

begins to push up and grow; but before the first green blade has sprung, we are sure to have welcomed the earliest comer of all, the Pasque-flower, which is "merry spring-time's harbinger" in the North-West. They call it the "crocus" here, and *Anemone pulsatilla* is its name among the learned, I have heard; but somehow I cannot regard flowers as belonging to the Latin races, and this one is such a perfect herald of Easter that the Easter name seems to fit it best. Some time in March out of the cold, cold earth it comes up into the light, and you find its buds standing on the prairie, each wrapped up in a furry grey coat against the north blast. Perhaps for a week the shining fur coats are all that can be seen, tightly buttoned up; but one sunny day the furs open wide, and out slip the nestling flowers. Oh, how glad we are to see them! Hans Andersen would have made a pretty fairy tale about the opening of the Pasque-flowers. Their colours are beautiful and delicate—all the peculiar cloudy blues of the anemone, deepening almost to violet, and veined with lilac and grey. Leafless and unattended, they come in crowds, in millions; and gleaming all over the prairie among the withered, tangled grass, they show the fresh young year born out of the old one. Many richer flowers follow in their time, some lovelier; but I think none meet with quite the same welcome as the Pasque-flowers, which answer to more than the pleasure of the eyes.

One of the great charms of the prairie is, that the flowers grow in such masses and myriads over it. Until I came here I never knew what it was to see as many flowers as I could wish all at once. But

here,—say it is the month of May; May with the fleecy blue and white skies, the light-hearted breezes blowing, the sad-voiced plovers calling, when for a short while pools of clear water shine here and there over the prairie, "as if," some one said, "the land had opened its eyes to look at the sky." Beautiful duck are resting on these pools very often, mallard, teal, pintail, and others; or cattle have come for a drink, and stand in groups that call for a *Rosa Bonheur*, making bright reflections of themselves on the water. This is the time when violets blow; blue and grey and golden, they come up by thousands in the short grass, and at the same time the "shooting-stars" make long flushes of crimson where they stand in their regiments, nodding side by side. Sometimes a pure white one bends like a bride among the rest. They are little winged flowers, reminding one of cyclamens, but "American cowslip" is their misleading name.

About the last week in May or the first in June it is worth taking a long ride to find the forget-me-nots which grow in certain high spots. One calls forget-me-nots blue at home, but the bluest would look as pale as skim-milk beside these. Enamel or the deepest turquoise would be dulled by them. They shine from the ground like gems, and you may see them quite a long way off, though they have none of the glisten and transparency of red and white flowers: they shine only from their pure, opaque intensity of blue. The place where we always go to find the first forget-me-nots is called "the Ridge," as though there were no other elevation of its kind in all this mountain country. It is a stony ridge, its top half covered