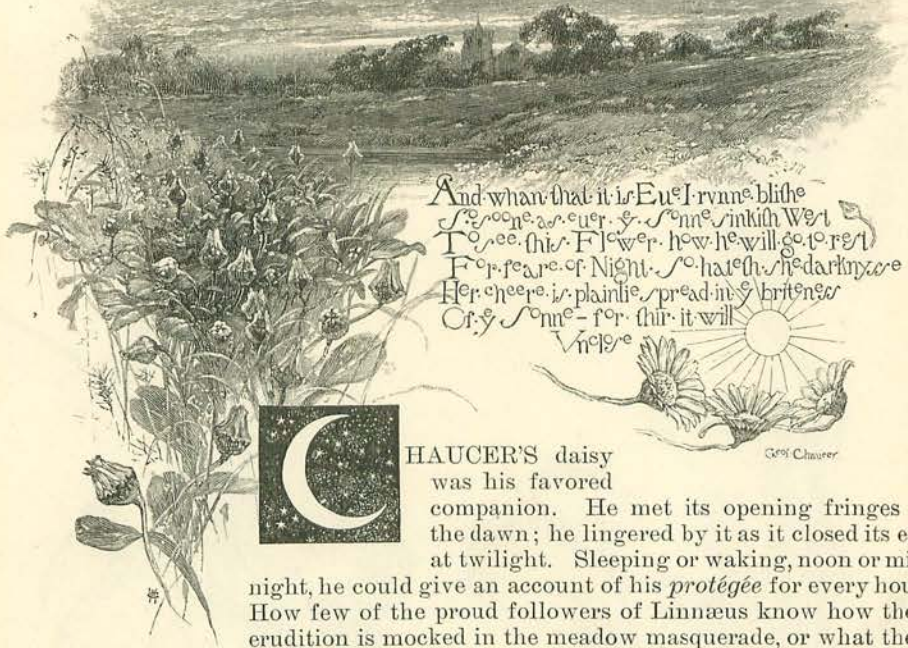


A MIDNIGHT RAMBLE



And when that it is Evening blithe
 For once as ever & Sonne in kith Wert
 To see this Flower how he will go to rest
 For feare of Night So hate the darknesse
 Her cheer is plainlie spread in Briten
 Of Sonne for this it will
 Vncle



HAUCER'S daisy
 was his favored

companion. He met its opening fringes at the dawn; he lingered by it as it closed its eye at twilight. Sleeping or waking, noon or midnight, he could give an account of his *protégée* for every hour. How few of the proud followers of Linnaeus know how their erudition is mocked in the meadow masquerade, or what their hard-named minions are up to in the dark hours!

My first midnight walk was a revelation, and a severe shock to my comfortable self-conceit. The woods and meadows had been full of faces that I had known and welcomed familiarly for years in my daily walks. But when I sallied forth with my lantern that night, I stepped from my threshold upon foreign sod. I found no greeting nor open palms, and I lost my way as though in a strange land. I opened a fresh humble page in my botany. In whatever direction I might look over the broad meadow I found the same strange complexion everywhere to the limits of my vision, and what "a pleasing land of drowsy-head it was!"

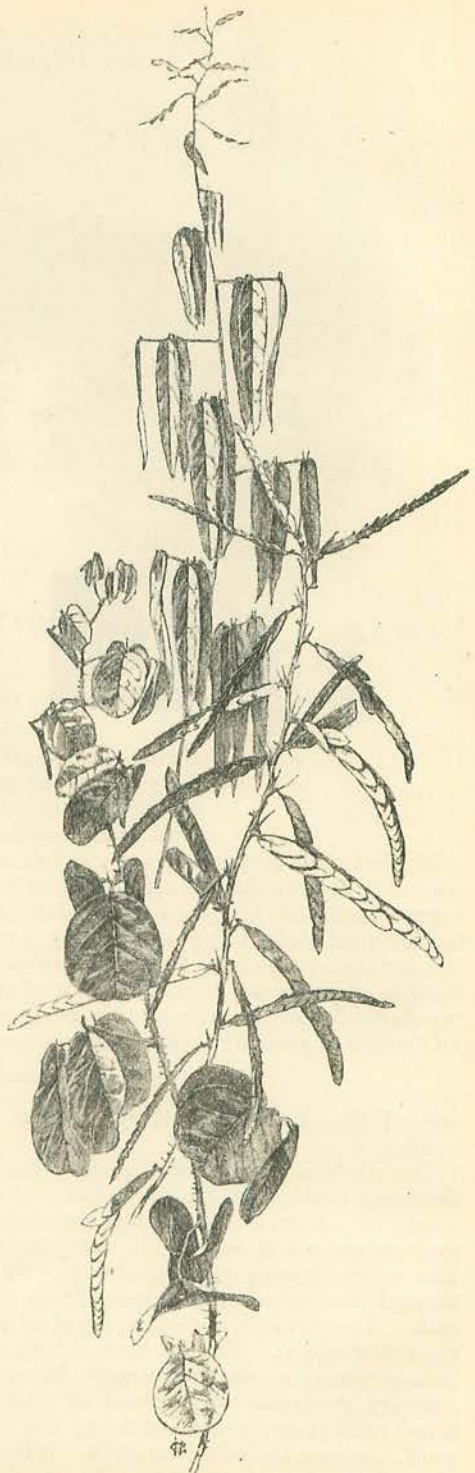
"We are all a-noddin', nid-nid-noddin'!"

seemed the universal lullaby. What a convocation of nightcaps and sleepy-heads!

The clovers are indeed a drowsy family; they keep regular hours, and make a thorough business of their slumber—red clovers with their heads tucked under their wings, as it were, the young blossom clusters completely hooded beneath the overlapping upper pair of leaves, and every individual leaf below bowed with folded palms. The white clovers were similarly well brought up, and continued their vespers through the livelong night, their little praying bands to be seen everywhere along the path. The yellow hop-clover played all sorts of antics with its leaves without seeming rhyme or reason. The tall bush clover, rising here and there among the slumberous beds, presented a complete surprise, being entirely changed from its diurnal aspect, the ordinary generous leafy spread of foliage now assuming the shape of an upright wand, each three-foliolate leaf being raised upon its stem, with the leaflets folded inward, clasping the maternal stalk. It had its arms full indeed, and seemed conscious of its heavy responsibility. The trailing ground-nut vine and the delicate wild bean were hardly recognizable in their odd night-dress; and the desmodiums at the



SLEEPY-HEADS AND NIGHTCAPS.



IN THE LAND OF NOD—DESMIDIUM AND PARTRIDGE-PEA.



NASTURTIUMS.

border of the woods presented a singular contrast of drooping listlessness, with each leaflet hanging as vertically as a plummet. I sought the familiar plummy beds of the little partridge-pea, wondering what sort of a reception I would meet from that quarter, but I found these plants even more fast asleep and transformed than their drowsy neighbors, and had trodden on a number of the plants ere I discerned them, for, like the sensitive mimosa, which they so much resemble, and which

“opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night,”

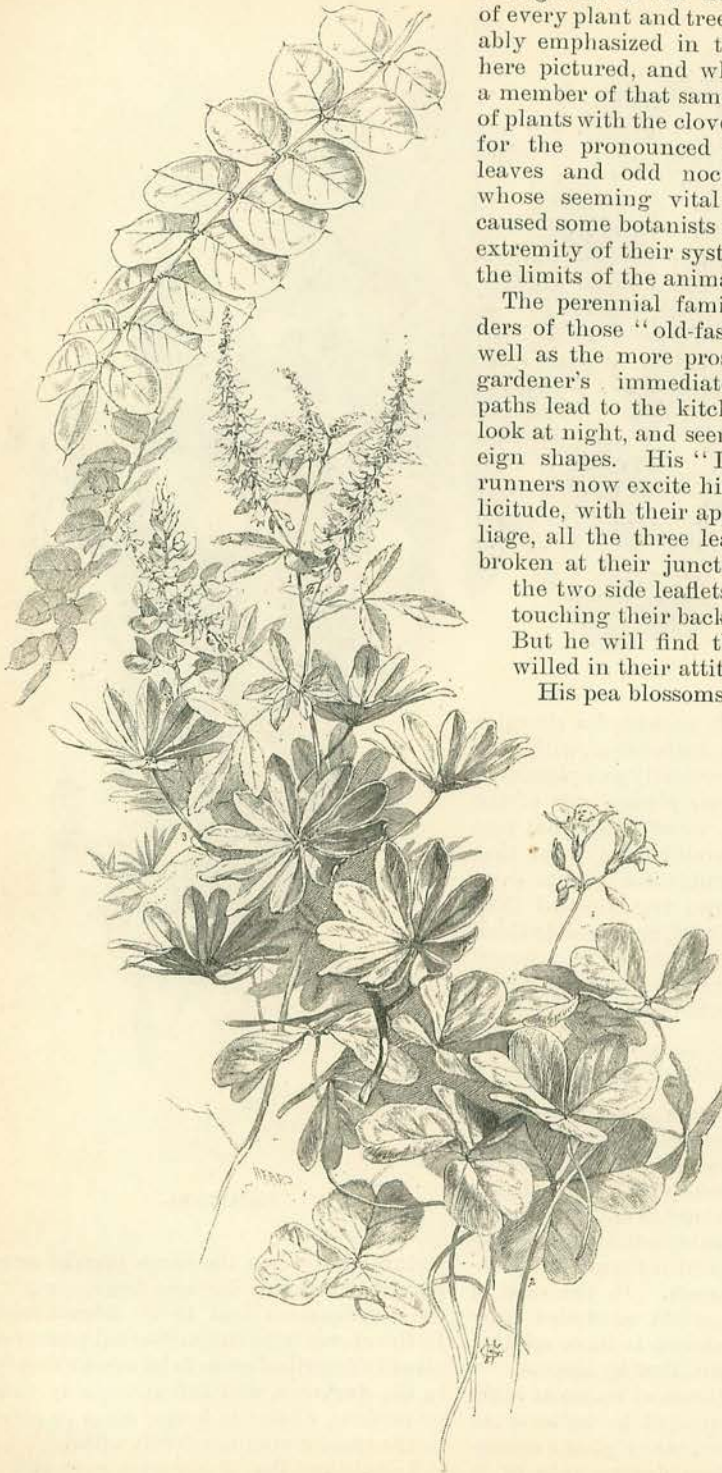
these tiny leaflets were now folded in a long flat ribbon for each leaf, presenting thin edges to the sky, hardly distinguishable from the thin seed-pods among them.

The nature of the nocturnal movements and attitudes of plants, both in leaves and flowers, has long been a theme of speculation among botanists. In the case of many flowers the night attitudes have been conclusively shown to have relation solely to their fertilization by insects.

The drooping attitude of leaves at night was commonly supposed to indicate an aversion to moisture, many plants assuming the same position during rain as in the dew, thus seeming to verify the con-

jecture; but when the same pranks were played in a cloudy day or a dewless night, the explanation had to be abandoned. In the clover tribe the nocturnal positions already described seem to be assumed only in the darkness, and this invariably, dew or no dew, while the leaves seem to revel in the rain, remaining freely open.

I doubt not that if our eyes were sharp enough they might discern a certain



strangeness in the nocturnal expression of every plant and tree, such as is remarkably emphasized in the locust which is here pictured, and which, by-the-way, is a member of that same leguminous order of plants with the clovers, especially noted for the pronounced irritability of the leaves and odd nocturnal capers, and whose seeming vital consciousness has caused some botanists to class them at the extremity of their system, in contact with the limits of the animal kingdom.

The perennial familiar blooming borders of those "old-fashioned flowers," as well as the more prosaic domain of our gardener's immediate concern, whose paths lead to the kitchen, wear a strange look at night, and seem peopled with foreign shapes. His "Limas" and scarlet-runners now excite his wonder, if not solicitude, with their apparent drooping foliage, all the three leaflets nodding as if broken at their juncture with the stem, the two side leaflets in many instances touching their backs beneath the stem. But he will find them firm and self-willed in their attitude.

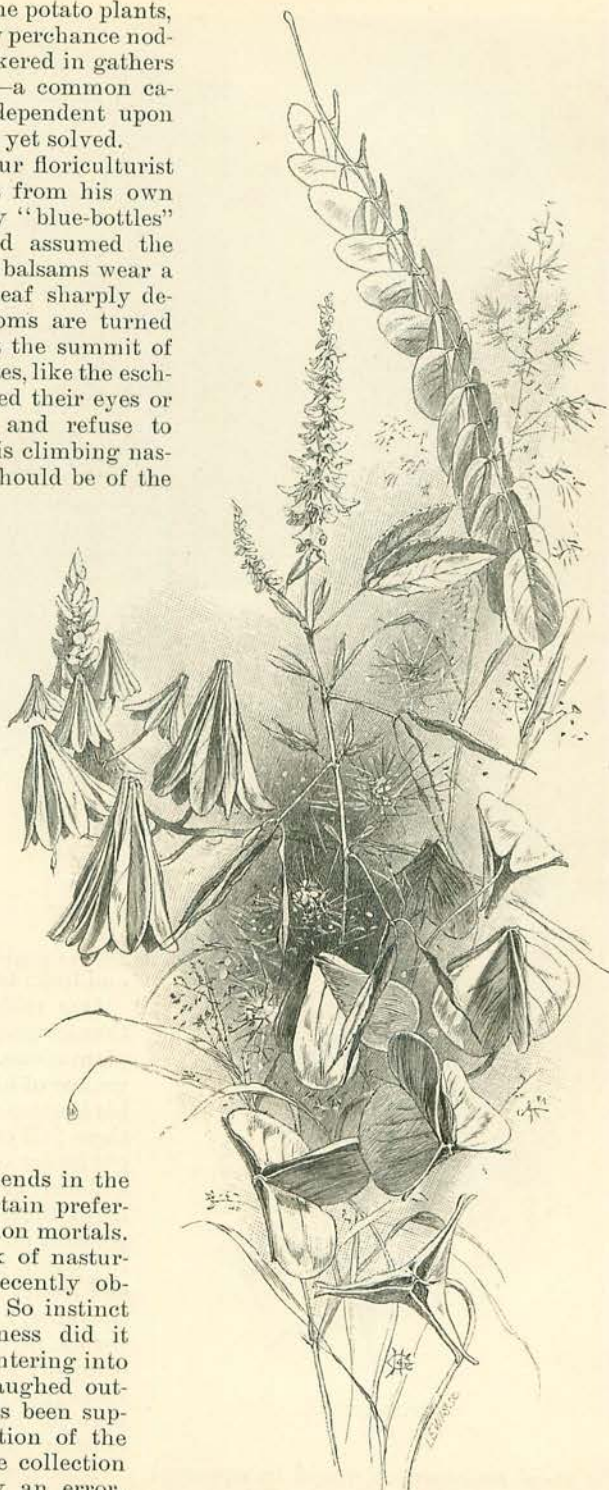
His pea blossoms have taken in sail, and nod on their stems. The leaves of his young cabbage plant, usually more or less spreading, now stand quite erect, guarding that promising young head within, for this plebeian cabbage head knows a trick or two above its neighbors, and can get a blessing from the ambrosial ether in a bright glistening sheen and a border of dew-drops, even on a cloudy night when all his neighbors are athirst.

The tobacco field over the wall looks bewitching and all on end, simulating the conical shape they soon shall bear in the dry-

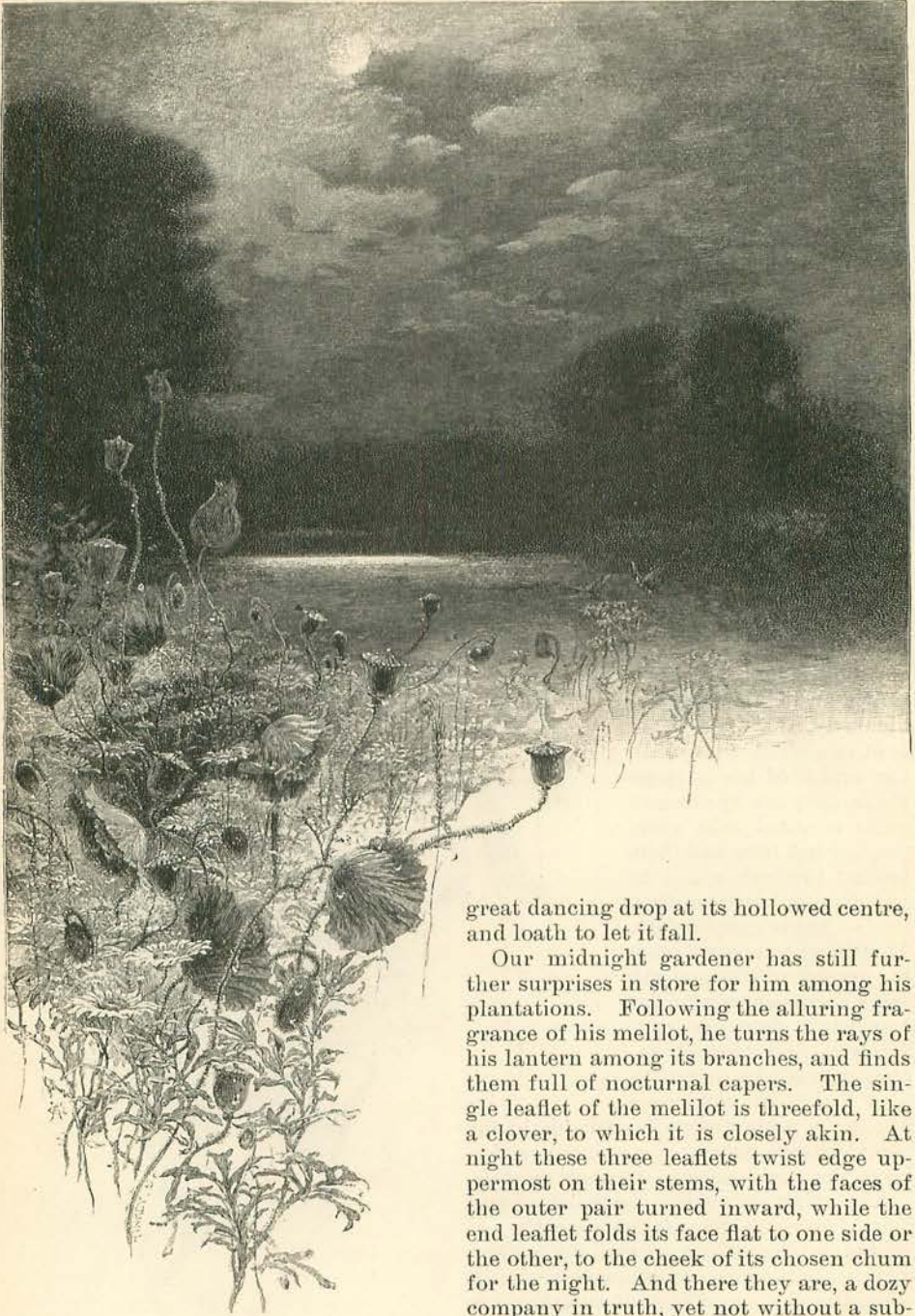
ing-house. The flowers on the potato plants, saucer-shaped by day, are now perchance nodding with their open rim puckered in gathers around the central stamens—a common caprice of these flowers, but dependent upon some whim which I have not yet solved.

Turning to his "posies," our floriculturist may pick an exotic bouquet from his own familiar borders. His starry "blue-bottles" have raised their horns and assumed the shape of a shuttlecock. His balsams wear a hang-dog look, with every leaf sharply declined. His coreopsis blossoms are turned vertically by a sharp bend at the summit of the stem. Many of his favorites, like the eschscholtzia blossoms, have closed their eyes or perhaps hung their heads, and refuse to look him in the face, while his climbing nasturtiums, especially if they should be of the dwarf English variety, await his coming in hushed expectancy, and their wall of sheeny shields flashes a "boo" at him out of the darkness, which immediately reveals the changed position of their foliage. Every individual shield is now seen to stand perpendicularly, the stem being bent in a sharp curve. In the midst of his surprise the flowers one by one now seem to steal into view, peering out here and there behind the leaves, and he will discern a grimace then that he never noted before. That bright bouquet upon his mantel will henceforth wear a new expression for him and a fresh identity. He will find himself exchanging winks therewith now and then, and hover about the room among his friends in the proud consciousness of a certain preferment not vouchsafed to common mortals.

The effect of such a bank of nasturtium leaves as the writer recently observed is irresistibly queer. So instinct with mischievous consciousness did it seem that he found himself entering into conversation at once, and laughed outright in the darkness. It has been supposed that this vertical position of the leaf was assumed to avoid the collection of dew, but this is obviously an error. There is no disposition in the nasturtium



ASLEEP—LOCUST, MELILOT, LUPINE, OXALIS.



SLEEPING POPPIES.

to avoid moisture, as would be apparent to any one who has watched the leaves during rain, catching and coddling the

great dancing drop at its hollowed centre, and loath to let it fall.

Our midnight gardener has still further surprises in store for him among his plantations. Following the alluring fragrance of his melilot, he turns the rays of his lantern among its branches, and finds them full of nocturnal capers. The single leaflet of the melilot is threefold, like a clover, to which it is closely akin. At night these three leaflets twist edge uppermost on their stems, with the faces of the outer pair turned inward, while the end leaflet folds its face flat to one side or the other, to the cheek of its chosen chum for the night. And there they are, a dozy company in truth, yet not without a subtle suggestion that it may all be a subterfuge for the moment to cover some mischief or other.

And here is another interesting specimen close by, a member of that same somniferous tribe—the blue lupine—the

“sad lupine” of Virgil (*tristis lupinus*). The plant is certainly bright and cheery enough by day, and whatever its changed aspect by night, it is certainly not one of sadness. The blue flower spikes rise up precisely as at mid-day, but the foliage presents a striking contrast, every wheel-shaped leaf now drooping like a closed parasol against the stem. The various lupines are full of individual whims in their choice of sleeping postures, some species raising their leaflets in the form of a beaker, and others following the bent of the nasturtium already described.

Every corner of our garden offers some similar revelation, and even the plebeian weeds have caught the odd contagion, and “do as the Romans do.”

The formidable mats of parsley which our gardener had singled out for extermination on the morrow—with anticipation, perhaps, of a “mess o’ greens”—are now supplanted by an unrecognizable network of knotty stems, the artful leaves concealed flat against the prostrate red stalks, and with edges upward.

Tall strange columns loom up, white and ghostly, beneath the glare of your lantern, here and there among the potato plants. They prove to be pigweeds, but for strangeness they might have sprung up like mushrooms since your last visit, most of the upper leaves, which during the day had extended wide on their long stems, now inclining upward against the stalk, and enclosing the tops of younger branches. Still other older plants are seen with leaves extended much as at mid-day, but nearly all turned edgewise by a twist in the stem.

The chickweed’s eye is closed, and

“Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel.”

The creeping-mallow blossom now ignores proud array of “cheeses,” and the oxalis flower has left her shooting pods to keep the vigil, closed and nodding upon its stem, while its foliage masquerades in one of the oddest disguises of all this somnambulistic company, the three heart-shaped leaflets reflexed and adjusting themselves back to back around the stem with many curious contortions.

Whatever the disputed function of this nocturnal movement, it has at least been shown to be essential to the life of the plant, careful experiment having demonstrated, according to one authority,

that “if the leaves are prevented from so regulating their surface, they lose their color and die in a few days.” Darwin also conclusively demonstrated the same fact with various other plants.

The sleepest beds in the garden, at least as to the flowers, will be found among the poppies.

“Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow’dst yesterday,”

mutters Iago to Othello. The poppy, “lord of the land of dreams,” sets a beautiful example of that somnolence for which it is itself the emblem and ministering nepenthe.

In a recent moonlight stroll in Switzerland I visited the poppies in their native haunts, the common wild species whose flaming scarlet sets the foreign summer fields ablaze in the mid-day sun. But I found their fires now smouldering beneath the dew, and giving no token beneath the moon, for the blossoms were closed in luxurious slumber.

In the dim moonlight I beheld thousands of these folded flowers swaying among the familiar daisies and grasses of my own land, and otherwise attended by a host of meadow flowers whose names I had not yet learned. The night ephemera fluttered here and there, and a large moth, which seemed almost phosphorescent in its whiteness, hovered spirit-like close above the poppies. The poppy welcomes all the “meadow tribes” during the day, but at night her four damask curtains are closely drawn, the two inner petals being coiled within each other above the tiny head that wears a crown within, and the outer pair enfolding all in their crumpled bivalve clasp.

The wilds are full of companion instances of sleeping beauty, but there are few lovelier than is afforded in our own fringed gentian.

“Thus doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,”

sings Bryant in his beautiful tribute to this flower—a sentiment which is true of the blossom by day, but this darling closes its “fringed curtains” at night like other blue-eyed folk. So do many of the asters, their drowsy fringes coiling close in various sleepy curls and cuddles. We have already noted, in our head-piece, the daisy’s “How he will go to rest.”



DROWSY FRINGES—ASTERS, AND FRINGED GENTIANS.

"Oft have I watched thy closing buds at eve,
Which for the parting sunbeams seem to grieve,"

says a poet who followed the footsteps of
Chaucer; as did Wordsworth also:

"And when at dusk, by dews opprest,
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness."

Shakespeare, with his characteristic om-
niscience and felicity, alludes to the sim-
ilar habit of the marigold—

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

And again in the following lines what an
inspiring epitome of the dawn!

"Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chalic'd flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes."

Indeed, the daisy and the marigold are not
singular in this retiring tendency. It may
be said that most flowers manifest a dis-
position to nod or close at nightfall—the
wild rose, mallow, pea blossom, crane's-
bill, oxalis, chickweed, mullein, and cer-
tain buttercups, for example, and the list
might be multiplied indefinitely. To all
these dozy tribes is opposed a striking
contrast in our beautiful evening prim-
rose, one of the loveliest of night-bloom-
ing flowers. In the midst of all this som-
nolence what, then, in this particular
flower, is that

"golden care
That keeps the ports of slumber open wide
To many a wakeful night?"

Not the quality of "care" in the poet's
thought, 'tis true, but care certainly in
the sense of conscious, hopeful purpose
and bright anticipation. For who that
has lingered in the twilight and watched
the eager bursting buds of the primrose,
seen the impulsive greeting in the open
welcome of its chalice, and caught the
enticing fragrance of its earliest breath—
who that has known these can deny the
spell of its sweet consciousness? It is a
rash hand that will pluck the primrose
in the twilight. How well Keats knew
its impulsive ways!—

"A tuft of evening primroses,
O'er which the wind may hover till it dozes,
O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,
But that 'tis ever startled by the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers."

Our evening primrose does not bloom
in the dark hours for mere sentiment or

moonshine, but from a motive which lies much nearer her heart. From the first moment of her wooing welcome she listens for murmuring wings, and awaits that supreme fulfilment anticipated from her infant bud. For it will almost invariably be found that those blossoms which open in the twilight have adapted themselves to the crepuscular moths and other nocturnal insects. This finds a striking illustration in the instances of many long tubular-shaped night-blooming flowers, like the honeysuckle and various orchids, whose nectar is beyond the reach of any insect except the night-flying hawk-moth. It is true that in other less deep nocturnal flowers the sweets could be reached by butterflies or bees during the day if the blossoms remained open, but the night murmurers receive the first fresh invitation, which, if met, will leave but a wilted, half-hearted blossom to greet the sipper of the sunshine. This beautiful expectancy of the flower determines the limit of its bloom. Thus, in the event of rain or other causes preventive of insect visits, the evening primrose will remain open for the butterflies during the following day, when otherwise it would have drooped perceptibly, and extended but a listless welcome. I have seen this fact strikingly illustrated in a spray of mountain-laurel, whose blossoms lingered in expectancy nearly a week in my parlor, when the flowers on the parent shrub in the woods had fallen several days before, their mission having been fulfilled. In the house specimens the radiating stamens remained in their pockets in the side of the blossom cup, and seemed to brace the corolla upon its receptacle. These stamens are naturally dependent upon insect agency for their release, and the consequent discharge of pollen, and I noticed that when this operation was artificially consummated the flower cup soon dropped off or withered.

Browning has proven the seer of the twilight flower, and in a tender allegory has truly voiced its perfume. It is the flower that sings, and though "in a gondola," how like the voice of the evening primrose!—

"The moth's kiss first!
Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure this eve
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up; so here and there
You brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide open burst.

"The bee's kiss now!
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday,
A bud that dared not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow."

"Poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history," says Plato, and in similar vein of thought Hawthorne avers that "creation was not finished until the poet came to interpret and complete it." But after all were not such disciples as Darwin and Müller and Sprengel, the prophets of the flowers, more than mere scientists?

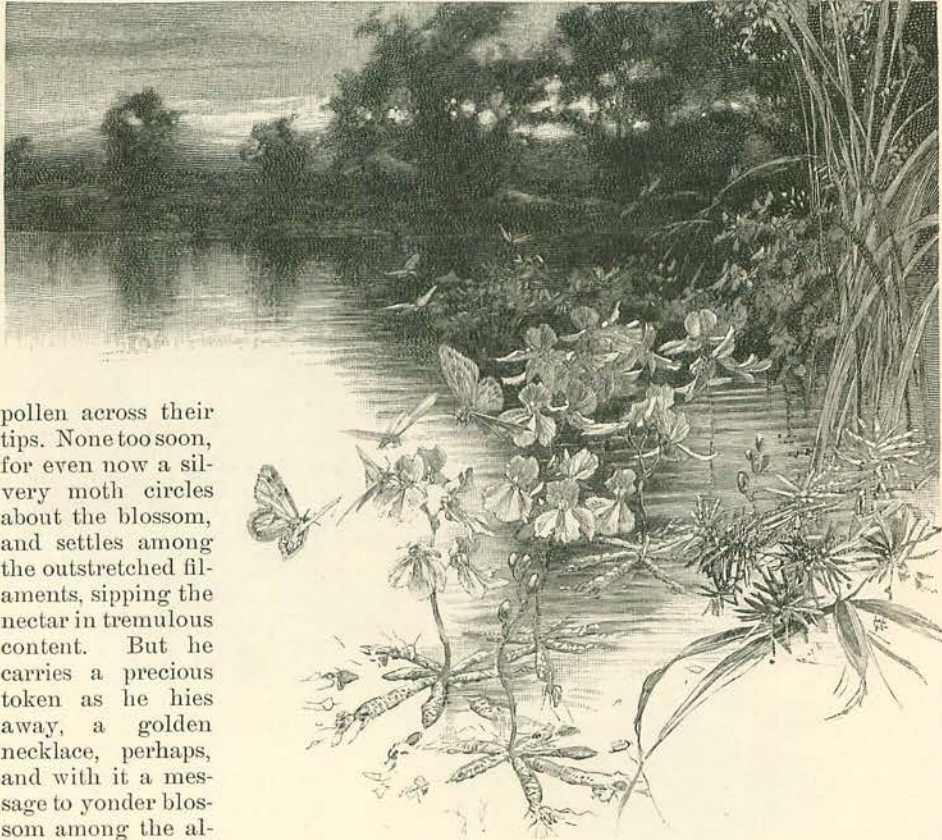
Returning to our primrose glen, how irresistibly do we bring to mind those fragrant lines of Moore's, even though they now sing to my twilight "primrose," when they sang of "jasmine buds" with him!

Look! Our misty dell is fast lighting its pale lamps in the twilight. One by one they flash out in the gloom as if obedient to the hovering touch of some Ariel unseen—or is it the bright response to the fire-fly's flitting torch? The sun has long sunk beneath the hill. And now, when the impenetrable dusk has deepened round about, involving all, where but a moment since all was visible, this shadowy dell has forgotten the sunset, and knows a twilight all its own, independent of the fading glow of the sky. It was a sleepy nook by day, where it is now all life and vigilance; it was dark and still at noon, where it is now bright and murmurous. The "delicious secret" is now whispered abroad, and where in all the mystic alchemy of odors or attars shall you find such a witching fragrance as this which is here borne on the diaphanous tide of the jealous gliding mist, and fills the air with its sweet enchantment—the stilly night's own spirit guised in perfume? Yonder bright cluster, deep within the recess of the alders, how it glows! fanned by numerous feathery wings, it glimmers in the dark like a phosphorescent aureole—verily as though some merry will-o'-the-wisp, tired of his dancing, had perched him there, while other luminous spires rise above the mist, or here and there hover in lambent banks beyond, or, like those throbbing fires beneath the ocean surge, illumine the fog with half-smothered halo. This lustrous tuft at our elbow! Let us turn our lantern upon it. Its nightly whorl of lamps is already lit, save one or two that have escaped our fairy in his rounds, but not

for long, for the green veil of this sunset bud is now rent from base to tip. The confined folded petals are pressing hard for their release. In a moment more, with an audible impulse, the green apex bursts asunder, and the four freed sepals slowly reflex against the hollow tube of the flower, while the lustrous corolla shakes out its folds, saluting the air with its virgin breath.

The slender stamens now explore the gloom, and hang their festoons of webby

night-blooming honeysuckle, where the bright bevy of blushing buds are bursting in anticipation of that "kiss which harms not," as the welcome sphinx-moth, piloted by the two great glowing lanterns of its eyes, hovers in the murmurous cloud of its humming phantom-wings. How often have I watched these

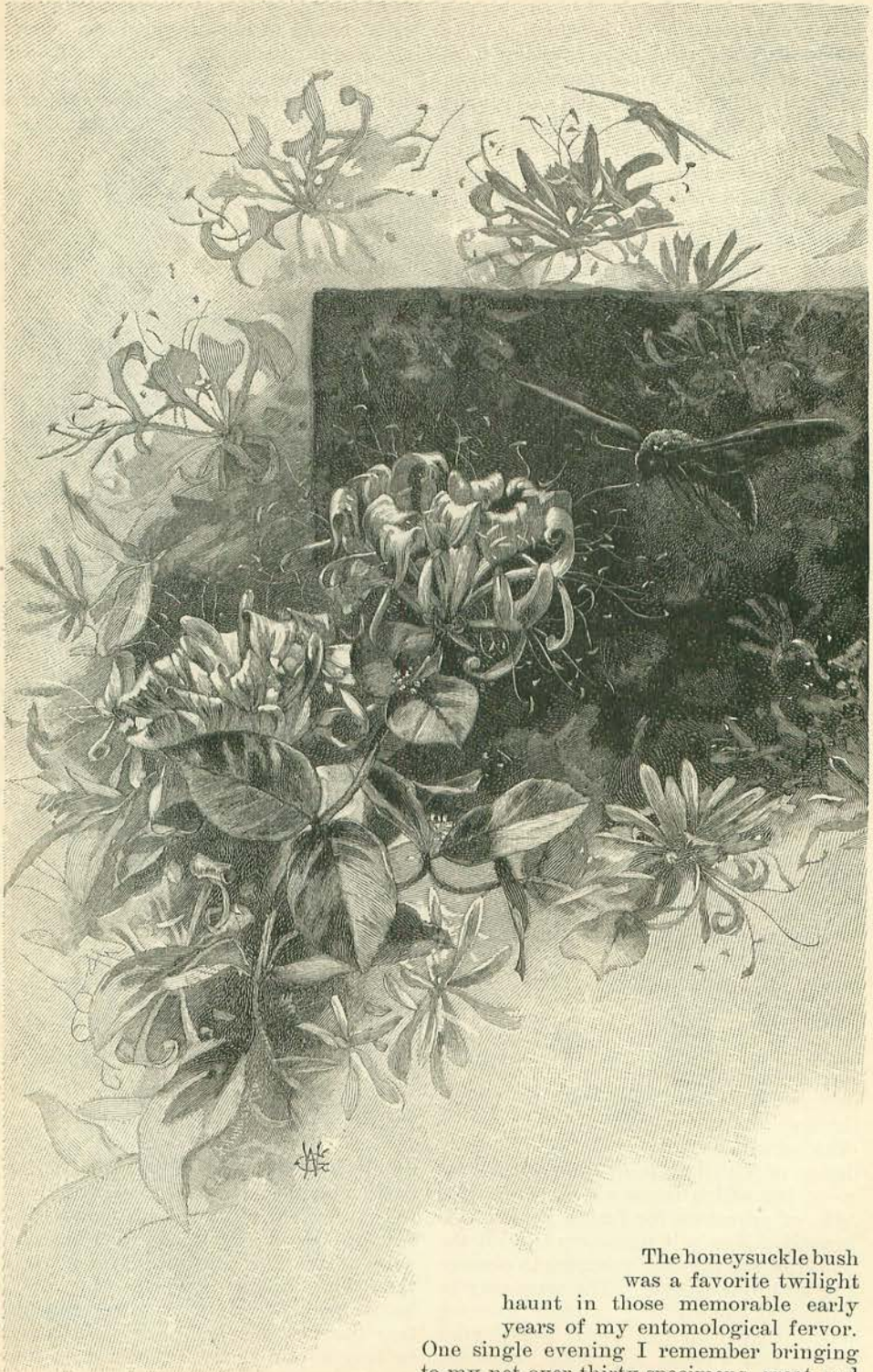


FLOATING CANDLES OF THE PONDWEED.

pollen across their tips. None too soon, for even now a silvery moth circles about the blossom, and settles among the outstretched filaments, sipping the nectar in tremulous content. But he carries a precious token as he hies away, a golden necklace, perhaps, and with it a message to yonder blossom among the alders, and thus until the dawn, his rounds directed with a deep

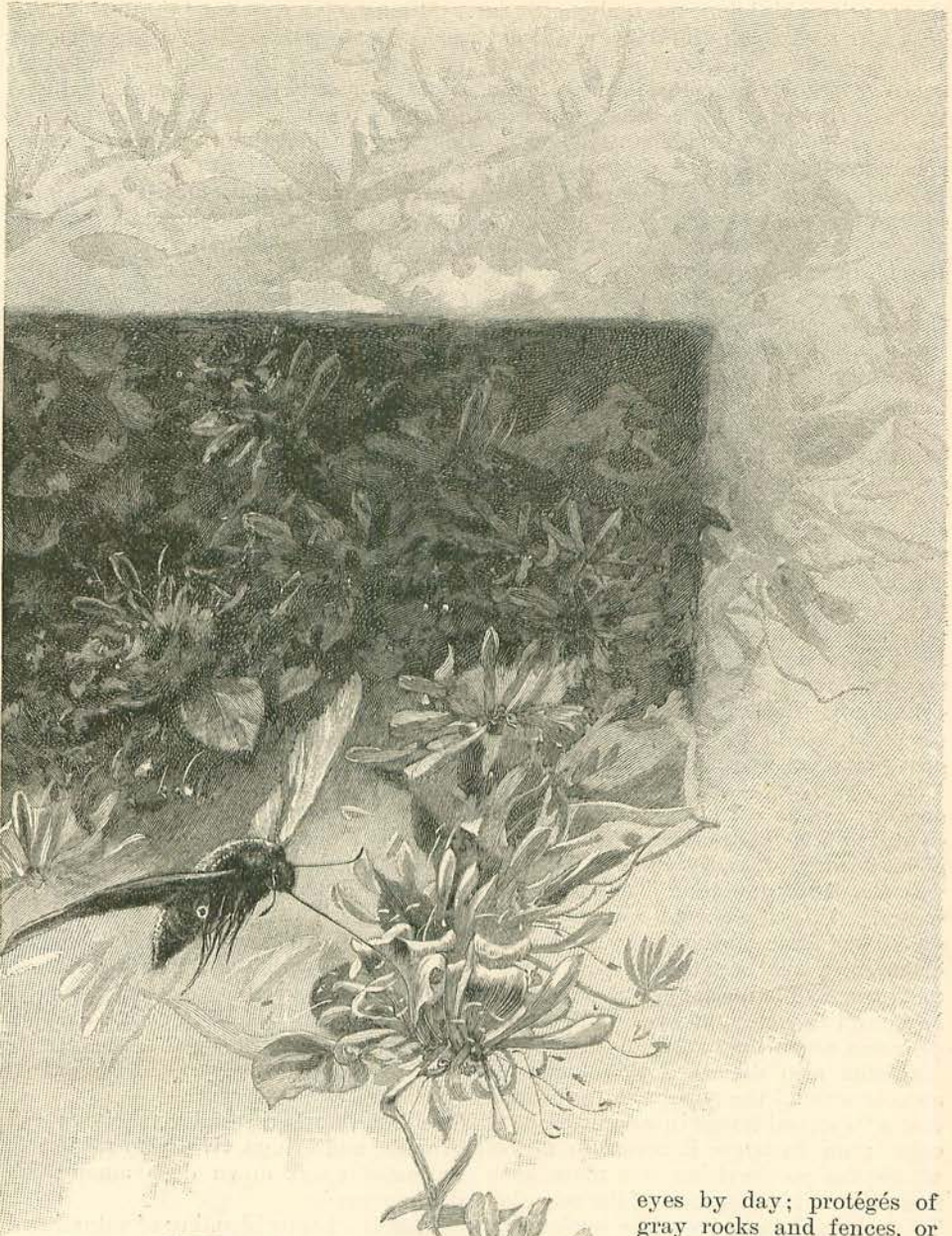
design of which he is an innocent instrument, but which insures a perpetual paradise of primroses for future sippers like himself. Nor is it necessary to visit the haunt of the evening primrose to observe this beautiful episode. The same may be witnessed almost any summer evening much nearer home, even about your porch, and among city walls, heralded by those fresh, dewy whiffs from the

mimic humming-birds in the gathering dusk, whirling about the flowers, following the circuit of each fresh-blown cluster, tilting and swaying in their buoyant poise above the blossom's throat, only their long bodies visible in the fuzzy, buzzy halos of wings, the slender capillary tongues uncoiled, nearly six inches in length, and thrust in turn deep into the honeyed tubes.



SPHINX-MOTHS.

The honeysuckle bush was a favorite twilight haunt in those memorable early years of my entomological fervor. One single evening I remember bringing to my net over thirty specimens, great and small. What a strange fascination they



SPHINX-MOTHS.

always had for me, with their great bulging eyes, their grotesque shape, their mysterious flight, and queer exotic look generally—as unlike the creatures of the sunshine as though from the Stygian world. Indeed, my first specimen could not have amazed me more had I bagged a chimera fresh from the moon, for these sphinx-moths are hid from the sharpest

eyes by day; protégés of gray rocks and fences, or merged in the fissured bark of trees, eluding the most careful search, their frequent glowing color now smouldering beneath the ashes of their upper wings, from which they rise like a phoenix in the dusk. These are mostly dressed in sombre colors, but some of them bear the aureate hues of the sunset on their wings, others are black as night, or painted with olives

dark as the midnight trees, and one there is lit with the rosy tints of dawn, as though thus to typify in their motley the sombre interval of their animated being. Who that has witnessed this revelation among the honeysuckles could be any longer insensible to the vital interdependence between this blossom and the moth?

Most of the nocturnal flowers have thus adapted themselves especially to these long-tongued Lepidoptera, hiding their honey in such deep tubes or spurs that it is only accessible to the hawk-moths. To these there is intrusted the perpetuity of many night-flowering plants.

In attributing a phosphorescent quality to the evening primrose I have mainly followed the license of fancy, although, if the scientists are to be believed, I have indeed scarcely wandered from the literal truth. For the singular luminous glow of this and other nocturnal flowers has long attracted the attention of the curious, and positive qualities of inherent light have been accorded in many instances. It is true that "the evening primrose is perfectly visible in the darkest night," from which fact phosphorescent properties have been ascribed to it. "Many perfectly authenticated instances are on record of luminous, electrical, lightning-like phosphorescence playing about flowers. The daughter of Linnæus was the first to note it," observes one writer. Pursh also subsequently observed and chronicled it. Similar flashes or corona have been discerned on nasturtiums, double marigold, red poppy, geraniums, tuberoses, sunflower, and evening primrose, according to these authorities.

Goethe also discerned this luminous aureole around the poppy, but explained it as a "spectral image in complementary color"; an instance, it seems to me, of where the poet's vision was more keen and philosophic than that of the scientist. This spectral image can be evoked by any one in a simple philosophic experiment. A moment's steady gaze at the left side of a blossom cluster, the eyes being then instantly turned to the opposite side, will reveal the colored aureole around this portion of the cluster, and always in the complementary hue—a halo which plays incessantly around the petals as the eyes are shifted. Thus the spectre of the poppy is a ghostly green-white; that of the primrose is purple.

Whether or not the primrose is thus endowed may be similarly demonstrated by any one, and I think it will be found, as in the writer's experience, that the brightest cluster, however luminous it may appear in its haunt as a condensing mirror of the midnight sky, will be invisible in a perfectly dark closet—conditions under which true phosphorescence would glow with added brilliancy.

I have observed this same luminous deception prettily illustrated in the instance of the pondweed (*Utricularia*), with its floating candlestick dancing on the ripples, the faint light from its yellow petals attended by numerous circling moths.

But we are not without numerous examples of true phosphorescence among our vegetation, for the "fox-fire" of the midnight forest is a true plant. How it gleams in the dank nocturnal woods!—most brilliant in the deepest recesses, as though feeding its fire from the very darkness. There is a whole tribe of these phosphorescent fungi—luminous moulds, mushrooms, and toadstools. They shine through crevices in the bark of trees or among the leafy loam. They glare at you with true feline suggestiveness from the deep hole in decayed tree or shadowy den amid the rocks. Following the hint of a peeping speck of fire, I have torn the bark from a decayed prostrate trunk in the woods, and liberated a flood of brilliant light covering several square feet in area.

That was an observant poet, by-the-way, who jotted down the following episode in his night stroll:

"Among the crooked lanes, on every hedge,
The glowworm lights her gem, and through the
dark
A moving radiance twinkles."

The last line is especially felicitous and graphic, and brings vividly to mind this animated spark down deep among the dewy grass.

That is a happy blending of natural and poetic truth in these lines of Coleridge:

"Many a glowworm in the shade
Lights up her love torch";

for, like Hero, who lit her nightly torch to guide her fond Leander, even so the glowworm gives this bright token to her ardent flame hovering above the grass, the glowworm being in truth but the wingless mate of the fire-fly.

But I have said comparatively little of

the dew, yet in the whimses of the dew alone there is a sufficient invitation to "let the moon shine on thee in thy solitary walk." The path of the night Rambler is paved and illuminated with brilliants, and to the tyro in these fields seems especially decked out for the occasion. A sheen of iridescent silver flashes through the grass on right and left at every swing of the lantern, like a flitting phantom of a rainbow. The mazes of the spider festoon the grass in a drapery of diaphanous silver lace pendent in sparkling spans from clover head to grass tip, and enveloping the entire meadow beneath its glistening meshes. An answering pearly spangle greets your passage hither and yon from the wheel-shaped gossamers everywhere hung among the herbage, for nature crowns this airy marvel with a rare diadem. These innumerable "wheels of lace," such as remain intact, are mostly invisible by day, except to a quiet searching eye, and the greater portion of their number are renewed or freshly brought into being during the twilight, and are quickly baptized with dew, every thread and strand strung with brilliants, suggesting a possible clew to the old-time popular belief that "gossamers were composed of dew burned by the sun."

In the caprice of the various leaves in their attitude toward moisture there is much of interest; the fastidiousness of this leaf, the eager affinity of that, one appearing as dry as at midnight, and another laved and revelling in the nocturnal bath. Here is the common plantain at our feet as wet as though fresh from immersion, its dripping surface condensing the moisture in rivulets along its parallel veins, and conducting through the grooved stem a long and generous quaff to the parched earth at its root. Other leaves are clothed in a glistening sheen resembling hoar-frost; they flash a fugitive response to your lantern, and upon the slightest touch let fall their bright disguise and leave their surface dry. Another great lush leaf exhibits a strange contradiction of caprice, and seems hardly to know its own mind, its general surface appearing perfectly free from moisture, yet nursing its great crystal globe at every depression upon its uneven surface. Its moveless poise seems almost instinct with avarice. Its cup is brimful, and each silvery restless bead,

"Scarce touching where it lies,"

grows apace until the accumulated weight disturbs the equilibrium, which is the tremorous signal for a general release and a net-work of flashing rills.

Following the sound of the water in the runnel, a rare spectacle awaits you where the *Equisetum*, the vulgar "horsetail" of the daylight, now stands transfigured, a marvel of nature's bijoutry, each whorl of its curved fringes drooping with its weight of gems, a mimic fountain worthy the court of any Faerie Queene, like that in Spenser's "bower of bliss,"

"So pure and shiny that the silver flood
Through every channell running one might see."

The freaks of dewy decoration seem endless in variety. The feathery tops of blooming herds-grass and other grasses are all a-tangle with flashing spangles, while their drooping blades are often free from moisture, or perhaps upraised hang a border along their edge, or pierce a solitary bead at their tips. Here is a bristling bed of foxtail-grass, an army of those "peaceful spears of the field," each bearing aloft its glittering trophy unto the dawn.

Let us descend beneath the hill to the borders of the pond, for here is a charmed spot. I have reserved it for the last, the bright consummation, for it is the crown-jewel of all this brilliant realm.

Every one knows the "jewel-weed," the bright reveller of the brook-side copse, with its golden "ear-drops" and luxuriant spray, murmurous haunt of the humming-birds and humble-bees, the *Impatiens*, or *noli-me-tangere* of the French, the "touch-me-not" or "snapweed" of the loitering school-boy, with its touchy, jumping pods, popping even at a hard look or breath.

Let us lay our lantern amid the succulent stems here by the brook. What a lavish display of gems! Every leaf among the lush, translucent canopy, though as dry as at high noon, now drooping low, and bordered with its pendent array of pure limpid diamonds, a spectacle such as Aladdin might have awakened beneath his supernal lamp, but which finds few parallels in natural fields.

The analytic eye discovers minute glands along the edge of the leaf at the crenate points, and one or two on the stem, each of which seems possessed of some secret power of distillation denied to other plants. Whole beds of the *Im-*



THE PENITENT JEWEL-WEED.

patiens will sometimes be seen scintillating with their gems when no drop of dew is discernible elsewhere.

There are many beautiful surprises among these dewy shadows, but none comparable to this tearful dell where the penitent jewel-weed tells her beads.

But though the dial sleeps, the hours have flown. A long gamut this for daylight folk. We may now return to our pillow, conscious that we have explored a new world and doubled our possessions.

WILLIAM HAMILTON GIBSON.