

CHILDREN AND FLOWERS.—No. 1.

RAGGED ROBIN AND LILY OF THE VALLEY.

"POVERTY AND RICHES."

FROM the earliest times flowers have been employed as symbols to reflect the emotions and conditions of mankind, and parallels and similitudes have ever been drawn between the natures of plants and the attributes of humanity. It has always been the delight of the poet to trace in some beautiful and fragile flower the type of a still more beautiful and tender childhood. The varied hues, shades, aspects, and qualities of flowers have ever suggested comparisons with the sentiments, emotions, and aspirations of youth. From the rugged and gigantic forest tree to the tender and fragile plant, each and all have been employed to symbolise the passions, the hopes, and the fears of humanity.

According to the ancient mythology of the Greeks, many of our common flowers did at one time actually breathe the breath of human life, and were looked upon as humanity itself under other forms. We have familiar instances in the *Daphne* of our woods and the *Narcissus* of our meadows, and a long list might be here appended of common flowers and trees that were at one time believed to be metamorphosed into forms of mankind.

The symbolical purposes for which flowers have been used are infinite. There is hardly any festival, ceremony, rite, or even passion or emotion, but has its floral association. Certain plants pertain to births, marriages, or deaths. Others clearly express beneficence or malevolence, innocence or guilt, harmless quiet or furious passion. Some, from their starved and shrivelled aspect, point to poverty; whilst others, from their nobleness and regal beauty, indicate affluence and riches. Their odours bear a hidden reference to that which is inviting and desirable, or that which is repulsive and loathful. The flower that is sweet, tender, and fragile denotes angel childhood; whilst our more robust and vigorous shrubs and trees portray strong and sinewy manhood. Not only our children, as *Rose*, *Violet*, and *Lily*, are named after flowers, but our houses, ships, and towns. Large countries have their floral emblems, as well as their patron saints; for we have the rose for England, the shamrock for Ireland, the thistle for Scotland, and the lily for France.

Of all the fair objects in the world, none can compare with children and flowers. Both are altogether beyond comparison or estimation, or the power of the poet to describe or the artist to paint. No other pleasure can compare with the presence and love of happy children; and no gratification of the mind is more delightful than the knowledge and company of flowers. Seldom, among the rudest, do we hear of cruelty to a child, and unrequited indeed is the wanton destruction of plants. Avarice is never mingled in the love for them, as it is in the love for gold and jewels, and more sordid wealth. Children and flowers are cosmopolitan, and the inheritance by right of all. Like the air that is breathed, they are given to rich and poor alike, and to all they offer an equal and endless joy.

Among our loved little ones, many are the sweet "Lilies of the Valley" whose goodness, purity, and beauty never tire, and whose innocent and unsullied love forms a constant well-spring of enduring happiness. No sweeter flower than the *May lily* grows in our woodlands, with bells whiter than snow, and grateful fragrance exceeded by no other plant. No wonder, then, the lily of the valley is held to symbolise all that is pure, sweet, and beneficent in happy childhood. Our old herbalists tell us it "restoreth speech unto those that have the dum palsie," "is good against the gout, and comforteth the heart." Our picture illustrates the truth of the old belief "that it comforteth the heart," "and helpeth also the inflammation of the eyes."

The lily of the valley is known to her intimate companions and to botanists by the christian and surname of *Convallaria majalis*, which is only another way of expressing "Lily of the Valley, born in May."

None fairer wakes on bank or spray
Our England's Lily of the May,
Our Lily of the Vale.

Would that we had among our brothers fewer Ragged Robins! In field, and town, and roadside, these poor ragged robins we have always with us; but not so the plant known by this name. The latter is to be found only in certain localities and peculiar situations, and first appears when the cuckoo's notes are heard, as its name implies, *Lychnis Flos-cuculi*—the cuckoo's flower. The child is oft, like the young of the cuckoo, deserted by parent and friend. In the wet marsh, in the bog, on the moor, and by the ditch-side there may be found the ragged robin. In the squalid court and dirty alley, on the wet pavement, the muddy road, and in the driving rain there may be seen our ragged little ones, waiting to be rescued by some kind heart that in this country is seldom looked for in vain. Our old books, speaking of the plants called ragged robins, aptly tell us "the natures and virtues of these, as of many others, lies hid as yet, and so may continue, if chance or a more curious generation than yet is in being do not finde them out." Like the little ragged ones of the streets and roadsides, the plant trembles and shivers, the slightest stirring of the air causing the crimson petals to quiver and twinkle. This, we are told, is the reason it was named *lychnis*—because, like the flame of a lamp, it trembles and flickers. If we imagine the "natures and virtues" of the ragged little ones "to lie hid as yet," we will refrain from surmising why the ragged child is called *lychnis*, and

leave for time to unfold which passion-flame will burn with the greatest vehemence—love, ambition, joy, or despair.

The fields, woods, and roadside throughout the country are strawn with flowers, neglected or misunderstood by the majority of men, and known only to the few. It requires a sharp and discriminating eye to separate the valuable from the worthless and the harmless from the virulent. The larger shrubs and trees to a certain degree protect the smaller plants, and afford them unwilling support, whilst they all strive together for mastery, and each separate plant endeavours to displace its neighbour. The sweet odour given forth by some fragrant lily is frequently overpowered by the narcotic exhalations of an adjacent nightshade; and various twining plants twist and writhe themselves in inextricable complication round certain other species, eventually strangling and bringing them to the ground; whilst the rank and luxuriant foliage of a third effectually chokes the growth of its more tender fellow-plant. The acute eyes of the botanist are required, used as they are to distinguish one minute difference from another, to single out the good from the bad, and by careful cultivation and management change the apparently rank and useless weed into a valuable and meritorious plant. It is thus all our delicious varieties of the English apple have been derived from the sour crab, and all our luscious plums from the acrid sloe. It is identically the same with our human weeds and wastelings, as correct of mankind as of plants, and as true of the lily as of the robin, "of their natures and virtues" much "lies hid as yet." When plants put forth their first seed leaves the several species that ultimately become furious poisons closely resemble other forms full of medicinal virtue or esculent value. So in tender childhood, who can distinguish the little one destined for philosopher or philanthropist, or separate from others the innocent white hand that may be ultimately imbrued with blood? The anxious parent is ever impatient to move aside the veil that obscures the future years of the little infant; but how beneficently the future is hidden only parents who have ceaselessly watched over the ever-varying fortunes of their sweet lilies and ragged robins can tell.

The little ragged London urchin knows of no lily or lychnis; for him there are no floral seasons; he never sees the plant-laden banks, inhales the fragrant breath of the flowers, or hears the song of the jubilant birds. The green meadows and the golden corn-fields are foreign to him; the rising and the setting sun he has never seen, nor has he ever breathed the pure air of heaven. In place of these he has the exhalations from drains and sewers, black walls and filthy roadways, the garret and the underground cellar. How different even is the appearance of domestic animals in town and country! In town our ragged one sees no sleek ducks, geese, or turkeys; no cows, and sheep, and frisking lambs in spring pastures. What a sad substitute does he get for the loud crowing cock and the cackling hen in the dead, yellow, stale, eviscerated poultry hung in rows between flaring gas jets in company with other odorous and suspicious viands. The cows he sees in dirty subterranean cellars; the sheep and lambs, bloodstained, in slaughter-houses. Domestic animals, after a long residence in town, entirely lose their healthy, plump, clean look, and put on the smoke-begrimed tint, sallow complexion, and emaciated limbs so common in cities and so uncommon in the country. The only relief to the dark picture is the now not unfrequent sight of vanloads of poor school lads taken through the dusky streets for one day's pure pleasure in the fields, to breathe the sweet air for a few hours, to see the sky, the grass, the butterflies, the hedgebanks, the trees, and the corn, and to hear the happy song of the birds. The country child always has these pleasures, mingled with the long rambles over field and down, the delight of nutting and nesting, and the primitive fishing in the clear, sparkling brook. What comparison is there between these country pleasures and pastimes and the sights and sounds of town, with its acrobats, organ-grinders, negro minstrels, and cheap jacks?

The working botanist considers it one of the greatest honours to science and himself to be able to add one new plant to the world's flora; a plant new to science and art alike, and previously unknown, unseen, and undescribed. He is the discoverer and the father, and the plant (and its future generations) is named after him, carrying his name down to future ages. So children are named after their parents, and bear their name; but who can tell the new joys and the secret pleasures of the firstborn? None but the happy parents who, like the botanist, can see beauties that separate the new comer from all other children and all other flowers.

The lily of our pictures is far less common than the robin, and many weary miles may be traversed before this tender wildling is found. The lily of the valley is a princess amongst flowers, whilst the robin is the kumble villager. The lily belongs to Flora's "upper ten thousand;" but whether princess or villager, peer or peasant, they are, one and all, our children—our own flesh and blood—and flowers, breathing the same air, subject to the same changes of fortune, living the same life, and dying the same death.

The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things:
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hands on kings.
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

W. G. S.





LILY OF THE VALLEY AND RAGGED ROBIN.

CHILDREN AND FLOWERS.—No. 2.

MAJOR CONVULVULUS AND CANTERBURY BELL.
"LOVE AND WAR."

FROM the times of the ancient Olympian and Pythian games, with their chaplets of olive and laurel, to these more modern times, with our wreaths of bay and oak leaves, the crown of the victor and the coronet of the bride, with its orange-blossoms and jasmine, have ever been chosen from the floral kingdom. The victor's chaplet and the bride's wreath, though of little value in themselves, are intrinsically beyond estimation. Bribery cannot procure a victorious crown, neither can money buy affection. Certain plants pertain to triumph in war and athletic sports; whilst others symbolise the consummation of love. What, indeed, in these days, would the welcome be to the conquering hero with no masses and garlands of flowers? and what the marriage feast without the snowy bouquets and vases loaded with fragrant blossoms? For more reasons than one, our convolvulus and campanula have been chosen to symbolise "Love and War." It is not easy to say why the profession of arms and the tender passion are always so closely allied; and few of our readers will agree with Bacon where he says, "I know not how, but martial men are given to love: I think it is *but as they are given to wins*; for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures." We certainly have heard before of "love and wine," and even "love and cigars;" but we imagine the powerful, engrossing, and all-absorbing passion of love needs less trifling allies than either cigars or wine. What can be more momentous (after love) than War, of which Major Convolvulus, of the imperial purple, is here the representative? And a fitting companion is given him in the tender blue garden Campanula, under the well-known name of Canterbury Bell.

Major Convolvulus is not a native of Britain, but his family, we are told, is established at "Syria and other remote places of the world," and he "is a stranger in these northern parts." Our military Major was born in America, where he was appropriately named "Morning Glory," his suitable and family name being, however, *Ipomœa purpurea*, he being a branch of the true Convolvulus family. That he has been aptly called *Ipomœa* no one can doubt who knows his twisting, twining, insinuating, and fascinating manners; and as for *purpurea*, a glance at the Picture will establish its appropriateness. His friends first visited this country many years ago, but kept up the military reputation of being "constant never," and always failed to establish themselves during more than a few brief summer months. This "flower of chivalry" is only to be seen late in the season. August is peculiarly the Major's month—for the best of all reasons; it is the most military month of the year—named, as it is, after the conquering Augustus Caesar himself, who in this month subjugated Egypt, rejoiced over his triumphs, and (after the manner of our Convolvulus) put on the imperial purple. The Canterbury bell (the Queen of Beauty) is the flower of midsummer, from which time she waits for her imperial lover.

As love and war have ever been allied, and as in this country there is no end to the number of sweet "bells," "bells," and "belles," our youthful Major was not long in twining himself round the warm heart of a Canterbury "belle"—this Canterbury bell, like the Major, not being a native of Britain, but of the south of Europe, where she was duly christened *Campanula medium*, because she was always a "little belle." In the old-fashioned times our forefathers had other bells in their gardens, such as "steeple bells," "Coventry bells," &c.; and our herbalists warn us not to confuse them, as the latter were sometimes "called Canterbury bells, but vnp properly." There can be no doubt that originally the name was applied to a wild British plant and not to its exotic relative; for we are told "it grows very plentifully in the low woods and hedgerows of Kent, about Canterbury," so that the well-known Canterbury bell of our gardens bears that name, to a certain extent, "vnp properly."

Let the little maid, whether of England or the south of Europe, be ever so young, she will soon display the pleasant and coquetish qualities of the modern belle, whether of Coventry, or Canterbury, or London, we say not; and how soon the romping lad has a desire for, and does don the military accoutrements of Major Convolvulus, let the ones who know the secrets of the play hour confess; military aspirations are as natural to boyish youth, as tender, winning love is to the innocent little maid. It is equally true now as in the olden time when it was said, "these bel floures we have in our London gardens, especially for the beauty of their floure," for the blue bells now are ever there, mingled with the spotless belles, who in the summer evenings frolic on the spreading lawn; 'tis then we hear the divine harmony and joyous ring of childish voices, not to be compared with the metallic music from the iron mouths of any "steeple bells," or the bells of Canterbury or Coventry, or of any cathedral or church, either in Europe or the American continent (where Major Convolvulus was born).

Old Gerard tells us, "the ancients, for anything we know, have not mentioned, and therefore not set down, anything concerning the virtues of these bell floures," but that they are "cold and dry;" and elsewhere we read "they are bitter and acrid." Now, none but the most confirmed bachelor and misanthropist would ever dare imagine that any of the lustrous little belles of the human family inherit the slightest trace of either of these "virtues." What must the parents

be of a child who is "cold and dry" or "bitter and acrid." We confess we are acquainted with no such parents and no such children; if such exist, they must be abnormal growths, the morphological significance of which (as botanists say) it is difficult to understand.

With our children, who are not "cold and dry," few occupations afford such pleasant recreation as the culture of a few flowers (not excluding the purple Convolvulus and the Canterbury-bell). The tending and study of plants, while it extends its purifying and ennobling influence to the mind of the old and young alike, adds health and vigour to the body; for flowers, whether exotic and rare, and studied in the spreading conservatory, or, as outcasts, fragile and dusty and gathered by the wayside, are to all, when studied and contemplated, a pure source of pleasure and of moral elevation, at once giving wholesome employment to the mind and glowing health to the body. The beauty of colour, the perfection of form, and the intricacy of structure of the commonest weeds that grow, have ever had a strong attraction to all persons of taste and feeling; the themes and allegories plants have inspired are beyond number; and like other beautiful things—such as innocent children, melodious music, and sweet odours—are beloved of all: rough and rugged men, with hard hands, love them as deeply as does the daintiest lady. The presence of flowers, and music, and, more than all, of happy children—with their innocent eyes, damask cheeks, and pretty voices—recalls the "age of gold," and makes careworn men and women forget the harsh present and revert to the old, happy times when they, too, were pure and genuine, frank and generous.

As children are the sources of the purest pleasure, so, sometimes, are they the cause of the deepest grief. Negligently trained and carelessly brought up, they are a constant sorrow to their parents and an annoyance to society. It is sad to look upon an unhappy, palefaced child; we naturally look to see children jubilant and joyous; but we occasionally notice the sometimes unnecessary severity and restrictions ("bitter and acrid") of parents and tutors, perverting the happy, brave, exhilarant nature of a lad into dejected and sullen cowardice, worse than anything "cold and dry;" the habits and characters of parents and preceptors are by these means reflected in the rising generation. But, than children in distress or suffering, there is no more grievous sight; to see the poor little head laid low with pain, the beaming eyes lustreless, and the merry voice stilled, with quiet, patient suffering is, in truth, a sight to stir the heart and distract the mind; to know how helpless the little one is to tell or understand its affliction, and how powerless are the distressed friends to afford the needed relief, is the gloomiest phase in the page of childhood, far exceeding in melancholy the hushed sight of the little innocent one in its last quiet sleep, free from all distress of mind and suffering of body. The dismal vacancy left in the household when one loved and merry voice is heard to ring no more—may be filled up never again!

Nothing at first sight could appear more opposed than love and war; it seems equivalent to love and hatred. If the rose is the symbol of love, war surely finds a representative in the nightshade. Be this as it may, we all know the fascination exercised by the "defenders of the country" over the fair sex, from A 1 in the "force," who courts the area belle, to Major Convolvulus, who trifles with the affections of the belle of Canterbury. Would that Goethe's lines were less true and that "Majors" had the same reputation for continual constancy in love as for steadfast and unchangeable determination in war! But, says the soldier,

Malden's heart, and city's wall,
Were made to yield, were made to fall;

When we've held them each their day
Soldier-like, we march away!

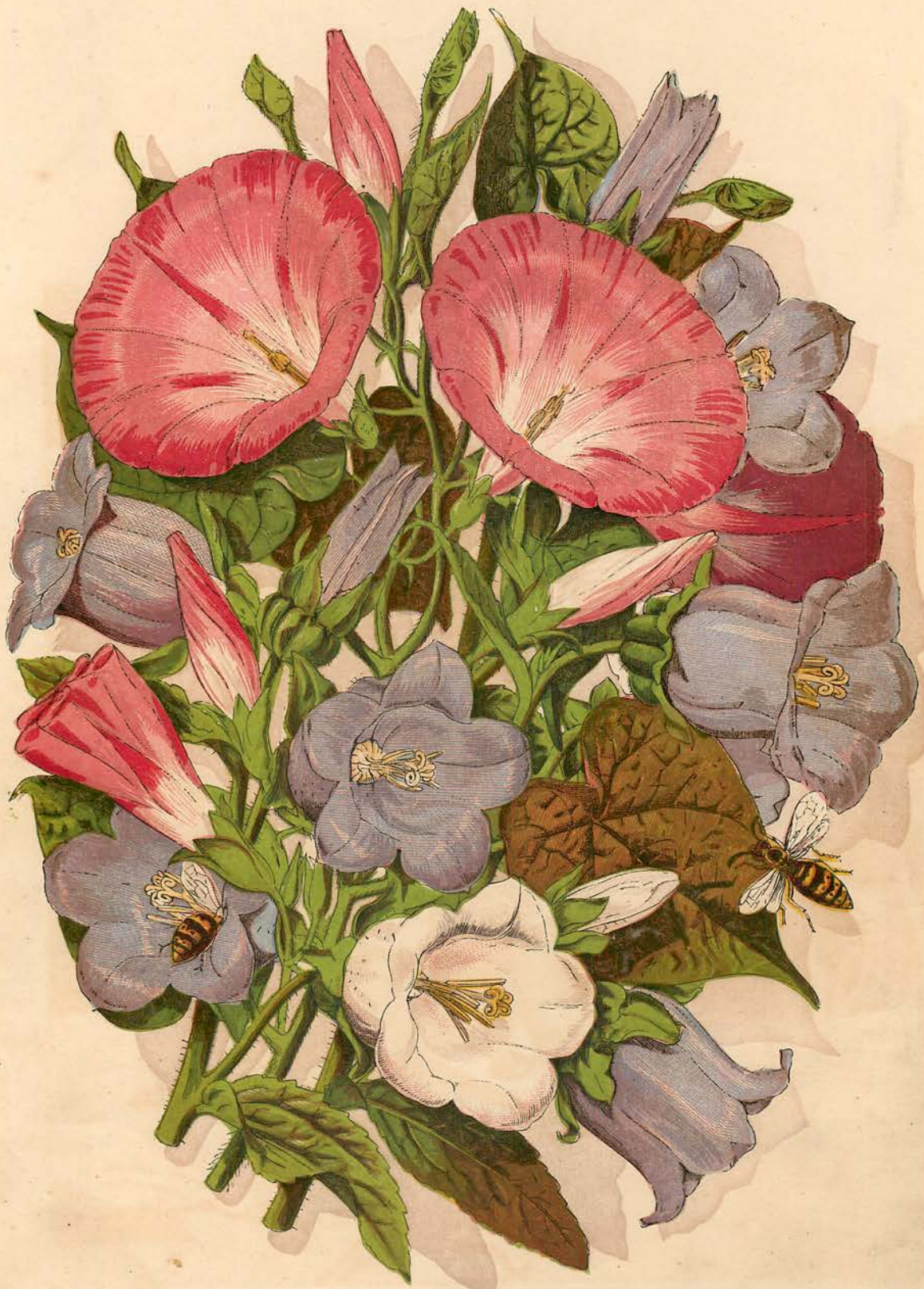
An old author, speaking of the attributes of this "military plant" under the name of "Blew Birdweed," says "it foldeth itself about them with many turnings and windings." Few maids can resist the insinuating appeals of the soldier-lover; how gently and imperceptibly he steals on the affections, how commanding is his aspect, how gorgeous the colours of his dress! Well may he be called *purpurea*; but the Major's twining ways have ere this ended in complication and entanglement. May the brave semblance and the alluring manners of *Ipomœa* never more draw aside from the path of rectitude any "bell," or "belle," or "maiden's heart"!

Our ancient pundits were undecided as to the qualities of this Convolvulus, one affirming him to be "hot and drie in the first degree," whilst others protested him to be "hot and drie in the third degree." We confess ourselves unable to settle the dispute; but, unless the trappings and embellishments of the profession of arms have extra allurements for the gentler sex, we imagine the lover "hot and drie" would have little chance with the Canterbury belle unless "hot and drie" be translated "ardent" (in love) and "quietly humorous."

Knowing the Convolvulus, as we do, to be an American Major, we also equally well know that America is the country of the "drie" and "quietly humorous." Has it not brought into existence another "drie" Major (Downing)?

We trust the day will soon go by for the production of fighting Majors and fire-eaters both at home and abroad, and that good-will and tranquillity may for evermore exist between our brothers in America and their friends at home; and when our Major returns he may as aptly retain his name of "Morning Glory" for other than military achievements as we must now imagine him and his fellow Majors to hold it only for warlike bravery.

W. G. S.





MAJOR CONVULVULUS AND CANTERBURY BELL.

CHILDREN AND FLOWERS.—No. 3.

WHITE AND YELLOW WATER-LILIES.

"EXALTATION AND DETRACTION."

IN quiet pools and placid streams, all over the country, we find water-lilies, white and yellow, reposing on the surface of the water, and giving an extra charm to the calm lake and slowly-running river. The white water-lily—the pure water nymph, the queen of flowers, and the pride of the waters—may be found all over Britain, from north to south. Words fail to give any adequate idea of its unsullied and queenly beauty. Added to a perfect form, it is in colour white as snow, the outer petals suffused with the palest blush of rose, and it has a heart of solid gold. Among the family of water-nymphs, this is the white water-nymph—*Nymphaea alba*—the "sculpture-like and stately river queen."

Equally frequent and generally in company with the white water-nymph, we find its yellow Naiad sister, *Nuphar lutea*, whose fragrant flowers float upon the waters like lumps of gold. It is at these times (like sisters blonde and brunette) we see these royal plants to their greatest advantage—whiter than ivory and purer than gold.

Water-lilies of the family of mankind and the family of Flora are found in every part of the world; but it is in other countries we must search for the more iridescent and important water-nymphs of Flora. In America for the unapproachable *Victoria regia*; in Egypt for the "rose of the Nile" and the blue water-lily, *Nymphaea lotus* and *Nymphaea cœrulea*; and in Indian waters for the lotus of the Hindoo—*Nelumbium speciosum*—sacred to Isis. These water-naiads have ever symbolised fertility and plenty, and the latter at least (though a poor mortal nymph) was believed to yield one essential ingredient to the "Elixir of Life." But the queen of queens and the goddess amongst water-plants is the *Victoria regia* of South America, where indeed this nymph (who both in size, beauty, and fragrance excels every other water-lily) reigns supreme over all aquatic flowers. It is not necessary to dilate here on the gigantic and fragrant flower-head, white and unsullied as purity itself, and the immense reticulated, buoyant leaves, exceeding in diameter the height of a man. Yet, like all other earthly and unsubstantial things, this colossal and magnificent water-queen, this goddess of plants, lives but a single year, and has a life thread as frail and slender as the smallest and most despised weed by the dusty roadside. To find the fairest of all the lilies of the family of marit is not necessary to leave the shores of "merrie England," as we all know.

Written description fails to give any idea of the more than perfect beauty of all flowers. The best painted flower when placed beside the original looks little better than a clod of earth, for no base colours can imitate the iridescent hues of plants. And if this be true of flowers, how much more so is it of childhood and youth? Can any words describe or any brush paint the happy, beaming eyes of innocent children? In flowers there is something unapproachable to all art in their finished form and prismatic colouring; and in pictures of children, however perfect, there is constantly absent the nameless and spiritual grace ever present in the originals. It is beyond the power of the artist to imitate the divine light of the eye, to give the music of the youthful voice, or the graceful play of the limbs, "gay without toil and lovely without art."

Beauty and happiness are often little appreciated till lost. If we can imagine the world without its little children and with no flowers, what a desolate and cheerless waste it would be! Flowers are so universally loved by all, and made use of on so many festal and joyous occasions, that it is difficult to imagine the blank that would ensue even on a partial failure of the supply of flowers; but what the absence of the tender little ones would be, let the distracted mother say who in deep and lasting sorrow ever bewails the loss of her pure and unspotted innocent.

The praises of the white water-lily as a symbol of purity and beauty have been sung by poets of every country, but the golden *Nuphar* has not been without her detractors. For instance, an English authoress and botanist, writing of this queenly flower, says—"It is a coarse, vulgar-looking plant, with large, bright, yellow flowers, which smell like brandy" (!) Could anything be more unjust? The flowers are fragrant in the extreme; and, when the golden petals have fallen away, the seed-vessel presents a form not dissimilar to an ancient flask, hence the common name of "brandy-bottle flower"—the white water-lily being for the same reason called "water-can." Could anything more malignant be written in a description of either of the two sweet water-nymphs by the lakeside (seen in our Picture) than a reference to spirituous liquors? It is only in the broadest burlesque we can imagine any connection whatever between nymphs and brandy. But authors and authoresses alike, ancient and modern, have all made common cause against this fair nymph. We are told in one place (oh, shame!) she is "good for killing cockroaches;" and the only other good that has been written of both sisters is, they "have a drying force, without biting;" and that they are "good against pilling away the hair of the head," or—as we should read it now, "good against peeling off the hair of the head." In pictures of water-nymphs and mermaids the hand-glass and comb are always introduced, so we can only imagine this has some hidden and occult reference to the "pilling away;" and the fact of both nymphs being powerful "without biting," must needs be in the highest degree satisfactory to the sub-fluviatic lover.

The water-lilies of our picture, being specially fresh-water nymphs, must not be confounded with the marine goddesses, associates of Neptune and the Tritons, who live in the wonderful coral palaces in the unfathomable depths of the ocean, and who may even now be disporting themselves on the magic, nerve-like thread that has made the two hemispheres coalesce; nor even with the weird "water-maidens" whose residence is in the caverns of pearl and crystal in the lowest parts of the deep and treacherous inland lakes, whose nocturnal singing and revelling have been heard and seen by so few, but celebrated in prose and verse by so many.

Where the beautiful water-nymphs are collected, there we always find the cruel dragon-fly, the *Demoiselle*, the syren of the river-side; beautiful beyond description in aspect and colour, yet in disposition murderous and savage. These creatures pass swiftly through the air on errands of destruction, or are seen lightly balanced on flower or leaf whilst engaged mercilessly torturing one of their own, or some other species. In addition to the dragon-flies of the air, named *Demoiselle*, there are other dragon-flies of the earth of the family of mankind, some members of which also frequently named *Demoiselle*, are equally cruel, fatal, and ruinous, and, like the dragon-flies of the air, prey on their own kindred, and place the mark of sin and blood on the fairest objects of nature. Both evil-doers are crafty, wary, and difficult to take, and, when caught (as entomologists well know), their fleeting, transient, and deceptive beauty at once fades and withers away. The gay trappings of green and blue outravelling in colour the emerald and the amethyst when the creatures are sailing through the air, soon become wholly colourless, mishapen, and unsightly when the short life of the *Demoiselle* has passed away. How many cruel dragons are there in the streets of London and other cities—dragons whose life's sole aim it is to waylay and subvert the pure and innocent? Could St. George, the patron saint, be revived, other more terrible dragons than that of Cappadocia could be given him to slay.

Water-lilies are no sooner removed from their native element than they fade and die, the petals of ivory and gold wither and waste, the fragrant and beautiful object of one hour excites only aversion the next; so transitory and fleeting are all the really beautiful things of nature, so short is their hour of life, so soon they perish and are forgotten! How thoroughly beyond human power it is to revive the beauty and fragrance of the humblest inanimate flower! what, indeed, would the childless parent give to revive once more the dead eyes of the little one, or cause the tongue, silent in death, once again to speak? The water-lilies in one picture differ materially from the plants in the other; the water-lilies of the human family are at least immortal, whilst all the family of Naiads and Nereids and Nymphs, goddesses though they be, and though said to live for many thousand years, are confessedly mortal. The sleep, however, that simulates death is given to both. When the sun has dispelled the mists of night and the families of plants and families of men awake, then the royal water-lilies throw back their fragrant petals and turn to the sun, so the water-maidens in our picture throw back their masses of brown and golden hair to lave with the goddesses of the stream.

We believe the hypothesis of Darwin has not included an attempt to give man any aquatic attributes, or even to show him to be, now or at any recent time, aquatic in nature, or even amphibious in tendency; and, though we have ere this heard of "water-babies," we cannot imagine our brave lilies inhabiting water, though we have witnessed the matutinal bath on the coast and the hebdomadal immersion at home in the nursery bath, or in the large vessel made with staves and iron hoops.

Few flowers are less easy to secure than water-lilies. They are generally quite beyond the reach of the hand of the despoiler, and it is only the most enthusiastic botanist that is willing to wet his feet to secure the beautiful flowers. Many a despairing lover, wandering in the autumn by the seashore, could tell a sad tale of the obstacles and impediments in the way of securing a like requital of his love for some Nereid of the shore, difficulties far more embarrassing to him than even the deep and flowing water.

What sad tales of deaths by drowning and of courageous rescues could some of our water-nymphs disclose—of brave youth swallowed up by the deep and treacherous stream, and of the broken-hearted one flying from the cold and cruel world to the colder arms of death abiding in the depths of the water!

For beauty, and purity, and gladness, the lily, the rivulet, and the river have been held as symbols from all time.

—We are but children to these and to thee,
Thou bountiful daughter of mountain and sea;
And down by the woodlands so dreary and deep,
And down by the valleys all dotted with sheep,
And over the shallows, and ever the sand,
It sings like a joy in the heart of the land.
O maiden! O maiden!
Thy beauty arrayed in,
It comes through the long summer sunshine like thee;
With happiness singing,
Its merriment ringing,
Its radiance flinging,
Profusely and free.
It kisses, caresses, and blesses the dearest,
Gladdens, O maiden, the next to the nearest,
Covers with graces
The gloomiest places;
The light of the woodland, the loved of the lea,
O maiden, it cometh in beauty like thee.

W. G. S.





WATER LILIES.

CHILDREN AND FLOWERS.—No. 1.

SWEET WILLIAM AND MARIGOLD.
"YOUTH AND BEAUTY."

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

In these days every one possessing human tenderness is expected to recognise the teachings of Nature in the beautiful objects of creation everywhere to be seen, and at all seasons to perceive something more than a "yellow primrose" in the "primrose by the river's brim." Notwithstanding the affirmation of Xenarchus that

Poets are nonsense; for they never say
A single thing that's new. But all they do
Is to clothe old ideas in language new;
Turning the same things o'er and o'er again,
And upside down.

we imagine the arts, the sciences, and literature would hold out few attractions to students were the whole knowledge exposed on the surface. Many of the commonest things are least understood; and there is not a ragged weed, or despised insect so mean, but it holds an undivulged secret so prized and precious that, were it once revealed, it would exceed all other human knowledge. Where is the beginning of life? By what subtle process do the tiny rootlets of the young nightshade distil the furious poison from the earth, or whence comes the fragrance of the violet? Who can tell us what mysterious instinct prompts the mother of the finest creature to make such bountiful provision for the diminutive little ones she will never see?

In the study of natural history there is always something new, and the animal and vegetable kingdoms are so nearly allied that it has been found impossible to draw a boundary line between them. The races of men and the races of plants possess many more things in common than is usually acknowledged, and a fact in the study of one invariably points out a truth in the life of the other. When children and flowers are selected, we have the rarest and best of both kingdoms at our disposal; the enduring oaks and sable yews are laid aside for the more brilliant and tender gems of the parterre, and the great names in the family of men are passed over to give a short preference to the spotless little ones.

In the happy olden time, our wise men did not know plants (if they did children) as we know them now, for who in these days, on looking at a Sweet William, could possibly think or believe that it "wonderfully about measure doth comfort the hart being eaten now and then"? Who would think of eating a Sweet William, unless, indeed, it were eaten for love? Could anyone imagine our Marigold as one of the anthropophagi about to begin the cannibal banquet? If the youth in the purple dress is an anthropologist and looks upon her as a Sweet William eater, without doubt she is about to convince him of the untruth of his thinking, and to show in what other way her "hart" may be comforted.

As doctors are allowed to differ, a quotation from a second authority will, we doubt not, be accepted by our readers as more in accordance with truth; for we read that the Sweet William is "not used either in meate or medicine, but esteemed for its beautie to deck vp the bosomes of the beautifull;" and as if to impress the fact more indelibly on the reader's mind, we are again informed that "Wilde Williams is not used in medicine or nourishment;" and immediately afterwards, and for a third time, it is "not used in phisicke." After these medical testimonials that the "Sweete William," or "Sweet Iohn," or "Wilde Williams," as it is frequently called, is not to be eaten, it cannot fail to be an acceptable partner to any flower, be she a marigold (French or exotic) or an English rose.

The strictly proper name of the Sweet William, and the only one recognised by botanists, is *Dianthus barbatus*. *Dianthus* is the classic way of expressing "divine flower," and *barbatus* refers to the prickly beardlike calyx or chalice from which the flower springs. When the same name is applied to the inexorable youth in our Picture, no one will deny his right to the surname of *Dianthus*, but his claim to the hirsute *barbatus* may be considered incipient. Both the Sweet William and Marigold are of exotic origin, and in this country are far from their own homes; therefore, we may well distrust the evil things that have now and then been said of them (no doubt the authors were prompted by jealousy); for instance, an ancient herbalist proposed calling our "Divine Williams" "Fleawort"—not because it killeth fleas, but because the seeds are like fleas—as if the blaze of colour in the flower head suggested nothing—and that the seeds must be searched for to compare them to "fleas." We have changed much since these old, old days; for two hundred years ago, the popular name for Sweet William was "Pride of Austria" or "Austrie," as they spelt it in those benighted times. If it be allowed in these pages to refer to matters political, we would fain say there is now a certain "Sweete William" (of the double eagle) who is anything but the "Pride of Austria" in the year of grace 1867. Even the flower of our gardens comm only bears the brand of Cain on the leaves and sepals, in the shape of distorted, swollen, black, morbid, excrescences, that we saw everywhere on Sweet

Williams this year, and which is known to mycologists by the fearful name of *Puccinia lychnidearum*. We have a nobler and purer "pride" in "merrie England" for a certain "Sweet William" who first saw the light at Stratford-upon-Avon.

The family to which our Sweet William belongs (*Caryophylloceae*) is of great extent and widely spread. Disliking hot countries, it shows a decided preference for more temperate zones: certain members are even found on Alpine summits or bordering the limits of perpetual snow. The aristocratic name above cited refers to the crimson colour which decks so many of the brethren; they, however, have certain poor relations, and Ragged Robin in our last year's Almanack is one. Gay colouring is considered of little value in these days if it be not combined with intrinsic worth; and one of the first botanists of the present day, referring to this family, says, "they are, generally speaking, insipid and useless." We are disposed to think certain of our fair readers will be able to call to mind other Sweet Williams of a similar type.

The Marigold of our Picture is *Calendula officinalis*;—*Calendula* has reference to the time of its appearance, and *officinalis* to the fact of its being of value in the shops of the old pharmacists, although one of these informs us, proving the glorious uncertainty of "phisicke" (at least in the olden time), that "touching the faculties hereof, there is nothing certaine." Originally from the south of Europe, Marigolds are now common everywhere; but the golden Maries of our English "garden of girls" we have ever had with us. Of Marigolds and Golden Maries there are many sorts; there is the chocolate French marigold, the marsh marigold, the "Oxe eie" and "Jacke an apes a horse backe, doubtless, a degenerate kinde;" one will "strengthen the hart," one is dried and kept throughout "Dutchland against winter to put into pibiscall potions," the "Oxe eie" marigold is "fastened through the eares of cattell for certaine diseases and doth cure them;" but all know that the marigold of the vegetable, [if not of the animal, kingdom has a certain native bitterness.

The colour of the marigold is the old, old colour for jealousy, nearly allied as it is to love, and so familiar to lovers; but there are two senses in which yellow is symbolical, one for inconstancy and deceit, the other for goodness, marriage, and riches; the latter was well known to our forefathers, one of whom wrote "maydens make garlands of it, when they go to feestes and bryde-ales, because it hath fayre yellowe floures and ruddy."

The Marigold belongs to a family so vast (*Compositae*), that it has been computed that one flower out of every twelve belongs to it, and everywhere so well beloved is it that a single word of detraction has seldom been spoken of any single member; they grow all over the world, showing a slight preference for the milder regions, and vary in size, from the tiniest gem, to the veriest giant. On the banks of the Thames we have one relation (*Sonchus palustris*) which grows 12 ft. high, whilst we all know what a jewel amongst plants is our little Daisy. Some are inclined to show a little bitterness, as the wormwood; the scent of the camomile does not please everyone; and the thistle, whilst inwardly saying "Nemo me impune lacessit," often displays an alarming array of prickles; but merely for "defence, not defiance."

The Marigold was believed, at one time, to be capable of imparting a yellow colour to the hair; but, as this hue is becoming less appreciated than formerly, it may not be looked upon as a notable "vertue" by all our readers.

Shakspeare more than once refers to these plants, and in "Cymbeline" we read,

And winking Marybuds begin
To ope their golden eyes.

Certainly, the Marybuds we know do not "wink;" but we cannot tell what Golden Maries did in the times of the ancient Britons. He sings elsewhere.

Her eyes like Marigolds hath sheathed their light,
And canopied in darkness sweetly lay,
Till they might open to adorn the day.

This has direct reference to the sleep of plants, for the golden rays of the Marigold flower begin gently to close in the afternoon, only to be again awakened by the rising of the sun and the carolling of the birds.

The hues of the Sweet William and Marigold are surpassingly lovely; in the former, especially, they vary to such a degree, and are so exquisitely pure and prismatic in their shades, as to altogether defy imitation. Sometimes the tint is pure white, touched with lilac; at others almost black, so intense is the ruby-red; then again, the flowers are marked and embellished one shade over another with the most matchless and consummate beauty. The Marigold is usually one blaze of golden fire, sometimes with a heart of amethyst, at other times with a disc of burning yellow or with petals touched with purple. Until we can steal our colours from the spectrum, no one will faithfully paint flowers or the faces of our little ones.

Who can paint
Like nature? Can imagination boast
Amid its gay creation hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows?

W. G. S.





SWEET WILLIAM AND MARIGOLD.

CHILDREN AND FLOWERS.—No. 2.

COLUMBINE AND PENNYROYAL.
"REALITY AND IMITATION."

Not a tree,
A plant, a leaf, a blossom but contains
A folio volume. We may read, and read,
And read again, and still find something new;
Something to please, and something to instruct.

PENNYROYAL in our Picture has evident reference to the drama, and, as the plant known by the same name has ever enjoyed the possession "of subtle parts," we naturally imagine that Pennyroyal is playing one of the "parts" of which one man in his time is said to play so many. No doubt the performance represented in our Picture is a Shakspearean revival, and our lad is saying—

My crown is in my heart, not on my head,
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,
Nor to be seen. My crown is called content;
A crown it is that seldom Kings enjoy.

Or, may be,

There's Fennel for you and Columbines.

If the Columbine be gathered before it is fully in flower the side view presents a very exact resemblance to a group of doves drinking from a chalice: from this similarity it has derived its popular name, which means "doveliike." In the days of our youth, our only "doveliike Columbines" appeared at Christmas time, in the disreputable company of Clown and Pantaloon. The Columbine belongs to a very suspicious family, and the effects of many of her near relations are quite as fearful to the human race as the cruel practical jokes of Clown and Pantaloon aforesaid. The *Ranunculaceae*, of which the Columbine is a member, are spread all over the earth; but they love temperate regions best, and they are murderers, everyone: they deal in madness and death; they poison the honey of the industrious bees. "Devil-in-the-Bush" is one brother. Baneberry, Black Hellebore, and Wolfsbane are others; the woeful Rue is sister of the Columbine. Beneath the beauty of the Christmas Rose is hidden the sting of the scorpion. All our middle-aged readers will agree with what old "Phisitions" have said of the Columbine—viz., "most do attribute unto it the vertues of wilde otes." Oh! ye loungers behind the scenes, where the Sylphs and Columbines do congregate, say, what are the "vertues of wilde otes"? How many times have Columbines and "wilde otes" been associated? Elsewhere, under the name of *Herba Leonis*, we are told it is the "herbe wherein the lion doth delight." What a sermon might be preached from these words! Does it refer to the lion (young British) that enjoys such ecstatic delight in front of the boxes at Christmas time, or has it reference to the horrid lion of eternal destruction and death that has devoured so many flowers, both of Columbine and Rose? Not always so is it that apt comparisons can be drawn between beings and plants—for instance, in a venerable botanical description of Columbines, some are described as "blew," "purple-red," or "horse-flesh colour," "which maketh the difference"; we imagine it does, for the Columbines our little ones delight in are of our own flesh and blood—probably the lion itself would hesitate ere he "delighted" in a Columbine of horse-flesh tint, purple-red, or "blew." It is consolatory to find they are thought to be temperate "between heate and moisture"; and few need telling that to take a Columbine, or any other fair lady, it is requisite "to bee well covered with clothes;" or, in other words, says the Columbine, "if thy purse be empty, come not me a-wooing."

That Columbines may be honourably wooed and won is worthy of belief; for in the sweet spring time it is not uncommon to see a tiny golden zone on Columbine leaves in our gardens; we had plenty of it this spring, and, if it does not point to the ring of Hymen and happy marriage, what can its meaning be? Botanists know it under the extraordinary name of *Aecidium Ranunculacearum*; and, as *Aecidium* is only the classic way of expressing "wheel," we imagine it has some reference to the "wheel of fortune," which does not give the golden token to all alike. The same authorities tell us that Columbines are better without it; that it is a mere disease, and a blot on the Columbine's character. So much for the "vertues of wilde otes," say we.

The botanical name *Aquilegia vulgaris*, has reference to the eagle-like claws of the nectaries. The common and scientific names combined thus give us doves with eagles' claws; it has been quite common to find birds of this feather, from the Siren choir of Homer to the Harpies of the nineteenth century.

"Pennyroyall," says an old doctor of medicine, "groweth naturallice wild in moist and overflowen places, as in the common neer London, called Miles-ende."

As if to show the persistence of things, Pennyroyal holds its headquarters at Mile-end even now; but, differing from the "Pennyroyall" of our old herbalists, it rears its evil head in dens overflowing with vice in the shape of the "Penny Royal Theatre," erewhile known by the unpleasant sobriquet of "Penny Gaff." The Columbines here have eagles' claws indeed, and the talismanic wand of Harlequin is only used to transform the image of truth and purity into that of sin and guilt. How great is the difference between child and child, and how incessantly fighting are the powers of good and evil for the possession, body and spirit, of our unspotted little ones! It is similar to the choice and tender flower, that has

been planted out to take its chance with others, when, if no external agency be there to rescue it, it will probably get suffocated, and have to yield its place to some noxious weed; or, it is like certain trees, producing rich and priceless fruit under cultivation, but which, if allowed to run wild, only furnish poisonous thorns and worthless acid berries.

Pennyroyal, belonging to the mint family (*Labiatae*), science recognises under the name of *Mentha pulegium*, *Mentha*, or *Menta*, meaning mint. It may reasonably be supposed that the kingly personage represented in our Picture (and not excluding certain other kingly personages) cares more for the mint where the money is coined than the mint to be found in "overflowen places" like "Miles-ende." The Greek mythology tells us that a maiden of the same name (*Menta*) was transformed into this plant by Proserpine, from jealous considerations regarding her husband, Pluto, who she thought loved the damsel. It bears the name of *pulegium*, because it was at one time imagined to be offensive to certain small creatures, whose appearance was once said to be the same with Sweet William seeds, and which we have had the pleasureless duty of previously referring to.

The family to which Pennyroyal belongs is of enormous extent, members of it being found in every quarter of the globe; some of these are good and of great value to the community, others are bad and of evil odour. They are noted above most plants for the possession of a beautiful lip, hence they are known as the *Labiatae*; what especial value the simple owning of a beautiful lip may have without virtues of a corresponding degree, may appear doubtful to others besides the writer. Many of the family come from the rural districts, and are most abundant about cottage gardens. Sage and Savory are brothers of Pennyroyal, so are Rosemary, Thyme, and Lavender: some of its relations in the hedgerows possess a horrible fetor, and even Pennyroyal is not without its detractors, as the odour of its presence, though pleasant to the majority, causes a shudder of horror to pass through the nerves of many lady gardeners.

One would, at first, think that in children and flowers there is no such thing as imitation—that a flower is a certain flower and nothing more; and that a child is an embodiment of innocence and reality, with nothing assumed. In the very young child this undoubtedly is so; but, no sooner does the little one begin to understand, than it commences a certain mimicry of other persons and things—first, she is a "mamma," then a "grand-ma," erewhile a shopkeeper, then a purchaser, now a distressed damsel flying from a fiery-dragon in the shape of her little brother, whilst the first-born becomes the valiant St. George. Inanimate things are made to represent horses and carriages and towns and trees, till at last the little ones will lead three lives: one the real life of the school-room, one the playtime life, and the other the life of happy, smiling dreams.

In flowers this mimicry of other things is still more remarkable and inexplicable, because it is unconscious imitation. In the lower orders one plant often closely resembles another of a different family, whilst in orchids we have flowers exactly similar to insects: in the fly, the bee, and the spider orchis we have a vegetable mimicry of insect form that defies detection at a short distance. To complete the complication, certain of these insects will look like flowers, or leaves, or dead sticks, or anything but themselves, and smell like flowers, for odour is quite as puzzling as form and colour: the odours of the animate and inanimate kingdoms in certain instances so resemble each other as to be indistinguishable.

Amongst the fungi, we have one that lolls out of oaks, and precisely resembles the tongue of an ox; another is in every respect like a human ear, and grows on the elder; whilst a third is the same with an animal's brain. What purpose this mimicry serves it is not easy to say; amongst animals and the higher orders of plants guesses may be made to approach the truth; but why, unless it be by accident, a plant should represent an animal's brain or the human mesentery is far more difficult to tell.

There is a very strong resemblance between plants and animals in many other ways; they live, they breathe, they have a circulating fluid in their veins, they eat, and drink, and sleep; for plants eat and drink without a mouth set with teeth, and sleep without organs of vision: to eat is to consume nutriment, sleep is perfect rest from sensation during a period in which the vital functions go on in the usual way. Plants, too, like human creatures, can only live under certain conditions and under a certain temperature; we have alike malformations, diseases, and a temporary death; for no one can believe that death is permanent annihilation in a world where nothing is annihilated. The child sleeping the sleep of death, and the broken and faded flower, rent from the parent stem, have ever been compared one with the other.

The bier descends, the spotless roses too,
The father's tribute in his saddest hour:
O Earth, that bore them both, thou hast thy due,—
The fair young girl and flower!
Give them not back unto a world again
Where mourning, grief, and agony have power;
Where winds destroy, and suns malignant reign,—
That fair young girl and flower.

But he, thy sire, whose furrowed brow is pale,
Bends, lost in sorrow, o'er thy funeral bower;
And Time the old oak's roots doth now assail,
O fair young girl and flower!

W. G. S.





PENNY ROYAL AND COLUMBINE.

CHILDREN AND FLOWERS.—No. 3.

LONDON PRIDE AND GOLDEN ROD.
"MAY AND SEPTEMBER."

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud, or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humours lead
A meaning suited to his mind.

ALTHOUGH Golden Rod is grouped with London Pride in our Pictures, the bringing of them together would in reality be impossible, as they are separated by the great gulf of the seasons: London Pride unfolds its beautiful blossoms in the early spring, whilst Golden Rod does not display his aureate disc till the late autumn, London Pride, as its name indicates, is the glory of town gardens, where it is wholly unaffected by neglect and impure air. It thrives and throws up its pretty starry flower-stalk under the most disadvantageous circumstances; penned up in a stifling back court, in a broken flower-pot, in the bottom of an area, without the slightest attention, it is as happy as in its native Irish mountains. Besides indicating happiness, youth, and beauty, it points to Ireland in many ways, and may be taken as the type of Irish beauty, without at all detracting from its merits of London Pride.

Its name of *Saxifraga umbrosa* refers to its supposed power of disintegrating stones. We will charitably suppose this to indicate the power of Irish beauty to melt the famous stony hearts of lovers; *umbrosa* refers to the shady situations in which it delights to live. "Saxifrage," says an old author "is in the mother tongue 'stone breaker';" it was known, too, by the name of Mountain Saucile; "and he who keeps such has no business with a doctor," says Gerard (who just before refers to the profession as "rannagate surgeons or phisickmongers"); so there is no doubt it was formerly held in high repute by English herbalists.

Less pleasant are the thoughts unwillingly brought to mind by this essentially Irish plant in the following ancient description of "St. Patrick's cabbage" (another name by which our Saxifrage was known). Says our author, "It concocteth rawe humours," and "it is spotted most curiously with bloodie specks or prickes." As for the "rawe humours," the island which acknowledges the shamrock as its national plant has ever been celebrated for its natural mirth and humour, though we are fain to acknowledge that many Irish anecdotes are specially adapted to make the Hibernian reader "rawe." As to the "bloodie specks," these horrid spots have ever stained the flowers of Erin; from the earliest times we have had entanglement and confusion; the very ornament of old Hibernia is called "Celtic knot-work" in which the devices of designers are woven in inextricable complication; from that time to this we have ever had intricate and difficult "knot-work" with our brothers in the Emerald Isle. Let us hope that similar cruel complications and "bloodie specks" may never again stain the character of Celt or Saxon, and that all future "knot-work" may be the peaceful intertwining of the Shamrock with the Rose; that the only Golden Rod associated with Ireland may be the sceptre of Victoria and the "Rod" of Gold Stick in Waiting, preceding English Princes and Princesses in an Irish Palace; for it is not too late to learn that the British Flora acknowledges a "Golden Saxifrage" as well as a "Golden Rod." This Celtic knot-work was ever chased, engraved, enamelled, and set with precious uncut jewels, which shone out brilliantly, like the pure eyes of innocence and childhood, if, indeed, it be not profanation to compare anything belonging to childhood with cold, shining stones, however rare or precious, for we cannot buy the body and soul of a little one as we buy a bit of coloured quartz. When we say children's eyes are like sapphires, their lips like rubies, their teeth like pearls, and their hearts like solid gold, the comparison must be considered the same with the nurse's adage when she tells us that our Lily of four summers is like "waxwork"! We all know there is no comparison between one and the other; we compare children to precious jewels because we highly esteem both; but how much the former is valued above the latter, or above all things in the whole world, no words can say. There is no equivalent to the beauty and tender love of the little maid, the London Pride, our purest one, and best of best.

How fair the maiden! None can be
So fair, so beautiful as she?
Ask the mariner who sails
Over the joyous sea,
If wave, or star, or friendly gales
Are half so fair as she.
Ask the knight on his prancing steed
Returning from victory,
If weapon, or war, or arrow's speed
Is half so fair as she.
Ask the shepherd who leads his flocks
Along the flowery lea,
If the valley's lap, or the sun-crowned rocks,
Are half so fair as she.

Golden Rod, common in thickets, lanes, and mountains in autumn, is a member of a large North American family named *Solidago*. Of all the household our single representative is the one solitary member to be found in Europe, the other brothers confining themselves exclusively to the northern part of the western hemisphere. The family derives its popular name of "Golden Rod" from its repeatedly branched stem and shining flowers forming a veritable rod of gold.

Its scientific name of *Solidago virga-aurca* bears in the latter part of the name the same meaning; but *Solidago* has a deeper significance, and refers to its supposed power of closing wounds, which is again indicated in another of its popular names of "wound-wort." As Golden Rod has been undesignedly associated with London Pride in these Pictures, let us hope that an attempt will be made by our English Golden Rod, to prove its efficacy in closing the sad wounds recently laid bare in our sister island. At one time it was "extolled above all other herbes" for this purpose; and we are gravely instructed that it is "as good as Saracens Confound," whatever that may be. The old accounts of treatment by this "hearb" are not without recriminations regarding certain "Fantastical Phisitions" and "new fangled fellows," who dealt in the herb. It is rare near London now, but that it was not so at one time is proved by the following quotation, which may prove useful to any enthusiastic botanist who wishes to verify an old locality, and does not desire to go far into the country:—"It grows," says our informant, "neare unto a gate that leadeth out of the wood unto a village called Kentish Towne, not far from London, harde by a gentleman's house called Master Leonard." This lucid direction will, we think, satisfy everybody.

Of rods there are many. A rod of land in the city of London is a "golden rod" indeed to its possessor; there is the sceptre rod of kings, often of iron; the birch rod, of our youth (to us), anything but golden; the fascinating piscatorial rod; but, of all rods, save us from the heavy rod of the tyrant. There are tyrants in flower gardens as well as in palaces: the venomous Nettle is one, the coarse suffocating Dock is another. What would become of rare and beautiful plants if tyrants like these held undisputed sway? But justice comes at last, the oppressor is divested of power, and the hurtful weeds are uprooted and destroyed; then is felt the need of the wound-closing *Solidago*, of the peacemaker, the gardener, of garlands, and the King with the golden wand.

The flower is called "golden" because it is yellow and shines like gold; it possesses the good outer qualities of the precious metal, without its inner and evil properties; it is purer than gold in one sense, for it is spotless and free from stain. The gold that Flora strews broadcast over the earth never mars friendship or sows disension between brethren, precious as it is and bearing the impress of Nature. Flora's gold has never paid the price of flesh and blood. Was not Maximilian estimated and sold for so many pieces of shining dross?

Gold is synonymal with wealth and riches; but how poor indeed a man may be and yet have coffers of gold, for money will not buy health and happiness; and it is possible to have heaps of golden coin with a discontented mind and a broken heart! A man, however poor, may be happy and contented, for happiness is cheap and may be possessed by anyone: it is not to be bought for so many "pieces of gold" and pierced with bullet-holes, like a poor Emperor's body. Where good children are (whether in the busy streets or green leafy lanes), with content and love, pure thoughts and kind words, there is happiness better than all the gold in the world; with these there is happiness in breathing the pure air of heaven, in listening to the rejoicing birds, in gathering the starlike flowers better than gems. The prattle of little ones is to be preferred to the flatteries of Courts; and the shade of green, whispering trees in the merry greenwood is better than a kingly canopy of silk and gold.

All the *Saxifragaceae*, of which London Pride is one, were once believed to possess the power of disintegrating stones, even the ability to disintegrate the solid rocks, amongst which many of them grow. The Saxifrages are a family of mountaineers, ranging over the whole world, sometimes found taking the form of inconspicuous plants, and at other times appearing as lofty trees; and some of the most singular plants of the vegetable kingdom either belong to or are very closely allied to this family, notably the exquisite "Grass-of-Parnassus" and the fly-entrapping *Sun-dews*.

Never since the world began has the marriage knot proved agreeable when May and September have been allied, for

Youth is full of pleasure—
Age is full of care, &c.

The strong and lusty bridegroom loves best a youthful bride, and the young wife a husband in the springtime of his manhood. But there is a far purer love maintained between parents and children, a love that autumn and winter and grey hairs only render stronger and truer. Nothing can exceed the unalloyed purity of the deep, confiding, unspotted love shown by a little child to its parents, a love that binds father and mother together with bonds ten thousand times stronger than any ever thought of on the marriage day. If it be possible to conceive of parents being brought still closer together than by their children's love, it is in the blank and helpless despair that follows the death-sleep of an angel little one.

Come to me, O ye children,
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away.
For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses
And the gladness of your looks?
Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

W. G. S.





LONDON PRIDE AND GOLDEN ROD.