

30 THE PAGEANT OF SUMMER

promises the finches bushels of seed for their young. Under the scarlet of the poppies the larks run, and then for change of colour soar into the blue. Creamy honeysuckle on the hedge around the cornfield, buds of wild rose everywhere, but no sweet petal yet. Yonder, where the wheat can climb no higher up the slope, are the purple heath-bells, thyme and flitting stone-chats.

The lone barn shut off by acres of barley is noisy with sparrows. It is their city, and there is a nest in every crevice, almost under every tile. Sometimes the partridges run between the ricks, and when the bats come out of the roof, leverets play in the waggon-track. At even a fern-owl beats by, passing close to the eaves whence the moths issue. On the narrow waggon-track which descends along a coombe and is worn in chalk, the heat pours down by day as if an invisible lens in the atmosphere focussed the sun's rays. Strong woody knapweed endures it, so does toadflax and pale blue scabious, and wild mignonette. The very sun of Spain burns and burns and ripens the