

the attention of the female portion of my readers, it is the natural history of the vegetable world. I do not mean botany as it is generally taught in schools—a mere acquaintance with the Linnean classification. The bare knowledge of names and classes can confer little real pleasure, or enlargement to the mind. But this forms but a small part of botany; and in the attentive study of the habits and natures of plants there is a fertile field for intellectual enjoyment. Whether our attention be directed to the simple star-eyed daisy—"the little flower that loves the lea"—or to the magnificent dahlia, in all its gorgeous hues—to the green moss, that vivifies the rude bark, and triumphs 'mid decay, on the fallen timbers that strew our forest wilds—or to the majestic pine, that towers above his brethren of the woods. From the first wonder of the bursting seed, ere even the tender leaf bud appears above the soil, to the perfection of the noble tree, or the expansion of the lovely bud, all is admirable—all is beautiful—and well fitted to awaken thoughts of holy contemplation in the mind—to lift it in grateful feeling towards that Almighty Being, who has graciously strewed the sinner's path with flowers, to cheer, to soothe, to delight, to win him back from the vexatious cares of life to better and holier things. Has He not given us flowers, to teach us an humble reliance on His care, whose fatherly goodness extends even to the lilies of the field?

The study of plants has this great advantage over many other pursuits connected with natural history—it is easy of access to all. The conchologist and the mineralogist must have costly specimens to assist their studies. The botanist may walk forth into the fields and woods, the garden, nay the barrenest road-side, to obtain his cheap treasures—heathy common land will contribute something to his collection and to his amusement. The "hortus siccus," neatly and carefully arranged, grows daily beneath his hand, affording a constant supply of interesting matter to the lover of flowers.

The entomologist must inflict pain, or at all events, deprive happy creatures of a life of enjoyment, before he can perfect his studies. The ornithologist must pursue the beautiful objects of his admiration with difficulty, and often amid perils, from which the boldest might shrink back; but the love of flowers may be pursued without incurring such risks, and the most feeling heart may delight itself in the occupation, without fear and without reproach.

It is now the season of apparent death in the vegetable world in these latitudes, and the seeds and roots of plants lie buried deep beneath a pall of snow. The slumber of death seems to brood

over our vast forests; every future leaf and bud and flower lies locked within a scaly prison. In Canada we have no Christmas rose—no pure chaste snow drop—no winter aconite, to peep above the snow, and cheer us with the sight of verdure or fair colours. Not here, as in Britain, are seen, as early as the month of March, in sheltered gardens or green mossy hollows, knots of these sweet flowers, "the tender primrose that forsaken dies"—the powdery catkins, waving to every breeze—and the rich crimson tassels of the hazel, with the soft velvety buds of the osier and palm willow, that lures by its rich scent the cautious bees. The bursting buds of apricots and peaches come forth on sunny walls in mild seasons, and March suns perfect, and March winds scatter them abroad.

The pink, white, and azure blossoms of the *Hepatica*, that ornament of our Canadian woods, comes forth in sunny borders, and stores of bulbs are bursting from the shroud, within whose silken folds their beauties lay buried.

There are a thousand lovely sights to be seen at this season in the floral world, but none that used so to fill my young heart (I speak of childhood) with such unalloyed delight as a rich bordering of newly opened Crocuses (those so aptly termed the cloth of gold) on a bright March morning, with the newly awakened inmates of the hive, making sweet melody within their glowing cups—sweet sounds in happy unison with happy hearts.

Though no longer able, with my outward senses, to behold and enjoy the lovely flowers that make a British spring the fairest season in the year—an exile from the old affectionate haunts of my childhood—I can still think upon the flowery meads and woodland glades, thickly embroidered with stores of choicest flowers—flowers whose very names unlock a thousand memories of the past—the early happy spring-time of our lives.

These have a language all their own—and eloquently does the simple language of the home flowers speak to the heart of the British emigrant. But it is not of British flowers I purpose treating in future. I shall endeavour to select for the *Garland* an offering of native Canadian flowers, described, as they appear in their seasons, by the pen of the

CANADIAN FLOWER GATHERER.

INDEPENDENCE.

ONE man may be less dependent than another; but absolute independence, even were it desirable, is a moral phenomenon, nay, rather a moral impossibility.