

should be singularly strong. "Even within this century it was a plant which none dared destroy."

Referring now to the connection, already alluded to, of the elder with the Christian faith, it may be mentioned that it is a popular belief that our Lord's cross was made of elder-wood. On this account the country people in some parts exercise the greatest care not to burn any of the tree lest they should be guilty of irreverence. In Scotland we find this idea very prevalent; the peasants there often address the following rhyme to the elder, ascribing misfortune to it ever since it was made the instrument of our Saviour's death:

"Bourtree, Bourtree, crooked rung,
Never straight and never strong;
Ever bush and never tree,
Since our Lord was nailed to thee."

Bourtree, it may be mentioned, is the name of the elder in Scotland.

Another remarkable popular idea is that Judas hanged himself on an elder-tree. There happen to be mushrooms resembling the human ear found usually growing on the elder-tree: these are known as Jews' ears. Now this, say the best authorities, is a corruption of Judas' ears, and alludes to the superstition just mentioned. It seems the fungus has grown on the elder ever since the death of Judas. These mushrooms, by the way, have wondrous virtues, and we find an old remedy for a cough in the following lines:—

"For a cough take Judas' ear,
With the paring of a peare,
And drink this without fear,
If you will have a remedie."

In the treatment of those ills that the flesh is heir to, the elder is also very efficacious. The following is a Danish cure for tooth-ache:—Take an elder-twigg and put it in your mouth; then take it out and stick it in the wall, saying, "Depart, thou evil spirit!" The Danes have a cure for ague, as well, by means of an elder-twigg. They stick it in the ground without uttering a word; the disease, it is held, passes then into the twigg and attaches itself to the first person who unhappily approaches the spot. Quite independent of its magical powers, however, the elder is considered "a whole magazine of physic to rustic practitioners." Boerhaave, it is said, sometimes took off his hat when he passed the tree, so useful did he consider it in the alleviation of human maladies.

In some places it is held that one may shelter safely under the elder during a thunderstorm, as it is exempt from being struck by lightning. In North Germany, on Good Friday, after sunset, wreathes of elder are twined and hung up in the houses, and it is believed that they more effectually preserve the house than any lightning conductor that ever was invented.