



MALE FLOWERS OF YEW.

The female blossom is on a separate tree, and it may be at some distance away; the wind therefore carries the fertilising pollen far and wide, and in due time it reaches the other flower, which will eventually produce the beautiful wax-like yew-berries.

I used to think that the showers of pollen, which make the ground under the tree look yellow with its abundance, was an instance of needless waste; but I have now observed that many species of flies and solitary bees are extremely fond of pollen and feed greedily upon it, as well as use it to store in their nests for their young grubs to feed upon when hatched.

Doubtless in this way the tree is able, all through the early spring, to afford the winged creatures an abundant supply of needful food until they are able to obtain honey from the summer flowers.

WILLOW CATKINS.

As one of the tokens of coming spring, it always gives me a thrill of pleasure to note for the first time the silvery willow buds appearing. As the dark brown bud scales begin to open and reveal the silky down within, then, as the sun gains power, these outer scales fall off and the pure white catkins become conspicuous. They daily grow in size, until, attaining maturity, they are covered with pollen of a rich golden yellow. This pollen

is highly attractive to the newly-awakened humble bees. These may be seen clustered upon the blossoms, not only feeding themselves, but carrying away provision with which to store their cells.

It is interesting to observe that while the willow has only one bud-scale, the lime-tree has two, and other trees usually have many outer coverings for the bud.

The male and female catkins are shown in the illustration, and, as I have said, they grow on different trees which are usually found within a short distance of each other, so that the wind may carry the pollen from one tree to another in order to fertilise the flowers.

A small low-growing species of willow called *sallow*, which, by the way, grows abundantly on our common, is the kind

which is most frequently gathered for decoration at Easter-tide. This custom dates from the time when palm-branches were strewn before Our Lord when He was riding into Jerusalem.

The real palm, of course, is still used in Eastern countries for church decoration, but as we in England have no tree with either fresh green leaves or conspicuous blossoms flowering at Easter, the willow, with its pretty golden catkins, has been called palm and substituted for it for many generations. A passage of Goethe on this subject has been thus translated:—

"In Rome, upon Palm Sunday,
They bear true palms;
The cardinals bow reverently,
And sing old Psalms.
Elsewhere their Psalms are sung
Mid olive branches;



MALE.

FEMALE.

SALLOW CATKINS.

AN OLD CORNWALL ROMANCE.

By C. A. MACIRONE.

CHAPTER II.

"Cornwall's wrecked-devoted shores,
Her barren hills, and russet moors;
Where languid verdure tints the vales,
And sigh, through chasms, the summer
gales"—*Polydore.*

Cornish proverbs: "Speak little, speak well, and well will be spoken again."
"Be silent, tongue."

"Look twice before you leap once."

TRAVELLING in the days of Henry VI. was a very different affair to the rapid locomotion of the present day. There were wild moors and

forests, lonely wastes to pass, rivers to ford or ferry, little hamlets clustering round the castles of the nobles were the only resting-places—few and far between. The towns were the centres of the rising trade of the country, of the cathedral life and that of the universities. Among the bridle-paths men urged their difficult way in companies; for it was seldom safe for an honest or well-to-do man to travel alone. All travelling was dangerous across wild, uninhabited country. There were few roads, except the great Roman roads—from one old Roman colony to another—and the need of getting food and shelter for the night often made a journey a very anxious and circuitous business. Besides,

all travelling had to be on horseback, and the horses needed food and rest.

It was a pleasant journey they took across moor and heather, through woods and forests, by ferry and river, jogging along from dawn to nightfall. They had fair weather and a prosperous home-coming. The merchant had noted the intelligence, and, still more, the modesty and discretion with which the child had spoken when he met her first, and on the road he often whiled away the time by answering kindly her questions as to the journey and the places they passed, and also in trying to prepare her for the life to which he was taking her.

She was a keen observer, though a silent