

STARS OF EARTH;
OR,
OUR COUNTRY FLOWERS.

CHAPTER I.
JANUARY.

"Ye field flowers! the gardens eclipse you,
'tis true,
Yet, wildings of nature, I doat upon you."



O we love flowers? I think the answer to this question in nine cases out of ten would be affirmative; it is the fashion to admire these bright "stars of earth,"

in various degrees, of course.

Some people value them because they look pretty, and adorn their gardens and rooms; others, because they can be grouped into tasteful and perfumed bouquets. But they have no knowledge of the structure and habits of the blossoms, interesting and varied as the study ever is. This does not seem the design of the all-wise Master who gave us this splendid creation, and who, while walking amongst us on earth, drew so many of His teachings from the way-side flowers, the trees, and the pastures, and told us to "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."

These thoughts were impressed on my mind during the first week my two nieces, Laura and Fanny St. Ledger, came to stay at Fairview Cottage. Town-bred, delicate girls, accustomed to the excitements of fashionable life, to stately promenades in Kensington Gardens, or to equally fashionable drives with their mamma in the parks, how would they be able to endure, much less enjoy, their twelve-months' visit in the very heart of the country?

Their father held a high official position, and in that capacity had accepted a foreign appointment for a year; his wife had accompanied him abroad, and the two girls were to stay with me during their absence.

I soon discovered they hated the country, had not the slightest appreciation of the beauties of nature, cared little for the flowers in the hedge-row, the trees in the woods, the grass in the fields, the heath on the moors, or the ferns in the lowlands. What if I could help them to gain cultured and intelligent knowledge of all these lovely objects, be a lowly interpreter of their leading aspects, and thus implant a taste in my nieces' hearts that would last them a lifetime!

During our country walks we should have employment for the eye, the mind, the fingers, and the imagination; rural scenes would no longer be voted tame, uninteresting, and lonely, but would teem with familiar objects, varied in hue, form, and beauty. That evening as we gathered round the tea-table I began my first teaching, and it commenced with the opening question in this chapter. I asked Laura if she was fond of flowers.

"Oh, yes; we had some splendid camellias in our conservatory when I came away from home," she answered, indifferently.

Laura was a pale girl, about thirteen years old, with mild grey eyes, light hair, and was as fragile as the graceful pink wood anemone, that sways with every touch of the spring breeze.

"Do you like flowers?" I asked Fanny, who was a year younger than her sister, repeating the same question. The girl's brown eyes sparkled, and with a toss of her glossy dark curls and a gleam of her white teeth, she inquired laughingly,

"Didn't Laura give a right answer, Aunt Carrie?"

"She confessed to liking hot-house flowers."

"Wasn't that enough? Hot-house flowers are by far the best."

"They are the most highly cultivated, of course; but I confess to being fondest of wild flowers—those that are given to us profusely, like the air, the light, and many more of God's precious gifts."

"Precious! I should call them weeds, Aunt Carrie; our gardener always pulled up 'wild flowers' by handfuls, and threw them away."

"I suppose they may be called 'weeds' when they intrude into select garden beds and borders; but while you are both staying here with me I should like you to visit the natural haunts of the wild flowers, their own domains, where God's own hand has planted them, and where they are not called 'weeds.' You shall see them on the hill-sides, in the fields and woods, and in the hedges."

"Oh, I shall like that!" exclaimed Fanny, with enthusiasm; but her sister looked profoundly indifferent. "Common weeds" had no charms for her at this time.

I looked at the two girls, with their refined, delicate faces, their slender forms, and thought they almost looked like hothouse plants themselves. From being pent up in a heated atmosphere, and from only taking restricted exercise in crowded places, they had both become puny and sickly-looking.

Well, there was fresh air around Fairview, and bracing breezes, lovely walks, and splendid scenery; could the girls only be taught to love and enjoy the simple beauties of nature, doubtless health and vigour would return to them again.

After tea, I brought forth a little pot of primroses, that with great care and tending I had been nursing for some time, and now, on the last day of January, they were in full bloom.

"Look at this flower," I said; "it has five leaves, called petals, and the whole blossom is termed a corolla, or little crown."

"The petals seem to end in a straight tube," said Fanny, who had been examining the flower attentively.

"Yes, they are all joined in one piece, and the tube grows out of a green cup, or *b. ket*, called a calyx. This outside calyx is formed to encircle flowers, as if to take care of them, and to guard the more dainty and delicately-coloured petals. It joins the long, tender stem, and is generally green, but not always. Notice the tint of the primrose petals, a pale, delicate yellow, peculiarly its own—that we call 'primrose colour.'"

"Have all flowers five petals?" asked Fanny.

"No, some have less, some a great many more; the dahlia, for instance, has many petals, the convolvulus seems to have only a single large one—but if you look very closely you

will see convolvulus petals are merely joined, and the join forms a kind of ridge or seam in the flower. The primrose grows on a separate stalk, that springs direct from the root; it is called a *scape*. All blossoms are not formed like the primrose, nor all scapes like this. Some have leaves growing direct from the stalk, some bunches of flowers that spring from the same stem like the cowslip, and other stems creep along the ground."

"Like the strawberry?" suggested Fanny.

"Yes; or the creeping buttercup, and many other plants. But we will return to our primrose. Look inside the corolla, and what do you see there?"

"A delicate little column with a small round head to it. How pretty! Is there any use in that?" asked Laura.



CALYX.



"It forms a very important part of the flower. Look at it minutely; that is called the pistil. The top of it is the stigma, which is of various shapes in various flowers. The lower part is the ovary, from *ovum*, an egg; and in this we must look for the future seed of the plant. In simple flowers the pistil is the very centre, sometimes in a single column, like that of the primrose; sometimes several slender pistils spring from the same ovary, as in the handsome marsh marigold. Again let us examine our primrose. Do you see anything else inside it?"

"Only five tiny, tiny threads, growing tightly on the inside of the petals," exclaimed Fanny.

"Those 'tiny, tiny threads' are called stamens. They are very small indeed in the primrose, and are joined to the petals, or leaves; but in many flowers they grow round the pistil. Sometimes they are few in number, whilst in other blossoms they may be reckoned by hundreds."

"Are they of any use?" asked Laura.

"They are most necessary to the plant—in fact, the top of these little stamens are store-houses on a small scale. At the top is a box, bag, or cell, or whatever you may choose to call so tiny a thing. The botanical name for it is anther. Within it, very closely packed, is a kind of yellow dust, called pollen. This dust feeds the pistil, and without both stamens and pistil no flower is perfect, and there could be neither seeds nor fruit."

"How does the box open, and send forth the yellow dust?"

"In various ways, Laura. Sometimes it opens of itself with a jerk, and scatters the dust in all directions, so that the pistil is sure to get its share; sometimes the bees and butterflies carry the dust from flower to flower. There are numerous ways in which the pistil is kept properly supplied, or else we should neither have fruit to eat nor seeds to sow."

"Now I call that wonderful!" said Laura, roused at last. "I never thought there was so much to talk about in a common primrose."

"We have not half done yet," I said, laughingly; "but, as it is getting late, we will resume the subject on another occasion."

USEFUL HINTS.

GINGERBREAD.—Flour 1½ lbs., Scotch oatmeal ½ lb., treacle 1½ lb., brown sugar 1 lb., butter ½ lb., ginger 3 oz., and seven eggs. Put the treacle, sugar, and butter on the fire together till hot, mix them well, add a teaspoonful of pearl ash; then beat the eggs well and add them. Add the other ingredients, well mixing all together in a large basin; let the mixture stand two hours before the fire, pour into a shape, and bake in a slow oven.

TO MAKE FURNITURE POLISH.—1 oz. beeswax and ½ oz. white wax, cut into thin shreds and dissolved in 1 pint of turpentine. It will require to be stirred occasionally, while dissolving; apply with a piece of flannel and polish with a dry soft duster.

LIQUID GLUE.—Add sufficient naphtha to shellac to make it of the consistence of good cream. Leave to dissolve.

SOFT CORNS between the toes may be cured by applying a small piece of cotton wool fresh every morning.

ORANGE JELLY.—To 1 pint of orange juice, carefully strained, add ½ oz. dissolved isinglass, and sugar to taste.

SAGO MILK.—Take one large spoonful of sago, wash it, and add to it one pint of milk; stir it until it boils, then let it stand half-an-hour to thicken.

TO TAKE STAINS OF WINE OUT OF LINEN.—The article should be held in milk whilst it is boiling on the fire, and watched until the stains disappear.

VARIETIES.

RIDDLE NO. 5.

Here's a riddle—it's new to thee:
What is that which we often see,
Called neither *It*, nor *He*, nor *She*,
And parted before united to be?

MEMORY.—The memory is like a true friend; it loves to be trusted.—*Jay*.

How many straws go to a goose's nest?—*Answer.* Not one, for straws not having feet cannot go anywhere.

WHAT man getteth his living backwards?—*A ropemaker.*

TALK about those subjects you have had long in your mind, and listen to what others say about subjects you have studied but recently. Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned.—*O. W. Holmes.*

It is by no means a small matter to despise small matters.

ONE WAY OF CHOOSING A WIFE.—"A place for everything, and everything in its place," said the patriarch to his daughter. "Select a wife, my son, who will never step over a broomstick." The son carefully treasured up the lesson. "Now," pleasantly said he one day to one of his companions, "I appoint that broomstick to choose me a wife. The young lady who will not step over it shall have the offer of my hand." The ladies passed by the broomstick, some stumbling over, and others jumping over it. At length a young lady stooped and put it in its place. The promise was fulfilled; she became the wife of an educated and wealthy young man, and he the husband of a prudent, industrious, and lovely wife. He brought a fortune to her, and she knew how to save one. It was not easy to decide which was under the greatest obligation; both were rich, and each enriched the other.

LOSING AND GAINING.—He that loses anything and gets wisdom by it is a gainer by the loss.—*L'Estrange.*

RIDDLE NO. 6.

I'm a friend to the poor, and the rich, and the great,
I'm quite near the Queen on occasions of State,
Of course I am polished, or I shouldn't be there,
Nor take part in the feast of the great Lord Mayor.

At festival dinners I'm sure to be seen,
Dressed sometimes in brown and sometimes in green.

With political parties I've nothing to do,
The Whig I support and Conservative, too,
I comfort the aged, I'm frequently told
I'm as fond of the young as I am of the old.
I can't tell my feelings of joy and of pride
When good little girls come to play at my side.

And if brothers more rude, Tom, Bill, Bob, and Jack,
Come tumbling and scrambling to climb up my back

Or make me a horse on a dull rainy day,
I let them alone, not a word do I say.
Now to find out my name, you must use all your wits,
You will pull me to pieces, and cut me to bits.
But don't touch my tail, for that I can't spare,
You may cut off my head, but you must leave my hair.

K. F. W.

ANSWER TO RIDDLE NO. 3.—The Letter H.

SELF.—Say nothing respecting yourself either good, bad, or indifferent nothing good, for that is vanity; nothing bad, for that is affectation; nothing indifferent, for that is silly.



DRESS.

NO 7.—There are many long recipes for washing and boiling lace, many people sewing it round a bottle covered with flannel. You will find that it may be cleansed, and done equally well with a little soap lather, into the water of which you have added about a teaspoonful of borax. It must not be rubbed, and will require long soaking. To iron it you must pull it out quite straight, and lay it between the folds of a handkerchief; a couple of lumps of white sugar dissolved in a wine-glass of water is a strong starch for it, and is better than ordinary starch.

ART.

ITALY.—The mosaics of St. Mark's at Venice are composed, we believe, of pieces of variously coloured glass, and gold-coated plaster, for the background. The reason for the alarm now felt in art circles everywhere at the proposal to restore the church is caused by the belief that it is impossible for an age like ours to adopt the ideas and inspirations of one so diametrically opposite in character to our own, and that, in attempting to rebuild the west front as proposed, that masterpiece of architectural art would be wholly lost in the endeavour.

L. B.—The Doré Gallery in New Bond-street contains the original of the engraving.

HOUSEKEEPING.

ANXIOUS.—Certainly, you need not mind assisting in the house, by dusting the drawing-room, attending to the lamps, and performing any duties within your strength. If you are to grow into a useful and helpful woman, you must begin your training with such things as these, and, in time the whole routine and ruling of the household will be learnt, without trouble to yourself, by constant training.

BROWNIE.—The best way of taking off rust is to rub the steel with rotten stone and oil. This will also generally restore the polish.

MARY.—Mix a teaspoonful of ammonia with a quart of water; it will extract all the grease from woollen stuffs, but it will not take out stains.

AT HOME.—Why not have all your floors stained and varnished, if you cannot manage the turpentine and beeswax;—although we do not know what your difficulty can be. We find it simple enough. If the floors be varnished, they can be washed over, at any time, with cold water, and rubbed dry with a coarse rubber. Otherwise, as a rule, they will only require dusting, like the rest of the room, using first a damp duster to take up the particles of dust, and then a dry one. Do not forget that dust is matter, and if you dry-dust it away, without removing it entirely, it only flies to some other place, and settles there instead.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BOADICEA.—The celebrated lotion for the hair of Dr. Erasmus Wilson is the best. It can be made at home without difficulty. Take of eau de Cologne eight fluid ounces, tincture of cantharides one fluid ounce, oil of lavender and oil of rosemary half a fluid drachm each. If too strong, dilute with rose water. Apply with a sponge.

ALTHEA.—The recipe is intended to give a slight stiffness like that of new silk to black silk that has been already cleaned, only gum water is intended, and as some silks take more gum than others, you had better try a little bit and dry it, before you put in the whole dress. A very little gum arabic will go a great way. 2nd. Four parts of water. 3rd. Wash your silver jewellery first with warm water and soap, then polish it with a very little of the best whiting or a little hartshorn powder and a leather.

MYRTLE.—Thank you for the New Year's Card and the kind letter of congratulation.

SCRIBBLER, L. A. L., and ALPHA.—We have already said that boys may not compete for our prizes. There are plenty announced for boys in the "Boy's Own Paper."

SUSIE W.—Yes, unfortunately you are too old to compete for the prizes. Competitors must be under 19 years of age.



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CHAPTER II.

FEBRUARY.—THE PRIMROSE.

The rolling orbs proclaim in heaven
God's goodness every hour,
And growing proofs of love are given
In every leaf and flower.



EARLY a month passed, ere we resumed our investigation of the primrose, and Laura laughingly asserted I could not possibly find anything more to say about it.

"We shall see," I retorted, as I selected a primrose bud. "Look at this, Laura, how neatly it is folded up. The hardy green calyx quite protects the fragile yellow petals until they are strong enough to open out into a full blown flower.

The petals are not always as neatly folded up as they are in a primrose. In a poppy bud the scarlet leaves are crumpled up most curiously, just like a handkerchief doubled together in a heap. In a young fern, or the shoot of a palm tree, they are curled up tightly."

"How curious that is," said Fanny, opening a primrose bud to examine it more minutely.

"Let us look at the leaf, it springs, like the flower-stalk, direct from the root, and is formed of one large piece, rough and puckered, egg-shaped and oblong. The root has little porous fibres hanging from it, and these suck up the moisture from the soil, and distribute it over the plant. If you were to leave this root of primroses in a vase without water, the petals of the flowers would soon droop and look pale, the stems would grow too weak to support the buds, and the hardy green leaves would begin to shrivel. Add some water, and watch the speedy change that appears; the roots suck up the fresh draught, the stems grow erect, and the petals spread out with fresh life and vigour. This little example shows you the use of roots.

"When you understand the primrose thoroughly, you will have learned a great deal about all simple flowers, for they resemble each other in many respects.

"Now we will find out some relative of the primrose family, also the order to which it belongs. Botanists have tried various ways of classing plants. Some have counted the stamens and pistils, and arranged them accordingly. A regular system has been formed in this manner, rather complicated perhaps. The most natural way of classification seems that of forming flowers into families, putting those that agree in form, structure, and outward likeness together, and then calling the group by the name of one of the principal flowers.

"There are about 300 such families amongst the English flowers, and the primrose has been considered important enough to have a family of its own. Thus we have the primula tribe, in honour of the hedge flower we shall soon see blooming by the roadside."

"I suppose all the members of the family are not exactly alike?" said Laura.

"No. Distant relations are admitted into the tribe, just as you number amongst your kin, father, mother, sister, brother, cousin, and so on. These may differ in disposition, temper, countenance, and complexion, but some family likeness may almost be traced.

"The near relatives of the primrose are the oxlip and cowslip. And both these flowers are much deeper in colour—bright yellow, in fact.

"The leaves are dark green, egg-shaped, and puckered, and the lower parts of the stems resemble the primrose stalk. At the upper end, a difference is seen; each stalk is divided into a number of little ones, which form an umbel, and on each of these stalks is a separate

flower or bud, making a bunch. Another relative of the primrose grows only in the north of England, called the bird's-eye primrose. It has a purple flower, and a little golden eye, from which it gains its name. Its leaves are dusted over with a powdery kind of white dust, like meal. This relative is very rare, so I dare say we may never meet with it."

"It must be pretty," said Fanny.

"Yes, and so is the hottonia, which has handsome pink or yellow flowers which grow in whorls, or circles, round a leafless stalk. It takes up its abode in ponds and ditches. Another member of the tribe is the bog pimpernel, which has bright rose-coloured flowers, that light up dreary wastes and pieces of marshy ground."

"What numbers of relatives our little hedge flower can boast of!" exclaimed Fanny.

"It has many more than I have named. For instance, the cyclamen, which has flesh-coloured flowers; the money-wort, which has yellow flowers, shining leaves, and grows by rivers and in damp woods; the wood-loose strife, that has deep yellow flowers, and finds its home in the deep shade of leafy woods; and the sea milkwort, which grows by the sea-shore in the salt marshes, and which we may know by its egg-shaped leaves and pink flowers. I might add a much longer list of relatives, but I think I have mentioned enough to give you some idea of what a tribe or family of flowers consists.

"When plants have pistils and stamens growing together in one flower, they are termed simple. Another class, which I will describe by-and-by, are called compound, a third are termed incomplete; and in one of these three classes you may place every flower that grows in the world."

"Here is a daisy root, with a couple of flowers on it and some buds; it belongs to a very large family indeed, for there are more than nine thousand different plants belonging to the daisy tribe."

"I had no idea the miserable, common little field daisy was so highly connected," said Laura, with a laugh.

"Common, indeed, you may call it. It covers our fields and hill-sides, and at last it sprinkles the lowly grave in the churchyard with its tiny heads of bloom. I wonder what poor people's children would do, had it not pleased God to make the daisy for them. They would never be able to make daisy chains, and amuse themselves by stringing long wreaths as they wander about the fields in the warm summer weather. I am glad daisies are common; the world would else be a poor, bleak, barren place for the little ones who can seldom get any but wild flowers."

"I did not mean to disparage the daisy, Aunt Cavié."

"I am glad of that. In warm climates, the daisy tribe is found in the shape of large handsome trees. Let us take a flower and pull it to pieces. I want you to find me the pistil and stamens."

"There are not any, the daisy has neither," replied Laura, promptly.

"Then it cannot be a simple flower, and that brings me to the next class—to the compound flowers. The daisy is a pattern of the whole order. The blossoms may vary in shape, in size, or in colour, but the general formation is the same. Break the flower in pieces, you will find it is made up of little minute things, called florets. Each of these is a complete flower, and each has a separate pistil and stamens of its own. The sunflower is formed in the same manner, on a much larger scale. Look at the row of white florets in the daisy, they are sometimes snowy, sometimes 'crimson-tipped,' they grow round a closely packed cushion of shorter yellow florets. Turn the daisy round, there is a little green basket (or

involucre) that keeps all neatly together. The daisy is the type of the compound order of flowers, and is the head of the daisy tribe, or family. We must remember this, and when we find any flower we shall be able to class it as simple, or compound. All the thistles, the pansy tribe, hawkweeds, marigolds, groundsels, chamomiles, and numerous others are of the compound order."

"I think, after all, the daisy is rather pretty," said Laura, thoughtfully.

"What a concession! If I were to paint you a daisy, and you examined the painting with a magnifying-glass, you would find it full of uneven lines, huge blocks, and rough marks; but if you look at the real flower through a glass, you would only discover fresh beauty—more delicate workmanship. This is one difference between our works and the works of God. His works bear the closest inspection, and but reveal new glories; while our handiwork, the more it is looked into, the more the weaknesses and imperfections appear.

"I will mention a few more relatives of the daisy tribe, and then, by the next time we have a talk about flowers, we shall be able to find them, I hope, out of doors in their own haunts.

"Perhaps, then, the coltsfoot, one of the family, may be blooming by the roadside. We shall find it in stony places, and know it by its delicate little downy petals and its yellow disk. The flowers are in bloom before the large leaves show themselves.

"Our garden flowers, china-asters, chrysanthemums, golden rod, and numbers of others are of the daisy tribe, near relations to the poor little field flower."

mair, it's no will at a', for it's neither dated nor signed. It's just waste paper."

Mr. Mason saw that it was so, yet with that stereotyped smile of his, which seemed rather to purse up and draw his lips together than to open and expand them, he remarked: "Unfortunately, you are right, sir. But in the absence of any other evidence of our deceased friend's wishes, might it not be as well to read over the unexecuted document for the sake of information?"

box. Tapping the lid cogitatively, he said, *sotto voce*, "Aweel, it's no' signed. There's muckle consolation in that," adding in a louder key, "Just waste paper, Mr. Mason; an' quite as weel I'm thinking, seein' that the will must hae been drawn up afore the bairns were born. An' it does not indicate Captain Stapleton's wishes either, as I know, for I was named executor of his *last* will; and in that he provided, not only for Brian and Hesba, but for the little sea-sprite Mercy. But it's nae use

fashing ourselves ower a bit o' waste paper; and sin' the true will canna' be found, we shall just hae to fa' back on the common law of the land."

Mr. Mason smiled grimly. Grandma Stapleton rang for the long-delayed tea, whilst Mr. Forsyth proceeded, "I'm no' sure about *English* law, but I've some notion that when a man dies intestate, and leaves a son, the son inherits, an' the wife can only claim her thirds. So, Mrs. Brian, I'd advise you just to consult a sound lawyer, and let him manage your affairs for you."

Mr. Mason's lips had been pressed as tightly together as had his fingertips; but now his features relaxed. With his most winning smile he handed a cup and saucer to Mrs. Brian, complimented Grandma Stapleton on the excellence of her tea, and in sundry little ways endeavoured to turn the conversation.

James Forsyth, however, was not to be put aside so easily. He did change the subject, but it was only to the very unexpected and uncongenial topic of the shipbroker's own liability to the estate; and, as he spoke with the decision of definite knowledge, Mr. Mason began to shift uneasily in his chair, as if a crop of thorns had suddenly sprung into existence beneath him.

At this juncture, when James Forsyth was pressing to know the precise number of thousands to be paid by the underwriters when all other claims were satisfied, and Mr. Mason pursed up his mouth to "h'm" and "ha" and "consider," a sharp rat-tat at the door and a



LEARNING HIS LESSONS.

MORE THAN CORONETS.

By MRS. G. LINNÆUS BANKS, Author of
"The Manchester Man," &c.

CHAPTER VI.

MERCY QUESTIONS DINAH.

"THERE'S the missing will, madam," the new comers heard Mr. Mason say as they opened the door, and naturally pressed forward with some eagerness.

The pause for ordinary salutation was of the briefest, and a bystander might have seen that there was little cordiality in the greeting of the two men.

James Forsyth took up the document. A glance sufficed. "That's no' the missing will," said he; "an' what's

"Aweel, that's a reasonable proposition," assented the doctor, and taking up the paper, drew his chair close to the table, and proceeded to read it aloud by the light of the lamp.

As he read his countenance changed. The unsigned will had evidently been drawn up years before, for it set forth that the testator's mother was already sufficiently provided for, and that he gave everything of which he died possessed to his dear wife Frances for her sole use and benefit, and appointed his friend Robert Mason his executor, making no mention of the children whatever.

James Forsyth's brow clouded as he laid down the paper and took out his snuff-

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CHAPTER III.

MARCH.

"A few leaves flutter from the woods
That hung the season through,
Leaving their place, for swelling buds
To spread their leaves anew."

It was on a clear, cold March day we first set forth for a long country walk. The trees were still bare, leafless, and barren, the hedges dull and dreary, for Nature had not yet thrown off her russet garb and adorned herself with the tender hues of spring. Flowers and leaves are timid of appearing too soon; there are still frosty nights to be dreaded, still cold northern winds to whistle through the wilds. Yet there are tokens of a speedy awakening. Violets and snowdrops here and there in the garden beds, and a sound of birds carolling amongst the bushes!

I could see plainly the two London girls thought the country scene very unpromising, as they looked around them in rather dreary silence.

At last Fanny picked a branch from the hedge, on which were suspended what she called "tassels."

"What are these funny looking things, Aunt Carrie?"

"They are called catkins, and are the flowers of trees which produce perfect flowers of their kind. These have stamens and pistil, or else they would not produce seed. Many trees bear catkins. The branch in your hand is a piece of willow tree; these flowers are tufted with soft, cottony down, and make their appearance before the leaves. Notice, they spread all over the branch, which is not the case with most catkins."

"These others grow in branches," exclaimed Laura, as she picked a branch from the hedge.

"That is a piece of hazel tree. In the autumn we shall find plenty of brown nuts growing on those branches, but it is not these gold-sprinkled catkins that produce the fruit. The little bud on this branch, with a minute red tuft growing from it, is the fruit-bearing bud. The pollen, or yellow dust, from the catkin feeds this, then withers, and falls off. The barren-looking tree with a silvery bark you see yonder is the birch, which, when in full leaf, is one of our most elegant forest trees. For grace and lightness no other can compare with it; in fact, it has been called the 'Lady of the Woods,' so much does it add to the grace and loveliness of our sylvan scenes."

"The bark looks quite silver-coloured; I can peel it off easily," said Fanny, as she stood beside a fine young specimen.

"Yes, there is something remarkable about the bark I should like you to remember. It has often been used for writing purposes, and with very little preparation can be formed into

capital tablets. Sometimes letters have been written on the bark, so if ever one is lost in the desolate forest, where no 'cream-laid' notepaper can be had, perhaps some strips of birch bark may serve for keeping a journal. The finest birch trees are found in the great forest of South America and in the Himalaya districts, but in very cold regions they degenerate wonderfully, and I have heard of a traveller who once brought home from some place far north six full-grown birch trees in his pocket. Though perfect trees, he could grasp them all in his hand."

sallow, and hazel trees have the catkins in full bloom in early spring, before the leaves appear, and they make the hedges bright with their varied and drooping tassels, just at the season when Nature is only just arousing from its winter's sleep. But there are nearly two hundred kinds of trees that have their catkins and leaves at the same time. The oak, beech, and birch are among the number. All catkin-bearing trees are called *amentiferae*, from a Latin word that means catkin, and most of our forest trees are of this order."

"The firs are catkin-bearing trees, I suppose?" said Laura.

"No; they belong to quite another class, that I hope we shall talk about some day; but now it is too cold to prolong our walk and conversation. I may as well mention that the oil of the birch tree, when distilled, is used in preparing Russia leather, and gives the peculiar odour by which the leather is so well known."

VARIETIES.

A HIDDEN WORD OF SIX LETTERS.

In a month my first you'll see,
My second in a mouse,
My third is in a forest tree,
My fourth is in a house,
My fifth in every home abounds,
My sixth in royal crowns.

ANSWERS TO—

BURIED MOUNTAINS (PAGE 158).

Himalaya.
Apennines.

BURIED TOWNS.

Derby.
Sandgate.

DOUBLE DIAMOND ACROSTIC (PAGE 175).

C
E L L
F R A I L
CLAPHAM
A S H E N
C A T
M

SQUARE WORDS.

1.	2.
S O F A	C H A T
O V E R	H A R E
F E A T	A R E A
A R T S	T E A R

The stains on spoons, arising from using them with boiled eggs, may be removed

by rubbing them well with a little moistened salt held between the finger and thumb.

HIDDEN TOWN AND COUNTRIES.

1. The man drove the cab right on the pavement. 2. I can do very well without it. 3. It would do very well to look at. 4. The girls rode well on donkeys.

HIDDEN NAMES.

1. I would not mar your joy for worlds. 2. The people wanted war done away with. 3. She liked oranges very much. 4. Do you remember when he lent the books?

THAT household is nearest the Christian ideal where are studied most minutely those delicate offices and interchanges of kindness which, like golden threads, run through the warp and woof of everyday life.—Duff.



THE LADY OF THE WOODS.

"I thought the hardy fir grew nearest the Poles, Aunt Carrie."

"No; the birch is the most venturesome, and they are also the last trees one meets with in ascending high mountains. Dr. Darwin relates a curious circumstance. He found at the foot of a high mountain some trees he could walk under quite easily; higher up he found the same sort of tree, but gradually growing smaller and smaller, until at last, on the top, he could trample on them, as they were no larger than shrubs of wild thyme, and the intense cold had produced this remarkable change in the growth."

"Do all trees bear the catkins before the leaf?" asked Laura.

"Not all of them. The alder, poplar,

broke off abruptly, and once more turned round to look up at the steep cliff.

"Dolly, we must have a try for—
for—"
Her voice broke, and failed her for a moment. But she struggled with the weakness, and continued, firmly, "We must have a try for life. It was not so bad to wait while there was a hope for rescue, but now, we have not five minutes to live if we cannot get up higher out of the reach of the waves. If we can but reach that ledge we may survive till help comes, but even up there I saw seaweed and shells, a sure proof that the whole of the place in which we are now standing is deep water at high tide. Each great wave, as it comes on now, looks as though it would be the one to swallow us up."

"Yes, Kathy," said Dolly, in quiet, clear tones, "then go now, dear, please go; good bye! Kiss mamma for me, and tell her," she added, after a moment's pause, and in lower tones, but equally firm ones, "tell her, please, not to mind, for that I did not, excepting for her sake."

Kathleen started, and gazed into Dorothy's soft brown eyes and at the lovely, meek face. She looked steadfast and calm as a martyr, patiently awaiting the doom allotted to her constancy.

"Dolly!" she exclaimed at last, "Do you suppose— Have you really imagined that I meant to leave you?"

"No, Kathy. I know that you didn't mean to, but you must. I have all the time meant that you should. I have only kept you with me till it should not be safe for you to stay any longer, and now you must go. Good-bye."

She raised her face, and her friend accepted the offered kiss; but then Kathleen said resolutely, although very tenderly, "Thank you for the kiss, Dolly darling, and for your loving care for me, but I'm not going."

"Oh! you must, you must!" exclaimed Dorothy, her calmness changing into a piteous cry. "Do go, I pray you, Kathleen. You will make it so hard for me to die if I know that I'm making you die too!"

"Hush, Dolly dear, hush. You cannot surely suppose that I am going to mount up on to that ledge there and quietly watch you drowning; or that I am going to mount to the top and go off to your mother, and tell her, 'I left your daughter with in a foot of the waves, with no hope of escape. She's dead by now.'" Dolly shivered slightly, and Kathleen continued rather triumphantly, "There, you see, when I put the matter into plain language you see its hideousness, and you see as well as I do that we must escape together or die together."

"No, no," said Dorothy again, trying to still her quivering lips. "No, no,

Kathy. You don't see—or you are so generous you won't see—that it is no question now of our wishes or feelings, either yours or mine, but a question of right and wrong. It is a sin to sacrifice a life uselessly. If by staying there was an atom of hope that you could save me, you would do right to stay; but there is none, you know there is not, and so it is a sin to remain and fling a life away fruitlessly, for which God has very likely got good use."

"Dorothy, I am going to try to hoist you up on to that ledge," was all the answer Kathleen vouchsafed. And she did try, and first in one way and then in another, but all equally futile, in spite of her companion's desperate efforts at the same time to help herself. They only resulted in Dorothy's sinking back at last on to the soaking sand with a groan of agony, and an ankle not only sprained but dislocated. Still, in spite of this addition to her sufferings her unselfish care for her friend was as keen as ever, and she renewed her entreaties and arguments to her to make her escape from rapidly approaching death.

"Look here, Dolly," said Kathleen at last, doggedly, as she once more raised her, and held her in the firm clasp of her arm; "it's said, 'As thy day thy strength shall be,' and that we shall not be tempted above that we are able to bear; well, I've no strength to leave you, and I'm unable even to bear the thought of doing it, so that settles the matter. If you say anything more about it I shall think you dislike the thought of having me with you to the very end, and then I'll just walk out and meet the waves at once, and finish the affair that way."

(To be continued.)

STARS OF EARTH; OR, OUR COUNTRY FLOWERS.

CHAPTER IV.

APRIL—SPRING FLOWERS.

"Be your title what it may,
Sweet and lengthening April day,
While with you the soul is free,
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea."

ONE day, towards the end of April, the sun shone forth with quite a summer splendour, and then, provided with baskets, we set out for a ramble in the woods. We were going to pick wild flowers, and hoped to find a fair display in some of the favoured nooks.

Already a great change was visible in the look of the hedges. The trees had begun to put forth their young buds, white daisies were sprinkling the grass thickly, and some pale primroses were peeping forth amongst their dark green leaves. Buttercups were everywhere. The shining, star-like flowers were clustering their yellow heads under a hedge hard by, and the fields were covered as with a cloth of gold.



"The cows will have a fine feed of buttercups," said Fanny.

"There you are mistaken, Fanny. Cows never dine off buttercups; in fact, they don't like the flower, and no wonder, for the whole race is acrid and bitter; some kinds are even poisonous."

"Don't they spoil the hay? The reaper must mow them down with the rest, I should think. No one could ever weed a field like that of Farmer Milman's yonder."

"The acrid properties of the buttercup are extremely volatile, and are quite destroyed by the drying process; so they lose their noxious qualities when cut down and mixed with the hay. Laura, what kind of flower is the buttercup?"

"It is simple, and has several bright petals that are yellow and glossy; also lots of stamens and pistils, more than I could count, perhaps, all loose and free. Its leaf is—what shape would you call the leaf, Aunt Carrie?"

"Heart-shaped or kidney-shaped. The proper name for this kind of buttercup is 'pile-wort.' It is a bright, little spring flower, and its numberless shining stars glance out prettily amongst the grass and leaves. Some people have called it the lesser celandine. It is one of the buttercup race."

"Does the buttercup give its name to a family, like the primrose and daisy do, Aunt Carrie?"

"Not exactly, Laura. Botanists have called the tribe after the 'ranunculus,' the handsome scarlet flowers you often see in gardens. 'Rana' means a frog, and the ancients gave that name to the flower nearly two thousand years ago, because the places where they are found are generally moist and damp, and there frogs delight to make their homes. There are about a thousand members to this huge family. The botanical name is 'ranunculaceae.' Some people call them the crowfoot tribe. There are many varieties of buttercups that differ in various ways. The bulbous buttercup has round roots, and grows in nearly every meadow. Another sort has creeping roots, and is a great pest to the farmer, for it spreads and takes root wherever a leaf can be produced. Then there is the meadow crowfoot, with its root composed of fibres, its calyx spreading, its stem slender, its leaves narrow. I mention all these to show how one kind can be distinguished from another, and a quick eye can soon detect the difference. The marsh marigold is the very queen of buttercups. Its flowers, leaves, and stalks are on a gigantic scale, and they make treacherous, swampy grounds look very showy with their brilliant yellow flowers. Another kind, called 'water snow-cups,' or 'water crowfoot,' chooses ponds and running streams for its home; it sprinkles the surface of the water with its large, showy white flowers. This plant is very peculiar in its habits, and has a trick of changing the form of its leaves. When growing in a still pond the leaves grow out broad, flat, and spreading, lying on the water like those of the water lily; but when it grows in a running stream, the leaves all become divided and hair-like. Both sorts of leaves can be seen on the plant at once—the broad ones on the surface of the water, the thread-like ones beneath. We will look for the snow-cups next June."

"They are summer flowers, I suppose?"

"Yes, Laura. Do you know the wood-anemones, or wind flowers? They are relatives of the buttercups; so are the clematis plants, or traveller's joy. The latter is a creeping hedge shrub, that climbs up and twists amongst other shrubs, almost covering them with its leaves and greenish-white flowers. In autumn this plant is curious, for its seed vessels are feathered with white tufts, which deck the hedges on all sides. Children call it the 'old man's beard.'"

"I shall look out for that next autumn," said Fanny. "Do tell me some others of the great ranunculaceae family."

"Do you recollect the showy flowers called peony? They are not often found wild, but one bright scarlet kind is sometimes met with amongst rocks and in steep places. All columbines, larkspurs, monkshoods, pheasant eye are of the same tribe, and the poisonous hellebore. The true celandine—also poisonous—are relatives, though, perhaps, rather disreputable ones."

When we had climbed the stile and reached the tangled wood, the full glory of the spring flowers burst on our view. Whole banks of sweet-scented blue and white violets were seen, with their waxy heads, looking up from the dark green leaves. On the slope of the hill thousands of white and pink-tinted wood anemones waved their beautiful flowers and graceful leaves; and primroses were clustering in every nook. Our baskets were soon full, grouped according to taste. Laura gathered only the pure white violets, with their deep-tinted leaves. Fanny chose the deep blue violets, and mixed them with primroses and wood anemones. She soon found out some of the light, blue-tinted violets were not odorous, and asked the reason.

"They are the dog violets, or *Viola canina*. Notice, the flowers are larger; though there are eight sorts of British violets, only one kind is scented. You can find the scented ones in various shades—deep purple, lilac, white, and pale rose colour."

"What sort of flower is the violet, Aunt Carrie? I am rather puzzled about it," said Fanny, tearing a flower to examine it.

"It has exactly the same parts as a primrose, though they are arranged differently. There are five petals, you see, but the lower one is lengthened out into a spur. Each flower grows on a separate stalk. The stamens are five in number, and the pistil has a curious hooked top. The leaves are heart-shaped, and rather downy, especially underneath. The violet has given its name to a family, though not a very numerous one. They flourish in most regions of the earth, except just those that lie within the Tropics. In South America they are most luxuriant, and grow to shrubs. The way in which violets plant themselves is strange, for when the seed is quite ripe, the seed-vessel opens with a jerk and the seeds are scattered a long way off on the ground. All the beautiful pansies and heart's-ease belong to the violet tribe; also the yellow mountain violets, which are found in the fields in June and July."

"How do you like botany?" I asked Fanny, when I had finished my little sketch of the violet.

"If botany is what you have been telling us, I like it very much; but I always thought it was full of hard names, and horrid classes and orders."

"I dare say, by and by, you will like to know a little about the very classification you think so 'horrid'; but at present I will only give you a slight peep into it. More than a hundred years ago there was a very clever and learned man called Linnaeus, and he is said to have been the first who began to classify plants. He counted the stamens and pistils, and arranged them in classes according to their number. A flower with one stamen would be of the class 'Monandria'; with one pistil, would be of the order 'Monogynia'; with two stamens, of the class 'Diandria'; with two pistils, of the order 'Digynia,' and so on. Some of the names of the classes and orders are still retained."

PLAIN DARNING.

"OH, dear! oh, dear! those horrid darns again! I hate the mere name of them. I would rather have cheap things, and wear them right out, than make my eyes ache over mending nice ones." Such are the exclamations of most girls when mending-day comes.

I really cannot understand this general dislike for darning, when it is so easy.

Most of you girls take pleasure in making guipure and darning-patterns on net, which certainly require more care. Only try to take half the pains with your clothes as with your fancy-work, and you will produce a neat repair worth looking at, instead of the cobbler-style hastily put out of sight.

Now I would advise you always to get the best materials, for cheap things are rarely economical and, besides, induce slovenly habits. Remember also "a stitch in time saves nine," and if you regularly inspect your linen you will spy out many a thin place, which, strengthened at once, will prevent a hole and spare much trouble.

I am going to explain to you a few ways of mending to teach you not only to keep your own things in order, but also to help your mothers, and one day to become good house-

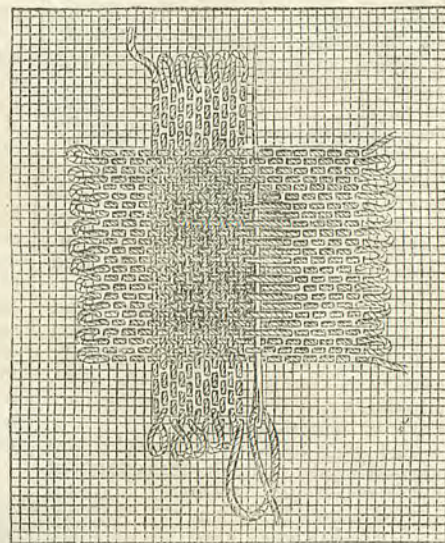


FIG. 1.—CROSSED DARN.

keepers. It is preferable to repair linen before sending it to the wash, except a few articles such as stockings, which had better be washed first and then left rough-dry to be mangled or ironed after mending. These stockings are generally placed in a special basket, ready to be taken up at any odd moment.

Look at fig. 1 and you will see a darn half crossed. "Everyone knows how to do that," you say, "'tis as easy as A B C." May be, but there are two ways of doing a thing. Just follow my instructions and see whether you will not learn something new. You are aware a good workman must have good tools, so be sure to choose, for darning, the proper thread among "flourishing" thread, mending cotton, Angola, wools, crewels, filoselle, silk ravellings, &c. Just a trifle finer, it should match, in colour and make, the strands of the material, and the older the stuff the smoother the thread. The long needle of a proper size to slip through the fabric should have an eye large enough to carry the cotton without dragging. Now, a thimble on the second finger of your right hand, a pair of scissors on the table, and you are ready to set to work.

Prepare the gap by drawing and securing

years ago," replied the other; "he was a bad man."

Presently another of the townsmen met them with the same question, "And what poor soul have you got there, doctor?"

"Poor Mr. B——," answered the doctor again, "is dead."

"Ah, indeed!" said the other. "And so he is gone to meet his deserts at last."

"Oh, villain!" exclaimed the man in the coffin.

Soon after this, while the pall-bearers were resting themselves near the churchyard, another stepped up with the old question again, "What poor soul have you got there, doctor?"

"Poor Mr. B——," he replied, "is gone."

"Yes; and to the place of punishment," said the other; for if he has not gone there I see not what use there is for such a place." Here the dead man, bursting off the lid of the coffin, which had been purposely left loose, leaped out, exclaiming, "Oh, you villain! I am gone to the place of punishment, am I! Well, I have come back again to punish such ungrateful rascals as you are!" A chase was immediately commenced by the dead man after the living, to the petrifying consternation of many of the spectators at sight of a corpse in all the horrors of the winding-sheet running through the streets.

After having exercised himself into a copious perspiration by the fantastic race, the hypochondriac was brought home by Dr. Stevenson freed from his delusion, and by strengthening food, cheerful company, and moderate exercise, was soon restored to perfect health.

LISSOM HANDS AND PRETTY FEET.

By "MEDICUS."

"Like dew on the gowans lying
Is the fa' o' her fairy feet,
And like winds in summer sighing
Her voice is low and sweet."

"Annie Laurie."



THE poet evidently sings of his lady-love; that a child might understand, and the simile expressed in the first two lines could not well be sweeter. "Gowans," I should tell my English readers, is a word signifying mountain daisies—the wee, modest, crimson-tipped flowers mentioned in the verses of the rustic bard. It is very natural for a young girl to wish to have pretty hands, and I would have them lissom as well as pretty. A shapely hand is one that is moderately small and plump, the fingers beautifully tapered, the joints supple, and the nails delicate and well formed. It is in youth the hands should be taken especial care of. I do not advocate too hard work for any girl, but I do aver that the hands, if they are to be shapely, are not to be idle. If they are, I'll tell you what will happen—they will grow long, and lank, and bony; and if there is any tendency to indigestion or to rheumatism, it is just possible that the joints may get thicker than they ought. Even such simple work as sewing, knitting, embroidering, painting, or playing gives just that amount of exercise to

hands and fingers which is necessary to keep them in a healthy shape.

The nails require care to keep them nice. They should be seen to every day at toilet. What are called hang-nails, or, by some, rag-nails, is a very painful affection, which can very easily be prevented. In this way—three times a week the skin that overlaps the lower end of the nail should be well pushed downwards, because if it is allowed to attach itself to the nail the skin gets stretched and torn. It should always be pushed back, but never cut. The free end of the nail should be pared with a knife or cut with a scissors into the shape required. The inner part of the free edge of the nails should be kept perfectly clean with a brush and soap and water, but not interfered with by knife or scissors. The surface of the nail should never be scraped. The white spots which appear on the nails of the young at times are not dangerous, although they don't look pretty. They are caused by hurts or blows.

When the hands are well taken care of and moderately exercised they should be of a beautiful delicate pinkish white colour, and as soft as the finest satin. Exposure to any amount of daylight does them good, exposure to the sun turns them brown or yellow, exposure to cold and wet hardens and kills the skin, and produces roughness and chaps. Gloves, then, are worn in summer to protect the hands from the sun, and in winter from the cold. The wrists at both seasons should be protected—by kid in summer, by fur in winter. When at any time the hands feel uncomfortably hot the gloves ought to be taken off; by retaining them at such a time you are only spoiling the life and beauty of your hands. Some girls, especially those with a somewhat delicate constitution and tender skin, suffer much from chapped hands after exposure to cold or to wet. At times this is so painful and persistent an affection that the doctor should be called in. But if this should not be deemed necessary, so long as the hands are bad kid gloves should be worn not only by day, but by night as well. If it is persistent the hands had better be damped with a solution of potash and water—half a dram of the solution to one ounce of water, and then afterwards dressed with the benzoated oxide of zinc ointment, to which a drop or two of otto of roses has been added. But any one suffering from chapped hands should take a little medicine to cool the blood about twice a week, and if at all weak, either the quinine wine already recommended or the tincture of iron, or a little of both. If the stomach is weak, much advantage will be obtained by using a teaspoonful of gentian bitters in half a wineglassful of water before breakfast and dinner. As a mild application to the hands if rough or inclined to chap, I recommend camphor ointment, or, perhaps better than anything else, the preparation called rose glycerine. After exposure of the hands and before their exposure to cold or the sun, this rose glycerine is invaluable.

Now, here is a little bath for the hands, for which I am sure you will feel grateful. It is easily prepared, and if the hands are soaked in it for about ten minutes morning and evening in summer, it tends to keep them nice and white and free from roughness. You put a pinch or two of powdered alum and a teaspoonful of powdered sal ammoniac in about a pint and a half of warm salt water, and dissolve; then, when you have added a little toilet vinegar, this elegant hand bath is ready for use.

The same may be used for clamminess of the hands; but as this latter is generally a symptom of a low state of health, I would also advise the use of light-brown cod liver oil—about a dessert spoonful or more three times a day. "Nasty," did you say? Well, there you have me in a corner. But you soon get

over the feeling of loathing which it at first excites, and, oh, dear me! there is really no end to all the good that cod liver oil is capable of doing. By the way, chewing a bit of orange peel before and after taking the little dose helps to disguise the taste of the oil.

Glycerine and water—rain-water, mind, always use rain-water for face and hands, at least—is a good application for damping the hands with. And a mixture of pure lime-juice, or lemon-juice, and lavender-water, equal parts, is another nice preparation for whitening the hands. The hands should never be rubbed with a coarse towel, but with a very fine one, and afterwards with a piece of soft flannel. The soap you use should be very mild and transparent. Carbolic soap is, in cases of chapped hands, useful, and so is tar soap, but neither are very elegantly perfumed.

I hope I am not writing for any girl who bites her nails. It is a disfiguring habit, and any of my readers guilty of such a thing should be tried by court-martial by her brothers and sisters, and condemned to wear gloves day and night for a month, for beautiful nails are a very great adornment.

Both feet and hands, if at all tender—or I might almost say whether or not—should be washed every night before lying down, and every morning. If this is done, and sometimes a little alum added to the water, you will have very little trouble with corns or any other painful disfigurement. The feet should be wiped thoroughly dry, and the toes seen to. The nails should never be cut short; they should be a medium length, and, mark this, they should be cut straight across, and not from the sides like the finger-nails. They ought to be well cleaned and brushed, but never scraped, and the scarf-skin should be gently pressed back.

There are few things more painful than an in-growing nail. It ought to be seen to at once, or the nail may have to be removed. It is generally caused by wearing too short shoes, which presses the nail back and causes it to thicken and grow downwards instead of forwards.

The feet should never be cramped up in a tight boot, while, on the other hand, a too loose boot or shoe is often the cause of corns. The stockings ought to be very soft, but not too thick, as thick stockings make the feet excessively tender.

When hands or feet are cold, warm them by exercise or friction; but never hold them to the fire, else chilblains may be the painful result.

Everyone knows what a common chilblain is, so I need not take up space by describing it, but content myself by giving a prescription for its cure. It is as follows:—Soap liniment, one ounce; tincture of lytta, two drams; laudanum, two drams. Mix and apply three or four times a day.

STARS OF EARTH; OR, OUR COUNTRY FLOWERS.

CHAPTER V.

MAY.

"The spirit of the gentle south wind calls
From his blue throne of air,
And where his whispering voice in music falls,
Beauty is budding there."

AT last the warm weather had fairly set in, the shade of the trees was growing pleasant, and our rambles gradually stretched out on a longer scale. One day we sauntered along by a pleasant brook that ran through a tangled copse near the hill side.

Fanny darted along by herself, startling many a bird that was busy at this season

with its noisy nest-full of little ones. Soon she returned with some handsome white flowers, of which the leaves were large and of a deep, beautiful green.

"Are these wild lilies of the valley?" she asked.

"I should think not," I replied, laughing. "Their very perfume might tell you that."

Fanny plunged her nose into the bouquet, took a long investigating sniff, then flung the offending flowers into the stream, as she exclaimed—

"Hideous! essence of onions, mixed with asafoetida, is fragrant compared to that scent!"

"You have found some sylvan garlic, Fanny, and I daresay you will recognise the flower in future, and leave it to bloom unmolested amongst its pretty green leaves. It is a member of the lily family, and in many points resembles the universal favourite, the lily of the valley. Its leaves have the same deep colour, the same shape, and they love to nestle in the shade, along the moist hedge banks or in the damp fields. Often it spreads in such abundance as to destroy every other plant near."

"Is the lily family large?" asked Laura.

"Yes, they are a numerous and elegant species, most of them have bulbous roots and showy flowers, and I suppose they may claim to be the grandest amongst the tribes. One always thinks of the Master's description of the lily, can you repeat the words, Fanny?"

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

"The Eastern lilies were very glorious; they covered the slopes of Tabor and the sunny fields of Gennesaret, and were far more gorgeous, more stately, than we ever see them here. No earthly trappings of monarchy, however overlaid with gold and jewels, can ever equal the delicate, pure workmanship of God's own creation."

"There are no specimens about here except the odious sylvan garlic," said Fanny, looking round.

"We shall see lilies in abundance presently," I replied, as I opened a rustic gate, that led to a wood. There, under the shade of the trees, were lilies sprinkled like a dotted carpet over the ground. Wild hyacinths, or blue bells, were peeping out brightly from their spiky green leaves, most of them of a deep blue colour, but here and there were bunches of pale pink ones and lilac and white. We were soon deep in the study of the flower.

"The six petals are united in a tube, you see; there are six stamens, and the stigma, or top of the pistil, is three-lobed, the root is bulbous. The star of Bethlehem, with its pure white petals; the squill, with its clusters of blue or purple flowers; the Solomon's seal, with its elliptical leaves, all turning one way, and its white flowers, hanging like old-fashioned seals, are all members of the lily tribe (liliaceæ). All the grand, showy tulips that make the garden beds so gay are of the

same family. There is only one sort of English wild tulip, and that grows in the region of chalk pits; it has a small yellow flower, which smells sweetly. I must not forget to mention asparagus also. Now let us look at the dandelion, or *Leontodon taraxacum*."

"What a long name for an ugly flower!" exclaimed Fanny.

"Do you call it ugly? Ebenezer Elliot termed it the 'sunflower of the spring.' It is a compound, or composite, flower, and is made up of separate florets, the stems are hollow, the leaves are deeply cut. The farmer has no great love for the flower, but it has some excellent medicinal properties. Here is some furze, or gorse, and that brings us to the pea and bean tribe. English people are very proud of their gorse, and I suppose there is hardly a more gorgeous sight than a wide common covered with these bushes in full bloom. When the hot June sun shines on them, the rich golden colour is splendid. It will not grow either in very hot or very cold countries. The flower is like that of the pea, but instead of leaves the plant has sharp, branched thorns. The pea tribe, with butterfly-shaped flowers (*leguminosæ*) has nearly seven thousand species in it; some of them small, such as the clover, vetches, lentils, others are immense trees, with gigantic trunks; some die at the end of the summer, others live for thousands

to the cuckoo-pint tribe (*Araceæ*). Children call the plant 'lords and ladies.'"

"A large leaf, called a spathe, grows round the curious flower, there is a little white ruff round the neck, and it has a bright pink head, rather long in shape. Yet it has parts that answer to those of a primrose. The head is sometimes white or purple, or deep crimson, or pale pink. The first ruff round its neck is only a dainty ornament, but the next ring is formed of the stamens, which are 'sessile,' or close to the plant; the lower



of years. In South America the locust trees are supposed to be more than two thousand years old. The rosewood, logwood, tamarind, and acacia trees all belong to

this order, but there are only about seventy British species, of which the furze and brooms are the largest. There are many kinds of trefoil and vetches; the sainfoin has spikes of bright crimson flowers, and in summer the fields are sometimes covered with clover, white and pink and red."

Fanny ere long found a prize, as she called it, in the hedge.

"Aunt Carrie, what is this wonderful production? It is not a flower, and I never saw any fruit like it."

"It is an arum, or wake-robin, and belongs

ring forms the pistils, and the ovaries or seed vessels, also. A curious metamorphosis takes place in the arum in autumn. The club-like head falls away, so does the spathe and all the rest of the plant, except the ovaries, which become a showy mass of bright scarlet berries, that look pretty amongst the grass. These plants are very poisonous, a single drop of their acrid juice would cause a burning sensation in the mouth and throat. In foreign countries they are still more acrid than the British species. For instance, the arum plant, or dumb cane, in the West Indies, would make the tongue swell and destroy the power of speaking for some days, should anyone venture to chew it.

The roots of the plant, when properly prepared, are wholesome and even nutritious. People take advantage of this property, and make from them a kind of sago, also starch.

"Have you noticed the leaves? They are arrow-shaped, and are spotted with deep purple marks. But I think we have walked far enough to-day, and our next ramble shall be on South Hill Common."



STARS OF EARTH; OR, OUR COUNTRY FLOWERS.

CHAPTER VI.

JUNE—ON THE HEATH.

"There is a lesson in each flower,
A story in each stream and bower.
On every herb on which you tread
Are written words, which, rightly read,
Will lead you from earth's fragrant sod
To hope, to holiness, and God."

BRIGHT summer weather had really come, flowers were blooming everywhere on the bright sunny day, when we set out for South Hill Common. We soon reached the cliffs, where the blue sea came rippling up over the rocks, and amongst some of the crevices Fanny gathered some bunches of bright pink blossoms, which she brought for our inspection.

"Those are sea pinks, and belong to the 'thrift family' (*Plumbaginaceæ*) not a numerous one, for these flowers and the sea lavenders are the sole members. Sea pinks love sandy downs and rock crevices, the flowers grow on a single downy stalk, and there are scales that form a kind of basket at the back. The leaves make a thick tuft; this cushion-like mode of growth makes them fitted for bordering, and they are often placed in garden flower beds; the roots of the plant are used for medicinal purposes. The sea lavender is not scented like the garden variety; it has pale, spike-like flowers.

"Look at those large leaves yonder; they are wild celery."

"Fit for eating, I suppose?"

"No, Laura; it would require long and careful cultivation to fit it for the table. In its wild state the flavour is strong and unpleasant. Wild celery belongs to the Umbelliferous tribe, the flowers of which grow at the ends of little stalks, which are joined at

the base, and are called Umbels. Many species of food are found in this class—such as carrots, parsnips, celery, parsley, angelica, caraway, and coriander, anise, and cummin also. Some deadly poisons are among the Umbelliferous tribe, such as the hemlock; a very few drops of its preparation would kill an animal, and it was used by the Greeks of old in State punishments—the learned Socrates and others were put to death by it. Now I am going to tell you of another family, the *Labiata*, or lip-shaped. In it we find all our aromatic plants, such as sage, thyme, peppermint, rosemary, lavender, balm, &c., all wholesome. The very air here is perfumed with some of the wild species. This tribe has many peculiarities that distinguish it. For instance, the stem of this dead nettle is square, the seeds are down near the stems of the leaves, several of them in their dark green cells. The leaves grow one above another, and are called alternate. The blossoms are two-lipped, the under one two-lobed. There are four stamens, two long and two short. In the south of France, and in Italy and Spain, these labiates grow to a wonderful degree of luxuriance and richness—the very honey of the bees is flavoured with them, as Scotch honey is with the heather."

"Are any garden flowers in this class?" asked Laura.

"Yes, the salvias, and numbers of others; the rosemary, which is sometimes called sea dew, because it grows near the sea, and looks as though sprinkled with salt spray."

We had reached a lane by this time. Hundreds of wild roses were crowding the hedge, and trailing their long pink and white wreaths in all directions.

"Will you describe this rose, Fanny?"

"It has five petals—numbers of stamens and pistils. Its leaves are smooth, with pretty edges, and it has, oh! such numbers of sharp thorns."

"I will tell you its family—the *Rosaceæ*, or rose tribe, and an important one it is, with above a thousand species. In it are apple, quince, medlar, pear, plum, cherry, almond, peach, nectarine, and apricot trees; also strawberry, raspberry, and blackberry plants and shrubs."

"I cannot understand how wild roses and apple trees can be of one tribe; there is no resemblance," said Laura.

"Is there not? Look at a wild rose and at

the blossom of an apple, pear, or peach tree. Look also at the strawberry and blackberry blossom; each of them has five petals, and many stamens and pistils. Though there are many differences in these plants, trees, and shrubs, there are still enough points of resemblance to constitute them of one tribe. The fruit of the strawberry varies much from that of the apple or nut, yet they are of the same race. The calyx of the strawberry remains fastened to it, the little nut-like seeds are placed in a fleshy kind of receptacle, while the seeds of the blackberry and raspberry are enveloped in pulp. The cherry is different, also, for the stone or seed is within the juicy pulp. In the almond, on the contrary, the seed is surrounded by an external shell. The fruit of the apple is called a pome. The calyx enlarges, and forms the fleshy part, and the seeds or pips are snugly enclosed in cells within. The fruit of the rose is called a hip, and is full of nut-like, hairy seeds. Again, the fruit of the mountain-ash—another of the same tribe—grows in large clusters of scarlet berries—rowan berries, as they are called. While we get our most delicious fruits from the *Rosaceæ* tribe, some deadly poisons are extracted from it also—such as prussic acid and the oil of bitter almonds. To return to roses. Those on the hedge are called dog roses, and are as fragrant as the best of the species. The beauty of roses and their choice perfume have made them justly favourites. From them is distilled the famous attar of roses, to make nine drams of which it is said a hundred thousand blossoms are required."

"Is the honeysuckle one of the rose tribe?" asked Laura.

"No, it belongs to the woodbine family (*Caprifoliaceæ*), a much smaller group. The honeysuckle is a graceful plant, with its delicate, twining stems, and whirls of creamy blossoms. The flower has five petals that are partly united, and end in a little tube—that holds a liquid drop of honey, whence the flower gets its name. There are five long stamens, and the long pistil, or style, is tipped with bright green. The elder tree and the guelder rose tree belong to this tribe. Also, there is a little plant that the great botanist, Linnæus, has immortalised by giving it his name. He went to the fir woods of Scotland, and there he found a little creeping plant, with delicate pink flowers, roundish green leaves, and a sweet perfume, and this

spring blossom he called the *Linnæa*. This twining plant, with rough green leaves and whitish flowers, marked out with tiny green veins, is the white bryony, one of the gourd tribe (*cucurbitaceæ*), and with all its elegance, it has a bad character, for it is poisonous. In winter, when the flowers die away, bright scarlet berries appear, also poisonous. The black bryony, is equally plentiful; its leaves are larger, heart-shaped, and varnished. The small flowers are green, and the berries that succeed them larger. It belongs to the yam tribe (*dioscoreaceæ*), and is the only member of that family flourishing here."

On the common were some fine specimens of the bee orchis (*orchidaceæ*). The orchis plants are some of the most remarkable in nature; they are so various and fantastic in form. There is hardly an insect but the flower seems to mimic its appearance. The bee orchis looks as if a bee had settled on every flower; the fly orchis is called after the insect it resembles. Some of them are like butterflies, others like long-legged spiders. One is called the "green man orchis," and is supposed to represent a little green man with his head hidden in a flower. In the hot, damp regions of the Tropics these plants become still more remarkable; they are not content with growing on the earth, but perch themselves on the boughs, and in the trunks of trees, from which position they send forth most gorgeous and lovely blossoms. There is hardly any flower so brilliant in hue or so wonderful in shape as these southern orchis blooms, that light up the dark Tropical forests with fantastic beauty.

Orchis plants are much cultivated in England now; many rich people have orchis houses in which those famous Tropical blossoms are carefully trained and tended.

THE DRESS OF THE MONTH.

THE changes in the dress of the month are exhibited mainly in small things, not large ones. For instance, we are leaving off the many-buttoned gloves and taking to some without any buttons at all, which are called the "sack" gloves. They are made with a gore, and may be obtained both in kid and in silk, and are unquestionably a great improvement on the many buttons, which were most tiresome to wear. Black gloves are no

longer the rule for day and evening dress, although they are still worn by the careful and economical, and will not go out of date yet it is to be hoped for their sakes. All kinds of coloured ones are seen—drab, lemon, pink, brown, coffee, and the new shades of heliotrope and petunia are both introduced, as no other shade can be selected to look well with either of them. Yellow gloves are worn if the bonnet be trimmed with yellow roses or écu feathers. Gloves are more used than mittens in the evening for all occasions, except for children, who invariably wear the latter.

and sleeves are of a figured stuff. Velvet and velveteen have by no means taken their departure with the cold weather, both being used as skirt trimmings, laid on in flat bands, wide or narrow as preferred. Deep kiltings for the skirt are as fashionable as ever, and the only change in the scarf is to drape the square ends at the side instead of the back.

Serge dresses are always pretty and useful, and were never so stylish as now, when one of the best London tailors has introduced the fashion of trimming serge with the spotted

foulards. A short blue serge dress which was much admired the other day was made with a deeply kilted skirt and a jersey, and had a scarf of blue foulard spotted with white dots draped round the hips. The hood to wear with it was lined with the same, and the small toque hat was edged with a brim of gathered velvet, and had a top of spotted foulard. Our two sketches of the month's fashions give an idea of the style of costumes now used by young girls, and both may be copied without difficulty, and at a small cost.

Entire costumes of these spotted materials are to be seen, and never was there so great a choice of pretty and cheap costumes for girls as now, when the prints, crêtonnes, and sateens are manufactured in such good taste, and charming Eastern-looking hues, not too dark to be dingy, and yet dark enough to wear for a long time without getting soiled. These summer dresses are all trimmed with cheap lace, which has a light and graceful effect. Perhaps none of the readers of this paper have any idea of the virtues of a hot iron in freshening up a summer costume; but so ex-

cellent is its effect that every girl who wishes to look fresh in her toilette and have a dainty appearance should learn to use an iron, and make herself independent of anyone's help. The wrong side of the dress should be ironed, not the right; and when much tumbled, the natural freshness may be restored by placing a damp cloth underneath the iron, and pressing out the creases in that way.

Some very simple but pretty little summer bonnets and hats have just come out, and may be made by girls for themselves on any shape the most individually becoming to each. They are made by completely covering the shape with narrow black lace, slightly gathered, and sewn on in rows round and round, one above the other. The edge is bound with



Stockings for both children and grown people are worn self-coloured, with embroidered clocks, and sometimes with small embroidered sprays in front.

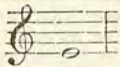
Although there is much more drapery, and the plain effect, so long aimed at, at the back of the bodice is no longer in vogue, there is no appearance of crinoline; the skirts being made as narrow as ever, and in no case, when short, do they measure more than two yards round. The polonaise seems to have given way to the bodice and trimmed skirt, and now that three materials are often seen in the same costume, there is no excuse for not utilizing old dresses. Velvet, cashmere, and foulard, or silk, are amongst the most favourite mixtures, and the skirt may be made of a plain and uncoloured material, while the bodice

kindly give me your attention for a few minutes, I shall probably be able to simplify a few of the things which now discourage you, although it is not possible in this little paper to convey more than a few hints as to the general management of the instrument.

The principal difficulties which beset the learner are the proper manipulation of the draw stops, and the steady supply of wind.

Having seated yourself, suppose you begin by playing a scale. But stop! Your chair is much too low. With wrists hanging down below the key-board, feet placed flat upon the treadles, and your knees almost up to your chin, you cannot play with any degree of comfort, to yourself or pleasure to your hearers. Your chair, too, is for ever sliding away from the instrument, and, in consequence, you experience the annoyance of being obliged to remove your hands from the keys every few minutes in order to shift your seat back to its original position. Or perhaps, instead of taking your hands from the keys, you contrive, by a series of spasmodic jerks, to wriggle yourself a little nearer, and are then dismayed to find that you are not in the centre of the key-board, but near one end, and sitting *sideways* instead of *facing* the instrument. At last you are *compelled* to take your hands from the keys, and possibly, to rise from the chair, in order to place yourself once again in the proper position. Now all this is the consequence of sitting too low; and if a harmonium chair cannot be conveniently procured, you must use books or a hassock for the purpose of raising your seat to the necessary height. The under part of the feet should be as nearly as possible in a horizontal position, and the *toes alone* placed upon the treadles. Attention to this rule will insure a proper position at the instrument.

Now commence playing again, not forgetting, however, that it is necessary to draw out a stop, otherwise there will be no sound. Draw, on the left hand side, the stop bearing the figure 1., and play the scale of C from the lowest note upwards. On reaching



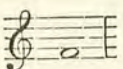
the scale suddenly breaks off, and you will find it impossible to proceed further unless the stop No. 1 on the right hand is drawn also. You now begin to perceive that the stops are divided into *bass* and *treble*, those of the bass extending from



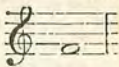
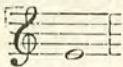
and those of the treble from



8ve.



and you also conclude, rightly, that as 1-1 are continuations of each other, so also are 2-2, 3-3, and 4-4. But beyond 4 you cannot depend upon this continuation. No. 5 in the bass, for instance, is not usually carried through by No. 5 in the treble; indeed, you will find an awkward break or gap between the notes



of the keyboard, which will require some little ingenuity to bridge over.

Let us now examine the *itches* of the stops. Draw No. 1 on the left hand, and put down the middle C



You will find that this note is precisely the same pitch as the corresponding note on the pianoforte. Now draw out No. 2 and push in No. 1; the sound immediately drops down to the octave below. Draw No. 3 and push in No. 2; the sound rises two octaves. Change No. 3 for No. 4, and the sound produced will be an octave lower than the last, in other words, identical in pitch with No. 1.

In speaking of the pitches of stops it is customary to apply the technical expressions universally adopted by organ-builders. These expressions refer to the length of a pipe necessary to produce a certain sound, this sound being identical or in unison with the note C



of the pianoforte. An organ pipe must be eight feet long to produce this sound, four feet long for the octave *above*, or sixteen feet long for the octave *below*. Hence the stops Nos. 1 and 4, which you know are in *unison* with the pianoforte, are called eight-foot stops, No. 2 is therefore, a sixteen-foot stop, and No. 4 a four-foot stop.

In playing you must remember that the principal or standard stops are those of eight-feet; and you will, therefore, never be wrong in using these stops. If, however, you wish to use a sixteen-foot stop, either alone or in conjunction with one of eight-feet, you will usually find it necessary to transpose the music an octave higher.

As no two harmoniums are alike in the quality of their tone, it is absolutely impossible to give you much information upon this point. You will find, however, that the stops are divided into two distinct classes:—those of a *flutey* tone, like Nos. 1 and 2, and those of a *reedy* tone, like Nos. 3 and 4. Your own taste and good judgment will tell you which are the most suitable stops for the music you wish to play.

In the study of blowing you will of course need a book of exercises, &c. There are not many instruction books, but there are sufficient for you to choose from.

It is absolutely necessary that you should practice the feet *separately* at first, and not attempt to use them together until you can blow steadily with *one* foot.

Practice with one note, then with two notes, afterwards with three, and so on, thus increasing the number of notes and consequently the difficulty of blowing steadily.

Use the stops 1-1 to begin with, and gradually add the others in this order: 4-4, 3-3, and lastly 2-2.

Let your principal study be confined to long *sustained* notes. Sustain them softly at first, then a little louder, and so on. Afterwards practice *increasing* and *diminishing* the sound; but be careful not to *jerk* the bellows. When using both feet together, one treadle should commence its descent a trifle before the other has finished, and do not let there be the slightest break in the continuity of the sound.

The great beauty, and indeed the *life*, of the harmonium is its power of expression; and, except in pieces requiring uniform loudness throughout, you should make it the rule *always* to use the Expression stop. You *must* conquer the difficulties of this stop, otherwise your playing will be dully monotonous and utterly devoid of the faintest approach to expression. Do not be disheartened, dear reader, a little perseverance is all that is necessary to enable you to overcome the difficulties which perhaps at first appear almost insurmountable.

STARS OF EARTH; OR, OUR COUNTRY FLOWERS.

CHAPTER VII.

JULY.—“GRASSES AND FERNS.”

“THE feathery fern, the feathery fern!

It groweth wild, and it groweth free,

By the rippling brook, and the wimpling burn,

And the tall and stately forest tree.”



“FARMER MILLMAN has finished cutting his hay,” said Fanny, as we passed his field.

“He seems to have a fine crop, though the rain has made him rather late,” said I, as we stood looking at the heaps of freshly mown hay. “Would you like to hear about the flower of the grass?” I enquired.

“Surely grass has no flowers. I never saw any,” replied Fanny.

“Nor did I,” added Laura. “I know they have little feathery heads, but I never heard them called flowers; that must be a new-fashioned name, Aunt Carrie.”

“Anything but new, Laura. We find the term in a Book that is more than eighteen hundred years old, and one sentence in which it is used is mournful as it is true. ‘All flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.’ But the end of the sentence is glorious with hope, for it says, in contrast to the former part, ‘But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you.’

“St. James also tells of the flower of the grass. He compares it to the man who thinks only of earthly riches, and pronounces his doom. ‘As the flower of the grass, he shall pass away.’

“We shall find these flowers all in bloom this month; they belong to an extensive class, as well as a useful one. They are not, of course, tinted with gorgeous hues, like the rose or the dahlia, but they are perfect in their kind, are furnished with pistils and stamens, and the flowers generally grow in spikelets.

“Barley and wheat are cultivated kinds of grass, so are rice, oats, and maize, which make up very important parts of our food. We should get on badly without ‘daily bread.’

“These cultivated kinds grow in all temperate and hot climates, and have called forth the industry of man in all ages of the world, long before the sons of Jacob went down to Egypt to buy corn. It is very remarkable that these cereals will not grow without due care and attention, illustrating most wonderfully and literally the words, ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.’

“But to return to the wild grasses. They are very beautiful, and only think how

bare the earth would look if its bright green covering were removed. In hot countries, there is nothing to equal our own fresh, moist pastures. For instance, in Palestine the heat of the sun and the dryness of the earth cause the grass to wither very soon, and travellers say all the flaunting and gorgeous flowers of the East do not hide the parched and cracked ground, and that our emerald meadows are far more refreshing to the sight. One can easily imagine how soon the eye would grow tired of crimson lilies and showy oleanders, and long to gaze upon the ever-green turf of our parks and pastures. Grass flourishes above the zone of man's cultivation, where he could never sow the seeds. 'God maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains.' Strange to say, in these high lands the grasses do not produce seeds as they do in sheltered valleys, but the roots spread, and young plants spring from the stem, and go on increasing for ever. On some of the beautiful slopes of the Alps there are lovely green spots on which the goats feed.

"In southern countries the stems of the grass become tall, and form themselves into trees. I wish you could have a glance at these grasses, waving their silken, feathery flowers above the tree tops. There are also bamboo forests and cane-brakes from which we get sugar and other luxuries, all of the grass tribe."

"Now we will gather some grasses from the road side. I have found several kinds."

"Ah! I thought you would soon discover a variety. I will try and tell you the names."

"What sorts have I in my bunch?" asked Laura.

"You have gathered some sweet-scented vernal grass; it has two little stamens, and flowered spikelets. The delicious perfume that arises from newly cut hay comes chiefly from the sweet-scented vernal grass. That pretty, soft-looking bunch with fine feathery spikelets, is bent grass, not so good for herbage as many of the others, and the hard looking kind is rye grass, common enough everywhere."

"My grasses are not a bit like Laura's," exclaimed Fanny.

"You have the crested dog's-tail grass, which has an erect head, and slender, hard stem. The other, much of the same form, but softer and more silvery looking, is cat's-tail grass. There is some quaking grass, which is very delicate and beautiful, also the brome grass, very pretty and luxuriant. I am giving you only the English names; the botanical ones are more difficult to remember. There are about twenty different kinds of grasses in our meadows and pastures, but the farmer only selects eight or ten sorts to sow for hay."

"Now we will look for some ferns, and I must first tell you ferns, mosses, and other flowerless plants are called cryptogamia—from crypt—and they include all those in which stamens and pistils have not been detected, fructification being performed by other organs. There are about three thousand kinds of ferns in the world, and in England only about thirty-five kinds are found growing wild."

"Ferns differ greatly in their habits. Some love the mountain side, some grow on old walls, others on the moist, shaded sides of streams. To discover to which class ferns belong we must look at the back, and there we shall discover the seeds arranged in various forms. In one kind the seed grows in little round spots like spangles, in another it grows in bars, another has its seed like a neat braid round the edges in a half-moon shape. Thus we may call them the 'spangled ferns,' the 'bar ferns' and the 'braid ferns.' In olden times fern seed was supposed to have the power of rendering people invisible, and

pretty fables are told about it. No doubt insects feed on this seed, or sori, for it is so abundant the whole world might be full of ferns, if it did not perish in some way or other. It is full of a kind of oil, and burns with a flash and noise like gunpowder, but it does not explode, and is not dangerous. The fern has not leaves like other plants, so there is a peculiar name given to the fern branches. They are called 'fronds.' If you examine the fronds well, you will discover every part of it is rolled up like a ringlet (circinate or curled). Only two other vegetable productions have the same curled leaves; one is a little English plant called 'sun dew,' the other is the stately palm tree of eastern countries."

We had now reached the banks of a clear stream, where the thick trees nearly met overhead, and this was a favourite haunt of the ferns.

"What lovely green leaves those are nearly touching the water!" said Fanny.

"You mean the delicate, light green fronds of the lady fern (*Athyrium Filix Femina*). The one above it, with long ribbon-like fronds, is the hart's tongue (*Scelopendrium Officinale*). The latter is one of the bar ferns; the sori grows at the back in straight lines. This pretty graceful looking plant is the maiden's-hair fern; the seeds form half-moons round the edge (*Asplenium*). Here is another of the same kind—the bracken; both are braid ferns. Brackens grow to a great height in summer, and armed men have hidden themselves amongst them in olden times, to surprise their enemies by an unexpected attack."

"Maiden's-hair ferns grow in numerous forms, but the seed is always arranged in the same way; the stems are hard and thin, and of a delicate purple hue, like a girl's black hair."

"The fern yonder with several fronds growing in a circle is the *Filix mas*, or male fern. The seeds on the back form little round raised spots, and this is one of the spangled ferns."

Ere long we reached Overstone Lynch.

"What a lovely place!" exclaimed Fanny. "What multitudes of orchis plants, what quantities of wild honeysuckles, what thousands of flowers!" She darted down the steep path, but soon drew back, and exclaimed the place was full of bogs, and swamps, and mud.

"I brought you here on purpose to show a kind of fern called the *Osmunda regalis*, or royal fern. These ferns form into trees, and the seed-cases tower high above the large fronds, like tall brown feathers."

"I never thought ferns could be so lovely," said Laura, as she picked her steps over the moist grass, and cut off a splendid feathery head and a frond.

"I shall prize this greatly. I suppose if I press and dry it nicely it will keep?"

"Yes, it certainly will; and it would be a good plan for you and Fanny to make a collection of ferns. It might remind you of Overstone Lynch when you are far away in London again. Notice this forked-looking fern growing round the roots of the trees; the fronds have deep divisions, and it is called polypody, which means many feet. (*Polypodium Vulgare*.)"

"Although ferns do not possess the gorgeous colours of flowers, nor the same useful qualities as fruits and vegetables, still they are a great prize to us, for they teach us the beauty of form. They help to make the world more attractive, and we may learn many a lesson from them of God's wonderful goodness, even in the prodigality with which He has given us such graceful and wonderful varieties of elegant ferns."



A GIRLS' WALKING TOUR.

PART II.



WEDNESDAY MORNING.—Much refreshed, we rose with the lark (unless, indeed, that estimable bird rises before 7.30), and having had our usual substantial breakfast we went on our way without staying to inspect the lions of Farnham, or even to inquire if there were any.

"I'm sure we may congratulate ourselves on having good tempers," said the poet, as we stepped briskly along in the bright morning air, "because my father prophesied that we should all have quarrelled with each other before the first day was over, and should probably part and return to our respective homes on the second."

"But why should we quarrel any more than anyone else?" asked one.

"Well, I could not quite grasp his reason, but he said people always do on walking tours; it's a way they have, I suppose. They get so tired of each other's society after a day or two."

"Naturally they do, when the pedestrians are of the male sex," said our artist, who is something of a *man-hater*, "and very likely we should have been no exception to the rule had there been any gentlemen with us, so I think we have clearly proved that our arrangement is the best." Of course we all agreed, and rather than let the prediction come true I forbore for the future to express my opinions with regard to the cooking-stove, since the others all seemed peculiarly impressed with the conviction that it was the secretary's duty to carry the obnoxious machine.

Exhilarated by the fresh air and bright sun, we walked at a fine pace towards the wild barren country round the Hind-head, intending to stay the night at Haslemere.

Tilford was soon reached, and here we paused to buy provisions and also to inspect a splendid old oak tree on the green.

"It is called the King's Oak," said the pathfinder, "and is one of the boundary marks of the Waverley Abbey lands. Years ago orders were given for it to be cut down; but the country people assembled from far and near to protect the tree, which they regarded with great respect and even affection. They nailed plates of tin round the trunk so that the axes could not take effect." Seeing what she took to be incredulous looks, she added—"There are the pieces of tin before your eyes, so it must be true."

Whether the pathfinder's pretty story were true or not, we could not but be glad that the hoary old tree had stood so long, and such as were able made some hasty sketches of it, whilst the others went on an expedition to the one shop of the village, and secured a heterogeneous collection of viands for dinner.

As we left Tilford with its pretty bridge and river behind us, the aspect of the country

concerned. He formed no new ties, and appeared to think the only thing in the world worth living for was the stern grind of perpetual work. He never spared himself—took no holidays, and not more rest than he could help, and at last the machinery had broken down from the long strain; and again he had gone to Gastein to find, if he could, a cure from its waters.

Happy was it for Cora she had fallen into such capable hands as those of Mrs. Woodhouse. The child's education was entirely left to her. The only point on which her father expressed any interest was in the weak protest he occasionally made against his daughter being allowed to imbibe a taste for frivolity and vanity.

Those quiet afternoons in the garden of Antoine Mylin's house were soothing beyond measure to Mr. Forest's overwrought and wearied mind. They were like rest after a long day's labour. The exertions and irritations of business were over, he could watch the sun go down in peace, could note the crimson and golden clouds fade before the grey twilight, and feel the repose of night was coming next, and that to-morrow would be as eventless, as free from the turmoil of life as this closing day had been.

This daughter of his was a new revelation to him. For the first time in his experience he began to find she was someone whose opinion was worth hearing, someone who could think brighter and better thoughts than his own were.

Her sweet face—so like her mother's—was yet of a loftier stamp, a more refined type; and in all her ways she seemed to aim towards a purer standard of rectitude than this world teaches with all its wisdom.

No one could be freer from pretension, less desirous of forcing her views on others, or more charitable to the erring than Cora was. Constrained by the love of her Saviour, she strove to follow the Divine example, and ever looked forward with faith to the reality of the other life that never ends.

Her father, who had seen so much of the world, and knew of its evils, its stains, and spots, soon recognised this golden web of religion underlying all her words and actions. He grew to respect it, and by-and-bye longed to know more of its source and fountain.

So on these evenings Cora sometimes read aloud to him from the Book that tells the secret, and her voice was sweet and fresh as those of the birds that fluttered near the rustic seat, her cheeks bright as the half-wild roses that clustered near them.

They often walked to the little churchyard and stood awhile beside the white marble slab, not talking much of the young wife and mother, whose name it bore, but thinking of her—Mr. Forest with regret, Cora with mysterious reverence, as she pictured to herself an ideal of the mother she had never known.

One afternoon they were returning from the churchyard through a lane bordered on either side with groves of trees, through the leaves of which the warm sunlight glanced quivering on the white road.

A stranger appeared in the distance, dressed in a light tweed suit and a low round hat—unmistakably English in his look and mien.

Cora, on whose arm her father leaned, looked towards the advancing stranger, and speedily brought herself to task.

"I must be growing fanciful," she thought; "but perhaps that is because I never see any one I know here, and I imagine every Englishman must be a friend. But I positively could imagine that to be Ralph Burges—his very walk, his face, his figure! How silly of me, to be sure!"

Yet her heart gave a much more rapid throb than usual, despite her protest, and she smiled to herself at her folly. But the figure came towards them rapidly, an answering smile on his face, and then Cora saw she was not silly at all, for it was Ralph, in very person, standing before her with outstretched hand. A bright flush rose to her face as she shook hands with him and introduced him to her father.

"This is Mr. Ralph Burges, papa, Nesta's brother—you have often heard me speak of her."

"Yes, yes, to be sure! Have you come to try the baths of Gastein, Mr. Burges?"

"Oh, no!" laughed Ralph. "I don't think I have any need of the magical waters, for my health is of a robust kind, I am glad to say."

"You cannot be too thankful for that," retorted the invalid, solemnly.

"How did you find us out? It seems so strange," said Cora.

"Not strange at all. Nesta gave me your address before I left home, and I have just called at Antoine Mylin's house. He directed me this way—in fact, came along the road with me until you appeared in sight."

STARS OF EARTH; OR, OUR COUNTRY FLOWERS.

CHAPTER VIII.

AUGUST.—ON THE HEATH.

"And the flowers! we found so many,
That it almost made us grieve
To think there were some, sweet as any,
That we were forced to leave."



sprinkled about everywhere, and the brave,

prickly thistle holds up its handsome head without risk of being rooted up by the farmer, who so perpetually strives, in vain, to banish it from his cultivated lands.

As the two girls ran about half wild, over the breezy common, their faces glowing with health, their eyes lit up with animation and delight, I compared them mentally with the pale, sickly girls they were when they first came to Fairview. Constant exercise in the pure air was already producing a wonderful change in their bodily appearance, the study of the "common things" of nature had given a healthy tone to their minds, and they had begun to look up to God, the great Architect of all His glad creation. The study of God's good gifts ever ought to lead us on to value yet more than ever His greatest gift of all to man, even His well-beloved Son, who came to seek and save and die for us.

Fanny had gathered a bunch of thistles, and this uncomfortable bouquet was in due course presented to me with a wry face, as she looked at her fingers.

"Ah! 'those that gather thistles must expect prickles.' Let me look at them? Three kinds, I see, in your bouquet. The one with the large purple head and the prickly spreading basket (or involucre) outside it is the musk thistle. You have also the true Scotch thistle, which is the emblem of Scotland, as the rose is of England, the shamrock of Ireland. Your third flower is the stemless thistle—its pretty flower springs direct from the earth, as though its stem had gone down amongst the roots. The thistle is a compound flower (of the Composite family, or *Compositae*), like the daisy, for the florets all come apart in the same way, and have each their stamens and pistil. The inner row of florets is always perfect—the large outer ones are often imperfect. All thistles have not prickles, the stemless, for instance, has none; but the Scotch amply makes up for it by being covered with very sharp ones. Have you ever noticed the feathery seeds of the thistle floating in the air on a fine day? They are on the way to sow themselves, and thus they spread far and wide over the ground. The dandelion seeds distribute themselves in the same way."

"Some horrid burs have got into my fringes, and I cannot get them away," said Fanny, laughingly, as she made vain attempts to get rid of the clinging, troublesome things.

"Let me pick them out of the fringe for you, and at the same time I will tell you what they are. They belong to the common burdock (*Compositae*), and by attaching themselves to people's dress, or to the coats of animals, they distribute their seeds from place to place. The leaves of the burdock are heart-shaped, large, and handsome; artists take advantage of this, and often introduce sketches of them into their pictures of country landscapes.

"There are two kinds of heather growing on this common. The crimson heath is pretty, but the flowers rustle like withered leaves, and if you place them in water they very soon turn a dull purple colour. They belong to the heath family (*Ericaceae*), which is large, and includes all the lovely greenhouse flowers, with their clusters of pink and white waxy blooms. Gardeners take great pride in their heaths; those brought from the Cape of Good Hope are highly prized.

"The other specimen on this moor is the common heather. Its flowers are numberless, the whole place seems warm with their rich glow. They love sunny places, where the plough of the farmer will not disturb them, and you may constantly see numbers of bees buzzing about amongst their clusters, seeking

the stores of honey the little flower supplies. The calyx is divided into four or five parts. The corolla or blossom consists of one petal, divided also.

"There is a handsome tree belonging to this tribe, the *Arbutus*—which grows wild about the Lakes of Killarney, but only in gardens here."

"Are these blue bells, Aunt Carrie?" asked Laura, as she brought some of the "fairy bells" for me to examine.

"Yes, the true kind; sometimes the name is given to the wild hyacinth that grows in spring, but that is a mistake. The four petals are joined together like a bell; the stems are so slender and delicate that the slightest breeze sets them in motion. The blue bell (*Lidiceæ*) is a general favourite; songs have been sung, poetry written in its praise, and wherever we go, into the depths of the shaded woods, we shall find it until the last autumn flowers have faded."

"I never knew wall flowers grew wild, and yet there are several of them on this heap of stones," exclaimed Laura.

"One British kind is occasionally found on old walls, or amongst stones, where it grows without much moisture, and I am glad you have found this piece, for it is the type of a class of plants about which I want to speak. It has four petals, which form a cross; this has given the name to the tribe; its sepals or divisions of the calyx are four also, and the seed is generally in a pod or pouch. The name is cruciform (or cruciferae), and there are about eight hundred varieties in the tribe, amongst which I may mention cabbages, sea kale, turnips, brocoli, radishes, water cress—and indeed all kinds of cress. Then there are these wall flowers, the cultivated plants of which may, I think, fairly compete with any other garden flower in beauty of colour and delicacy of perfume."

"I have something now that is neither a flower nor a rush," said Fanny, producing what she called a "curious plant."

"That is the common mare's tail. Its stems are all jointed, you can pull them easily to pieces. It has whorls of long narrow leaves, with hard tips, and the flowers grow close to the upper leaves, very much out of sight. The tribe is called the 'horse-tail family' (*Equisetaceæ*), and they are closely allied to the ferns. There are about seventy varieties, some of them are used for polishing wood and metal, as they contain a kind of flinty substance. Don't confuse them with those pretty flowering rushes I see yonder, for they are quite different, and belong to the 'rush tribe' (*Butomaceæ*). That pretty red flower over in the pond belongs to the flowering rush; its leaves are sword-shaped, and spring from the root. It looks very handsome with its scarlet head just above the surface of the water. Another kind is the asphodel, which bears a spike of star-like yellow flowers. Those pale lilac flowers belong to the water plantain (the *Plantain family*, or *Plantaginaceæ*). It has broad leaves that taper to a point, and it loves the cool banks of rivers or shaded ponds."

Our walk from the common led us through some marshy ground, then over the rugged slopes of some hills, and as we were passing a kind of quarry we came in full view of the home of the foxglove. Dozens of these stately flowers were rearing their heads to the

height of four or five feet, and the only fault Fanny had to find with them was that she could not find one that had its flowers all open at once.

"They never are in flower all together, for the lower blossoms open first, and the top ones remain closed until their turn comes. Village children call them 'fairies' petticoats,' from some fancied resemblance to what they suppose so dainty a garment should be. They belong to the fig wort family (or *Scrophularinææ*), which is rather an important one. There are about two thousand species, and they are found in all

berries, and it grows in ruined, dismal old places. From this plant a poison called belladonna is procured.

"The bittersweet (night-shade family, or *Solanaceæ*) a twining plant with purple and yellow flowers and heart-shaped leaves, belongs to this tribe, and perhaps you will be surprised to hear our old friend the 'potato' is one of the same family. Ever since Sir Walter Raleigh brought it from Virginia, in 1586, it has been a favourite vegetable. But even the potato plant is not without faults, for its leaves and berries are slightly narcotic. In our next walk I hope we shall find some September fruits; at any rate we will have a hunt for them."



AFTERNOON TOILET.

THE DRESS OF THE MONTH.

THE June roses have fled, the heat of July and August is over, and before us spreads the cool September, from whence we shall gradually slide into the chilliness of October almost without recognising the change of seasons. In our dress, however, we are obliged to make some alteration, and for this, of all months, it is perhaps the most difficult to dress. The summer garments are a little too cool; the autumn ones not yet thought of, much less purchased. In this dilemma there is always black to fall back upon; black, in which everyone looks well, and in which no one can err on the side of over-dressing. It has been more valuable than ever to us since the introduction of the coloured kiltings, or *balayuses*, enabled us to give a touch of colour, in a natural way, to the blackness of the costume. Nothing was ever more easy to make than they are, or more inexpensive to purchase. Turkey-red twill is quite good enough for a girl's use, and the kilting of the two-inch-wide frill can be done at any shop in town where the kilting machine is kept, for about a half-penny a yard. The kilting may be of any and every colour, but red and old-gold are the most popular; and the possessor of two or three sets of different colours need not be considered very extravagant.

The colour of the *balayuse* must be repeated on the bonnet or hat, which, if red, may be effected by a red poppy or red satin bow at the throat as well. Small artificial sunflowers are now made, to be worn at the side of the neck, ensconced in the black lace necktie, quite a bunch being used. Indeed, these floral ornaments are quite a feature in everyone's dress, and I must confess that I like them, for what could be more suitable than flowers to the young? The floral bonnets have always been peculiarly pretty, and I shall never forget the pretty effect of a small bonnet of blue forget-me-nots which was worn by the fair-haired daughter of a noble family when they first came out, and the extreme suitability of the style to her modest and flower-like face.

In the evening young girls may wear the new floral collar, which is a ruffle of leafless flowers, tied round the throat, and having a few tendrils of hanging buds and leaves. Buttercups on black, scarlet pimpernel on pale blue, or violet would make pretty necklaces. Two of the most fashionable collars of the day—both to be worn with the lace frill—

parts of the world, from the North Pole to the Equator. The calyx of the foxglove is in five divisions—the corolla, or flower, is shaped like a bell, it has four or five stamens, and one pistil. The handsome snapdragon of our gardens and the 'germander speedwell' of our hedges belong to this tribe. The latter you know well, a bright blue flower like a bird's eye; it is sometimes mistaken for the 'forget-me-not,' which is another spring flower and belongs to the borage tribe (or *Boraginaceæ*); so does the 'viper's bugloss,' which has rough leaves, covered with bristles; and loves the neighbourhood of old walls and quarries, which it adorns with its rose-coloured or blue flowers. I should like to tell you about the nightshade tribe, chiefly to advise you to avoid the 'deadly nightshade,' a plant of ill-repute, for every part of it is poisonous. It has lurid purple flowers that give way to black shining

STARS OF EARTH; OR, OUR COUNTRY FLOWER

CHAPTER IX.

SEPTEMBER—BLACKBERRIES.

"Thy fruit full well the schoolboy knows,
Wild bramble of the brake;
So thou put forth thy small wild rose,
I love it for his sake.
"Though woodbines flaunt and roses glow
O'er all the fragrant bowers,
Thou need'st not be ashamed to show
Thy satin-threaded flowers."—*E. Elliott.*

SOME weeks of wet weather prevented our promised fruit-hunting expedition, and it was not until the end of September we ventured on a long ramble. And then the glory of the summer flowers was gone, the wild roses had faded, and bright red berries shone in their places. The honeysuckles had vanished, and berries of bright crimson nestled in their stead amongst the leaves; flowers that had passed unnoticed during the full glow of summer blossoms were now prized beyond measure. Fanny brought champions and bindweed, Laura some flaunting red poppies, and we set ourselves at once to examine and classify them.

Campions belong to the chickweed tribe, which includes some of our favourite garden flowers, such as the pink, sweet-william, and

carnation, and some pretty wild flowers, such as the corn cockle, the ragged robin, &c. In this class the calyx has four or five distinct sepals joined to it, often tube-shaped—and there are always as many or more petals. This chickweed tribe mostly inhabits the temperate regions of the earth, and is not found in the tropics. The bladder campion is rather singular-looking; the calyx is blown out like a tiny balloon, and the pure white flowers form a kind of star on the top. The sea campion, resembles it very much, but is of lower growth, and bears larger white flowers, which are sometimes double, and very handsome. All the curious flowers called catch-flies belong to this group; some of them have a kind of sticky juice on the stems, which attracts and captures unfortunate flies who venture near it. The ragged robin has bright, rose-coloured flowers, deeply divided, which gives it rather a ragged look, whence its English name.

Now for the scarlet poppies. They belong to a narcotic race, and from them some deadly poisons are prepared, such as opium, laudanum, and morphia. These articles are useful for medicinal purposes, but are far too dangerous to be trusted in inexperienced hands. The poppy tribe is not a large one, and the flowers are more showy than fragrant. Some of the garden varieties are handsome, and the common scarlet poppy adds fine bits of colouring to the banks and cornfields. The flowers of these plants have two sepals

and four or more petals. The seed vessel is curious, and grows to a large size. It has several cell-like divisions, and in these are numberless small, round seeds, used also for medicinal purposes. The seeds are not poisonous like the other parts of the poppy; in some foreign countries they are made into

cakes and eaten. The yellow Welsh poppy has lovely golden flowers, and one handsome flower, called the horned poppy, grows near the seashore, has large yellow blossoms, heavy-looking leaves, and long seed-pods.

Now for the bindweed tribe, which is handsome as well as useful; they are nearly all climbers, and the wild ones sprinkle the hedge with their beautiful blooms. In tropical countries they are the most gorgeous, the most lovely of the climbing plants. Various kinds of medicine are prepared from some of the tribe, such as jalap and scammony, and sweet potatoes are the productions of a tropical plant called *Convolvulus batatas*. All our garden convolvuluses belong to this tribe. The large white flowers of the great bindweed are conspicuous in the hedges during July and September; its arrow-shaped leaves, twining stems, and white flowers hang over the bushes like wreaths. But with all its beauty the flower is a pest in gardens; it sucks up all the nourishment from the soil, and it embraces the trees around, which it climbs so closely that it sometimes strangles them to death. The sea bindweed is pretty; it grows only on the sea coast, and has large rose-coloured flowers, which expand only in the bright summer sunshine, when it covers the sides of the sand hills with its blooms.

In the copse we found multitudes of nuts growing on the hazel trees, and in the lanes, further on, were ripe, juicy blackberries; and when Laura and Fanny were tired of picking wild fruit we talked about the briar.

It is one of the rose tribe, and is a very ancient tree. We read of it in those early days when the Lord banished Adam and Eve from Eden for their disobedience.

The thistle and the briar have figured together through all the ages, for when God cursed the ground on man's account, he added, "Thorns, also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Since then, in some form or other, the briar has spread over all the world. It is found in all climates, and should ever remind us of man's fall from the sinless state in which he was first created.

In England there are several varieties of the blackberry, or common bramble. Its leaves grow in leaflets of five together, its flowers



are rose-shaped and of transparent white or pink, and of its thorns one need not be reminded, as a slight experience of berry-picking will make their presence well known.

The dewberry resembles the blackberry in some respects, for it grows on hedges and borders of fields; it has a grey bloom on its fruit and a round stem, with both thorns and bristles growing on it. Then there is another relative, called the "stone bramble," which flourishes in mountainous places and in stony ground. It grows principally in the North of England, and bears yellowish flowers and bright scarlet fruit, which ripens in August. Another bramble, called the "mountain cloudberry," grows also in rugged places, and may be known by its large rose-coloured or white flowers. Its stamens and pistils are on different plants, and the fruit (semi-transparent) of a rich orange red, and of a fine flavour, ripens in the autumn months.

The cloudberry has not thorns like the rest of its species, and it grows very luxuriantly in the hilly parts of Ireland. But I think the ripe blackberry is quite as nicely flavoured as any of the berries I have named. At any rate, it is far more plentiful and much more easily found.

What would the village children do without blackberries? And what would their mother do without the fruit for the puddings and pasties of which their little ones are so fond?

All the berry trees I have named belong to the rose tribe, which, you see, gives us most of our most valuable vegetable productions, both wild and cultivated; its flowers delight the eye with their infinite variety and great beauty; its fruits satisfy the palate with their rich and luscious taste.

TIMOTHY'S WELCOME.

A BALLAD STORY.



THE air was heavy with the sweetness of roses and limes and fresh mown hay, and merry voices rose loud and clear in the still air, as girls and boys, and men and maidens tossed the fresh mown crop at one another, and a lark joined his bright treble to the sound, rising far above them into the blue sky. The labourers had just been eating their simple dinner beneath two huge elms in the meadow. They had been cutting, and were most of them returning to their work, but two young men were lying on the soft turf smoking their pipes and talking earnestly together. One was married, the other was not; he had a lodging in the village street with an old widow woman, the quaintest old soul ever known, who persisted in wearing the dress which was the fashion of her grandmother, and whose chief conversation was praising the "old times" and abusing the new. But Fred Gowan was an oddity himself, and he and his landlady got on together famously. Timothy, his brother, was a married man with a "family," consisting of one bonny,

healthy, restless boy, some eight months old. He, Timothy, was very young, so young that his elder brother had been as cross as his excellent temper would permit him to be at his marriage, telling him he would live to rue it; that he would have a dozen children to keep before he was "a man," uttering the last words with a contemptuous laugh. But his bright young bride, two years still younger than himself, cheered him with her hopeful nature, and told him she was sure that God never sent mouths without bread to put in them, and that youth was the time to work, and when they were old the children would work for them.

He repeated her cheering words to Fred, but Fred only shook his head and said, "Have your own way; we shall see who's right."

"Well, Fred," said Timothy, "I do like a woman about a house. If we'd a had a sister, or mother had lived, it would have been different. I seem to want a kind of a welcome hoame when I comes in from work."

And so Margaret and he were married about a month after her eighteenth birthday, and Timothy was twenty. A young couple to begin life in its most serious form; but they were brave and fearless and full of hope, and no happier face was to be seen in the village than Timothy Egan's new-made wife.

"Ah, she's give herself plenty o' time to repent!" said one dirty, draggled old woman, with one miserable, sickly-looking baby in her arms, another a year older hanging to her skirts. "Wait till she gets a sight o' little 'uns to look after, she'll wish then she hadn't a been in such a hurry."

"Oh, I don't know," answered the neighbour to whom she spoke. "I think the children bring comfort and love. I know mine do, bless 'em."

"Well, of course we don't want to part with them when we've got them, but they're careful comfort, and no mistake."

But Margaret had no fears when her first bonny boy was placed in her arms—all was joy and gladness in her happy, hopeful heart—and the pleasure of showing that wonderful baby to Timothy was beyond words to express—worth any trouble to own such a treasure—our Baby.

"What are we to call him, Timothy?" asked the happy little mother.

"Minikin, I think, for such a wee minikin it would be just the thing," he answered, surveying the tiny atom he was holding so tenderly in his arms.

"Oh! dear, we cannot christen him such a funny name as that."

"Well, you can call him what you like; but I shall call him Minikin, so there's an end of that, little woman!" and so the child was christened Jack by his mother's wish, and was called "Minikin" by his father.

As soon as Margaret was downstairs again, "Uncle" Fred was invited to tea to inspect his nephew. He was obliged to confess that he was a "good specimen," but said he quite agreed with one of the neighbours, who had exclaimed, when she heard the news, "Poor things, their troubles are beginning."

"Why, Fred, it is downright wicked of you to abuse children, when the Bible tells us that they are blessings, and that the man is happy that has his quiver full," said Margaret, feeling quite inclined to quarrel with Fred.

"Ah, my lass!" he answered, "that was in the days when the world was not so full as it is now," laughed Fred. "However, enjoy your baby now—he won't cost much for the next twelvemonth. And when your quiver is full I shall see how you like it."

When he was gone, and Margaret sat working by the child's cot, waiting for Timothy, who had walked home with Fred, she thought over her talk with him, and began to feel, sit-

ting there alone, inclined to look for the first time with apprehension at the prospect of an increasing family, and as she sat thus thinking she pictured Timothy coming home to find her dirty, tired, and cross, the children crying, no supper laid; what would he say and do? she had never seen him angry—always singing and laughing—she should be frightened if he were to scold her, and at the thought of it tears filled her eyes. Hark! his step, his voice outside! She hastily dashed away the tears and flew to let him in, and all her imaginary sorrow flew away. The next afternoon she was seated with her work beside her, but, truth to say, not doing it just at the moment, but looking with loving eyes at the baby, whom she had put down in his cot to sleep, but which he did not feel inclined to do, and she was just telling him in her tenderest voice, with the sweetest of loving smiles on her bright face, that he was the very naughtiest boy ever known, that she was afraid if he did not improve he would come to a bad end, when a tap at the door, opened at once by the person tapping, admitted Mrs. Macgregor, Fred's landlady.

"Ah, there you are, dawdling over that baby. I did not come to see it. I never look at babies, they're all exactly alike. I came to see you; ask me to sit down."

"Oh! certainly, Mrs. Macgregor," said Margaret, rising and placing a chair for her strange guest.

"I'm very pleased to see you."

"No, no, I don't suppose you are, really; but I've a great respect for your brother-in-law; and I don't want you, for his sake—mind, for his sake—to be discouraged in your outset in life. All the village have got you on their tongues because you got married when you were young, and they say, and so does Fred, that you will rue it when you have half-a-dozen children. And I have come to say that you will *not*, unless through your own fault. Children were meant by God for blessings, and to those parents who do their duty by them they are blessings—the greatest and the best."

"That I quite believe, Mrs. Macgregor," said Margaret, lifting her boy from his cradle and pressing her lips tenderly on his face.

"That's the way—love them all like that; but *show* your love to them in a still wiser way—make them *obedient* at once, my good young woman. I had thirteen; seven of them have gone to better keeping than mine; the other six are all doing well for themselves, and come and see their old mother, and let her never want for anything, and are the best of good children, God bless them. You can by prayer and continual work make your children as good as mine. We are all the children of one Father, and He has given us all the same powers—the same mother-love; and when He trusts us with little ones He expects us to bring them to Him. So you need not worry yourself or think about the future; leave it in His hands, He won't send you a child more than you can keep, and all the trouble you take for them will be repaid you *tenfold*. Now I've preached my sermon, and I am going. If I've done you any good I'm glad; if I hav'n't, I'm satisfied that I tried to, so good-bye."

And popping up from her chair, she was gone before Margaret could rise from hers.

"She is gone like a fairy," exclaimed Margaret, in astonishment at her strange visitor. "But she did speak beautiful, that I must say, and I will, please God, make you a good boy, my darling—my treasure," she continued, kissing her baby so hard, that the poor little man, unmindful of the affection, cried with the pain, till Margaret did penance in a wonderful "see-sawing" step, which soon sent the little rebel to sleep and gave his mother time to cook her husband's dinner,