

FLOWERS OF THE FIELD AND FOREST.

in our native floral domain, and nature does not repeat it in even the brilliant colors of the autumn woods. As splendid and as characteristic as this color is in the Cardinal-flower, it is said to be not quite constant, but occasionally "sports" pink, white, and even yellow.

It is very common in New England, and is indeed distributed throughout the country east of the Rocky Mountains. It always grows on low ground in marshes and by the side of water-courses. It lines the banks of Taunton Great-River for long distances, standing up to its middle in water at high tide, and bending low and swaying heavily as the whelming waves go over its head from the puffing, hurrying little steamers passing by.

The splendid display and contrast of colors which a mass of these flowers make by the side of a clear stream is very striking. The green leaves of the trees are massed behind and above, the grass below, and in the midst this blood-red flower, like tongues of flame, reaching up, the blue sky overhead, and all repeated in the glassy water beneath, make a picture not to be forgotten.

The lines of Dr. Holmes give us a poetical interpretation of some such scene.

The Cardinal, and the blood-red spots,
Its double in the stream;
As if some wounded eagle's breast,
Slow throbbing o'er the plain,
Had left its airy path impressed
In drops of scarlet rain.

The Cardinal-flower grows from two to five feet high, and remains in bloom from July to October, thus both by its size