

there is special work in the world for everybody, and the faithful concurrence of the whole, duly performed, is "like music." One reference in *Romeo and Juliet* is so beautifully figurative that I cannot omit it :—

"O my love, my wife,  
Death that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath  
Upon thy beauty yet hath had no power,  
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there."

But I am neglecting the weeds and wild-flowers—  
weeds are but wild-flowers in excess of number, and growing where the soil is wanted for purposes of cultivation. Taken individually, few of the plants which are prone to trouble the gardener and the farmer, through their fecundity and their perseverance, are inferior in beauty of structure to the generality of the garden favorites. Isolated by the wayside, and in the pride of their summer, they seldom fail to please. Many of the larger kinds, no doubt for want of training, become ragged and disorderly, but even then they redeem themselves by their lustre. Nothing in the costliest garden is more splendid than a full-grown cotton thistle, a scarlet corn-poppay, or a well-developed specimen of the azure bugloss (or ox-tongue). One of our minor poets has happily expressed it :—

"The soil is mother to the weeds,  
But only step-dame to the flowers."

Of the wild flowers Shakespeare mentions

Pansy	Violet
Cowslip	Nettle
Oxlip	Cuckoo-buds or Buttercups
Daisy	Wild Thyme
Daffodil	Dog Rose
Harebell	Eglantine
Crow-flower	Woodbine
Meadow-Orchis or Long Purple	

As Shakespeare's favorite trees were those of the woods, in which as a boy he was accustomed to wander, absorbing "sweet influence," so are his wild-flowers those of the Warwickshire meadows, trodden we may be sure, with equal delight. The green fields around his native village, the quiet lanes, the borders of the pretty streamlets, were their homes. Here it was that he first plucked the "pale primrose," the freckled cowslip, and the early daffodil.

We find the violet mentioned in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; but when Shakespeare copies, or borrows, if either term can be justly applied to the use he makes of his predecessors, he repays a hundredfold in the method of the use. Perdita's are not Ovid's flowers, for those may be anything we like to fancy; hers are old England's violets, and nothing besides.

Similar, one cannot but think, is the Shakespearian indebtedness, which yet is no debt, in regard to that

most sweet and tender passage in Ovid, where the poet enjoins us to pay kindly respect to the tombs of the departed, by strewing flowers upon them.

"They ask," he says, "but small offerings. To them is affection more pleasing than a costly gift. Enough for them are chaplets and plucked violets."

Almost like an echo of these lovely words are the lines in *Pericles*, where Marina enters with her basketful of mourning tribute :—

"No, no, I will rob Tellus of her weeds,  
To strew thy grave with flowers; the yellows, blues,  
The purple violets, and marigolds,  
Shall, as a chaplet, hang above thy grave  
While summer days do last."

It is impossible to quote the many beautiful illustrations that might be furnished, showing the poet's love for the pansy and violet, the cowslip he mentions only six times, the one which first occurs to one is the well known song of Ariel in the *Tempest* :—

"Where the bee sucks there look I,  
In a cowslip's bell I lie."

In King *Henry the Fifth* he tells of the "freckled cowslip." Again, in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* we have Oberon addressing Puck :—

"Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer,  
Ay, there it is."

"I pray thee, give it me,  
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlip and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine."

he tells Puck to place a pansy on the eyes of Titania, in order that, on awaking, she may fall in love with the first object she encounters.

But I may be growing tedious, and must hasten on; whilst speaking in praise of wild-flowers I am in good company; I might claim that every poet whose writings are worth quoting has sung their praise. Thomson in his *Seasons* has proclaimed their beauty in simple language; the daisy has been immortalized by Robert Burns as the "Wee, simple, modest, crimson-tipped flower." And of the thistle.—Scotland's emblem,—he tells :—

"The rough burn-thistle, speckling wide  
Among the bearded bear,  
I turned the weeder-clips aside,  
And spared the symbol dear."

Gerald Massey, another of the people's poets, sang,

"And here's my Rest, where green and shadows meet  
Overhead, the small flowers looking at my feet;  
Green picnic places peeping from the wood,  
Where you may meet the spirit of Robin Hood  
Crossing the moonlight at the old deer-chase;  
A brooding Dove the Signet of the place;  
Gleams of the Graces at their bath of dew;  
An earthly pleasure, Heaven trembling through—

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And with glad laugh the tiny buttercup,  
Its beaker of delight brimful holds up;  
And, prodigally glorified, the mead  
Is all aglow with red ripe sorrel seed.