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*A POST OF WILDFLOWERS*

*To*  
*FLORIAN,*  
*GRAEME*  
*&*  
*TOM*

A POST  
OF  
WILDFLOWERS

---

*Gathered in the Countryside  
of English Literature  
and  
Furnished with Appropriate Sentiments  
by  
VICTOR BONHAM-CARTER*



*Illustrated  
with Wood Engravings by  
HELLMÜTH WEISSENBORN*

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ALLAN WINGATE

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## PREFACE

WILDFLOWERS are free and belong to everybody. This fact alone is a test of civilisation, for when a man gets something for nothing he generally reveals himself in his true colours. Thus in possessing wildflowers botanists classify where poets glorify, bores destroy where gentlemen enjoy. This little book is for the last category in its broadest sense—gentleness, not gentility.

We have plucked a handful of common plants. Our posy is therefore no sure index of Latin appellations, no erudite anthology of literary allusions, no popular pot-pourri. The flowers have been gathered in field and hedgerow, but not every one has been taken, only our chosen favourites. Similarly the verses and prose passages make no claim to uniqueness; there are others—often many others—that would do. But these are our choice and we hope you will enjoy them.

And now, away with excuses and explanations. Poetry and picture need none of these. Let your senses take command.

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## THE IDLE FLOWERS

I have sown upon the fields  
Eyebright and Pimpernel,  
And Pansy and Poppy-seed  
Ripen'd and scatter'd well,

And silver Lady-smock  
The meads with light to fill,  
Cowslip and Buttercup,  
Daisy and Daffodil;

King-cup and Fleur-de-lys  
Upon the marsh to meet  
With Comfrey, Watermint,  
Loose-strife and Meadowsweet;

And all along the stream  
My care hath not forgot  
Crowfoot's white galaxy  
And love's Forget-me-not:

And where high grasses wave  
Shall great Moon-daisies blink,  
With Rattle and Sorrel sharp  
And Robin's ragged pink.

Thick on the woodland floor  
Gay company shall be,  
Primrose and Hyacinth  
And frail Anemone,

Perennial Strawberry-bloom,  
Woodsorrel's pencilled veil,  
Dishevel'd Willow-weed  
And Orchis purple and pale,

Bugle, that blushes blue,  
And Woodruff's snowy gem,  
Proud Foxglove's finger-bells  
And Spurge with milky stem.

High on the downs so bare,  
Where thou dost love to climb,  
Pink Thrift and Milkwort are,  
Lotus and scented Thyme;

And in the shady lanes  
Bold Arum's hood of green,  
Herb Robert, Violet,  
Starwort and Celandine;

And by the dusty road  
Bedstraw and Mullein tall,  
With red Valerian  
And Toadflax on the wall,

Yarrow and Chicory,  
That hath for hue no like,  
Silene and Mallow mild  
And Agrimony's spike,

Blue-eyed Veronicas  
And grey-faced Scabious  
And downy Silverweed  
And striped Convolvulus:

Harebell shall haunt the banks,  
And thro' the hedgerow peer  
Withwind and Snapdragon  
And Nightshade's flower of fear.

And where men never sow,  
Have I my Thistles set,  
Ragwort and stiff Wormwood  
And straggling Mignonette,

Bugloss and Burdock rank  
And prickly Teasel high,  
With Umbels yellow and white,  
That come to kexes dry.

Pale Chlora shalt thou find,  
Sun-loving Centaury,  
Cranesbill and Sinjunwort,  
Cinquefoil and Betony:

Shock-headed Dandelion,  
That drank the fire of the sun:  
Hawkweed and Marigold,  
Cornflower and Campion.

Let Oak and Ash grow strong,  
Let Beech her branches spread;  
Let Grass and Barley throng  
And waving Wheat for bread;

Be share and sickle bright  
To labour at all hours;  
For thee and thy delight  
I have made the idle flowers.

But now 'tis Winter, child,  
And bitter northwinds blow,  
The ways are wet and wild,  
The land is laid in snow.

*Robert Bridges*



COWSLIP (*Primula veris*) is a perennial found in nearly every pasture in England. The word is said to mean cow-slop, i.e. a cow's droppings. Cowslip juice has been 'commended to cleanse the spots or marks of the face, whereof some gentlewomen have found good experience.'

## COWSLIP

Folks tell me that the May's in flower,  
The cowslip-peeps are fit to pull,  
And I've got leave to spend an hour  
To get this little basket full.

*John Clare*

' . . . when the lawyer is swallowed up in business,  
and the statesman in preventing or contriving plots,  
then we sit on cowslip-banks, hear the birds sing,  
and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these  
silent silver streams, which we now see glide so  
quietly by us.'

*Izaak Walton*

Thus I set my printless feet  
On the cowslip's velvet head,  
That bends not as I tread.

*John Milton*



CORNFLOWER or BLUEBOTTLE (*Centaurea cyanus*), like Corn Cockle, is a corn weed. Thus Holditch, an old writer, says it 'proclaims bad farming to the landlord, the tenant, and the passenger, and announces the neglect of using clean seed-corn, judicious fallowing, and horse-hoe husbandry.'

## CORNFLOWER

Summer's blue-caps blossom mid the corn.

*John Clare*

They are a beautiful blue, not like any other blue, not like the violets in the garden, or the sky over the trees, or the geranium in the grass, or the bird's-eyes by the path.

*Richard Jefferies*

When on the daz'ling poppy may be seen  
A glowing red exceeding your carmine;  
And for the blue that o'er the Sea is borne,  
A brighter rises in our standing corn.  
Come then, my Dafnis, and the fields survey,  
And thro' the groves, with your Ardelia stray.

*Anne, Countess of Winchilsea*



GOLDEN STONECROP, GOLDEN CHAIN, WALL OF POOR MAN'S PEPPER, or PRICK MADAM (*Sedum acre*) covers rocks, stones or roofs with a carpet of yellow flowers. The leaves have a sharp and pungent taste, and the flowering season (June-July), though intense, is short. Linnaeus recommended it for the cure of scurvy and dropsy.

## PRICK MADAM

Above (the growth of many years) is spread  
The yellow level of the stonecrop's bed.

*George Crabbe*

The stonecrop is the finest of roof plants, sometimes forming a broad patch of brilliant yellow. Birds carry up seeds and grains, and these germinate in the moist thatch.

*Richard Jefferies*

The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,  
Hung down in heavier tufts ; and that bright  
weed,  
The yellow stonecrop, suffer'd to take root  
Along the window's edge, profusely grew,  
Blinding the lower panes.

*William Wordsworth*

TRANQUILLITY



LORDS AND LADIES or CUCKOO PINT (*Arum maculatum*). Called also ADAM AND EVE, BULLS AND COWS and LAMB-IN-A-PULPIT. The seed—bright red berries—is poisonous. The root, however, contains starch, and was formerly used in the manufacture of hair powder.

## LORDS AND LADIES

Some went searching by the wood,  
Peeping 'neath the weaving thorn,  
Where the pouch-lipp'd cuckoo-bud  
From its snug retreat was torn.

*John Clare*

In the rustling rush of every gust, in the graceful bend of every tree, even in the 'Lords and Ladies', clumped in the scoops of the hedgerow, and most of all in the soft primrose, wrung by the wind, but stealing back, and smiling when the wrath was past,—in all of these, and many others, there was aching ecstasy, delicious pang of Lorna.

*R. D. Blackmore*

The children coming home from school,  
Their hands and pinafores all full  
Of cuckoo-pint and bluebell spike,  
Gathered in dingle, dell and dyke.

*Alfred Austin*



DAISY (*Bellis perennis*) is one of the commonest and most popular wild flowers, and may be found in flower nearly the whole year round. It is called *Bairnwort* in Scotland, and *Marguerite* in France, Louis IX employing it as a device on his ring in honour of his wife. The flower is found as far east as the Caucasus.

## DAISY

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,  
Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss  
our feet.

*Thomas Nashe*

Now have I thereto this condicioun  
That, of alle the flowres in the mede,  
Than love I most these flowres whyte and  
rede,  
Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.

*Geoffrey Chaucer*

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,  
Thou's met me in an evil hour;  
For I maun crush among the stoure  
Thy slender stem,  
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,  
Thou bonny gem.

*Robert Burns*

INNOCENCE



HAREBELL OF SCOTCH BLUEBELL (*Campanula rotundifolia*) has a most delicate appearance. The plant is none the less firm rooted and hardy, being found at great altitudes. Dedicated to St. Dominic.

## HAREBELL

Let merry England proudly rear  
Her blended roses, bought so dear ;  
Let Albion bind her bonnet blue  
With heath and harebell dipp'd in dew.

*Walter Scott*

With fairest flowers  
While summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,  
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack  
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor  
The azured harebell, like thy veins; no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine.

*William Shakespeare*

From 'Wuthering Heights'

'I lingered round them under that benign sky,  
watched the moths, fluttering among the heath  
and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing  
through the grass, and wondered how anyone  
could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the  
sleepers in that quiet earth.'

*Emily Brontë*

DELICATE AND LOVELY AS THIS FLOWER



**YELLOW FLAG** (*Iris pseudacorus*) grows beside water-courses and in low-lying ground. It is sometimes known as *segg*, a name derived from the Anglo-Saxon, meaning 'short sword.'

## YELLOW FLAG

This flower is generally taken to be the original of the heraldic fleur-de-lys, France's flower.

Thus says Henry V to Princess Katherine:

'What say'st thou, my fair flower-de-luce'?

And in 'Henry VI Part 1', the Messenger says:

'Cropped are the flower-de-luces on your arms;  
Of England's coat one half is cut away.'

*William Shakespeare*

And on by many a level mead,

And shadowing bluff that made the banks,

We glided winding under ranks

Of iris, and the golden reed.

*Alfred Tennyson*

I drew my bride, beneath the moon,

Across my threshold; happy hour !

But ah, the walk that afternoon

We saw the water-flags in flower !

*Coventry Patmore*



MEADOW-SWEET or QUEEN OF THE MEADOWS (*Filipendula ulmaria*) is generally found near water, and flowers from June till autumn. It has a strong pleasant scent like almonds and, we are told, Queen Elizabeth 'did more desire it than any other herbe to strew her chambers withall.'

## MEADOW-SWEET

The meadow-sweet taunts high its showy wreath,  
And sweet the quaking grasses hide beneath.

*John Clare*

And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
Made towards us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

*Alfred Tennyson*

Suddenly he stopped short, lifting a curious  
nostril. He fancied he smelt meadow-sweet. He  
had never seen the flower in Rhineland—never  
thought of it; and it would hardly be met with in  
a forest. He was sure he smelt it fresh in dews.

*George Meredith*

USEFULNESS



BULBOUS BUTTERCUP or CROWFOOT (*Ranunculus bulbosus*) together with its near relations MEADOW BUTTERCUP (*R. acer*) and CREEPING BUTTERCUP (*R. repens*) are some of the commonest inhabitants of pasture. Local names are numerous, two examples being FROGS-FOOT and GOLD-CUP. The French call it JAUNET.

## BUTTERCUP

And all along the stream  
My care hath not forgot  
Crowfoot's white galaxy,  
And Love's Forget-me-not.

*Robert Bridges*

In the spring the mowing-grass rises thick and strong, and richly green, or hidden by the cloth-of-gold thrown over it by the buttercups.

*Richard Jefferies*

Meadows of fervid green,  
With sometimes prospects of untold  
Cowslips, like chance-found gold;  
And broadcast buttercups at joyful gaze,  
Rending the air with praise,  
Like the six-hundred-thousand-voiced shout  
Of Jacob camp'd in Midian put to rout.

*Coventry Patmore*

INGRATITUDE



CHICORY or SUCCORY (*Cichorium Intybus*) long celebrated for medicinal qualities, as a salad ingredient, and as an adulterate of coffee.

## CHICORY

Chicory was recommended as a cure for ague in 'Primitive Physick,' a book by *John Wesley*, the preacher.

Yarrow and Chicory  
That hath for hue no like.

*Robert Bridges*

Aught unsavoury or unclean  
Hath my insect never seen;  
But violets and bilberry bells,  
Maple-sap and daffodils,  
Grass with green flag half-mast high,  
Succory to match the sky.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

FRUGALITY



BROOM (*Cytisus scoparius*) grows up to five feet high. The tops, fresh and dried, are used medicinally as a stimulant for kidneys; and the dark green branches are suitable for basket work. Broom was the heraldic flower of the Plantagenets. First adopted by Henry II, it was formally recognised in the reign of Richard I.

## BROOM

Then through the broomy bound with ease they  
pass,  
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,  
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are  
spread,  
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed.

*George Crabbe*

Sort all your shepherds from the lazy clowns  
That feed their heifers in the budded brooms.

*Beaumont and Fletcher*

Althaea with the purple eye; the broom,  
Yellow and bright as bullion unalloy'd  
Her blossoms ; and luxuriant above all  
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,  
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf  
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more  
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.

*William Cowper*

. . . and thy broom-groves  
Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves  
Being lass-lorn.

*William Shakespeare*

HUMILITY



TRAVELLER'S JOY or OLD MAN'S BEARD (*Clematis vitalba*) is mostly found on chalky soil, such as downland, and is a luxuriant climber. In 1777 it was reported by Curtis to be growing by New Cross Turnpike.

## TRAVELLER'S JOY

*Gerard* originated the name. He described the plant in his Herbal as 'decking and adorning ways and hedges when people travel.'

Old, but full  
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,  
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
O'er-flourished with the hoary clematis.

*Alfred Tennyson*

*Gilbert White* of Selborne wrote in his Journal on November 23rd, 1788 :

'The downy seeds of traveller's joy fill the air, and driving before a gale, appear like insects on the wing.'



WATER-LILY. There are two plants, the white (*Castalia alba*) and the yellow (*Nymphoea lutea*). The latter gives off a smell supposed to resemble brandy, and is still called 'Brandy Bottle' in some parts of the country.

## WATER-LILY

O father, I saw my mother there  
Among the lilies by waters fair,  
Among the lambs clothed in white,  
She walked with her Thomas in sweet  
delight.

*William Blake*

The winding streamlet, limpid, lingering, slow,  
Where the reeds whisper when the zephyrs blow;  
Where in the midst, upon her throne of green,  
Sits the large lily as the water's queen;  
And makes the current, forced awhile to stay,  
Murmur and bubble as it shoots away.

*George Crabbe*

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,  
And starry river-buds glimmered by,  
And around them the soft stream did glide and  
dance  
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

PURITY OF HEART



PRICKLY SOWTHISTLE (*Sonchus asper*), and its close relation COMMON SOWTHISTLE or MILK-THISTLE (*Sonchus oleraceus*), are frequently found growing together. It is recorded by Pliny that Theseus, before his encounter with the bull that ravaged the plain of Marathon, took for his nourishment a dish of sowthistles.

## SOW THISTLE

The plant is mentioned by *Robert Burton* in the 'Anatomy of Melancholy.' He recommends a decoction of its roots as a cure for those who flush or 'sweat when they eat.'

Upon the various earth's embroidered gown  
There is a weed upon whose head growes  
Downe;  
Sow-thistle 'tis ycleped, whose downy wreath,  
If any one can blow off at a breath,  
We deeme her for a Maid: such was his haire,  
Ready to shed at any stirring ayre.

*William Browne*

Where may she wander now, whether betake her  
From the chill dew, among rude burrs and  
thistles?

*John Milton*

For thestles sharpe of many maneeres,  
Netles, thornes, and hookede breres.

*Geoffrey Chaucer*

CALF LOVE



CHARLOCK, KERLICK or WILD MUSTARD (*Sinapis arvensis*) is a common annual, and an attractive but formidable weed in cornfields. It is a favourite with bees, and used to be eaten whole, as a salad, by agricultural labourers.

## CHARLOCK

What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines  
A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold.

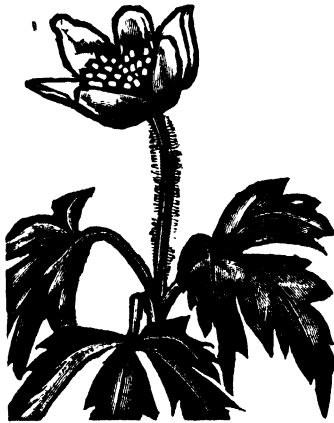
*Alfred Tennyson*

The light sulphur-coloured charlock is scattered everywhere out among the corn, too, for no clearing seems capable of eradicating this plant; the seeds will linger in the earth and retain their germinating power for a length of time, till the plough brings them near enough to the surface, when they are sure to shoot up unless the pigeons find them.

*Richard Jefferies*

O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade  
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade.

*George Crabbe*



**WOOD ANEMONE** (*Anemone nemorosa*) is a perennial, flowering in or near woods in early Spring before the trees become leafy. According to myth, the anemone sprang from the tears shed by Venus over the dead Adonis.

## ANEMONE

Anemone's weeping flowers,  
Dyed in winter's snow and rime,  
Constant to their early time.

*John Clare*

Primroses, cowslips, pansies, and the regular open-eyed white blossom of the wood anemone (or, to use the more elegant Hampshire name, the windflower) were set under feet as thick as daisies in a meadow.

*Miss Mitford*

A purple flower sprung up, chequer'd with white;  
Resembling well his pale checks, and the blood  
Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood.

*William Shakespeare*



PRIMROSE (*Primula vulgaris*), despite its pale appearance, is a very hardy and prolific plant, and may be found from January until May. The word is a corruption of *primerole*, firstling.

## PRIMROSE

Plainly, I cannot glose;  
Ye be, as I devyne,  
The praty primrose  
The goodly columbyne.

*John Skelton*

He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,  
Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight  
By chilly finger'd Spring.

*John Keats*

Follow me weeping to my turf, and there  
Let fall a primrose, and with it a tear.

*Robert Herrick*

Upon this Primrose hill,  
Where, if Heav'n would distill  
A shoure of raine, each severall drop might goe  
To his owne primrose, and grow Manna so;  
And where their forme, and their infinitie  
Make a terrestriall Galaxie,  
As the small starres doe in the skie :

*John Donne*

EARLY YOUTH



GERMANDER SPEEDWELL or BIRD'S-EYE (*Veronica chamaedrys*) a lovely perennial, vivid and miniature. Flowers from May till August.

## BIRD'S-EYE

Again a child, when childhood roved, I run  
While groups of speedwells with their bright  
blue eyes,  
Like happy children, cluster in the sun.

*Ebenezer Elliott*

Germander gives a good flower to the eye.

*Francis Bacon*

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

*Alfred Tennyson*



KINGCUP or MARSH MARIGOLD (*Caltha palustris*) is a perennial, grows luxuriantly in water meadows, and flowers during the Spring. The name Marigold refers to its use in mediaeval church festivals as one of the flowers devoted to the Virgin Mary. Also known as GOLDS, GOLDINS, BOOTS, MAY-BLOBS, YELLOW GOWAN and WATER BUTTERCUP.

## KINGCUP

Closed were the Kingcups, and the mead  
Dripped in monotonous green,  
Though the day's morning sheen  
Had shown it golden and honey-bee'd;  
Closed were the Kingcups, and the mead  
Dripped in monotonous green.

*Thomas Hardy*

Despense, Bisynesse and Jalousye,  
That wered of yelewe gooldés a gerland  
And a cokkow sittynge on hir hand.

*Geoffrey Chaucer*

Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,  
Bright gowan, and marsh marigold, farewell.  
Whom from the borders of the lake we brought,  
And placed together, near our rocky well.

*William Wordsworth*

All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,  
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge  
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*

DESIRE OF RICHES



SNOWDROP (*Galanthus nivalis*), like the primrose, is an early Spring flower, and a hardy one. It has been dedicated, as a symbol of purity, to the Virgin Mary and called 'Fair Maid of February.'

## SNOWDROP

Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

*Alfred Tennyson*

Brother, joy to you !  
I've brought some snowdrops ; only just a few,  
But quite enough to prove the world awake,  
Cheerful and hopeful in the frosty dew  
And for the pale sun's sake.

*Christina Rossetti*

Hearing of that blest shore  
She thinks on earth no more  
Contented to forgo this wintry land  
She hath no thought nor care  
But to rest calmly there,  
And hold the snowdrops pale that blossom in her  
hand.

*Jean Ingelow*

HOPE



YARROW or MILFOIL (*Achillea millefolium*) is a perennial, found in pastures, meadows and waste places. According to myth, Achilles first used the plant for medicine, at the bidding of Chiron the Centaur.

## YARROW

And in a little maund, being made of osiers small,  
Which serveth him to do full many a thing withall;  
He very choicely sorts his simples got abroad.  
Here finds he on an oak rheum-purgung Polipode;  
And in some open place that to the sun doth lie,  
He *Fumitorie* gets, and *Eye-bright* for the eye:  
The *Yarrow*, wherewithal he stops the wound-  
made gore:  
The healing *Tutsan* then, and *Plantan* for a sore.  
And hard by them again he holy *Vervaine* finds,  
Which he about his head that hath the megrim  
binds.  
The wonder-working *Dill* he gets not far from  
these,  
Which curious women use in many a nice disease.

*Michael Drayton*

HEARTACHE



SHEPHERD'S PURSE (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) lasts nearly the whole year round. Dedicated to St. James of Compostelle, the patron of pilgrims carrying a bag.

## SHEPHERD'S PURSE

Though common this wild-flower has hardly been noticed at all by the poets. Most references to it occur in Herbals and books of remedies, since the juice was useful as a styptic.

One name for the plant was 'Poore Man's Parmacetic,' the latter word being a corruption of 'Spermaceti.' Thus Hotspur in 'Henry IV Part I' relates how a certain effeminate lord, visiting him after battle, said that

. . . the sovereign'st thing on earth  
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise ;  
And that it was a great pity, so it was,  
This villainous saltpetre should be digged  
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,  
Which many a good tall fellow had destroyed  
So cowardly ; and but for these vile guns,  
He would himself have been a soldier.

*William Shakespeare*

I OFFER YOU MY ALL



DANDELION (*Taraxacum officinale*), a perennial and troublesome weed. Has medicinal value, and was much used in the past as 'a great alterative or sweetner of the Blood.' The name is a corruption of the French *dent-de-lion*, the resemblance being probably attributed to the leaves, not the blossoms.





WOODSORREL (*Oxalis acetosella*). Also called ALLELUIA, since it blossoms between Easter and Whitsuntide when the psalms of rejoicing are sung. Other names are CUCKOO-BREAD and STUB-WORT. It is believed to be the original of the Irish shamrock.

## WOODSORREL

Apothecaries and herbalists call it alleluya and cuckowe's meat; either because the cuckowe feedeth thereon, or by reason when it springeth forth the cuckowe singeth most; at which time also alleluya was wont to be sung in our churches.

*John Gerard*

O look ! look, I am sure that this is the wood-sorrel ! Look at the pendent white flower, shaped like a snowdrop and veined with purple streaks, and the beautiful trefoil leaves folded like a heart,—some, the young ones, so vividly yet so tenderly green that the foliage of the elm and hawthorn would show dully at their side,—others of a deeper tint, and lined, as it were, with a rich and changeful purple.

*Miss Mitford*

Here, as in a niche of Sabbath, dwells the nervous shy wood-sorrel, feeding upon leaf-mould, quivering with its long-stalked cloves, pale of hue, and shunning touch, delicate wood-sorrel, coral-rooted, shamrock-leafed, loved and understood of few, except good Fra Angelico.

*R. D. Blackmore*

JOY



DAFFODIL or LENT LILY (*Narcissus pseudo-narcissus*). Clusius writing in the sixteenth century reported that daffodils grew in such profusion in the meadows near Cheapside that all the taverns were decked out with this flower.

## DAFFODIL

The boys are up the woods with day,  
To fetch the daffodils away,  
And home at noonday from the hills  
They bring no dearth of daffodils.

*A. E. Housman*

For sports, for pageantry and plays  
Thou hast thy eves and holidays;  
On which the young men and maids meet  
To exercise their dancing feet;  
Tripping the comely country round,  
With daffodils and daisies crown'd.

*Robert Herrick*

On me the morn distils  
Before her darling daffodils,  
While, going home, the evening sweet  
In cowslip-water bathes my feet.

*Andrew Marvell*



COMMON WATERCRESS (*Nasturtium officinale*) grows best in clear and slow-moving streams over a gravelly bottom. First cultivated by Nicholas Mesner of Erfurt, in the sixteenth century, it was not introduced into England until a hundred years later.

## WATERCRESS

No more, thy crown to braid, thou deign'st  
to take,  
My cress-born flowers, that float in many a  
shady lake.

*Thomas Warton*

All the bloomy flush of life is fled.  
All but you, widow'd, solitary thing  
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ;  
She, wretched matron, forced, in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread.

*Oliver Goldsmith*

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses ;  
I linger by my shingly bars ;  
I loiter round my cresses.

*Alfred Tennyson*

SPLENDOUR



**FIELD POPPY** (*Papaver rhoeas*), annual, flowers all summer and is often abundant and conspicuous in cornfields. Is poisonous to stock in a green condition.

## FIELD POPPY

Though I cannot give thee fires  
Glittering to my free desires;  
These accept, and I'll be free,  
Offering poppy unto thee.

*Robert Herrick*

Then let us give Corellia charge o' the sheep,  
And thou and I'll pluck poppies till we weep,  
So shall we smoothly pass away in sleep.

*Andrew Marvell*

There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil,  
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil.

*George Crabbe*

Summer set lip to earth's bosom bare,  
And left the flushed print in a poppy there:  
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,  
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.

*Francis Thompson*



COMMON FUMITORY (*Fumaria officinalis*) a small garden weed flowering in March, that grows less than a foot high. In the Middle Ages, it was the custom to boil fumitory in milk, and use the result for a cosmetic. Also considered good for dimness of sight.

## FUMITORY

A day or two ye shul have digestyves,  
Of wormés, er ye take your laxatyves  
Of lawriol, centaure and fumetere,  
Or elles ellcbor that groweth there  
Of katapuce or of gaitrys beryis,  
Of herbe-yve, growyng in our yeerd ther mery is;  
Pekke hem up right as they growe and ete hem yn.

*Geoffrey Chaucer*

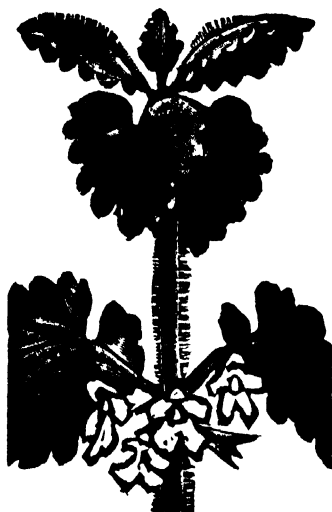
Fumitory, too, a name  
Which superstition holds to fame,  
Whose red and purple mottled flowers  
Are cropped by maids in weeding hours,  
To boil in water, milk or whey,  
For washes on a holiday,  
To make their beauty fair and sleek,  
And scare the tan from summer's cheek.

*John Clare*

Fumiter is erbe, I say,  
Yt spryngyth in April et in May,  
In feld, in town, in yerd et gate,  
Yer lond is fat et good in state,  
Dun red is his flour.

*Stockholm MS*

**SPLEEN**



GROUND-IVY (*Nepeta hederacea*) flowers between mid-March and mid-July, and was chiefly used in the past for flavouring beer ; being supposed not only to improve the taste but also to render the liquid clearer. It is not botanically related to common ivy.

## GROUND IVY

### RECOMMENDATION FOR A WOUND :

If you have not an honest surgeon at hand, bind leaves of ground-ivy on it.

*John Wesley*

### RECOMMENDATION FOR ALE:

If infused in Ale, which is frequently done, it not only helps to fine it but corrects its Fogginess and enriches it with its salutary Qualities.

*C. Deering*

### RECOMMENDATION FOR TEA:

The tea had a rustic aroma of ground-ivy, reminding Weyburn of his mother's curiosity to know the object of an old man's plucking of hedge-side leaves in the environs of Bruges one day, and the simple reply to her French: 'Tea for the English.'

*George Meredith*



FOXGLOVE (*Digitalis purpurea*) is known to everyone. Other names are FINGER FLOWER, FLAP-DOCK, DEAD-MEN'S BELLS, and LUSMORE. It will sometimes blossom for two or three years. The dried leaves are used for medicinal purposes, and all parts of the plant are poisonous.

## FOXGLOVE

Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,  
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes.

*Anne, Countess of Winchilsea*

Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The furzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.

*Alfred Tennyson*

Look at that old oak with the deer under it ; the long and deep range of fern running up from it to that beech-grove on the upland, the lights and shadows on the projections and recesses of the wood, and the blaze of foxglove in its foreground.

*Thomas Love Peacock*

INSINCERITY



HONEYSUCKLE or WOODBINE (*Lonicera Periclymenum*) is one of our loveliest wild climbers. It was named in honour of Adam Lonicer, a German botanist who died in 1586.

## HONEYSUCKLE

Where blooms the woodbine, faintly streak'd  
with red,  
And rests on every bough its tender head ;  
Round the young ash its turning branches meet,  
Or crown the hawthorn with its odours sweet.

*Robert Bloomfield*

Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine.

*William Shakespeare*

Why, Sir, being married to those sleepy-souled Women, is just like playing at cards for nothing . . . I do not, however, envy a fellow one of those honeysuckle wives, for my part, as they are but *creepers* at best, and commonly destroy the tree they so tenderly cling about.

*Samuel Johnson*



COMMON MALLOW (*Malva sylvestris*) flowers about the beginning of June and continues in profusion until September. The plant was once found in full bloom at Christmas. The year was 1738.

## MALLOW

The sitting down, when school was o'er  
Upon the threshold of the door,  
Picking from Mallows, sport to please,  
The crumpled seed we called a cheese.

*John Clare*

An English doctor with a bunch of pot-herbs,  
And he cries out, 'Endive and succory,  
With a few mallow-roots and butter-milk.'

*Beaumont and Fletcher*

Gonzalo : Had I the plantation of this isle,  
my lord—  
Antonio : He'd sow't with nettle-seed.  
Sebastian: Or docks, or mallows.

*William Shakespeare*

Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf  
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf.

*George Crabbe*

MILDNESS



WILD MARJORAM (*Origanum vulgare*) frequents limestone and chalk districts. The word is derived from the Latin *amaracus*, mentioned by Virgil. A strong aromatic oil is distilled from the plant.

## MARJORAM

With margerain jentyll,  
The flowre of goodlyhede,  
Enbrowdred the mantill  
Is of your maydenhede.

*John Skelton*

Here's flowers for you;  
Hot lavender, mints, savoury, marjoram;  
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,  
And with him rises weeping; these are flowers  
Of middle summer, and I think they are given  
To men of middle age.

*William Shakespeare*

Hymen, O Hymen ! tread the sacred ground;  
Show thy white feet and head with marjoram  
crown'd.

*Robert Herrick*

The lily I condemned for thy hand,  
And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair:  
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, another white despair.

*William Shakespeare*

BLUSHES



FIELD or SMALL BINDWEED (*Convolvulus arvensis*) a persistent and troublesome weed that strangles its victims, and is hard to eradicate owing to its extensive roots. It is closely related to BINDWEED proper (*Calystegia sepium*) or HEDGE-BELL.





HEMLOCK (*Conium maculatum*) is distinguished by its spotted stem and mouse-like smell. It was the State poison of Athens, by which Socrates met his death.

## HEMLOCK

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,  
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,  
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,  
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

Hee hath broke my bones, worne out my flesh  
and skinne,  
Built up against mee : and hath girt mee in  
With hemlock and with labour, and set mee  
In dark, as they who dead for ever bee.

*John Donne*

Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress  
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;  
And through whole solemn hours dost sit,  
and hearken  
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—  
In desolate places, where dark moisture breeds  
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth.

*John Keats*

YOU WILL BE MY DEATH



CORN COCKLE (*Lychnis githago*), a weed flourishing only where corn is continuously sown. The seeds are poisonous. If mixed with wheat they give off a bad smell and make bread unfit to eat.

## CORN COCKLE

Instead of Cushions wrought in windows laine,  
They pick'd the *Cockle* from their fields of Graine.

*William Browne*

And thus of all my harvest hope I have  
Nought reaped but a weedye crop of care:  
Which, when I thought have thresht in swelling  
sheave,  
Cockel for corne, and chaffe for barley bare.

*Edmund Spenser*

I say again,  
In soothing them we nourish 'gainst our Senate  
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,  
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd  
and scatter'd  
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number.

*William Shakespeare*



SCARLET PIMPERNEL (*Anagallis arvensis*) is also called SHEPHERD'S or POOR MAN'S WEATHER-GLASS since its blossoms expand in dry weather and close in wet. It was formerly regarded for its healing properties, and for curing hydrophobia in particular.



SCOTCH HEATHER or LING (*Calluna vulgaris*) inhabits acid soils. It is a valuable plant for bees, the hives being placed out on the moors before late summer when the heather flowers open. Heather honey is a great delicacy.

## HEATHER

Braw lads on Yarrow braes,  
Ye wander thro' the blooming heather.

*Robert Burns*

I saw here what I never saw before—the bloom of the common heath we wholly overlook ; but it is a very pretty thing ; and here, when the plantations were made, and as they grew up, heath was left to grow on the sides of the road in the plantations. The heath is not so much of a dwarf as we suppose. This is four feet high ; and, being in full bloom, it makes the prettiest border that can be imagined.

*William Cobbett*

A bed, a bed, now, King Henry,  
A bed you mak to me.  
For ye maun pu' the heather green,  
An mak a bed to me.

*Anon.*



**WOOD VIOLET** (*Viola odorata*) is a perennial, prefers shade and is generally to be found on a hedge-bank or by a wood. The white species has a finer scent and is the harder to find. Bacon says: 'That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air, is the violet, especially the double white violet.'





DWALE, DEADLY NIGHTSHADE or BELLADONNA. (*Atropa belladonna*) grows in ruins and by roadsides. All parts are poisonous, especially the berries. Several old writers reported it as common on the outskirts of London, Gerard finding it in abundance at Highgate. Also called NAUGHTY-MAN'S-CHERRY.

## DEADLY NIGHTSHADE

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist  
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd  
By Nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine.

*John Keats*

Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root  
Here the dull night-shade hangs her deadly fruit;  
On hills of dust the henbane's faded green,  
And pencill'd flower of sickly scent is seen.

*George Crabbe*

Foxglove and Nightshade, side by side,  
Emblems of punishment and pride,  
Group'd their dark hues with every stain  
The weather-beaten crags retain.

*Walter Scott*

FALSEHOOD



VALERIAN, ALL-HEAL or SETWALL (*Valeriana officinalis*) was formerly a popular panacea and is still to be found in the British *Pharmacopoea* as a nerve medicine. It has a vile smell. Dr. Brewer says : 'It is good in nervous complaints and a sovereign remedy for cramps.'

## VALERIAN

There is a balsam, or indeed a blood,  
Dropping from Heaven, which doth both cleanse  
and close  
All sorts of wounds, of such strange force it is.  
Seek out this All-heal, and seek no repose  
Until thou find, and use it to thy good.

*George Herbert*

Even in the stifling bosom of the town,  
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms  
That soothe the rich possessor ; much consoled  
That here and there some sprigs of mournful  
mint,  
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well  
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint  
That nature lives.

*William Cowper*

This mayden in a morne betime,  
Went forth when May was in her prime,  
to get sweet Cetywall,  
The hony-suckle, the Harlocke,  
The Lilly and the Lady-smocke,  
to deck her summer hall.

*Michael Drayton*

GOOD DISPOSITION



ROSEBAY WILLOW-HERB (*Epilobium angustifolium*)  
and GREAT WILLOW-HERB (*Epilobium hirsutum*)  
grow commonly in ditches and other moist situa-  
tions. They also abound in rubble and in ruins.

## WILLOW-HERB

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-reed and mallow.

*Alfred Tennyson*

I look'd around, and there,  
Where two tall hedgerows of thick alder boughs  
Join'd in a cold damp nook, espied a well  
Shrouded with willow-flowers and plummy fern.

*William Wordsworth*

Flowers of the willow-herb are wool ;  
Flowers of the briar berries red ;  
Speeding their seed as the breeze may rule,  
Flowers of the thistle loosen the thread.

*George Meredith*

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,  
And meadowsweet and haycocks dry,  
No whit less still and lovely fair  
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

*Edward Thomas*

CELIBACY



CAMPION or CATCHFLY (*Lychnis alba* or *Lychnis dioica*).  
It is thought that the name may be derived from *campagne*, meaning field or country, thus flower of the field.

## CAMPION

He with cowslips pale,  
Primrose, and purple lychnis, deck'd the green  
Before my threshold, and my shelving walls  
With honeysuckle cover'd.

*Mark Akenside*

Just as one begins to feel a little sad because the  
wood-hyacinths pale, the red campion takes a  
brighter hue and holds up a bolder stalk, deter-  
mined to see over the heads of the now fast-  
shooting green crosiers of the bracken.

*Alfred Austin*

The sportive tyrant with her left hand plucks  
The heads of tall flowers that behind her grow,  
Lychnis and willow-herb, and foxglove bells.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*



**WILD PANSY OF HEARTSEASE** (*Viola tricolor*) flowers from spring to autumn. Occurs as a weed in cornfields and in newly ploughed ground. The name is derived from *pensée*, thus Ophelia says 'There's pansies, that's for thoughts.'

## HEARTSEASE

Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:  
It fell upon a little western flower,  
Before milk-white, now purple with love's  
wound,  
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

*William Shakespeare*

'I will dare to say, that this boy lives a merrier  
'life, and wears more of that Herb called Heartsease  
in his Bosom, than he that is clad in Silk and  
Velvet.'

*John Bunyan*

Frolic virgins once these were,  
Over-loving, living here;  
Being here their ends denied,  
Ran for sweethearts mad and died.  
Love, in pity of their tears,  
And their loss in blooming years,  
For their restless here-spent hours,  
Gave them heart's-ease turn'd to flowers.

*Robert Herrick*

YOU OCCUPY MY THOUGHTS



GILLIFLOWER could mean the pink, the stock, or wallflower (*Cheiranthus Cheiri*), the old English name for the latter being 'Bloody Warriors,' by virtue of its reddish colour, as recorded in William Barnes' *Glossary of the Dorset Dialect*.

Country names for the Gilliflower meaning the Clove Pink include SOPS IN WINE, SWEET JOHN, PAGANTS and BLUNKET.

## GILLIFLOWER

The columbine, the nept,  
The jelloffer well set,  
The proper violet.

*John Skelton*

Where banners the invader braved,  
The harebell now and wallflower waved.

*Walter Scott*

Understand, this firstling was  
Once a brisk and bonnie lass,  
Kept as close as Danae was:  
Who a sprightly springall lov'd,  
And to have it fairly prov'd,  
Up she got upon a wall,  
Tempting down to slide withal:  
But the silken twist untied,  
So she fell, and, bruis'd, she died,  
Love in pity of the deed,  
And her loving-luckless speed,  
Turn'd her to this plant we call  
Now the *Flower of the Wall*.

*Robert Herrick*



**SPEAR PLUME THISTLE** (*Cirsium lanceolatum*) common in pasture and a great nuisance to farmers, for the heads ripen quickly and the seeds are blown abroad by the wind.

## SPEAR THISTLE

Wide o'er the thistly lawn, as swells the breeze,  
A whitening shower of vegetable down  
Amusive floats.

*James Thomson*

Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair,  
As hath the seeded thistle, when a parle  
It holds with Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair  
Its light balloons into the summer air.

*John Keats*

I saw again this morning large flocks of goldfinches feeding on the thistle-seed on the roadside. The French call this bird by a name derived from the thistle, so notorious has it always been that they live upon the seed. Thistle is the French *chardon*, and the French call this beautiful little bird *chardonaret*.

*William Cobbett*

AUSTERITY



WHITE BRYONY (*Bryonia dioica*) is not found in Ireland or Scotland. The berries are poisonous, and the large white root was once used in medicine.

## WHITE BRYONY

On a sudden low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings.

*Alfred Tennyson*

The white bryony, whose leaf is not unlike that of the grape, has a magical reputation, and the cottage folk believe its root to be a powerful ingredient in love potions, and also poisonous. They identify it with the mandrake. If growing in or close to a churchyard, its virtues are increased, for, though becoming fainter as they lengthen, the shadows of the old superstitions linger still.

*Richard Jefferies*



**RED CLOVER** (*Trifolium pratense*) is an important bee-flower and indispensable to every seeds mixture used in ley farming. First introduced to England in 1645 by Sir Richard Western, ambassador to the Low Countries.

## CLOVER

Sweet bottle-shaped flower of lushy red,  
Born when the summer wakes her warmest  
breeze,  
Among the meadows waving grasses spread,  
Or 'neath the shade of hedge or clumping trees,  
Bowing in slender stem thy heavy head.

*John Clare*

Or clover, blossom'd lovely to the sight,  
His team's rich store through many a wintry  
night.

*Robert Bloomfield*

Where we'd go gathering cops of clover,  
In sunny June times long since over,  
O clover-cops half white, half red,  
O beauty from beyond the dead.  
O blossom, key to earth and heaven,  
O souls that Christ has new forgiven.

*John Masefield*

INDUSTRY



HERB ROBERT (*Geranium robertianum*) is an annual, prefers walls and damp places, but will grow practically anywhere. May be connected with St. Robert, a Benedictine monk, whose day, 29th April, is about the earliest date on which it can be found in flower.

## HERB ROBERT

The poet had a particular affection for this little geranium, which grew on the walls in Rydal Mount. He called it by a nickname—Poor Robin.

Now when the primrose makes a splendid show,  
And lilies face the March winds in full blow,  
And humbler growths as moved with one desire  
Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire,  
Poor Robin is yet flowerless ; but how gay  
With his red stalks upon this sunny day !  
And, as his tufts of leaves he spreads, content  
With a hard bed and scanty nourishment  
Mixed with the green, some shine not lacking  
power  
To rival summer's brightest scarlet flower ;  
And flowers they well might seem to passers-by  
If looked at only with a careless eye ;  
Flowers—or a richer produce (did it suit  
The season) sprinklings of ripe strawberry fruit.

*William Wordsworth*



**DOG ROSE** (*Rosa canina*) is the common and beautiful wild rose seen in any hedgerow in June. Before metal became cheap, the hardness of dogwood made it popular for skewers.

## DOG ROSE

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,  
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;  
And my fause lover stole my rose,  
But ah ! he left the thorn wi' me.

*Robert Burns*

I had rather be a canker in the hedge  
than a rose in his Grace.

*William Shakespeare*

Before man's fall the rose was born,  
St. Ambrose says, without the thorn;  
But for man's fault then was the thorn  
Without the fragrant rose-bud born;  
But ne'er the rose without the thorn.

*Robert Herrick*



A SENTIMENTAL VOCABULARY

ANEMONE	<i>Sickness</i>
BIRD'S-EYE	<i>Female Fidelity</i>
BROOM	<i>Humility</i>
BUTTERCUP	<i>Ingratitude</i>
CAMPION	<i>Youthful love</i>
CHARLOCK	<i>Indifference</i>
CHICORY	<i>Frugality</i>
CLOVER	<i>Industry</i>
CORN COCKLE	<i>Gentility</i>
CORNFLOWER	<i>Delicacy</i>
COWSLIP	<i>Pensiveness</i>
DAFFODIL	<i>Regard</i>
DAISY	<i>Innocence</i>
DANDELION	<i>Rustic oracle</i>
DEADLY NIGHTSHADE	<i>Falsehood</i>
DOG ROSE	<i>Pain and Pleasure</i>
FIELD BINDWEED	<i>Insinuation</i>
FIELD POPPY	<i>Consolation</i>
FOXGLOVE	<i>Insincerity</i>
FUMITORY	<i>Spleen</i>
GILLIFLOWER	<i>Fidelity in adversity</i>
GROUND IVY	<i>Fidelity</i>
HAREBELL	<i>Delicate and lovely as this flower</i>
HEARTSEASE	<i>You occupy my thoughts</i>
HEATHER	<i>Solitude</i>
HEMLOCK	<i>You will be my death</i>
HERB ROBERT	<i>Piety</i>



A SENTIMENTAL VOCABULARY

HONEYSUCKLE	<i>Domestic Happiness</i>
KINGCUP	<i>Desire of riches</i>
LORDS AND LADIES	<i>Ardour</i>
MALLOW	<i>Mildness</i>
MARJORAM	<i>Blushes</i>
MEADOW-SWEET	<i>Usefulness</i>
PIMPERNEL	<i>Assignation</i>
PRICK MADAM	<i>Tranquillity</i>
PRIMROSE	<i>Early Youth</i>
SHEPHERD'S PURSE	<i>I offer you my all</i>
SNOWDROP	<i>Hope</i>
SOW THISTLE	<i>Calf love</i>
SPEAR THISTLE	<i>Austerity</i>
TRAVELLER'S JOY	<i>Poverty</i>
VALERIAN	<i>Good disposition</i>
VIOLET	<i>Faithfulness</i>
WATERCRESS	<i>Splendour</i>
WATER-LILY	<i>Purity of Heart</i>
WHITE BRYONY	<i>Prosperity</i>
WILLOW-HERB	<i>Celibacy</i>
WOODSORREL	<i>Joy</i>
YARROW	<i>Heartache</i>
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V. B-C.











