
THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF
WILD FLOWERS
AND THE STORY OF THEIR NAMES
by GARETH H. BROWNING
ILLUSTRATED BY M. C. POLLARD

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THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF
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TO
VALERIE
—HERSELF
A WILD-FLOWER



The Scarlet Poppy.

Front.

PAGE 204

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THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF
WILD - FLOWERS AND THE
· STORY OF THEIR NAMES ·

WHERE THE NAMES CAME FROM
CHAPTER I.

HERE is a certain question in my mind that I have been wondering about for a long time. Children go out into the happy countryside, along the leafy lanes, over the sweet green fields, and into the cool and shadowy woods where the birds are calling to one another from the high branches; and all around them, wherever they play, the earth is starred with thousands upon thousands of brightly coloured gems, and these gems are more precious than ordinary gems, because, not only do they exhale every variety of fragrant odour, but they are sent by God to beautify the world and make it a happy place for us to live in. You will at once guess that the lovely gems I am thinking of, with their glowing colours of purple

and blue, and red and yellow and cream, and violet and glistening white, and the delicious perfumes which they distil into the warm air, are - the wild-flowers.

The question that I have in my mind, then, is concerned with the wild-flowers. In the springtime we go out into the woods and meadows and pick certain white flowers and certain yellow flowers; and the first kind we call Snowdrops and the second kind we call Primroses. Later on, we gather other blooms, blue and crimson and violet, and we say, 'These are Bluebells and Red Campions and Violets.' So, through the whole of the spring and summer, we continue to pluck the flowers as they appear in their season, and call them each by a particular name.

Now, having said this much, I can disclose to you the thought that has been puzzling me for so long. Do children ever stop and ask themselves *why* we call the flowers by these names, and *where* the names come from, and *who* first made them up? You know who gave you *your* name. Your godfathers and godmothers gave you a Christian name at your baptism. You were, of course, much too small a baby at the time to remember anything about it yourself; but you learned of it later on in your Catechism. Your parents have always called you by that name, and, no doubt, you have never given the subject a moment's thought, but

have just taken it for granted, as indeed is only natural.

And I expect that is what you have done about the names of the flowers. You meet them day by day, and always you are speaking of them by their familiar names, while probably you have never once paused to wonder how they came to have those names, or, what is much more interesting, what they mean. For every one of these flower-names has a meaning, and many of them conceal a pretty story or a happy thought. Only, the stories are written in a sealed book, and you cannot read them by yourself until you are grown up and have learned to understand hard foreign languages that were spoken hundreds, or even thousands, of years ago, and acquired a mass of other knowledge most difficult to master. Many of these flower-names are so old that even the cleverest people cannot tell us now what they mean; but, fortunately, it is possible to learn about most of them.

Some of the names tell us of ancient gods and goddesses, of kings and heroes and saints, of witches and fairies and all sorts of magical and fascinating people. Most of them come from olden times, when people saw fairies and demons on the earth and every kind of good and evil spirit flying in the air. Many are quite plain and homely in their associations. But all of them have their special meanings, and

it is because I thought you would like to hear about them, and so learn the pretty secrets of the flowers, that I have written down their stories in this book. At the same time you will find that I have told you something about the appearance of the plants, their leaves and flowers, with their shapes and colours, and when and where to find them; because this will enable you to know the flowers better and to feel that they are your dear and intimate friends. You will not find all the wild-flowers in this book, for there are far too many to describe in a single volume; but, together, we shall talk about the commonest, or the most interesting of them.

Now, before we come to speak of the flowers separately, I am going to tell you something about the far-distant countries, and the times of long ago, where and when the names came from, and the strange superstitions and pretty fables out of which so many of them arose.

CHAPTER II.

THOSE of you who remember your early English History will recall that the land in which we live was inhabited long ago by the ancient Britons. Then, from the far-distant shores of the south of Europe, came the soldiers of the mighty Roman Empire, who conquered the Britains and seized the land. Later on, the Romans were compelled to abandon their new possession in order to return to their own country and defend it against their enemies. As soon as they had gone, England was once more invaded, this time by a race of fierce and hardy sailors and warriors called Angles and Saxons, who came across the sea from the northern shores of Europe. It is with these warriors that we will begin the story of our wild-flower names.

The Anglo-Saxons were, in a sense, the godfathers of many of the flower-names which we use to-day. To mention only three plants, the Wild Strawberry, the Daisy, and the Yarrow were known to them under these names more than a thousand years ago. Is it not strange to think that these pretty flowers, which are such favourites with us to-day, were spoken of in just the same words by those savage warriors who

came from over the cold seas and descended upon our shores with sword and battle-axe? But even a thousand years, long as it is, does not really indicate the greatest age of names such as these, for some of them were used by the Anglo-Saxons long before they left their homes in the north of Europe. So you will see that, not only are such names very ancient, but they had to travel across the ocean before they settled down amongst us.

The Anglo-Saxons were quite as familiar as we are with many of the plants which grew in England then as they do to-day. They used them chiefly as medicines, and particularly for healing up the numerous wounds which they received in battle. But I will tell you more about the strange ancient uses of plants later on. At present I am going to take you a long way from England to continue the story of plant-names in a foreign land.

The country we are going to visit is called Greece, and it lies in the south of Europe on the shores of the blue Mediterranean Sea. We are going there because a large proportion of our wild-flowers owe their names, or the ideas which those names express, to the ancient Greeks who lived more than two thousand years ago.

The Greeks were a noble, handsome, and wise race, and, at the time I am speaking of, they formed a powerful nation. They, like the barbarous Anglo-Saxons, were familiar with the

plants which grew around them, and they made a great study of them and employed them for various purposes. They lived before our Lord was born, and they worshipped a large number of false gods. Their supreme god was called Jupiter, and he was very powerful, because he had control over the thunder. When he was wrathful with anyone he would destroy them by hurling down thunderbolts upon them. His throne stood at the top of a mountain, which was so high that it pierced the clouds. The mountain was called Olympus, and there all the gods and goddesses in whom the Greeks believed lived. One of the goddesses was named Venus, and she was more beautiful than any other being. Then there was Iris, who acted as messenger to the other gods, and travelled to the earth by means of the rainbow. In those days there were a number of famous heroes and heroines, strong men, giants, strange creatures that were half-man and half-horse, and beautiful youths and maidens. Some of these latter were especially loved by the gods, and they have become famous for the beautiful stories that have been written about them, several of which you will find in this book.

The Greeks were passionately fond of flowers, and they were in the habit of using them to deck the altars of their gods and the statues of their heroes, to crown the victors in their public sports and games, to ornament weddings and feasts and

funerals, to supply foods and savoury flavours, and to serve a variety of other purposes. There was another way in which they made a very special use of plants. In those early times people knew but little about medicines, and most of those which they employed were made from plants and animals. Their learned men explored the high mountains, the fields, and woods and desert-places, and examined every plant to see what medicines they could discover in its roots and leaves and flowers.

In this way the Greeks came to give names to the flowers, and many of them have been copied and handed down to us in England, and are still in common use after a period of more than two thousand years. Sometimes they named plants after their gods and heroes, as Jupiter and Hyacinth and Iris. Sometimes the individual who first discovered a medicine-plant bestowed his name upon it, as in the case of the Gentian, which comes from the name of a certain king. Other plants were called after their healing or other useful qualities, or after some striking feature, such as their scent or the shape of their leaves and roots. For instance, our Milk-wort owes its name to the discovery which the Greeks made that it contains a milky fluid in its roots; while the Hawkweeds are called by that name because the Greeks associated them with the keen-eyed bird of prey. So, too, such names as Lamb's-tongue and Hound's-tongue were made



The Greater Celandine.

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The Lesser Celandine.

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up because the shape or surface of the leaves of those plants suggested them.

In course of time another nation arose which at length destroyed the wise and noble Greeks, and became the masters of the greater part of Europe, including our own land. This was the Roman nation, and it dwelt in Italy, which also is in the south of Europe. The Romans were a great and clever people, but they were not nearly so wise as the Greeks whom they had conquered. But they were fond of learning, and so they adopted all the knowledge which the Greeks had acquired and written down in their books; and, amongst other things, they studied the subject of plants. In this way they not only kept alive the Greek flower-names and the uses to which plants had been put, but they spread them all over their dominions throughout the Continent and Britain. They also studied plants for themselves and added a great many new names. The language of the Romans was called Latin, and a very large proportion of our plant-names belongs to this tongue, especially as, for hundreds of years after the fall of the Roman Empire, the Latin language was used almost everywhere in learned books.

The time came when the Romans, like the Greeks, were conquered by their enemies. A host of savage warriors, related to the Anglo-Saxons who descended upon our own land, defeated them in battle, and their great empire

split up into the various countries which we know to-day as England, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, and so on. It was during this time that the Anglo-Saxons came to dwell in England, as I told you in the first chapter. Let us see what happened afterwards.

CHAPTER III.

THE barbarians who defeated the Romans belonged to wild and savage nations who set no value on the learning which the Greeks and Romans had acquired, but spent most of their time in fighting. So they burnt a lot of the fine cities which the Romans had built, destroyed many of the books that were in them, and drove away the great scholars who had studied, amongst other subjects, plants and the medicines which they supplied. It is true that a few books survived, but from that time onwards, for almost a thousand years, the greater part of the ancient knowledge of plants was lost or forgotten. This period, because of the ignorance of the times, was called the Dark Ages, and now I will tell you about its strange superstitions and customs, and how they affected the names of plants.

At the beginning of the Dark Ages, the Anglo-Saxons in England, and the barbarians on the Continent who had defeated the Romans, were pagans; but the Romans themselves believed in our Lord, and in time the pagan tribes became Christians. In spite of this, many of the people continued to live in fear of the cruel gods and evil spirits which had figured in their old religions.

The Christian priests and monks worked hard to clear their minds from such groundless fears, and, to this end, they taught them about our Lord and His mother, the Virgin Mary, and instructed them in the lives of the saints, and the wonderful events that had happened to the Fathers of the Church. It was during this time that such legends as those which you may read about in the chapters on the Devil's-bit Scabious and the Carline Thistle arose.

One of the things which the Church did towards banishing the memory of heathen religions was to forbid people to use the old names of certain plants which had been called after heathen gods. These plants, and many others, they dedicated to our Lord, or the Virgin Mary, or the saints. So you will find, as you read this book, that there are many plants called after 'Our Lady,' which is the title by which the mother of Jesus was known. In dedicating a plant to a saint, the priests would often choose a saint whose festival happened to be celebrated at the time when the plant was coming into flower. Thus, the St John's Worts bloom about the 24th of June, which is the feast-day of St John the Baptist. In other ways, too, the people were taught to observe some connection between God and His church and every flower that bloomed, so that the flowers of the countryside became intimately mingled with the religious life of the people.

Now the Dark Ages were times of great superstition, and it is to this circumstance that we owe a large number of our popular flower-names. It is very difficult for us, in these days, to realise how completely different the world appeared to the minds of the people who lived in the age we are talking about. Nowadays our scientists know so much about such terrifying and painful things as thunderstorms and disease, and such wonderful things as the stars and chemicals and Natural History, that it *is* almost impossible for you to enter into the minds of our forefathers who were ignorant of those studies. When they suffered illnesses or misfortune, when they saw their crops ruined and their cattle fall sick, when their cottages caught fire, when the thunder pealed in the sky or the lightning flashed, when earthquakes and tempests raged about them and shook the earth, they believed that these awful calamities were the work of evil spirits. If they recovered from disease, or good luck befell them, they said that they were being helped by the good spirits or the saints. Their minds were full of the notion that, everywhere and at all times, the world was one great battlefield, in which Satan and a host of devils, demons, imps, hobgoblins, will-o'-the-wisps, witches, and other powers of darkness were exerting themselves to plague and vex them; while, on the other hand, our Lord and the Virgin Mary, the saints and the good fairies, were fighting on their behalf.

Satan was constantly putting evil temptations in their way in order to bring the punishment of sickness and ill-luck upon their heads. A legion of demons was busily engaged in striking down their cattle with plague and pestilence and bringing ruin upon their crops. Imps and hobgoblins worked mischievously to thwart them in every way. Will-o'-the-wisps ran before benighted travellers with a light and led them on and on until they left them floundering in bogs and marshes. Witches flew about on broom-sticks, and entered houses through the keyhole to cast evil spells upon the occupants and blight their lives. These wicked women had sold their souls to Satan, and, in return, he had given them the power of the Evil Eye, so that with a glance they could strike a man down with sickness or misfortune.

The poor afflicted people prayed to God and the saints for protection against these powers of evil; but they looked, through them, to another quarter for salvation. They believed that God had given to many of the plants special powers, not only to cure sickness, but also to drive away the evil spirits. So they came to reverence the plants that grew around them in such abundance and offered them succour in their distress, for almost every plant was supposed to have its use. Many of the things which they believed were quite true, for even to-day you can obtain useful medicines from

plants; but a great part of their faith was merely superstition, the result of their consuming fears. So it was on the Continent, and so it was in England.

I think you will understand now what an important part flowers played in the lives of the people hundreds of years ago, and how it was that they came to name them after the good and the evil influences which interfered so actively in their lives. Let me tell you about some of these names. The St John's Worts were called Devil's-flight, and were burnt on bonfires and hung up at the windows of houses, because they were thought to possess the magical power of driving away evil spirits and protecting houses from lightning. The Herb Bennet was called the Blessed Herb because, if you kept the root of it in the house, no evil spirit could approach the place. The Lady's Bedstraw was called after the Virgin Mary and many other flowers were similarly associated with her. Scores of plants were named after Satan and the wicked spirits who were more or less in league with him. Most of them were only 'local' or 'provincial' names; that is to say, they were not used generally all over England, but were limited to a village or other small district. There was the Devil's-bit Scabious, the root of which was bitten off by Satan in a passion; and there were such fanciful names as Devil's-candlesticks (the

Ground Ivy), Devil's-claws and Devil's-fingers (the Bird's-foot Trefoil), and Devil's-nettle (the Yarrow), besides many more of the same kind, all showing in what constant dread of the Evil One the common people passed their days. Then the wicked witches had their name attached to a number of plants, such as Witches'-thimbles (the Foxglove), and Witches'-pouches (the Shepherd's Purse).

Of course, nearly everyone believed in fairies in those days. They saw them dancing in the moonlit woods at night and nestling in the flowers by day, and they were always acting like little fairy godmothers to poor people in distress, although they were quite capable of playing a trick on you if you offended them. But everyone was so sure that they really lived in the countryside around them that they named heaps of flowers after their little friends. There were Fairies'-petticoats, Fairy-caps, Fairy-gloves and Fairies'-dresses (the Foxglove), Fairy-cups (the Cowslip), and dozens of others.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Dark Ages were a period of great hardship and suffering for the people; for, owing to the ignorance of men concerning medicines, they were constantly being afflicted with plague and pestilence and many other kinds of horrible and painful disease. And the pains which they endured were increased by the frequent wars which were waged by one king after another, since there were very few proper medicines at hand to heal the wounds of battle. The savage, untaught nations which had over-run the Roman Empire, both on the Continent and in our own country, did indeed know something about the medicines to be found in plants, for they had used them from the beginnings of their history; but their knowledge was very slight compared with that of the Greeks and Romans which they had so ruthlessly and foolishly destroyed. The time came when they bitterly regretted their hastiness in throwing away the ancient learning, and the few books that remained to them were eagerly studied, so that many of the old plant-names were preserved. The monks and nuns, who lived holy, secluded lives in their monasteries and convents, did all they could to lessen the sufferings of the

People. They cultivated the herbs which they knew in special herb-gardens and freely ministered to the sick and poor with the medicines which they made from them.

You will understand that, at this time, and indeed from the earliest times, plants were cultivated and studied, not so much for their beauty (although they were loved for this as well), but for the medicines which could be extracted from them. Besides this, I must tell you that, as there were then practically no vegetables in cultivation, some of the herbs served in their place, as also for flavouring and seasoning food. Every cottage, we may suppose, like every monastery, had its little garden in which the more useful herbs were carefully cultivated, and the country was ranged far and wide for the healing and eatable plants that were to be found growing there.

Later on, regular physicians and apothecaries, who were like our present doctors and chemists, used the herbs extensively in the medicines which they made up for their patients. You would have loved to see an apothecary's shop as it used to be. As you entered the low doorway you would observe, hanging from the ceiling, a dead alligator, with the bodies of other animals ranged all about the shop. Around the walls your eyes would light upon jars full of worms and insects and other strange, outlandish things. Dried roots and leaves of plants would

be hung from the great wooden beams, and there were drawers filled with the powders made from them. All these fantastic materials were employed, in one way or another, by these ignorant people in the faith that they would cure all sickness and disease, though very many of them were, I am afraid, quite useless for the purpose.

The cultivated herbs were gathered in the great herb-gardens in country and town, and the wild-flowers were collected from the countryside, and then they were sold in the streets and markets for the apothecaries' use. At all the country fairs you would see men, who were often rogues and quacks, displaying their herbal and other medicines for the country people to buy.

Many plants were named after the particular parts of the body which they were believed to be good for, or after the diseases which afflicted them. Thus, the Lungwort was so called because it was deemed to cure diseases of the lungs, and the Stitchwort received its name because it was supposed to relieve that troublesome little complaint. Besides these, there were scores of 'local' or 'provincial' names of a similar character, and you may read about them in the chapters on the separate flowers.

Now I will tell you of a very singular notion which everybody at one time believed about the way in which plants revealed their healing

natures. No one pays the slightest attention to it to-day, for it has proved to be quite untrustworthy; but it is still of interest to us because it was responsible for a number of the plant-names which we continue to use, especially the local ones. This strange notion was called by the mysterious title of 'the Doctrine of Signatures.' It meant that every plant exhibited some sign, or 'signature,' as it was called, which was set there by God to indicate the particular healing quality which it possessed. Thus, the Lungwort was seen to be a cure for chest complaints because it bore on its leaves some white spots which resembled those on a diseased lung. The Eyebright was marked out as an aid to weakened sight by its yellow and purple colours, which are like those which appear in your eyes when they, or you, are out of order. Certain of the Forget-me-not family of plants were called Scorpion Grass because the flower-spikes curled up like the tail of a scorpion, and they were held, on that account, to be a remedy for the sting of that creature. And so on with many more plants. Was it not an interesting belief, and cannot you imagine the eagerness with which the early herbalists, as they were called, examined the plants around them for the signs which they fondly hoped would reveal a new cure for the ills of men and women?

The Dark Ages came to an end at last.

Gradually, people learned more and more about plants and their uses, and some of the ancient superstitions were abandoned. Then a great and wonderful event happened. A number of the learned books written by the old Greeks and Romans hundreds of years before, which had been scattered or neglected after the fall of the Roman Empire, were one by one re-discovered. By this time everyone was eager to learn all they could about the uses of plants, and so, when the Greek and Latin books came to light, they studied them joyfully and strove to recover all the knowledge which had lain buried and forgotten in them for so many years. After they had read the books, the learned men on the Continent travelled far and wide searching for plants and trying to pick out the particular ones described in the books, in order to know them better and procure the medicines which the old writers had discovered fifteen hundred or two thousand years before.

From that time onwards there was a tremendous increase in the knowledge of plants, and many new names were given to them, either by copying the old Greek and Latin names, or by manufacturing others in those languages. Very often, I am afraid, they made a sad muddle of their work, for they sometimes found it difficult to discover a particular plant described in the old books, and they gave the name to another plant altogether. This would not have mattered

so much if it had merely resulted in a flower being called by a name which belonged to another plant. But, unfortunately, when they gave the name to the wrong plant, they also, in their minds, transferred to it the special healing powers which belonged to the right plant, and so people were given the wrong medicines for their ailments!

However, they did their best, and presently the discoveries they made, and the new knowledge they acquired on their own account, were brought to England and written down in enormous books for Englishmen to study. And for two hundred years or more they studied them hard and put their new knowledge into practice. By that time, however, scientists were finding out fresh medicines, such as those which you buy in the chemists' shops to-day, and the old herbal medicines then began to go out of use. I do not mean to say that plants have proved useless to the doctors. On the contrary, many of them are in frequent demand, and even now there are lots of people who collect them for their valuable properties; but they are no longer relied upon as one of the main sources of drugs. Their chief appeal to us now lies in their simple charm and beauty; and we have only to picture for a moment what the countryside would be like without its flowers to realise how dear they are to us.

CHAPTER V.

SINCE the time when herbal medicines lost their general repute, the names of our wild-flowers have not varied much; but, before then, throughout the long periods I have been describing, they underwent many changes. A lot of the old Anglo-Saxon names gave place to the Greek and Latin ones introduced at different times from the Continent, while others were copied from the French and German languages. At the same time many fresh names were being made up in England, and this was especially so in the case of ‘local’ and ‘provincial’ names.

It was a favourite habit of our forefathers to notice any likeness to animals which they fancied they saw in the leaves and flowers of plants, and then to name the plants after those animals. Thus, many flowers are called Bird’s-eye from some fancied resemblance to the bright eye of a little bird. Others are named Bird’s-tongue, Lamb’s-tongue, Ox-tongue, and Colt’s-foot, because their leaves are rough, or are shaped like the tongue, or the foot, of those creatures. Some-times plants were named after the animals who liked to eat them as food, such as the Pig Nut and the Goose-grass. Others were considered to be injurious to particular animals, and then

they would receive such titles as Cow-bane and Hen-bane; for ‘bane’ has the meaning of poison. But even these names are not always truly English, for they, or the idea which they express, were often copied from the Greeks.

Our ancestors were a farming people, and they were given to naming plants after the ways in which they affected their crops and flocks. Thus, the Rest-harrow (which is really *Arrest*-harrow) was so called because its tough, woody roots clogged, and *arrested*, or stopped, their harrows as they were drawn over the ploughed fields. And several plants were called Sheep-rot or White-rot because they were supposed to cause a rotting disease in the sheep that fed on them. All the things that go to make up country life brought their influence to bear in the forming of flower-names: birds, animals, butterflies, seasons and places of growth, snakes, poisons, food, habit, and a *great* deal of fanciful imagination. But to read of all these things you must turn to the chapters on the flowers themselves.

I should like you to appreciate the difference between ‘local’ or ‘provincial’ names and the *common* names of plants. In these days every plant has usually one, but occasionally two, common names which are recognised almost everywhere. But in the olden times such names were not so generally known, and every district made up its own *local* names. These local names are often very pretty indeed, and it is



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nice to know and remember them; but they cause a lot of confusion, because many plants have a score or more of different ones, and you cannot tell which flower is being indicated by them. It only makes matters worse when you find, as you often do, that the same local name is given to two or more quite different plants. Thus, if you speak about the Bird's-eye, people do not know whether you mean the Germander Speedwell, the Scarlet Pimpernel, the Forget-me-not, the Lady's Smock, or one of a number of other flowers, for all of them are known in different districts as Bird's-eye. But, if you talk of a Scarlet Pimpernel, everyone knows at once which flower you mean, because that is its *common* name. Thus, you will see that it is important to remember a plant by its common name first; and, to help you to do so, I have placed that name at the head of each of the chapters which deal with the separate flowers.

People are still going on making up local names for the flowers they cherish, and I should not like to guess how many there are scattered all over the country. Certainly they number several thousands. I think that many of them must be the result of the children's fancy, they are so pretty and so happily chosen, and I know that 'grown-ups' do not, as a rule, know and love the beautiful treasures of the woods and meadows as simply and intimately as the children do.

Now I think you will begin to understand why it is that so many, perhaps the majority, of our flower-names look so strange and meaningless. They look strange when they are made up of Greek or Latin, or French or German words, or even of ancient Anglo-Saxon words of which we have not learned the meaning. But they are *not* meaningless; on the contrary, they are full of delight and interest, with their association of myths and fables and miracles, demons and witches and hobgoblins, the pretty birds and the fairies and the old tales which have come down from the past. And all these things you may read about if you turn to the next part of this book.

The Greater Celandine and the Lesser Celandine.

I AM going to tell you about these two flowers together because they have the same common name; though, in reality, they are quite different flowers in every way, and it was owing to a mistake that, long ago, the same name was given to them.

The Greater Celandine is a shrubby plant, with soft green leaves divided into several leaflets which grow up the leaf-stalk in pairs until they come to the end of the stalk, where there is a leaflet by itself. It is probably this manner of growth which has led to the name of Jacob's ladder, as if the leaflets were steps leading to the one at the top of the stalk. The leaves are 'scalloped' at their edges, and they have very pretty veins, which you can see at their best if you hold one of them up to the light.

The flowers have four soft yellow petals and they grow together in little clusters. When they have fallen you will be surprised to see, if you continue to watch the plant, that their place is taken by a number of long green pods. These pods contain the seeds of future plants. You will find some of them shown in the

picture. Some people fancy that the cluster of pods looks like a Cock's-foot, and so they call the plant by that name.

The leaves and stalks contain an orange-coloured juice, and you must be careful not to let any of it get on to your fingers, because it is harmful and it will burn your skin. This juice has been used by people to remove warts, and sore places on the skin called felons and tetter; but you would be very unwise to try it yourself. Several names have been given to the plant because of the burning nature of this juice, and also because of the uses to which it has been put. These names are Devil's-milk, Cure-wart, Kill-wart, Wart-flower, Wart-weed, Felon-wort and Tetter-wort. You must not think that the word 'wort' is the same as 'wart.' On the contrary, it is a very old word which meant a root or a plant, but it is never heard now, except in the old names of plants which are still in use to-day. Felon-wort and Tetter-wort mean, therefore, Felon-plant and Tetter-plant.

Now let us look at the Lesser Celandine. We see at once that it is quite different from the Greater Celandine, for it has heart-shaped leaves and a flower of many bright and glossy yellow petals that shine up from amongst the dark green leaves like a star. It is one of the earliest flowers to look for in the spring, when it covers the banks and roadsides and shady

places with a shower of gleaming, golden blooms which have earned for it the country names of Gooley-cup, or Golden-cup, Butter, Butter-and-cheese, Butter-chops, Cheese-cups, Golden-guineas, and many others.

In one part of Scotland it is also called Foal-foot, because the leaves are thought to be shaped like the foot of a young horse; but this name belongs really to the Colt's-foot, which is another plant altogether.

But what does the name Celandine mean? Listen, and I will tell you. Like many other flower-names, it was made up by the people who lived in Greece hundreds of years ago, and it has been copied by English people and handed down to us for our present use. The meaning of Celandine, in the language of those people of Greece was ‘a swallow,’ and sometimes when we want to use a simple English name, instead of this foreign one, we call the Greater Celandine the Swallow-wort, which, as you will remember from what I have told you, means the Swallow Plant.

‘But,’ you will ask, ‘why are these two flowers called after the swallows? What have they to do with those pretty birds?’ And I will answer you in this way. The swallows fly to us from far across the sea in the early spring, and, when the summer is almost over, and the days are getting short again, and the sun is losing its warmth, they return to their old homes in a

warmer climate. Well, the Greek people who named these two flowers noticed that they bloomed when the swallows arrived in their country and withered when they flew away; and they called the plants ‘Swallows’ because both the flowers and the birds came to them and left them at the same seasons.

The swallows usually arrive in our land during the month of April and return to their southern home about September, and the Greater Celandine may be found in flower through most of this period. You will, however, be able to find a Lesser Celandine long before you see swallow, because the flower begins to appear as early as March.

There is another story about this name of the Greater Celandine. It is said that it was called after the swallows because the mother and father birds used to fly to this plant and carry a branch of it back to their nests to bring sight to the eyes of the little ones. People believed that the plant was so magical that it would restore the sight of the baby swallows even when they had lost their eyes. This, of course, is only fancy, for the birds certainly could not see if they had not any eyes; but the orange-coloured juice of the Greater Celandine, which we spoke about before, is used, even by men and women, to strengthen their eyes. In Cornwall, the village folk make a kind of ointment with the plant and use it for curing what

they call kennings or kennels. These kennels are nothing to do with dogs, as you might at first suppose; they are sores in the eyes, and the villagers who make the ointment call the plant the Kenning-herb or the Kennel-herb. They use the Creeping Buttercup for the same purpose.

The Colt's-Foot.

IN the chapter on the Cudweed you will read how that plant was known by the name of Son-before-the-father because the younger flowers were so forward in behaviour as to grow up and overtop the older flowers. The Colt's-foot also is sometimes called by this strange name, but the reason is a different one; for, in this case, it does not mean that there is anything disrespectful about the manners of the plant, but simply that, unlike nearly every other plant, the flowers appear before the leaves. The people who gave this name to the Colt's-foot thought this was a very strange habit, almost as strange as it would be if children grew up before their parents, and so they called the plant Son-before-the-father.

The Colt's-foot flowers appear in the early spring, and they are very welcome to us then, because they tell us that the winter is over and all the beautiful flowers of spring and summer are on their way to gladden our eyes. The

flower-stems spring up straight from the root and they are covered with small scales, like tiny leaves. The flower-heads are bright yellow in colour, and although they look as if each one was a single flower, they are, in reality, made up of scores of little flowers all crowded closely together. When the flowers die away, a pretty ball of down grows in their place, and this ball contains the seeds of new plants.

Later in the season, when the flowers have disappeared, this topsy-turvy plant gives forth its leaves, and these often grow to a great size. Underneath, they are grey and hoary, and their surfaces are often covered with a grey film, exactly like a cobweb, which you can rub off with your hand. The leaves are cut up at their edges into irregular curves, set with dark-coloured teeth; but on the whole you might well say that, except for the angles, they are like the foot of a colt, or some other animal, in shape. That is why the plant is called Colt's-foot, and also Foal's-foot, Horse-hoof, Bull's-foot, Calves'-foot, Asses'-foot, Colt-herb, Hoofs, and Sow-foot.

The leaves and roots of the Colt's-foot have been made use of in more than one way for over two thousand years. People still dig up the roots, and pick the leaves, and then burn them and draw the smoke into their lungs through a reed or straw, because they say that it cures them of a bad cough. For this reason they



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named the plant Cough-wort. Another use which they make of the leaves is to chop them up and smoke them as tobacco; and they also roll them into cigars and smoke them that way. They say that this also helps to cure their coughs, and they call the plant Baccy-plant.

The Colt's-foot is a plant which you may find growing everywhere along the borders of fields and by the roadsides, but it is particularly at home in places where the soil is wet and clayey, and because of this it has received the further name of Clay-weed.

The Wood Anemone.

THIS graceful white flower is one of the most welcome visitors of the early year. It comes to us when the winter is over, and fills the woods and copses with its starry blooms as the fresh winds of March blow with the promise of spring. Indeed, you may always associate it with the wind, for the name Anemone is a foreign word which means ‘wind-flower’ or ‘daughter of the wind.’ It was a long, long time ago that the name was given to the flower by the ancient Greeks, who lived on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and the reason why they chose it was this. They thought that it was only when the wind blew that the flower opened its petals, as though it were pleased to receive

the soft caresses of the breeze. That was more than two thousand years ago, and still we call the flower by the same name.

Let us look at the plant, as we pluck it from the wood where it grows, and see what its petals and leaves are like, so that we may remember it the next time we find it on our rambles. The leaves are divided into three leaflets which are very much cut up and toothed. The ‘petals’ of the flower are really ‘sepals,’ but they look just the same as petals, so we will not bother ourselves at present about what the botany books call them. They are generally as white and pure as snow, though frequently tinged with pink. The flower-stem bends over at the top, and, when the sky is overcast, or evening draws on, the delicate little blooms close up to protect themselves from the cold and rain. But, when the sun shines again, they expand their petals to its warmth and light, and gleam like bright stars in the shadows of the woods. The root of the plant is woody; it creeps under the ground and thrusts its stems up through the soil into the light and air as it goes along.

Although the proper name of the plant is Anemone, many country people have learned to use other names as well. One of these names is Cuckoo-flower. Now, quite a lot of flowers are called Cuckoo-flower, and the reason is that, when they are in bloom, people begin to say to one another, ‘Ah! the cuckoo will be

here soon.' For the cuckoo, you must know, flies to us from foreign countries when the spring days are growing longer, and it stays in the woods until the summer is beginning, and then it flies away again until next year. So you will understand why the Anemone is called Cuckoo-flower.

Then, another name that country people use is Candlemas-caps. Candlemas is a feast which used to be held on the 2nd of February in honour of the Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, and it was probably because the Anemone was soon afterwards to appear, and because its petals were so pure and white, like the Virgin Mary, that the name was chosen.

Now I will tell you some funny names. They are not really the proper names of the plant, and the only one which you should remember is Anemone. But this is what the children in some of the country villages call the flower: Bread-and-cheese-and-cider, Chimney-smock, Moon-flower, Smell-foxes and Smell-smock. I am sure I wonder as much as you do why anyone should call the plant Bread-and-cheese, because, if you were so rash as to eat it, you would find it very nasty and bitter. Perhaps that is why it is called Cider, for cider is a bitter drink. Then, quite a lot of people, even those who are grown up, speak of an *Enemy*-flower; but that is an ignorant mistake, for what they mean to say is Anemone-flower.

I think you will better understand why other children use the names Drops-of-snow, Granny's-nightcap, and White-soldiers; for you have only to glance at the snow-white petals to see how fitting they are.

The Wild Strawberry.

I EXPECT you will think that the best part of the Wild Strawberry is the fruit, for no doubt you have often feasted off it when you have found the plants growing in woodland clearings and on the wayside banks. In the chapter on the Herb Robert you will learn that every flower produces a kind of 'fruit,' though it is not often eatable. In the case of the Wild Strawberry, you will at once say that the fruit is rather more like the kind you generally think of when you use the word, for it is a delicious thing to eat.

This plant grows from a woody root, and, like the strawberries in your garden, it sends out little runners which stray all over the surface of the ground. These runners put out little roots as they travel along, and in time a new plant grows wherever the rootlets take hold of the soil.

The stems of the Wild Strawberry are clothed with silky hairs. The leaves grow in three leaflets, which are cut up into sharp teeth. The flowers stand erect on their branching

stems, and they each have five pure white petals. As the flower withers, the drooping fruit appears in its place, generally getting redder and redder as it ripens, though sometimes it is white. If you look into the fruit, you will see the little straw-coloured ‘seeds,’ which are meant to produce new plants next year.

It was many hundreds of years ago that the plant was first named the Strawberry, and no one to-day is quite certain of the exact meaning of the name. Some think it should really be Stray-berry, because the runners stray over the surface of the ground. Others say that the runners look like pieces of straw lying on the ground, and that the name was given for that reason. Many people think the name just came about because, when you grow Straw- berries in your garden, you place layers of straw between the rows. Then others say that the seeds which are scattered over the fruit are like tiny bits of straw, blown there by the wind perhaps, and they tell us that the name Strawberry means the berry with straw on it.

But, whatever doubts we may have concerning the true reason for the name, there can be no question about our enjoyment of this winsome plant, which gives us its bright little flowers in April and May and a delicious fruit to eat later.

The Dog Violet.

THE Dog Violet is so well known that I need not describe it to you fully. You have often seen it growing in the early spring, with its purple or purple-blue flowers of five petals, of which the lower one stands out behind like a spur. The leaves are notched and heart-shaped and rather sharply pointed. The Dog Violet is not the only kind of Wild Violet which you may see growing about the country-side. There are the Sweet Violet, the Marsh Violet and others, but this is the commonest and therefore the one which you will most frequently find.

It seems strange that this particular flower should be called the ‘Dog’ Violet, but there is a reason for it, and I will explain it to you. You will notice, as you study the wild flowers, that there are quite a lot of them which carry this name of ‘Dog,’ or else that of some other animal. You will at once think of the Dog Rose; and I can mention others which have the names of animals attached to them. There are the Cow Parsnip, the Horse Thyme, the Pig Nut, and many more, while the Dog Violet itself is, in some places, called the Horse Violet.

Now, there are two ways of explaining these ‘animal’ names. Sometimes they mean that

the plant is good for the animal whose name it bears, such as the Pig Nut, the tubers of which are eaten greedily by pigs. Sometimes they mean that the plant is coarse or inferior as compared with some similar flower. The Dog Violet, for instance, is inferior to the Sweet Violet in one particular way, that is, it has not any scent. The word ‘Dog,’ although *you* use it only when speaking of your house-hold pet, is often used to point out inferior or worthless things. Now we see how the word comes to be applied to the Dog Violet: one kind of Violet has a beautiful odour, and is therefore called the Sweet Violet; another kind is scentless, and, because it is inferior in this particular way, it is called the Dog Violet.

This, of course, does not mean that we should love the Dog Violet any less. True, we admire the Sweet Violet for its grateful perfume, but we can still give our affections to its humbler sister-plant, because it is so pretty and so welcome, even though it has no scent.

The name Violet itself is a very, very old one; so ancient, indeed, that no one can now say for certain how it first arose; but there are two stories told about it, and these I will repeat to you. Long ago there was a false god called Jupiter, whom the heathens used to worship before they were told of our Lord. This false god was very fond of a beautiful maiden, and, in order to protect her from the

jealousy of a certain woman who, like a wicked fairy, would have done her great harm, he changed her into a beautiful little cow. In order to honour the maiden, and also to provide her with a delicate food, the god commanded the earth to bring forth a flower which had never grown before, and immediately this purple flower sprung up in the fields and the woods. The name of the beautiful maiden was Io, and the god called the flower Ion in memory of her. In time, the name became changed to Viola, and then at last it grew into Violet.

The other tale which is told is that there was a certain far country called Ionia, and that the maidens who lived there offered up some of these flowers to the same false god Jupiter. Because of this, and because the maidens were known as Ionians, the flowers were ever afterwards called by a name which grew into the word Violets.

The Primrose.

WHAT a happy time it is when the Primrose comes again! The first of the pale, lemon-coloured blooms returns, like a dearly loved friend, to tell us that the cold dark winter days are nearly over, and that all the warmth and beauty of the spring and summer are before us. Once again we shall be able to ramble in the



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fields and woods, and play by the streams, seeing all the lovely procession of flowers pass before us, from the Daisy and the Primrose of spring-time to the Toad-flax and the Pimpernel that stay with us till the autumn.

It is because the Primrose is one of the early signs of spring that it receives its name, for really it means ‘the first rose.’ It is not altogether a fitting name for the plant, because it is *not* the first of the spring flowers, and it is *not* a Rose. But it is, at any rate, a very early visitor, for, although it does not spread at large over the fields and banks and woods until April and May, still we do often chance upon a plant or two that shyly opens its pure and lovely eyes much earlier in the year. And it is called Prim-rose because, long ago, people used the name rose for several flowers that were not at all like those which we call Roses to-day. Indeed, in parts of the west of England, they still call the Primrose the Butter-rose, because the colour of the flowers is so like that of the farm butter which they make there.

I do not suppose you will need me to describe the plant to you very fully, because you already know it so well; but I will just say a word about it, for it is easy to miss the details of a flower, even though you have picked hundreds of them. The leaves of the Primrose spring up from the ground in the form of a rosette. They are long and rather dark green in colour, and so

full of strongly marked veins that they are crinkled all over. The flower-stalks grow from the centre of the rosette of leaves, and there is one flower on each stalk.

I expect you always think of the flower as having five petals. Actually it has only one, and, if you look closely at the flower, you will see that this is so; for the five divisions which look like five petals are all joined together in one piece. This is one of the details which I mentioned as being easy to overlook.

No doubt you have noticed that the flowers are of two kinds. In one kind, if you peep into the heart of it, you will see a little green ball poised on the end of a slender stalk and looking like the head of a pin. In the other kind you will see, instead of the pin-head, a bunch of ‘stamens’ forming a ring in the middle of the flower. The first kind is called ‘pin-eyed,’ the second kind ‘thrum-eyed.’ In one place in the west of England they call the pin-eyed flowers ‘Boys,’ and the thrum-eyed ones ‘Girls’; so, when they find both kinds growing together, they name them ‘Boys-and-girls.’

The Cowslip.

THE Cowslip, as I am expect you know, has a general likeness to the Primrose, and yet there is a distinct difference between the different

parts of the two plants. In both cases the leaves are dark green and deeply crinkled, but those of the Cowslip are contracted below the middle in such a way as to make them rather like a pointed egg in shape.

The flowers, too, although, like those of the Primrose, they are divided into five parts resembling petals, are smaller; but the most obvious difference is that, whilst the Primroses grow singly, the Cowslips hang out several drooping blooms on each stalk. These clusters of flowers are thought to resemble a bunch of keys, and so the plant was often called Keys, or Our Lady's-keys, or the Keys-of-heaven. So, too, they were dedicated to St Peter under the name of Herb Peter, St Peter's-wort and Peter's-keys, because, as you know, St Peter was supposed to keep the keys of heaven, and a bunch of keys is generally adopted as his badge.

The Cowslip resembles the Primrose in another way. It produces two kinds of flowers, one called 'pin-eyed' and the other 'thrum-eyed.' You may read more about this in the chapter on the Primrose. Children call these two kinds of Cowslip 'Boys' and 'Girls,' just as they do the two kinds of Primroses.

The Cowslip is a favourite flower with the fairies, and it is said that they are in the habit of running up the stems and nestling in the blooms. That is why the plant is often called by such a name as Fairy-cups. You will remember

the song of Ariel, the fairy in Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*:

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
In a cowslip's bell I lie.

Long ago, in the days when most of the medicines in use were extracted from plants, the Cowslip was regarded as a very valuable flower, for it was believed that it could cure palsy or paralysis, and it was therefore called Palsy-wort and Paralysis-herb. I do not, however, think that it could have been of much use for such complaints, and I never heard of anyone employing the plant for that purpose in our time.

The Cowslip does not grow so abundantly as its sister flower, the Primrose, and it generally chooses the open downs and meadows, rather than the woods and hedgerows, for its home. So it is there that, in April and May, or later, we must look for its drooping flowers.

The Marsh Marigold.

THE Marsh Marigold is one of the showiest flowers of the springtime, and you may tell that it is a great favourite with children by the countless names that have been given to it all over the country. It grows in marshy places and by the sides of rivers, so you will very likely get your feet wet if you try to pick the

flowers. In these low-lying places you will see the flowers growing in great yellow expanses that shine as if you had scattered handfuls of bright gold all over the grass. The leaves are large and glossy, and the great big blooms, which are shaped like a cup, make you think of a buttercup that has grown up to be a giant. The five sepals are so bright and glossy that you might think they had been polished by the fairies.

Everywhere you may go in the country villages you will find that the people have made up names from these brilliantly coloured, cup-like flowers: Fire-of-gold, because they ‘shine like fire in swamps and hollows grey’; Gilty-cups, Golden-cups, Meadow-bright, Golds and many more. In the North of England and in Scotland they call them Water-gollands, Gowlands, and many other names which mean much the same as ‘gold.’ There used to be the name of Bassinet, which comes from a French word meaning a small basin, and it was given to this flower because it may be said to be shaped like a little basin, as well as like a cup.

The name Marigold means Mary-gold, and it is quite likely that the flower was called after the Virgin Mary. People in the old days loved to think of our Lord and His mother when they looked at the flowers that made the fields so beautiful; and no doubt they thought that it would be pleasant to call these flowers

after the Virgin Mary, so that they might be reminded of her whenever they saw them growing. In some parts they are called Mary's-gold and Mary-bud.

Some children call the plant Drunkards and Hard-drinkers, and, when they find them growing together with Buttercups, they name them Publicans-and-sinners. These are not very nice names, but I expect the children think what a lot of water the plants must drink, as they always live in such watery places, and that this was why they gave them these names. Other funny names are Butter-blobs, Mire-blobs, Water-blobs, May-blobs, Mare-blobs, Molly-blobs, May-bubbles, Water-bubbles, and Hobble-bobbles. Are not these funny names, and would you not like to know how they came to be given? Well, look at the flowers when they are partly closed and you will see that they are rather like great big golden bubbles. A bubble used to be called a blob, and that is how the Marsh Marigold got these names.

Then there is another name, which I think must have been given to this flower, though in mistake, because it is round like a ball. It is the Water-caltrops, and I am sure you will be puzzled about it until I tell you what it means. A caltrop was a big iron ball with sharp spikes sticking out all over it, and soldiers used to place a lot of them on the ground when they were expecting their enemies to attack them.

on horseback on horseback. The spikes would stick into the feet of the poor horses and make them lame, so that they fell down and could no longer carry their riders into the battle. Of course, the Marsh Marigold has not any such spikes as these, but perhaps the round flower made people think of this ball which was called a caltrop. Or it is just possible that the name was due to another kind of caltrop, for there was a snare or trap, with the same name, which the soldiers threw on to the field to catch the feet of their enemies' horses and make them fall down in that way. The Marsh Marigolds grow very thickly together, and you might catch your feet in their great leaves and stems and so tumble down, just as the poor horses did.

Lots of children, when looking at the big round flower, have been reminded of a button, and so they have called it by such names as Bachelor's-buttons, Billy-buttons, Bobby's-buttons, and Soldiers'-buttons. These names, however, have been given to many other flowers which look like a button; and, indeed, quite a number of the names of the Marsh Marigold that I have been telling you about belong to other plants as well. Besides these, there are the names of King-cups and Crazy, or Crazy-bet, which you may read about under the chapter on the Creeping Buttercup; for these names are applied to that and other plants, as well as to the Marsh Marigold, because all the flowers

appear so much alike unless you look at them carefully.

The Creeping Buttercup.

THE Buttercups, with their glossy golden petals, are so familiar to every child that you will probably be surprised to be told that there are several different kinds of them, although the flowers look so much alike. The particular plant shown in the picture is called the Creeping Buttercup, and it gets the first part of its name from the long runners which it sends creeping along the ground. These runners throw out rootlets which take hold of the soil wherever they go, and in this way the plant soon manages to spread over the fields and fill them with the golden blossoms which everyone (except the farmer) so loves to see.

Some people call the runners *Granny-threads*, and in one part of the country the farmers know the plant by the curious name of *Hold-the-rake*. This is why they use such a strange name: When the hay has been cut and the farm-labourers are raking it together, they find that the runners of the Creeping Buttercup are a great hindrance, because they catch or *hold* the teeth of the rake; so they call the plant *Hold-the-rake*. In the same part of the country they have another funny name: *Meg-many-feet*, or *Meg-with-many-toes*, because the runners



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creep all over the ground and spread so rapidly. In parts of Scotland and other places the plant is sometimes called Sit-fast, because its numerous rootlets fix it so firmly to the ground that it is almost impossible to pull it up.

If you look at the plant you will see that it has five glossy petals and that the leaves are divided into three leaflets. You would find most of the Buttercups very bitter if you tasted them, and the juice of some of them would burn you if you squeezed it on to your skin.

You will easily understand that the common name of the Buttercups is due to their appearance, for the colour is yellow and shiny, like butter, and the shape resembles a cup. But long ago there used to be a kind of cup made for holding butter, and it was called a butter-cup, so possibly that is where the idea of the name first came from. The old names were Butter-flowers, Gold-cups, and King-cups, and some people still use them to-day.

At one time farmers used to think that, if their cows fed on Buttercups, the butter which was afterwards made from their milk would be greater in quantity, or else yellower in colour; but this is a mistaken notion, for cows, finding that the plants are bitter in taste, do not eat them at all. Then again, it used to be said that dairymaids were in the habit of putting the flowers into their butter to make it a rich deep yellow, and that the plants were called

Buttercups for that reason; but that idea is probably as mistaken as the other.

All over the country, children and grown-up people have made up pet names about the golden colour of the Buttercups. Some of them, which apply to the Creeping Buttercup, Butter-roses, Butter-and-cheese, Butter-creeses, and Gold-balls. Then there are such names as Gilty-cup, Horse-gold, Yellow-cups, and, indeed, so many more, all pointing to the colour of these favourite blooms, that I cannot mention them all.

Most of the Buttercups have another name which belongs to them almost as much as the name Buttercup. This name is Crow-foot, and it was given because the leaves are thought to be something like a crow's foot in shape. There are all sorts of varieties of this name, just as there are of the names which refer to the golden hue of the flowers. For instance, the Creeping Buttercup is called Crow's-claws, while in Scotland the name is sometimes Craw-foot and Craw-taes, which is just the same thing as Crow-foot and Crow-toes. It is not only the crow, however, that has given a name to the plant, for in some places the people call it Cat-claws and Ram's-claws, because they fancy that the leaves are like the feet of those animals. I do not myself think there is very much resemblance, but you will find, as you continue to read, that such names as these are

often given to a plant where the likeness to a particular animal is of the slightest.

Another curious name which some people give to the Creeping Buttercup is Crazy, and I am sure you will wonder why they use it. Well, I will tell you. These people think (though I am sure I do not know why) that, if they smell the plant, it will very likely make them silly, or ‘crazy,’ and so they remember it by that name. But I expect the name was first given for some quite different reason and that they have forgotten what it was.

In Cornwall the village people call the plant the Kenning-herb, or the Kennel-herb, and, if you would like to know why, you should read what I have said about the Greater Celandine, for that plant bears the same name.

Now we have said quite a lot about the various names by which the Creeping Buttercup is known in different parts of the country; but, although it is pleasant to read about these *local* names, as they are called, it is well to remember that the proper name of the flower is the Creeping Buttercup.

The Daisy.

THIS is the children’s flower. It blooms everywhere and at every season of the year. All children love to gather it for posies and for

making daisy-chains. How pretty it is, with its bright pearly petals forming a gleaming ray about its centre of gold! In the morning we see it opening to the light of day, and in the evening it folds up its white petals again as if it were going to sleep. When I remind you of the bright and happy look of this little favourite, and of its manner of opening and closing, like an eye, I have told you almost enough to help you to understand the meaning that lies in its name. For the word Daisy means the ‘day’s eye,’ or the ‘eye of day’; and, indeed, the flower is just like a bright and beaming eye that opens with the sun and goes to sleep at twilight.

Well by reason men it call may
The Dayeseye, or else the eye of day.

What a lot of names there are for the Daisy, and how well some of them show that this is truly the children’s flower. In parts of the west of England it is called Baby’s-pet. In the north of England it is sometimes known as the Bairn-wort; and, as a bairn is only another word for a child, the name may well mean the child-flower, because it is so loved by all children. Once upon a time the people of Wales told a pretty story about the Daisy. They said that each new-born baby taken away from the earth became an angel which sent some new kind of flower to take its place in the world; and the Daisy was sent by a little one who

had been called away from its loving parents directly it was born.

Another Scottish name by which the Daisy is well known is the Gowan, and, as you will see if you read the chapter on the Dandelion, this name means ‘gold,’ and it is given to the plant because of its golden centre.

Those bright pearly petals forming a ray around the centre of the flower-head (which, like many others, is a numerous group of distinct florets or little flowers) may have given rise to another name which I will tell you about. The Daisy was called of old the Margaret, or Marguerite, and also Herb Margaret. These names are seldom given to the Common Daisy nowadays, but the Ox-eye Daisy, and other flowers, are called Marguerites. Now Margaret, as you know, is a girl’s name, and, indeed, the flower has been associated with St Margaret; but long before the name was used in this way it meant, in a foreign language, ‘a pearl.’ Do you not think that the white ray of petals in the Daisy gleams just like a necklet of pearls? Or perhaps you will think that the flower-buds, before they open, remind you of pearls? Whichever it be, we may fancy that the flowers were called Margarets or Marguerites because they are white and glistening, like pearls.

I have told you in other chapters how people of long ago used to use the wild-flowers of the countryside as medicines. The Daisy was

supposed to be very good for healing broken bones, and so it came to be called by such names as Bone-wort and Bone-flower. People also said that you could take away bruises by laying the leaves of the Daisy on them, and they called the plant Bruise-wort. Nobody believes in these healing powers to-day, and so the old names are seldom if ever used.

The Red Clover and the White Clover.

I DO not suppose there is a single country child who is not familiar with the Red and White Clovers. They grow so freely, throughout the summer, in meadows and by the road-side and in waste places that you need never be at a loss to find them. I expect, too, that you love them, not only for their beauty and fragrant scent, but for the delicious honey they secrete. Many a time have we sucked the sweet store that abounds in the flowers, and many a name has been given to the plants on account of this abundance. Thus, the Red Clover is sometimes called Bee-bread, although this is not a fitting name, because bee-bread is really the pollen, and not the honey, of flowers. But the other names of the Red Clover are better ones—Honey-sucks, Suck-bottles, Suckies, Sucklers, Sucklings and Sugar-plums. The

last name, I think, is quite a good one, for the oval flower-heads of purple hue, with the sweet juice they afford, do remind one of delicious ripe plums, or of those sweets which children love as much. Some of these names are given to the White Clover as well, and it has some additional ones, such as Honey-stalks and Lamb's-sucklings.

We are not the only creatures who find delight in these two clovers, for they form one of the chief honey supplies of the bees. The honey-bees—those which live in hives in our gardens—keep mostly to the White Clover, for the other plant buries its sweet juice too far down in its heart for their tongues to reach. But the great humble-bees have a longer tongue, and so you may always find them humming about the Red Clover enjoying a gorgeous feast.

There are very many kinds of Clover, but I think these two are the best loved. They have many resemblances to each other in the shape of their leaves and flowers; but, when you stop to examine the plants, you will soon discover that they have many differences as well. In both plants the leaves are divided into three leaflets, with certain whitish markings on them. Each flower-head is made up of a collection of separate little flowers, or florets as they are called, all growing together on one stalk. In the case of the Red Clover,

the flower-head, which is of a purplish-red colour, is generally oval in shape—rather like the plums we spoke of. In the case of the White Clover, the flower-heads, which are of a creamy tint, sometimes tinged with pink, are formed more like a ball, and the florets are less tightly crowded together. As these creamy florets wither one by one, they hang downwards away from the still living ones above them, and turn brown; until, as time goes on, the whole flower-head has lost its former erect position and becomes a drooping cluster of withered seed-pods.

The stems of the Red Clover are more or less erect, though generally rather bent, and quite wiry. The White Clover has creeping stems, which throw out little roots that take hold of the ground and so establish themselves securely. Both plants form a favourite food for sheep and cattle, and farmers grow large fields of them specially for their animals. I expect that is why they sometimes give the name of Cow Clover to the red plant and (in Scotland) that of Sheep's-gowan to the white one. The latter plant is also very commonly called Dutch Clover, because farmers import large quantities of the seed from Holland.

Many people think that one of the numerous kinds of Clover is the true Shamrock of Ireland, a leaf of which you wear on St Patrick's Day; but you may read more about this in the chapter



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on the Wood Sorrel. In some of the little villages of the west of England they call the White Clover by the pretty names of Baa-lambs and Bubby-roses. Some folks used to speak of the Red Clover as Cock's-head, because, I suppose, the colour reminded them of that bird; and they also named it Sleeping Maggie, though I cannot tell you why.

The name Clover is a very old one and no one can say what it originally meant. The Anglo-Saxons called it by the same name, though we spell it a little differently now, so you will understand how ancient it is. Some people say that the word meant 'cleave' and referred to the three leaflets, meaning, I suppose, that they appeared as if cloven, or cut, out of one big leaf; but I am afraid that is only a guess. Then others say that the name came from a foreign word meaning 'a club,' and that it had to do with an enormous three-headed club which was carried long ago by a very strong and celebrated hero called Hercules. These people say that the three leaflets of the Clover were likened to the three heads of the club; but I think that is a worse guess than the other.

From what I have said, you will appreciate that the Clovers are most useful plants. First, they provide the farmer with a valuable food for his stock. And how much the cows love this food you may tell by the common phrase, 'to

be in clover,' which people use to describe anyone who is in a fortunate condition; for they liken such a condition to that of cows feeding in the delicious clover-fields. Then, the Clovers afford the bee-keepers a rich store of choice honey; and, finally, they give us pleasure by the prodigal manner in which they adorn the meadows and fill the air with the sweet odours.

The Ox-Eye Daisy.

YOU have all seen the big flowers of the Ox-eye Daisy growing in the fields, their white rays and flat golden centres looking exactly like huge Daisies. From June to September they star the countryside, and it is because of their size they are so often called Dog Daisies, Horse Daisies, Bull Daisies, Great Daisies, and Big Daisies. In Scotland, where the Common Daisy is often called the Gowan, they name this plant Horse-gowan. I have told you in other chapters how the names of animals, such as 'horse' and 'dog,' are often given to flowers which are big or coarse.

The flowers of the Ox-eye Daisy are so large and bright that some people fancy they are like the moon, and they call them Moon Daisies, Moons, and Moon-flowers. Also, as if the golden centres reminded them of bright new pennies, they sometimes call them Moon-pennies

and Horse-pennies. I do not know whether some children foolishly believe that, if you pluck the flowers, you will be struck by lightning in the next thunder-storm, as they do about certain other flowers; but in parts of England the Ox-eye Daisy is called Thunder Daisy.

There are so many country names for this flower that, if I were to repeat all of them, I should never stop; but I will tell you a few more before I go on to describe the plant. One of these names is Cows'-eye, which, of course, is the same kind of name as Ox-eye; and both these names were made up because people thought the big staring flowers looked like the eye of a cow or an ox, or some other large eye. The golden centre of the flower-head has led some folk to call the plant Butter Daisy. And, because it grows so much on poor land, it has been called Poor-land Daisy and Poverty-weed. It is also named Maudlin-wort, after Mary Magdalene. Then it is sometimes called the Midsummer Daisy and Harvest Daisy, because it is in flower at midsummer, when the grass is cut and harvested for hay. So, too, it is at times called the Marguerite, as I have told you in the chapter on the Common Daisy.

The Ox-eye Daisy is another of those plants whose flower-heads contain a very large number of little flowers all growing together as if they were one big flower. The leaves of the plant are rather dark and smooth, and they vary very

much in shape. The lowest leaves grow on long stalks. They are broad and round at the ends, and the edges are divided up into little curves and points. The higher leaves have not any stalks, and they look longer and narrower than the others. Their edges are generally set with long teeth, especially where they join the stem.

The Wild Arum.

IN the chapter on the Early Purple Orchis you will find I have described that flower as having more names than any other plant. Well, I think the Wild Arum comes very close to it, and in this chapter I am going to tell you about some of the numerous names by which it is known. They are such quaint names too—Lords-and-ladies, Adam-and-Eve, Ladies-and-gentlemen, Parson-in-the-pulpit, and lots of others equally amusing.

It is not surprising that the Arum should be called by so many quaint terms, for it is a curious plant itself, quite unlike any of those which you will read about in this book. The leaves grow on long stalks which spring from the ground. They are large and glossy, and shaped in the rough likeness of the barbed head of an arrow. But the most remarkable thing about them is that they are blotched with dull purple spots. Sometimes these spots are a very dark purple,

occasionally they are yellowish, while at other times there are no spots at all.

The flowers are very curious indeed. If we look at the plant in April and May we shall see a large pale-green hood, or sheath, which encloses the flower-stalk at its lower end, then opens out to a considerable width and finally tapers to a point. Set in the midst of this hood or sheath is a fantastic little spike which stands up very stiff and erect. It does look a funny little figure as it stares out at you from the enclosing hood, and children may well liken it to a minister preaching from the pulpit and call it *Parson-in-the-pulpit*, though I really do not know why the Devonshire children should name it *Lamb-in-a-pulpit*.

I think that the name *Schoolmaster*, which some children use, is also quite a fitting one, for the flower-spike does look rather stern; or, if you like, you may fancy that it reminds you of the schoolmaster's cane, for the upper part of the spike is shaped in the manner of a club. This upper part varies in colour from pink to purple and crimson, and you may also frequently find buff or yellow specimens. The flowers are set lower down the spike. They are not a bit like ordinary flowers, and indeed you would not call them flowers at all, for they have no pretty petals to show them off. None the less, they serve the chief purpose of flowers, which is to produce seeds from which new plants may grow.

If you look for the plant in the summer or autumn, you will discover that the leaves and the hood, with the purple part of the enclosed spike, have all disappeared, and that in their place is just a short green stalk, bearing a cluster of large bright scarlet berries. These berries have been produced from the unattractive flowers, and they contain the seeds which will ensure a future supply of Wild Arums.

The berries are most attractive things to look at as they gleam brilliantly amongst the surrounding foliage of the wood or hedgerow where the Arum makes its home; but you should remember never to touch them, for they are poisonous things to handle. It is for this reason that the plant is often called Poison-berry, Adder's-meat, Toad's-meat, and Snake's-food or Snake's-meat, as though it were a fitting food for poisonous reptiles.

Most of those funny names which I mentioned before were made up on account of the quaint little figure which the flower-spike presents as it stands up with such a dignified air within the protecting sheath. I expect you know that the plants with the darker-coloured spikes are the Lords, and those with the lighter ones are the Ladies. Some people say that the name Lords-and-ladies was given to the plant from the stately appearance of the spike, which looks as if it were a very important person indeed riding in a state chair or carriage! In the same way, the dark

spikes are called Adam and the light ones Eve. Then there are names of many other ‘pairs’ of people or animals which have been made up in the same way, such as Bulls-and-cows, Cows-and-calves, Devil’s-ladies-and-gentlemen, Devil’s-men-and-women, Kings-and-Queens, Angels-and-devils, and Parson-and-clerk; but the best known of them all is Lords-and-ladies.

Sometimes the purple spike is likened to a finger, and then the flowers are called Dead-man’s-fingers (like the Early Purple Orchis) and also Lords’-and-ladies’-fingers and Ladies’-fingers. Then, some people have fancied that the sheath looks like the hood which the friars and priests wore over their heads, and they call the plant Friar’s-cowl and Priest’s-hood. Jack-in-the-box is another of these many names, and quite a good one, too, I think; but a really pretty one is Babe-in-the-cradle, as though the flower-spike were a little baby lying in the cradle formed by the sheath.

The Wild Arum is another of the flowers which are called after the cuckoo, because it appears at the season when the bird is with us. In fact, it is almost as well known by the name of Cuckoo-pint as it is by that of Wild Arum. So, too, it has such names as Cuckoo-babies and Cuckoo-flower.

Long ago the Wild Arum was made to serve a useful household purpose. That was in the days when the fine ladies and gentlemen who

went to Court wore stiff and elaborate ruffs around their necks. The use of starch was not common then, and, when it was discovered that the root of the Arum contained a lot of starchy matter, it was employed in stiffening ruffs and other linen. The servants who did the starching did not like the work at all, for the root of the Arum is very hot and burning, and it chapped and blistered their hands so much that they had hardly time to heal before the next batch of linen had to be starched. From this use of the roots, the Wild Arum came to be called Starch-root or Starch-wort.

The common name Arum *may* have something to do with this burning quality of the plant, for it is said that it comes from a foreign word meaning ‘fire’; but the name was given so many hundreds of years ago that we cannot be certain what it really does mean.

Now I have told you about lots of the names of the Wild Arum, and, although there are several more which I have not mentioned, I think we had better bring this long chapter to a close.

The Wood Sorrel.

LOOK in the woods, and under the trees that grow in the hedges, and you will find one of the most delicate plants of the spring. It is called the Wood Sorrel and it has flowers of the purest white, with delicate lilac-coloured



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lines or veins in the five petals. In Wales these beautiful white flowers are called Fairy-bells, and the people say that, at night-time, they ring out little silvery peals to call the fairies into the woods to dance and play beneath the trees when you are fast asleep. If you look at the flower I think you will agree with me that the fairies could not have chosen a prettier kind of bell.

The leaves of the Wood Sorrel are some of the strangest that you will find, and we will look at them well because they have such pretty habits, and because there are so many names about them. They grow on slender stalks which spring from the root of the plant. Their colour is a fresh yellow-green, but underneath they are purple. They are divided into three leaflets, and each of these is deeply creased down the middle. In the evening, or when the day is dull, and the sun has hidden itself behind the clouds, these leaflets fold together and hang downwards as if they had gone to sleep. For this reason the plant is sometimes called Sleeping Beauty. I expect it reminds people of the Sleeping Beauty in the fairy-tale, for it certainly looks just as dainty and beautiful as she did.

If you were to chew one of these leaves you would find it a very sour morsel. That is the reason why the plant is called Sorrel, for ‘sorrel’ comes from a French word which means ‘sour.’ Many other names have been given to the plant

on account of this sourness, such as Sour-clover, Sour-sabs, Sour-suds, Sour-sap, Sour-Sally, and Wood-sour.

This is one of the many flowers that are called after the cuckoo. It has several names of this kind: Cuckoo-bread, Cuckoo's-bread-and-cheese, Cuckoo-spice, Cuckoo's-victuals, Cuckoo's-meat, and Cuckoo's Sorrel. People call the flower by these names because it is in bloom when the cuckoo visits our land, or, as some say, because the bird sings most at that time. They also tell us that the cuckoo feeds on the leaves, or even that it clears its rather husky voice by eating them, though I am afraid that is only their fancy. In Scotland and the north of England the cuckoo is called a 'gowk,' so they call this plant Gowk's-meat.

But it is not only the cuckoo that is supposed to find its food in the leaves of the Wood Sorrel. The names Rabbit's-meat, Hare's-meat, and Fox's-meat show that people regard the plant as a dainty meal for those wild animals too. Even men and women and children were believed to find the plant useful in this way, and that is how such names as Bread-and-cheese, Bread-and-cheese-and-cider, and Bread-and-milk, and also Lady-cakes, and Lady's-meat (which are Scottish names) arose; though they are, of course, very fanciful names and only given in fun. I expect that the word 'cider' in one of these names was thought of because the leaves

of the plant taste as bitter as cider. The same name is sometimes given to the Wood Anemone, because that also is a bitter plant.

In more than one country the people have shown their gratitude to God for sending this lovely and useful herb into the world. The leaves were, at one time, picked in large quantities and made into a sauce to be eaten with fish, for the bitter flavour was considered more appetising than that of any other plant. In this way the old name Green-sauce arose. In one part of France they called the flower God's-bread, and they likened it to the manna with which God fed the Israelites in the wilderness. In England it bore the name of God-Almighty's-bread-and-cheese.

There is another reason why people held this plant sacred in their memories. Once, long ago, the people of Ireland were heathens. They had never heard the story of Our Lord, and they worshipped false gods. When the Christians heard of this, they sent a very holy man, St Patrick, to go and preach to them and tell them all about the Holy Trinity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. But the Irish would not believe his teaching because they were quite unable to understand how there could be Three Persons in One, and for a long time the good missionary, St Patrick, could not think of a way to explain the mystery to them. Then, looking down on the ground, he saw a

plant growing at his feet with each of its single leaves divided up into three leaflets. In great joy he picked a leaf of the plant, and he showed it to the Irish who were standing all around him and trying to understand his teaching.

‘Look at this leaf,’ said St Patrick. ‘Do you see that there are three leaflets in it, and yet the three leaflets together form only one leaf? So, in the Holy Trinity, there are Three Persons, but they together form only One Godhead.’ Then the Irish understood his message, and they were baptised and became Christians.

Now there are many plants that have these three-in-one leaves; there are the different kinds of clover, as you may see the next time you walk in the hay-fields; but many people say that the plant which St Patrick used, and which the Irish called the Shamrock, was the Wood Sorrel. It is quite likely that it was really a kind of clover, and not the Wood Sorrel at all, but in some parts of England the Wood Sorrel is called Shamrock to this day.

In the north country this flower is sometimes called Hearts, and you will not need me to explain the reason for that, as you have only to look *at* the shape of the leaflets to understand it.

At one time the Wood Sorrel was called Stab-wort, because it was supposed to be useful in curing ‘wounds, punctures, thrusts and stabs

into the body.' In those times there were very few medicines for curing people when they were ill, and, instead of going to the chemists' shops for pills and lotions, as you would to-day, people went to another kind of shop and bought herbs, or plants, or medicines made up from the juices and powders of their leaves and roots.

Then there is an old name, very much like Stab-wort, but with quite a different meaning. It is Stub-wort, and you will understand why it was given when I tell you that the plant often grows in the rotting centres of the *stubs*, or stumps, of old trees. When next you are in the woods at spring-time, see if you can find some tree-stumps with the Wood Sorrel growing out of them.

At one time the plant was known to some people as French Sorrel. I do not know why it should have been given this name, for it did not come from France; but the name is borne by several other plants as well.

Now I will conclude my talk about the Wood Sorrel by telling you of the most curious of all the many names which have been given to it. Do you not think it very strange to call a plant by the name of Alleluia? Well, that is what people called it hundreds of years ago, and in some country parts they use the name to-day. I expect you have often sung the word Alleluia, or Hallelujah, in church without quite knowing what it meant. The meaning is 'Praise

the Lord,' and these words appear in many psalms and anthems, especially the psalms from 113 to 118, which are called Psalms of rejoicing. Alleluia was regularly sung in churches all over the continent of Europe at Easter and afterwards, when everyone was rejoicing over the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is said that it was because the Wood Sorrel was in flower at that season of rejoicing that people named it with the word Alleluia, or Praise the Lord, which they were then singing so often in church. In the south of Italy they called the plant Juliola, and some people say that the name of Alleluia came from that word; but I think it is much more likely that what I have said above is the true meaning of the name.

The Greater Stitchwort.

THIS flower is called the *Greater* Stitchwort because there is another white flower which resembles it, called the *Lesser* Stitchwort. It is quite easy to tell one from the other, because the Lesser Stitchwort is so much smaller than its big brother. The Greater Stitchwort is a very welcome spring and early summer plant that grows everywhere in the hedgerows. It has long, frail stems and tapering, pointed leaves that grow in pairs.

If you had lived two or three hundred years

ago, and you had told your mother that you had a pain in the side, or ‘the stitch,’ she would probably have tried to cure the pain with a drink made from this bright little flower. Now that seems a very curious thing to do, but many people thought that the flower would cure ‘the stitch,’ and that is why they gave it the name of Stitchwort.

In the spring-time you will have noticed the gleaming white petals of the Stitchworts shining like hundreds of stars in the green hedgerows; and, when you see how very white and glossy they are, you will understand the reason for other names of the flower: Satin-flower, Star-wort, Miller’s-star, Snow and Snowflake, Lady’s-white-petticoats, Old Man’s-shirt, and White-smocks. Look closely at the five petals and you will observe that they are divided into ten little straps. These little straps made some people liken the flowers to strips of lint, the material that is used for making bandages, and so they gave them another name—Lady’s-lint.

But why is the Stitchwort also called Pixy-flower? Well, first I must tell those of you who do not already know that ‘pixy’ is another name for a fairy, so that Pixy-flower means Fairy-flower. Some children say that the fairies hide in these flowers during the day-time, and they are afraid to pluck the blossoms because they think that, if they disturb the fairies when

they are resting, the ‘little people’ will carry them away, because, of course, fairies do not like to be disturbed any more than we do.

Do you think that the flowers, with the circle formed by their white petals, look anything like clocks? Well, some people do, because they call them Clocks, and Lady-watches, and Lady’s-watch-and-chain, though I do not really know how you could tell the time by them.

Nearly all of you will have heard some of the next names which I am going to tell you—Snap-jacks, Snap-crackers, and Snappers; and I expect I need hardly explain that the reason for these names is that, if you burst the little swollen balls which appear after the flower is dead, and which contain the seeds, they go off with a smart pop or snap. Perhaps it is for the same reason that the plant is sometimes called Thunder-flower, as if the little ‘snaps’ were like a clap of thunder.

There are some other names which I think will make you wonder. They are All-bone, Break-bones, Dead-men’s-bones, and Snap-stalks. What curious names these are, and why should this pretty little flower have such ugly names? I agree with you that the names are not very happy ones, but there is a reason for them. Just take any of the long, sprawling stems of the plant and break them at the joints. You will find that, when the plant is getting old, the stems are rather brittle and break off like dry



The Greater Stitchwort.



The Germander Speedwell or Bird's-Eye.

twigs or tiny bones. It was for this reason, I suppose, that these fanciful names were given.

Now I will tell you some more of the many names of the Stitchwort. They are Adder's-meat, Adder's-spit, and Agworm-flower. Agworm, or Hagworm, is what north-country people call a snake or adder. This is the reason for these names. Many children think that, if they pluck this flower, they will be bitten by an adder, and so you may be sure they never touch it. This is not really true at all, because, of course, the flower has nothing whatever to do with adders; but that is what some children believe, and that is how these names came to be given.

The Greater Stitchwort is one of the many flowers which are called Bachelor's-buttons, and it has other similar names—Billy-White's-buttons and Shirt-buttons. Another, less common, name is Babes-in-the-wood, and perhaps children call it this because, when they see the little white flowers peeping out of the long grass and flowers of the hedgerows, they are reminded of the fairy tale about the babes who were lost in the wood.

In Devonshire this flower is sometimes known as Easter-bell, because it comes into bloom about Easter-time, and also because, when the flowers are only half-opened, they look rather like little bells. So, when the country people see them,

they think of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which the church bells welcome with a joyous peal at Eastertide.

The Germander Speedwell or Bird's-Eye.

MANY of you will know this plant, with its flowers of a brilliant blue and centres of pure white, by the name of Bird's-eye, for that is a name which is given to it all over the country. Many flowers, as you will read in other chapters, are called Bird's-eye, but this is the flower to which the name belongs best. I am not quite sure of the exact reason why the plant is called by this name, but most people think that it is because of the beautiful deep blue of the flower, which is like the colour of some birds' eyes.

In the west of England, however, the children think that, if you pluck the flower, the birds will come and peck your eyes out, though, of course, they will not do anything of the kind. Children do acquire some strange fancies about the flowers which they see around them, and often these fancies are made up of the most fearful ideas. Even this sweet little Speedwell, which looks so pretty and harmless, is said by some children to make you blind if you gaze at it steadily for an hour, and so they call the plant Blind-flower! Probably it is because of the colour of the

Germander Speedwells that they are also called by the pretty name of Angels'-eyes, for their heavenly blue is just the colour which we should expect to see in the lovely eyes of the angels. So, too, the plant is sometimes called God's-eye.

But the flowers are also known as Cats'-eyes (or Cats'-een in Scotland), though pussies' eyes are not usually anything like the colour of the little Speedwell, except perhaps some of the beautiful Persian cats, which have blue or grey eyes. There are other kinds of eyes which people have thought of when they wished to make up a name for this favourite bloom, for sometimes the plant is called Bright-eye, Milk-maid's-eye, Billy-bright-eye, and Bobby's-eye. Probably most of these 'eye' names, to whatever flower they are given, have something to do with, either the bright appearance of the flowers, like the sharp little eyes of a bird, or the little 'eye' which seems to look out at you from the heart of the blossoms.

The Germander Speedwell is a plant that covers all our banks and hedgerows with its brilliant blue flowers in May and June, though it continues to open its bright eyes in much smaller numbers through the later months. There are many kinds of Speedwell, but it is this one that you will most frequently notice. It is a fragile plant, having a weak stem with hairy lines running up it. The leaves are borne on very short stalks. They are broad

and hairy, and their edges are cut up into little teeth. The flower-spikes spring from the stem just where the leaves grow. Each flower has really only one petal, though it is deeply divided to look like four petals, and there is a pure white circle in the heart of the flower where the two little ‘stamens’ spring.

If you pluck the flowers you will find that they very quickly fall off, and, for that reason, it is difficult to bring home a bunch of them. Perhaps that is why the plant is called Speedwell. Long ago, when friends were bidding each other good-bye, instead of saying ‘Farewell,’ as we might do to-day, they would say ‘Speed well,’ which meant the same thing. So perhaps it was because of the way in which the flowers of this plant fell off and left you when you took them in your hand that people fancied it was like saying good-bye to a parting friend, and so called the plant Speedwell. And this is all the more likely to be true because, not so very long ago, the plant was called Forget-me-not, though, of course, this name now belongs to another plant. In some parts of the country the people have other names for the Speedwell which are a kind of farewell, for they call the plant Re-member-me and Wish-me-well.

When the flower falls you can see that, as I have said, it is all in one piece. It looks rather like a little basin, and some children call it Break-basin, because, as the plucked flower

falls to the ground, it makes them fancy that they have dropped a basin and broken it.

I shall not tell you about the meaning of the word *Germander*, which is the first part of the name of this flower, because it is made up from a hard foreign word having no particular meaning for our little plant.

The Lady's Smock.

IN the spring-time the Lady's Smocks, 'all silver-white . . . do paint the meadows with delight.' That is what the great poet Shakespeare says about the flower, and certainly the fields and roadsides do seem to be full of delight when this most favourite plant begins to paint them with its delicate petals. These, none the less, are not usually white, but pale heliotrope or lilac. You may find the plant happily nodding its flowers above the grass wherever you wander, as if it were thinking how fresh and beautiful the earth looked in its new spring clothes of green grass and budding flowers.

Let us look at the plant and see what we can learn about it. The leaves which grow near the ground are short and roundish; those which spring higher up the stem are long and narrow; and they are bitter to the taste, like Water-cress. Hence the plant is often called

Bitter-cress and Meadow-cress. The flowers have four petals, and, when they fade, they are followed by little pods containing the seeds. The plant produces these seeds so that, when it dies, new flowers may spring up to take its place.

Nobody knows for certain why the flowers are called Lady's Smocks. I am sure they do not in the least resemble smocks, either in shape or in colour, but it has been said that the reason why they are likened to them is that, when the country people saw them dotted over the fields, looking almost white in the distance, it reminded them of a lot of newly washed little smocks laid out to bleach in the sun. Perhaps you have read Shakespeare's song in his play called *Love's Labour's Lost*, in which he mentions the flower. The song is called 'Spring,' and here is a part of it:

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

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
And turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks.

Some people say that the flowers are named after the Virgin Mary, who is frequently spoken

of as ‘Our Lady,’ and that the reason is that they come into bloom about the 25th of March,

which is the feast day of our Lord's mother, and is called Lady-day. These flowers do not usually appear quite as early as that, so perhaps there is another reason for the name which we do not know.

The Lady's Smock is almost quite as well-known under the name of Cuckoo-flower. There are many flowers which bear this name, and the reason is that they begin to flower about the time when the cuckoo visits us from over the sea; or, as someone has said, 'when the cuckoo doth begin to sing her pleasant notes without stammering.' Many children believe that the plant is called Cuckoo-flower, or Cuckoo-spit as they name it, because the frothy spittle which you may often see around the stalks is dropped there by the cuckoo as it flies above; but this is not a true reason, for it is an insect that makes the froth, and not the cuckoo at all. Then, other children speak of the plant as Cuckoo's-shoes-and-stockings, and they explain this by saying that the whiter flowers are the stockings and the more deeply coloured ones the shoes. Another name which children use is Cuckoo-buttons, though I am sure I do not know how the flowers resemble buttons, or why the cuckoo should need such things! You will find more about this name of Cuckoo-flower in the chapter on the Wood Anemone.

You would be very much surprised, I expect, if you were given a plateful of Lady's Smocks

for your supper and told that it was Bread-and-milk. I don't suppose you would care for it at all, and I am sure I should not. Yet that is the name by which some children call the flower, and, although no one remembers the true reason for it now, it is said that, long ago, country people used to give up their winter mornings' breakfast of chicken-broth about the season of the flower's arrival and eat bread and milk instead! Sometimes the name is altered to Cuckoo's-bread, as though the bird was in the habit of making a meal off it; but that name really belongs to the Wood Sorrel, about which you can read in another chapter.

I do not know what connection there is between this flower and the milk which we drink, but there are several other names of this kind which people give to the plant. Some call it Milkmaids, Milk-girls, and Dairymaids; and others use the name Milk-jug, perhaps because they fancy the whiter flowers look something like a milk-jug. Then there is a very curious name—Lady's-milksile. Now milk-sile is the name given, in the north of England, to a pan (which has a sieve at the bottom) through which the dairymaids pour the milk in order to strain out any dirt which may be in it when it is carried from the cow-sheds. So I suppose that the shape of this flower reminds them of the straining-pan, or milk-sile, which they are in the habit of using.



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The Early Purple Orchis.

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If you look into the flower you will see that *it* has a little cluster of what are called ‘stamens,’ each with a tiny yellow head. These yellow heads help to make the seeds of the plant fertile and so ready to grow into new plants. The centre of the flower looks rather like a very small eye.

Several names have been made up which I think must be about this little eye—Bird’s-eye, Bonny-bird-ee, Pigeon’s-eye, and Pig’s-eye—as if it reminded people of the eye of a pretty bird, or even of a pig; though perhaps the names simply mean that the flower has a bright look like an eye.

You will find this ‘eye,’ in different forms, in the middle of many other flowers, and lots of names have been made up about it, or about the bright appearance of the flowers. Sometimes the same names have been given to different plants. For instance, the name Bird’s- eye is applied to the Forget-me-not, the Scarlet Pimpernel, the Herb Robert, the Ground Ivy, and the Greater Stitchwort, in addition to the Lady’s Smock. The result is that people cannot tell which plant you are speaking of if you use such names as Bird’s-eye, and so it is best to remember the most common name of a flower first, although it is pleasant to know the others as well.

In Scotland and the north of England Lady’s Smocks are often called Spinks or Bog-spinks.

Another north-country name is Lamb's-lakins. Children who live in those parts know that a lakin is a plaything, so the name of the flower means Lamb's-playthings. Perhaps the little lambs play with the flowers, or leap over them as they gambol about the fields; or it may be that it is mother's lambs—the children—who play with them and give them their name.

The Early Purple Orchis.

I THINK that this flower has had more names given to it in different parts of the country than any other plant. In fact, there are so many of them, and they are so curious and fanciful, that I hardly know how to explain their meaning to you. Of course, it is because the plant is everywhere such a favourite with children that many of these names have been made up; but I think that 'grown-ups' as well must be fond of it, because they too have thought of a lot of names. The common name is the Early Purple Orchis. It is not, of course, an interesting one, but it describes the time of the flower's appearance, which is from April to June, and the colour of the blooms.

I do not think you will need me to help you very much in finding the flower, for you must have seen it growing everywhere about the fields and hedges and roadsides when you have gone

out there to play in the spring-time. Its leaves grow in a cluster close to the ground, clasping the flower-stem at the bottom. They are long and broad, and taper to a point; but the most remarkable thing about them is that they are splashed all over with strange, dark-purple spots. These blood-like stains have given the plant the sacred name of Gethsemane, and a story has been told to explain the reason why. It was said of old that one of these flowers was growing at the foot of the Cross on which our Lord was crucified, and that some drops of His sacred blood fell on the leaves, since when they have always borne the stain.

I think, though, that, as this name is Gethsemane, and not Calvary, where the Cross was erected, another story might be told about the stains. You will remember that, whilst Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He suffered an agony so great that the perspiration broke out on His forehead in drops of blood. In the place where He knelt in prayer, one of these flowers was growing, and, as the blood ran down His forehead, some drops of it fell on to the plant and stained it for ever afterwards. Perhaps that is how the story was first told, and how the Early Purple Orchis came to be called Gethsemane.

I think that it must be because of these stains on the leaves that children in some counties call the plant Red-butcher and Butcher-boys and

Butcher-flower, as if the reddish splashes were like the blood which you see sprinkled about a butcher's shop.

I have told you, in another chapter, how some plants are named after the adders which we often find lurking in long, wet grass. The Early Purple Orchis has received several such names, for it is called Adder's-grass, Adder's-tongue, Adder's-flowers, and Adder's-mouths. I cannot tell you for certain why these names were given to the plant. The leaf is something like a tongue in shape, although it is certainly very much bigger than an adder's tongue. Perhaps the flower, with its open mouth, reminded people of an adder's mouth; and no doubt the fact that the plant often grows where adders abound had something to do with these names.

The flower-stem of the Early Purple Orchis springs up from the cluster of leaves and raises its loose spike of purple flowers to a height of a foot or so. The flowers are a curious shape. They have six purple sepals and petals. One of the petals is much larger than the others, and is called the 'lip' of the flower. It is divided into three lobes, and it extends behind into a long hollow tube or spur. The purple colour is mottled with darker and lighter shades of the same colour. The plant belongs to a big family of plants, all called Orchises, or Orchids, and many of them have flowers of the most astonishing shapes. One kind looks exactly like a bee, another resembles

a butterfly, another a fly, while one is actually like a little man, with a body, two legs, and two arms complete! The Early Purple Orchis has not nearly such remarkably shaped flowers as these; but evidently they, too, have a likeness to certain animals, for some children call them Cock-flowers, and others, in Scotland, name them Cock's-kames, or Cock's-combs.

Then there are several names after Mother Goose and her family of goslings, which I think must have to do with the group of flowers as they are arranged on the stem. There is Gandi-gosling, Giddy-gander, Goosie-gander, and others. There is also a name which shows you that the handsome purple flowers reminded some people of red-coated soldiers, for that name is Soldiers'-jackets.

These are not the only bird-names and animal-names which have been given to the Early Purple Orchis, for the plant is also called Crow-feet, Drake's-feet, Cuckoo-flower, Frog-wort, and Ram's-horns. I have told you, in other chapters, of flowers which have been named Cuckoo-flower because they are in bloom at the time when the cuckoo visits our land, and this plant is another of them.

The roots of the Early Purple Orchis are very different from those of most of our wild-flowers, for, if you were to dig them up, you would find that they consisted chiefly of two roundish, fleshy tubers. Every year the plant produces a new

tuber to provide it with food for the next year, while the old one perishes as its store of nourishment is used up. Some curious names have been given to the plant on account of these tubers, and they are mostly of a rather dreadful kind. In the north country the children believe that one of the tubers was once the thumb of a wicked murderer, because they say that its colour, or its shape, is like a thumb, and they name the plant Dead-man's-thumb. Other children give it the unpleasant names of Dead-man's-fingers and Dead-man's-hand. These names are given to several of the Orchises, and I think they are not at all nice. They do not really suit the Early Purple Orchis, and I think that, if they are used at all, they are best applied to some of the other kinds, like the Spotted Orchis, the tubers of which are divided in such a way as to look like the fingers of a hand.

Sometimes the Early Purple Orchis is called Adam-and-Eve, and there are two reasons for this surprising name. I am not sure that it does not properly belong to another kind of Orchis, although it certainly is quite commonly given to this one. But, whichever the proper plant may be, it was said that its tubers looked like two human beings, and that the pair represented Adam and Eve. In order to tell which was Adam and which was Eve, you had to drop the tubers into water. Then, the one that sank was Adam and the one that floated was Eve. In

some counties they gave this name to the Early Purple Orchis for quite a different reason. You will notice, as you gather the flowers, that some of the spikes are a much deeper purple than others. Well, the darker spikes were supposed to be Adam and the lighter ones Eve.

There are heaps more names that I could tell you about, and some of them are very interesting ones. There is Aaron's-beard, Kettle-case, King-finger, Long-purples, Poor-man's-blood, Single- castle, and many others; but we have said such a lot about the country names of this plant that I think it is time to stop. So I will only remind you that the chief name is the Early Purple Orchis, and that that is the one by which you should remember the plant.

The Bluebell or Wild Hyacinth.

How beautiful the woods appear when the Wild Hyacinths spread like a blue carpet beneath the trees! By the roadsides, too, the nodding bells paint all the hedgerows with a deep and glowing blueness. What happy times we have when, in May and June, we play in the shady woods and gather armfuls of the abundant flowers to deck our homes! I am afraid, though, that this very abundance of the Wild Hyacinth often tempts us to pluck the flowers in greater quantities than we can carry home. The woods

are so full of them that we go on pulling the lovely blooms in a state of eagerness that makes us forget that we are taking away more than we can ever use. And then we see the pitiful sight of large bunches of these flowers lying limp and dying upon the roads, where they have been thrown down because we have grown tired of carrying them. I should like you all to remember that the Bluebells are a precious gift sent to beautify the earth, and that we should use them as kindly and providently as if they were rare and difficult to find.

You will not need me to describe the Wild Hyacinth in detail, for it is familiar to everyone; but we will just look at its chief features to make sure that we have not overlooked anything of importance. The plant grows from a bulb, in which its food is stored up. From the bulb a number of long, slender, grass-like leaves grow out, and in the midst of them is the flower-stem with its row of drooping bells set on short stalks. The bells are divided at their open ends into six parts, which curl back prettily; and, if you peep inside, you will see six thread-like organs called ‘stamens,’ with a seventh which is called the ‘pistil.’

The Hyacinth is, of course, known throughout the greater part of England as the Bluebell, and, although I expect most of us will always use that name, it is really a cause of confusion, for, in Scotland and the north of England, another



The Bluebell or Wild Hyacinth.



The Dandelion.

flower, the Harebell, is commonly called the Bluebell, and our present plant is known as the Wild Hyacinth.

There is a very pretty story which tells you how the name Hyacinth came to be given to the plant, and I am sure you would like to hear it. Long ago there was a race of people, called the Greeks, who worshipped a number of heathen gods. I have told you stories about these people in other chapters, and you will learn from them that the names of many of our wild-flowers have come down to us from them.

Amongst the various gods which these people worshipped was one called Apollo and another called Zephyrus. The Greeks believed that, when each day they saw the sun rise in the east and move across the sky, it was Apollo driving a golden chariot, drawn by a team of splendid horses, across the heavens. Now, Apollo was very fond of a beautiful youth called Hyacinthus, and often he would descend to the earth and play with his friend.

Zephyrus was the god who caused the West wind to blow. He too was fond of Hyacinthus, and he was furiously jealous of Apollo because he had won the boy's affection. One of the games which Apollo and Hyacinthus played together consisted of throwing a heavy circular disc as far as they could, the one who threw it farthest being the winner. When I tell you that these discs were made of iron or stone

you will understand that they were exceedingly heavy, and that you had to be very strong to throw them any distance.

One day Apollo and Hyacinthus were playing this game and the sun-god was preparing to hurl his disc as far as he possibly could. Then Zephyrus, who was watching them from the sky, became seized with a wicked plan of revenging himself on Apollo for winning the love of the boy. Hyacinthus was standing some way in advance of Apollo as he hurled the disc, and, just as it left his hand, Zephyrus blew on it and caused it to veer out of its course and strike Hyacinthus a terrible blow on the head. Instantly the poor boy fell to the ground—dead.

Apollo was filled with uncontrollable grief at the dreadful tragedy, and he wept bitterly over the unhappy death of the youth whom he loved so well. Then, in the midst of his sorrow, he declared that he would produce from the dead body of the beautiful boy a living flower that should be even more beautiful. Thereupon a lovely flower sprang up from the blood of the prostrate Hyacinthus, and, wonderful to relate, its petals were streaked with letters which, in the language of the Greeks, meant ‘Alas! Alas!’ Thus did Apollo cause the memory of his friend to live on after his death in the form of a flower which bore the marks of his grief. That flower was ever afterwards called the

Hyacinth, and, although it all happened so long ago that no one can now say which flower it was, this plant which we are speaking of was thought to be related to it, and so it received the name of Hyacinth.

Several names of the Wild Hyacinth have been made up because of their beautiful colour and bell-like form. There is Blue-bottle, Bell-bottle, Blue-bonnets, Blue-rocket, Wood-bells, and, prettiest of all, Ring-o'-bells. Certainly the flower-stem, with its row of drooping blooms, is exactly like a peal of fairy bells.

Then the Hyacinth is another of those flowers called Cuckoos or Cuckoo-flowers, because it is in bloom when the cuckoo's note is heard in the woods where it grows so freely. But I am sure I cannot think why it should be called Cuckoo's-stockings or, in Scotland, Gowk's-hose, which means the same thing. The deep blue flowers would make very pretty stockings if you could fit them on your feet, but I do not think the cuckoo is in need of any such article of clothing!

The Dandelion.

WHEN you come to this chapter you may be inclined to exclaim, 'Oh! It's only about a common Dandelion—I'll skip that.' But I do not want you to 'skip' this chapter, and I do not want you ever to despise a flower merely

because it is easy to find almost anywhere and at any season. We can see the stars in their thousands on any clear night, but we should never forget that they, like the Dandelions, are none the less wonderful and beautiful because they are always there for us to see.

And, indeed, the Dandelion is just as beautifully and perfectly made as other flowers. Look at the golden flower-head, so big and fine, as it sways on the green and reddish stem. Each one of those petals, which look like straps with notches cut out of their ends, is a separate flower, so that the flower-head is really like a huge family consisting of scores of children all living happily together in one home.

Then, when the flowers have withered, what a marvellous piece of workmanship is the blow-ball which grows out of them! Do you see how it contains scores of perfect little white parachutes, each one complete in itself, and each one able to sail away on the breeze and carry a tiny pointed seed far over the fields? Wherever one of these seeds drops to the earth it will grow, if it finds a suitable place, into a new plant. I expect you have often pretended to tell the time with these Blow-balls and Clocks and Doon-head-clocks, as they are called. Some children also play at telling fortunes with them, and they call the flower Fortune-teller.

When all the parachutes of the Blow-ball have sailed away, the greenish knob on which they

grew is rather a funny thing to look at. It is so bare and smooth that people have likened it to a man's head when all the hair has been shaved off. So they called the plant Monk's-head and Priest's-crown, because monks and priests had the hair shaved off the top of their heads. Other people have named the plant Swine's-snout, and really this smooth green knob, with the little hollow in the middle, is quite like the snout of a pig.

Why is the plant called Dandelion? And what has it to do with the fierce king of beasts? We cannot be sure now, for the people who gave the flower its name passed away many hundreds of years ago; but some people say that the name was made up because those notches at the end of the flower-petals are like teeth. But there are other parts of the plant which seem rather like teeth. Do you see the rings of long, pointed 'bracts' (which look like small green leaves) growing beneath the flower-head? Before the flowers open, these bracts clasp the bud, and, after they are dead, they hang downwards around the stalk. Do you not think that these bracts are very much like the long, pointed teeth of some animal?

Then, again, let us look at the leaves. They are large and limp and grow straight from the ground. Each leaf is divided into a number of uneven, pointed lobes, with jagged teeth cut out of them. The unusual thing about these

lobes is that they point backwards, towards the beginning of the stalk; whereas the lobes of the leaves in other plants generally point *forwards*. These pointed lobes are very much like the teeth of some fierce wild animal, and it is quite likely that this is the true reason for the plant's name; for 'Dandelion' comes from three French words—*dent-de-lion*—which mean 'lion's tooth.'

In Scotland this flower, and many other yellow flowers, are called Gowans, Horse-gowans, Milk-gowans, and Witch-gowans; though the name Gowan is now usually given to the Daisy. The word means 'gold,' and it was given to these flowers because of their bright golden colour. The flower-stalk of the Dandelion is hollow and full of a milky juice. Some of the people of Scotland call this juice witches' milk, as though it were an evil kind of milk used by witches, and that is why they name the plant Witch-gowans. In the west of England the children sometimes call the flowers Burning- fire, because the long narrow petals make them think of flames of fire flaring out all around the flower-head. Do you not think that this is a very good name for this brilliant flower? And do you not now agree with me that the Dandelion is an interesting flower, even though it is such a common one?

The Milkwort.

THE Milkwort is a flower which grows freely on open downs and heaths through most of the summer. And yet you may not have noticed it, for it is a tiny little plant, only a few inches in height, and it seems almost lost in the surrounding herbage. In spite of it being so very small, it is a pretty herb, and there are some interesting things to say about it.

The lower leaves of the Milkwort are rather round in shape, but the higher ones resemble the blade of a tiny lance. The flowers seem, usually, to have five petals, three small and two larger ones, but these two larger ones are really ‘sepals,’ although they are coloured like petals. The ‘sepals’ of a flower, as a rule, are green in colour, and grow underneath the flower or behind it, where it joins the stalk. The flowers of the Milkwort grow in a spike. They are mostly of a beautiful deep blue, but you will quite often find them with a purple, pink, or white colour. In one part of Ireland they call Milkworts the Four-sisters, because of these four colours. Some children call them Starch-flowers, though I am not sure why. Do you think the deep blue of the flowers reminds them of the ‘blue’ which linen is dipped in before it is starched?

If you were to dig up one of the plants you would find, on breaking the tough woody roots, that they contained a milky juice. You would then begin to understand why the plant is called the Milkwort. Long ago people thought that if these plants were eaten they would increase the supply of milk.

There were some customs, a long time ago, which people observed during the season known as Rogation Week. This season commences with the Sunday before Ascension Day, when our Lord ascended into heaven. During the first part of the week the people, led by the clergy, used to join together and walk in procession. They went out into the fields, and the priests prayed for a blessing on the growing crops so that they might produce a rich harvest. They also walked all around the parish where they lived, following the line of the boundaries which separated their parish from the neighbouring ones. Often they would take little boys with them, and, when they had reached a boundary mark, the poor little boys would receive a whipping. This was not because they had been naughty, but simply because the people thought that the boys would always remember the boundary mark where they had received their whipping, and so, if the older people forgot which were the boundaries of the parish, the boys would be able to tell them. I think this was a very unkind thing to do to



The Milkwort.

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The Cinquefoil.

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the little boys, though the people did some-times give them a penny for their pains.

Now, those who walked in these processions used to carry nosegays and wear garlands of flowers on their heads, while the folk who watched them go by from their houses would deck their windows with flowers as well. The Milkwort was then coming into flower, and it was always chosen to make up the nosegays and garlands and to put in the windows. For this reason it was called the Procession-flower, or Rogation-flower. In the north of England they called it Gang-flower, and Rogation Week was known as Gang Week. The reason of this was that in those parts the word 'gang' meant the same as the word 'go.' So Gang

Week meant the week when the folks would *go* in procession.

The Cinquefoil.

I AM afraid you will find this name hard to say at first, but, if you try, you will soon learn to repeat it correctly. You see, it is a French word. I do not know why we should have copied the French name for the plant when we might just as well have made up an English one; but, long ago, when people began to study flowers carefully and give them the names which we use to-day, the learned men who devoted

themselves to the work were mostly foreigners living in Italy and France and Germany. The English people copied a lot of the names from these foreigners, and that is why so many of the names which we use now are taken from foreign words.

The name Cinquefoil is made up from two French words, ‘cinque’ and ‘foil,’ or ‘feuille.’ ‘Cinque’ means ‘five,’ and ‘foil’ means ‘leaf’; so you will see that the name means ‘Five-leaf.’ Some people preferred to use English names instead of foreign words, and they called this plant Five-leaf, Five-leaved-grass, Five-finger-grass, Five-fingers, Herb-five-leaf, and other such names. You will easily understand the meaning of these terms if you look at the leaves of the plant, for you will see that they grow mostly in five leaflets. Sometimes they are in threes, or even sevens, but mostly they are in fives. The leaflets are cut up at their edges into rather large teeth, and they are spread out like the fingers and thumb of your hand. That is how these ‘finger’ names came to be given.

There is more than one kind of Cinquefoil, but the most common is the Creeping Cinquefoil, which you will see in the picture. This plant sends its root deeply into the ground, and its stems go creeping away on the surface in all directions. That is why it is known as the Creeping Cinquefoil. The stems send out little

roots as they travel along, and these peg the plant firmly to the ground, just as the rootlets of the Creeping Buttercup do.

The flowers of the Cinquefoil grow at the ends of long slender stalks. There are five yellow petals, which look soft and crinkly, and they are notched at the ends. They stand rather apart from one another and show the green ‘sepals’ in between. The sepals are like green leaves, and they grow underneath the petals of the flower. You will find the Cinquefoil in bloom from June to August.

The Tormentil.

THE Tormentil is a plant which blooms at about the same time as the Cinquefoil; and, as you may often mistake one for the other, we will note the differences between the two. First of all, let us take the flowers, for these will help you best to distinguish the plants. The Tormentil is much smaller than the Cinquefoil, and usually it has only four petals, while the Cinquefoil has five. The petals are soft and crinkly, and the sepals show between them, just like those of the Cinquefoil. The petals have a notch at the ends, again like the Cinquefoil, and, if you pull one off, you will find that it is a perfect heart in shape.

The stems of the Tormentil usually grow more upright than those of the Cinquefoil, though some-

times they creep along the ground. The root is woody and red in colour, like blood, and this led some north-country people to think that it would be good for a painful disease called dysentery. When people suffer from that disease they lose a lot of blood, and the folks thought that this plant with the blood-red roots would help to cure them. For this reason they called the plant Blood-root. The root was also given as a medicine to children, and the plant got the name of Flesh-and-blood.

In the Shetland Islands the people called the roots Earth-bark, because they used them in tanning leather. I will tell you what ‘tanning’ means. Leather is made from the hide of cows and other animals. But, before it is fit to use for making our boots and other things, it has to be soaked in a liquid obtained from the bark of the oak or some other tree, and this soaking is called ‘tanning.’ The people who live in the Shetland Islands found that they could use the roots of the Tormentil for tanning leather, instead of the bark of trees, and that is why they named these roots Earth-bark.

In other parts of Scotland they call the flower Shepherd’s-knot and Shepherd’s-root. I cannot tell you why they do this, unless it is that the shepherds find that the runners, which the plant sometimes send out, and which are very tough and wiry, are useful for tying up things. In the Cheviot Hills the people call the plant the

Ewe-daisy, which means Sheep-daisy, though, of course, it is not like the real Daisy at all.

The leaves of the Tormentil grow together mostly in three leaflets, though often they are in fives. The leaves which spring from the root grow on short stalks, while those which grow from the stem of the plant are without stalks. All the leaflets are narrow and have their edges cut into rather large teeth.

Have you noticed, when you have heard the name of this plant, how much it sounds like ‘torment’? In any case, you must have wondered what the name meant. Well, no one can say for certain, but it is quite likely that it has something to do with torment, or severe pains. Some people say that the root of the plant was a cure for what they called ‘the rage and torment of the teeth’—in other words, toothache. Others tell us that it was used to cure those who were suffering the kind of torment, or colic pains, which you would feel if you had eaten a lot of green apples. The doctors call these colic pains ‘tormina,’ which is very much like the name of the flower. We cannot be sure about the true meaning of the name, but one thing I *am* sure of, and that is that, if this little plant does help to cure us of either toothache or colic, we shall be very grateful to it and love it all the more.

The Ivy-Leaved Toad-flax.

I HAVE told you about the Yellow Toad-flax in another chapter, and now we are going to talk about a flower which, although it does not look like it, is a little brother of that plant. It is because the Ivy-leaved Toad-flax is a relation of the other plant, having its petals formed in a similar manner, that it is called Toad-flax. In this case, however, the last part of the name—flax—is a very unsuitable one. The leaves, with their five divisions, or ‘lobes,’ are more like Ivy leaves, and that is how the plant got the name of *Ivy-leaved* Toad-flax, and also Ivy-wort.

This sweet little plant loves to ramble over old garden-walls, where it hangs in dainty festoons of pale lilac flowers with yellow centres, and smooth, dark, and rather fleshy leaves, which are often purple beneath. The flowers are very numerous, and each one produces a little nobby ball full of the seeds of future plants. The stems trail all over the wall where the plant has made its home, and they throw out tiny roots as they creep along, and so make their hold all the more secure.

This creeping or climbing habit has given the plant the names of Climbing-sailor, Roving-sailor, Rambling-sailor and Wandering-sailor, Creeping-Jenny and Roving-Jenny, and Wandering-Jew.

So rapidly does it extend that it is frequently called Thousand-flower and Mother-of-hundreds, Mother-of-thousands, and even Mother-of-millions. So you see what an enormous family may grow from one single plant!

You will find the plant in flower from May right on to September; but even this lengthy period does not exhaust its season, for in odd places it may be met with at almost any time of the year.

The Yellow Iris.

If we wish to find this handsome flower we shall have to leave the fields and woods where we usually ramble, and run the risk of getting our feet wet and our boots exceedingly muddy. When, however, we do follow the Yellow Iris to its home, we shall be rewarded by a lovely sight. The plant lives in marshy places, and by the sides of streams, and even in the streams themselves; and there, during the month of June and into July, it grows in great masses that spread far and wide into the distance. Suppose, then, we discover a marshy valley, where a stream is wandering slowly along the flat ground. There we shall see a waving expanse of long narrow leaves growing thickly together as high as your waist and rustling in the breeze, with the great, flaring, yellow flowers catching the light of the sun.

The Yellow Iris is big and bold and strong in all its parts. The leaves are long and pointed, and their edges are keen, like swords. Many of the old names of the plant, which people still use to-day, are made up because of this remarkably sword-like character of the leaves. One of the names is Gladdon, and it is thought by some people that it comes from a foreign word meaning ‘a sword.’ Then there is a name, Sedge, which is given to many rushes and other water-side plants. The Yellow Iris is called the Yellow-sedge, and also Seg and Water-seg and other similar names. These are very ancient names, for they take us back to the times when the Saxons came from over the cold seas to descend upon our shores. Their meaning is probably the same as that of the name Gladdon, that is to say, ‘a sword.’ In Scotland they have another of these ‘sword’ names, for they sometimes call the plant Jacob’s-sword.

The flowers of the Iris are like yellow flames flaring out from a green sheath. There are three long lobes, like petals, which hang out in the wind in the manner of flags or banners; three smaller ones which grow upright; and three other features which also look like petals. They are such big and showy flowers that it does not take many of them to make a handsome decoration for your house.

The plant has another common name—Flag, or Yellow-flag, and, although I cannot tell you



The Ivy-Leaved Toad-Flax.

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The Yellow Iris.

for certain what this means, it may be that it refers to those three long yellow petals which, as I told you, hang out like a flag or banner. In Cornwall they sometimes name the plant Duck's-bill, because that is what the flower reminds them of by its shape and colour. In many places the name is Butter-and-eggs, because the colour of the flowers makes people think of those pleasant foods. The same name is given to the Yellow Toad-flax and the Bird's-foot Trefoil for a similar reason.

While the flowers are blooming the plant is preparing the seeds which are to grow into future plants, and, after the flower has fallen, you can see the cases in which these seeds are stored. They are quite a good size, measuring as much as three inches in length and an inch across. Some people think these seed-cases, when they are fresh and green, look like tiny Cucumbers, and so they call them by that name.

Now I expect you would like me to tell you the story of the name Iris. It is a very ancient name, and it was given to the family of flowers to which the Yellow Iris belongs by the Greek people who lived on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. In those days the Greeks worshipped a number of false gods and goddesses, for our Lord had not yet appeared on the earth. One of these goddesses was called Iris, and she was supposed to act as messenger to the other gods. She appeared to the eyes of

people on the earth in the form of a rainbow, and, whenever they saw a rainbow in the sky, they said that the goddess Iris was carrying a message. The Greeks called the rainbow, as well as the goddess, by the name of Iris, and it is from the rainbow that the name of the flower comes. You know what a beautiful range of colours you can see in the rainbow. Well, many kinds of Irises, especially those which grow in foreign countries and in our gardens, have the same varied tints, and so they were likened to the brilliantly coloured arc which you see in the sky. The Yellow Iris does not possess this lovely range of colours, but it belongs to the family of Irises which does, and so it shares the name with its more gaudily painted brothers and sisters.

In old books the Yellow Iris was very commonly called a *Fleur-de-lis* or *Flower-de-luce*. You will perhaps guess that this is a French name, and, in fact, it is the French for 'lily-flower.' The *Fleur-de-lis* was adopted as an emblem in the coat-of-arms of the kings of France, and it appeared on the banners and shields which they carried with them into battle. I cannot tell you for certain which was the actual flower indicated by the name, but many people said that it was an Iris, and so the Yellow Iris came to be called a *Fleur-de-lis*.

The Forget-me-not.

If you ask me why this pretty little blue flower is called Forget-me-not, I shall be unable to say for certain, but I can tell you several stories about it.

Once upon a time, a knight in armour was walking with his lady along the banks of a broad river. As they sauntered along, the lady espied a bright expanse of these flowers growing on the edge of the water, and she exclaimed how lovely they looked, and longed for her knight to gather a handful for her. The knight, being only too willing to please the maiden, scrambled down the bank and stretched out his hand towards the flowers. But alas! they were growing just out of his reach, and, in straining to gather them, he slipped into the river. He tried to swim ashore again, but his armour was so heavy that he could not do so. The swift stream carried him away from the spot where his lady stood weeping on the bank, and, as he was swept past her, he cried out to her to remember her lover. ‘Forget-me-not! Forget-me-not!’ he exclaimed, and drifted out of sight. The maiden never forgot her lost sweetheart, and ever afterwards she called the flowers which had cost him his life ‘Forget-me-not.’

And the lady fair of the knight so true
Still remembered his hapless lot;
And she cherished the flower of brilliant hue,
And she braided her hair with the blossoms blue,
And she called it 'Forget-me-not.'

Now perhaps you would like to hear another tale about this flower. There was once a very poor shepherd who lived in the mountains. One day, when he was tending his sheep, a fairy came to him with one of these blue flowers in her little white hand and said, 'My poor man, I am very sorry for your misfortunes, and here is a gift which will make you rich. Press this little flower against the mountain-side and the rocks will open into a cavern full of gold and precious stones. When you are inside the cave you may take away as many of those treasures as you can carry, but on no account must you leave behind the most precious thing of all.'

The poor man was greatly rejoiced at the good fairy's gift. He took the flower and pressed it against the mountain-side, and immediately a huge stone rolled back, revealing a dark cave within, gleaming with the reflection of gold and glittering with the light of thousands of jewels. The man eagerly entered the cave and, throwing down the flower, began to stuff the gold and jewels into his pockets, and his boots, and his stockings, and, indeed, into every one of his garments that would hold them. When he had collected as much as he could

carry, he remembered the fairy's warning not to leave behind the most precious thing that was there. So he looked carefully round the cavern until, presently, he espied a particularly big and sparkling jewel. 'This is evidently the most precious thing here,' he said, and he put it into his hat and turned to leave the cave.

As he walked towards the opening, he heard a tiny little voice calling out piteously, 'Forget me not! Forget me not!' and it seemed to come from the little flower which he had thrown down on the ground. 'Well,' he thought, 'I can't stop to pick you up, so you must just stay where you are.' Then he walked on quickly with his heavy load of gold and jewels, and was just about to pass out of the cave when—What do you think happened? Suddenly, with a loud noise, the great stone rolled back into the opening, and he was shut in. The flower which had admitted him into the cave was what the fairy had meant as the most precious thing, and, for neglecting its helpless appeal to be remembered, the poor man was shut in the cavern and never came out again.

Now I will tell you one more story of the Forget-me-not. It is about Adam and the Garden of Eden. You will have read in the Bible how Adam gave names to all the flowers that were growing in the Garden. After he had named them, God walked with him round the Garden to see if the flowers remembered

their new names. They went from flower to flower and God bade them repeat the names which Adam had just given to them. All the flowers repeated their names quite correctly until they came to this little blue flower. Now the Forget-me-not has another name, which is used in dry, learned books. This name is *Myosotis* and, as you will see, it is a very hard name to remember. When God asked the flower to pronounce its name, it hung its head for shame and murmured, 'I forget.' Then God, seeing how unhappy the poor little flower was because of its forgetfulness, said gently, 'Never mind if you have forgotten your name, little flower; but see that you forget ME not.' And ever afterwards (the story says) the flower was known as the Forget-me-not.

There are several plants which are brothers and sisters to one another, and all of them are loosely called by the name of Forget-me-not. The true Forget-me-not is, however, a plant which grows by the sides of rivers and streams, and it has a long, rooting stem, rough bright-green leaves, and curled up clusters of brilliant blue flowers with a yellow 'eye.'

The other flowers of this little family, which grow in the fields and on the banks of hedges, should really be called by the name of Scorpion Grass. They are very much like the true Forget-me-not of the streams, but their flowers, though just as brilliant in colour, are smaller.

A scorpion is a creature which has a curled up tail with a very nasty sting in it, and all the plants of this little family are sometimes called Scorpion Grass because their clusters, or spikes, of flowers are curled up like the tail of a scorpion.

The plants of this family are also called Mouse-ear, because the leaves are hairy and shaped something like the ear of a mouse.

Some of the Forget-me-nots, or Scorpion Grasses, begin to appear as early as April, but others do not come into flower until June or July.

The Red Campion.

THERE are many flowers called Campions—the White Campion, the Bladder Campion, the Sea Campion, the Red Campion which we are going to talk about now, and several others. The Red Campion is a plant that grows through the whole of the spring and summer and covers the hedges with its beautiful clusters of pinky-red blooms. It is often quite a tall plant, with tapering, pointed leaves that grow in pairs, and stems that are sometimes green, but often of a reddish colour. The leaves and stems, and, indeed, almost the whole plant, are covered with fine hairs.

The flowers must be well known to every child, for they grow thickly all over the country-

side wherever you go, and they have been given so many names that I cannot tell you about them all. The five red or rosy petals grow up out of what looks like a green tube or bladder. Each petal is almost cut into two, so that at a first glance you might think there were ten petals. In the middle there is one of those ‘eyes’ which I told you about in the chapter on the Lady’s Smock. It looks like a ring of the tiniest white teeth. Children call the flower Bird’s-eye, Bull’s-eye, Robin’s-eye and Hare’s-eye.

The Red Campion, like several other flowers, is also called Cuckoo-flower, because it is in bloom at the time when the cuckoo visits us from its home in the warm, sunny lands of far away. But this name belongs best to the Lady’s Smock, and you should not use it for any other plant.

You will hear a lot of people call this flower Robin-flower, and indeed the word Robin appears, in all sorts of ways, in many of the names by which the Red Campion is known. There is Poor-Robin, Red-Robin, and Bob-Robin; Robin Hood, Bobby Hood, and Robin-in-the-hedge; Robin-redbreast, Cock-robin, and heaps of others. Who, or what, this ‘Robin’ is, nobody knows to-day, though there are all sorts of tales told about him. Some people say that he was a mischievous little imp, called Robin Goodfellow; while others believe that



The Forget-me-not.

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The Red Campion.

he was a different person altogether, called Robin Hood, who was a robber. Then, many people think that the Robin after whom the flower is called is not a person at all, but is the little Robin-redbreast that comes and hops around the doors of country cottages asking for a crumb. Other things are said about these names, and you may read of them in the chapter on the Herb Robert, for many of the same names are given to that plant as well. Indeed, when you have finished this chapter, I should like you to go straight to the one on the Herb Robert and read what I say there about the way children confuse these two flowers.

Some of the names of the Red Campion have to do with buttons—Billy-buttons and Soldiers'-buttons. Another of these names is Bachelors'-buttons, and it may have been given because people thought the flower, with its notched petals, looked like the jagged cloth buttons which they used to wear in olden times. There was a custom, in those days, for young men to carry certain flowers about with them because they believed they could tell from their appearance whether their sweethearts loved them or not. This name of Bachelors'-buttons is given to many plants besides the Red Campion, for there are lots of flowers which you may fancy to look something like a button.

There is one very sad name for the Red

Campion: it is called in some parts of the north of England Mother-die, and the reason for the name is this. The children who live in those parts believe that, if they pluck the flower, something dreadful will happen to their parents, so, of course, they are afraid to touch it. This is a foolish belief, for if you were to pick hundreds of these flowers, it could not bring any harm to your parents.

I suppose it is because the flowers look so red as they grow in the hedgerows that children sometimes call them Red-butchers, Butcher's-blood, and Red-Jack, as if their colour made them think of the butcher's shop with all its red meat. But I do not consider these at all pleasant names for such a pretty flower.

There are ever so many more names of the Red Campion, but we will leave them now and think about the meaning of the name Campion itself. Unhappily, the story of this word is not known for certain, but I will tell you what some people say about it. Long ago there was a race of people, called the Greeks, who were very fond of holding public contests in running, wrestling, and other sports and games. It was their custom to crown the victors in these con- tests with wreaths made of a particular kind of flower. Later on, when these games or sports were held in another country, the victors came to be known as 'campions,' which, of course, is very much like our word 'champions,' and means

the same thing. In this way it came about that whenever the people who had watched the games saw this flower growing in the fields, they thought of the champions who had been crowned with it. Then, in time, they began to give the name of champion or campion to the flower itself. Now the flower which was used to crown the victors in these games was like the one which we are talking about, so you will see how it was that the Red Campion came by its name.

The Herb Robert.

WHEN you see a little reddish-purple flower with five petals growing thickly in the hedges, you may at first mistake it for another flower which grows just as abundantly. Many children are unable to tell the difference between a Red Campion and a Herb Robert, but that can only be because they have never had the differences pointed out to them. The only features in which the two plants are at all like each other (and those only at a first glance) are the colour of their flowers, the number of their petals, and the richness of their growth. In every other way they are quite different, and, when you have read this chapter and the chapter on the Red Campion, I am quite sure that you will never mistake one flower for the other again.

The Herb Robert has the prettiest leaves you could picture. They are divided into three or five leaflets, and each leaflet is cut up at the edges in a way which makes them appear almost feathery. The stems of the plant are hairy and they are of a beautiful red colour. The leaves themselves, as they grow older, turn to the same hue, and, in fact, the whole plant, in time, seems to be painted with varying shades of red. That is why some people call it Dragon's-blood, Red-weed, and Red-shanks. 'Shanks' is a vulgar word for 'legs,' and, in the case of the Herb Robert, it means the red stems. The plant has another name—Blood-wort—which may refer to its red colouring, or to a belief which people used to have that it was good to stop the bleeding of a wound.

The flower has five petals, which are not cut in the middle as the Red Campions are; also it is much smaller than the Campions. You should watch the Herb Robert when the blossom is fading, for you will see a very curious change take place. Where the flower once grew, there appears a long, pointed thing like the awl which shoemakers use to pierce holes in leather. Or, you might say, it is like a sharp needle. It is green in colour at first, and has a rosy tip. This 'awl' is called the 'fruit' of the plant, and it contains the seeds which will grow into new plants next year.

You will think it strange that a plant like

this should have a fruit, because, when people speak of ‘fruit,’ you at once think of oranges and apples and pears and other delicious things to eat. But, in every plant, the seed-pod, or any other vessel which holds the seeds, whether it is good to eat or not, is called the ‘fruit.’

Several names have been given to the Herb Robert on account of this ‘fruit.’ The chief ones (which are given to its sister-plants as well) are Cranes-bill and Wild Geranium. A crane is a bird with a long, pointed bill or beak, which lives by the water; and the name of Cranes-bill is given to the Herb Robert and its sister-flowers because their ‘fruit,’ or seed-pod, is so much like this bird’s beak. The word Geranium means the same as Cranes-bill; for it comes from a foreign word meaning ‘a crane.’ Sometimes the plant is called Fox Geranium and Fox-grass. This is not because foxes eat the plant, or even because they hide in the hedges where it grows. It means that it has a strong, unpleasant smell, such as foxes have. In parts of Scotland the plant is called the Scotch Geranium.

Some country people name the Herb Robert Adder’s-tongue, and I expect that is because they fancy that the long needle of the seed-pod looks like the tongue of an adder. In one part of Ireland, instead of thinking that these fruits are like an adder’s tongue, they fancy that they resemble a dog’s toe, so they call

the plant Dog's-toe; but I am quite sure that they have never seen a dog with toe-nails as long and sharp as the needle of the Herb Robert.

Some of the names of this plant are very curious indeed. One is Knife-and-fork. You will notice that the flowers grow in pairs. They do not look anything like a knife and fork, but some children pretend that one flower is the knife and the other the fork. When the flowers are dead and the seed-pods appear, you might perhaps fancy that the pair of pods growing together look a little like a fork with two prongs; but, of course, the knife is 'only pretending.'

There are some more strange names which I will mention to you; but I cannot explain what all of them mean, and, besides, I have a lot to say yet about the meaning of the name 'Herb Robert' itself. One of these strange names is Death-come-quickly, and it is given because of a foolish idea which some children have that, if they pluck the flowers, some misfortune will happen to their parents. This, of course, is a very silly thing to believe, for it is quite untrue. Other names are Kiss-me-quick, Sailor's-knot, Jenny-wren and Wren-flower.

Jenny-wren, as I expect you already know, is the tiny little bird which flits about country-people's cottages. There are several other birds whose names have been used for this flower, for it is also called Cuckoo-meat, Nightingales, and Robin-redbreast. Besides these

names, there are some which I think must have been given because of the little 'eye' in the centre, which you may read about in the chapter on the Lady's Smock. Thus, there are the names Bird's-eye, Cuckoo's-eye, Robin's-eye and Cat's-eye; but these, and other names just like them, have been given to so many quite different flowers that it will be best for you not to use them, because people would not know which flower you were indicating.

I will just mention a few more names which the children who live in the west of England give to the Herb Robert, and then we will talk about the common name of the flower. Some call it Angels; others pretend to see some likeness to an apron in it and call it Baby's-apron; and still others know it as the Biscuit-flower. Then it is also called Candlesticks and Chatter-boxes and Chinese-lanterns. I wonder if you can think out the reason for any of these pretty names?

Now let us talk about the name 'Herb Robert' and I will tell you what I can about the man, called Robert, who gave his name to the plant. There are lots of names for the flower which bring in this word 'Robert,' or 'Robin,' which is only another form of the same name. Some of these are Bobbies, Bob-Robert, Robin, Little-Robin, Red-Robin, Robin-flower, Robin Hood, Robin-in-the-hedge and Robin-redshanks. Now, if you turn to the

chapter on the Red Campion, you will find that many of these names have been given to that flower as well; and I think that, just as children often confuse the two plants, so they have mixed up their names.

But what we should like to know now is: who was the person called Robert whose name has been given to our present plant? Well, I am sorry to say that nobody is at all sure about it, although we may make quite a lot of guesses on the subject. Some people think he was a mischievous little fairy called Robin Goodfellow, who used to appear in people's houses at night and play all kinds of naughty pranks there. Some say he was a robber called Robin Hood. This robber lived in a wood a long time ago, and he and his band of outlaws used to go out and stop the horses and coaches of travellers and rob the passengers of their money and jewels. Of course, he was a bad man to do this, but he thought he was not doing anything wrong because he gave away a great part of the stolen money to the poor.

Then, it is said that the name really came from a certain Saint Rupert, who lived many hundreds of years ago. Others believe that it came from Saint Robert, who was the famous abbot of a monastery, and who is remembered on the 24th of April every year. People who give this reason for the name remind us that the flower comes into bloom about that date.



The Herb Robert.



The Mouse-Ear Hawkweed.

You will now see that there are many reasons for us to choose from in trying to discover why the name of Herb Robert was given to the plant. Indeed, there are several more, but I cannot stay to tell you about them now, and we shall have to be content to call the flower Herb Robert without being quite sure where the name came from.

The Mouse-Ear Hawkweed.

THERE are a great number of yellow flowers, all looking very much alike, called either Hawkweed, Hawkbit or Hawk's-beard. It will be a long time before you are able to tell these flowers from each other, because they are so similar; so at present we will talk about one particular kind, and, when you know this one, you will be ready to learn about some of the others. The plant shown in the picture is called the Mouse-ear Hawkweed, and we will examine it to see if we can discover what it has to do with the mouse.

First, let us look at the flower-head. It is pale lemon in colour, and the petals are long and narrow and square at the ends, like a strap. Observe closely and you will see that there are little notches in these ends. Although the flower-head looks as if it were only one flower, every petal is really a separate little

flower by itself, so that there are actually scores of flowers all crowded closely together in each flower-head.

The flower-stalk has no leaves on it, and no branches, but it grows straight up from the circle of leaves which lie close to the ground. There is one flower-head at the end of each stalk. The plant is quite a small one, generally about four to eight inches high.

If you pull up the plant you will find that it sends out a number of runners, like the Creeping Buttercup, and this is the best way to tell it from the other plants of the family.

So far we have not found the mouse which we started out to find, but now let us examine the leaves. They are rather narrow and round, and soft to touch—something like a mouse's ear. If you glance at the surface of the leaves you will find that there are just the same long hairs there as those you would discover if you could peep inside the ear of a mouse. So now you understand why the plant got the first part of its name. Underneath, the leaves are grey and hoary, and that is another sign of this particular plant.

After the flower withers, a downy ball, rather a soiled white in colour, appears in its place. Pull it to pieces and you will find that it is made up of a number of little parachutes, each bearing a black seed. When the wind blows, the little parachutes go sailing away over the fields and sink to the ground in different places,

where each seed in time may grow into another plant. The Mouse-ear Hawkweed is generally in flower from May to July.

I have told you the reason for the name Mouse-ear, and now I expect you would like to know why the plant is also called a Hawkweed. Well, there is a very fierce bird called a hawk, and it has such sharp eyes that it can see things just as clearly from a great height as you could if you looked at them close to. Long ago the story was told that this keen-eyed bird, in order to strengthen its sight, would seek out a particular flower and tear it open with its beak so as to get out the juice or sap within. Then it would sprinkle its eyes with the juice, and that helped to make them clear and strong. Also it would treat the eyes of its little ones in the same way, so as to ensure that their sight should be keen. We do not know which was the actual flower which the hawk was supposed to use, but people thought it was one of these yellow flowers which are now called after the bird, and that is how the name came to be given to the Mouse-ear Hawkweed.

The Ground Ivy.

THE Ground Ivy is not a true Ivy at all, and it was not a good name to give it, for it does not look in the least like the plant which twines

itself around the trees and covers the ground so closely. The only reason for the name that I can think of is that the Ground Ivy is a weak plant which trails along the ground, in the manner of the true Ivy, before it lifts its stem above the surrounding growths. Many names have been given to the plant on account of this habit of creeping over the ground, and some of them are rather funny ones: Blue-runner, Run-away-Jack, Gill-go-by-the-ground, Jenny-run-in-the-ground, Lizzy-run-the-hedge, Robin-run-up-dyke, and so on.

We shall find this plant hanging out its clusters of bluish-purple flowers about the hedges and waste ground throughout the late spring and early summer. The flowers are grouped together, generally in threes or fours, and they grow out from the places where the upper leaf stalks spring from the square stem. They are pretty little things to look at, and they are shaped like a tube with two lips. The upper lip is divided into two parts and the lower one into three. In one county the children sometimes call these flowers Lion's-mouth, just as they do those of the Yellow Toad-flax, though they are not nearly so much like the mouth of the King of Beasts as the flowers of the Toad-flax are.

The leaves grow in pairs. They are broad and round and rather rough, and their edges are prettily scalloped. In fact, they are very

much like the shape of your pussy's foot, and many people call the plant Cat's-foot for that reason. The backs of the leaves are beautifully marked with a purple network of veins.

One of the oldest names of the Ground Ivy is Ale-hoof, and I expect you will think it a very curious one. You certainly would not imagine that this little plant had anything to do with the ale or beer which men drink. Well, it has not now, but, long ago, people made use of the leaves in connection with the brewing of ale. That may not have been the reason for the name Ale-hoof when it was first given to the plant, but after a time everyone came to think it was, and they used the plant in their beer accordingly.

Some children give the plant the rather dreadful name of Devil's-candlesticks, though I cannot think why, unless they imagine that the green leaf-like tube, with its five teeth, which holds the flower is like a candlestick. Then, other children call the plant Deceivers, but here again I cannot tell you why, although I should very much like to know.

The Cudweed.

IN this chapter I am going to tell you some stories about a strange and interesting plant. But, first, let us go out on to the dry and sandy

heaths or cliffs, where this plant grows throughout the early summer, and see what it is like. It is not an easy plant to find, although it grows commonly in the dry soil which it prefers for its home; for it is only some six or eight inches in height, and its colours are not such as to catch your eye.

The flower about which I am talking is so often called the Cudweed that I have given it that name at the head of this chapter. It does not, however, really belong to the family of plants which are properly called Cudweeds, but it is a member of another family, called *Filago*, which is a near relation to it. These plants are very much alike in many ways, and, as the flower which I am going to tell you about is the commonest of its family, and the name *Filago* is a difficult foreign one, I will call it the Common Cudweed.

The stem of the Common Cudweed is clothed with narrow, pointed, stalkless leaves of a strange pale grey colour. Both stem and leaves are clothed with a cottony down, and this led people, a long time ago, to call the Cudweeds by the names of Cotton-weed, Down-weed and Hoar-wort.

The Common Cudweed was known in some parts as the Chafe-weed, and this name was probably thought of by someone who noticed what soft downy plants the Cudweeds were. It was believed that the plants would help to

soothe people's skin if it became chafed with riding or walking; they may also have served to prevent heavy loads from galling the backs of horses and other beasts of burden; and so the name Chafe-weed was made up.

Many soft branches grow from the stem of the Common Cudweed, and, at the end of each of these, and also at the top of the stem, you will see some of the strangest flowers that grow in the countryside. The flower-heads are just like greenish balls with tiny yellowish spikes standing out all around them, and they are quite different in appearance from any other kind of wild-flower. Perhaps it is from the shape and colour of these flower-heads that many children call the Common Cudweed Old-owl and Owl's-crown.

But the strangest thing of all about this plant is the way in which the new branches grow out from underneath the old flower-heads and rise up above them with a new clothing of leaves and young flowers. And now I can tell you some of the best known names of the Common Cudweed, and you will think that they are very strange ones. These names are the Impious-herb and Son-before-the-father. Why should this plant be called by the bad name of the Impious-herb, which means 'the Wicked-herb'? Well, some people used to think it was because there was something so unpleasant about the plant that no animal would touch it. But the true reason is that, as I have told you, the older flowers are over-

topped by the younger ones; for these younger flowers raise themselves above the flowers which appeared on the plant first, like little children seeking to outgrow or overtop their parents. I am sure you will agree with me that only wicked children would do such a thing as this, and that you will understand why this plant is called the Impious-herb or the Wicked-herb.

But what does the name Cudweed mean? We shall begin to understand it if we think of the cows in the fields. You have seen them lying out there, resting, while all the time they chew a mouthful of grass and swallow it, and then keep on bringing it up and chewing it over again. This mouthful of grass is called the 'cud,' and you will generally find the cows chewing their cud when they are resting, or when they are waiting to be taken home to their sheds. There is a very old book, written for farmers, which says that, long ago, the farmers used to take a handful of the Common Cudweed and put it into the mouths of any of their cattle which had lost their cud. This old book also said that, if a sheep were unwell, the farmer should take away part of the cud of another sheep, mix it with the Common Cudweed and give it to the sick sheep, and it would make it well again. So you will see that the plant was called Cudweed because it was given to animals with their cud as a medicine, just as your mother gives you a pill to swallow with jam.



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The Fumitory.

The Fumitory.

THERE are two chief kinds of Fumitory, the Common Fumitory and the Ramping Fumitory, but they are so much alike in nearly every way that we need not separate them in our talk. I will only mention that the Ramping Fumitory is a long, straggling plant, which climbs upwards by twining its leaf-stalks round the other plants amongst which it grows, and that the Common Fumitory generally grows in a rather more upright manner. You will be able to find the flowers throughout the summer months.

The name Fumitory is a very curious one, and it has a strange history, which I think you will like to hear. It is a foreign word, so first I will tell you what it means and then I will repeat the stories that are told to explain how the plant came to have that name. Fumitory, then, means ‘the smoke of the earth,’ or ‘Earth-smoke,’ and in some places the people call the flower by the last name. Now let us take the plant and, as we examine it, I will tell you some tales about it. Look at the leaves: they are feathery and delicate, and pale- or grey-green in colour. The flowers grow out in rows from the sides of their stalks—pretty, delicate blossoms of rose or cream colour, with little purple tips. Do these flowers suggest anything particular to you? Do they not look like rows of tiny wax-dolls? The purple tip

of each flower is the head of the doll, and the lower part looks just like the pinky-white body sitting down. Many children have noticed this likeness, and so they call the plant Wax-dolls.

But you are waiting to hear the stories about the name Fumitory. Well, one story is that the plant is produced by a kind of miracle. You know that, if you want to grow a flower, you have to put a seed or a cutting into the ground, from which the plant will spring. It was said that the Fumitory was such a wonderful plant that it grew up by itself, without any seed! It appeared out of the mists that rise from the ground, and it grew in great quantities, like smoke. The mists drifted and whirled about the earth, and, when they had mixed with the air and felt the warmth of the sun, they gradually turned into this plant.

A lot of people used to think this was a true tale, but others said that the plant did not grow in that way at all, and that the name Fumitory, or Earth-smoke, was given because if you put the juice of it into your eyes, it would make them water, just as smoke does. Whether it will do this or not I do not know, for I have not tried it, and I don't suppose that you would like to either. Then others say that the plant has a smoky smell when you bruise it; but this you can test for yourself.

Once upon a time the Fumitory was used by the magicians (or wise men who worked

magic) to drive away evil spirits. They gathered great quantities of the plant and set fire to it, and murmured strange words over the blaze, and they said that the wicked spirits would fly away as soon as they smelt the smoke. That is another reason which some people give for the name of the flower.

There is still another notion which may help us to discover the meaning of the name, and I think it may well be the true one. Look at the plant from a distance the next time you see it growing in delicate grey-green clouds at the foot of the hedges. Glance, also, at the creamy flowers when they begin to wither; they change in colour to a chalky-grey. Do you not think it all looks rather like a little cloud of smoke drifting along the ground—it is so bluey-grey and delicate? I am sure I do, and so I think that this name of Earth-smoke is quite a suitable one for the plant.

The Goose-Grass or Cleavers.

THIS curious little plant is known equally well as Goose-grass and as Cleavers, and there is a very good reason for both the names. Of course, it is not a grass at all, but long ago people used to call many flowers grasses when they were not really such. Still, the leaves of this plant are rather like grass, for they are

long and narrow and pointed. They grow in little circles around the stems, like the spokes of a wheel, just as the leaves of the Lady's Bedstraw do.

Geese are very fond of the plant, and they gobble it up greedily. That is why it is called Goose-grass; and the same name is given to some other flowers which geese like to eat. This plant is also called Gosling-grass, Gosling-scrotch and Gosling-weed. A gosling is a young goose. In some parts the people call the plant Goose-bill and Goose-tongue, because the prickly leaves are like the rough-edged bill of a goose.

I expect you have noticed how rough and prickly these leaves are. Indeed, every part of the plant, the long, square, straggling stems that clamber up the hedgerows where the plant chiefly grows, the circles of leaves, and the little green seed-balls which appear when the tiny greenish-white flowers have fallen, are all covered with hooked bristles. Many a time, I expect, you have played tricks on your playmates by throwing a piece of the stem against their clothes, where it clings closely by means of these hooked bristles. The Goose-grass is really quite a clever plant to produce its bristles in this way, for, when people or animals brush up against it, the seed-balls stick to their clothes or their skin and are carried away into every part of the country. Then, when they are

brushed off again, the seed-balls fall to the ground and new plants spring up everywhere. So, too, the hooks on the stems help the plant to clamber up the hedges by fastening on to the other plants growing there, and in this way they are able to lift themselves up to the light and open their little flowers to the warmth of the sun. Their straggling stems are too weak to stand up by themselves, so the plant supports itself by means of its clinging bristles. Because of this climbing habit many people, in England and Scotland, have likened the plant to children running and climbing in the hedges, and they have called it by the names of Jack-at-the-hedge, Lizzy-run-the-hedge, Robin-run-the-hedge, and Robin-run-up-dyke.

What a lot of names the Goose-grass owes to its clinging habit! All over the country you will hear children calling it by such names as Cleavers, Clivers, Catch-rogue, Catch-weed, Grip-grass, Stick-a-back, Sticky-back, Stickle-back, Gentlemen's-tormentors, and Cling-rascal. Then, it is also named Love-man and Sweethearts, because it clings to you as if it loved you. Sometimes children draw a piece of the bristly stem across their tongues to make them bleed, and they call the plant Tongue-bleed and Scratch-weed; while in parts of Scotland they name it Bleedy-tongue and Bluid-tongue for the same reason. I do not think this is a nice thing to do, and I expect it is only naughty

little boys that do it. Certainly it would hurt you if you scratched your tongue and made it bleed in this way.

The little green seed-balls are called burs, and many people name the plant Bur-head and Bur-weed, while in one part of Scotland they call it Hedge-bur. The plant is also known as Clitch-buttons, Bobby-buttons, and Soldiers'-buttons, because these burs are like buttons fastened on to your clothes.

Another common name is Hariff, a word which is spelt in many other ways. Now this is rather a puzzling name. It has been said that it may have meant 'hedge-robber.' It does not seem kind to call this poor little plant a hedge-robber just because it runs wild over the hedges and fastens itself on to the other plants there like a robber; and very likely the name does not mean a robber at all. Perhaps it simply means 'the rough hedge-plant,' because its bristles make it so very rough to touch.

You will find the Goose-grass or Cleavers in flower from about June to August.

The Shepherd's Purse.

SUPPOSE you had lived several hundreds of years ago and had rambled out on to the grassy hills where the sheep were grazing. You would have seen the shepherd tending his flocks, and later

perhaps you would have watched him sit down on the grass and prepare to eat his dinner. He would have brought his food from the little cottage in the valley where he lived, and carried it in a leather pouch or satchel. You would also, in those days, have seen people walking through the streets of the towns carrying small three-cornered wallets at their sides to hold their money, and you would have noticed the boys going to school with their books in a satchel just as they do to-day.

Now I think that if you look at the plant called the Shepherd's Purse, you will quickly understand why the name was given to it; for when the small white flowers have faded, their places are taken by a pretty little heart-shaped pod which is full of seeds. It was because these pods looked so much like the purses or wallets which the shepherds and other folk used to carry that the flower received its name of Shepherd's Purse, besides others such as Shepherd's-scrip, Shepherd's-pouch and Shepherd's-bag, Lady's-purse, and the funny name of Clappedepouch. Some people in Scotland used the name Witches'-pouches, and I expect they thought that the witches took the little purses off the plants to keep their money in—though I never heard of witches having money. Then another old name was Case-weed, because the pods are like a little case, in which to keep money and other things.

Of course, the pods are very small ones.

You could not really carry your pennies in them any more than the witches did. They are really more like little toy purses, and that is why some children call the plant Toy-wort or Toy-plant.

I have told you that these seed-pods are shaped like a heart. Well, some other names have been made up because of this likeness. There is Mother's-heart, and also a very sad name, Pick-your-mother's-heart-out; and, in case you do not know the trick that boys play with the plant, I will tell you about it. The boys who know the trick give one of the plants to a playmate who does not know it, and they tell him to pick off one of the seed-pods. When he does so the pod cracks, and they at once exclaim, 'You've broken your mother's heart!' Is not that a naughty game to play?

There is still another object which these seed-pods resemble, and you may think of it if you have ever had a tooth out. Do you not think that the pods look something like a double tooth as you see it after it has been drawn, the pointed part at one end representing the root? Perhaps that is why some people long ago called the plant Tooth-wort.

When the seed-pods are ripe and dry you can pull off the two outer parts and peep at the inside, which consists of a whitish division in the middle, with the seeds sticking to both sides of it. Rub the seeds off and then tell me



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what the whitish division reminds you of. I think it reminds me of an oat, for it is something like an oat in colour, and quite like one in shape, and the two outer parts of the pod make me think of the husks. That, I expect, is why the plant has received the name of Bad Man's-oatmeal.

The Shepherd's Purse is a slender plant which grows everywhere, and you may find it at almost any time of the year. Sometimes it is only a few inches high, sometimes it grows up to as much as two feet. The lower leaves are divided into parts called lobes. The upper ones are of quite a different shape; the edges are cut up into little teeth and, where the leaf is joined to the stalk, it has two sharp points like the barbs of an arrow. The plant has a sharp taste that makes some people call it Pepper-and-salt.

Farmers do not like the Shepherd's Purse at all, because it grows all over their fields amongst the crops; and, as it makes the ground poorer and costs them a lot of labour in weeding it out, they call it Pick-pocket and Pick-purse, as if it actually took money out of their pockets.

At one time it was thought that, if you cut yourself, or your nose bled, you had only to drink the juice of the plant and it would stop the bleeding; so people came to call it Blood-wort. But I do not think I should like to rely on it to do this if I cut myself badly, or my nose would not stop bleeding.

The Foxglove.

WE are going to talk now about one of the handsomest of all our beautiful wild-flowers. And, indeed, it does look a splendid plant as it rears its noble stem high up above the lesser growths of the fields and hedge-rows, as though it were aware of its dignity and beauty. So kingly it is that, in one part of Scotland, the people called it the King's-elwand, because the stem is fit to serve as a king's wand. It is not only the bell-like, purple flower that is attractive; the downy leaves are lovely too. Do you see how deeply and beautifully they are decorated by the lace-work of veins? If you look underneath, you will discover that these veins often acquire a beautiful pink hue. In June and July the country-side is filled with the spires of this showy flower, nodding gracefully in the wind, and seeming to drop a dignified curtsey to you as you pass.

But what has this plant to do with the fox—that crafty animal which slinks from its hole at night and breaks into the farmyards to carry off the poor little chickens? No one can answer the question. The name was given centuries ago, but what is the reason for it we cannot now say. Certainly, it seems absurd to suppose that a fox could have any need of gloves! For Reynard has no hands, and how

could he run any better with gloves on his feet! Perhaps the name has not anything to do with the fox at all. That is what many people declare; and they tell us instead that ‘the Foxglove’ means ‘the Folk’s-glove.’ Now ‘the folk,’ or the ‘little folk,’ is a discreet way of referring to the fairies. Old-fashioned people used to tell you that you had to be very careful how you spoke of the fairies, for they were apt to be rather annoyed if you mentioned them too freely. So our grandfathers and grandmothers fell into the habit of speaking of them quietly as ‘the folk’ or ‘the little folk.’

I cannot tell you for certain whether this name of Foxglove really means the fairies’ glove; but certainly everyone seems to think that the fairies have a lot to do with the flower. I expect you have often closed up the open end of a Foxglove and then made the bell burst with a pop; and perhaps you know that, in some counties, the children, for this reason, use no other name for the flower than Poppies, or Pops, or Poppers. Well, it is said that the fairies live inside the Foxgloves and that the ‘pop’ is the sound of their annoyance at being driven out of their home. It is also said that, when you see a Foxglove bending down, it is a sure sign that the fairies are within the bells.

You can tell how much the fairies have to do with the Foxgloves by the number of ‘fairy’

names which have been given to the plant. The flowers seem to supply all sorts of garments for the little folk's wear; for they are called Fairies'-petticoats, Fairy-caps, Fairy-gloves, and Fairies'-dresses. Then the fairies would appear to be busy sempstresses, for this plant supplies them with thimbles, as the name Fairy-thimbles shows. Also, they are fond of music and need some pretty chime to ring them to their revels in the woods at night. The Foxglove serves them splendidly for this, for the flowers look exactly like a peal of bells hanging from the stem; and so it gets the name of Fairy-bells.

But there are some people in Scotland and the north of England who tell us that not only the kind fairies, but the wicked witches as well, use the plant for sewing, and they name the flowers Witches'-thimbles. They employ some more rather dreadful names—Dead-men's-bells and Dead-men's-bellows; but I think it is a shame to give such horrid names to this beautiful flower.

Some of the other names which I have to tell you about are much prettier than these last two. They have to do with the Virgin Mary, or 'Our Lady' as she is often called. People say that the flowers of the Foxglove would make lovely gloves and thimbles for the mother of our Lord, and so they call them Lady's-gloves and Lady's-thimbles.

When you strip the flowers from their stalks

and fit them like gloves upon your fingers, you are doing what has led to quite a number of other names of the plant; for, in different parts of the country, the Foxglove is called Finger-flower, Finger-root, Fairy-fingers, Lady's-fingers, Purple-fingers, Fox-fingers and Dog-fingers.

I should like you to look well at the inside of these flowers to see the many dark purple spots there, surrounded by rings of white. They look like a lovely piece of lacework. These markings also help to make the gaping flower appear like a throat; and you will understand how the plant came to be called by such names as Throat-wort, Dragon's-mouth, Lion's-mouth and Tiger's-mouth. Because the mouth of the flower, with its purple spots, was rather like a throat with little ulcers in it, people used to think that the plant was a good cure for a sore throat; and perhaps that was really how, in olden times, it came by its name of Throat-wort.

The bells of the Foxglove fall off one by one as the summer goes by, starting from the lower part of the stem and mounting gradually upwards. As they disappear you may see a little case left behind, shaped like a peg-top upside down. If you break open the case, you will find that it is crammed full of countless seeds. This is the way that the plant has provided for little plants to take its place in the world; for, next year, if the seeds find a home in suitable

ground, they will themselves grow into plants as tall and stately as their parent.

The Cow Parsnip or Hogweed.

YOU all know what parsnips are like, for you have seen them growing in your garden, and you have eaten the roots as a vegetable. The Cow Parsnip is very much like the garden parsnip to look at, but it is not good to eat. Why is it called Cow Parsnip and Hogweed? Well, cattle are said to be fond of its leaves, so the first name may have been given for that reason. Or, it may be that it was so called to mark it out as a useless brother of the useful garden Parsnip. It is as if you were to say that this wild Cow Parsnip is of no use to men and women and only fit for animals. Many worthless plants are named after animals in this way, as you may read in the chapter on the Dog Violet.

If you were to gather a handful of the leaves of this plant and give them to pigs, those greedy animals would gobble them up rapidly, for they are very fond of them and they make them grow fat. That is why the plant is called Hog-weed and Pig's-bubbles, Pig's-cole and Pig's Parsnip, Pig-weed and Swine-weed.

In many places the plant is called the Eltrot, and, although you would hardly think so, this name

also appears to have something to do with pigs. A young pig is, in some parts, called an elt, and so it is quite likely that this name of Eltrot was given to the Cow Parsnip because pigs are so fond of the plant. The name would then mean ‘the young pig’s root.’

The Cow Parsnip is a great strong plant that covers the hedge-banks and borders of fields with its masses of white flowers, and you will see them at their best in July. The plant sends up a stiff, hairy stem with deep grooves running up it, and it grows sometimes as much as five or six feet high. The leaves are large and rough, and, like the garden Parsnip, they are made up of several pairs of leaflets, with another leaflet at the end of the stalk. The flowers grow in large, flat masses at the ends of a group of stalks which stand out exactly like the ribs of an umbrella,

It is very interesting to watch how the plant puts forth its new leaves and flowers. The first thing you see is a kind of sheath growing out of the stem. At the tip of the sheath a tiny leaf is perched, like a little bird standing on the roof-edge of your house and preparing to fly away. Only the little leaf does not fly away; it goes on growing and growing until it is a great big leaf like its brothers and sisters. As the leaf grows, you will see a little stalk shooting up from the inside of the sheath. This stalk will become longer and longer, and presently

it will blossom out with another ‘umbrella’ of tiny white flowers.

The stems of the Cow Parsnip are hollow, and all sorts of names have been made up about them, especially in Scotland and the north of England. The chief one is Kecks or Kex, and it is given to several plants which have hollow stems like the Cow Parsnip. Then there is the name Clog-weed, which also seems to have meant a plant with a hollow stem. Some children cut the stems and use them to squirt water. In Cornwall they call these squirts ‘skeets,’ and the Cow Parsnip has the name of the Skeet-plant.

There are some funny names for this plant, and no one knows quite what they mean, or whether they mean anything at all. One of these curious names is Limperscrimps; another is Lisamoo; and others are Bilders, Geagles, Cow-mumble, Cakers and Cake-seed. Long ago there was another name—Madnep. It was said that, if a man were mad, you had only to anoint his head with some oil in which the roots and leaves of the Cow Parsnip had been steeped, and he would become quite well again. That, perhaps, is why the plant was called Madnep, although I do not think it would really help to cure anyone if he were actually mad.

There are many more of these names which I could tell you, but they are not used much



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nowadays, and so I will just say a word about the name Parsnip itself, and then we will finish this chapter. The name is a very old one. It is not English, but comes from a foreign word which meant ‘to dig and trench the ground.’ When you wish to grow Parsnips in your garden, you have to dig a deep trench in the ground; so, possibly, people gave the foreign name of the trench to the plant which they grew in it. Or it may be that the name Parsnip comes from another foreign word which was the name of a digging-fork with two prongs. I expect you have noticed that parsnips sometimes divide into two roots, like the prongs of a fork. Now, do you see how these prongs might make people think of the two-pronged fork with which they dug the trench? If you do, you will understand how they could give the same name to the digging-fork and to this plant.

The Wall Pennywort.

THIS quaint little plant is not one that you will find growing on the ground. It prefers to perch on the tops or sides of old walls, and in the crannies of cliffs, as though it wished to raise itself to the level of your eyes, or to look down upon you from a greater height. Often you will wonder how it manages to find enough nourishment to live; for, as a rule, it

grows where there is but scanty soil. The crevices in the cliffs and ruined walls, where it grows so freely, serve to provide it with the little food it needs.

The reason of this I will now tell you. Let us look at the leaves of the plant. They are different from most of the leaves that we shall see. In shape they are round, almost circular, and they have little notches cut in their edges. But do you see how thick and fleshy they are? It is this feature that enables them to live on so little soil, for the leaves store up a big supply of moisture, and this moisture, together with the food which the leaves extract from the air, serves the plant as nourishment. Even during hot, dry weather the Wall Pennywort continues to live quite happily, for the fleshy leaves have been busy storing up enough moisture to sustain it until the next wet spell arrives.

A very common name for this plant is the Kidney-wort, and the reason is that the leaves are rather like a kidney in shape. People used also to say that the plant was helpful in curing pains in the kidneys, but I expect that was only because the shape of the leaves was like a kidney. In olden times they thought that if a plant looked at all like any of the limbs or organs of your body, it ought to be good to cure any pains which you might suffer there.

The leaves of the Wall Pennywort have a hollow in the middle, just above the place where

the stalk joins them, and this hollow gave rise to another name-Hip-wort. Why? Just because there is also a hollow in your hip-bone which people thought of when they saw the leaves of this plant. And, because of the likeness between the hollow in the leaf and that in your hip-bone, they believed that the plant must be a cure for diseases of the hip.

But a stranger name is Corn-leaves. People used to think that the plant was good for corns on the feet, and you may be sure that the reason of this was that the hollow leaves would fit nicely over such growths.

There are other names which have been made up on account of the hollow leaves of the plant, and I think you will agree that they are quite good ones. People thought that the leaves looked something like saucers and dishes, so they called the plant Cups-and-saucers and Penny-plates. I expect they would really make quite good plates or saucers for your dolls' tea-party should you have unexpected visitors and find yourself short.

Then again, many people have thought of pennies when they have looked at the round, thick leaves. That is how the plant came by its name of Pennywort and the further names of Penny-hats, Penny-caps, Penny-cakes, Penny-pies, Penny-flowers, Money-pennies and Penny-leaves. I do not know whether it was on Shrove Tuesday that another of the names of

the plant was first made up, but some children call it Pancakes.

You may, if you wish, fancy the leaves resemble a button. That is what other children have done, and so they have given the plant the name of Bachelor's-buttons. In Scotland the people sometimes use the name of Lovers'-links, because, I suppose, they fancy that the leaves would make a lovers' chain. They also called the plant Jack-in-the-bush and Maid-in-the-Mist.

The leaves of the Wall Pennywort spring mostly from the root. The flowers look like little waxen tubes or bladders as they hang from the spikes, which form the chief part of the plant. These spikes vary from a few inches to a foot in height, and some children call them the Devil's-candlesticks. The flowers range in colour from a greenish-yellow to a deep purple, and much the same may be said about the stalk. You may look for the flowers, in the places I have told you of, from June to August.

The Yellow or Biting, Stonecrop.

WHEN you are among the rocks and cliffs of the seaside, or when you are in any part of the country where old walls and rocks are to be found, you will see, during the months of June and July, the golden clusters of the Yellow, or Biting, Stonecrop gleaming in the sunshine. It

is one of those flowers which, like the House-leek and the Wall Pennywort, love to spring up in the crevices of rocks and old walls. And, like those flowers, it stores up moisture in its fat little leaves to serve it through the dry weather.

It is because the plant chooses these stony places for its home that it is called the Stonecrop, as if we should say that the beautiful golden blossoms, with their five glowing petals set like a star, were the crop produced by the wall, just as the corn and grass are the crops produced by the fields. In the same way the plant is called Rock-crop and Rock-plant, and also Wall-grass, Wall-moss and Wall-wort. And it is such a brilliant crop, and it grows so thickly on the dry, hot walls and cliffs, that people have given it the further names of Gold-chain, Gold-dust, and Golden-moss.

The stems of the Yellow Stonecrop creep out of the little hollows where the roots are growing, and send their branching spikes of thick leaves and golden flowers out over the face of the rock. Because the plant grows out in this creeping manner it is called by some people Creeping-Charlie, Creeping-Jack and Creeping-sailor, while another pretty name is Love-in-a-tangle.

Some people call the flower Bird's-bread, though I have never seen the birds feeding on it. I think that, long ago, there must have been some story which would tell us why this name was given, but no one to-day remembers it, and

so I cannot tell it to you. In the west of England the children call the plant Candles and Candlesticks, and really you might say that the brittle spikes of crowded leaves and bright yellow flowers make you think of candles, or of candle-holders.

The leaves of the Yellow, or Biting, Stonecrop are shaped something like a tiny egg, although they are more pointed than an egg. You might also think that they were rather like a little pig's ears, and indeed that is what some children do think, for they call the plant Pig's-ears. If you wish to find out why the plant is named the Biting Stonecrop, you have only to taste the leaves. You will discover that they are very hot and biting, and that is why the plant has received this name, as well as the names of Wall-pepper, Pepper-crop, Country-pepper, Poor-man's-pepper, Stone-hot and Wall-ginger. I suppose, when they made up these names, the country people thought to themselves, 'There is no need for us who are poor to buy pepper, for here is a plant which is quite hot enough to serve instead, and we can pick it off the wall without paying anything!'

The House-Leek.

THE House-leek is a plant that you must look for on the roofs of old cottages and the tops of old walls. Of course, I do not mean that

you are to climb up on to the roofs of buildings in searching for the plant! You can see it from the ground, and, if you are lucky enough to find one growing on a low wall, you will be able to examine it at ease.

It is well worth looking at carefully, for it is a most curious and handsome plant, and the names which it bears are very interesting. Some of these names were first made up more than two thousand years ago by the people of Greece, and they have been handed down to us by the Romans, the French, and other peoples.

The plant commences its growth with a rosette of thick, fleshy leaves. These leaves are a clear, pale green in colour, and often they are tinted with a beautiful rose-pink at their sharply pointed tips. All around the edges you will see a line of stiff bristles. Later on, the plant sends up a long, thick, fleshy stem, covered with leaves which are narrower than the others but like them in most ways. At the top of the stem the flowers branch out. They are fleshy-pink in colour, and are made up of about twelve pink petals, which are sharply pointed and look like a beautiful star. In the centre of the flower is a bushy collection of red threads, or 'stamens,' with golden knobs at their ends.

You will find the flower in bloom during June and July, and, just as in the case of the Wall Pennywort, which you may read about in another chapter, you will wonder how it can

manage to live in its breezy home, where there is so little soil. The reason is the same in the case of both flowers. The thick, fleshy leaves store up a big supply of moisture, and the plant lives on that, and on the food which the leaves extract from the air throughout the dry weather. It lives so long in this way that people call it Sengreen, Ayegreen and other names, all of which mean 'Ever-green.'

The word House-leek means the leek which grows on houses, and, if you have ever eaten the vegetable called a leek, you will see that this thick-stemmed plant is very much like it. Some people have called the plant House-wort, because it grows on the roofs of their houses.

For a long, long time folks have believed that the House-leek protects their houses from thunder and lightning, and so they have named it Thunder-plant. Now I will tell you about an old heathen god after whom this plant received some of its names. This false god was called Jupiter, and the heathens were taught that it was he who, when he was angry, caused the thunder to rumble and hurled the thunder-bolts from the skies. Probably it was because the House-leek was looked upon as a safeguard against thunder-storms that it came to be named after the heathen god who was supposed to cause them. Of course the House-leek does not really protect your house from lightning, but many people held this foolish belief at one



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time, and in the country villages some of the cottagers retain it to-day.

The other names which I was going to tell you are Jupiter's-beard and Jupiter's-eye. The first name is supposed to have been made up because of the bristly edges of the leaves, which look like the beard growing on a man's chin; though the name may have to do with the bushy collection of stamens which I told you about, for these, too, might well remind you of a beard. The second name was given perhaps because people fancied that the flower looked like an eye, or perhaps, as some say, because of the shape of the upper leaves. Another name is Bullock's-eye, which, I think, must be made up from the staring appearance of the flower.

In the west of England the country people call the House-leek Poor-Jan's-leaf, and they believe that it is good for healing cuts and bruises. 'Poor Jan' has really the same meaning as 'a poor man,' and the name is meant to show that, as the plant grows wild on poor people's cottages, it supplies them with a free medicine, and so saves them the expense of going to a doctor. In one part of Scotland they have the same faith in the healing nature of the plant, and they call it Healing-blade or Healing-leaf. Another Scottish name is the funny one of Hockery-topner, but I have no idea what it means.

The Common Avens or Herb Bennet.

IN the shady hedgerows, and in little woods and copses, you may often find, from June to August, a plant, which grows to a height of one or two feet, with leaves that vary greatly in size, and fragile yellow flowers standing at the ends of long and slender stalks. This is the Common Avens or Herb Bennet. It is called the *Common* Avens because there is another flower, which grows in watery places, called the *Water* Avens. Sometimes the present plant is called the Wood Avens, because it grows in thickets and woods.

I should like to tell you the meaning of the name Avens, but it was given to the plant hundreds of years ago and everybody has forgotten why.

Before I tell you the interesting story of the other name of this flower—Herb Bennet—we will look at the plant and try to remember the appearance of its leaves and flowers. The leaves are of two kinds. Those which grow from the root are on long stalks, and have several leaflets on each stalk. These leaflets are divided into curves called ‘lobes.’ The leaflet which grows at the end of the stalk is much larger than the others. The other kind of

leaves grow from the stems. They look longer and narrower than the root-leaves, and they grow in threes. Both kinds of leaves are cut up at their edges into little teeth.

The flower of the Herb Bennet is made up of five bright yellow petals, with the green sepals showing between them. There is one flower at the end of each stalk and the petals usually lie flat. When the flower withers, you will see an interesting change take place. A little ball, made up of tiny nuts, appears, and a stiff bristle grows out of every nut and carries a hook at the end. These nutlets are the seeds of future plants, and they form a prickly ball. The little hooks catch in your clothes, or stick on to the coats of birds and animals. In this way they get carried all over the country-side and, when they fall off, fresh plants spring up in new homes far away from the parent plant.

The root of the Herb Bennet has been called Ram's-foot-root, because it is supposed to be shaped like the feet of that animal. It has the taste and smell of cloves, and one old name of the plant was Clove-wort.

I expect you are wondering about the meaning of the name Herb Bennet, so I will tell you the story of it. Long ago, people were taught that the world was full of evil spirits who went about seeking to do them harm in various ways. They were terribly afraid of these wicked spirits, because they believed that,

unless they could find something to protect themselves, the spirits would visit them with all kinds of misfortune, such as illnesses and accidents to their houses, their cattle, and their crops. Then the tale was told that a wonderful plant had been sent into the world by God to protect the people from the wicked works of the evil spirits. This plant, it was said, was so powerful that, so long as anyone carried it about with him in his pocket, no wicked beast could harm him, and no such thing could even come near to any garden where it was growing. You had only to keep the sweet smelling root of this plant in your house and the Evil One was powerless to do you any harm. In fact, Satan was so afraid of the plant that he would run away as fast as he could whenever he found a house where the root was kept. For this reason, the plant was thought to be blessed above all others, and it got the name of the Blessed Herb.

Now, there is a foreign language in which they use a long word, *benedictus*, for our English word ‘blessed.’ In time this foreign word became altered to Bennet, which sounds something like it, but is much easier for you and me to say. In this way the wonderful plant which kept away the evil spirits came to be known as the Herb Bennet, or the Blessed Herb, and that is the plant we are now speaking about.

Another tale is told about the meaning of the name Herb Bennet, though it is not really a true one. There was once a holy man called St Benedict. One day, feeling thirsty after his heavy labours for the good of the people, he called for a cup of wine, and one of his monks brought it to him. It happened that this monk was a very wicked man who wished to kill the good Saint; and, when the monk poured out the wine, he put some poison in as well, and then handed the cup to St Benedict.

The Saint took the cup and, not knowing that the wine was poisoned, prepared to drink. But it was his practice to offer up a thanksgiving to God before he ate or drank anything, just as you say grace before meals to-day. When he took the cup of wine from the wicked monk, he blessed it. At once there was a great crash; the cup fell from his hand, and the poisoned wine was spilt on the ground. So the life of the good Saint was saved by a miracle and the wicked monk was punished.

After that, people used to give it the name of St Benedict's Herb or Herb Bennet to plants which were believed to have the power of preserving people from poison or poisonous beasts, and it is said that the flower about which we are now talking was one of them. But all this happened very long ago, and I am not at all sure whether the Common Avens was distinguished in this way or not.

The Eyebright.

WHAT a sweet little plant the Eyebright is, with its tiny stems and baby leaves and flowers! Sometimes, when it peeps up at you from some breezy cliff-pasture, it is no longer than a baby's finger. Sometimes, when it shelters itself in the warm valleys, it grows as high as six inches! Seldom does it get any bigger, and I do not think it wants to, for it looks such a bright and happy little flower that I am sure it is quite contented to be a meek and humble ornament of the fields. Throughout the months of July, August, and September you will find it smiling up at you from the grassy cliffs of the coast and the flowery fields and heaths of the inland country.

The stem is purplish in colour, and little branches often grow out from it. I should like you to look well at the leaves for they are very beautiful. They grow without any stalks and are broad and crisp to the touch, and dark and glossy. They are prettily cut into teeth or 'lobes' at the edges; and the veins, which are engraved deeply on the upper surface, form a pattern on the reverse side, just like the screen which you see across the chancel in church.

The flowers always seem to be smiling, and that is what makes the plant look such a happy little thing. Each flower appears to contain

several petals, but really there is only one petal, though, as you see it, it is divided into five parts. Two of these are at the top of the flower, while the other three spread out like a fan beneath. Each part has its edge further divided into two 'lobes.'

The main colour of the flower is white, but the centre is ornamented with a bright little yellow splash, and it is also spotted and streaked with purple. These yellow and purple stains have had a lot to do with the name of the flower, for, although the plant is such a tiny, humble thing, it was held to be a most marvellous medicine for one of the worst afflictions that people could suffer. I am afraid the plant has not nearly such wonderful powers as everyone used to believe, but there are still many country people who employ it as a medicine.

Now I will tell you about this supposed value of the Eyebright. It was said in olden days that goldfinches, linnets, and other birds used to fly to the plant and make use of it in some way to restore their sight when it was becoming feeble. The great poet Milton says that the Archangel Michael used the Eyebright to clear away the evil mists which had clouded Adam's sight through eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Now the purple and yellow stains on the flower are very much like the colours which appear in your eyes when they, or you, are out of order.

Seeing this, people said that the plant must be a remedy for weak sight, and so they collected its juice and dropped it into their eyes to strengthen them. They also made a wine, with which they mixed the juice, and they said that this helped their sight in the same way.

Then, in time, people began to speak of wonderful cures which the plant had effected. They said that old men, who formerly had been unable to read large print with spectacles, were enabled by this plant to read small print without them. They even said that the flower would restore your sight if you had gone quite blind. Of course it will not do anything of the sort, but some people still use the juice to strengthen their eyes when they are weak. Now you will understand how this little plant came by its name of Eyebright.

The Sun Spurge.

THERE are several flowers, related to one another like brothers and sisters, which are called Spurges, and the particular one which you will see in the picture is called the Sun Spurge. Now, why is it called the Sun Spurge? Well, you all know the Sunflowers that grow in cottage gardens, and I expect you have noticed that, as the sun moves across the sky, the Sunflower turns round so as to keep its face towards it. It was because the



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flower seemed to love the light and warmth of the sun so much that it was named the Sunflower. The Sun Spurge behaved in exactly the same manner, and so it seemed fitting to call it by a similar name. At one time both the Sunflower and the Sun Spurge were called the Turn-sole. ‘Sol’ is the old name by which the sun was sometimes called, so you will see that the name Turn-sole was made up because of this same habit of turning towards the sun.

Now we will look at the plant and see if we can learn why it is called Spurge. It is a plant which you are liable to overlook in your search for wild-flowers, because its blooms are not showy or brightly coloured, like those of such plants as the Poppy and the Foxglove. Those flowers you could never miss, because their brilliant colours catch your eye and attract you towards them; but the Sun Spurge is just a green plant with dull-looking flowers that you might consider rather uninteresting.

None the less, the Sun Spurge is a graceful plant, and one which I am sure you will like when you come to know it better. It looks very sweet and dainty as it raises its pale-green and red-stained stem with the broad crown of golden green leaves at the top. Sometimes the stem sends out a branch or two, and, when you discover the plants growing closely together in a spreading expanse, they make a pleasing sight.

At first you might think that the plant was

all leaves and stems, but this is not so. There are small leaves growing singly up the stem, and, towards the top, there is a circle of five larger ones. They are quite a pretty shape, broad at the ends and tapering towards the stalk. All except the lowest leaves are cut, around a great part of their edges, into a line of the tiniest teeth, which makes them look exactly like a fine saw.

In the centre of the group of five leaves you will see the curious little greenish flowers. Close by, you will also find that five stalks grow out like the ribs of an umbrella. At the end of each of these stalks is another collection of leaves and flowers and stalks, very much like the main group, but smaller, so that you have five little sets of them spreading out all around the main stem in the prettiest manner.

Some of the flowers turn into tiny green balls when they die, and these balls, which contain the seeds of next year's plants, are just like the very smallest apples you ever saw. You would not, however, like to eat them, for they are very bitter. That is why some Scots people call the plant Deil's-apple-trees, or Devil's-apple-trees.

This poor plant has received quite a number of bad names such as this, though it really is not its own fault if people are so foolish as to use it in such a way as to give themselves pain. The reason for the name lies in the milky juice which fills the stem of the plant, and also appears

on the leaves if you bruise them. This juice is very burning, and people have used it to remove warts from their hands, calling the plant Wart-weed for that reason. Unfortunately, though, they often burn their skin when they try to put the juice on the wart, so I should advise you not to follow their example. It was the fiery heat of the juice that made folks connect the plant with Satan and give it such undeserved names as Devil's-apple-trees, Devil's-milk and Devil's-churnstaff. A churnstaff is a rod or staff which dairymaids use to churn milk into butter, and this plant, with its straight stem and spreading top, is not at all unlike a churnstaff, so the last name is quite a good one. If you turn to the chapter on the Yellow Toad-flax you will read that the same name is given to that plant.

Then there are other names which have been given to the Sun Spurge on account of its burning milky sap, and most of them seem to show that people thought ill of the plant when they made them up. There is Cat's-milk and Mad-woman's-milk, Milk-weed and Mouse-milk and Wolf's-milk, many of them rather frightening. Still, even though it does seem a little cruel to brand the plant with such alarming names, they will serve a useful purpose if they deter you from breaking the stems and getting the hot juice on to your skin. In parts of Scotland they have another name for the Sun Spurge, for they call it Little-good and Little-goody.

There are some people who call the plant Saturday's-pepper, because the juice makes all the parts of it so hot and biting to taste.

Now I think you will begin to understand something of what the name Spurge itself means, but I will explain it a little further. Long ago it was discovered that the group of plants to which this one belongs were useful as a medicine to clear certain disorders from the body, or to purge it. At that time there was a word 'spurge' which had the same meaning as 'purge,' and it was the former word which people adopted for the name of these plants with the purging powers.

You will find the Sun Spurge during most of the summer months.

The Ribwort Plantain.

THERE are several plants which belong to the little group of flowers called Plantains, but the one which you will know best is called the Ribwort Plantain, and it is so called because the veins of its leaves are strongly marked, like ribs. The plant has been called Dog's-rib, but I do not think its 'ribs' are especially like those of a dog. Another name by which you will frequently hear the flower spoken of is Lamb's-tongue, and it was given many hundreds of years ago because it was thought that the leaves looked something like a baby lamb's

tongue. I do not myself see any great likeness, but the country people of olden times often named the plants which grew around them from the slightest resemblances. Another kind of Plantain, called the Greater Plantain, has a much broader leaf than the plant I am going to tell you about, so perhaps the name Lamb's-tongue was meant for that.

The Ribwort Plantain is a plant which you will see growing abundantly about the fields and waysides throughout the summer months. It has a number of long, narrow leaves which taper to a point, and the 'ribs' which I have told you about run right along them in almost parallel lines. These leaves spring from the root of the plant, and the flower-stalks arise from amongst them.

The flower-stalks are tough and wiry, as I expect you know from the game which children play with them, and which we are going to talk about presently. They are indeed so tough that they have been used in making baskets, and some children call the plant Baskets.

At the top of the stalks the flowers are collected in a short, thick spike. There are hundreds of the tiniest flowers on each spike. When these are fully open, the spike is surrounded by circles of little 'stamens' with pale yellow tops standing out boldly all around. But when the flowers are dead, the spike becomes dark brown in colour and looks very dingy.

Many children call these spikes Bobbies and Bobbins. Another name they use is Black-Jacks, because the spikes are so dark in colour. Then sometimes they are called Hard-heads, because the spikes are so hard. In the Scilly Isles, which, as you may have learned, lie between England and France, the children call the plant Black-men and Chimney-sweep, because these dark-coloured spikes remind them of negroes and the sweeps who get almost as black as negroes when they sweep our chimneys. In the villages of Cornwall, when the children find a Ribwort Plantain with from eight to twelve spikes of flowers, they call them Hen-and-chickens. I suppose they fancy that they are like a hen with its brood of chickens around her. So, in Devonshire, they sometimes call them Cocks-and-hens.

I expect you have often played the game of Cocks, or Kemps as it is called in Scotland, with the flower-spikes of this plant. If you live in the country you are sure to have done so, for every country child knows it well. You each pluck one of the tough stems, with its hard head, choosing the toughest and wiriest one that you can find, and then you and your playmates take it in turn to slash at each other's stems and try to knock the heads off. The one whose stem remains unbroken at the end of the game is the champion. That is why the plant is called Kemps, for Kemps is

a very old word which meant a warrior, or a champion.

In one part of Devonshire the children call the plant Soldiers, or French-and-English-soldiers, and no doubt this name is a memory of the times long ago when French and English soldiers fought each other in real battles, just as the children fight pretended battles with the stems of the Ribwort Plantain.

There is another name which I believe has to do with warfare, one which sounds rather curious. This name is Carl-Doddie, and it is I think that used in many parts of Scotland. Carl means Charles, and Doddie means George. You may be a little puzzled at first to imagine why the Ribwort Plantain should be called ‘Charles-George,’ but, if you read the name in a slightly different way, ‘Charles-against-George,’ you may begin to guess that the name is connected with English and Scottish history. And so, indeed, it is if ‘Charles’ is ‘Bonnie Prince Charlie,’ the grandson of the last Stuart king of England, and ‘George’ is George the Second, a king of the House of Hanover, whose members reigned after the Stuarts had been banished. You will remember that, while George the Second was king, an attempt was made by Bonnie Prince Charlie to capture the throne from him. It was, perhaps, during this time that the Scots children began to give this name of Carl-Doddie to the fighting game which they played with the flower-

stalks of the Ribwort Plantain. You see, they would divide themselves into two armies,' and one side would fight for Prince Charlie, while the other fought for King George.

Some learned people say that the name has nothing to do with King George and Bonnie Prince Charlie, and that Doddie is simply a Scots word meaning anything with a round head; but I do not think this is altogether a suitable explanation of the name of this particular plant, and it certainly is not so interesting!

The name Cocks, or Fighting-cocks, which some children use, reminds us of a very wicked sport which men used to enjoy a long time ago, when they trained cocks to fight one another. These names, you see, have quite a lot of interesting stories to tell of old times, if only you stop and read about them.

The word Plantain itself comes from a foreign word which meant 'the sole of the foot'; and, if you look at the leaves of the Greater Plantain, which I mentioned before as being another plant belonging to this little group of flowers, you will see that, being broad and flat, they do rather resemble a man's foot. At least that is what the people thought when they first made up the name Plantain, and no doubt they also felt that the name was particularly suitable because the plant was so often found growing along the waysides, where the feet of men are constantly travelling.



The Musk Thistle.



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The Musk Thistle.

THE Thistles are a rather numerous family of flowers, and, as it is difficult at first to tell one from another, we will choose the Musk Thistle for the present chapter and talk only about that one. You have only to smell the flower to understand its name, for it has a fragrant odour of musk.

This Thistle is one of the most handsome plants of its kind. It stands about two feet high and has a fine big purple head of flowers, with a stately collar or ruff of prickly scales round the base. These prickly scales stand out as stiffly as if they were starched, as a collar or ruff should be. The flower-head droops on its stalk, and some people call it the Nodding Thistle, because it seems to nod as the breeze sways it. This flower-head is made up in much the same way as that of the Dandelion and many other flowers; that is to say, that although it looks as if it were one big flower, it is really a collection of hundreds of quite small ones all crowded together. When the flowers are dead they are followed by the thistle-down, which bears the seeds of future plants, as the parachutes of the Dandelion do.

The leaves, like those of most Thistles, are very prickly. They are long and pointed and

cut up into little divisions, or ‘lobes,’ as they are called, with a very sharp thorn at the end of each lobe. There is a cottony down under the leaves, and also on the stem and other parts of the plant. You may find the flower blooming during the greater part of the summer.

Nobody knows what is the meaning of the word ‘Thistle.’ It was given a very long time ago to the various kinds of flowers which we call Thistles—even before England was invaded by the Saxons—and I do not suppose we shall ever find out the reason.

You all know that ‘the Thistle’ is the national flower of Scotland; but I wonder if you know the story which is told to explain why a Thistle was chosen for this purpose? Well, it is said that, one night, during the time when the Danes came sailing over the seas to descend upon the coasts of England and Scotland, there was an army of Scottish soldiers resting after the heavy labours of the day. They had been fighting hard against an army of Danes, and at nightfall the opposing armies had agreed upon a truce, so that each side might bury their dead and also recover from their strenuous exertions.

But the Danes conceived a treacherous plot. They discovered that the Scottish soldiers, relying upon the truce, were fast asleep, and they planned to steal upon them in the darkness,

surround their camp and kill all the sleeping men with their swords and battle-axes.

They crept up to the camp and noiselessly began to surround it, while the tired Scotsmen slept on in ignorance of the terrible death that was stealing upon them. The Danes were just about to rush forward, shouting their loud battle-cries, when, suddenly, one of them stepped with his unprotected foot upon the sharp prickles of some Thistles that were growing just outside the camp. He uttered a loud cry of pain. The sleeping soldiers awoke. Hastily they sprang to their feet, seized their arms, and, as the Danes rushed upon them, they stood ready to defend themselves against the treacherous foe. Then there was a great battle, and the Danes were defeated utterly.

The Scotsmen were so grateful to the humble Thistle for giving them the warning which saved their lives that they adopted the flower as their national emblem. We cannot say for certain which particular kind of Thistle it was which the Dane trod on, and which was chosen as the national flower of Scotland. There are several kinds which are said to be the true Scotch Thistle, and the Musk Thistle is one of them; though really the Thistle which you see in drawings of the emblem of Scotland is not any one particular Thistle at all. Many learned people have tried to identify it definitely, but they have not been successful.

The Devil's-bit Scabious.

WHEN you read this rather alarming name, you will wonder how ever it came to be given to this pretty flower which grows in open fields and pastures from July to October. The reason lies in an old fable which everyone used to believe. Many hundreds of years ago, when there were no real doctors and no medicines such as we have to-day to heal us when we are ill, people used to employ the juices and extracts of various plants to cure them of their sicknesses. Now, the thick root of the Devil's-bit Scabious was thought to be particularly valuable as a medicine, and there was scarcely a disease which it would not drive away. Plague, pestilence, fevers, poisons, the bites of snakes and other venomous beasts—all these, and many other ills, could be overcome with the aid of this wonderful plant.

That is what the people were taught to believe, and they were also taught that Satan believed the same thing. Of course, Satan did not want the people to be cured of their sicknesses. He would much rather that they should continue to suffer from them and always be in pain; and, one day, when he saw how glad the people were to have such a useful plant, he flew into a great passion and, in his

rage, he bit off a big piece of the root. Ever since then—so the story goes—the root has been shorter, and, if you were to dig up one of these plants to-day, you would find that the root still looks exactly as if it had been bitten off.

Some people said that there was another reason why the root was shortened. The story is told that, instead of it being a great blessing to men, it was in fact used by Satan to vex them with all kinds of evils. The mother of Jesus, seeing what ill the Devil worked, was filled with pity for the afflicted people, and so she took his evil powers away from him. Satan became furiously angry at being checked in his wicked work, and, in his rage, he seized the plant and bit off the root. These are the stories which explain why the flower is called the Devil's-bit Scabious. It is also known by other names, such as Forebitten-more and Of-bit, which mean the same thing, for the word 'more' means a root.

There are, however, many prettier names which children have made up for this flower, such as Blue-ball, Blue-kiss, Blue-caps, Blue-bonnets, and Blue-buttons. All these are affectionate names given to this bluish flower because it is such a favourite with the children. Other names are Bachelor's-buttons and Gentlemen's-buttons. Many flowers which resemble a button are so called because, I suppose, it is

suggested as a joke that they might be used by those men (called bachelors) who have no wives to see that the buttons are sewed on their clothes.

The Devil's-bit Scabious is a slender plant, growing from about twelve to eighteen inches high. Its leaves are long and hairy and rough to the touch. Sometimes the upper ones have a few teeth cut in their edges. The stem of the plant is often hairy, and it bears short and slender branches. The flower-heads, each of which is made up of a large number of small, separate flowers, grow at the ends of the stem and branches. They are round on top and flat beneath, rather like a ball cut in half. They are a deep bluish-purple in colour.

There are several other plants called Scabious, and it is not always easy to tell one kind from another. The most common kinds are the Field Scabious and the Sheep's Scabious. You may easily tell the Field Scabious, because the flower-heads are large and flat, and the colour is lilac or heliotrope. The flower-heads of the Sheep's Scabious are much more like those of the Devil's-bit, but the leaves are different, being rather oblong and blunt. Then there is another kind of Scabious, called the Small Scabious, which you can best tell by the longer teeth in its upper leaves.

But you have not yet been told why these plants are called Scabious. Well, there is a

complaint which makes your skin rough and covers it with sores, and this was called scabies. One of the Scabious plants is said to have been used to cure the complaint, and that is how they all received the name of Scabious.

In some parts of Scotland and Ireland they have a pretty name for the Devil's-bit Scabious. They call it Curl-doddy or Curly-doddy, because they say that the flower-head is like the curly head of a little boy. I have told you, in the chapter on the Ribwort Plantain, about the Scots word Doddy, which means anything with a round head. This plant has a round, curly head, and so I think the name fits it quite well.

In Fifeshire, Scotland, the children recite an address to the flower. They stand before it and say:

Curly doddy, do my biddin',
Soop my house, and shool my midden.

In case some of you English children do not know what this means, I will write it out again in another form:

Curly doddy, do my bidding,
Sweep my house, and clear my rubbish-heap.

I am sure I do not know why the children call upon the plant to do this work for them, or in what way it could perform such a task.

I expect there is some old story which would tell us the reason, if only we could recall it.

The Teasel.

THE Teasel is a bold and handsome plant. It does not grow so commonly as many of the plants which I am telling you about, but, when you happen to see one on your walks in the country during July or August, you will find that it has many interesting things to show you about itself. It varies in height from two or three feet to six feet. When it attains its greatest height it is a tall and stately plant, with its thick strong stem standing up very stiff and straight and proud. You will need to be careful how you handle this stem, for it bears a number of sharp prickles on its surface.

The leaves which grow from the stem appear in pairs. They have not any stalks, but their lower ends are joined together around the stem in a most curious manner. You will see how curious these leaves are directly you look at the plant, for, where they clasp the stem, they form a perfect little cup or basin. Often this basin is filled with rain or sparkling dew.

Once upon a time people believed in a heathen goddess called Venus. They were told that this goddess was very, very beautiful, and they fancied that the little basin of dew and rain collected by the leaves of the Teasel would make a pretty fairy bath for her to wash or bathe in. They also believed that



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this water had the wonderful power of removing freckles and warts, so that, if they bathed their faces in it, they would become more beautiful, like the heathen goddess. In this way the plant came to be called Venus'-basin, Venus'-bath and Venus'-cup.

The leaves of the Teasel have a thick rib in the middle; and, if you look at the back of the leaf, you will see that, like the stem of the plant, this rib is very prickly. That is why people in one part of the country call the plant Pricky-back.

The flowers are arranged in a very strange manner. They grow at the top of the plant in a great prickly head which reminds you of a stiff broom. Indeed, many children call the plant Church-brooms, Sweeps'-brushes and Clothes-brushes, and also Barber's-brushes, Brushes-and-combs and Gipsy's-combs. There are countless little flowers crowded between the green prickles on each head, and you can see them opening here and there in little purple patches. A number of long and narrow 'bracts' (which look like leaves) grow up around the flower-heads, and these, too, are set with strong prickles.

The flower-head of the Teasel is a very wonderful thing. There is another kind of Teasel, very much like this one, called the Fuller's Teasel, which is used by cloth-makers to give certain cloths a fluffy surface. This is

done by brushing the cloth with the flower-heads of the Fuller's Teasel, which are full of little hooks. The work of finishing the cloth is called 'teasing,' and the plant was called the Teasel because it did this kind of work better than anything else could do.

The Bird's-Foot Trefoil.

THIS is a very favourite flower with children, and you may find it growing in golden and orange clusters from June or July until August, or perhaps even later. It is a dainty plant, whose branching stems sometimes lie along the ground and sometimes try to stand up, though they are generally a little too weak to do this very well.

The first thing I will tell you about the Bird's-foot Trefoil is that it is not really a trefoil at all. The word 'trefoil' is a foreign one which means 'three-leaf.' If you look at this plant, you will certainly see the pointed dark green leaflets growing at the ends of their stalks in threes, but, on looking again, you will notice that there are two other leaflets at the bottom of the stalks; so that there are five of them altogether. Still, because of the little groups of three leaflets, the plant is known as a Trefoil.

The flowers grow together in clusters of from three to twelve, and, before the buds open, they

look something like bunches of fingers, or perhaps like little shoes. The flower itself is made up of five petals, which are arranged in a very interesting fashion. The topmost petal of all is called the 'standard,' and it encloses the other petals when the flower is in bud. Afterwards, when the flower opens, two of the other petals appear at the sides, and these are called the 'wings.' The wings partly enfold the two lowest petals of all. These lowest petals are joined together, and they are called the 'keel.' So you see that the flower of the Bird's-foot Trefoil is formed of five petals, called the standard, the wings, and the keel. If you pull off the keel you will discover the seed-pod which is beginning to form inside it. The keel comes away exactly as if you were pulling off a shoe.

The seed-pods are almost the most interesting thing about this flower. They are long and hard and shiny, and, when you find four or five of them growing together and standing out in different directions, they look exactly like a bird's claws. That is why the flower is called the Bird's-foot Trefoil. Some people, instead of thinking of the pretty birds when they look at these seed-pods, fancy they look like dead fingers, and they call the plant Dead-man's-fingers. Others call it Cat's-claws, Crow's-toes, Bird's-claws, Lamb's-toes, Devil's-claws and Devil's-fingers.

There are heaps and heaps of names that

children and ‘grown-ups’ have given to this plant from some likeness which they see in the flowers and the buds and the seed-pods. I will tell you some of them, and then you must look at the flowers closely the next time you find them, and see how many of these terms you can explain. There are so many names of this kind that I cannot mention all of them, but here are quite a lot for you to think over. First I will give you those about shoes and stockings: Boots-and-shoes, Cuckoo’s-stockings, Lady’s-boots, Shoes-and-stockings, Lady’s-shoes-and-stockings and Pattens-and-clogs. Now I will tell you the names for the feet that are to go into the shoes or the stockings: Crow’s-foot, Pig’s-foot and Sheep’s-foot. Would it not look funny to see these creatures in boots or stockings! Next I will tell you some more of the names about fingers: Fingers-and-thumbs, Fingers-and-toes, Five-fingers, God-Almighty’s-thumb-and-fingers, King’s-fingers and, last of all, Tom Thumb.

The flowers of the Bird’s-foot Trefoil vary from a warm yellow to a deep rich orange, and you can often see a whole range of these colours in a single cluster of flowers. The two main colours are so rich and glowing that children have found it necessary to make up several names to suit them. Perhaps they were thinking about their breakfasts when they started to make up these names, for some of the favourite

ones are Eggs-and-bacon, Butter-and-eggs and Cheese-cakes.

There are lots more names which I could tell you about—Boxing-gloves, Bunny-rabbits'-ears, and so on; but I think I have given you enough for the present, as it will take you quite a long time to consider those which we have been talking about.

The Wild Pansy or Heartsease.

THE Wild Pansy or Heartsease is a little flower that grows amongst the ripening corn and is everywhere a favourite, as we can tell from the many names it has received. When a plant is called by ever so many different names, each containing its own particular meaning, you may be sure that it has become a favourite in the affections of children and country folk. And if you think about these names and learn what they mean, you will discover how it came about that this little flower attracted so much attention.

The leaves of the Pansy are somewhat oblong in shape, with their edges cut into little curves. Beneath them you will find what look like other leaves of a different shape. These are so deeply cut as to have a distinctly ragged appearance. They end in a large, round kind of 'leaflet.'

The flower is made up of five little petals. I expect that sometimes, when you have looked

at these petals, you have thought that the markings on them were rather like the face of some animal or of a human being. Certainly they seem to have funny little eyes that look up and smile at you as you hold them.

Well, many people have noticed the same thing, and so they have named the flower Cat's-faces, Monkey's-face and Biddy's-eyes. 'Biddy' means a chicken, for that is what some farmers' children call their chickens. Other people call the flower Two-faces-under-the-sun, Face-and-Hood and Three-faces-under-a-hood, because the lower petals look something like faces sheltering under the hood formed by the two top petals.

Then there is another name, a sacred one—Herb-Trinity—because there are often three colours in the one flower, namely, purple, yellow, and cream or white, and these three colours remind us of the Holy Trinity or Three-in-One.

But the best known of all the many names of this flower is Heartsease, though the reason given for it is rather a foolish one. In olden times people used to believe all kinds of silly stories about the wonderful things that could be done with plants, some things that were pleasant and some that were very harmful. One of these strange notions was that, if you carried the Heartsease about with you, it would make your sweetheart love you. Nobody, of course, believes such a story to-day, but the name Heartsease is thought by some folks to have arisen because

of this old tale that it would bring ease and joy to your heart.

Another old name of this kind is Love-in-idleness, and the poet Shakespeare tells a pretty tale about it. He says that Oberon, the king of the fairies, commanded Puck, who was a kind of elf, or goblin, to go and find a certain plant, which he described as ‘a little western flower,’ called Love-in-idleness. The juice of the plant, he said, if it were laid on the eyelids of anyone while asleep, would make that person love the first living creature which it looked at on awakening. That flower is supposed to have been the Heartsease, and Oberon describes how once he saw Cupid shoot the flower, by chance, with an arrow. Cupid was a kind of boy-fairy. He had tiny wings, and flew about with a bow and arrow. If he shot anyone with his arrow, that person would at once ‘fall in love’ with someone else. Oberon says that he saw Cupid shoot an arrow at a lovely maiden-queen; but it missed its mark, and then

It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love’s wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

You see, Cupid meant to make the maiden-queen ‘fall in love,’ but the arrow missed its aim and wasted itself idly on the Heartsease, which, of course, could not really love anyone. That, I suppose, is why the flower was called Love-in-idleness.

The Wild Pansy or Heartsease has some very funny names indeed: Call-me-to-you, Kiss-me-over-the-garden-gate, Jump-up-and-kiss-me, Tickle-my-fancy, Kit-run-the-street, and lots of others, all very curious and fanciful. How pretty these names sound! You would hardly think they were the names of a flower at all, and yet lots of children who live in little country villages use them to-day.

Now we must say a word about the Pansy itself, which we seem to have forgotten amongst the many loving terms, almost ‘nick-names,’ by which the flower is called. ‘Pansy’ is just an English way of saying the French word *pensée*, which means ‘a thought’; and people used to send the flowers to those whom they wished to remember them. For some similar reason the plant was called Herb-constancy and True-love.

The Basil.

IN this chapter I am going to tell you about a dreadful reptile called a Basilisk; for this little plant, gentle and fragile as it looks, is named after it.

Once upon a time, so the story says, there lived a kind of reptile that was brought into the world in a miraculous manner. First of all, it was said that a cock laid an egg. Now, this in itself would be a most marvellous feat,



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for, of course, it is only hens that lay eggs. However, when the egg was laid, a serpent found it. The serpent coiled itself around the egg and stayed there until, in time, it was hatched. And what do you think came out of the egg? It was a thing which grew into a reptile, with a comb on its head like a cock's comb. Or it may have been that it had a crown on its head. It was not at all terrifying from its size, for it was only about a foot long. It had a black and yellow skin and fiery red eyes. Also it possessed eight legs and a long tail.

This creature had the most deadly powers, and all living things ran away from it whenever they saw it coming—men and animals, and even serpents. Its breath was so hot and scorching that it burnt up all the grass and other vegetation wherever it went, besides killing any animals which encountered it. But, most wonderful thing of all, if the reptile even *looked* at a man, the glance was so baleful that it would kill him instantly. This fearful creature was the Basilisk.

Of course, everyone was terrified of it, for there was only one way to destroy it, and that was to steal into its den and place a mirror there. The glance of the Basilisk was so terrifying that, if he caught sight of his own reflection in the mirror, he would immediately fall down dead. But, as you may imagine, it was

a most dangerous proceeding to attempt even to enter the den of the Basilisk, for, as I have said, one glance from his wicked eye would kill you.

One day someone discovered a plant which had a wonderful power. Whether it was the scent of the plant, or its appearance, or what it was, no one could say; but no sooner did the Basilisk see it than he made off as quickly as he could. So anyone who armed himself with this wonderful flower was safe against the evil eye of the creature. Now, the plant which I am going to describe to you was not the actual one which frightened the Basilisk, but I expect it was very much like it, for to this day it is called the Basil, which comes from the word Basilisk.

The Basil, which grows in our hedges and woods from July to September, is a plant of from one to two feet in height, and it has a fragrant odour. The stem is square and rather weak. The leaves, which grow in pairs, are somewhat like an egg in their outline, except that they are pointed and the edges are cut up into tiny teeth. They are soft to the touch and, like the stem, covered with little hairs.

The flowers are purple or reddish-purple. They are made up of a tube opening out into two lips, the upper one notched or divided into two parts and the lower one into three parts. The flowers grow on short stalks, and they

are arranged in crowded rings around the stem of the plant just where the leaves spring. Close to these rings you will find a large number of long, hairy bristles.

The St John's Wort.

THERE are several kinds of flowers called St John's Wort, but, in most of them, the differences are not likely to be very clear to you until you have learned more about the study of flowers. They are all called by the same name of St John's Wort, and they will all look very much alike to you.

The flower shown in the picture is called the Slender St John's Wort, and it is a suitable name, because the plant is so very neat and dainty and slender. It grows from one to two feet high, and the stem is round and smooth. At different points along the stem you can see little branches growing out. These branches are rather wiry; they grow outwards at first and then bend upwards in a straight line.

Each of the branches puts out several little buds, which are tipped with a beautiful orange-red colour, as if they had all been dipped in one of the paints out of your paint-box. When the flower opens, you can see that it has five petals of a lovely deep yellow. The heart of the flower is filled by a large number of threads,

or ‘stamens,’ with deep orange-coloured tips, growing together like a little bush.

The leaves of the Slender St John’s Wort have no stalks, but grow in pairs around the stem and branches as if they were embracing them. They have rather an unusual shape, as they do not grow to a point, but are rounded off quite bluntly. If you hold one of them up to the light, you will be able to see a lot of little whitish dots in them, as though they had been pricked with a needle. Several kinds of St John’s Wort are marked with these dots, and they have been given the name of Thousand-holes.

You have all heard about St John the Baptist, and now I expect you would like to know why these plants are called St John’s Worts. Suppose we went out together into the woods, and over the hills, where these flowers grow. It would be of no use for us to look for them before the latter part of June, because that is when they first begin to open their golden petals. Now, perhaps you know that the 24th of June is called St John’s Day. It is because these flowers begin to appear about that date that they are called after St John. I have told you in another chapter how people often named plants after the Virgin Mary because they liked to think of her when they looked at the flowers which make the earth so lovely. In the same way they called other flowers after some of the

saints, and they named those which we are speaking of in memory of St John the Baptist.

You would open your eyes with surprise if I told you of all the marvellous things that people used to be taught in years gone by about flowers. They were told that they had all sorts of magic powers. They cured almost every kind of sickness; they served as charms to bring sweethearts together; they caused the sheep and cows to fall ill; they brought good luck and bad luck; and, indeed, they were always working miracles, sometimes for the good of men and women, but at other times for their harm.

One kind of St John's Wort (or probably many kinds) was looked upon with the greatest awe, for everyone believed that it had power over witches and devils and all manner of evil spirits. They used it to cure those who had gone mad, and in Scotland they carried it about with them as a protection against witches. Nearly everyone hung up the plant in their houses, because they looked to it to protect them against thunder-storms. On St John's Day it was the custom to light bonfires in all the towns and villages, and the people gathered from every part and threw the plant into the flames. For these reasons the plant was called by a strange foreign name which meant Devils'-flight. You see the people felt that no powers of evil could harm them so long as they had

the plant close by, for, as soon as the wicked spirits saw or smelt it, they would turn and flee as fast as they could! Perhaps it was for a similar reason that some of the St John's Worts were called the Grace-of-God, as if people were grateful to God for his grace in giving them this protection from evil powers.

The Centaury.

SUPPOSE are that one day, you were wandering over the fields, and through the woods, and quite suddenly you saw coming towards you a strange creature with the body and legs of a horse and the head and trunk of a man! You would, I am sure, be greatly astonished, and would think it was an animal out of some old fable or fairy tale. And, indeed, you would be right, for, once upon a time, someone made up a tale about a race of such creatures, and it was told over and over again until everyone believed that they really lived on the earth.

Now, these supposed men-horses were called centaurs, and one of them was named Chiron. This Chiron was famous for his knowledge of medicine. In fact, if he had lived in these days we should have called him a doctor. At that time most of the medicines which people used were taken from plants, and so Chiron used to go about the country examining the

wild-flowers and trying to discover new medicines to heal the various sicknesses from which people suffered. Two of the plants which he studied were those which afterwards came to be called Centauries, of which the plant I am telling you about is one; and he was the first to use them as a medicine.

Perhaps you have heard of Hercules, who was the strongest man that ever lived. One day the centaur Chiron was talking to Hercules, who was showing him his armour and weapons of war. While they were talking, Chiron accidentally dropped one of Hercules's heavy arrows on to his foot, which it pierced deeply. The wound was a very bad one, but, fortunately, Chiron had already discovered that the Centaury plants had the most wonderful powers of healing wounds. So he gathered some of the plants, and with them he succeeded in curing the wound in his foot. For that reason the plants came to be called Centauries—that is, the plants whose healing powers were dis- covered by a *Centaur*.

Some people said that the leaves of the Centaury were good for curing fevers, and they named the plant Feverfew and Fever-wort; but no one nowadays ever uses the plant for that purpose, or calls it by those names. These leaves are very bitter, and, long ago, the plant was called Gall-of-the-earth and Bitter-herb because they were so unpleasant to the taste.

The Centaury is a plant that springs up in many different situations, and varies in shape according to where it grows. On the windy cliffs of the seaside it is often only a few inches high, and it seems to huddle its leaves closely together as if to protect itself from the gales. But in more sheltered places it sends up its stiff, square stem to a height of a foot or more. The leaves are dark and shiny, and broad and pointed, and they show their three chief veins in hard lines on the upper surface. They are without stalks, and they spread around the bottom of the plant and also grow in pairs all up the smooth stem.

The flowers, which are divided into five parts like petals, are of a most beautiful rose colour, with bright yellow ‘anthers,’ as they are called, in the centre. Some people name them Blush-worts from their lovely rosy colour. They grow in flat clusters at the ends of several branches which fork out from the top of the stem. These lovely flowers close up and go to sleep quite early in the afternoon, and they do not seem to like damp or cloudy weather at all, for no sooner does the sun hide itself, than they fold up their bright petals and wait until the clouds go by. You may look for the flowers from late June until August or September.



The Yellow Loosestrife.

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The Great Mullein.

The Lady's Bedstraw.

HERE is a pretty little plant with a pretty name. When it is in flower, during July and August, it spreads like a yellow fringe along the borders of dry fields and hedge-banks. If we pick one of the plants we shall find that it is most dainty and delicate in every way. All along the upright stem the fine, thread-like leaves grow out in little rays like the spokes of a wheel which has been painted with dark-green glossy paint. Just by these circles of leaves you will see delicate baby branches beginning to grow out from the stem. In time they will each bear a feathery plume of greenish-yellow flowers, very numerous and tiny, and soft to touch. When all the feathery branches, with their yellow blooms, have grown to their full size, the whole plant looks like one big plume swaying lightly in the wind. There are so many of the little flowers crowded together that in some parts of Scotland they call them A-hundred-fold.

Now I will tell you the story of the name Lady's Bedstraw. But first you should notice that the name Bedstraw is made up of two words, 'Bed' and 'straw.' I wonder whether you have ever seen, in country cottages or poor people's homes, the beds stuffed with straw (or paliasses, as they are called) which some folk still sleep on? They are very lumpy and un-

comfortable, and not nearly so pleasant to lie on as our feather beds and hair mattresses. But long ago nearly everyone slept on straw, or herbs, if they made up a bed at all. At first they did not even stuff the straw into paliasses, but simply strewed it over the bed and covered it with a sheet.

You have seen that the Lady's Bedstraw is beautifully soft and fluffy. Well, when the people looked at it, they used to say that it would do, even better than straw, to make up their beds. I do not know that they really did use the plants for this purpose, because they would have had to go such a long way to gather enough for covering a bed; but they fancied that, if they could find sufficient of the plants, they would be able to make up a very cosy couch for themselves. It was because of this that the plant came to be called Bedstraw and also Bed-flower.

But there is another part to this story, a part about our Lord. You will remember that Jesus was born in a common stable, and that His mother, the Virgin Mary, laid Him in the straw in a manger. Well, the story is told that this straw was not the ordinary coarse, hard straw which we see, but was an armful of the flowers about which we are talking. For this reason people called the plant the Lady's Bedstraw, or Our Lady's Bedstraw, for the Virgin Mary is often spoken of as 'Our Lady.'

So, when next you see this delicate little plant growing along the borders of the fields, you will think of our Lord's cradle, which was said to have been filled with it.

There is another name which people have given to the plant, and I think you will say it is quite a pretty one. That name is Maiden-hair, and it was given because the plumes of flowers are fine and soft like a young girl's hair.

Now I will tell you of a way in which this plant was once of great use to farmers and their wives. They employed it in the making of cheese. When a farmer's wife is going to make some cheese, the first thing she has to do is to get some milk and 'curdle' it—that is to say, turn it sour. Cheese is made from sour milk, although, of course, you do not taste the sourness once it is made. In order to curdle the milk, the farmer's wife would sometimes put into it a liquid called 'rennet,' but often she would go out and pluck a sprig of the Lady's Bedstraw. Then she would put the sprig into the milk, and, soon after, the milk would curdle and she could make her cheese. The country people said that the plant gave the cheese a pleasant flavour, and they named it Cheese-rennet and Curd-wort. In Scotland they sometimes call rennet by the name of Keeslip, and they give the same name to this plant.

The Scarlet Poppy.

THE Scarlet Poppy is such a well-known plant that I need not help you to look for it in the cornfields and by the wayside, where it grows. I will, however, describe its flowers and leaves in a few words, so that you will know, perhaps better than you do now, some of their features, and also understand the many country names by which the herb is known.

I cannot tell you for certain what the name Poppy means, for it was given such a long time ago that everyone has forgotten. Some people think it is another way of writing pap, because they say that the juice of it was given to babies in their food to make them go to sleep; but I do not think this is the true reason. More probably it is copied from some foreign word of which the meaning is forgotten. We will not, however, trouble ourselves about this, for there are lots of country names which we can talk about instead.

The leaves of the Scarlet Poppy are long and narrow and jagged, and the stalks are covered with bristles. Suppose we pluck one of the green flower-buds. We see that outside are two little sheaths, and, if we open these, we find the four red petals of the flower tightly crumpled up within. When the flower opens wide there is a little round bowl, with a flattish

top, in the bottom of it, and if we split this open, we shall discover it to be full of tiny seeds, set in something which looks rather like cheese.

Now, one of the old names of some of the Poppies was Chesbolle, or Cheesebowl, and it may be that the plants came to be called by this name because the little bowl is filled with this soft cheese-like substance. We cannot be at all certain about this, and indeed some very learned people think there is a quite different reason for the name. They say that it means a ball of pebbles, because the pebbles that we pick up on the shore when we are by the sea were at one time called by a name which came to sound like chesil. Thus, they say, the Poppies were called Chesbolles because they contained a bowl of seeds which were like tiny pebbles. It is quite a pretty idea, but, unhappily, it is a mistaken one.

Many a name has been given to the Scarlet Poppy because of the beautiful hue of their petals, which make such a glowing splash of colour in the cornfields. In the north of England and in Scotland they think the flaming red flower is like the colour of a cock's comb, so they call it Cock-rose, Cock's-comb and Cock's-head. They also call it by the curious name of Cocheno, which is a very, very old word meaning scarlet. Then, in other parts, they speak of the flower as the Cup-rose

or the Cusk, because of the shape of the flower, or of the little bowl of seeds. Other people call it Copper-rose and Corn-rose, Red-weed and Red-rag, while some folks think of red-coated soldiers when they look at the flowers and so call them Soldiers, because the petals are like the scarlet tunics which soldiers used to wear. Others are reminded of flames of fire and call the flowers Fire-flouts.

Many children are afraid to pick Poppies because they believe that, if they do, and the petals fall off (which they most likely will), they are more likely to be struck by lightning or hit by a thunder-bolt; so they call the flowers Lightnings and Thunder-ball, Thunder-flower and Thunder-bolts. This is only a foolish belief, and you need not pay any attention to it.

There is another story which some children tell about Poppies. They say that if you pluck one and hold it to your ear, you will have a bad attack of ear-ache. Of course this tale is no truer than the other, but that is what they believe, and they call the Poppies Ear-aches. So, also, they name them Blind-eyes and Blindy-buffs, because they think that if you place them too close to your eyes, you will go blind. I wonder how they came to believe such a silly story? Perhaps it was because their eyes became dazzled when they stared closely at the flower for a long time, because

the brilliant red colour may make your eyes swim, though it certainly will not make them blind!

In Cornwall the country people have another complaint against the plant, for they say that if you handle it, it may cause warts to grow on your hands, and they call it Wart-flower.

You will begin to think that the Poppy is a very unfriendly flower if I tell you of any more aches and pains which it is supposed to cause; but there is one more name that I must explain to you, because there may be some truth in the story of it. The name is Headaches, and it is given to Poppies all over the country, because folks say that the smell of it, or perhaps the dazzling effect of the colour, will give you a bad headache if you are not careful.

Corn-poppies that in crimson dwell,
Called headaches from their sickly smell.

Certainly, the plant has a strong and unpleasant odour, and it may well be that it would make your head ache if you were to smell it too much. Some people even use the name Poison Poppy, perhaps for this same reason.

Farmers do not like to see the poppies growing amongst their corn, because they put them to a lot of trouble in weeding them out. They call them Cancers and Canker-roses, because a cancer is a harmful growth, such, for instance, as you will find on the hips of the Dog Rose.

You will understand now that there are many reasons, some true and some false, why the Poppy is not always admired; but, in spite of this, we shall always love to see it colouring the cornfields with its brilliant scarlet flowers.

I will finish my talk about the flower by telling you that in many parts of the country the people give the name Poppy to several other plants, such as the Foxglove and the Mullein. These flowers are not poppies at all, and it is a mistake to call them by that name, so I am sure you will remember this when you are speaking of them.

The Yellow Loosestrife.

THE Yellow Loosestrife is a handsome plant which makes its home by the banks of rivers and streams and in other damp places. It has a stout stem that grows straight upwards to a height of some two or three feet. The leaves are long and tapering, ending in a point. Their edges are quite plain, being free from all those teeth and notches which you so often find in other leaves. They grow straight from the stem of the plant, without any stalks, and usually they are arranged in twos and threes. If you hold one of them up to the light, you will be delighted by a charming picture, for the leaf is decorated with a beautiful flowing pattern



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of veins which you can see through. This is one of the pretty things that you are likely to miss if you pay only slight attention to flowers, but, if you study them carefully, you will often be rewarded by the discovery of some beautiful feature that you had previously overlooked.

The flowers of the Yellow Loosestrife grow at the top of the plant in bright yellow clusters which are dotted with orange. They are set at the ends of numerous stalks which stand out, rather stiff and straight, all round the main stem. The flowers are rather large, and have a beautiful satiny surface. They are divided into five lobes, like petals, and in the centre of these you will see a similar number of thread-like ‘stamens’ with golden-yellow tops. The calyx of the flower, which is the green, leaf-like growth immediately beneath the petals, is prettily edged with red. In July and August these clusters of golden blooms make a brilliant splash of colour by the river-side, where they often grow in great numbers.

Now that we have looked at the plant I will tell you how it came to receive that very strange name of Loosestrife. There was once a king of Greece, who lived a very long time ago, and he was fond of studying plants to see whether he could discover some new use to which they could be put as a medicine; for in those days, as I have told you in other chapters, most medicines were made from plants. This

king, it is said, was the first to discover that the plant about which we are talking was indeed of great value; and his people, to show their gratitude, named it after him. Now, as the king was a king of Greece, his name was, of course, a Greek name, and it was a hard one for English people to pronounce. It was also a very curious name with a special meaning. In our language the name meant Loose-strife, or End-strife; and I suppose it was conferred on the king because his people hoped that he would put an *end* to their *strife*, and bring them peace in the place of war.

Time went on, and King Loose-strife died, and the people forgot that this plant had been named after him. Then someone claimed to have discovered a new and wonderful power which the plant possessed. He declared that if a farmer's beasts were quarrelsome when they were yoked together to the plough, you had only to give them some of the plant to eat, or even to lay it upon their necks, and it would immediately cool their temper and so *loose*, or end, the *strife* between them. Indeed, it was even said that, with this magical plant, you could soothe wild animals and make them tame and quiet. Of course this is only a fable, but for a long time everyone believed it to be true, and they said that the plant was called Loose-strife because it would put an end to strife between animals.

There is another water-side flower which shares the name of this one, but it is quite a different looking plant. It has a spike of purple flowers, and for that reason is called the *Purple Loosestrife*.

The Great Mullein.

NO wonder this plant is called the *Great Mullein*, for there are few plants which equal its proportions. And it looks all the larger for the places in which it grows. You will find it, during July and August, rearing its tall and stately stem high up in the hedges, or standing out in lonely grandeur on the bare surface of heaths and commons. It is not always such a tall plant, but, when it makes up its mind to grow as big as possible, it often towers to a height of as much as eight feet. In fact, I *have* heard that it has been known to raise itself as high as ten feet (which is more than twice as high as you!), but I have never seen it quite so huge myself.

But it certainly is an enormous plant at times. It has a massive stem like a huge club, with sometimes a branch or two growing from it, and large leaves whose ends run quite a long way up the stem before they grow away from it. These leaves are surely the most curious of all plant-leaves, for they are thick and soft and, like the stem, covered all over with dense

woolly hairs. To handle these leaves is exactly like touching a piece of flannel, so soft and thick they are.

Many a name has been given to the plant because of the softness of these leaves. People liken them to blankets and call the plant Blanket-leaf, Beggar's-blanket and Adam's-blanket. I suppose they fancy that the leaves would make a good warm blanket for beggars, who are too poor to buy them, and that Adam might have used them for the same purpose when he wished to clothe himself. Then, others have made names about the flannel-like texture of the leaves, such as Flannel-flower, Old-Man's-flannel, Adam's-flannel, Aaron's-flannel, Poor-man's-flannel, Flannel-jacket and Our Lord's-flannel. Besides these names the plant has been called Felt-wort, Fluff-weed, Hare's-beard and Wool-blade. Also, some children, seeing how soft the leaves were, have named the plants Bunny's ears and Donkey's-ears. Certainly they are just as nice and soft to feel as the ears of those darling animals,

But we must leave these fascinating leaves for a while and look at the flowers, for these, too, are very attractive. They are massed together, sometimes in hundreds, all round the upper part of the stem, so that the plant looks like a great thick club. Unfortunately, though, they do not all open their yellow petals together, but appear and die off rather quickly, a few

at a time. Still they look very handsome as they crown the plant with their golden petals, and they are worthy of the name of Golden-grain which has been given to them.

The flowers are made up of a single petal divided into five parts so as to look like five separate petals, and inside you will see five thread-like things with orange tops, two of which are hairy. These are the 'stamens,' which help in preparing the seeds to grow up into future plants.

Once upon a time the Mullein served a very useful purpose. That was when people had no other means than lamps and candles and torches for lighting their houses and other buildings, and even those were of a simple kind which we should not care to use to-day. Now, I wonder if you could guess why the Mullein should have received such names as Candle-wick, Torches and Torch-blade, and Hedge-taper and King's-taper? I do not suppose you can, so I will tell you their story,

Long ago, in those old times before gas and electric light had come to brighten our homes, people used to collect the soft downy hairs of the stem and leaves of the Mullein and use them for making the wicks of their lamps or candles. Sometimes they would dip the stem in fat and burn that as a torch at funerals and other ceremonies. That is how the plant came to receive the name of Candle-wick, and perhaps

also those of Torches and Tapers; though some people say that the latter names were given because the plant, as it stands boldly up with its noble spike of yellow, flame-like flowers, looked just like a wonderful lighted torch or taper.

The stout stem of the plant led many folks to liken it to a rod or staff. So they called it Aaron's-rod, Beggar's-stalk, Shepherd's-club, Jacob's-staff, St Peter's-staff and Shepherd's-staff. I expect you have often seen pictures of shepherds and saints and pilgrims walking along supported by their long staves, and the people who gave these names to the Mullein no doubt thought that the massive stems of the plant would serve very well for this purpose.

Now, we have talked quite a lot about this interesting flower, so I will conclude the chapter by saying a word about the meaning of its chief name. 'Mullein' is a word which comes from the French name of the plant, and probably it means 'soft,' and was given because of those same soft leaves which I have been telling you of. There are several kinds of Mullein growing in the country-side: one is called the Moth Mullein, and it has big, handsome flowers which are generally yellow, but sometimes white; another is the White Mullein, with white or creamy flowers. Then there are the Primrose-leaved Mullein, the Dark Mullein, and the Hoary Mullein; but the Great Mullein is the only common one, and is readily recognised.

The Woody Nightshade.

I WONDER if you have ever stopped to think what a strange and rather forbidding name this plant has? We must go out into the hedgerows where it grows and study it well for a while, so that we may then try to discover something about its meaning.

The Woody Nightshade climbs in the hedges with thick, woody stems and branches, which are all covered with soft hairs. The flowers open in June and continue to appear at times even as late as September. The leaves are broad and pointed, and the upper ones have two curious leaflets at their base rather like a pair of ears.

The flowers are strangely coloured, and you should take warning from the hint they seem to give that the plant is a poisonous one. These flowers usually have what looks like five lurid purple petals, spreading outwards or bent back, and there are two green spots at the base of each of these ‘petals’ or lobes. In the centre of the flower is a cone of brilliant yellow ‘anthers,’ as they are called, with a single point standing out at the tip. It is the contrast of these two bold and striking colours, purple and yellow, that makes us feel, as we look at the flowers hanging from the branches, that

we should be unwise to be too free in our acquaintance with the plant.

There are several flowers which bear the name of Nightshade—Woody Nightshade, Black Nightshade, Enchanter's Nightshade and Deadly Nightshade; and you will understand by these names that they may be dangerous things to meddle with. Some of them are highly poisonous and most of them are harmful, so you should be careful not to touch them.

The Woody Nightshade has several other names which speak of its rather risky nature. One of these, a Scots one, is Mad-dog's-berries. You will notice, if you watch the plant throughout the summer, that, after the flowers have gone, a cluster of berries takes their place. These berries are green at first, but later they become a brilliant red. They contain the seeds which, in time, may grow into new plants. Never touch these berries, for, although they would not send you mad, as the name Mad-dog's-berries might lead you to think, they would do you harm.

Other evil names of the Woody Nightshade are Poison-berry and Poison-flower; and in one place it has the curious name of Poisonous-tea-plant, though I never heard of anyone fancying that they could make tea with it! Then, with some people it is the Snake-berry and Snake's- poison-food.

Another name, which is very ancient, and also



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quite common, is Bitter-sweet, and the reason given for it is that, if you were so unwise as to chew the stems, or, as some say, the roots, you would find them bitter at first and afterwards sweet. Other people say that the berries are sweet at first, but afterwards bitter. In one country place the children do sometimes chew the roots, saying that they taste like liquorice, and they have a funny name for the plant—Terrididdle or Terrydivle. I think that this must be their way of saying Tether-devil, which is another of the country names of the Woody Nightshade.

I have told you, in the chapter on the Greater Celandine, how people sometimes used the juice of that plant to cure sore places on their fingers called felons, and that they named the plant Felon-wort for that reason. They made the same use of the berries of the Woody Nightshade, and so they gave the name of Felon-wort to that plant as well.

I cannot tell you exactly what the name 'Nightshade' means. Probably it has something to do with the nature of the berries of some of these related plants; for certain of them would send you into an unhealthy sleep if you ate them, while others would be very poisonous indeed. The sleep that would steal over you is perhaps likened to the shade of night, and so you get the strange name of Nightshade.

The Honeysuckle.

YOU will not need me to point out the Honeysuckle to you, for you could hardly pass it by, as its delightful fragrance attracts you to where it climbs along the hedge-rows. The flowers are so beautiful, with their long tubes and open, trumpet-like mouths, pure white or painted with mingled hues of yellow and pink and red! Some children call them Trumpet-flowers and Bugle-blooms because of their trumpet-like form. How graceful are the five ‘stamens,’ with their bright orange-red tops! And how delicate is that little thread-like growth which springs from the heart of the flower, bearing a tiny green ball at its tip! Those stamens and that green ball are the parts of the flower which help to make the hidden seeds ready to grow into new plants.

The Honeysuckle is one of the earliest plants to spread open its pairs of dark, bluntly pointed leaves to the sunshine. The flowers, although they begin to appear in June, are amongst the latest which you may see in the country-side, for they go on blossoming until the end of September or October. When they die, their place is taken by bunches of deep crimson berries, and these berries contain the seeds of future plants.

How thick and strong are the stems of the

plant as they clamber along the hedges or twine around the trees! No wonder the Honeysuckle is also called the Woodbine, or Wood-bind, for its woody stems bind themselves tightly around every tree and bush that comes in their way.

The Honeysuckle used to be called the Caprifole, which is a very strange foreign word meaning ‘Goat-leaf.’ Now, why should this plant be called after the goat? Perhaps it is because goats like to eat the leaves. Or perhaps because the stems climb so high up the hedge-banks and rocks, as no animal but a goat could do.

At one time the plant was called the Honey-suck, and Honeysuckle is just another form of this name. You have only to suck the sweet honey which lies in the heart of the flower to understand how fitting these names are.

The Scarlet Pimpernel.

WHEN will have seen this bright and happy little flower peeping up at you out of the grass, or hiding in out-of-the-way corners, or nestling down along the roadsides, you may have thought to yourself, ‘Now, why is this sweet little red flower called by such a hard name?’ Many people, much older than you, have asked themselves the same question, but unhappily it is

such a long time since the name was given that we have forgotten what it means. It *may* have something to do with the leaves, which, you will notice, grow in pairs on the stem, for there is a hard word, which you may learn later on, meaning ‘winged,’ or ‘two-winged,’ and this hard word sounds something like ‘Pimpernel.’

But there are lots of other names of the plant which we shall find no difficulty in understanding. One of them is Shepherd’s-weather-glass, and others are Shepherd’s-warning, Shepherd’s-delight, Shepherd’s-sundial, Poor-man’s-weather-glass, Change-of-the-weather and Wink-a-peep. There is one curious habit of this flower which will explain every one of these names to you, and you can observe it for yourself the next time you see a Pimpernel growing in the fields. Directly the sun begins to be hidden by clouds and it is going to rain, the Pimpernel will fold up its little petals and remain tightly closed until the sun shines again. In this way shepherds who were out on the hills looking after their sheep knew when there was to be a change in the weather, and folks used to say that the flower served as a weather-glass to poor men who could not afford to buy one. And it is a very useful weather-glass, too, because it is in bloom for such a long time—from about June until September. Some people used to say that you could tell from the flower what the next day’s weather was going to be like; but I do

not think the Pimpernel would be able to forecast the weather for so long ahead as that.

Here is a pretty little verse which has been written about the flower:

Come, tell me, thou coy little flower,
Converging thy petals again,
Who gave thee the magical power
Of shutting thy cup on the rain?
While many a beautiful bower
Is drenched in nectareous dew,
Sealed up is your scarlet-tinged flower,
And the rain peals in vain upon you.

Other people call the flower Shepherd's-clock and Shepherd's-watch, because they say that it closes up and goes to sleep every day at two o'clock, and thus the shepherd, when he is far away from home, can always tell when it is that hour. But I think he would very often be misled, because the flower does not really close up nearly so early. When you are next in the fields, see how many Pimpernels you can find wide awake after two o'clock! People have even declared that the blooms go to bed at midday, and they have described them as flowers which

boys that mark them shut so soon
Call *John* that goes to bed at *noon*.

But this is even more untrue than the other story.

The Scarlet Pimpernel is a dainty and delicate little plant with many straggling stems. The leaves grow from the stems without stalks.

They are light green in colour, smooth to touch, and shaped rather like an egg, only more pointed. Underneath they are covered with tiny dark dots, as though you had shaken a pepper-castor over them! One name of the plant is Bird's-tongue, and I think this must have been given because it was thought that the leaf was shaped like a bird's tongue.

The flowers have the sweetest expression, and they always seem to be smiling with happiness. Perhaps that is because the sun is always shining when they are open. This is another of the many plants which some children call Bird's-eye, and you can read what the name means in the chapter on the Germander Speedwell and the Lady's Smock.

The flowers grow at the ends of delicate stalks, as fine as a piece of thread, which spring from the stem at the places where the leaves grow. They have five bright scarlet lobes, like petals, with a ring of vivid purple at the centre. Within this purple ring there is an upright cluster of the prettiest 'stamens' of the same colour, with bright yellow tops.

Occasionally you may find a Pimpernel with a blue flower, but not very often. People used to call these blue flowers the Female Pimpernel, and the ordinary scarlet ones the Male Pimpernel.

The little silvery-green balls which you find hanging on the ends of the flower-stalks after

the flowers have fallen contain the seeds of next year's Pimpernels. They are very dainty little vessels, and, if you break one, you will find that it is full of a milky juice or sap.

In olden days, when people used to get most of their medicines from plants, they believed that the Scarlet Pimpernel was possessed of all sorts of wonderful healing powers:

No ear hath heard, no tongue can tell,
The virtues of the Pimpernel.

In Cornwall, to this day, the people often call the flowers Guinea-flowers; not because they look like a golden guinea, but because they believe that an ounce of them is worth a guinea. I suppose they mean a guinea's worth of medicine.

Now I will tell you a story. In one of the tiny little villages of Devonshire they sometimes call the Pimpernel by a strange name, Urith's Blood, and this is the sad little tale which tells you why. Urith was a young maiden who lived in Devonshire many hundreds of years ago when the Christians were being persecuted for their devotion to Jesus Christ. In those days it was not everyone who had been taught about the Lord, and lots of people worshipped wooden images and other strange things. These people, who were called heathens, tried to prevent the missionaries from preaching the new faith, and sometimes they went so far as to kill them.

Urith was a faithful servant of the Lord. One day her enemies surrounded her in a cornfield and called upon her to renounce her faith; but she bravely told them that she would never do so. Then the wicked heathens fell upon her and killed her with a scythe, which is an instrument for cutting corn. From that day the story was told that on the spot where her blood was shed the Pimpernel grew up, scarlet in colour like her blood. And so the maiden, who, by dying for her faith, had become a martyr, was called Saint Urith, and the flower came to be known as Urith's-blood.

The Carline Thistle.

I HAVE told you about one kind of Thistle—the Musk Thistle—because it is an easy one to tell from the numerous flowers which are called Thistles; and, in this chapter, we are going to talk about another Thistle, which is also easy to know, and about which there is a story to relate.

The Carline Thistle has a most unusual flower-head, for it looks just like a warm, golden-brown, plush button, surrounded by glistening, straw-coloured ‘bracts,’ which seem like stiff petals. There are two rings of these ‘bracts,’ and, during damp weather, the inner one closes up over the centre of the flower-head



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as if to form a roof over it and protect the flat circle of little flowers (for there are scores of separate flowers in each head) which make up the ‘button.’

The Carline Thistle grows mostly on dry heaths and banks, and the flowers appear from about July to September. The plant stands about eight inches to a foot in height, and the green and purplish stem, unlike most thistles, is free from nasty prickles, although there are plenty of them on the rather cottony leaves. Several branches grow out from the stem, and a flower-head appears at the end of each branch.

Now I will tell you the story which explains the name Carline Thistle. Once upon a time there was a famous French emperor called Charles the Great, or Carolus Magnus. Perhaps you have heard of him under another name—Charlemagne. This emperor was a great soldier, and he commanded a large army. During one of the wars that he was waging, his army was afflicted by a terrible plague which was killing his soldiers by thousands. The emperor did not know how to stop the plague, and when he asked his physicians if they could find him any medicine that would save his army, they were quite unable to help him.

So the emperor was plunged into despair, and he was very miserable indeed, because he

saw his huge army wasting away in sickness and he was powerless to cure the disease. Then one night, the story says, he fell on his knees and prayed to God to help him in his distress. When he had done this, he went to his couch and slept, and in his sleep he dreamed that an angel came and stood over him with a bow and arrow in his hand. The angel said that God had sent him in answer to his prayer. Then, bidding the emperor watch closely what he did, he fitted the arrow in the bow and shot it to a great distance. ‘Now,’ commanded the angel, ‘go and see where the arrow has fallen. You will find that it has fallen on a certain plant. Take up that plant and it will cure your army of the plague.’

In great joy the emperor ran to where the arrow was sticking up out of the ground, and he found, as the angel had said, that it had pierced a certain plant in its fall. The next day, when he awoke, he remembered his dream and sent his men out far and wide to collect all the plants of the kind which the arrow had struck; and with those plants the plague was stopped.

That plant is said to have been a kind of thistle like the flower we are talking about, and ever afterwards it was called the Carline Thistle, in memory of the great French emperor *Carolus*, or Charlemagne. So you see what an interesting history this strange flower possesses.

The Lesser Knapweed.

THIS is rather a stiff and dull-looking plant. It has, however, a nice, bright purple flower-head, set on a dark brown knob or ball, and it grows very commonly in the fields and by the waysides throughout the summer.

The knob out of which the purple florets (or little flowers, for each petal is really a complete flower) grow is very hard and bristly, and it seems to have taken the fancy of children and ‘grown-ups,’ for they have made up all sorts of names about it. Ball-weed, Hard-head, Iron-head, Hard-iron, Knob-weed and Horse-knobs are some of these names. The word Knapweed itself used to be spelt ‘Knopweed,’ and a ‘knop’ was very much what you would nowadays call a knob. I have told you, in the chapter on the Dog Violet, how the names of animals are often given to plants which have something coarse about them. The name Horse-knobs, which is applied to the Lesser Knapweed, means that the knobs of the flower-heads are looked upon as rather big, or coarse, or rough.

Often this plant is called Bull-weed, Bull-heads, Bully-heads and Bull-thistle; and it may be that these are other ‘animal’ names, given for the same reason; for I do not think that bulls are fond of the plants. At any rate, I have never seen a bull feeding on them! As,

however, there is another name—Bolleweed—it is quite likely that all these names refer to the ball or knob of the flower-head.

Some people call the flowers Loggerheads, Club-weed and Drumstick. There was once an instrument, called a loggerhead, which consisted of a heavy ball of iron at the end of a stick or rod, and I suppose that people gave the Knapweed this name because the knobs standing at the ends of their stalks reminded them of this implement. But there may be another reason, which is rather a funny one. They used to call a man with a large head a loggerhead, and also men who were ‘thick-headed,’ or stupid; so perhaps these knobs of the Knapweed made them think of such a person! Then there is another name—Churl’s-head. A churl was a rough, or stupid, fellow, a sort of peasant, or a clown; and when people gave this name to the Knapweed, they were likening the rough, bristly knob of the flower-head to a churl’s head.

Some of the country names of the Lesser Knapweed are like those of the Teasel. One of these is Shaving-brush, and others are Brushes, Chimney-sweep’s-brush and Chimney-sweep; and I am sure that, when you look at the flower-heads with their tufts of purple petals standing out above the knobs, you will understand how these names came to be given.

The Lesser Knapweed is usually from one

to two feet in height. Its stems, with their numerous branches, are tough and wiry, and often they are covered with a soft down. The edges of the lower leaves are cut up into teeth and lobes, but the higher ones, which are smaller, have few, or often none, of these features. All of them are long and pointed, rather dull green in colour, and rough to the touch. They grow straight from the stems without stalks.

This plant is sometimes called the Black Knapweed, but I think that the *Lesser* Knapweed is a better name, because there is another plant, which is like its big brother, called the *Greater* Knapweed.

The Yellow Toad-Flax.

THE Toad-flax, or the Yellow Toad-flax as it is often called, to distinguish it from another flower named the Ivy-leaved Toad-flax, is a welcome plant in the country-side, because its bright yellow and orange flowers, which begin to decorate the hedgerows in July, continue to cheer us through September and even into October, when most of the flowers of the year have gone.

Why it is called the Toad-flax is by no means certain, but you can easily discover a connection with the toad if you press open the lips of the flower, for then they look very much

like the wide mouth of that reptile. Even if you simply look at the flower from underneath, you will be struck by its suggestion of the mouth of a toad or a frog. I expect you have often pressed open the Snapdragons in your garden in this way; and the Toad-flax is very much like that flower; indeed, it is sometimes called the Wild Snapdragon. It is also known by the names of Lion's-mouth, Bunny-mouth, Monkey-flower and Rabbits or Rabbit-flower. The children in one part of the country call the plant Dragon-bushes, because the flower, when you pinch it, yawns open like the mouth of a great dragon, and the leaves are numerous and bushy.

The leaves of the Toad-flax are smooth, and blue-green in colour, and they are long and narrow and pointed; in fact, very much like grass. They are also similar to the leaves of the plant called Flax, and that is why our plant is called *Toad-flax*, and also Wild Flax and Flax-weed. I have told you, in other chapters, how the names of animals were often given to worthless plants to distinguish them from some similar plants which were useful or especially attractive; and it is possible that this plant was given the name of the toad to show that, although it resembled the useful flax, it had not the same value. One writer has suggested that the plant was given its name because toads sometimes sheltered amongst the branches; but

I think that is a very silly reason, because the plant has very few branches and they would not afford much shelter to a toad.

The flowers are a pure bright yellow in colour, with a deep splash of orange that makes a very pretty combination. The yellow is so much like the colour of nice fresh farm butter, and the orange is so much like the deep hue of the yolk of an egg, that lots of people name the flowers Butter-and-eggs, Chopped-eggs, Eggs-and-bacon and Eggs-and-colllops. Besides these names, they call the plant Bread-and-butter, Bread-and-cheese and Butter-and-sugar. I expect it is when they suck the honey from the flowers that children think of the last name. Then the plant looks so stiff and upright, with its bright spike of pretty yellow flowers on the top, that it is sometimes given the name of Yellow-rod. In the same way it has been called Churnstaff, because it makes you think of the staff which dairymaids used to churn their milk into butter.

The Yellow Toad-flax is quite an important looking plant. It grows from one to two feet high, and, when you see a number of them pushing up through the other plants of the hedge-rows, their stems clothed with the numerous leaves and crowned with the brightly coloured blooms, they make quite a showy and pleasing patch of colour. Certainly the hedges would look dull without them in September.

The Yarrow or Milfoil.

THE Yarrow, or as it is almost as commonly called, the Milfoil, is a plant which you will love because of its beautiful clusters of tiny flowers and its delicate and feathery leaves. Many plants make their sole appeal to us by the beauty of their flowers, but the Yarrow attracts us in another way as well, for its leaves are so beautifully made. If you pluck a leaf and look closely at it, you will see that it is dark in colour and divided up into leaflets that are countless in number and so soft and delicate as to make each leaf like a dark green feather.

I have many things to tell you about these leaves. The first thing is that the plant owes its second name, Milfoil, to them. That name comes from two foreign words meaning ‘thousand-leaf.’ Indeed, some people used to call the plant Thousand-leaf, as well as Hundred-leaved-grass, and the reason is to be found in the countless divisions of each single leaf, as though they were numbered by the hundred or the thousand.

Although the leaves are so soft to touch, they have earned for the plant the surprising names of Devil’s-nettle and Nose-bleed. Perhaps some of you know the reasons for these names, because you have played the ‘games’ which country children practise with the plant. But many of you probably do not know of these



The Yarrow or Milfoil.

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The Clematis or Traveller's Joy.

practices, so I will tell you about them. One of them is to draw a leaf of the Yarrow across your cheek, when you will be surprised to find that it makes your skin tingle as if it had been stung by a nettle. If you try this, you will understand why the plant is called Devil's- nettle.

It was a very long time ago that people first gave the name of Nose-bleed to the plant, and we cannot be at all sure what was the true reason for it. Some say that it was that if you had a bad headache, and you turned one of the leaves round inside your nose, it would make it bleed and so relieve the headache. But others tell us just the opposite, for they say that if your nose is bleeding, the Yarrow will stop it. So really we do not know what to believe! Now, there is a custom amongst country people in different parts which has to do with one of these supposed effects of the Yarrow. A person takes one of the leaves, turns it round inside his nose and all the while thinks of his sweetheart. At the same time he repeats a kind of charm, which is like this:

Green Yarrow, green Yarrow, you bear a white blow
(bloom);
If my love loves me, my nose will bleed now;
If my love don't love me, it won't bleed a drop;
If my love does love me, 'twill bleed every drop.

So you see these village people think that if the leaf makes their nose bleed, their sweet-

hearts truly love them. Is not that a foolish belief?

But, whatever may be the real reason for the old name of Nose-bleed, it is quite true that people thought the Yarrow was useful to stop bleeding; for, in Scotland, they used to call the plant Stanch-grass, because they employed it to stanch, or stop, the bleeding of wounds. Besides this, the plant was called Carpenter-grass, because it was used to close up wounds, especially those which might be caused by the sharp chisels and other tools of the carpenter.

Now we have talked quite a lot about the leaves of the Yarrow, so we will turn to the flowers. You will see that these grow together on a bunch of stalks, with several flower-heads on each stalk. Each of these flower-heads is made up of several white or pinkish petals growing round a rather dull yellowish centre. Now, every one of these white or pink petals, and every one of the little yellowish tubes which form the centre of the flower-head, is a separate flower; so you will see that there are really hundreds of complete flowers growing together in the clusters.

The flowers have rather a ‘peppery’ look, and perhaps that is why the plant was sometimes called Old-Man’s-pepper and Wild-pepper; though the best reason which is given is that the young leaves were used in olden times to give a pungent flavour to salads. Or possibly

people mistook this plant for another kind of Yarrow which is called the Sneeze-wort, because it was employed to make you sneeze, as pepper would. In one part of the country they name the Yarrow Old-Man's-mustard, but I cannot think of any reason, unless it is the slight pungency which accounts for its 'pepper' names.

The Yarrow is a plant of the fields and roadsides, where it grows freely from July to September and onwards. The stem is tough and covered with thick downy hairs, and it grows from a few inches to about a foot in height. In some parts of the west of England the children call the plant by the pretty names of Bunch-of-daisies and Angel-flowers. The real name of the plant, Yarrow, is a very, very old one, and nobody can tell what it means.

The Clematis or Traveller's Joy.

WHICH do you think is the prettier name—Clematis or Traveller's Joy? Traveller's Joy, I expect you will say, because the name carries a meaning which you can understand. One day, a very long time ago, a traveller was plodding along the hot and dusty highway and feeling very weary and footsore, for he had journeyed a long, long way. He tramped along, with his eyes cast down on the ground in his weariness;

but presently he looked up, and his face lit up with pleasure and his spirits seemed to throw off some of the tiredness which had oppressed them. And the sight which so pleased him was just this plant gleaming in the hedgerows; and because it gave him such delight to see it decking and adorning the ways and hedges where people travel, he called it Traveller's Joy. The name of the traveller was John Gerard, and he lived more than three hundred years ago. He was a great scholar, who studied plants and walked over the country-side seeking them so that he might describe them in a great book which he was writing. He wrote down this name of Traveller's Joy in his book, and that is how it has come down to you and me.

The other name, Clematis, is not an English word at all. It was given, though probably to some other plant, by the people who lived in Greece and Italy over two thousand years ago, and it meant, in their language, a vine-shoot. You have only to glance at the plant to see how like a vine it is. It has a stout stem, which lifts itself up to the top of the hedges by means of its leaf-stalks. Look at these and you will see that they twine themselves round the bushes and other plants, and so raise themselves to the top where there is plenty of sunlight. The plant is too weak to stand by itself, so it depends upon these leaf-stalks to

help it to climb upwards. Some people call it Climbers for this reason, while others named it Hedge-vine and White-vine. So, too, it used to be called Love or Love-bind, because it clung to the bushes as if in a loving embrace. Farmers often use the stems to fasten their gates or to tie up the bundles of faggots which they take home for firewood; and it is for some such reasons as these that they give the plant the names of With-bind or Bind-with.

The Clematis has another common name, and one which you will think very pretty. It is Virgin's-bower. Several reasons are given to explain how the name arose, but we cannot be sure which is the true one. Very likely it is because the plant, from its rapid growth and long climbing stems, is useful for training over arbours and shady places in gardens, thus making a pleasant bower for virgins, or young ladies. Some people think that the name was given in honour of Queen Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen of England, because they say that the plant was brought into this country from abroad for the first time during her reign. But others tell the story that while Joseph and the Virgin Mary were fleeing from Herod, when our Lord was a little baby, the plant sprang up to form a shady bower wherever they rested. Naughty boys have been known to cut out the dry stems of the plant and smoke them—and I expect it made them feel very ill. From this

use of the plant they call it Smoking-cane, Tom-bacca, Smoke-wood and Devil's-cut.

Now let us look at the flower itself. It has a number of greenish-white 'sepals' (which look like petals) and a little bushy collection of what are called 'stamens' and 'pistils.' In the autumn and winter, when the flowers are dead, you will find that they have grown into masses of whitish feathery tufts, like a man's beard. These have given rise to several other names, such as Old-man's-beard, Daddy's-whiskers, Grandfather's-whiskers, Bushy-beard, Beggar-brushes and Grey-beards. The plant is also called Maiden-hair, because these tufts are as finely spun as a girl's hair. Another name is Snow-in-harvest, because the tufts, appearing at harvest-time, look almost like snow clinging to the hedges. Then again there is a name, Silver-bush, and you will understand this if you look at the flowers after the sepals have fallen off, for they gleam in the sunshine exactly like silver.

You may expect to find the Clematis or Traveller's Joy in bloom from July onwards, and, when the autumn comes, you can begin to expect those feathery tufts which look so much like a beard.

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