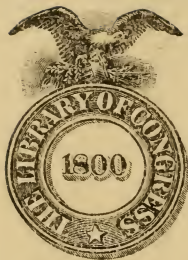


A TREASURY OF FLOWER STORIES





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A TREASURY OF FLOWER STORIES

BY

Miss INEZ N. McFEE

Author of "Girl Heroines in Fiction," "Boys
and Girls of Many Lands," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

ONCE upon a time a great poet, walking down along the margin of a bay, saw before him "ten thousand daffodils" tossing their heads in a sprightly dance, which fairly outdid the sparkling waves in glee. And so pleasant was their golden host that ever afterward as the poet treasured them in his memory his heart danced with the daffodils, and at length he wove them into a beautiful poem and gave to the world a picture which will last for aye.

Just so have other flowers whispered to their friends and lovers the most wondrous stories and marvelous fables, until, to-day, it has been possible for the author to gather this TREASURY OF FLOWERS. And surely no more interesting or delightful treasury could be found anywhere! Straight from the Fairyland of Fancy come the myths and fables, sandwiched in with all sorts of flower-lore, dependable information, and the doings of fairies, genii, and pixies.

There is the story of the discontented golden-

PREFACE

rod and the tale of how the goldenrod and the aster came to be; we learn the legend of the narcissus, the iris, and of that dear little flower which the good Father created last, and whispered low, "Forget-me-not"; there are stories of such friends as the gentians, the bluebell, the water lily, hepatica, anemone, hyacinth, flower-de-luce, and the furry little pussy willows. We meet the glorious cardinal flower, Lady Columbine, and sweet My Lady Clover. Then there are the tales of "The Proud Poppy and the Little Blue Cornflower," and the "South Wind and the Dandelion"; we are told why the flowers only bloom half the year, and about the pixies and the tulips, and the wondrous hundred-petaled Christmas rose, which carried health and happiness to a little girl high up among the snow-capped peaks of Switzerland; and so on and on until the treasury becomes a mine of richness, and the young reader comes back from the Fairyland of Flowers only when the end of the volume is reached.

A TREASURY OF FLOWER STORIES

THE LINE OF LIGHT AND WHAT IT BROUGHT

LONG, long ago, when the world was first new, two dear little sisters, Avilla and Arlie, dwelt on the long bright slope of a mountain, where the sun always shone warmly and the birds sang their happiest; but alas! Arlie could only feel and hear these blessings, she could not see, for she had been born blind. Poor child! Poor little sister! Avilla felt very bad about it, and she questioned every one she saw, striving to find some way to help Arlie. It was so sad not to be able to see the many beauties which she herself so dearly loved!

Finally, one day, a stranger told her of a wise old woman who lived in a cave many miles away. "She knows many secrets," he said, "and I've no doubt but that she may know of some way to make the blind see."

"I shall go to her at once," said Avilla hopefully, and though the way was long, the happy thoughts in her heart made the time pass quickly, and she scarcely gave any heed to the weary miles or the burning heat of the sun, "Oh, joy," she kept saying, over and over, "if Arlie can only see!"

By and by she came to the dark cave where the wise woman was said to live, but there were no signs of her, and Avilla paused a moment, hesitatingly. It was such a black, gloomy place! Suppose after all no one lived there! It looked desolate enough, a fit home for bats and owls and sleeping bears. Avilla stepped close and peered in. Nothing but silence and darkness met her gaze, and most little girls would have turned and got away as speedily as possible.

But not so Avilla: "Oh, joy," murmured her kind little heart, once more repeating its sing-song, "If Arlie can only see!" And into the black hole she went determined to do her best for her little blind sister.

Not a hand's breadth could she see before her, and ere she had gone ten feet something cold and flappy struck her full in the face. But Avilla did not cry out. She knew it was only a poor blind bat, and the helpless, frightened

thing suggested her own object more deeply than ever: "Oh, joy," she said aloud, "if Arlie can only see!"

"Eh?" said a voice, not unkindly, and a curtain lifted a little ways from the child, showing a bent old woman peering at her from her loom, close beside a little blazing bunch of faggots. "Eh, little one, what is that you say?"

"Oh, joy," stammered Avilla again, too surprised and dazed to jolt easily from her oft-repeated lines, "if Arlie can only see?"

"Aye, indeed! Why shouldn't she see?" the old dame queried briskly.

"She can," returned Avilla, trustingly, "if you will only open her eyes. She is blind, you know; born blind. Please tell me how to cure her!"

"Precious little good it would do, if I did!" cackled the old crone, shrilly now. "It would be no small task, and people don't usually trouble themselves for the blind."

"If you please," begged Avilla, earnestly, "I should. I love my little sister dearly, and there is nothing I would not do to open her eyes. Nothing! 'Oh, joy, if Arlie can only see!"

A moment the old woman stared at the child, as though weighing her carefully. Then she

stooped, and picking up a very long thread, handed it to Avilla, saying: "Here, take this; drag it all around the world, and when you get back, come here to me, and I will show you how your blind sister may be cured."

Gladly indeed Avilla set out. It was a long, long thread and she needed to exercise no little care to keep it trailing after her without catching and breaking. But she managed it blithely and with never a frown, because of the little singing refrain in her heart: "Oh, joy, if Arlie can only see, what happy, happy times we shall have together!"

By and by her way led her to a great bleak forest, and for a moment the child's courage faltered: "I can never go in there alone," she murmured; "it is sure to be full of all sorts of horrible creatures."

"Look at the thread! Look at the thread!" whispered a cooling little zephyr, playing against her cheek.

Avilla turned, and looking back lo! instead of the bit of dull gray flax, there trailed after her a long golden line of light that seemed to point far back. And more marvelous than all, wherever the line of gold flecked a blade of grass behold straightway there bloomed a flower,

THE LINE OF LIGHT AND WHAT IT BROUGHT

and no two blossoms seemed alike! "How beautiful!" cried Avilla, and she hurried on at once, pausing every now and then to glance back, and always and anon in the wake of the golden line blossomed a little flowery pathway, which gladdened her heart anew, and lent speed to her flight.

Thus, though the forest was deep and long, Avilla did not mind. "What happiness these beautiful woodland blossoms will be to all who pass this way!" she cried, joyously.

After a time she came safely out into the bright sunshine again, and here she presently found herself face to face with a new difficulty. Before her and on every side as far as eye could reach stretched a low, swampy marsh. But Avilla did not pause. "I must go on!" she told herself stoutly, and the thought of her little sister made her brave. So she stepped courageously off across the mire, with the long golden thread trailing after her.

And, strange to relate, she did not sink in: instead the way seemed to dry before her, and in the wake of the gleaming thread rose clump after clump of beautiful golden flowers—marsh marigolds, people call them to-day. While Avilla, as she looked back, cried out delight-

edly, "How lovely! This will help others to cross!"

Nor did she find the way tedious, though the marsh was miles and miles in extent. "Oh, joy, if only Arlie can see!" welled from her heart, every once in a while, in a little carol of song. She felt sure now, sure of success! For was it not a magic line she was leading? There could be no doubt of the old dame's power.

Presently, however, her mettle was tried to the very utmost. She reached a burning desert. No flowers could spring up here to gladden her heart; even the line of golden light must parch and shrivel unless she sped quickly. So with flying feet she hurried onward, following a little group of gay yellow butterflies, which seemed to spring from nowhere for her guidance; nor paused to look behind, until just as the sun disappeared behind a crimson cloud, and the end of the desert was reached, when lo! what a sight met her gaze! In the path of light which marked her trail, tall palms had sprung up magically, and each grain of sand the golden thread had touched now sparkled as a diamond, an emerald, a ruby, or some other precious stone. It was beautiful indeed, like a scene from Fairyland, as in truth it was, and Avilla was

fain to rest there through the night. It seemed to her that she could hear the birds singing in the palms, long after the stars had come out on guard, and her dreams were happy indeed.

The next morning she was up and off betimes, with the golden thread blossoming in wondrous hues behind her as she journeyed. After a time she reached a great mountain. "Oh, dear, how shall I ever go up over it?" queried the child, in dismay. Just then two strong eagles rose with outspread wings from their nest on a cliff-side nearby and soared majestically and slowly aloft. A moment Avilla's eyes followed them wonderingly. "They do it just by being brave and strong," she murmured, "so can I!" And so she followed after, climbing on and on, and always managing to keep the soaring eagles in sight. As she neared the top she looked back and saw that the sharp, broken rocky mountain side had changed into a beautiful mossy, flowery-starred pathway! And, again, Avilla rejoiced that she had made the way clear and bright for others! What mattered all her rugged climb with this thought to cheer and gladden her!

Moreover, as she turned to go down the slope on the other side, what was her delight to find that it was the very mountain wherein the old

wise woman lived deep in her hidden cave! Avilla's journey was all but done; she had made a golden trail of light and blossoms around the earth! Gleefully she ran downward, and burst in upon the old crone, crying happily:

"Here I am! Here I am! I have done all you told me to do! Will Arlie see?"

"At last! At last!" cried the old dame, jumping up from her flax to seize the golden thread, "Bless you, my child, I am free! I am free!"

And then before Avilla's wondering eyes the exultant old woman changed on the instant into a beautiful princess, with long golden hair and tender blue eyes, her face radiant with joy, and this is the story she told Avilla: "I was a king's daughter, but I was so selfish and idle that I never thought of the happiness of others. The fairies obliged me to live in this cave, until I could find some one who would be generous and brave enough to take the long dangerous journey around the world for the sake of others. I have waited and waited a long time. Now I can be happy again. Your line of light—love, and the beautiful bloom it has left in its path,—has freed me and you may be sure I will gladly help you. When you reach home you will find a happy little sister with wide open eyes."

THE LINE OF LIGHT AND WHAT IT BROUGHT

And so it was.

Next morning it would have been difficult to say which was the happier, Arlie or Avilla, as the two went hunting all down along the path for the many gay and wondrous blossoms which no one in all the world had before seen!

There grew a little flower once,
That blossomed in a day,
And some said that it would ever bloom,
And some said 't would fade away;
And some said it was Happiness,
And some said it was Spring;
And some said it was Grief and Tears,
And many such a thing;
But still the little flower bloomed,
And still it lived and throve,
And men do call it "Summer Growth,"
But angels call it "Love!"

—*Tom Hood.*

A STORY OF THE GOLDEN-ROD

A DISCONTENTED golden-rod bloomed in a sunny sheltered place one day in November. "Ah, me," she grumbled, "why am I here? My friends are all dead and gone, and I am so lonely and weary. Not a soul has passed this way for a whole week!"

"'Tsheveet, 'tshevee," called a gay musical voice, and a bright little goldfinch soared down in his funny, waving fashion. "Well, my dear," he cried, "I am so glad to see you here. Your face is the only bit of brightness in this gloomy world this morning. 'Tsheveet, 'tshevee, may be, may be. O, yes, I sing whether the sun shines or not, and try to be happy, but sometimes it is up-hill work! In the spring and summer my bright golden coat is an inspiration when all else fails, but there is nothing to be got out of this dull affair which nature compels me to wear in the winter time. However, I suppose she knows best,—and say, what a jolly, sunny place this is! Seeds, seeds, everywhere! I must bring my wife and children. Hush! Look

A STORY OF THE GOLDEN-ROD

your prettiest! Here comes a charming lady and a sweet little girl. I dare say you will get the release for which you have been longing. Good-by!" And the goldfinch floated away in his best waving, dipping fashion.

"Oh, mamma," cried the little girl, "see! there is a dear little goldfinch! How odd he looks in his dull winter coat. I should never have known him, but for his funny flight."

Then she caught sight of the smiling golden-rod. "Oh, mother, look! Here is some golden-rod! I am so glad! I believe this little bit bloomed late just to make our home-coming the brighter! Come here to me, you precious. I shall carry you to my room, for you would soon fade away and die here." So saying she plucked the lovely sprays and fastened them in her jacket.

"Come, mother, let us rest for awhile on this sunny rock. Don't you know some pretty tale about the golden-rod? This is as bright and shining as a fairy's wand!"

"Fairy's wands are mostly silver," smiled the mother, seating herself obligingly. "There is, however, a species of the flower called the silver-rod that might well serve the fairies. It is the only white or silverish member of the family.

All the others, and there are some eighty species or more, are yellow. There is a legend concerning the golden-rod that is most interesting.

“It seems that once upon a time a certain cross old woman dwelt alone upon the mountain top. For her, the sky was never blue, the bright sun shone only to scorch her garden, and she turned a deaf ear to the beautiful songs of the birds. Having lived so much alone, without interest in her beautiful surroundings, she grew to think of nothing but herself and her own sorrowful, lonely lot, and thus became the more gloomy and morose. For you know one can never be glad and happy whose interests are entirely centered upon self.

“By and by strange stories came to be circulated concerning her. It was said that she was a marvelous witch who could transform creatures and things to suit her will. Two dear saintly little twin sisters, whom we will call Golden-hair and Astoria, heard of this magic power and determined to go up and ask her to transform them into something that would be a benefit to the whole country around, and especially to the children of the poor. Accordingly they stole secretly away, and climbed bravely to the old witch’s hut.

A STORY OF THE GOLDEN-ROD

“Now it chanced that some saw them go, but before they could reach them to call a warning, the children had disappeared in the old woman’s tumbled, dreary home. What transpired there no one ever knew, for no one ever saw the children again. But on the following day, the hillside path which they had trod was all abloom with beautiful wild flowers which swayed and tossed gayly in the wind and made every heart glad that saw them. People thought them to be happy emblems of the children, and named them golden-rod and aster. Gradually these flowers spread about over the land until there was scarcely a country road or neglected field where they were not to be found. They always bloomed side by side, as became loving twin sisters, and the people deemed it a convincing proof of the tale. Someway, too, a fairy or somebody let out the fact that the children had sought the witch to be transformed into a blessing to the poor, and it was felt that in this guise they most certainly accomplish their mission. For every one, no matter how needy or low, can have asters and golden-rod. They are truly God’s gift to the wayfarer.

“They seem to have no real value other than to adorn the dusty roadsides and dry places

where little else is inclined to grow. And their tufted downy seed, much like that of the thistle, is scattered far and wide. The farmers consider them rather disagreeable weeds, and certainly they are hard to kill, but no one can deny but what they make the roadside and pastures more beautiful. They are great favorites with the thistle bird—the goldfinch, as you call him—for they furnish him with many a meal throughout the winter, when shorter stemmed seed plants are hidden beneath the snow.

“The golden-rod belongs to that great plant family called the composites, which contains about one plant in every six in North America. It is an own cousin to the aster, dandelion, thistle, sunflower, chrysanthemum, marigold, dahlia, and the zinnia. See if you can find out the distinguishing traits which mark the family.”

THE GENTIAN

“Oh! gentian I have found you out,
And you must tell me true:
See, I'll put my ear close down,
Where did you get your blue!”

“I found it, little one, here and there,
It was ready made for me;
Some in your eyes, and some in the skies
And some in the dark blue sea.”

“And where did you get that love fringe,
Gentian, that you wear?”

“I caught a hint from your dark eyelash
And one from your curling hair.”

“And why do you stand so straight and tall
When they say that you are wild?”

“Oh! that I learned in a different way
And not from any child.”

—*Anon.*

NOT every one knows the gentians, because alas! their beauty has been their own downfall—few hands can refrain from picking these lovely bits of color wherever found, and as next year's crop depends on the seed that is sown many spots that once bloomed in tints rivaling the bluest blue sky now stand bare and forlorn.

There are two species of gentians known in our country—the fringed gentian and the closed, blind or bottle gentian. The former is the great favorite of poets and artists, who love to portray it as a type of human steadfastness and courage. It bears beautifully fringed lobes, a single green-sheathed flower on a naked stalk. The closed gentian flowers in clusters. “Fifteen species of gentian,” we are told, “have been gathered during a half-hour walk in Switzerland, where the pastures are spread with sheets of blue. Indeed, one can little realize the beauty of these heavenly flowers who has not seen them among the Alps.”

The closed gentian never opens. The fringed gentian closes before dark. And there is a reason: Once upon a time, 'tis said, the Queen of the Fairies was out very late. Indeed, it was midnight and the silvery moon had disappeared. The fairy hurried to a gentian and asked for shelter. The sleepy gentian said, “How dare you disturb me at this late hour? Find shelter wherever you can.” “I am the Queen of the Fairies,” said the poor frightened little one. “I do not care for queens or kings,” said the gentian. “I cannot help you.” The fairy queen hurried away to another gentian, a beautiful

THE GENTIANS

specimen, standing erect on a tall stalk, and begged for a resting place. "Dear little friend," said this peerless one, "I shall be happy to shelter you until the sun appears." So the queen slept soundly until nearly dawn and then disappeared. Before going, she said, "Gracious, kindly gentian, in future you and all your children shall have power to open and receive the light. But as for your inhospitable sister, closed she shall remain forever and a day!'

Low, moist meadows and woodlands of the mountainous sections are the favorite dwelling-places of the gentians. and they are late comers, —in October they are still in their glory in Ontario, farther south they may be seen much later.

"Thou waitest late, and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

"Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall."

—*Bryant.*

The gentians depend on the bumblebees to scatter their pollen, and right willingly the big fellows accept the task, for the nectar of these flowers of their own favorite color is the last

feast of the season that is spread for them. Time was when the botanists claimed that the closed gentian fertilized itself: for, said they, "How could a bumblebee enter this inhospitable tightly-closed flower?" But he does do it. And, indeed, now it is a pretty well established fact that the closed-gentian keeps its petals locked for the especial benefit of its big booming favorites! The reason is plain: It has no fringes or hairs to entangle the feet of crawling pilferers, and no better way of keeping its pollen secure from the dew and rain, and from marauding butterflies, who are not willing to go in over head and ears into the deep gentian pantries for nectar, and so are of no use in helping to set seed.

Watch the bumblebee at work. He comes booming along, with his keen eye carefully on the watch for signs. He alights on a cluster of "bottles." Some of the older ones are of deep reddish purple: these say plainly enough, "Nectar removed." No use wasting time there! The big powerful fellow looks about sharply: "Aha!" he says, "here are some bright-blue bottles, with the daintiest of white labels, I'll try 'em!" Forthwith he thrusts his tongue through the valve of the nearest one, at the point where the

THE GENTIAN

five-plaited lobes overlap one another. It isn't a particularly easy job: for the bottle is securely sealed. But, at length, it yields perforce, and in goes the bumblebee's head and a good bit of his body! He is careful, however, to leave his hind legs outside; for he has no notion of entombing himself in the bottle. And presently, having drained the nectar, he backs out, carefully brushes the pollen from his head and throat, and is off to try another bottle. But brush as he may, some of the yellow dust clings to his velvety person, and there is plenty to powder the next flower he seeks.

By and by, thanks to his kind offices, the flowers are all fertilized, the petals fall, and the little hairy seed scales are formed and ready to ride away in the autumn gales. Fortunate indeed are those that strike into soft, moist soil at the end of the journey, and so imbed themselves ready to germinate and grow in the spring.

Some species of the gentian are down in the pharmacists' catalog as "ague weed." They give out a colorless, bitter juice which has long been recognized as a tonic in medicine. Evidently the nectar pantries, however, must contain something considerably more appetizing, or the bumblebee would never go to the trouble to break into them!

THE FAIRY GARLAND

DEVONSHIRE COUNTY, in England, 'tis said, was once the Kingdom of the Fairies. Here ruled King Oberon and his wife Titania, and here on moonlight nights the "little folks" held high revels. Belated travelers, crossing the lonely moors late at night, were often captured by the pixies and dragged away to their gay carousals. While gardeners, called out in the night to protect their charges against sudden changes of temperature, often came upon the most marvelous doings right on their own lawns. On one such occasion, so the story goes, a banquet was in full sway, and the table was nothing less than

"A little mushrome, that was now grown thinner
By being one time shaven for the dinner."

While rose-leaves did duty for the cloth; little silver spangles served as trenchers; a periwinkle and a cockle-shell shared honors as the ewer and basin; and the glasses

"Were all of ice not made to overlast
One supper, and betwixt two cowslips cast."

THE FAIRY GARLAND

A little fairy, clad in a suit of rush, with a monkshood flower for a hat, and a cloak of spiders' loom, brought in the bottles—and marvel of marvels—every bottle was a cherry-stone!

“And most of them were fill'd with early dewe;
Some choicer ones, as for the king most meet,
Held mel-dew, and the honey-suckles sweet.”

The hare-bells and the trumpet-flowers furnished dainty music throughout the feast, and with such wondrous victuals was the table spread! Milk-white kernels of the hazelnut was the bread; while all the first dishes were

“In white broth boylde, a crammed grasshopper;
The udder of a mouse; two hornetts' leggs;
Instead of olyves, cleanly pickl'd sloes;
Then of a batt were serv'd the petty-toes;
Three fleas in souse; a criquet from the bryne;
And of a dormouse, last, a lusty chyne.”

After partaking bounteously, the guests repaired to the toadstools round about, and danced and danced till the moonlight waned, and a threatening shower warned them to make haste away.

Often and often were the fairies surprised taking refuge under toadstools, and on more than one occasion truthful gardeners stoutly affirmed that they had seen fairy-serfs, marching

along, holding a toad-stool umbrella over their queen as she tripped hurriedly home in the rain!

Always the hare-bell was used to summon the fairies. A traveler, crossing the moors, one night, had proof of this, and it was really on his evidence that these little bell-shaped flowers were so named. It seems that the gentleman was jogging slowly along, tired and weary, when there came suddenly to his ears the tinkle of a little musical bell, so unlike any that he had ever heard before that he felt on the instant it must belong to the fairies, and he paused, waiting. Nearer and nearer the sound came, but it did not grow much louder. Presently, a hare dashed by, running like mad, and around his neck was a little tinkling blue bell-flower.

"Whither away, hare?" called the man, quickly. "Pray tell me!"

"There is no time," returned the hare, over his shoulder. "Do not seek to detain me. I'm off to summon the fairies to a special meeting called by the queen."

Who knows perhaps it was that very night that the "little folks" met to settle where the various flowers should grow. For it may have been, perchance, the very eve of the creation of

THE FAIRY GARLAND

many of our loveliest blossoms. But you may not have heard of this event:

It seems that long ago, when only a few humble flowers were strewn here and there on the earth, that Sandalaphon, the Angel of Prayer, stood in the gateway of the Celestial City receiving the petitions that were wafted up to him. So many of these were from the poor and the lowly, people whose cares were so great that their backs bent under the heavy weight, and their voices trembled with the burden of their crosses so that the angel was moved to pity. Gathering the prayers like a sheaf in his outstretched arms, he held them a moment thus, and then let them slip back to earth, changed by his touch into a great bunch of blooming plants of every color and shape, and of such pleasing brightness that all who beheld them must feel the gladder and happier for the vision.

Straight into the eager arms of the fairy queen's own handmaidens fell the marvelous gift, and presently a great cry of delight went ringing throughout the realm: "Come one, come all, and help with the fairy garlands!"

Such a busy night as it was! How the "little people" flew about here, there and yonder! Such

division and subdivision of the tiny plantlets as there was, that every hill and vale might be planted! Such discussion as to which specimens might be expected to thrive best in moist places, in meadows, on wind-swept hillsides, in the woods, and where not! No doubt Sandalaphon himself directed the labor: for not a single mistake was made, and so magically did the plants grow and thrive that shortly afterwards the gardeners began to find fairy garlands left nightly here and there strewing their walks and paths; garlands containing many surprising, unheard of blooms of great beauty, which the lucky finders were only too happy to transplant and tend with watchful care.

Always with the garlands were left, tossed here and there, helter-skelter, the folks' gloves (foxgloves) which the "little people" wore for mittens. Proof positive that it was they who brought the garlands! Besides shortly it was found that no one dared to pick a bit of the delicate white bloom of the snapperjack, or stitchwort, which had sprung up to amble gracefully all about over the hedgerows. 'Cause why: it was sacred to the pixies! And any one This "pixie flower" was always the foundation so bold as to gather it was sure to be pixey-led!

THE FAIRY GARLAND

for the fairy garlands; sometimes indeed it made up the whole thing, showing plainly that it was the prime favorite of the "little folks."

Two other common plants, the fairy butter and the familiar little chickweed, often were entwined in the garlands, and they were never absent from the glens where the fairies dwelt. The fairy butter is especially a plant of the mining regions, and no better proof is needed that the fairies lived about the mines. Indeed, 'tis said that when the dangerous damp came up from the mines at night such knocking and hammering arose as might be heard all about, while the fairy butter-plant rocked back and forth, and on the worst occasions, was even heard to groan, in sorrow, no doubt, for the little people who most certainly were perishing in the heavy damp.

As for the little chickweed, it was the fairies' weather-glass, as it is the poor man's to-day. And a very accurate little barometer it is! Here is what Lord Bacon, one of England's cleverest thinkers, figured out and set down after close study of the habits of this intelligent little weed: "When the chickweed bloom spreads boldly and fully in the morning, no rain will happen for four hours or more. If it continue open, no rain

will disturb the summer day. When it half hides its tiny flower, the day is generally showery; but if it entirely shuts up, or veils the white flower with its green mantle, let the traveler put on his great coat, and the ploughman expect rest from his labor."

The red chickweed or pimpernel also served the fairies as it does the little English maid to-day. Says this little rosy-cheeked miss:

"I'll go and look at the Pimpernell,
 And see if she thinks the clouds look well!
 For if the sun shine,
 And 'tis like to be fine,
 I will go to the fair!
 So, Pimpernel, what bode the clouds in the sky?
 If fair weather, no maiden so merry as I!"

Now the Pimpernel flower had folded up
 Her little gold star in her coral cup,
 And unto the maid
 A warning she said:
 "Though the sun smite down
 There's a gathering frown
 O'er the checkered blue of the clouded sky;
 So, tarry at home, for a storm is nigh."

So punctual is the pimpernel in opening its petals between seven and eight in the morning, and closing promptly at two in the afternoon, that it is called the "shepherd's clock." It is of no use on cloudy days, however, for then it does not open at all.

A LEGEND OF THE NARCISSUS

I WONDER if you know the beautiful narcissus. There are several members in the family, and grandmother groups them under the general name of daffodils and jonquils. They appear in a variety of dress, from the many shades of yellow to white, and white, edged with pink or yellow. Some of them are very fragrant.

Grecian mythology tells us that once the Narcissus was a beautiful youth who fell in love with the reflection of his own face in the water, and would not leave it. For his foolishness and vanity the gods changed him into a flower.

In the far-off land of China they tell a much more interesting tale. It seems that a certain rich man, on his deathbed, bequeathed to his elder son all his money and lands, excepting one poor, bare, stony acre, which he gave to his younger son. As soon as the funeral rites were over, the fortunate young man made haste to spread a great feast for his friends and make a gorgeous show. Pleased with their flattery, he gave one entertainment after another and squan-

dered his money in all sorts of wild and useless ways. Soon his inheritance was gone and the foolish man realized, too late, that he had only given one more proof of the Chinese proverb: "He who earns not, soonest spends."

But the younger son; what of him? Poor, and mocked on every hand by his brother and his riotous companions, he had left the place in despair, and became a wanderer in the land. On a certain day, tired and sick at heart, he lay down in a delightful, shady nook, beside a rippling, limpid, mountain stream and fell into a deep sleep. As he dreamed, a beautiful water nymph or naiad, clad in fleecy, snowy robes, appeared before him and murmured encouragingly:

"Arise, my friend, take heart and hope. Look at the lovely flowers which bloom about you on every hand. Take of their bulbs and plant them upon your barren acre. Water them and tend them with watchful care and a great miracle shall be worked for you. Always he who is willing to work and watch and wait may reap a glorious harvest and receive a rich reward."

Surprised, the young man awoke and glanced eagerly around. But the nymph had vanished. "Twas but a dream," he murmured, bitterly,

A LEGEND OF THE NARCISSUS

and got slowly to his feet, "good fortune is not for such as I."

But even as he spoke, he was conscious of a lighter feeling in his heart. The world did not look so dark and dreary; the flowers seemed to nod at him with friendly, smiling faces, and his feet seemed reluctant to move on. By and by he decided to accept the advice of the dream and fell feverishly to work. All day long he gathered bulbs and plants with patient care, and then, as night closed in, he set out for his distant home, almost staggering beneath his load.

Caring not for the sneers and doubts of his neighbors, who deemed him crazy, he planted his treasures, carefully screened them from the sun, and sought with copious waterings and tender care to make up for the lacking elements in his unfruitful soil. And nature abundantly rewarded his efforts. Presently the rocky, barren field was covered with tender shoots and blades of green. The young man redoubled his efforts and almost lived upon his love for these tender plants, which seemed to sympathize with him and understand his every whim and mood. The "wondrous miracle" which the nymph had promised was forgotten, and he ceased to look forward, as he had at first, for the flowers to

prove keys to some hidden mine of wealth, after the fashion of key-flowers in fairy lore. Day by day these children of the fields grew into his heart, and he was almost wild with joy when the first blossoms burst.

By New Year's Morning the once barren fields were a wondrous sight, and people came from far and near to view them. Such a wealth of blossoms, from the deepest shades of orange and yellow to purest white! How the people wondered and exclaimed and how delighted was the poor, despised, younger son! But he was most generous and freely gave a flower to all.

"The rich, the poor, the young, the old,
Drank nectar from the cups of gold,
No matter what their dower."

Time passed; and ere many moons had come and gone, the younger son gained all that the elder had lost, and all from the care of "bootless flowers." The "magic spell," spoken of by the nymph, had indeed been worked. The poor young man had grown rich and great through careful attention to a very small opportunity. Fortune ever smiled brightly upon him, as she always does upon those who faithfully work; for "work reaps its own reward."

A LEGEND OF THE NARCISSUS

Centuries have gone by since he lived and loved his flowers, but the people have not forgotten him. Always in every window, whether of humble home or palace fair, the Chinese sun on New Year's Day greets the bloom and fragrance of the sweet narcissus. And the people love to tell their children the story of the flower, and to teach them to guard well what they have that more may be added unto their store.

The "Chinese lily," the narcissus, is the poor man's emblem of thrift and care. Each citizen carries one on New Year's Day and sips from its bell-shaped cup the fragrant nectar of hope and cheer which the flower once carried to the poor, despised outcast who had not home nor where to lay his head. It whispers to all, like the narcissus of old, that work is the happy talisman, the blessed key-flower which unlocks the door to wealth and happiness untold. He who would succeed must rise betimes and carry to his task such a loving interest that Fortune cannot help but be attracted thereby.

THE BLUEBELL

No flower is more beautiful than the bluebell. It is one of the dearest, daintiest wild flowers imaginable. But, no doubt, you are as well acquainted with it as you are with the buttercup and dandelion. Perhaps you may have even heard the dainty bluebells ring! For they do ring, it is said, loud enough to attract the ears of myriads of flying insects and call them to feed upon the sweet nectar held in their bell-shaped cups.

I wonder if you have ever hunted for the bluebell in its quiet woodland home, or, perchance, gathered it from its own shady corner in grandmother's dear, old-fashioned garden? It is an own cousin to the heliotrope and the forget-me-not, but it is more showy than either of these charming favorites. A certain writer says: "There is something about the bluebells more beautiful in form of foliage and stem, and in the graceful way in which they rise to panicles of blue, than in almost any other family." And how cleverly they droop their heads in

THE BLUEBELL

order to protect their nectar from the rain and the dew! This is necessary in order to keep them sweet and attractive for the bees, beetles, rose chafers, and other insects which unconsciously perform the great service of spreading the pollen (the yellow dust which you know so well in the center of all flowers) from one blossom to another, and thus enables them to be fertilized and the seed to be set, so as to keep up the supply of bluebells from one generation to another.

In some communities the bluebell bears the name of Virginia cowslip. In others it is called the true or smooth lungwort. It used to be cultivated in old English gardens for ornament and for the benefit of the bees, who love to gather its nectar. Besides dwelling in the forest, it makes its home in rich, moist meadow lands, and will even entrench itself in the damp crevices of rocks where there is enough rich earth to give it a foothold. A meadow land deeply blued with lovely masses of bluebells in mid April is a wondrous sight.

According to tradition, the bluebell did not always have its beautiful color. It was once pure white and bloomed, half-hidden, in a dim ravine, shaded by towering trees which shut out

the sunlight and, indeed, nearly all the sky, excepting one tiny stretch of blue. Day after day the lonely little flower eyed this bit of blue with hungry longing. How beautiful it was! How clear and true it seemed when the little, fleecy white clouds tripped across it! And how brave it looked when it slipped from behind the angry rain clouds, which sometimes hid it from sight! Nothing ever seemed to dim its brightness or affect its purity, and the little flower longed with all its whole soul to be like it. Finally it began to pray to the bright star, which dotted the blue at night, entreating its aid.

Then a miracle happened. Slowly and surely the pure white of the dainty flower began to be tinted with blue like the light of the skies upon a summer night. The bees and beetles hung over it in admiration; they hurried to the other white flowers of its kind farther down the ravine. As they whispered of the change in their neighbor, they unconsciously left some of her pollen, which had clung to their feet and legs. And so new seeds were set in these flowers, and in their hearts came a desire that they, too, should be like the blue sky, which had so pleased their relative.

Next spring when the new generation of

THE BLUEBELL

plants in the ravine bloomed, they were all tinged with blue. The insects were delighted. It was so much easier to find these flowers with their gayer, more attractive colors, and they hung over them and forgot all about the white blossoms farther down the valley. So the neglected white ones died for want of friends and messengers to carry their pollen, and the blue ones lives and thrived. In the course of several generations, the flowers became the deep blue, slightly tinged with pink, which we now find them, and thus earned their title to the name, *bluebell*.

The poet, who learned this story from the birds, finds in it a lesson for all. He says that those who strive with watchful eyes after all things pure and high, shall take their image by and by. For the thoughts of our hearts tinge our actions and stamp their reflection upon our faces.

I wonder if you have ever seen the seeds of the bluebell? If you have not, just keep your eyes open for them. They are four little seed-like nuts. When fully ripe and matured, they have a queer, leathery, wrinkled appearance. If you know where there is a clump of bluebells, you must watch for their seed to ripen. Find

out, if you can, the methods which the flower uses to have her seeds scattered. Contrast the seeds of the bluebell with the tufted, flying seed of the dandelion, which blows whither the wind listeth, and the funny-winged "keys" of the maple tree.

Botanists will tell you that the bluebell belongs to the bell-flower, or *Campanula*, family, of which there are some 250 species. Most of the family are showy and ornamental, and a large number of the tribe favor Northern regions. Bluebells, it is said, are often found growing among snow and ice, safely protected by their downy suits. The hare-bell is the common English name for the bluebell.

The Scottish bluebell came to this country with our early emigrants, who could not do without their "bonny bluebells of Scotland." In their native land, the bluebells are as common as our own American golden-rod. They bloom everywhere, "far away from any house site, on sandy hilltops, on quarry edges, or set in jewel-like clusters in the emerald of the pastures."

THE WATER LILY

No doubt you know the water lily, and have often seen it floating upon the water as brightly and gracefully as a spirit princess from fairyland. It belongs to a very large family and is scattered all over the world. As might be expected from its wide range, the leaves and flowers vary greatly in size, shape, and coloring. The famous Amazon water lily has gigantic, floating leaves, three feet or more in diameter, and magnificent flowers in proportion; while the dull flowers of the water shield are only about half an inch long. The white and yellow water lilies of our ponds and bayous are the most common. Occasionally we find a sweet-scented, pinkish or pinkish-red species growing in still water.

The bloom of the sacred Egyptian lotus, a species of the water lily, varies from deep red to pinkish and pure white. In the tropical regions of Africa and India there is a blue water lily. It has been imported to our country, but

here it is said to be very tender and grows only in aquariums.

Botanists claim that the time is coming when the white water lily shall be no more; for the beetles and other insects which distribute the pollen care more for the brighter colored lilies. Of course, if this be true, and the insects should largely neglect the white lilies, then their seed will not be so well set, and they will become scarcer, but we hope that they will not become extinct for "another couple of thousand years or so," as Mr. Grant Allen says, for we cannot bear to lose this snowy-hued lily with its heart of living gold.

The water lily opens early every morning and closes again in the afternoon. Why is this? To quote Mr. Allen, "Because that is just the very time when the insects that fertilize it, or carry pollen from head to head, are flitting about in the open sunshine. It is only in order to attract these insects at all that the flowers possess their bright colors and store their little stock of honey or nectar. No plant can show that truth more clearly, indeed, than these very water lilies. For if you look at the center of the blossom, you will find it occupied by many rows of small, yellow pollen bags, hanging out at the

THE WATER LILY

end of long finger-like stalks, which we call stamens. But toward the edge of the blossom the stalks of the stamens seem to flatten out, gradually, more and more, and the pollen bags to grow less and less conspicuous, till at last they pass imperceptibly into the form of petals or flower leaves without any trace at all of the original pollen bags. This shows that the showy petals are in reality only stamens which have got flattened out by slow degrees in order to attract the fertilizing insects."

These words bring out a thought which many of us have not considered, viz.: That the plants do not flaunt their many-hued blossoms for our pleasure, alone, but also as gay advertising cards to the bees, beetles, and insects to come and distribute their pollen. What a new insight it gives us concerning the importance of these humble creatures, and how great are their opportunities to brighten the world about them!

But to return again to the water lilies. All lilies, no matter what their color, grow from a strong horizontal rootstock, much like a strand of long, thick rubber. And how do they grow? Just like this:—

"They draw their strength for leaf and stem
Out of the earth that cradled them;

A TREASURY OF FLOWER STORIES

Then catch in their tiny hands the rain
 To wash them clean of earthly stain,
And lift their faces in air and sun
 That clothe in beauty every one.
To heaven above from earth below
 That is the way the lilies grow!"

The Indians have a beautiful legend concerning the white water lily or lily star, as they called it. It seems that long ago a certain star fell in love with the many beauties of the earth and longed to come down and dwell near the Red children, who seemed so happy in their games and sports. Each day she drew nearer and nearer until at last she hung just above the treetops. The people watched her anxiously; for they could not make out whether she was an omen of good or evil. At last the star spoke to them.

"O good people," she called, "I love you, and I wish to dwell near you where I may gaze into your rippling lake-mirrors, scent your myriads of sweet-smelling flowers, and listen to your beautiful gay-plumaged birds, and the happy voices of your dear little children. Tell me where I shall make my home."

The simple-hearted people were delighted, and suggested one after another the mountain top, the heart of the wild rose on the hillside,

THE WATER LILY

and the cool depths of the forest, but none of these suited the star. They were too far off. She wished to dwell where she might see the children every day, where they might play around her, and where she might sometimes feel their dear, little hands touching her. At last a wise young chief bethought himself of the lake.

“Why not try the lake?” he cried. “Here our people spend the greater part of every day. The sunlight loves to glimmer on its waters and the skies, clouds, and stars reflect themselves in its mirrors.”

“Tis the very thing!” cried the star. “Bid the children watch for me.”

Accordingly the very next night the star floated downward on a wave of sweetest music and buried itself in the lake. For a long time the people watched, expecting a miracle. But nothing happened. The star was apparently gone forever, and they retired disappointedly to their wigwams. But the next morning lo! a beautiful lily with pure white petals and a rich golden heart stood where the star had gone down.

HEPATICA

When April awakens the blossom folk,
And blue-birds are on the wing,
Hepatica, muffled in downy cloak,
Hastens to greet the spring.

Careless of cold when the north wind blows,
Glad when the sun shines down,
She opens her wrap, and smiling, shows
Her dainty lavender gown.

Her sisters are robed in pink, and some
Are in royal purple dressed,
And over the hills and fields they come
To welcome the darling guest.

The children laugh as they pick the flowers,
And the happy robins sing;
For, blooming in chill and leafless bowers,
Hepatica means the spring.

—*Anna Pratt.*

WE often find this brave little harbinger growing right in the snow on the sunny woodland hillside. How it escapes being frozen is a miracle that is solved by its furry little hood, and the fur covering of its "scape," as the leafless flower stem is called. At first we see only the old brown leaves from last year, but soon

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the fresh young leaves uncurl and open. And then the little flower buds bravely cast aside their furs and come out in their dainty dresses, which vary from white to pink, and through all the shades of lavender to deep blue and purple. Each flower is made up of from six to twelve *sepals*, or divisions, if you please, of the flower-cup or *calyx*, which look so much like petals that you will have to inspect them sharply to see the difference. These sepals are in truth little leaves which Mother Nature has colored and transformed to call attention to the hepatica nectar pantries. It will be well for you to remember their structure; for when you come to study botany you will often read of "petal-like calyxes" or "sepals colored like a corolla," and you will, then, know all about what is meant.

Sometimes sweet-scented hepaticas are found. Some folks say that all the blooms are fragrant at a certain time. Burroughs, however, tells us that: "The gift seems as capricious as the gift of genius in families. You cannot tell which the fragrant ones are till you try them. Sometimes it is the large white ones, sometimes the large purple ones, sometimes the small pink ones." The odor is faint, like that of sweet violets, and however it be, lucky is the one who chances

upon a sweet-scented clump. Should such fortune come to you, mark the place, and see if the plant produces scented bloom next year, by so doing you may help to solve a much-mooted question.

“The gem of the woods,” Burroughs calls this little firstling, and we feel with him that it has never been admired half enough. “What an individuality it has! No two clusters alike; all shades and sizes. . . . A solitary blue-purple one, fully expanded, and rising over the brown leaves or the green moss, its cluster of minute *anthers*¹ showing like a group of pale stars on its little *firmament*,² is enough to arrest and hold the dullest eye.”

When the blossoms are gone, there are still left the lovely leathery lobed leaves, so much like the shape of the liver, that they give to the plant its common name—liverwort. The term *hepatica* also comes from the Greek word which means “liver.” And not only in its shape but in the color of its old leaves—a dull brickish-red—does the *hepatica* resemble the liver! It is one of the plants included in the old “Doctrine of Signatures,” which governed the pharmacists of

¹ Anther = pollen knobs.

² Firmament or filament = threads on which anthers are hung.

HEPATICA

old, who went by the rule that every herb had a sign to show its use to man, if only he were wise enough to read it! Thus the liver-shaped leaves of the liverwort pointed its purpose as a remedy for any and all liver complaints; the celandine, because it had yellow juice, was the cure-all for jaundice; the herb-dragon, because it was spotted and striped, was the remedy for snake-bites, and so on.

There are two kinds of hepaticas or liverwort common in our country. In the east and north the plant bears three roundish-lobed leaves, each clump growing on its own foot-stalk, which springs from the root. The western species of liverwort has sharp-lobed leaves numbering from three to five in a cluster. Both species bear many pistils and stamens. But only the three-lobed kind is capable of setting its own seed. The sharp-lobed hepatica depends on the bees and flies to scatter its pollen, and it carefully closes its bloom at night to protect the precious contents from the frost and the rain, while its flowers cling a long time, in order that the uncertain creatures on whom it is dependent may have every chance to call

LEGENDS OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT

When to the flowers so beautiful,
The Father gave a name,
Back came a little blue-eyed one,
All timidly it came.
And standing at its Father's feet,
And gazing into his face,
It said in low and trembling tones,
And with a modest grace,
"Dear God, the name thou gavest me,
Alas, I have forgot."
The Father kindly looked him down,
And said, "Forget-me-not."

—*Anon.*

THE forget-me-not is a native of Europe and Asia, but it has been naturalized well over our own land, escaping from the gardens in both the old world and the new, to wander along brooksides, marshes and low meadows, while in Alaska it has settled so thickly on the hillsides as to give them a bluish tint from a distance. The grandest type of all the clan is a rich dark-blue beauty growing wild in the Azores. This specimen has been transplanted to England, but it needs the protection of the greenhouse. Scor-

LEGENDS OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT

pion grass, or mouse's ear is the name given to the smallest member of the tribe, whose stems and leaves are covered with bristly hairs. The flowers of this forget-me-not form a lengthening stem, leaving their little empty green calices behind as they wither.

According to Blanchan, "It was the golden ring around the forget-me-not's center that first led botanists to believe that the conspicuous markings at the entrance of many flowers served as pathfinders to insects. This golden circle also shelters the nectar from rain, and indicates to the fly or bee just where it must probe between stigma and anthers to touch them with opposite sides of its tongue. Since it may probe from any point in the circle, it is quite likely that the side of the tongue that touched a pollen-laden anther in one flower will touch the stigma of the next one visited, and so cross-fertilize it." The forget-me-nots, however, are not entirely dependent upon insects to set their seed. When these fail, the perfect flowers are able to attend to this matter themselves.

Botanists will tell you that the forget-me-not belongs to the Borage family, a small family not unknown to fame in the circle of chemists and druggists, at least, as they figure extensively in

the preparation of perfume and dyestuffs, and have certain medicinal qualities.

There are almost as many legends of the forget-me-not as there are different types and names for the plant. But, notwithstanding that in all climes, this dainty blossom, of heaven's own true blue, is considered an emblem of friendship, many of the legends alas! in striving to account for the name *forget-me-not* have connected it with sorrow. One of the best known of these perhaps is that of the knight and his betrothed who were walking along the banks of the Danube, when the lady saw far below them a bunch of beautiful flowers. In delight, she exclaimed over them, wishing she had the beautiful blue blossoms to plant in her own garden. Of course, though the bank was steep and the descent perilous, the lover, as became a true knight, at once went down to get them. Somehow a treacherous sapling gave way, and he and the prized bunch of blue rolled into the river. Clad in heavy mail, as he was, the knight was powerless to swim, or to save himself, and when he found that he must perish, with great effort, he threw the flowers up to his beloved, calling at the same time "Forget-me-not." It is said that after the battle of Waterloo, a great quan-

LEGENDS OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT

tity of forget-me-nots sprang up upon different parts of the battle field, as if to ask that the fallen heroes should not be forgotten.

An old Danish myth typified one brilliant, seldom-found species of the forget-me-not as a wondrous key-flower, which unlocked a door in the mountain side for the lucky one who picked it. This door led away into a cave filled with beautiful sparkling gems—diamonds, rubies, amethysts, emeralds, sapphires, topazes, turquoises, all surpassingly lovely and glittering most temptingly in the rushlights held by a little old kobold in a red cap.

“Take what you want,” the little old fellow would cry pleasantly, when the guest exclaimed in wonder and delight over the treasures. “Take what you want, friend, but don’t forget the best!”

Straightway, of course, the shepherd, or perchance some traveler in the land, who had never in all his life heard of the key-flower, would begin to select this stone and that, choosing always the largest and most brilliant, until his pockets, his hat, his handkerchief, and even his shoes and other parts of his wearing apparel had been filled to the limit, and he was so loaded down with the valuables that he could scarcely

stagger under their weight, when he was perforce obliged to turn away. And always he did this most unwillingly, for there was the old kobold at his elbow, urging him repeatedly: "Take all you want, friend; but don't forget the best!"

Indeed, so anxious was the old fellow in his guest's making the best possible choice, that his cry, "Don't forget the best! Don't forget the best!" followed him up the passage, and the door closed on the words!

And, then, the guest, to his dismay, found that he had in truth failed to heed the oft-repeated advice. He had forgotten the best! He had left behind him the wondrous blue key-flower, and without its magic his treasures were as nothing; for now they were only so many pebbles and bits of moss and dead leaves—relics of his own greed.

"The sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers."

So wrote Tennyson. It is a happy thought, which calls to mind a legend told by one of the old Persian poets:

It seems that in the golden morning of the early world, an angel sat weeping outside the closed gates of Paradise. Alas! he had fallen

from his high estate through loving a daughter of earth, and never more should he enter the Celestial City, unless perchance the maid he loved should become immortal!

So great was his sorrow and despair at what he considered an utter impossibility that presently the angel's sobs moved the Keeper of the Gate to pity: "What now knight of the erring!" he chided gently. "Why sit ye there? Arise and redeem thy sin!"

A wise message truly.

But where to begin the angel knew not. Surely no act of his could lift his sweet queen of the flowers! And he turned to gaze, as he had so often, at the fair maid sitting afar beside a meadow stream, plaiting her golden hair with wondrous blue blossoms, and singing so sweetly to herself that even the ear of Israfil must have harkened.

Then, as he watched enraptured, behold! a shaft of purest golden light sprang like an arrow from the throne of Mithras and rested gently and lovingly upon the fair blossoms and the maid in their midst. And the angel's problem was solved!

Swifter than a starry brand he went to earth, and shortly he and the maiden set forth together

hand in hand, each bearing a great basket of beautiful plants which they had dug from the meadow. Hither and yon they went throughout the world, up hill and down dale, over pasture and field, pausing in all the sunny nooks and out of the way places, to set out little clumps of the wondrous blossoms. Then, their task ended, smilingly the two presented themselves before the Keeper of the Gate.

And lo! they were admitted at once. The fair maid, without tasting the bitterness of death, had become immortal for her sweet service in growing the lovely blossoms of heaven's own blue—the forget-me-not—and in sharing them so generously with mankind everywhere.

Who knows, perhaps it may have been the efforts of these two that set the forget-me-nots in the heavens? You know the poet Longfellow tells us in *Evangeline* that:

“Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of
 heaven,
 Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of
 the angels.”

THE CARDINAL FLOWER

ONCE upon a time, so the Indian legends say, there was a moody young warrior whom we will call Cloud-in-the-face. This was not his real name, you understand, and cloud-in-the-face was not his character until the unlucky day when the Great Spirit claimed the soul of the beautiful Indian princess who was so soon to have been his bride. Then Sorrow changed the heart, the name, and the blood of the young warrior.

How was he to live without his dusky peerless maiden? Moreover, how could he go through the world seeing others of her type happy, laughing and gay, while she, who was a thousand times more joyous and beautiful than they, was now silent and still forever?

Crazed and maddened he caught up his bow and quiver and rushed away into the forest. Here, after wandering about for hours and hours, he at length sank to sleep beside a stream. Presently a bevy of Indian maidens, from a town who knew not of the young warrior's sorrow,

came down to the water's edge, and paused there making merry, all unmindful of his presence.

How that sweet young laughter jangled on the overwrought nerves of the young chief! What quivers the happy voices sent through that agonized heart! With a long wailing whoop of despair, he rose savagely to his knees, and began shooting his sharp arrows with deadly aim straight into the careless, light-hearted group!

One after another the most beautiful and peerless ones of the lot fell, and their life-blood stained the earth all about. And there, in that very spot, not many moons afterward, rose a clump of cardinal flowers, one for each maiden slain, and none who saw them could doubt that the coursing red blood of those murdered Indian princesses lived again in the rich hues of the gorgeous blossoms.

The cardinal flower belongs to the lobelia family, being in truth the red lobelia. Strangely enough, too, all its kindred bear the bluest of blue blossoms! Now, why? Botanists tell us that it is simply an advertising measure. Blue has been proven over and over to be the favorite color of the bees, and the blue-typed short-tubed lobelias depend on the good offices of the bees to set their seed. The red lobelias have long

THE CARDINAL FLOWER

tubes, and the bees are small good to them. They must bid for the favor of the ruby-throats, and any one who knows anything about the humming bird knows how red flowers call him. Haven't you seen him time and again poised sipping thirstily, yet daintily, over the trumpet flowers, the cannas, gladioli, and other long-tubed flowers of the garden?

The lobelias received their name from no less a personage than Linnæus himself—the greatest and most renowned of all botanists—who chose to christen these flowers in honor of his friend Matthias de l'Obel, herbalist and physician, to James V, king of England.

By the way, have you ever wondered why the scientific names of the flowers were such "jaw breakers" and why they are always in Latin? Answering the last query first, there are a great many different languages, you know, and as the scholars of all nations study Latin, it was thought best to put the classification not only of plants, but of animals and minerals, too, in a language common to all. Thus you see the names in these three kingdoms are alike all over the world, and it is much more convenient than it seems to us at first glance.

As to the *length* of the names, we are indebted

to Linnæus for that, and it, also, is much more of a blessing than it seems. Up to the time of Linnæus, botanists had named more or less plants and grouped them together, but a beginning had scarcely been made in classification. The learned men were, as you might say, "stumped!" They had a general name for various families, but they had not yet hit upon a descriptive name for the different species. For example, *viola* meant a plant of the violet family, but to tell the name of any particular individual required a lengthy description of it. "Why not give a second name to qualify the first?" suggested Linnæus, and he gave as an example, *viola odorata*, which means, of course, the sweet-scented or English violet. The scheme seemed most happy, and thereby was laid the foundation of the "jaw breakers." And really they are not so terrible after all, once you know 'em! They remind one of the lions that so frightened the traveler because, at the distance, he could not see that they were merely *iron* lions.

Certainly, if these names were not too hard for Linnæus, they are not too hard for you and me. For, do you know, that not much more than two hundred years ago, the great botanist was just simply little Carl Linn, the bare-footed,

out-at-the-elbows son of a poor Swedish clergyman, who came near binding the youngster out to learn the shoemaker's trade, because he thought the lad really did not have brains enough ever to make a scholar!

Thanks to the interference of a kind friend, the physician of the village, Carl went to this gentleman's office instead of to the shoe-shop, and here he got his first training in botany. When he was twenty-one years old, he became a student in the University of Upsala, in Stockholm, trying to pay his way with the aid of an allowance of eight pounds a year (about \$40) from his father. But he was not discouraged, and when his old shoes were badly worn, he folded paper and put into the soles to keep out the damp and cold.

Finally he went to Holland, and there made friends with a rich banker who was a botanist, and who became interested in the young Swede. Carl Linn was sent to England to get rare plants for his new friend's garden. Now it was that the young botanist learned to write in Latin, and henceforth in all his work he signed himself as Carl Linnæus.

THE POT OF GOLD

OF course you have heard many times over of the pot of gold hidden at the end of the rainbow, but did you know that this self-same pot had been really and truly discovered? It all happened years and years ago, and must be a rather upsetting circumstances to those people who argue that the rainbow has no end.

And this is how it happened:

It seems that a very, very selfish man was once crossing a meadow all alone one bright moonlight night; suddenly, just how he never knew, his foot tripped over something which rolled chinking on a little way ahead of him, and behold! it was a pot of gold. The very pot of gold that belonged at the foot of the rainbow he felt sure: for had he not that very afternoon seen the rainbow arching right into this self-same meadow?

Delighted with his find, the miser, for such he was, determined to hide the precious pot and its gleaming contents away where no one could ever steal it from him. So he slipped it into a



Anne MERRIMAN Peck



THE POT OF GOLD

sack which he carried on his arm, and hurried away to the woods to secrete it in a specially good hiding place that he knew.

But there was a hole in the sack, and the selfish old fellow did not know that as he went the gold pieces dropped out one by one into the meadow. How disappointed he was when he discovered his loss! And how quickly he hurried back to recover the treasure!

He had no difficulty in seeing the pieces afar, but imagine his state when on stooping to pick up the bright golden coins, he found yellow flowers instead of money! How did it happen?

Let the wise ones answer. We only know that yellow buttercups give joy to all who pick them, and that selfish people never find joy or happiness anywhere.

THE BUTTERCUP DAIRYMAIDS

The little ladies of the churn,
They toil the springtime through,
A-churning golden butter from
The rain and sun and dew.

But when the merry June-time comes,
Their labor all is done,
And they pack their tiny butter-bowls
With butter like the sun.

A TREASURY OF FLOWER STORIES

And then they stand in ranks and rows,
Their bowls upon their heads,
A-waiting the inspectors, who
Shall soon go through the meads.

And when the child-inspectors come,
Such fun as then begins!
For they test that golden butter
With their rosy dimpled chins.

—*Anon.*

How many different kinds of buttercups do you know?

We once read of an old gentleman who announced with no little pride that he had fourteen different species of buttercups growing on his farm! Up until he was fifty years old, this man knew almost nothing about plants. Then he made up his mind he would really know what was growing on his own place. So he bought books and began to study plants, and in due time he was on speaking terms with a whole host of flowers, grasses, and weeds. But he had by no means exhausted his subject! "Oh," said he, "how many times I have wished that I had begun to study plants when I was a child, but I am getting more enjoyment from them now than I can say!"

The buttercup is a native of Europe, but it has found its way all over the meadows, grassy

THE POT OF GOLD

fields and roadsides of Canada and the States. Nothing is prettier than a gold-starred field of buttercups to the beauty-loving eye; and nothing rouses the ire of the farmer more than when the immigrant takes possession of his pastures. Cattle will not eat buttercups. Full well they know what the youngster who puts the stem or leaves into his mouth finds out to his sorrow. Beggars, it is said, often use the juice of the plant to raise sorry-looking blisters on their skin.

The buttercup belongs to the Crowfoot family—*Ranunculaceæ* is its scientific name, and there is one species at least which certainly justifies the fore part of its Latin classification: *rana*—a frog; this is the yellow water buttercup. Perhaps you may have seen it fully immersed in water, or stranded along shore in the mud. It has two sets of leaves, one for underwater existence, the other for land; so that, come what may, it is prepared. Often the stem of this species is several feet in length, and it makes itself doubly secure by rooting at the joints wherever it can.

Another interesting plant, which only the botanist would connect with the moisture-loving *Ranunculaceæ* which delights in marshes and low meadow lands, is the white water-crowfoot,

with its fine thread-like leaves stretching here and yonder under water in the daintiest possible patterns. "The flowers of this species," says Blanchan, "must, like the whale, come up to blow! . . . These are small, white, or only yellow at the base, where each petal bears a spot or little pit that serves as a pathfinder to the flies. When the water rises unusually high, the blossoms never open, but remain submerged, and fertilize themselves."

First to come in the spring is *R. bulbosus*: Let me see if we can't figure out just what flower is meant by this term, even though we haven't any particular knowledge of Latin. The first word, or initial as it is usually written, refers of course to the family name. And this we already know is buttercup in plain United States. *Bulbosus* you would suspect to mean bulbous, wouldn't you? And now we have it: *Ranunculaceæ bulbosus* = bulbous buttercup. Simple enough, after all, isn't it?

Besides, using our common sense a little further, we can easily enough determine why this species is the first buttercup to bloom. Naturally, having its nourishment thriftily stored up all winter in its underground bulb, it can push to the front much more rapidly than its fiber-

THE POT OF GOLD

rooted kin who must first gather their materials from the soil and the air. This buttercup is a low and generally more hairy plant than the tall crowfoot, which is the common meadow buttercup, but like it is thoroughly at home in most sections of our realm. Other names for the common meadow buttercup are kingcups, cuckoo flower, goldcups, butter-flower, blister-flower.

“Cuckoo buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.”

How well we all know this! Among them perchance may be others of their kin less common. Here are a few species whose acquaintance you should try to make: the tufted buttercup, the swamp or marsh buttercup, the bristly buttercup, the Hispid buttercup, the creeping buttercup, and the water plantain spearwort, which flecks the marshes throughout the season with its small golden flowers.

MY LADY CLOVER

Though the brown bee's a rover,
Seeking ever for sweetness new,
To the little Lady Clover
He in his heart of hearts is true.
"Sweet! Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!"
He hums it over and over.
"Where in the wide world will you meet
With the likes of my Lady Clover?
Pink she is, white she is,
A little thing of delight she is!
Sweet! Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!"
He hums as he sways above her,
"Nowhere at all do I ever meet
With the like of my Lady Clover."

—*Selected.*

AND, indeed, neither does man! Especially if he looks at the plant from the point of industry. Then, too, everybody knows that the clover is a mystic witch. Does not good luck always follow the finding of a four-leaf clover? And who doubts but that a five or seven-leaf specimen is a fore-runner of bad news? European peasants say that to dream of the clover foretells not only a happy marriage, but long life and prosperity. "Living in clover" is a happy expression that has come to mean the very bliss of

luxury and abundance. We might study clovers for weeks and weeks and then not half appreciate their worth and beauty, or in truth exhaust the long list.

No plant is of more value to the farmer than the clover, or indeed to all mankind; for what benefits the farmer benefits all. Chief of its uses, perhaps, and one which you might not think of if you were asked to name them, is its value as a means of enriching the soil. The clover is a legume, you know, own cousin to the garden and stock peas, and to the alfalfa. It has on its roots little tubercles or nodules, which are no more nor less than little plant-storehouses, whose business it is to store up the nitrogen which the plant gathers from the air. When clover is planted as a "cover crop" and turned under to enrich the soil, these little nodules release their nitrogen, which mixes with the earth to form nitrates, and in this fashion is easily taken up and used by whatever crop may be sown to reap the richness. Orchard men commonly sow clover in the fall, and turn under the crop the following spring that the fruit trees may feed from this valuable source of fertility.

In addition to their power of storing nitro-

gen, clovers by reason of their deep and spreading root systems make the best possible green manures for adding humus—vegetable matter—to the soil. Crimson clover is the one most often used for “cover crops.”

Though the clovers of all kinds are a delight to the bees, the honey bee who really “lives in clover” chooses a white clover field. By the way, did you ever sit off at a safe distance and watch one of these busy workers through an opera glass? In the lens, the clover blooms become a collection of little white-tubed honey-jars, which the bees, standing on their heads, empty with marvelous quickness. Each little fellow knows to a nicety when he is loaded, and looses not an instant in darting off to the hive in a “bee-line,” straight and true as a geometrical drawing. Indeed these little artisans are master hands at lines and exact patterns. Where is the pencil and rule that could draw a six-sided box straighter and truer than the hexagon cells into which his honey is stored?

The white clover, or shamrock, is the national flower of Ireland, and claims an equal place in history with England’s rose and Scotland’s thistle, and is the emblem of promise. It is said that if sod ground is plowed and strewed with lime,

white clover will spring up in abundance, typifying the promise of future bounteous crops.

The Happy Hunting Grounds of the bumblebees is the farmer's red clover field. And that they do invaluable service there is proved in the experience of the Australians, who imported quantities of clover seed, and had glorious fields of it that season, but not a single seed was set, because the bumblebees who attend to the distribution of the pollen had been left behind! Next year the experiment was again tried, and the bumblebees were not forgotten, with the result that clover was a success in its new home. Does any of the bumblebee's delight in his wondrous pasture come from pleasure in the service he performs? Not at all: indeed it is doubtful if he knows the good that he does. His happiness lies in the knowledge that none but the butterfly's long tongue can share the plentiful feast that is spread; so he booms lazily about and takes his time to sip the honey from each brimming floret. Perchance, it might be better if he did realize his importance, and hurried a little at the task! For the butterflies are doubtful visitors, if not actually injurious. Their long slender tongues sip up the nectar, barely touching the pollen which waits to be spread;

and some of the tribe alas! nip holes at the base of the honey tube, and so leave the plant a prey to the gall-making beetle and the cutworm.

“What did the sulphur butterflies provide as food for their caterpillar babies before the commonest clovers came over from the Old World to possess the soil?” queries Blanchan. “Whenever a *trifolium* (the family name of the clover) grows, there one is sure to see

‘Sallow-yellow butterflies,
Like blooms of lorn primroses blowing loose,
When autumn winds arise.’ ”

Besides the multitude of sulphurs, the “dusky wings” and various others of the *Lepidoptera* and their caterpillars feast upon the clovers. Indeed, a botanist, keeping tab on the insect visitors to a certain red clover plant, found that thirteen out of twenty of the comers were butterflies!

Clovers have advertising cards or signs that the insects read most plainly. Right well does the little busy bee know which florets contain nectar, and which are done for. And so may you also, if you but read as he does, the moment a floret has been drained of its nectar and the seed set, the seed-vessel closes over and the floret turns brown and hangs downward. “No visit-

MY LADY CLOVER

ing in business hours," this brown signal says, and the bee promptly alights on a fresh erect floret that is ready not only to welcome him, but to reward him richly for taking the trouble to call. When all the florets in a head have been fertilized, it stands brown and crumpled, endeavoring to look as discouraging as possible to such enemies as might suspect the presence of the little green seed-treasures, and feast upon them. Usually two, rarely three or four, seeds form in a seed-pod.

How many of the clover family can you name on sight? And have you ever by chance visited a clover field after nightfall to see how the plant puts her leaves to bed?

THE PROUD POPPY AND THE LITTLE BLUE CORNFLOWER

ACCORDING to an old, old legend there was once upon a time a little maiden called Papava. But, though she was the daughter of a king and very beautiful, she was not what such a noble gifted little lady should have been. She was selfish and willful, and her great black eyes were wont to snap stormily, and her richly-shod little feet that should have danced about happily all day stamped angrily because things did not go to suit her. Try as they might no one could please her, not even her worshipful parents, who were continuously bringing her some new and wonderful gift.

Such beautiful things as the little princess had! Every morning her raven locks were combed with a glistening jewel-studded comb; her breakfast came up on a golden tray, and her dishes were all of solid silver and the most beautiful sparkling crystal. No child ever had more marvelous toys, and her dresses were beautiful dreams. Red was the color Papava liked

best, because it set off her black curls and olive skin to the best advantage. So most of her silks and velvets—she would wear nothing else—were of the richest most glowing shades. Even her little nightrobe was of the heaviest, deepest-pile wine-red velvet, trimmed with a golden cord and solid gold buttons.

Because of her ill-temper and disagreeable ways, Papava had no little friends of her own. Indeed, she did not think there was any one in all the realm good enough to associate with her. "I am the king's daughter," she would say haughtily, and her tone added, "*Who* are you?"

So none of the royal parents' friends—and they were many—loved their little daughter. "She is a disobedient, ungrateful child," they said, "who can never bring anything but sorrow to the realm."

While her nurse and the good queen's maid agreed over their tea-cups below stairs, that they would like to whip the child until she couldn't stand! "Only," added the nurse, wisely, "it would be energy wasted! What Papava needs is to be put off somewhere and treated like common folks. It is ill for a child to have her own way in all things, whether she be the daughter of a king or of a peasant."

“And Papava does not even *know* her own way!” the queen’s maid had added. “Never in all the world was there a more changeful, troublesome, impulsive child!”

So you see there was bad work for somebody to undo, and it was small wonder that here and there were many among those who loved the king and queen whose heads shook sorrowfully as they wondered how it was all to end.

Chief among those who had to bear the brunt of Papava’s ill-nature was her own little waiting maid, a child so sweet and sunny and so evenly balanced that not all Papava’s fractiousness could rile her. And it was well, agreed the king’s household, for not one of them could stand what Little Blue Corny had to put up with.

“Little Blue Corny!” you exclaim, “A strange name for a sweet maid!”

And yet one very appropriate, as most nicknames are, when you know the whole circumstances.

Cornelia was the little maid’s name,—a name altogether too staid, high-sounding and large for her cheerful, humble little person. Blue were her eyes as the summer sky, and blue always was her dress; so what better than “Little

Blue Corny," spoken always in a tone of love and affection? For no one could look upon the child without feeling their hearts growing lighter, and more than once was voiced the thought: "Ah, if *she* could only have been the king's daughter!"

Strangely enough, however, the witches and genii of those days failed to see what would have been a clever solution of the court problem, and so Papava went on to her own fate.

"Let us go into the fields!" she commanded haughtily, one day, her eye having been taken with the scene of the reapers at work in the wheat. And Little Blue Corny bowed submissively, as became a humble little waiting maid, though well she knew it was no place for the proud little daughter of the king.

Forth they went at once through the palace gates, and the laborers, when they saw who was coming into their midst, removed their hats and bowed low in homage before the princess. Papava, however, scorned to acknowledge their greeting: it was but meet that they should bow before the king's daughter, and she swept on with high head and mincing steps, her manner as unfitting to a child, as was her rich, splendid apparel.

But not so Little Blue Corny, following respectfully after the princess, in her simple little blue gown; right and left her smiles flashed happily upon her friends, and every now and then she had something pleasant to say to the honest workmen who regarded her so kindly.

The look on the swift-changing faces might have been a revelation even to self-centered little Papava, had she not been too haughty to turn her head! But no; straight on down the long fields they went, and ever and anon, as they passed the working groups, their progress was the same. Finally they came to the far end of the field, and the princess, looking about for some chance to display her power, seized upon the flimsiest kind of an excuse.

"It is going to rain," she cried shrilly, indicating a small cloud which had that instant swept across the sun. "Let a shelter be built for me at once!"

The men stared at one another in dismay. Their day's task was heavy, and the wheat was over-ripe. It needed to be handled with care and got into the sheaves without delay. For alas! not a grain must be wasted. There were many mouths to feed, and bread would be scarce at best. What should they do?

“Obey me at once,” stormed the princess, stamping her foot over their hesitation, and sweeping them with a glance that would have slain could glances kill. “At once! Build me a shelter from your sheaves! The rain must not touch me!”

Plainly enough her tone added, “For I am the princess,” and the men knew they dared not disobey. But to use the precious sheaves which could ill-stand handling! It was wanton waste and madness. And still they hesitated.

Old Franc, a man who had long served and revered the king, advanced and bent low: “See, my princess,” he said, placatingly, pointing to the cloud which was even then sweeping away, “it is not going to rain. Not even one drop will fall! And we dare not waste the sheaves! Bread is scarce, and our people will have much ado to get through the winter!”

“Silence!” commanded Papava, her foot again striking the stubble, and her wrath rising in a frenzy. Who were these laborers that they dared question the needs of the people before the wishes of the king’s daughter? “I will have shelter,” she shrieked. “Build me a hut at once of your sheaves, or leave the service of the realm forever!”

Sullenly the men obeyed, while the princess stood in haughty, ireful waiting, and the Little Blue Corny pressed her apron mistily to her eyes to shut out the vision of the poor women and children who must know cruel want for those wasting grains that slipped from the ripened sheaves as the hut took shape.

At last all was done: sheaves for the floor, sheaves for the walls, sheaves for the roof—precious sheaves which cried in low mournful plaint, "*Bread, bread, BREAD!*"

And Papava, though she knew full well that she was wickedly and woefully in the wrong, turned a deaf ear: "Come!" she said sharply, to her waiting maid, and drew sorrowing Little Blue Corny into the hut beside her.

Instantly there was a blinding flash, which seemed to the men to come from heaven's own blue—certain it was that the little cloud had long since vanished; and in a twinkling the house of sheaves was in snapping, crackling flames over the heads of the haughty little princess and her patient maid!

Powerless were the men to save them, so fierce and terrible was the heat, and they stood awe-struck and paralyzed to the very marrow with fear. Alas! the headstrong, willful little Pa-

THE PROUD POPPY AND THE LITTLE CORNFLOWER

pava, the precious sheaves, and poor dear Little Blue Corny! It was all over in an instant almost. Bareheaded and in silence the men stood about the blackened, charred heap, until at length old Franc spoke aloud the thought of all: "It was the judgment of the great God!" he said solemnly, and turned away to the palace to acquaint the good king and queen of the sad event.

The following summer, when the golden corn stood tall and straight, in the field where the wheat had been, lo! there sprang from the site of the blackened and charred heap two flowers that were utterly unlike one another: one was a flaunting, rich red beauty, the other was a demure little blue flower of wondrous loveliness.

"Haughty Papava and Little Blue Corny!" said all the beholders in awed voices. For most surely did these flowers, springing from the ashes of the children, typify the character of each.

Sin and innocence! Cruel pride and loving kindness! Rich red poppy and little blue cornflower!

So we see them in the gardens to-day.

A LEGEND OF THE IRIS

PRINCESS IRIS was the favorite attendant and messenger of Juno, the queen of heaven. She it was who always went to the bedside of dying ones, as the messenger of peace and promise to bear away the departing spirit. The ancients pictured her with wings and encircled by a rainbow, for the rainbow was the special magic bridge, fashioned by Juno, on which the princess came down to earth, and over which none but she ever traveled. Red and purple clouds were her wrappings, and her golden chariot was drawn by two handsome peacocks, whose gorgeous tails spread out in the sun and shone like the colors in the rainbow itself.

Iris loved the waters of the earth, for in them she could always see the reflection of her own rainbow colors, and she never failed in passing to tarry for awhile along shore. One day, it chanced that as she drifted idly to earth, shaking water-drops from the clouds for the pure pleasure of seeing them sparkle in the light, she saw far below her the shining waters of a lake, and at once directed her chariot thither.

A LEGEND OF THE IRIS

Stepping out the moment her steeds touched the earth, how was she charmed and delighted in finding some beautiful flowers growing close to the water, stately and tall. "As blue as the blue waters of the sea!" she cried happily, and bent admiringly above the blossoms, touching the petals here and there lovingly, and all unheeding that the drops from her own rainbow hues were sprinkling the flowers plentifully.

No sooner had she passed on than some children came that way. "Oh, look!" they cried, wonderingly. "See this radiant blue lily, all shining with rainbow hues. Let us pick it for the Festival of the Flowers!"

Happy, happy children, as they bore their treasure to the hall, where all the gardeners and flower lovers were exhibiting their choicest blossoms.

"Where did this lovely thing come from?" cried the judges, deeply pleased. "What is it called?"

None knew. But one and all agreed that against the rich loveliness of its robes not a flower there could compete. Deep blue they were like the twilight sky, and as softly shaded as the cloudlets, while here and there was a rich

loveliness of tint sparkling like the rainbow in the sun.

“Iris!” some one cried. “The rainbow messenger! She is ever tarrying at the waterside. Surely she has kissed this bloom! In her honor let the flower be named.”

And so, to this day, the tall lovely blue lily that grows by the water’s edge, half hidden among its own sword-like leaves, is called iris, in memory of Iris, the rainbow queen.

This beautiful flower has another name also, and one perhaps with which you are more familiar, for it is the name that our grandmothers give it: *flower-de-luce*. A name that is also rich in honor, and dates back to the time of Louis the Seventh, the king of France. Having distinguished himself in the second crusade, the king desired, according to the custom of the time, to select a particular blazon. He, therefore, caused the Iris to be emblazoned on the arms of France, and it thus became the “flower of Louis.” Ages passed, Louis shortened to Luce, and this lovely species of the lily became the *flower-de-luce*, the typical flower of chivalry which has, as Ruskin so aptly pointed out, “a sword for its leaf and a lily for a heart.”

LOTUS BLOSSOMS

Do you know the lotus blossoms? How marvelous they are, like golden plates, measuring from four to ten inches across, floating on the surface of lakes, slow-streams and ponds, here and there, from Ontario southward to Florida, and westward to Louisiana and Oklahoma. A yellow form of the sweet-scented white water lily, they seem; but there are fewer petals, and these center into a host of stamens. The great round, ribbed leaves, smooth above, and lined with hairs below, are kept floating by means of the great air canals, which run through both leaf and flower stalks. How truly wonderful it is that roots imbedded deep in mud and slime can send up flowers of such sweetness and purity! And what a silent sermon is here preached for man!

Small wonder that the ancient Egyptians and many millions in India, Persia, China and Japan, have bowed their heads in adoration of the lotus blooms of the Old World. The Egyptians dedicated their species, the sacred lotus, to the

sun-god, and looked upon it as an emblem of the creation of the world from water. This explains why that, in pictures of Egyptian art, the lotus blossoms always stand up so grandly, king above the people and animals that share the picture. From the center of the lotus bloom came forth Brahma, the great Hindu creator of the universe; likewise, too, Buddha, the Mohammedan reformer, whose symbol is the lotus, also appeared floating on this mystic flower.

The flat-topped seed-vessel of the lotus ripens above the water, and herein are located little round nuts, which the water birds love to pick out and enjoy, and incidentally to distribute in their wanderings. In various foreign lands the natives eat both nuts and root of the different species of lotus; and one particular kind of these nuts was held by the early peoples to possess some very wonderful properties. This nut had the flavor of ripened dates, and its effect on the homesick wanderer was most marvelous. Who-soever ate of it on a foreign shore, at once forgot his native land, his family, and his friends, and was content to dwell among the strangers about him for aye!

In the old Grecian records of the *Adventures of Ulysses* is recorded the narrow escape that he

and his crew had in the land of the Lotus-eaters, —a people whose sole food consisted of lotus fruit and blossoms. Briefly the tale runs something in this wise :

Ulysses, the king of Ithaca, went up against Troy, which he left behind him in ruins, and set forth upon further adventures. Fortune, however, now turned against him. The next rich city he attacked repulsed him and his men with great slaughter. A hurricane arose as they put out to sea, storm-clouds blotted out the stars so that the pilots could not hold to their course, and buffeted by wind and wave, the king's vessels with broken masts and torn sails, drifted aimlessly, anchoring at last on the fateful shore of Lotophagi.

There Ulysses dispatched three men ashore to seek aid. These men, however, failed to return, and at length the king, in deepest anxiety, made up a party and went out in their search, expecting to find them imprisoned, if not eaten, by a cannibal host. Imagine then his surprise, when, having gone a short distance, he came upon a jolly party, laughing and feasting beneath the trees, and in their midst, more merry and boisterous than their hosts, the three men whom he had sent for help. Justly wroth,

Ulysses called their names sharply, but to his further indignation the three paid him no more attention than if he had never been their master. Indeed, to all appearances, they looked upon him and his men as curiously as did the strangers whose hospitality they enjoyed!

“Surely,” thought Ulysses to himself, “there is something remarkably strange in all this!”

And he advanced with caution.

His hosts, however, came eagerly to meet him, and extended the warmest welcome. “We have not much to offer you in the way of meat and drink,” they said, “as we live entirely upon the fruit of the lotus. But it satisfies us abundantly, and doubtless you, too, will find that it supplies all that you require.”

So saying they offered a great basket of the tempting fare.

But Ulysses waved it aside. In sharp tones he forbade his men eating any of the nuts on penalty of death, and he ordered, “Right about face, to the ship without delay!” At the same time signing for the three scouts whom he had sent out, to fall in. Instead of obeying, however, these men shrugged their shoulders, and reached again for a supply of the delicious food.

Greatly excited and indignant, fearful of

mutiny from the rebellion he read in the faces of his crew, Ulysses at once called out six of his strongest, most trusted men: "Seize these deserters," he said sternly, "and to the ship every one of you; there is the fiends' own magic in this tempting lotus food! Look sharp, men, as you value the life and happiness of your wives and little ones!"

His sureness and promptness had the desired effect; instantly the crew rallied about him; the deserters were hauled protestingly away, and in short order the disabled Grecian ships were out in the bay, bound whither they knew not, but anywhere to escape the dreadful fate which Ulysses knew had all but clutched them.

As for the three men who had been minded to stay in the realm of the Lotus-eaters, no sooner had that land disappeared from view, than the magic of the direful food loosed its hold, and when they realized what had so nearly befallen them, they gathered about their brave leader and thanked him with trembling voices and misty eyes for the courageous measures which had saved them from being traitors to home and friends.

THE ANEMONE

Wind-flower, wind-flower, why are you here?
This is a boisterous time of the year
For blossoms as fragile and tender as you
To be out on the roadsides, in spring raiment new.
The snow-flakes yet flutter abroad on the air,
And the sleet and the tempest are weary to bear,
Have you not come here, pale darling, too soon?
You would seem more at home with the blossoms in
June.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

AND what, think you, was the wind-flower's answer? "Why have I come here? Why?" she said. "Perhaps to show you that the strong may be sometimes the delicate, too!"

We need only to go back into the history of the wind-flower's origin to quite believe this word for word: You know that long ago the earth was far from being the safe place to dwell upon that it is now. There used to be numerous roaming wild beasts that killed many people and destroyed the crops. The brave men in those days were all mighty hunters, and sometimes for days and days parties scoured the woods to destroy wild beasts.

THE ANEMONE

Among these mighty men who so often covered themselves with glory was a certain youth called Adonis, to whom no danger was too great, no hardship too severe, for his courage to endure. Seeing that he was reckless in exposing himself, the goddess Venus, who loved him, made haste to urge a warning: "Be brave, my lad," she said, "when you meet the timid, but do not oppose your courage to the courageous. Do not attack the beasts that Nature has armed with weapons. Think of their terrible horns and claws and teeth! What honor will it be to you if you lose your life in their destruction? Beware how you expose yourself to danger!"

Adonis, however, only laughed at her fears, and waved to her gayly as she entered her chariot and was wheeled swiftly away by her graceful white swans.

The next moment he was attracted by the loud barking of his dogs, and seeing that they had roused a wild boar from its lair he instantly gave chase, notwithstanding that it was one of the fiercest and most vicious of the dreaded beasts, and that he was unarmed but for his spear.

Away through the forest they went headlong, and presently Adonis, pressing an advantage,

hurled his spear, and wounded the animal so that it was driven into a perfect frenzy of pain and rage. Gnawing at the weapon which stuck in its side, the creature managed to drop the rankling thing, and then flew at its enemy in a passion of fury. Adonis, perforce, took to his heels, and ran as fast as he could, but alas! the boar gained on him at every bound, and shortly the youth was overcome and left, gored and terribly mutilated by the creature's tusks, dying alone in an open stretch in the woods.

And hither came Venus, attracted by his heart-rending groans. When she saw that it was her beloved young hero, who lay stretched there, and that nothing could be done, she cried out in great grief: "Oh, Adonis, my beloved, each spring you shall return to earth that all the world may delight in you and remember your prowess."

And so it happened that the next season, on the spot where Adonis had fallen, there sprang up a quantity of flowers, streaked here and there with red the color of blood. But they, like the young hunter, were short lived. They came, however, shortly to be scattered well over the wooded hillsides of the Old World, and westward to the Rocky Mountains in the New.

THE ANEMONE

It is said that the wind blows the blossoms open, and afterwards blows the petals away; so the plant is called anemone or wind-flower. In China, it is styled the "death bloom," and is much planted in grave-yards. The old Romans always picked the first wind-flowers with solemnity and prayer, believing that due reverence of it would keep them safe from fever throughout the year. Even to this day certain European peasants, it is said, run past a colony of innocent wind-flowers with dread in their hearts, fairly holding their breath as they fly, for they think that the air all about them is tainted with death.

According to another old Greek tradition, Anemos, the ruler of the winds, always sent these delicate star-like namesakes as harbinger of the rude and war-like gusts which were shortly to come from his island realms away in the seas, no one knew just whither. Certain it is that the anemone is the "child of the wind." It is "fed and refreshed by the cold, rushing rains, and the storm rocks its cradle with lullabies wild." No blast, however fierce, can break its slender, pliable stem, as it trembles and bows in meek submission to its fate.

Pick the anemone and it is soon wilted and gone; dig it up carefully, keeping as much dirt

firm about the roots as possible, and it will bloom for many days in a pot on the window sill, a delight to all beholders. It is then that we take time to observe the plant carefully: How beautiful is the background of pretty leaves whorled where they set off the lone flower to best advantage, and how dainty are its petals! Stay! *Are* they petals? No, indeed, we see now that this is another one of those economical plants that makes shift to use its sepals as an advertising card. Nor is it altogether dependent on insect visitors, for these are apt to be few in the windy days of early spring. As the blossoms nod on the stem, they are so arranged that the pollen may fall in such a fashion as to self-set the seed, in case none is brought in from the colony of wind-flowers round about.

The anemone is a member of the great Crow-foot family. How many of its cousins have we already mentioned, do you remember? Two species are commonly recognized—the rue-anemone, of the wind-swept hillsides, which is the most familiar species, and the wood or true anemone.

CLYTIE

A LEGEND OF THE SUNFLOWER

ONCE upon a time there was a beautiful woodland nymph named Clytie. Her hair was a lovely golden color, just the shade of the cowslips and buttercups that grew in the meadows where she loved to roam. Her dress was green and so nearly matched the grass and the leaves that she was easily hidden among them.

Day after day Clytie sat among the swaying flowers, listening to the brook, as it went murmuring happily along, but her eyes were neither for the beautiful blossoms nor the gleaming water. Her face was ever turned in adoration toward the sun, and how very, very much she wished that Apollo, the sungod, would swoop down in his golden chariot and take her with him. What joy it would be to dart out the rosy gates of dawn, upward and aloft, in that marvelous golden chariot, drawn by the fiery steeds fed always on ambrosia, and guided by Apollo's strong arms and far-seeing eye! What fun to watch the moon and the stars slipping off to their beds, and to see the earth beginning to

glow and kindle under Apollo's rays! Glorious Apollo, there was no love like his; if only he would but come down to her! And so the foolish maiden sat ever with her face turned toward him, waiting and hoping for something that could never be.

Sometimes dark clouds veiled the sun-god, and then Clytie was sad and unhappy, and her face drooped. But, if the rain came suddenly, then she waved her arms and shouted with glee, for she knew that soon Apollo's face would come peeping out. When the sun started down toward the western horizon, and the shadows grew long, Clytie always rose with her arms full of the flowers that she had absently plucked, and hurried to the top of a high hill, stumbling sadly sometimes, for never for one moment did her eyes leave the fast disappearing chariot. Here, when Apollo had quite gone, she stood staring at the clouds so long as their purple and pink and golden loveliness reflected his glory, then as quietly and sweetly as flowers go to sleep, she sank to rest upon the mossy earth.

Nor did she ever fail to rouse with the first twitter of the birds in the morning; Apollo's first glance over the shining rim of his chariot

CLYTIE

always saw her standing waiting eagerly for him:

“Her golden locks, streaming wide,
Were kissed by zephyrs gay;
Her charming face they did not hide
From the eyes of the god of day.

“But bright Apollo did not care
To woo this tender dove.
From morn till eve she waited there
To catch one glance of love.”

And at last so disappointed was the maid that she could no longer roam about in her usual happy way. For nine days she sat and tasted neither food nor drink, her own silly tears her only nourishment. Each morning as the sun came up, she begged Apollo with her pleading eyes, and all day long as he followed his daily course, she saw no other object. Why, oh! why, would he not come and take her with him? Wondrous, beautiful, golden Apollo!

“Bless the child,” murmured the sun-god, more than once, knowing full well how it was with her, “she is not immortal; she could not ride by my side! Why, the fiery breath of my steeds would crisp a nymph in a twinkling!”

But he determined to ask Jupiter to interfere. Thus it was that, on the ninth morning, as Cly-

tie sat faint and weary, still watching Apollo in prayerful appeal, that all suddenly her limbs took root in the moist soil, and her sweet face became a flower, with golden curls a-flying. Straight and tall the flower stood proudly on its stalk, with pale green leaves about it, and as the sun moved slowly across the sky the flower-face followed the golden chariot slowly from east to west. And so Clytie stands

“. . . to-day as she stood then,
A sunflower, strong and bright;
A sign of constancy to men
Who sometimes scorn and slight.”

It is a fanciful legend. But the belief that the sun-flower turns always on its stem to face the sun is not strictly true. It is, however, a world-wide emblem of constancy. Thus Moore's lovely lines:

“The heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look that she turned when he rose.”

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

IN a grim old castle with thick walls and tall towers, high up among the snow-capped Alpine peaks, a little girl lay very ill. She was a favorite in the castle and in the monastery below, and for her sake the busy maids went about their Christmas preparations half-heartedly, and the monks came and went on errands of love. Father Celestine, famous for his skill in healing, knelt beside the little white bed and ministered to the child with tender care. An old shepherd, from far down the valley, came to bring his little friend a wooden lamb which he had patiently carved and painted. But even its startling black eyes and cherry lips failed to interest the little patient. By and by she drifted off into a deep sleep. Monk and shepherd stole away on tip-toe, hoping that she would wake refreshed, and only the mother, the Lady Walpurga, watched beside the little one.

Presently the child started up with outstretched arms: "Look, mother, look!" she cried, "See the beautiful lady and all the little

children! See, she has given me roses, white roses!" Then she sank back, with closed eyes.

The poor mother was nearly frantic with grief. "It is the beautiful angels of heaven," she sobbed, "and my darling will soon join them!" She fell on her knees and wept bitterly. Then a thought of Father Celestine came to her. Perhaps he might even yet administer some saving herb! She called to the servants to send for him. But all had gone to Christmas mass, excepting an old dame in the chimney-corner, who stayed to keep an eye on the pots and kettles.

Leaving this woman by the child, the mother herself set off down the mountain in great haste. The peaks were still tipped with rosy light, but down in the valley Night had drawn her sable mantle. Into this gloom the heavy-hearted mother hurried, with no guide but the glimmering lights in the convent and no sound to cheer her save the crunching snow.

Presently there appeared before her a long procession of misty figures. A tall beautiful woman in a long white cloak walked in the lead, and following her came a troop of children, also dressed in long white cloaks. Lady Walpurga quickly hid herself, and watched their sweet, serious faces with bated breath. At the

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very last came a little girl who seemed to have great difficulty in keeping up with the others. Her cloak was too long and she stumbled every now and then in a most distressing fashion. Lady Walpurga was so sorry for her that she forgot all about her fright. She ran to the little one, and kneeling down, pinned the cloak up out of harm's way, and brushed off the chilling snow.

As the mother rose to her feet, the beautiful leader turned and smiled radiantly; then pointed slowly to the ground beside her. A merry peal from the convent bells rang over the snow, and the procession magically disappeared. Lady Walpurga rubbed her eyes as though to clear them of dreams, and advanced hesitatingly to the spot where the beautiful lady had pointed. And lo! out of the ice and the snow, she beheld a beautiful little bush, standing all covered with clustering green leaves and snow-white blossoms.

"The white roses that my little daughter saw in her vision!" she cried delightedly. "Who knows what magic they may contain?"

Speedily plucking a few blossoms she hurried back to the old manor, forgetting Father Celestine entirely. At home she found the old shepherd giving a drink of goat's milk and juni-

per berries to the little one. She pushed him one side and breathlessly placed the roses in the little trembling hands.

A low murmur of delight broke from the child. She buried her face happily in the roses and drew in deep breaths of their spicy odor. Presently she began to sneeze, and oh, how she sneezed! So hard that the little white bed fairly shook, and the mother and the good shepherd were frightened almost out of their senses. But soon the paroxysm passed. "Water, give me water!" gasped the little one. The old shepherd held his cup to her lips. She drank thirstily and sank back in a deep, natural sleep.

"The saints be praised!" cried the shepherd, "The fever has broken. My drink and the sneezing have saved her!"

"'Twas these blessed roses!" cried the Lady Walpurga, and with tears of joy glistening in her eyes, she told how she had found them.

Instantly the old shepherd bent to examine the blossoms, which until that moment he had scarcely heeded. "'Tis the Christmas rose—the sneezewort that only a few people have ever seen," he cried, excitedly. "Count the petals! See how many there are—more than a hundred, some folks say. As for the procession, it was

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none other than Frau Berchta, the White Witch, and her Little People," he declared, solemnly. "It's lucky that you have a kind heart, my lady. For the good Frau wanders about over the mountains from Christmas to Twelfth Night, 'tis said, blessing all whom she finds worthy. Always she is especially pleased with any form of kindness, and bounteously repays the doer. Rest assured, the child will live!"

As though confirming this blessed intelligence, from the cloister below there now came the swelling sounds of the Christmas anthem: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men,*" and the mother and the good shepherd bowed their heads, and stood with glad and happy hearts.



PIXIES AND TULIPS

IN Devonshire, not far from a marsh where the pixies used to hold their nightly revels, there lived an old woman who was very fond of flowers. Such a marvelous garden as she had! Even the king and queen, one day in passing, paused to admire her wondrous tulip bed. There was not its like in the whole country round. Such great deep-cupped, many-hued tulips as there were, and so sweet-scented that the air all about was heavy with fragrance! The place was especially the joy and delight of the pixies, and after nightfall they were always to be seen about the bed. And none but the old lady knew why: the tulips were such ideal pixie cradles that the mother-pixies delighted to put their little ones to sleep there. Indeed nothing could have been more convenient than this lovely nursery so close to their tournament ground!

So, night after night, in the wee, small hours, there often drifted up to the old lady's room, close under the thatch, the strains of sweetest music. "Tis fairy music," she would say hap-

pily. "Who could doubt it?" And her dreams thereafter would be filled with pleasing fancies of herself as the benefactor of the fairy horde. But she never ventured near the bed after night-fall. She was afraid of frightening her guests away.

As for the tulips themselves, blessed and doubly blessed they were by their delighted visitors, and they grew to such size and of such matchless elegance that on no account would the good dame allow one to be picked.

Months went on, and finally the old lady was taken very ill and died. Her son, a coarse, rough fellow, who had always thought his mother wasted altogether too much land in flowers, at once determined to plow up the tulip bed. "They are a useless weed," he said. "I shall grow beets and parsnips for the stock in their stead."

And he was as good as his word. Before the kind-hearted owner of the garden had been three days in her grave, the tulips were gone, and in their place stretched a strip of blackest loam, all duly marked and planted in the straightest possible rows.

"No good will come of it," said the neighbors, who knew how the old dame had prized her

flowers, and one and all heard the mournful wail that swept all up and down the valley that night. "Tis an indignation meeting," they agreed. "Bob might better have saved his seed."

And so it proved, for not a single spear of green ever appeared above ground.

"Bosh!" said the son, when he heard what people were saying, "pixies be hanged! The seed was old; I feared it would never sprout. I shall plant the patch to corn."

It was done forthwith, but again the mournful wail rose and fell through the long night. And the people shook their heads: "It's no use," they said. "The pixies will never forgive the despoiling of their nursery." For on her death-bed the old lady had told the secret of the pixie cradles, begging that they should never be disturbed. And her son had promised. But he had not thought it necessary to keep his word. "It was only a dying woman's whim," he said.

However, precious little good his broken promise did him: he had his work all for nothing. For the ground remained fresh and black as when the soil was first turned, and never a sprig of green of any sort marked its level surface.

But not so with the old lady's grave. Though



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no mortal ever tended it, the most wondrous tulips bloomed over and all about it: proof positive that the pixies knew where their kind friend slept. Moreover, people passing that way late at night often heard the sweetest strains of fairy music. "Tis the pixie mothers putting their babies to sleep in the tulip cradles," they would say. "Hark to their silvery-toned lullabies!"

LADY COLUMBINE

WHO would ever guess that the delicate little anemone and hepatica are kin of the elegant and stylish-looking Lady Columbine? But then no one would ever know that the modest little bloodroot, blooming shyly in out-of-the-way places, was related to the proud, dashing poppy; or that the common little saxifrage, flowering humbly in rocky clefts, could claim the closest connections with the great showy hydrangea, standing so regally in our gardens. Plainly it is with flower people as it is with human folks; the humblest family has some one individual who seems to make up in grace and charm for all that the others lack.

Such an odd flower is the columbine, and so richly colored! Perhaps you may have gathered it in the woods, as I did long years ago, wrongly naming it the wild honey suckle. How sweet is the nectar in the long tube-shaped honey-cells! Dainty little horns-of-plenty they are! And queerer than all else these tube-shapes are really petals, drawn out at the end to fashion

LADY COLUMBINE

the little horns. The sepals are five in number, and if you don't watch yourself you will be mistaking them for petals, too, so like are they in shape to what we usually find doing duty in that line. A host of stamens stick out in a dainty golden tassel, but there are only five pistils, you can count them easily.

"Dancing in red and yellow petticoats, to the rhythm of the breeze, along the ledge of some overhanging rock," says Blanchan, "the columbine coquettes with some Punchinello as if daring him to reach her at his peril."

For whom are the delicious honey-horns of the columbine filled? No short-tongued insects can reach them that is certain. But stay! Look yonder: there's a bee drilling a hole into the tip of a horn. Little robber, if he can't have the honey by fair means he will have it by foul! Ordinarily, however, small bees content themselves with a feast of columbine pollen and pass on. Here comes a great big drummer. Can he manage to enter these blossoms, hanging downward as they do? Certainly, he is a master hand at standing on his head, as we have seen, and in truth the trick "has no more terrors for him," according to Blanchan, "than a trapeze has for the trained acrobat."

Butterflies and moths come sailing along, and pause, attracted by the gay red and yellow advertising cards. But they have no acrobatic proclivities, and moreover, their tongues are not fitted to probe into these deep funnel-shaped narrowing pantries. So they flit away elsewhere; the bumblebee, too, passes on, after a few plunges, and the bulk of the honey-sweet pantries have not been touched.

We feel sure the columbine must have spread her feast for other lovers, and we can make a pretty strong guess who. For we know a dainty feathered guest who is fond of sipping at deep red and yellow cups, and it matters not much to him which side up they hang. And sure enough! "Speaking of angels," you know—here's the ruby-throat now! Nor is he anywise uncertain how to proceed: into the first luscious red horn-of-plenty he dips with vigor, then out and into the next one, and so on until each of the five flower spurs have been emptied; then he attends with business-like directness to the other cornucopias in the clump, and later to such other plants in the colony as it takes to satisfy his sweet-tooth; when he is off and away as suddenly as he came, all unconscious of the pollen he has so plentifully scattered. But we feel

LADY COLUMBINE

quite like offering him a rising vote of thanks. Well we know that we can pass this way next season and find an even larger bed of columbines than are here to-day.

In Europe, where there are no humming-birds, the columbine wears a blue dress, and her honey spurs are shorter, stouter, and more curved. For she must depend upon the large bumblebees to set her seed, so she dresses in their favorite color, and builds her pantries for their convenience. None of the columbines have any arrangement for self-fertilization. The seed-vessel is an odd little pod with openings up and down its sides.

Occasionally the columbine is white, so that its name which comes from a word meaning two doves is not so inappropriate as it would seem.

“O Columbine, open your folded wrapper
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell.”

THE HYACINTH

OF course you know the hyacinth: you have seen its beautiful shades of blue, pink or white spikes of bloom in the florist's window many times, even if you have never planted the onion-like bulbs in pots of your own, or grown them in your garden. Coming with the crocus and narcissus, before the snow is quite gone, nothing is sweeter or more lovely than its dainty bells of spicy fragrance. And no flower is easier to grow. Once the bulbs are planted they go on increasing from year to year without danger of overcrowding, and no excuse whatever is needed for them to slip through the fence and away, running wild.

The hyacinth belongs to the lily family, and is a very great favorite with people all over the world. Its native land is the Levant, which is the coast and islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, more particularly Syria and Asia Minor. In this far away land, you know, the favorite style of dress is the tunic, which is in

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short a loose flowing gown or wrapper. And the hyacinth, used always to this style of dress, adopted the fashion to such an extent that botanists say that it has a "tunicated" bulb—meaning that the bulb is wrapped about by various garments, which are in truth merely coats of scales.

If we examine the hyacinth bulb carefully, we note that its "tunic" is made up of leaf scales, which, instead of going on and forming leaves, remained scales set aside by Nature for a special purpose. Indeed, botanists tell us that some of the scales on a full-grown bulb are really the fleshy end of the leaf-stalks, little store-houses, if you please, of starch and other plant materials. So, you see, that a tunic is a very convenient garment; not only does it wrap up the plant, but it feeds it also! It stands as the sole supply of nourishment until the roots and green leaves form and get about their life business of forming more food from the earth and soil-water, the sun and air; then what is left of the tunic, after giving rise to the *two* "tunicated" bulbs which are to form the plant's next generation of hyacinths, decays and still helps by enriching and loosening the soil about the roots of the now independent plant. Many plants, we find, favor the tunic, among them being the tulip and a

certain common garden vegetable which often fills our eyes with tears on beholding it.

If we go a little further into our analysis of the hyacinth bulb, dissecting it piece by piece under a powerful lens, we find that its fleshy scales are folded together very much as the scales are folded about a tree bud. It reminds us of the surprise package that has come by mail, and we go on unwrapping tunic after tunic, until lo! in the very center of the bulb, we find the precious gift—a tiny flower-cluster wrapped about by half a dozen delicate leaves. These are white and fragile and very, very small, but what a wealth of promise is theirs! Something else there is here, too, that we look at with delight. On either side of the tiny plant stem are the bulb buds which we have already mentioned,—the guarantee that where one hyacinth bloomed this year *two* will stand next season, if all goes well.

If you have ever planted hyacinth bulbs, you know just how the plant shoots up, under the warm kiss of the sun, and how soon after the first sprig of green appears the hyacinth bells are ready to ring. It seems almost as though some fairy magic had been at work. And, indeed, we are justified in suspecting this, when

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we learn the old, old tale concerning the origin of the hyacinth:

In a certain neighborhood long, long ago, were two boys, Apollo and Hyacinthus, who were the best of chums. Day after day they were together, mixing in all manner of out-door sports, and never were the hours long enough to enjoy even the half that they had planned. Fishing trips and pleasant excursions up the sides of the mountain often occupied them for days, and such delightful times as they had! But, best of all, perhaps, were the games they had in a delightful old garden near their home. Both were exceedingly skillful in playing quoits, and on a certain day they set out to try for the mastery. How it happened no one could after relate, but just as Apollo threw the discus, Hyacinthus eager for his turn ran to get it, and in some manner the quoit struck the ground and rebounded, striking him full on the forehead. Instantly the youth, so gay and eager but a moment before, fell to the earth, as a dying flower droops upon its stem.

Now the lad Apollo, as you have perhaps already guessed from his name, was none other than the great god Apollo, the Lord of the Silver Bow and the Bringer of Light, who was

but sojourning on earth, in one of the pleasant guises which he so loved. On seeing the fate of his young friend and playmate, the lad who had given him so many joyous, happy hours, he ran to him greatly concerned: "Oh, my beloved Hyacinthus," he cried sorrowfully, "you die robbed of your youth by me. Yours is the suffering, but mine the crime. Would that I could die for you! But since that may not be, you shall always live in my memory and my song. I shall always sing with regretful sorrow. And you, my beloved, you shall become a beautiful flower!"

And so it was.

Next spring, on the spot where the young lad's life had ebbed, there sprang up a beautiful blue flower, bearing the scepter of kings.

"'Tis Hyacinthus, the king's son," cried the common folks delightedly, and so to this day the flower comes up from the ground each returning spring to remind us of the youth's sad fate.

DAISIES AT HOME AND ABROAD

ALL the world loves a field of daisies, excepting the farmer on whose land they are trespassing! There is charm and fortune in them; ask the happy child, who in vacation days sits deep in the daisy field the long hours through, making chains and white-capped old women galore, and listening delightedly to bobolink's mad music; or again ask the maidens who have times untold tested their fate by the old, old process, "He loves me, he loves me not!"

"When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

So sang Shakespeare, while Burns set all the world aglow by his lines to a

"Wee, modest, crimson-tippit flower."

Both of these great poets, however, saw an English spring scene and an English flower. Their daisy is quite different from ours—"A little pink and white blossom," says Blanchan,

“that hugs the English turf as if it loved it—the true day’s-eye, for it closes at nightfall and opens with the dawn.”

The daisy belongs to the thistle family, and there are several members in the clan, among those most familiar being the common white daisy, and the yellow ox-eye or black-eyed Susan, which is such a favorite with artists and city folks who seldom know the pleasures of the country roadside. The common little dog-fennel, a miserable pest in backyards and gardens, is styled by botanists—the pig-sty daisy. And in this case there is something in the name, for as everybody knows this is the very spot the little nuisance likes best!

Type of one of the great plant divisions is the daisy, and that is the reason we have introduced it here. Let us examine a specimen under the lens. A black-eyed Susan will do admirably. First we must note that the narrow orange-yellow “petals” which make such a beautiful border around the brown center, are really not petals at all. Each one is a “female floret” whose open corolla has grown large and showy for advertising purposes. “Look!” they cry to all passers, “nectar here! Stop and taste!”

And sure enough! For as we rapidly pick

the specimen in pieces, to our surprise, we find that these yellow florets are merely a beginning. The whole brown center is made up of tube-shaped blossoms, "huddled together in a green cup as closely as they can be packed." Within each of these tiny brown tubes is a close ring of stamens, standing guard around the little pistil where the seed is to be set. As the pistil rises through their midst, its little brush-like tip sweeps the pollen from the swollen knob-like ends, or anthers, which crown the stamens, and carries it up where the first visiting insect must remove it.

Bees, wasps, beetles, butterflies, and more than all the flies, cannot keep away from such a provident hostess, and shortly the table is cleared slick and clean. Then the two arms of the wise little pistil, which have kept tightly closed for fear of self-fertilization, open out, and a new dish is offered: the honey in the nectaries. Moreover, the little pistil-arms mucilage themselves, so that every bit of pollen from another flower may safely stick to them. Then the guest with the long tongue is anxiously awaited, and usually he is not long in coming. For, as one writer naïvely puts it, all insects look upon the daisy as a sort of "department store," where every

want may be supplied. As a result, immense quantities of cross-fertilized seed is set in every patch,—“Small wonder that our fields are white with daisies—a long and a merry life to them!”

But to return again to the make-up of the daisy, each one of these little brown tubes is in truth a tiny floret, or a flower by itself, if you please. Therefore the whole bloom may be said to be a compound, or union of many flower-heads crowded together. Botanists put this in one term: they call it a composite flower. And so many plants are there which bloom in a composite fashion that they have been grouped under one great division called the *Compositas*. The asters, sunflowers, and dandelions are familiar specimens of this large class. Can you name others?

How often have we heard some one exclaim: “You’re a daisy!” But do you know that this is really not so much a slang phrase as it would seem? In the eastern counties of old England “daisy” used formerly to be considered as an adjective meaning excellent—as for instance, “She’s a daisy lass to work,” meaning, “She’s a good girl to work.” So the American youngster’s “You’re a daisy!” is simply provincial old English.

THE SOUTH WIND AND THE DANDELION

UP in his soft cloud-hammock far in the southern sky, the South Wind lay rocking slowly to and fro.

“I ought to be away to the Northland,” he murmured lazily to himself, “but it is so sweet and comfortable here I dread to set out.”

So he tarried, swinging idly, until presently the Zephyrs came by: “What, South Wind, are you still here?” they asked, in surprise. “We thought you gone these many days! It is getting very lovely in the North, they say. The grass is growing green, and the sky is of the deepest blue.”

“I know,” said the South Wind, in his laziest don’t-care drawl, “they seem to be doing very well without me. I’ll be along one of these days.”

And forthwith he dismissed the matter and dropped off to sleep.

Nor did the South Wind think of duty and the Northland again until the following morn-

ing: "I surely ought to be off," he told himself again, then, and rising, he stood up on tip-toe and looked away and away to the northward. "Ha!" he cried admiringly, "they certainly are coming on! But what are those yellow flowers starring the green grass? I do not remember of ever seeing their like before. How bright and beautiful they are! Like the sun in all his spring glory! I'll be off this very afternoon and pick the whole host of 'em!"

So saying he laid down again in his soft cloud-hammock, and stretching himself lazily, stared contentedly off into the deep blue of the heavens. "How delicious it is here!" he murmured presently, and then fell a-nidnodding. By and by he was sound asleep, and of course he did not go to the Northland in the afternoon. Whoever heard of starting on a long journey at that late hour? It would be much better to wait until morning!

Nor did he go then, either; for, as you have guessed, the South Wind was very lazy. And, though he would have been shocked had any one mentioned it, his favorite motto was, in truth, "Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow!" So he tarried, dillydallying day after day, telling himself now, and yet



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THE SOUTH WIND AND THE DANDELION

again, "Surely I must be after those beautiful yellow blossoms! They are marvelously lovely."

Here and there the earth people questioned one another, saying: "From whence came these beautiful blossoms? What are they called?"

No one knew. But their lack of knowledge was not serious. Names were easily coined in those days.

"Look at the dented edges of the leaves," suggested one who was examining the plant for its key-note. "Just like a lion's tooth! Stay! There you have it: just the very name—*dent de lion*."

And dent-de-lion it became forthwith!

Presently this was improved upon by the children who loved the "dandy, spandy little flower"; they called it the dandelion. Other names which came later were blowball, peasant's clock, and lion's-tooth. But none of these seem to fit so nicely as dandelion!

Meantime, now, the South Wind came on perforce, eager to pick the bright "harmless gold." But lo! it had vanished. Not a yellow flower remained in all the fields of the North. In the places where he had beheld them were straight little stalks with airy, fairy, snow-white heads. What could have happened? Alas! it

was a problem all too deep for the South Wind.

“Perchance, my brother, the North Wind, has breathed his frost upon them?” he said speculatively, and if he had known how, the South Wind would most certainly have frowned. Alas! the precious, wondrous golden flowers! “Well, well,” he murmured plaintively, “That’s how I’m paid for my slothfulness,” and then, warned betimes, he hurried on, lest he lose out somewhere else.

As he vanished, the children came out to the meadow, “Oh, look,” they cried, “the poor old dandies have gone to seed! See how their little tufted feathers are riding in the zephyr trains of the South Wind! Let’s hope they do not all follow him!”

They did not, of course; for next year, not only was the meadow well-filled with glorious dandelions, but they came up all along the roadsides, and in the yards and gardens. “Pestiferous weeds!” said those who had to contend with them, but the children greeted them as jolly old friends and laughingly spun their dandelion curls and blew the time of day.

“It is strange where they all went to, and how they came again with such reënforcements,” said the South Wind, looking upon them from his

THE SOUTH WIND AND THE DANDELION

cloud-hammock. "How beautiful they are! I vow that this time they shall not escape me! A good armful I shall gather to carry away Northward."

And, for once, the South Wind was true to his word!

With his help, to-day the dandelion has managed to land its peaceful legions in every part of the civilized world and to take possession of the soil. "Never say die!" is its motto, and so strong and thrifty is its seed that "after soaking in the briny ocean for twenty-eight days—long enough for a current to carry them a thousand miles along the coast—they are still able to germinate."

Hosts of bees, wasps, beetles and butterflies feed at its always well-spread pollen tables, and thirsty tongues sip at its nectar wells. Like the daisy and other members of its Composite family, the dandelion runs "a department store," and somehow manages by "consummate executive ability to make every visitor unwittingly contribute to its success." Nor does it put its trust altogether in outsiders; if by accident any floret is left unattended, arrangements are made for self-fertilization. Not a chance does the dandelion lose: "Keep pushing," is its watchword,

early and late. The lawn mower may clip it again and again; you may even painstakingly dig it up with a knife; but lo! when your back is turned, a few leaves are thrown out from some over-looked root and a little yellow-crowned blossom nestles low in the grass and shortly there stands triumphant a whole host of tiny parachutes ready to set sail on the first passing breeze!

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