

studies of the botanist, render both pursuits more interesting and agreeable:

VIOLA.

We begin with the violet, the sweet spring violet of England, as our favourite of all the vernal flowers. *Viola Odorata*, the sweet violet, is the most distinguished member of a numerous family of plants designated by the Latin word *Viola*;—the first part of its name may properly be considered as its family name, the last (*odorata*) as expressing its peculiar quality.

Viola Odorata is often called in English the March violet. Although you may occasionally, in warm seasons, gather its blossoms, in sheltered situations, through March, yet it is not till April, that month of wild flowers, that its blossoming time becomes general.

The whole plant, plucked from the ground, is from the root to the blossom, singularly elegant, and worthy of attention, more particularly as a study for the pencil. It is observed in the greatest perfection, when growing in a light, vegetable, or sandy soil, duly shaded, for it loves to hide its beauties in deep dells and forest glades. The root runs along the ground, extending itself by light fibres, from which it throws up a thick general stalk—from the heart of this stalk arise groups of leaves and flowers. The leaves are of a perfect heart shape, scalloped round with great regularity, fringed with minute silver hair, and veined with a delicate net work, which may better be observed by holding up the reverse of the leaf to the light.

The blossom may be considered as approaching to that termed by botanists, papilionaceous, butterfly or winged form of flower, of which the pea bean, lupin, vetch, acacia, broom, trefoil, and mimosa, will serve as illustrations.

The outward appearance of the violet is familiar to every one, yet among its many admirers, possibly there are but few that have examined the structure of its blossom with the minute attention it deserves. Let me now recommend it to the young botanist, with the assurance that it will well repay his or her trouble.

The stalk, with its delicate floral leaves and calyx, is of a fine olive tint; it is united to the calyx with a graceful bend, and the latter is beautifully adapted to the irregularity of the blossom. The flower consists of a pair of upper petals, a pair of side ones, and one broad curved petal below. The upper pair are of the deepest tint and purple, the side pair and lower one, are somewhat paler, and veined with many exquisite pencillings of a redder shade, which may be observed by placing the flower in such a point of view that the rays of light may fall upon it.

The two side petals are finished with two velvety knobs, of a fine orange or deep yellow colour; in these knobs the odour of the violet is supposed to reside, though I am disposed to think the perfume is dispersed through the whole blossom, as is the case in the damask rose, and many other flowers, a single petal of which will convey the delicious fragrance of the flower. In some plants the odoriferous qualities exist in the leaves, in others the fork or rind, while in many it is confined to the flower alone.

The nectarium, or receptacle for the honey, terminates in a curled horn behind, which forms a peculiar feature of this elegant flower, though it is not confined to this tribe alone, being common to many others, larkspur, monkhood, fumitory, &c. According to the Linnean classification, the violet belongs to the class Pentandria; five anthers meeting in the centre of the flower, forming a small orange coloured cone over one pistil, which marks the order to be that of Monogynia.

The only violets which belong to that called *Odorata*, are the deep purple spring, or March violet, the pure white, the reddish purple, and the double garden purple, all of which retain the exquisite odour of their sweet original.

The inodorous varieties of the violet are numerous and beautiful. Among these we enumerate the large blue wood violet; this delights in mossy woodlands, and under shady trees on light sandy banks, in close lanes and hollows; it grows low to the ground, on rather a short footstalk sometimes slightly clustered; the outer side of the flower is all but white, next to this comes the pale blue dog violet, the red-veined, and the white veined with blue; these last are chiefly summer flowers.

Canada presents us with several sorts of scentless violets during the spring, and till late in the fall may be gathered different shades of pale, and bright blue, small white flowering violets, the lower petal marked with deep purple veintings, the leaves very small and growing close to the ground; the capsules of this latter sort, are spotted irregularly with purple, and instead of drooping, stand upright above the foliage; besides these there abound several varieties of yellow violets, some of a pale yellow, others of a deep brimstone, also pale green. The flowers of the yellow varieties for the most part spring from joints in the stalk, accompanied by buds and leaflets—the capsules or seed vessels of these plants, are covered with a hoary soft down, that looks like some white bud rather than a seed pod—the brimstone is the tallest I have seen, growing from six to eight inches from the ground; in rich mould, it blossoms freely from May, or