

Walking and musing in a wood, I saw  
Some ladies gathering flowers: now this, now Pother,  
And crying in delight to one another.

"Look here, look here! what's this? a fleur-de-lis.

Oh—get some violets there:

No, no, some roses farther onward there:

How beautiful they are!

O me! these thorns do prick so—only see!—

Not that; the other; reach it me.

Hallo, hallo! What is it leaping to?

A grasshopper, a grasshopper!

Come here! come here now, quickly,

The rampions grow so thickly

No; they're not rampions.

Yes, they are:—Anna, Beatrice, or Lisa;

Come here, come here for mushrooms, just a bit

There, there's the betony—you're treading it.

We shall be caught, the weather's going to change:

See, see; it lightens—hush—and there's the thunder.

Was that the bell for vespers too, I wonder?

Why, you faint-hearted thing, it isn't noon:

It was the nightingale—I know his tune—

There's something stirring there

Where, where?

There, in the bushes.

Here every lady pokes, and peeps, and pushes;

When suddenly, in middle of the rout,

A great large snake comes out.

"O lord! O lord! Good heavens! O me! O me!"

And off they go, scampering with all their power,

While from above, down comes a pelting shower.

Frightened, and scrambling, jolting one another,

They shriek, they run, they slide, the foot of one

Catches her gown, and where the foot should be

Down goes the knee,

And hands, and clothes, and all; some stumble on,

Brushing the hard earth off, and some the mud.

What they plucked, so glad and heaping,

Now becomes not worth their keeping.

Off it squirts, leaf, root, and flower;

Yet not the less for that they scream and scower,

In such a passage, happiest she

Who plies her notes most rapidly.

So fixed I stood gazing at that fair set,

That I forgot the shower, and dripped with wet.