from Persia ; and the WHITE SEA DAFFODIL, which grows wild on the banks of the gulf of Venice. Mary thought this the most beautiful, with its slender pendent petals, and its long white stamens tipped with green rising gracefully in the middle ;—but it was the PRIMROSE PEERLESS which spoke.

“I have the same claim to your notice as the Hyacinth,” she said, “for I, too, was a mortal once. Great injustice has been done to Narcissus, of whom it is said that he was so in love with his own face, reflected in a fountain, that he killed himself with vexation, because that was only a shadow. I will tell you the true story. Narcissus had a sister whom he deeply loved, and with whom he hunted in the woods, and sported by the mountain streams. She died, and his only consolation was to gaze at himself in a fountain, because his face so nearly resembled hers that it seemed to recal her to his sight. But it was not herself. He could no longer hear the voice of the loved one, nor embrace her gentle form ; and when he killed himself for grief, and the nymphs of the fountain raised a funeral pile to burn his body, that they might preserve the lov-

ing ashes in an urn, they could find nothing but a flower, like this one you are looking at.

“I should like very well to look at myself in the water, but I am very happy here with my cousins the Hyacinths, for we can talk together of our beautiful homes by the Ægean Sea, where the souls of men love to linger in flowery forms after their own are destroyed by time and death. The humming bird comes to sip nectar from our cups, when he travels southward with the sun ; and the sparrows find among our flowers the insects they love to eat. We are not so much beloved as the Hyacinths are, for our fragrance deadens the thoughts of men. A Grecian poet called us the Garlands of the Infernal gods, because he thought we were a fitting crown for those who were dulled by death.”

Mary wondered if he did not know that our

thoughts are brighter than ever when our bodies are turned to dust.

“Perhaps this is a punishment we must bear for the crime of Narcissus, for he certainly was ungrateful to destroy the beautiful body which was given him to clothe his spirit. But we are consoled by the possession of a healing power in our roots, which are of great service to men. They will heal deep wounds, extract the anguish of fire, and they will even draw thorns from the flesh, and restore the fairness of a faded cheek.”

The words of the gentle Narcissus soothed Mary's spirit, which had been troubled by the tales of wrongs and discontent that she had heard in the garden. She was running away to the happy fields where the wild flowers grew, when she saw a mournful Iris trembling on its stalk.

Iris. Tulip. Uvularia.

THE IRIS.

MARY stopped, but did not approach the Iris, for her little heart was awed by its dark color and mysterious motion. Why did she tremble all the time? Not a breath of air stirred the other flowers. Did not the Sun love her? Were not her sister Irises kind? They looked gay, laughing in the sunshine, and dressed in their rainbow robes; but she stood apart,—sad, solitary, and in a mourning garb. Mary wished she knew her sad secret, but she could not ask. She was very well acquainted with the Blue Flags of the meadow, and the Flower-de-luces of

the garden ; but this stranger she had never before seen.

If Mary had been a little older, she might have felt a sympathy with the flower of the trembling heart, but her own happy one had felt only the beatings of joy. The Iris, even before she spoke, gave her an intimation of something which her own soul had not yet told her.

The flower must have seen, by the earnest look of the child's sweet eyes, that she was longing to know something of her ; though at first she thought her gayer sisters must have attracted her attention. At last she spoke.

“I came from my native land, little girl, a messenger of love, but not of happiness. I was sent to your father by an absent friend who was once as joyous as yourself ; but alas ! he is now languishing in a deep dungeon, shut out from the bright sun,

the free air, and more than all, the faces of beloved friends.

“ My native land is Austria ; where the sun shines bright, but not upon happy fields ; where the air flows fresh, but loaded with the sighs of the miserable. My former possessor,* when he was carried from his own beloved country to my unhappy one, took me from the brook side as he went into the dungeon, and sent me to his friend, an emblem of his dark fate.

“ He was good and kind, and loved little children, as well as flowers ; and was willing to spend his life in doing them good ; and in restoring his beloved country to the freedom and happiness it enjoyed before the stranger oppressed it. But the King of mine—alas, that my dear native sky should look down upon so hard a heart !—was afraid of

* An Italian exile.

good and courageous men who might seek to destroy his wicked power, and he stole away many of the best people from their beautiful Italy, and shut them up in his strong prisons.

“Perhaps you think flowers need not trouble themselves about the sorrows of men ; but we were made to minister to their happiness, and to console them when in affliction. It is our greatest delight to please those who are superior to us. We are even willing to leave the fresh air and sunshine, to go into the darkened chamber of the sick, though it shortens our lives, and we die without ripening into perfection. If I had been left to grow wild in my native fields, I might never have known any thing of human sorrow ; but I will not regret even my beloved home, since I have given the solace of sympathy to the unfortunate. I would not change places with all my sisters, whose very name

is RAINBOW, bright and beautiful as they look this sweet morning ;—for my mourning dress is the tie which binds me to the sorrowing heart. I thank the Sun for giving me the power to draw forth its pent up waters.

“If you would like to hear about the brilliant Irises that reflect all the colors of heaven and earth, I doubt not they will tell you. There is the WHITE FLEUR-DE-LIS of France—the badge of kings. She concentrates all colors, and will talk to you of regal splendors.”

As she was speaking, a bee came on his zigzag course through the air, and hovered over the variegated band of flowers. Many an Iris hoped his first visit would be to her, and each rejoiced in the gay colors she wore ; but the bee honored the stranger with his first salutation. He thrust himself gently under the leaf-like stigma, to find the

precious drops of nectar which lay hidden there. Mary was afraid he would break the Iris, but ONE wiser than Mary had taught him how to do it ; and as he cunningly visited each sweet spot, she observed that his wings were covered with yellow dust. She watched him with great anxiety, and in a few moments he flew away to other flowers, to cull sweets for his hive.

“That little bee,” said the Iris, “is a welcome visiter. If it were not for him I should have no seeds. He little knows the service he does me ; but when he comes for the drop of nectar that is in store for him, the touch of his wings bursts my anthers, and the pollen which adheres to him falls upon the stigma as he passes from one side to the other. I did not expect that he would notice the stranger, but I see that he is as loving as my own Austrian bee, and I shall now have no fears for the

future. If my own land were but as happy a one as this, I should love the blue sky better."

Mary wished that it was. She hoped she should never go to that country, where good people were put in prison. It was something she could not understand, and instead of going to the meadow, she returned thoughtfully to her mother to tell her the sad story she had heard.

THE MAY-FLOWERS.

It was May morning. Mary, like all other little girls, was up as early as the dawn began to steal over the sky, and long before the sun climbed the eastern hills. Every one who loves flowers and green fields, loves to go Maying. Even if the clouds are dark and the cold rain-drops are beginning to fall, there seems to be sunshine in the grass,—for it is May-day. The Queen of the Spring has called all her flowers, and their bright faces are gleaming from every nook.

Sometimes May mornings will be cold, but this

one was warm and beautiful. Long before the sun rose, the light vapor that had been floating in the air was turned into rose-colored and golden and purple clouds, to welcome his coming; and little islands of glorious mist were hanging in the still blue. It seemed as if the floor of the sky, as well as of the earth, was covered with flowers.

The hills and fields were sprinkled with happy children, and the tuneful air answered to the sound of their happy voices. The May-birds had all come back from their winter visits, and they were now flying from tree to tree, and singing as if their little throats would burst—for May-day had come. The peewink was building his nest among the white blossoms of the choke cherry; the cinnamon-colored thrush was hiding his among the dark leaves of the saxifrage; the bobolinks chattered from the cornels, and others, too numerous to mention, filled

the air with life and motion The butterflies were so happy in the sun's beams that they went soaring up into the air, as if they were sure the birds would not touch them. And who that saw the dragon-flies of all hues wheeling and darting about, would not have sung with the poet,—

“ Save for the Eternal thought,
Bright shape, thou hadst not been !
He from dull matter wrought
Thy purple and thy green ;
 And made thee take,
 E'en for my sake,
Thy beauty and thy sheen.”

The birds were glad that the children had come to shout for joy on the hills, and the children were glad that the birds had come home again to sing so sweetly, and that the flowers were all awake and blooming so brightly. All things were glad that May-day had come.

All the flowers wished to speak at once, and as

they called Mary from every side, she knew not which way to turn.

The pale *Uvularias* rang their yellow bells with all their might, that she might come and hear how they were related to the Lilies, and see the little tubercles inside their petals, and how their stems pierced through their leaves. It surely was not vanity that made them ring their bells so loudly, for they told Mary they had some cousins named *Grandiflora* who were handsomer than themselves.

The *Erythronium*, sometimes called the Dog's Tooth Violet, said very modestly that she too was a Lily. The bright sun that morning had made her roll her yellow and crimson petals as far back as possible. She looked as if she would have been glad to turn her eye up to him if she could. It was only in fair weather, she said, that she dared to expand so far ; she always felt afraid of clouds, and of

the dark, too, and shut herself up as tight as she could when they came. Mary could not think any thing would hurt such a pretty creature. It seemed as if darkness itself would smile to see her, standing so beautiful upon her solitary stalk, drooping her graceful head over her dark brown, lance-shaped, spotted leaves. The Pearl-bordered Fritillary, a brilliant butterfly, with glossy black and bright orange-colored wings, hovered over her, enamored.

But Mary had no more time to look at it, for a pert yellow Butter-cup called to her that she was Shakspeare's "cuckoo-bud of yellow hue," and that her real name was *Ranunculus*. She did not add that she was named from a frog, which would have been the whole truth, but said it was not true that she made butter yellow, and she wished no one would call her Butter-cup any more.

"If you should ask the cows whether they love

to eat my flowers, they will tell you no, very quickly," and here the *Ranunculus* burst out a laughing.

Mary could not think what she meant, but as soon as the flower could recover herself, she said, "when they do touch me they are well punished, for I make their mouths smart so, that they scamper about as if they were mad,"—and then all the *Ranunculuses* joined in the laugh at the thought of the poor clumsy cows running about and kicking up their heels.

Mary could not help laughing too, though she thought this very unkind; but the flowers went on to say—

"The *Anemones*, that you admire so much, are not so sweet and amiable as you think they are. They are distant relations of mine, and I know all about them. They look very pretty to you, and have very pretty pink robes, and toss their heads about as if they were mighty grand, but they are

bitter and caustic enough when you know them better. They hate the cattle as badly as I do, and poison all that bite them. I can't blame them much for that, to be sure, but you may be certain that they are pretty spiteful. And this Clematis that is running over the wall, belongs to the Ranunculaceæ family also, and the fine Peonies that grow in your garden, and those Delphiniums that people admire so much for their shades of blue, they are all alike, though they are so handsome. The leaves of some of the Clematis will make your fingers sore while you are admiring them—then every body knows how poisonous the Aconites and Hellebores are. You would not like flowers so much if you knew them better."

Here the Butter-cup paused, as if to think of some more evil to speak of her neighbors. Mary disliked all she said very much. She was disap-

pointed that the bright golden flowers were so ill-natured, and she remembered that the little Anemone in the meadow, had told her that some of her cousins were used for medicine, and that medicine must not be trifled with. She knew how good it was in God to make medicines to cure the sick, and she did not believe that he gave the flowers their bitter and caustic qualities except to do good with, though this ill-tempered *Ranunculus* tried to make her think otherwise.

She recollected all that the cruciform flowers of the turnip, the cabbage, the radish and the mustard in the kitchen garden had told her. Even they, which are so useful and good to eat, have qualities which can only be safely used for medicine, and must not be rashly meddled with. The umbelliferous flowers that are poisonous when wild, can be cultivated and made good food for man—such as the

celery. She had heard that some plants produced deadly sleep if eaten while the sap was ascending in the spring of the year, but were only pleasantly aromatic when it had been elaborated in the leaves through which the sleepy qualities passed into the air. She knew that the beautiful Gilly Flowers, Hesperides and Candytufts, were of the same family as those useful friends of the table, and yet they all possessed qualities which were not agreeable, but which God had given them to be used in the right time and place. Mary knew indeed, from all that the flowers had told her as she walked through the fields and the garden, even from the tall trees that had bent over and spoken to her as she sat beneath their shade, that not a plant grew on the beneficent earth, which was not created for the good as well as the pleasure of man. Indeed, the whole earth seemed to her to be full of God's goodness. The

birds sang to her of their happiness. The bees and the butterflies hummed and fluttered their wings in joy and gladness. The sheep gambolled on the hills. The little fish sported in the brook. The very leaves of the trees and blades of grass made music as they waved in the gay winds, that sometimes softly whispered, and sometimes loudly thundered their life and enjoyment. These thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, for all that she had ever known seemed to rise up at that moment in her memory, and speak its testimony to the goodness of God. When she grew older, and found that there were some people in the world who liked to speak ill of others, and who were ungrateful for the powers and blessings that God had bestowed upon them, she remembered that a few among all the flowers that spoke to her in her childhood, were like them, and it troubled her

Pitcher Plant. Witch Hazel. Marygold. Trillium Erectum.

loving heart to know that there could be ingratitude in such a world.

Just at that moment she saw her own brindled cow walking slowly along as if seeking something good to eat.

Before the *Ranunculuses* could laugh again, her little hands had torn them all from their grassy bed and thrown them over the fence. Mary was sorry to spoil any one's pleasure on May-day, but she could not let the innocent old cow be made unhappy.

The other flowers trembled at the fate of their companions. The *Trillium Erectum* tried to hide her gloomy blossoms of dark brown and purple under her diamond-shaped leaves, for her conscience told her she was not contributing to the pleasure of those around her. Mary, however, was too much occupied with the pain in her hands

to observe the disagreeable odor, for the spiteful *Ranunculuses* had blistered them in a moment.

Stooping to pick up her bonnet, she saw sweet little *Trillium Cernuum* bending her white corolla under her three-leaved mantle, trembling, but not with a guilty conscience. She smiled when Mary did, but she was too much agitated to speak till Mary said, "good morning." There was something in her triune form that riveted the little girl's attention, though she had never been told that this was the magic number which was fabled to find an answering chord in the fair proportions of the human soul.

"I generally live in the thicket," said *Cernuum*, "but the trees have been cut down since I was here last. My cousin *Pictum*, who lives on the mountain, can best tell you about us all; she wears a white and purple robe turned over at the edge,

and is accustomed to see people." The kind-hearted little flower did not mention the other cousin that stood by, for she would not expose to a stranger the envious heart of Erectum.

A *Convallaria Racemosa*, who had by this time quite forgotten the Butter-cups, told Mary that if she would come in the fall of the year, she might take up one of her roots and see the resemblance to Solomon's Seal which gave rise to one of her names. But Mary's curiosity was not so strong as her love for this beautiful flower, which she knew was related to the Lily of the Valley, a favorite of her own as well as of the nightingale. She told her so; and then another little cousin, encouraged by this, and whose name was *Stellata*, spoke up, and said she was named from the stars.

Multiflora, who stood under the hedge, and was still smaller than *Stellata*, and gently clasped by

each one of her leaves, as if each one loved her dearly, told Mary she was the favorite of the cinnamon-colored thrush, the sweetest songster in the woods, and that the peewinks and the bobolinks came to see her every day.

The Cowslip said her other name was *Caltha*, which was the Greek word for goblet ; and she was willing to tell such a kind little girl, that her flower-buds were as good to eat as capers, if they were gathered early enough. "It is too late now," she added, rather hurriedly. "The cows do not eat us," this she said with a shudder, "unless they are very hungry indeed. I hope they will not be so this morning. I like to impart the sweets of my goblet to that butterfly—the one with pale olive-brown wings dotted with black—for he tells me stories about many flowers. That bush by my side is the morning and evening Primrose. She

looks faded now, but she wakes before the sun, sleeps all day, and then wakes again after he has gone down at night. I wish I could see her, but I cannot wake so early in the morning, and I have tried in vain to keep my eyes open after sunset. It certainly is not the sun that withers her petals every day, for they droop quite as much when he does not shine. I wonder if she would not like to live longer,—but my friend butterfly says he can give me no information about it. He says silk-worms love Primrose leaves, and they are often gathered to be steeped in wine, which then lulls people to sleep.”

A Geranium looked very much afraid Mary would escape her, so she interrupted the Cowslip. “I am named from a Greek word signifying crane, from some resemblance of my seed-vessel to that bird’s head. I know,” said she, blushing with conscious

inferiority, “that you will be astonished to hear that I am one of that family of splendid flowers so carefully cultivated in hot-houses. But it is true. Like the children of men, our race is wonderfully improved by cultivation. I believe there are as many as sixty of my relations highly prized by all lovers of beautiful things, and their fragrance is oftentimes as delicious as their colors are variegated and brilliant. I suppose they love hot-houses as well as I do the fresh air and open sky. One would surely think so, to see how much they improve in beauty there, and in health too, for their colors are more brilliant than mine, and their leaves more vigorous, and filled with spicy odors

If you examine my stamens you will see that they are all united at the base into one tube, encircling the germ. From this circumstance, botanists call us of the *Monodelphia* class, meaning one brotherhood.

“Anemonifolium is the most distinguished of my relations; she has delicate, glossy green leaves, shaped like a fern, and large red blossoms, and lives at the Cape of Good Hope. Another is named Washingtonia.” Mary thought this ought to be the queen of flowers to be worthy of such a name, for her grand-mother had often talked to her of that good Father of her country.

But now she espied a troop of Columbines on a rock, whose dark face was gleaming with delight, as they seemed to be climbing over it on every side. Of all the flowers that came to the May, none were to her so beautiful as the Columbines. They never seemed to stand still like other flowers, but as they waved gaily in the wind, they looked as if they were running about as fast as the happy children who were snatching them from their nooks and pinna-cles. But they did not look so fresh or so beautiful

after they were torn from the rocks, and separated from the green landscape they adorned. The other children did not know why it was so, but Mary picked them up as fast as they threw them away, for she knew it broke the hearts of flowers to be plucked and then neglected.

All these Columbines were scarlet and yellow, but one of them, who said she would tell Mary her book-name if she would never call her by it, spoke of white, and blue, and purple, and rose-colored cousins who lived, some in the Swiss mountains, some among Siberian snows, and many in dear America, wherever it is cool and sunny too. "Botanists call us *Aquilegia*," she said, "because our spurs look something like an eagle's claws. They call us *Pajarillas* in Spain, which I like better, for that means *a little bird*; but those great eagles steal little birds right out of the sky, and I do not like

them. How I love to play with the wind! I wish I was down on the ground—will you put me down? What have they done to me? Oh, look at those butterflies among my dear sisters! and there is a golden Robin sipping honey from their nectaries. I saved all mine for him this morning. Do not carry me away—where is the Sun?—Oh, what is the matter with me?” And then the once happy flower fainted away, and Mary tried in vain to revive her. If she could have reached home in time, a little warm water would have restored her beauty for a while, but the thread of life had been snapped and she was quite dead. Just before she breathed her last she pressed Mary’s hand with one of her pretty fingers and whispered, “do not eat my flowers for they will poison you.” Mary determined to pluck no more, but to let them enjoy life in their own way, till their little spirits took flight as their

mother Nature meant they should do when they had quite fulfilled their destiny on earth. That destiny certainly was to *make happy*,—and what flower of the field ever gave more joy to the heart of childhood, of manhood, of golden robins, or of humming-birds, than the sweet Columbine, full of nectar and beauty? The terrible lion himself is said to be charmed into softness by her taste and perfume.

As the little girl wandered on through the “singing valley,” the modest Celandine arrested her steps, to tell her the swallow had come home, and that she was named Cheladonia, from that merry little bird. She said her roots would make a bath to sharpen the sight of Mary’s eyes, if she wanted to see any better,—sometimes the swallow rubbed his little peepers with her leaves—and that she would cure the pain in her hands which the Butter-cup had

caused. Mary could have kissed the cunning little yellow flowers peeping through the grass.

Trientalis called her now to say that she was the favorite flower of Linnæus. Mary had never heard of Linnæus, but she supposed he must be a botanist, and she did not wonder that *Trientalis* was beloved by every one who looked upon her cluster of star-like flowers as they rise from her whorl of shining leaves. It seemed as if green Nature had caught the falling snow-flakes and held them suspended there.

“I differ a little from all other flowers,” said she, “and my kind friend said I should stand in his great book all alone, distinguished by my seven stamens and pistils.* I suppose this is a great honor, but all I understand about it is, that he loved me dearly. And

* *Trientalis*, the favorite flower of Linnæus, is the only one of its class and order.

he said I was formed in the fullness of beauty, expressed by my proportions, and which attracts all souls."

And then Arethusa greeted the loving child. The hue of her petals was like the color in the warm cheeks of youth when it is animated by exercise. There was something human, too, in the tone of her voice, as if she were one of those flowers that erst were mortals.

"No," said the Arethusa, as if she read Mary's thoughts, "I was never a mortal, but first grew on the banks of a fountain that was once as lovely a being as ever trod this beautiful earth. I will tell you the origin of my name. Arethusa was a nymph of holy Elis. She was a daughter of old Ocean, and often attended the goddess Diana in the chase. One day when she was bathing in the river Alpheus, the genius of that stream fell in love with her sweetness and beauty. But the mortal maiden did not wish

Swamp Honeysuckle. Gentian. Arethusa. Trefoil.

to marry the river-god, and she fled from Alpheus, who pursued her through the valleys, till exhausted by fatigue she called on Diana for protection. The goddess heard and changed her to a fountain. Then the happy Alpheus thought to mingle his waters with hers, but Diana opened a secret passage under the earth, and Arethusa disappeared, nor rose to light again, till she had attained a distant island. The river followed under earth and sea, and rose also in the Ortygian isle, and ever after, whatever was thrown into the river of Elis, rose again in Ortygia. From that fair maiden I was named, and perhaps my voice has caught an echo of the music of hers, as she murmurs through the rocky bed of her island home."

Mary tripped on, and soon came to a bower where the grass was covered with baskets of flowers and strawberries. Wild flowers of all kinds that she had seen that morning, had been gathered to deck this

pretty bower, and they looked bright and happy together there, as if they did not know that before night they would all wither and die.

A bright form presided, whose brows were wreathed with Mountain Laurel, and as Mary gazed upon the open chalice of the flower, the slender filaments sprang from their lurking places to dash the pollen upon the expecting stigma. It was Flora, goddess of flowers, who held in her hand a crown of her own weaving, which she lightly dropped on the head of her favorite child, for Mary was to be Queen of May.

The happy Queen threw herself down, to rest for a few moments, under a tall Hawthorn that stood near the entrance of the bower.

“Are you going to die?” said the flower, and as she spoke, she showered her with white blossoms, as if she meant to cover her over. The child started

from the ground. She did not like to think of so soon leaving this beautiful world and all its flowers and birds. "What ! are you afraid to die ?" said the Hawthorn, quite surprised that she had alarmed her. "I am the emblem of Hope to some nations of the earth. I came from the shore of the Red Sea, where people live in deep caves, that are dark and gloomy ; and when their friends die, they strew branches of my flowers over them, to express their joy and hope of future happiness, for death is to them the morning of a new day that has no night, on which they shall meet to be separated no more.

"In all countries, lovers come to sit under my shade, and talk of future happiness in heaven if not on earth. And we are a favorite ornament of gardens ; but there we are not suffered to grow in our native wildness. Every projecting twig is clipped from the hedge by the hands of the gardeners, who

have a strange enmity to some flowers, while upon others they lavish a world of kindness. I once heard a French lady say ; ‘ Il faut souffrir, pour être belle ;’ which means, we must suffer if we wish to look beautiful—but I much prefer to grow in my own way.”

As Mary gazed upon the lovely tree, she saw upon it a curious little gossamer net-work of silk, and there seemed to be life beneath it. It was the pavilion of the Black-veined Hawthorn Butterfly, so called from the veins of black that streak the edges and nerves of its wings.

“ If you will lift the corner gently,” said the flower, “ you will see the pretty creatures. Is it not the cunningest house that ever was made ? When they leave this silken home, they lay their eggs upon my twigs, and cover them with a firm shining substance, that often lasts for years ;—and

then, not butterflies, but caterpillars come forth from under it, and these again change to white butterflies, streaked with black, like these you see."

As Mary returned home at the end of this happy day, she thought of all the Hawthorns had told her, about the people who lived in caves and were so glad to die, and the butterflies who lived under their silken tents, and were so glad to be alive. She had heard before of the birth of the butterfly from out the body of the sluggish, greedy caterpillar; and she thought how pleasant it would be, if she could fly out of her body and go soaring up among the birds and the clouds, far into the deep blue sky, where her little baby brother went last summer when he died.

The sun had now sunk behind the wood, and the pale yellow flowers of the Evening Primrose were bursting from their envelopes, like bright stars in

the shadowed grass. Mary almost stepped upon
one that sprang to life at her feet. Was it music
that she heard?" The Primrose sang—

“Eve is my noon—at this still hour
When softly sleeps each sister flower,
I joy to be,
And conscious feel the pale moon shower
Her light on me.”

Rhododendron. Arrow Head. Convallaria. Evening Primrose.

MAY IN THE GARDEN.

THE coming of the May made the flowers in the garden so happy, that they too must talk to the little girl, whenever they saw her.

The Rhododendron, with its rose-like flowers, told of her habitation on the mountains, six thousand feet above the sea, on the very borders of the region of perpetual snow, for hers was indeed almost the last shrub to be found so high. She belonged to the family of the Roses, and was looking forward with delight, like all the other flowers of her tribe, to the day when they should yield the palm of beauty to

the Rose herself, for June was coming. She could speak, too, of the little pink flower that grows upon the very snow itself, far up in the northern regions where no earth is seen. Its name is *Protococcus*, and it is so very small that the snow and even the ice that floats on northern seas, seems covered with rosy specks too tiny to be flowers, but sparkling in the sun like precious stones.

As Mary stood listening, she saw that many little insects that were amusing themselves with peeping into the deep pink flowers, and sunning themselves in the rays that were concentrated there, were caught fast as if glued to the spot. "These," said the *Rhododendron*, "are my prisoners. The warmth of their bodies helps to ripen my seeds."

Mary turned away from this sight, and now the *Lily of the Valley* rung her silvery-toned bells, and threw sweet perfumes at the little flower-lover, to

make her come and tell her about her cousins the Convallarias, who lived out in the fields ; and then she sighed, and said if she were at home in her own dear England, she too should be out in the fields under the majestic oaks. “ Never,” she murmured, “ shall I forget the last night I stood upon

“ The bank whereon the wild-thyme blows,
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite overcanopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.”

“ The nightingales made music from their ‘ fiery hearts ;’ the stock dove

“ Sang of love and quiet blending,
Slow to begin, but never ending.”

Titania, Queen of fairies, called all her train that evening to sport in the bright moonlight—

“ And lo !

Appeared the loyal Fays ! Some by degrees
Crept from the primrose buds that opened there,
And some from bell-shaped blossoms, like the bees,
Some from the dewy meads and rushy leas
Flew up like chafers when the rusties pass ;

Some from the rivers, others from tall trees
 Dropped like sped blossoms, silent to the grass,
 Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the antic,
 Brought Robin Good-fellow, that merry swain;
 And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,
 Came too from distance in her tiny wain,
 Fresh dropping from a cloud—some bloomy rain
 Then circling the bright moon, had washed her ear,
 And still bedewed it with a various stain;—
 Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,
 Who bears all fairy embassies afar.”*

It was in the midst of their dances that night, that old Time came and frightened them into the acorn-cups, and when he would not listen to their prayers, but threatened them with his scythe, Shakspeare, the Bard of Avon, appeared among them and defied old Time. And he promised they should live forever in the memories of men.

Mary heard the nightingale, and saw the fairies, till the silence of the “Valley Lily-bells” waked

* Thomas Hood.

her from her waking dream. She knew who Shakspeare was very well, for her mother had often read to her his beautiful stories.

The Daisies, that "starry multitude," said a poet once called them "the eye of day." When Mary told them they were very pretty, one smiled and said *bellis*, one of her names, meant pretty, and that in France they thought her so precious they called her *marguerite*, (a pearl.) This little flower was very different from all those Mary had seen; its radiant face was composed of innumerable little flowers, each perfect in itself. The little pink beauty told her she would see many such before the snow came.

Mary well remembered the lines of the poet to the Daisy :

"A hundred times by rock or bower
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension,

Some steady love, some brief delight,
 Some memory that had taken flight,
 Some chime of fancy wrong or right,
 Or stray invention.

When, smitten by the morning ray
 I see thee rise alert and gay,
 Then, cheerful flower ! my spirits play
 With kindred gladness ;
 And when at dusk, by dews opprest,
 Thou smil'st, the image of thy rest
 Hath often eased my pensive breast
 Of eareful sadness."

In the midst of her "daisy thoughts," a beautiful Anagallis told her she was the POOR MAN'S WEATHER-GLASS, for she always closed her petals when rain was coming ; and that no one who knew her needed a watch on fair days, for she opened her flowers at eight minutes past seven in the morning, and closed them at three minutes past two. My name means "to smile," said she. "Ah, I see how easy it is to make you smile, but I can make sick people laugh, if they will but take the medicine I yield. Little birds

love my seeds, but they might be happy without them where

“The pale *Stellaria* grows,
Like *Una* with her gentle grace,
Shining out in a shady place.”

Mary wondered how the Pimpernel, (for that was another of her names,) should ever have heard of *Una*, whom she very well knew in the beautiful book, for flowers could not read, but she then remembered that flowers had some magic way of knowing what the poets had written about them. She was acquainted with the Chickweed that feeds so many birds, and grows wherever any green thing can grow. She observed that the blossoms of the Pimpernel were blue in the bud, but pink when fully opened, and she remembered to have seen them in the grass that grew near the craggy rocks of the sea-shore.

Then the Marygolds spoke, and said they opened

at nine in the morning and closed their petals at three in the afternoon.

When Mary heard that different flowers opened at each hour of the day, she wished she had a Flora's clock,* it would be so much prettier to say "half past Marygold," than "half past nine."

"We love the Sun," said they, "and turn our eyes to him through all his course. We even imprison his rays, which we pour forth upon the dark night in luminous sparks. And yet we are made an emblem of painful thoughts. We are often wreathed with Poppies and sent to the afflicted, to say, 'I allay your pain.' I am sorry we represent the pain, and yet I think," said one Marygold, "that I had rather be myself than a Poppy. The conserve that is made of our flowers will cure the trem-

* A Flora's dial may be planted in the grass, or in a garden, by placing the flowers at the proper points around a large dial-plate. The engraving in this volume may serve as a model for such a dial.

bling of the heart and the dimness of the eyes, so that we can do some good, if we cannot lull the troubled mind to repose, as Poppies can. In Italy we are called 'Flor d'ogni mese,' (*flower of every month*;) we are the 'Golden Flower' of Peru, and the 'Sun-Flower' of India. In Egypt our leaves are pierced with holes; we grow there beside the Hawthorn, on the shore of the Red Sea."

But now the Lily of Solomon, the glorious Amaryllis, so filled the air with her crimson sheen, that all other flowers stood paled by her side. A drop of diamond brightness sparkled in the stigma that protruded from her tube, reflecting the splendid color of her petals. Mary expected to see it fall to the ground; but the brilliant Lily said it never fell, nor would it sink back to its cell till the precious pollen had fertilized it; but when the Sun began to decline toward the horizon, she should call back

these silent waters laden with treasure, and reserve them till another day, when they would go forth again to sparkle awhile in the sun, and to carry new existence to the germ of life below.

“That sorrowing Myrtle,” she added, “cannot talk to you now. In her native clime she grows hundreds of feet high, but she is not happy even in this sheltered place, for she is without her companion who bears the life-giving dust.* Her stigmas still look green and vigorous, and she spends day after day in vain expectation that some friendly gale will waft it from other gardens ; but thus she has lived many summers. It is sad to see how long after the usual season she waits for what will perhaps never come ; but she says, ‘ while there is life, there is hope.’ Her stigmas even grow to

* The Myrtle is of the Diœcia class. The fertile flowers are upon one plant, the barren ones upon another, and the germ is not fertilized when they are far separated.

their usual size ; the substance of the seed that is to enclose the life-giving principle is there ; the cotyledons that are to come forth to nourish it when it first rises from the ground, and even the envelope which is provided to wrap them all together ; but alas ! after she has done all her part, the embryo will be wanting. Remember, little girl, never to separate the families of flowers that were born to live together. Little do the race of men know, when they pluck myrtle sprigs to give to their friends as emblems of their constant affection, because its leaves are ever-green, what a faithful heart the flower itself bears. Do not approach her—she cannot talk to you—she is listening for the sound of some butterfly's wing that may perchance bring happy tidings of the long desired farina.

“ The homes of the *Amaryllidæ*, if you wish to

know any thing more about us, are in all regions of the earth, from the cold climes of Siberia to the very tropics, where we grow in sunny islands under skies that it is happiness enough to look upon. We are named from a beautiful maiden whom a poet sang about."

A "Painted Lady" with wings of brown, carmine and black, alighted upon the edge of the flower, which stopped talking to Mary that it might hold a little discourse in the butterfly language. They seemed to be speaking of a tortoise-shell beetle that stood under a tall handsome thistle close by, and had made a curious little umbrella of earth which he supported with his forked tail. It was ominous of a shower, they seemed to think, and they had no sooner said the words than a loud clap of thunder, followed by a deluge of rain, proved that the little beetle had discovered by his quick instinct

the coming flood, which arrived too suddenly for the rest of the party to protect themselves against it. Mary was wet through by the time she had gained the piazza ; the "Painted Lady" was dashed to the ground, her beautiful wings soiled and broken ; and before the *Amaryllis* could close her petals over the stigma, the clear drop that stood ready for the pollen was washed away, and the cold rain penetrated to the very germ. When the shower had past, she slowly opened the folds of her garment again, but on that day she mourned, with many other flowers, the lost chance of ripening any seed. The butterfly's wings could not be mended by the sun, though it shone more brilliantly than ever upon the glittering rain-drops. The beetle alone was uninjured by the tempest ; for the glutinous substance with which he joined together the particles of earth prevented their being soaked through, and the stiff leaves of

the thistle that protected him, withstood the beating of the rain.

When Mary returned to the garden at sunset, she observed that the *Gladiolus Versicolor*, the African Iris from the Cape of Good Hope, who had worn a brown dress in the morning, had quite changed her color, and was of a bright blue. As she stood gazing in wonder at this spectacle, the flower spoke to her asking mind, and smilingly said, "Ah! you have now found out my secret. I saw you this morning hunting about for the blue flower. Every night I put on my brown garb, but before the day is done, my father, the Sun, again clothes me in this sweet color which you love so dearly. If you watch me carefully through the day, you will see that it is not a sudden change. Like all other things in this great world, I improve by degrees. Many flowers change their hues in the course of their lives, but I

believe I am the only one so happy as to recover by day the splendors I lose at night."

"Remember, my child," said the little girl's mother, when Mary told her this wonderful flower-story, "that when the shadows of temptation obscure your soul, the voice of your conscience, if you will listen to it, will as surely bring back the thoughts of goodness, as the sun restores the bright blue color to the flower after the shades of night have dimmed it."

JUNE,—THE ROSES.

Is not June another word for Roses, “Aurora’s sprights?” Now all the air was perfume;—light itself was rose-colored;—birds and butterflies were happiest. The dragon-flies of all hues left the flowers in the fields to come to the garden, for even the roses of the meadow could not compare with the roses of the garden, in size, or hue, or perfume. So luxuriantly did they grow, that their very stamens turned into petals.

Roses of all climates were there, and they seemed to be as happy together, as the Tulips could have

been when they met in the court of the Persian king. Indeed, they must have been far happier, for there is no rivalry among the Roses ; they are all sweetness and love. It is true they have prickles, but their wound is not poisonous ; they only give a gentle warning that such delicate beings must not be seized upon too rudely, else their “blooming honors” will fall to the ground.

The Damask Roses, originally denizens of a fair city in the East,* but now acclimated in every land, stood in a hedge round a clear little lake in the middle of the garden. The gold-fishes had come up to sun themselves in the morning ray, and were glancing to and fro amid the reflections of their lovely protectors.

Roses of Kashmire, the most brilliant and fragrant of the Roses of the East, stood by themselves

* Damascus.

higher up, in classic vases ; and round the pedestals on which the vases stood, were planted the pale clustering roses of the tropics. The Multiflora threw its festoons of flowers over a dark rock that stood on the highest terrace of the garden, and the Eglantine mingled hers with the early honeysuckles that grew over the arbor. The climbing Rose of the Lakes shot up to the top of the wall, and blended her crimson flowers with the yellow cups that hung from all the branches of the Tulip Tree. The White Rose of Bengal grew among the Nasturtiums, "cress of the fountain." The Elysian, with her hundred petals, the Blush and the Celestial, clustered together in kindred thought. The Moss Rose and the Rose of the World, remembered together their sunny France, and a thousand nameless varieties adorned the garden from terrace to lake.

How could Mary ever listen to them all ? for all

murmured forth their welcome and vied with each other to attract her attention.

As she stood bewildered with delight, the "Enfant de France" called to her. "Have you come to be crowned?" said the lovely flower. "In my native land, a holy man once said, the most amiable, modest, discreet maiden of the village, should wear a crown of Roses, when we held our annual festival. If you will go to Salency, you will see them assembled there to-day, and happy she who gains the crown, for she must be the most beloved. Ah! well I remember the sweet Rosiere that watered my roots every day, and picked off all the insects that destroyed my buds. Will you not be my Rosiere?"

Before Mary could answer, a Damask Rose spoke from the hedge. "Can you keep a secret, little girl?" she said. "If you can, I should like to be

worn in your bosom ; for in my beautiful Greece, I was the emblem of secrecy and truth. Cupid—do you know Cupid ? he was Love itself. Cupid presented me to Harpocrates, the god of Silence, whose sculptured form stood ever with his finger on his lips, and when my flowers were suspended over the social board, all the guests spoke, in the confidence that nothing they said should be repeated elsewhere. This was talking “under the rose.” Golden semblances of us were presented to kings ; the rose-like form expressed, “may your body live forever !” the golden material, “may your soul be immortal !” And the bravest warriors of Rome engraved us on their shields, for their fame was to live long after their mortal frames had crumbled to the dust ; as our fragrance lingers round all it has touched, when every trace of our forms has faded from the eye.”

“From my flowers,” said the White Rose of Egypt, “is made more rose-water than from all the Roses in the world beside. If you will go to my country, you shall be sprinkled with it whenever you enter the houses of men. Ships are laden with it from those shores, for all parts of the world.”

“And from me,” said Centifolia, “is distilled the attar of rose that fills the little bottle which is suspended from your neck. But it took many more roses than stand round this lake to fill it—so keep it very choice.”*

“I,” said the Black Hellebore, “can bring back the wandering mind, and calm the ravings of frenzy. If you know any whose intellect has fallen from its throne, send them to me and I will cure them.”

A Blush Rose said she was much happier here than in the city where she last grew, for it was diffi-

* Two hundred pounds of roses will not make half an ounce of attar.

cult for Roses to grow where the air was filled with smoke. "But even here," she added, "I have my troubles. I wish the lady-birds would come and eat up these insects." At that moment a lady-bird, with a dark violet-colored head, that shone like a ruby, crawled up the stem of the Rose-tree. The flower was thankful to see her, but the lady-bird did not stop to catch the insects that troubled the Rose, but jumped from one branch to another as if in pursuit of something. Mary could not help thinking she was chasing a pretty yellow butterfly that was flying about among the Roses, though what she could want of her it was difficult to imagine,—when all at once the little creature, who was very large and strong, however, for a lady-bird, jumped upon the back of the unsuspecting butterfly, and bore her away into the air."*

* This is a fact.

Mary and the Roses gazed at this spectacle in silent amazement, but the lady-bird kept fast hold of her struggling prey, and carried it to her nest; and when the butterfly's wings were once broken, so that she could not fly, it would be easy for a company of lady-birds to tear her to pieces. The little girl thought she should never love lady-birds again, or say to them any more, "Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home."

Soon the Rose went on to recount her sorrows. "I have one enemy," she said, "of a hundred and fifty different species. It is the ugly saw-fly you see creeping about. I shudder at its very touch; it has pierced holes in all my twigs, and laid its eggs in each one. My buds, my beautiful buds, are all withering, and even if a few should open to the sun, they will look sickly and blighted. The froth-frog-hopper, too, injures my beauty, and that of many

other Roses ; and the caterpillars eat the underside of my leaves and the bark of my stems. When the woodpeckers come, they devour the caterpillars ; but they are not always here. That emerald-fly comes oftener than I like to see him, though he is so brilliant—but there is a chirping sparrow who will soon catch him ; and that ruby-throated humming-bird will build her nest near us, I think, for she has been flying about me for several days. She will soon have occasion to catch those naughty bugs for her young ones.”

Thus lamented the Blush Rose her many griefs. The fairest beauty is soonest marred. The delicacy of this fair Rose’s skin was like a tender conscience, aware even of the slightest taint.

Mary’s attention was now caught by a leaf-cutting bee, who was making holes in the green leaves of a Cinnamon-rose. She watched her

motions, and saw her come again and again, and with her little sharp instrument, finer and sharper than any knife that could be made with hands, cut parts of perfect circles from the leaves, till each one had lost a portion of its substance to furnish the industrious little creature with materials for its nest.

“How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,”—

thought Mary.

And now a fragrance sweeter than all she had ever breathed, drew her towards a little fountain that gushed from a natural rock, and poured its waters into the lake. Trailing vines ran over this moss-covered rock, at the foot of which stood many choice plants in marble vases.

It was the Tea-Rose that beckoned Mary on. The graceful, pendent flower, with a cheek “like the convolution of a smooth-lipped shell” called her

to say, that in this cold country she could not grow so tall or so vigorous as in the sunny south. "We wither there sooner than here, and yet I had rather live there," she sighed, "for what is life worth under foreign skies and in cold winds? I believe all I gain by the change is in fragrance. The sun does not love me so well here—he does not call forth all my sweets, and they dwell within my folds, to cheer such loving beings as you are." And Mary could not be sorry that the sun left such perfumes to the earth.

"Do not fear to gather my flowers, sweet one," said Pendulina, rose of the hanging seed, "for I have no thorns."

The Cherokee Rose begged Mary to come and hear her story.

"It is not about myself," she said, "but I have heard that the kind friends who nourished my youth

are driven from their pleasant homes far beyond the great river that pours down from the lakes of the north. I know how they loved the hunting-grounds and the graves of their fathers,—and why are they driven away? A chieftain of my country gave me to Washington, when he talked with him in the great council of his tribe. That good father of his red and white children told them, that their lands should never be taken from them. Where is he gone? Why does he not come back to take care of his oppressed children? They loved him, and they wished to live in peace with their white brethren, and were grateful to them for the useful arts they had taught them, and for the knowledge they had imparted to them. I have often heard them speak of the Being that made them and wished them to be good and happy. It was not the Sun, but a Heavenly Father, the white men said, who was

Father to the Indians too. Will that good God be pleased to have his children quarrel with one another?"

At these words the eloquent Rose fell, scattered to the ground. Her own earnestness had snapped the delicate chords of life—but the tree bore many other buds that would open, to echo the sorrow of their heart-broken sister.

Loosestrife. Lily. Buttercup. Daisy. Butterfly Weed.

THE FLOWERS OF JULY.

IN a cool day, toward the last of July, Mary walked through the pine woods and oak openings with her father and mother. The wild-roses still blossomed in the hedges, and many new summer flowers spoke their praises and their thanks to the Sun, and welcomed the little girl to their woodland retreats.

Dog days had come ; but a cool west wind had this day cleared the atmosphere of sultry vapors. Only white clouds floated far up in the blue, their shadows chasing each other over the woods mead-

ows, and hills, like happy children sporting on the grass, making the bright sunshine more bright when they passed from before the "king of day."

The yellow *Lysimachias* that grow in so many different ways among their pretty green leaves,—sometimes hanging from their peduncles in graceful clusters,—sometimes rising from the axils of the leaves on slender foot-stalks, and sometimes clustering round long spike-like branches, looked cheerfully upon her as she passed, and said they could make the restive oxen quiet and mind their ploughing.

The social *Chequer-berries* that carpeted the earth under the clumps of oak-trees, looked as purple as they could, when they told her that by and by they should have plenty of red berries for her, and that quite early in the spring their tender green leaves would taste very good. They said they sup-

posed she often tasted their flavor in the candy she bought at the shop in the village, for the old woman that made it, came every spring for a fresh supply of leaves. Mary observed that the Chequer-berry had two calyxes and two corollas on every germ, which was, she thought, quite a new thing among flowers. The Chequer-berry told her she believed it was thought quite remarkable that it took two flowers to make one berry, and she seemed much pleased to be thought remarkable ; but Mary liked her better for her sweet fragrance and taste, and her pretty flowers, than for being different from others, which was only curious, and otherwise of very little consequence.

Mary did not care to hear the story of the woolly-leaved Mulleins. They did not look delicate enough to please her, and had formerly made her feel very uncomfortable when Charley rubbed the leaves upon

her cheek "to make her rosy," as he said. But one of them spoke as she passed, to say that she had a very handsome cousin who often bore on one spike a hundred golden-hued flowers. She told her, too, that her leaves cured many pains, and that their perfume would drive away the troublesome cockroaches that sometimes ate up the carpets and flannels in her mother's house.

Mary was sorry she had been so hasty as to dislike the Mullein because she was not handsome, or even because she pricked her. She was learning every day that many things are to be valued for their good qualities, if not for beauty's sake, and that there is another kind of beauty beside that which meets the eye.

The long white bells of the *Datura Stramonium* were open. Mary thought these very handsome, and was startled to hear her mother say, "do not

Nasturtium. **Stramonium.** **Dogwood.** **Meadow Cowslip.** **Hawthorn.**

put any part of that plant to your mouth, my child, for it is very poisonous." The Stramonium said this was true, to be sure, but for medicine she was useful. Her name, she confessed, meant *mad apple*, because her fruit, when eaten carelessly, produced terrible effects upon the brain. Mary thought again that she must not judge by appearances.

Close by the Stramonium stood a tall Mustard Plant covered with yellow flowers. It was not very pretty, but the Mustard Plant knew her seeds were good to eat, and she nodded very familiarly at Mary, as much as to say, "you and I know each other very well. I can peep at you every day out of the mustard pot at dinner time."

The pretty pink-white bells of the Apocynum were open too. They told Mary they were sometimes called Dog's bane, because dogs were poisoned by them, but that the Indians were not afraid

of them, and from the stalks of one of their species could make twine, bags, fishing nets, and a sort of linen. A poor little fly who peeped into one of the bells as they were talking, was caught fast by the legs between the stiff filaments of the stamens which had sprung open and closed again at his touch, and Mary was obliged to pull the flower all to pieces before she could release the little captive. It was well she stood near just at that moment, for his struggles would soon have ended his life, or he would have left his delicate little limbs behind him. Mary had heard that when flies lose their legs others will grow out, but she was not sure it was true; and when she saw the brilliant colors of the orange-colored Butterfly-weed filled with hundreds of these unfortunate prisoners, she longed to set them all free. Most of them, however, were dead. One of these *Asclepiases* said, as if wishing to excuse herself,

that the dead bodies of the flies gave nourishment to the plant. "In Canada," she continued, "our flowers are made into sugar. The Frenchmen gather us in the early morning before the dew is dried by the sun, and from our seeds they take the cotton to make soft sleeping places at night. We are sometimes called Swallow-wort, because our seeds look like flying swallows. And can you tell me, little girl, why it is worse for us to catch flies than for men to shoot the merry swallows? They will all go away next month, and I wish they could be allowed to fly about in peace and bid us good bye quietly. I see that you do not like us very well, but I can forgive your kind heart, for I have some sweetness in mine; and that you may not be poisoned by any of the flowers you will find this warm month, I will tell you that you may generally know us by our five stamens and umbelled flower-

stalks. That Henbane which you see under the hill, is not an umbellate flower, but it also has five stamens. The pigs run from the farm-houses when they can break loose, to find its berries, which they love, but they do not often have a chance, though they can eat them with safety. One dark beetle feeds upon it, and the goats and sheep sometimes nibble it a little ; but I advise you not to touch it, though it may do you good whenever you have a cough, if you take a very little at a time. There is the 'Deadly Night Shade' too. Its five anthers adhere together in a cone-like form, and its deep corolla might attract you, but its berries are very poisonous. One of its sisters is called Bitter-sweet, because when first tasted it is bitter, and then sweet. The Potatoe and the Tomato, as well as the Datura, are of the same family. All these Solanums are somewhat poisonous, and the fruit of the Pota-

Arum. Henbane. Hemlock Mountain Laurel.

toe is very much so. The part *you* eat is the tubers that grow on subterraneous branches.

“That deep pink *Kalmia* is the Lamb-kill, but it will not hurt you. I advise you to look at it, for just at this season the little filaments which lie back in the pouches of the corolla, spring suddenly from their hiding places and dash the pollen upon the stigma. One use men make of this plant, is to pour the liquid they can extract from it upon the head of the rattle-snake, which kills him immediately. I believe the bite of this snake is very poisonous to man ; but he is a beautiful creature. I like to see him winding through the grass. Oh, you need not be afraid ; there are none in the neighborhood now.

“That tall white umbel, the plant with those delicately pinnated leaves, is the Hemlock. I presume you know it, for it grows every where. It is very useful to man as a medicine, and seems to offer

itself to him every where ready for use ; for the bruised leaves bound on the head or any other aching part, will produce relief ; but take care not to eat its bulbs, for they have often killed little children who are attracted by their nut-like appearance and their sweetness. This *Cicuta* is famous for its having composed the beverage which a wise philosopher in ancient times was ordered to drink, when he was condemned to death by bad men, for trying to teach truth. Did you ever hear of Socrates, Mary ?” Mary had not, but she thought she should ask her mother to tell her that strange story. “The Hemlock only poisons men and cows,” said Asclepias ; “in spring the cattle are often hurt by it, but as the season advances, its fragrance is so strong that they soon learn to avoid it.”

Mary did not approach any of these plants. There was something in these fearful powers of

nature that troubled her. She was grateful to the Butterfly-weed for warning her against danger, and telling her the disagreeable truths it was necessary for her to know. It would have seemed to her as if she were surrounded by evil spirits, if she had not remembered that God must have a good reason for making every thing, even if she could not understand it.

She was relieved to see her favorite Blue-eyed Grass peeping at her from between the long blades. "I am afraid you will forget your humble friends the Grasses," said the pretty little bright eye, "so I hoped you would spy me out that I might remind you of us." If all Grasses were as pretty as you are, thought Mary, there would be no danger of my forgetting them; but as she stooped to look at the little speaker, she observed that what she had always called the common Grasses, to distinguish

them from her favorites, bore very small but very pretty flowers. She wondered she never had observed them before, but Mary had yet to learn that the most common things, which are generally the most valuable, are often thought unworthy of notice, while they may in reality be quite as curiously and wonderfully made as the most rare and showy. Mary little knew that the air which she breathed every moment was a *real thing*, as truly as the houses and trees that stood encircled by it, and that it was made up of several things which could all be separated by the ingenuity of man. She thought the air was *nothing*. She was astonished indeed when she was told that if the pressure of the outward air was taken away, that which is imprisoned within her would burst forth and tear her body into ten thousand pieces. She began to think there was no end to wonders ; and as long as she lived and

the more she knew, the more this feeling of her childish years increased, for there were more wonders in God's world than she could ever learn. She was very much surprised when the Blue-eyed Grass went on to tell her that corn, wheat, rye, and oats were all Grasses ; that the sugar-cane which grows in hot climates, and from which that sweet mouthful that children love is made, was also one of the grass family ; and still more did she wonder, when she spoke of a giant Grass that grows sixty feet into the air, and forms with its waving plumes of leaves, an impenetrable and beautiful shade in those lands where the heat of the sun is so oppressive. And not only for its beauty and its shade is the Bamboo valued. Houses, furniture, bridges, masts of ships, even paper is made of its tubular stems ; and its outer coat is composed of a substance which can neither be destroyed by fire, or acids, but may

be made into glass as permanent as that made of sand.

Mary passed on and ascended another of the many hillocks that rose in her path, and then she shouted for joy, and away she ran to the brook that flowed through the meadows. What did she see? for a brook was nothing new to her. At home she had a pretty brook, as pretty as any that ever flowed, and bordered with flowers too; but this one was fringed with the scarlet spikes of the gorgeous Cardinal flower, which to Mary was all glorious. There they stood, some on the brink as if they were just going to step in, and others already in the middle of the brook, as if they were about to sail merrily away with the little gliding waves, to the ocean, or the great river. Mary's eyes were dazzled with the glory of their bright colors, flashing in the sunshine,

Dog's Tooth Violet. Dog's Bane. Cardinal Flower.

and she almost fell into the brook as she tried to gather some of them to carry home.

“Do not be afraid, pretty flower,” she said, “I will not hurt you ; but I wish to take you home and plant you in my brook, where I can see you all the time.”

“Is it as pleasant a brook as this ?” said a trembling Cardinal that Mary was already pulling from its watery bed. “Is there a pine wood close by, full of birds and squirrels ?”

“There is no pine wood by my brook,” said Mary, “but a great many elms and willows, and plenty of butterflies and squirrels, and little fishes that play all day long ; and the sun shines there and every where.”

“Then I will go with you,” said the flower, “but pull my root up gently, for my stalk is very brittle and will easily break if you are not careful.”

Mary pulled gently, and the earth was so wet that it came up easily. She gathered a few more, and then ran along by the side of the brook to look at the thousand others that rejoiced in the light, and listened to the sweet hum of the waters. What a spectacle! Mary had never seen its like, and she never forgot its glory. Years after, when she grew up and lived within the brick walls of a city, and was not so happy as now, the vision of that sparkling brook and its thousand splendid flowers, would make her forget her sorrows for a time, and be again a happy child, wandering in the gardens of nature, listening to its voice, and learning wisdom and gratitude.

Not even when the Lobelias in her hand told her they were poisonous, (perhaps they wished to be released and thought to frighten her,) was the spell, that enchanted her broken. She had forgotten that

there was any thing in the world but beauty and goodness.

The thunder began to roll from the clouds that had gathered into a deep mass, and threatened every moment to overspread the sky and descend in showers ; the bright lightning leaped up in the horizon, and Mary and her parents sought shelter in a farm-house that now appeared in sight. But Mary was not afraid. She knew who made the world, and guided the thunder and lightning, and was more powerful than they, which were his ministers to do good as truly as the gentle flowers that made no noise.

As soon as the rain ceased, the farmer took the walking party home in his wagon ; for the grass was wet, and it was a long way home by the road. The clouds still hung heavy with their burden, and all the flowers had closed their petals or bowed their

corollas under the leaves, so that it seemed to Mary, as she rode along, that they had all run away to hide themselves from the shower.

AUGUST.

As the little flower-lover walked through the meadows, in the sultry month of August, she saw that this was indeed "the spring month of the autumnal flowers," for there were more buds than blossoms, though the warmth of the sun had won many forth before their usual season. Every thing looked fresh and promising, as if preparing for the brilliant colors of autumn.

The *Hypericums* told her how the bees loved their nectar; and Mary saw the busy little creatures flit from one to the other, and fly away laden with

honey and pollen. She had often tasted their honey, and she knew they made bee-bread for their young of the pollen. Of all the little insects she knew, none seemed so wise to Mary as the bees. She had heard how industrious they were from morning till night; she had seen how ingeniously they made their cells and stored their golden honey; and then how wonderful it was, she thought, that they should always know the way home, wherever they flew. Miles and miles away from their home, however zigzag had been their flight, when ready to return they rise high in the air, and then wing their unerring way straight to the hive that is their home. It must be God who teaches them the way, thought the little girl, and if I am lost will he not take care of me too ?

The pink *Hypericum* told Mary she might easily know the flowers of her name and family, by the

many tufts of stamens that stood together in her midst; for no other wild flower in America possessed such a growth. The pellucid dots upon her leaves, too, distinguished her from many other flowers. "And the oil that is contained in these tiny specks will turn the oil in your lamps to a bright purple color; and my leaves, if dried and steeped in water, will give a bright yellow tint to your winter gowns," said the sociable little flower. "One of my names was given me in honor of a good man named St John," she went on to say, "for on his birth day men used to gather our flowers, and hang them in the windows, to keep off thunder storms. But I suppose men are wiser now, for we are no longer used to charm away thunder. Only the bees and the children love us now."

The pink and red *Spiræas* raised their pretty heads among the bushes. The leaves of some of these

were covered with down, and they said they could cure many pains. They were named *Tomentosa*. Their flowers were almost red, and they said cords could be made from the strong fibres of their stalks.

The odd-looking, but not ungraceful *Prenanthes*, was just beginning to unfold her dark pendulous flowers. "In Carolina," she said, "we are called the Lion's foot ; and the unfortunate black men who dig the ground, and who think they can find in the green nature, which is their only friend, the remedy for all ills that beset them, bruise my leaves, and boil my juices with milk, to cure the cruel bite of the rattlesnake."

The elegant *Clethra* had also opened a few of the sweet-scented flowers of her spike. Her perfume reminded Mary of the orange-flowers in the greenhouse. She rose above all the flowers of the hedge except those of the *Clematis*, which had climbed all

the trees in the neighborhood and began already to hang out its wreaths of white flowers. The very name of Clematis means a tendril, and it loves to lend its own grace and beauty to every thing around. It told Mary its germs and seeds grew on a sister plant on the other side of the meadow, and that a little gnat carried the pollen when it was ready, to scatter it over the stigmas there.

Mary saw that where the Clematis vines found no supporting trees, they clung together and rose in a beautiful pyramid toward the sky, as if they would catch hold of the very clouds, to help them rise.

“We are like many trees in one thing,” said the pretty Virgin’s-bower, for this is one of the names of the Clematis, “our stamens and pistils grow on different plants. The wind often blows the pollen of a tree to the stigmas on its sister plant, and I believe the winds are very faithful messengers, but

my little gnat does my errands very well. You sometimes see me in cities, growing upon the sides of houses, but I prefer stone walls very much. People generally separate me from my friend Glycine, too, which I do not like. Do you see how lovingly our vines entwine? and we set off each other's beauty finely. Her lance-shaped leaves and my deeply lobed ones, present a pleasing contrast. I admire her pea-shaped flowers, and she admires my feathery ones.

The Glycine said it was very cruel to separate such intimate friends. For her part she wished people would only look at flowers, and not carry one away from all the rest. They were born to live together, where the sun drew them forth from the earth, and when one was gone, the whole hedge lost its harmonious beauty. "They tear us sadly, too," she said, "when they rend us from one an-

other, for you see we are almost inseparable. My friend Clematis," she added, as the latter affectionately wound another tendril round her stalk, "is always beautiful. After all other flowers have faded, her pretty seed vessels are covered with feathery tufts. The very winds do not blow them all away till the frost comes, and then we are all glad enough to flee back into the bosom of our mother Earth, and stay there till Spring calls us.

The purple and yellow Gerardias were just opening their trumpet-shaped mouths. They told Mary they were of the same family as the pretty yellow Calceolarias that grew in the garden. They stood under shady trees, where they love best to grow, like all trumpet-shaped flowers, which catch the sun's rays in such a narrow compass, that he would wilt them too soon if not sheltered.

The Catnep, pussy's favorite plant, told Mary

that if she wished to have her grow in the garden, she must plant the seeds, for if she grew from seeds, pussy would not know her, but if she transplanted the roots, pussy would soon discover her, and would come to tear her down and roll herself in her leaves, and then eat them up.

“Perhaps you did not know before, little girl,” said the Catnep, “that many plants change a little every time their seeds are planted. If you should take the seeds of that nice pear you are eating, the tree that would grow would not bear such pears as that, but some of a different kind.”

Mary wondered if she should ever hear all the strange and curious things that were to be known. Every day she heard something new and wonderful.

The Hedysarums had put forth their purple and violet. Mary saw one flower-stalk standing alone as if it had strayed away from home, for not a leaf

was to be seen near it. It spoke and said it was the *Nudiflora*, and that it always stood at some distance from its leaf-stalk. "I belong to a large family," it went on to say, "and as you love to hear of curious things, I will tell you of my cousin *Hedysarum Gyrans*, who lives in India. You have perhaps seen the *Mimosa* move its leaves at the touch of a fly or a sudden change of wind; but my cousin *Gyrans* moves her leaves all the time without being touched by any thing. Sometimes if the sun is very hot indeed, or the wind very violent, she stands still awhile; but this is very rare. Sometimes she moves only one leaflet at a time, sometimes two, and sometimes all the three that grow together. I wish such a wonder-loving little girl as you are, could see it. It must be a strange sight; I often think of it, and wonder how it can be done, for I can only move my petals a little when I think the

rain may fall into my corolla and wash away the pollen if I do not cover it up.

“ Another curious plant of our family, and a much more useful one, is the Saint-foin. It will grow where nothing else will, even in very dry and chalky soil, because its long roots penetrate very deeply into the earth where there is always moisture. The roots of Saint-foin will sometimes strike down twenty feet into a quarry of stone. Sheep and cows love to eat its leaves. I am glad I am not an *Onobrychis*, as the botanists call these poor cousins of mine, to be penned into fields on purpose to be eaten with grass and clover.”

A pretty little sweet-smelling Trefoil that grew at the foot of the tall *Hedysarum*, seemed rather hurt that the society of clovers should not be thought respectable. She said many people gathered her flowers from love of their fragrance, and children

especially liked to hunt among them for four-leaved clovers, which was an omen of good luck when found. She did not remember ever to have seen one herself, but thought there must have been one somewhere in the world, or they would not be looked for so often. She said her name, Trefoil, meant *three leaves on one stalk*.

“We like to grow together in a large field,” she said, “where taller plants do not smother us and push us away. I think Saint-foin is a very good neighbor. She strikes her roots down so straight that they do not interfere with ours, and I suspect she is very willing to live with clovers.” Trefoil looked up at the Hedysarum as she spoke, but the purple flower held her head very stiffly and made no answer, and Mary walked on.

The heart-shaped leaves and purple spikes of the Pickerel-weed, and the arrow-shaped leaves and

snow-white racemes of the *Sagittaria* adorned the brooks. The Arrow-head told Mary her bulbs were eaten by the Chinese, and considered very good food. Mary wondered whether the fish, called the pickerel, was acquainted with the flower of that name. She thought perhaps the fish liked to eat its leaves or roots.

The pearly-headed Everlasting said she was in former times used for cotton, and that her flowers would not wither even after they had been gathered a long time. This reminded Mary of the Rose of Jericho that she saw in the museum, which was not dead, though it had been lying on the shelf a great many years, and looked quite withered, but whenever it was put into a tumbler of water, it moved and expanded as if still a living flower, though its petals were gone.

She wondered what the life was that seemed to go

away and then come back again. She wondered if it was in the water, or in the flower, or in the ground, or whether God took it away and gave it back again whenever he pleased. She thought it must be something that could never die, for she knew it lived in her little brother when he seemed to be dead and lay still in the cradle, and could not move or smile or kiss her ; for her mother told her his soul was living with God then. Yet her mother could not tell her what life was. She only told her never to hurt any thing that seemed to feel its life, for she knew not how much pain she might give. Mary asked her mother if she might not kill the ants when they crawled upon her, and the bees that stung her ; but when she heard what wonderful habitations they make and how hard they work, and what care they take of their young, and what good the ants do, by eating up those things which

would poison the air, and the bees, by making honey, she admired them so much that she thought she never should feel angry with them again, but would drive them away without destroying them.

The yellow and red Lilies kindled gorgeously in the light of the sun, whose fervent heat now drove Mary from the fields to the sheltered garden. As she passed through it, the White Lilies arrested her steps. When she looked into the open chalice, whose brilliancy dazzled her sight, and where the scarlet lady-birds lay basking in the sunshine, like coral beads on the white neck of infancy, she wondered it did not wither under such glowing rays as must fall concentrated within it; but the Lily told her that when she rolled back her petals thus, like a turban, these warm rays were reflected in many directions, and did not pour into the center, as in those flowers which remain stationary all the day,

and collect the beams into one focus of intense heat. Sometimes she curved her petals inwards to shelter the precious center from the too scorching fire.

Mary stood silent and full of awe before the stately, spotless flower, whose purity looked like goodness itself.

“Sweet child,” were the Lily’s fragrant words, “the touch of your little hand would sully my fair robe, and the dark spot would spread till all its whiteness and its elasticity had gone. And within your breast is a flower as fair as this you see. Let it be unstained. Let no blemish mar the purity of your sacred conscience, and then you also can ever gaze upward with undimmed vision. My very name is whiteness ; let yours be innocence, and we will be kindred spirits.”

The glittering humming birds poised themselves in the air, over the two beautiful beings that were

exchanging their love, and as they murmured among the lily-borders, the sweet flowers sighed for the music of their beloved nightingales, who sing to their sisters all the night long, far off in their own Isles of Japan.

AUTUMN.

IN September, Mary found the earth all gay again with flowers. The Cornel-leaved Aster, that grows in the woods, and with whom she had already made acquaintance, for she blooms earlier, told her one day, that she would see many cousins of hers this month, for this was their gala time.

And as the little girl rambled through the woods, and by the small lakes and brooks, there they were, true enough, of all colors and sizes, strewing the earth as thickly as the stars strew the sky.

Under the dark canopy of the trees, in the woods,

were many shaded blue Asters ; some with willow-shaped leaves, and others with leaves that clasp quite round the stem. The little purple-white Aster was also there, and large snowy ones with sharp pointed leaves. Others grew all together in a flat head, like a cluster of white stars in the milky way.

By the side of a lake stood white Asters that grow on an umbelled flower-stalk ; and single purple ones with smooth shining leaves.

The tall, dark purple Asters of New England, grew on long spikes by the road-side, and on the dry hills, with blue-flowered ones that contrasted oddly with their red and hairy stems.

Many others, too numerous to mention, or even to have names, sprinkled the grass and the thickets. Their star-like forms attracted the eye in every direction, and the little cornel-leafed beauty said, that

in England they continued to bloom till December, where they are called “Christmas Daisies.”

The yellow and white, and sweet-scented Golden Rods, vied with them in number and variety. They told of the oil that is secreted in the transparent cells of their leaves, and how by distillation it may be extracted for the good of man.

The Autumnal Hawk-weed, “poor Robin’s plantain,” as the country people call it, popped up its sociable face wherever the green grass grew, like the Dandelion of the spring and summer months. It said its stem was tubular like that flower, and that it bore flying seeds. Mary had heard that birds rubbed their eyes with its leaves to make them shine brighter and see better; but she thought it almost too droll to believe, particularly as the flower said nothing about it.

The blue Succory, star-like in its form, like so

many of its companions, said she was good to mix with coffee ; that the French people, who know so well what is good to eat, always put her into theirs, which is the reason French coffee is so celebrated all over the world ; and that in Egypt, men used her a great deal for food. The Succory had not a very pleasant odor, but such a beautiful color, that Mary thought she could forgive her bad breath for her blue eyes.

The numerous family of Polygonums, rose-colored, purple and white, still appeared above the ground, in many places. One said her name was the Water-pepper, because her leaves and stem taste so sharp. The Knot-grass, with little white flowers in the axil of her leaves, peeped up between the stones, and said she was willing to grow in the very streets, if her friends, the stones, were only there, lying close together. One who lived in the

very edge of the pond, said she liked to be wherever there was water ; and she did not mind if it was not very clean ; it was all the same to her. She was named the Amphibious Polygonum, because she could live in the water or out of it, if it only were pretty near, so that she could feel its moisture. The floating Polygonum spoke from the middle of the pond, and said she loved to be in the deepest waters ; for her part she did not like mud, and should not be content to live half in and half out of her beloved element, like that little dirty cousin of hers.

The next lake Mary passed in her walk, was almost hidden from view by the broad shining leaves of the beautiful Nymphæas, reposing on the surface, and spreading their corollas to the sun, whose glittering beams were reflected from the snow-white petals upon the yellow anthers that stood clustered

in the midst. A rich perfume streamed upward, and almost overpowered the sense that perceived it, and a voice came, soft and sweet, as befitted such lady-flowers.

“We are beloved by all men,” it murmured, “and gratefully we endeavor to reward that love. If you gather us, sweet little girl, be careful not to bruise our stalks, else we shall soon droop and wither, for we cannot live long without water, and the delicate veins of our tubular stems are easily crushed and broken. You see how long they are. They rise from the very bed of the lake, and how deep soever it may be, it matters not, for they are endowed with an elastic power that lengthens the stem and keeps our flowers and leaves still on the surface. The upper sides of our leaves repel the water, too, so that they cannot sink. We open our corolla at seven in the morning, and at four we turn to take

a last look at our father, the Sun, and then close our eyes that we may not see the darkness which is said to wrap the world in gloom when he is gone. May we never see that wretched day which men call night ! They say they love it, that it is like their sorrows, and that it gives them rest ; but we know no joy but in sunshine, and care not for the moon and stars even of the poets that love us best, and sing the sweetest songs to us.

“When our flowering season is past, we descend and let our germs ripen in the water. ‘Under our shade expatiates the water-spider. She encloses a bubble of air in a contexture of filaments, takes her station in the midst, and plunges to the bottom of the lake, when the air-bubble appears like a globule of quicksilver. There she is exempt from every fear. If two happen to meet who suit each other, the two globules unite into one, and the two insects

are in the same atmosphere. And what grottoes under the sea were ever so cool?"*

"In India," she continued, "we are called 'Delight of the Waters.' In Egypt, where men believe the world rose from the waters, the deities are often represented seated on a Lotus, (for such is our name there.) The Persians consecrate us to the sun, whom they worship as 'lord of the Lotus.' The Egyptians also make bread of our seeds. And when the plain of the Nile is covered with water, we are so abundant that we may well be called the 'watery world of flowers.'" Mary thought so too, when she imagined what a beautiful sight it must be. She remembered the corn and wheat fields that furnish the material for bread at home, and thought it must take many pond-lilies to make enough for all the people, if all the seeds were

* Bernardin St. Pierre.

Vallisneria.

contained in the round germ that stood in the midst of the flower.

The Pond-lily then told her of the *Vallisneria Spiralis*, which grows in Italy, and has two sets of flowers. The long cork-screw stalks rise to the top of the water where the calyx of the fertile flowers expands in the open air. Many more rise soon after, on long, straight stems, looking like white bubbles, and suddenly burst when they reach the surface, and float about it in such abundance as to cover it entirely, scattering their pollen over the stigmas of the other blossoms. Then these stalks resume their spiral form, and descending, ripen their fruit at the bottom of the water.

She told, too, of the *Fucus Giganticus*, that rises three hundred feet from the bed of the lakes, bearing on its stem vesicles of air, that retain it in its erect posture, and supporting leaves on the surface

twelve feet in length, covering it like a carpet. "But other flowers call you," said she; "I will detain you only to say, that sparrows love our seeds."

Mary wished she would tell how the sparrows got them out of the water, but the Pond-lily spoke no more.

Long did the little girl linger around this charmed spot. The flowers were just far enough from her to be inaccessible, yet she could see them and inhale their sweets, and was never tired of gazing at their wonderful beauty.

The bud-like Gentians grew on the edges of the lake, and farther on, in drier places, stood many of the fringed ones.

A few yellow Gerardias, which still remained, formed a pleasing contrast with the deep purple Gentians, who told Mary that their virtue was first discovered by Gentius, a king of Illyria, from whom

they were named. They could be made into good beer, and their large roots were used for medicine. The Gerardias said they too were useful to man, and that they were named from a dear old gentleman, who many, many long years ago, had a garden full of flowers of all sorts, whose lives he had written in a great book, which was full of pictures, and they thought their pictures must be there, since they were named from him.

But the beautiful day was drawing to its close, and Mary returned with her mother, to close her eyes as the Pond-lilies closed theirs, till another day. As they returned through the meadow and opened the little garden gate, a sweet-scented Clover that stood near it was entangled in the hinge. The pressure of the leaves drew forth all its sweets, and Mary gathered a sprig to wear in her bosom, and then store it away in her favorite drawer, among her pret-

tiest playthings. The more delicate and still richer perfume of the Sweet Scented Pea, arrested her steps, tired as she was. Its pink and white blossoms still lingered among the seed-vessels that had already begun to ripen for another year. Mary gathered a few, and as the little round balls laid in her hand, the bannered flower told her many strange things.

“This pod that I bear,” she said, “is the type of many plants that are useful to man. And see how carefully it is preserved from injury. This banner protects my germ from every wind that blows, for I can turn my flower-stalk which way I choose, it is made so light and flexible. Behind my banner, I fold my wings over the boat-shaped leaf that covers the pod, and within that my seeds are protected from every accident. Often as you have listened to the stories of flowers, you have never heard, little girl,

the wonders I can tell you of this most wonderful part. To the preservation of seeds, all nature ministers. In their manifold varieties are contained the chief nourishment of the race of man. For this use we are made ; and the winds blow, the rain falls, the sun shines, to draw forth from the bosom of the earth the flowers and fruits that will give him pleasure and help him to live. My family is among the first in the scale of importance, though my seeds are small, compared with most of my kindred. But look at that rosy peach. To form that, the leaves evolved, and the pretty flower blossomed. When it had caught in its rose-formed corolla all the rays of the sun that it could, the petals fell to the ground, and the seed swelled to its present size, protected by that soft and juicy pulp which all little girls love so dearly."

A poet says, answered little Mary,

“ Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and tranquilly eat.”

“The Nut-tree that stands near it,” the Pea went on to say, “loves best to grow by the running streams. We know this by its seeds, which are formed of two little skiffs closely joined, so that whichever way it turns it can float on the waters. My friend Nasturtium, too, longs for the waters of her native clime. Do you see her boat-shaped seeds that fall to the ground in this pretty garden? They were destined to skim the waves a little while and then find a resting place on their brink. But we *can* grow wherever we are. We love some spots better than others, but wherever there is soil to cover us; and skies to water us, we can adapt ourselves to a change. Man travels far and wide on this large globe, and he can take us with him

and plant us wherever he chooses. Some little change in the form of our leaves will remedy the evils to which we are subject in being torn from our native lands. But though we can do our appointed task, and bring forth the seeds that nourish, it is true that we are happier and more vigorous at home, in our native soil, and among the friends of our childhood, than when transported over seas and mountains. No sky is so fair as our own, no breezes so grateful, no sun so bright. But it is also true that there are many plants whose country is the world. Their winged seeds gaily float on the breezes and the tempests, and it is their joy to make the 'desert blossom as the rose,' and clothe the mountain tops with verdure. When the little coral builders have raised their grottoes in mid-ocean so high that the waves can no longer cover them, the birds of the air, or the winds of heaven,

waft them there, and soon the desert rock is a garden or a forest.

“See that Milk-weed just rising from its capsule and floating away to other regions. No ship sails more surely on the wind. The Gilly Flower that looks so brilliant in that circle of blossoms, can thrust her scaly seeds into the smallest chink of a wall and grow there quite happily, giving men lessons of wisdom and faith that prouder means sometimes fail to teach. The pretty Balsamines throw their seeds far and wide by the sudden bursting of their elastic envelopes.

“In those lands where the sun is hottest, and violent tempests rend the sky and scatter the fruits of the earth, seeds are often protected in large cups filled with moisture. The cocoa-nuts that grow in those climes, are shielded by hard walls which neither the beasts of the forest nor the birds of the

air can pilfer from man, their master. And there is a fruit in an island of the East, so delicious, that the wildest monkey of the woods will come to man for assistance to break its shell, when he sees him sipping the luscious morsel.

“Your sugared melons and sweet pumpkins, too, are the homes of precious seeds. That graceful elm that throws its branches over the wall, could alone furnish seeds enough to cover with trees this and many other worlds. They fly far away—neither mountains nor oceans stop them—and fall in clouds that obscure the sun, on distant regions of the globe. And if seeds slumber hundreds of years, the light and heat of the sun will revive them, and make them as vigorous as ever. We find it hard to die. Can you live so long, little daughter of man?”

“Oh yes,” said Mary, and she thought of Him who said, “If God so clothe the grass of the field,

which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the fire, how much more will he clothe *you*, O ye of little faith !” and the life of nature in the flowers quickened her sense of immortality, from that hour.

THE LEAF.

IN the brilliant month of October, when the pleasant green tints of the grass and foliage, so agreeable to the eye during the heat of summer, were changed into the gorgeous colors that precede the falling of the leaf, Mary went to the beautiful pond with her mother, who seemed to feel quite sad to see the withered leaves strew the bank and the footpath under it.

Mary's little heart was full of hope. She was not reminded, like her mother, by the falling of the leaves, of many friends who had fallen from the

tree of life ; and wondered why she too was not glad to see every thing so brilliant, and to chase the dry leaves, as the wind drove them before her. Would not spring come again, and with it many more leaves? Therefore the wind that sighed through the rustling foliage, and made a melancholy sound to the ear of one whose many sorrows lent it a tone of sadness, was music to the little child, who saw only the beauties of every season, and could perceive no resemblance between faded leaves and withered hopes.

A maple leaf that hung on a low branch, and was tinged with scarlet and yellow, bright as ever were seen in flowers themselves, came off into her hand on the slightest touch, for she did not pull it.

“ I should have fallen to the ground in a few hours if you had not plucked me from the bough,” said the leaf in answer to the surprised look in Mary’s

face, "for I have fulfilled the purpose of my being, and am ready to give place to the new buds that have imbibed the principle of life which once animated me. If you wish to know the history of a leaf, I will employ the little breath I have left to tell you many wonderful things."

"You will be astonished indeed, little girl, when I tell you, that this great tree was once contained within the folds of a leaf not so large as myself; but it is true, and it is true too, that many thousands and millions of leaves, each capable of becoming a whole tree, have lived and fed upon this maple, once a leaf itself."

"When the seed of this great tree first fell upon the ground, a pelting shower drove it down beneath the soil; and then the sun shone warmly upon it, and the life that had long remained hidden within it began to have motion and vigor. It was wrapped

in a small leaf which never expanded into such a form as mine, but remained the protector of that precious embryo, till it had sufficient strength to put forth roots into the soil, and to throw up other leaves into the air. Then it withered, and the roots drew in food from the earth, which circulated upward to the leaves that were fanned by the air.

“ And when the sap had parted with some of its moisture, through the pores of the young leaves, that which was left, descended again to enrich the plant, and give it strength to put forth new ones. Wherever the descending liquid, now thick and nourishing, stopped in the joints of the stem and leaves, new buds were formed, part of which turned into stems, till gradually the tree grew to this great height. Every spring, when the warm days come, the roots, which then have many fibres, each with an opening in the end, receive the sap which rushes

upward through the branches in a torrent, restoring life and motion to every leaf-bud which has reposed quietly in its bed in the twig, since the approach of cold weather. If any one should be so cruel as to cut off a large branch at that season, the current of sap would pour forth in a stream ; and the tree would bleed to death in a few days, if the wound were not carefully stanchd.

“ Beautiful was the day when I woke into being. Many leaves in which I was wrapped, had perished with the cold ; some had been converted into thick varnish, to protect the others ; some had been nipped by the weather and become mere scales which sheltered their younger sisters from the winds and frosts. Till that day, there had been nothing but disappointment and mourning among the early buds, and all was said to have looked gloomy and unpromising. But on that sunny morning when the south-west

wind breathed balmily upon us, and the warm sap poured upward into every branch and twig, thousands of us burst our envelopes and shed light and perfume upon the air.

“The beeches were the most fragrant of our woodland company, and their delicate pink tints made the atmosphere look rose-colored far and near. But there was no rivalry among us. We all rejoiced together in our new-found existence, and the children of men walked on the turf below gazing upward to our promise with faces of hope and joy.

“And happy has been my long summer life, for no insects have fed upon my juices, and no rude hand has torn me from the bough. After I first unfolded, a few cold days threatened to freeze the vital current in my veins ; but the fresh tide that flowed into them every moment from the warm earth, resisted the nipping winds, and when at last I became vigorous

and deeply green, I was not afraid even of storms. If dust choked the passages of the air-vessels on my surface, a soft shower, or perhaps a hard one, washed them clear again. I could always breathe freely, and you see there are no blemishes upon me, and no accident ever marred my growth. I have seen many friends flourish around me ; I have waved over this pretty lake all summer ; the birds have sported through these branches ; the butterflies have flitted round me with their bright colors, but happily have laid no eggs near me, so that the warmth of my life has given birth to no caterpillars or canker worms, which I see daily destroying and destroyed around me. I have seen many unfortunate leaves torn from their birth place, because ravaged by the worm.

“ I am a mountaineer. You may know it by the winged seeds I bear. You might know it by my channeled leaf-stalks if I were not growing by this

lake, but they are hardly to be seen here ; the channels disappear when no longer needed. They would be quite large if I stood higher, where my roots could not easily find moisture ; for in them I could catch water from the skies and the atmosphere, to supply my needs. From these little canals it would flow into similar ones on the twigs, and the very bark of our trunks is furrowed to carry the water to our roots. When the trees of the lowlands and river sides go to live on the mountains, they assume such shapes, or they would perish with thirst. The very reeds and rushes which, you see, are round as they stand by the lake, have concave sides when they travel to the hills.

“Do you see those little mushrooms that have started up since the morning ? They are made to catch the exhalations from the ground. ‘Not a

vapor in the universe is lost,"* little girl. Look at their tiles of leaves lying so thickly together, and filled with moisture. Their umbrella-shaped canopy shades the earth beneath them from the sun, and they catch every vapor as it rises. Some of them are lined with pipes and sponges which catch and retain the dews.

"On the top of that high rock, you will find cup-shaped leaves. The plants of the tropics are more striking still. The traveller in those hot and sunny regions finds many a goblet of cool water in the reservoirs of the plants. In the season when no rain falls, they extract it from the atmosphere by the attraction of their sharp pointed leaves.

"Now observe the little Heart-wort that grows in that marshy dell. It holds water in its two shell-shaped leaflets, but that is not for its own draught.

* Bernardin St. Pierre.

It is to supply a little bird that daily visits it; and if he chances not to come, it is emptied to the ground through the channel that extends to the point of the leaf. I do not know who drinks the water the thistle holds ready in her leaves. The little birds and butterflies pass it by as if it were not good, and it flows off when too full, from the declivity of the leaf. Those birches, too, that hang over the water and find food enough from below, throw it off from their branches as fast as it collects. You can hardly wet the leaves of that Lady-fern if you try. It does not love water, but if it wished to grow on the hills, it could have an aqueduct on its stalk and catch water from the skies. See how dry and shiny that Mountain Laurel is. Her leaves repel the thunder as well as the showers.

“The bulbs of the Red Lilies, whose leaves stand clustered so thickly by the water’s edge, are them-

selves leaves in another form, and each one can become a separate plant with the help of due moisture and heat. Indeed, I know one leaf, the very notches of whose edge will throw out roots, if planted in the earth, thus defying all assistance from the seed. I know not how to account for the strange fact, but there are a few plants that have no foliage. The little Dodder that plunges its roots into the stems of others, around which it twines, you very well know. To my eye it is not so beautiful as it might be. But the Night-blooming Cereus, whose splendid flowers open just as our father, the Sun, sinks away from our sight,—did she never see him, do you think?—has a dry and naked stalk, from which it seems impossible that such a glory can spring. She blooms for the stars and the moon. And the nightingales love her, and man forsakes slumbers to watch the end like the beginning of

her beauty, for before the Sun rises again, all that life has fled, and he is denied the happiness of seeing his loveliest child. His warmth vivifies her; his beams draw her from the dark earth; why does she not show herself to him? When you gaze into her deep chalice, his very rays seem to be imprisoned there. Light and motion that vie with the brilliancy of his golden sunset skies, dwell below and pour their radiance upon the darkness. Yet he beholds her not. Can it be that the light is not his? Is there any other source of light?"

"It must be God's light," said Mary.

"Is God your Sun?" said the Leaf.

Mary did not answer, for she was thinking deeply, and the Leaf went on.

"Look at that Wild Rose-bush by your side. You saw it in its early beauty covered with flowers. It is now ornamented by the crimson seed-vessel.

That is a Leaf in another form. The remains of stamens left on the summit of that red ball, are also leaves in their secret nature, and certain circumstances of light and heat might have changed them all into petals, which are also leaves though not generally green. If that Rose-tree were transplanted into a richer soil, in the course of time the flower would become double, like the Roses of the gardens, by the transformation of these slender filaments. And then they would not wither so soon, for they could inhale more air by their multiplied petals. The very thorns were leaf-buds in their origin, as were also the tendrils of the vine that is supported by them.

“The cones of that Pine are formed of many leaves, between which are deposited the seeds. They have become quite hard like wood, and are short and oval, instead of long and slender, like its

other leaves. That, too, is a mountain tree, and so abundantly does its peneiled form attract moisture from the clouds, that some islands of the ocean are wholly watered by the streams that pour from its pyramidal groves. Behold how green and rich it looks ! Its leaves do not fall till spring, when the new ones are already grown to take their places. Men love the evergreens because they adorn their winter landscapes, and murmur still of woods and zephyrs, when all else is bound in icy chains.

“But *I* cannot live through the winter months. When the earthy particles, brought from the ground in the sap, have accumulated in my petiole and impeded the passage of water and air, activity ceases with the loss of that living flow, and I with my sisters fall gently to the ground, to be swept before the blasts of autumn, till at last we crumble to dust, or are crushed beneath the foot of man. I dread

the cutting frosts of winter, and am grateful that I need not live to encounter them. I have enjoyed a long and verdant summer, and the sharp frosts that change my green tint into the bright hues that seem to dazzle your blue eyes, warn me that my end is approaching. I die content. I have breathed forth those qualities of air which are beneficial to the atmosphere; I have inhaled those which would injure such delicate lungs as yours, and I have prepared the way for the ripening of the all important seed that is to perpetuate my race.

“And such is my destiny, to do good and give pleasure to man, for whose growth in love and wisdom this sweet world is made. I sometimes hear him complain as he walks by these plashing waters, but I understand not his sorrows. When he tells them that the waves of his spirit are sometimes lashed into storms like theirs, they bid him not be

troubled, for they are never so transparent, as in the calm that succeeds the tempest ; they tell him that the same waters which now reflect the clear sky and the overhanging trees, with the sunlight that shines through them, were a few days before foaming with the rage into which they were lashed by contending winds, and that he may, like them, be purified by agitation. But he replies to them, there is that within his soul which neither ocean nor its waves can parallel ; that he has infinite wants which this world cannot satisfy. Often we can soothe him, but sometimes we seem only to exasperate his woes. Is it the wintry storms of life, which we happily escape, that makes him differ from us ? or is this not his home, and does he raise his eyes to heaven because there alone is true happiness ?”

“Happiness must be there,” said Mary, thought-

fully, "for my mother expects to find my little brother there."

The Leaf was silent. It knew nothing of another world. The life that animates the trees and flowers is divine, for it is the gift of God ; but they know it not. They look up to the Sun, and call him their Father. And their existence is as brief as it is beautiful. When they speak to us, they tell us of many wonders, and of marvellous beauty, but they themselves know not that beauty can never die, and that when lost to sight, it lives in the soul, which never forgets what it has learned.

Mary saw that the flowers were made happy by this world, and that her dear mother was not ; but her mother told her she would not change places with the flowers, for they could not live forever or learn wisdom ; but she should be happy by and by, if she were good.

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2. Harebell.	<i>Scilla nonscripta.</i>	Hexandria Monogynia,	<i>Asphodeleæ.</i>
3. Bindweed.	<i>Convolvulus sepium.</i>	Pentandria Monogynia.	<i>Convolvulaceæ.</i>
4. Goat's Beard.	<i>Tragopogon pratensis.</i>	Syngenesia Æqualis.	<i>Compositæ.</i>
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	Genus and Species.	Class and Order.	Natural Family
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Marygold.	<i>Calendula viscosa.</i>	Syngenesia Necessaria.	<i>Compositæ.</i>
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Henbane.	<i>Hyosciamus niger.</i>	Pentandria Monogynia.	<i>Solanææ.</i>
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Dog's tooth violet.	{ <i>Erythronium americanum.</i>	Hexandria Monogynia.	<i>Liliaceæ.</i>
Dog's bane.	{ <i>Apocynum androsæmifolium</i>	Pentandria Digynia.	<i>Apocynææ.</i>
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