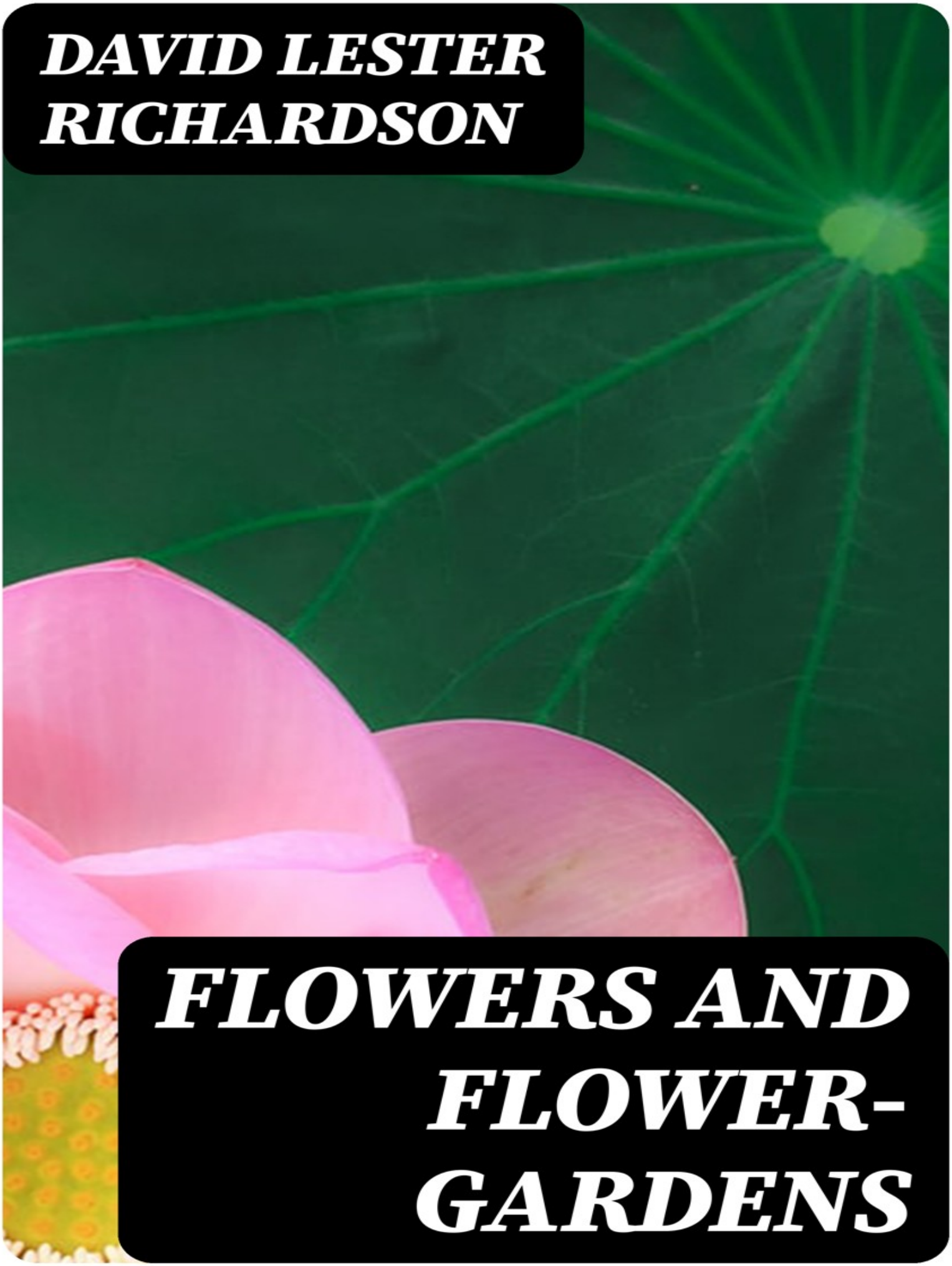
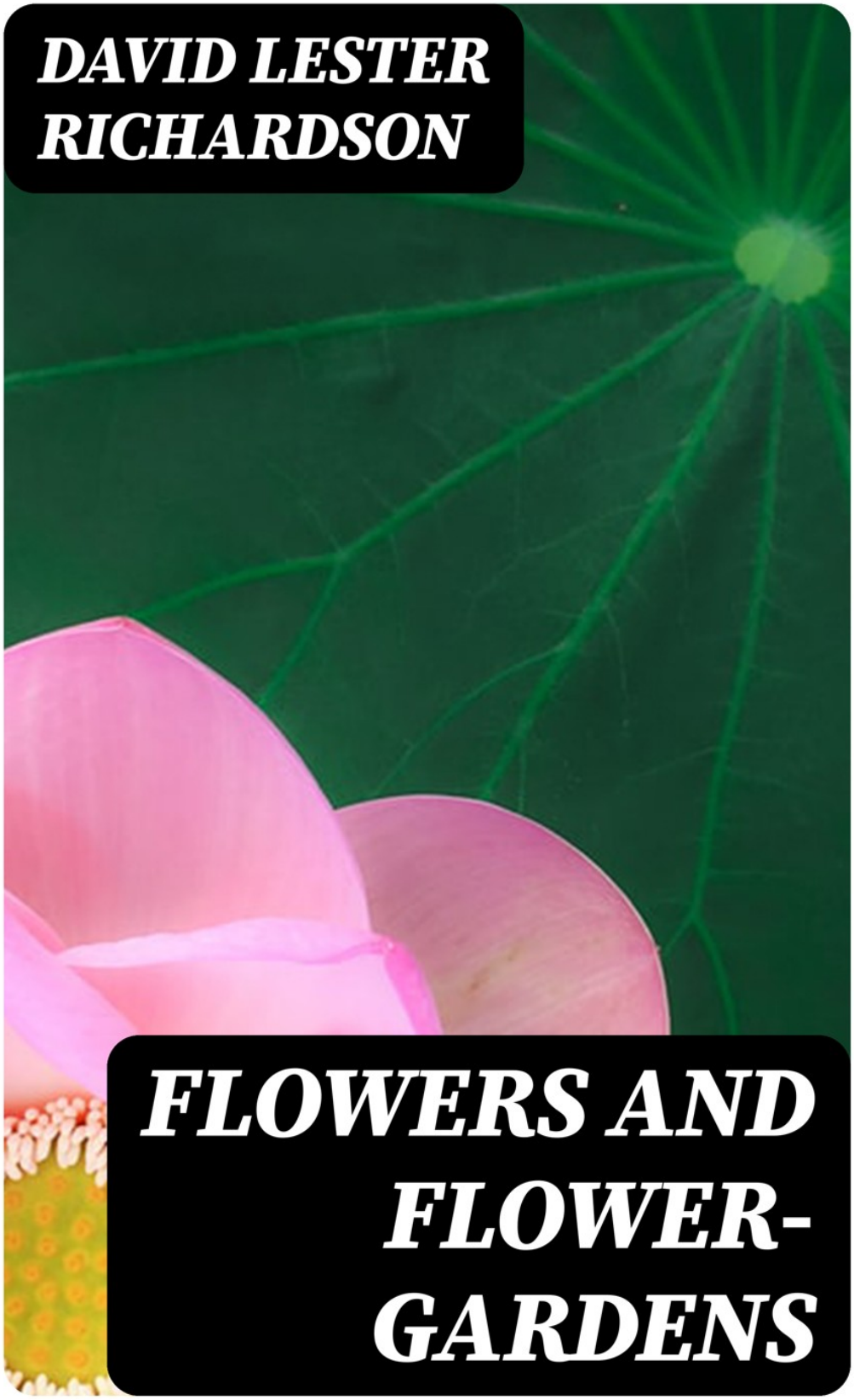
DAVID LESTER RICHARDSON



FLOWERS AND FLOWER-GARDENS


DAVID LESTER RICHARDSON
FLOWERS AND FLOWER-GARDENS

David Lester Richardson

Flowers and Flower-Gardens

With an Appendix of Practical Instructions and Useful Information / Respecting the Anglo-Indian Flower-Garden

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MDCCCLV.

PREFACE.

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In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.
Pope.

This volume is far indeed from being a scientific treatise *On Flowers and Flower-Gardens*:--it is mere gossip in print upon a pleasant subject. But I hope it will not be altogether useless. If I succeed in my object I shall consider that I have gossipped to some purpose. On several points--such as that of the mythology and language of flowers--I have said a good deal more than I should have done had I been writing for a different community. I beg the London critics to bear this in mind. I wished to make the subject as attractive as possible to some classes of people here who might not have been disposed to pay any attention to it whatever if I had not studied their amusement as much as their instruction. I have tried to sweeten the edge of the cup.

I did not at first intend the book to exceed fifty pages: but I was almost insensibly carried on further and further from the proposed limit by the attractive nature of the materials that pressed upon my notice. As by far the largest portion, of it has been written hurriedly, amidst other avocations, and bit by bit; just as the Press demanded an additional supply of "*copy*," I have but too much reason to apprehend that it will seem to many of my readers, fragmentary and ill-connected. Then again, in a city like

Calcutta, it is not easy to prepare any thing satisfactorily that demands much literary or scientific research. There are very many volumes in all the London Catalogues, but not immediately obtainable in Calcutta, that I should have been most eager to refer to for interesting and valuable information, if they had been at hand. The mere titles of these books have often tantalized me with visions of riches beyond my reach. I might indeed have sent for some of these from England, but I had announced this volume, and commenced the printing of it, before it occurred to me that it would be advisable to extend the matter beyond the limits I had originally contemplated. I must now send it forth, "with all its imperfections on its head;" but not without the hope that in spite of these, it will be found calculated to increase the taste amongst my brother exiles here for flowers and flower-gardens, and lead many of my Native friends--(particularly those who have been educated at the Government Colleges,--who have imbibed some English thoughts and feelings--and who are so fortunate as to be in possession of landed property)--to improve their parterres,--and set an example to their poorer countrymen of that neatness and care and cleanliness and order which may make even the peasant's cottage and the smallest plot of ground assume an aspect of comfort, and afford a favorable indication of the character of the possessor.

D.L.R.

Calcutta, September 21st 1855.

ERRATA.

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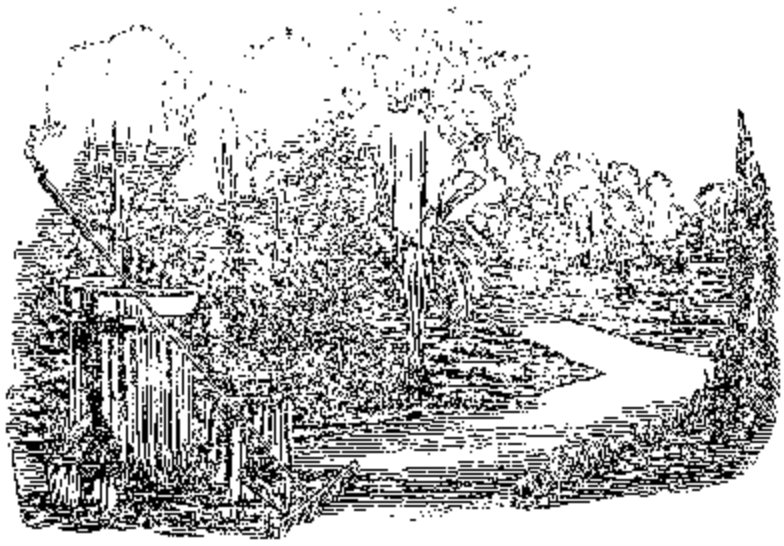
A friend tells me that the allusion to the Acanthus on the first page of this book is obscurely expressed, that it was not the *root* but the *leaves* of the plant that suggested the idea of the Corinthian capital. The root of the Acanthus produced the leaves which overhanging the sides of the basket struck the fancy of the Architect. This was, indeed, what I *meant* to say, and though I have not very lucidly expressed myself, I still think that some readers might have understood me rightly even without the aid of this explanation, which, however, it is as well for me to give, as I wish to be intelligible to *all*. A writer should endeavor to make it impossible for any one to misapprehend his meaning, though there are some writers of high name both in England and America who seem to delight in puzzling their readers.

At the bottom of page 200, allusion is made to the dotted lines at some of the open turns in the engraved labyrinth. By some accident or mistake the dots have been omitted, but any one can understand where the stop hedges which the dotted lines indicated might be placed so as to give the wanderer in the maze, additional trouble to find his way out of it.



ON FLOWERS AND FLOWER-GARDENS,

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For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is
come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.
The Song of Solomon.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty, Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then!
Milton.

Soft roll your incense, herbs and fruits and flowers,
In mingled clouds to HIM whose sun exalts
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.
Thomson.

A taste for floriculture is spreading amongst Anglo-Indians. It is a good sign. It would be gratifying to learn that

the same refining taste had reached the Natives also--even the lower classes of them. It is a cheap enjoyment. A mere palm of ground may be glorified by a few radiant blossoms. A single clay jar of the rudest form may be so enriched and beautified with leaves and blossoms as to fascinate the eye of taste. An old basket, with a broken tile at the top of it, and the root of the acanthus within, produced an effect which seemed to Calimachus, the architect, "the work of the Graces." It suggested the idea of the capital of the Corinthian column, the most elegant architectural ornament that Art has yet conceived.

Flowers are the poor man's luxury; a refinement for the uneducated. It has been prettily said that the melody of birds is the poor man's music, and that flowers are the poor man's poetry. They are "a discipline of humanity," and may sometimes ameliorate even a coarse and vulgar nature, just as the cherub faces of innocent and happy children are sometimes found to soften and purify the corrupted heart. It would be a delightful thing to see the swarthy cottagers of India throwing a cheerful grace on their humble sheds and small plots of ground with those natural embellishments which no productions of human skill can rival.

The peasant who is fond of flowers--if he begin with but a dozen little pots of geraniums and double daisies upon his window sills, or with a honeysuckle over his humble porch--gradually acquires a habit, not only of decorating the outside of his dwelling and of cultivating with care his small plot of ground, but of setting his house in order within, and making every thing around him agreeable to the eye. A love of cleanliness and neatness and simple ornament is a moral

feeling. The country laborer, or the industrious mechanic, who has a little garden to be proud of, the work of his own hand, becomes attached to his place of residence, and is perhaps not only a better subject on that account, but a better neighbour--a better man. A taste for flowers is, at all events, infinitely preferable to a taste for the excitements of the pot-house or the tavern or the turf or the gaming table, or even the festal board, especially for people of feeble health--and above all, for the poor--who should endeavor to satisfy themselves with inexpensive pleasures.[001]

In all countries, civilized or savage, and on all occasions, whether of grief or rejoicing, a natural fondness for flowers has been exhibited, with more or less tenderness or enthusiasm. They beautify religious rites. They are national emblems: they find a place in the blazonry of heraldic devices. They are the gifts and the language of friendship and of love.

Flowers gleam in original hues from graceful vases in almost every domicile where Taste presides; and the hand of "nice Art" charms us with "counterfeit presentments" of their forms and colors, not only on the living canvas, but even on our domestic China-ware, and our mahogany furniture, and our wall-papers and hangings and carpets, and on our richest apparel for holiday occasions and our simplest garments for daily wear. Even human Beauty, the Queen of all loveliness on earth, engages Flora as her handmaid at the toilet, in spite of the dictum of the poet of 'The Seasons,' that "Beauty when unadorned is adorned the most."

Flowers are hung in graceful festoons both in churches and in ball- rooms. They decorate the altar, the bride-bed, the cradle, and the bier. They grace festivals, and triumphs, and processions; and cast a glory on gala days; and are amongst the last sad honors we pay to the objects of our love.

I remember the death of a sweet little English girl of but a year old, over whom, in her small coffin, a young and lovely mother sprinkled the freshest and fairest flowers. The task seemed to soften--perhaps to sweeten--her maternal grief. I shall never forget the sight. The bright- hued blossoms seemed to make her oblivious for a moment of the darkness and corruption to which she was so soon to consign her priceless treasure. The child's sweet face, even in death, reminded me that the flowers of the field and garden, however lovely, are all outshone by human beauty. What floral glory of the wild-wood, or what queen of the parterre, in all the pride of bloom, laughing in the sun-light or dancing in the breeze, hath a charm that could vie for a single moment with the soft and holy lustre of that motionless and faded human lily? I never more deeply felt the force of Milton's noble phrase "*the human face divine*" than when gazing on that sleeping child. The fixed placid smile, the smoothly closed eye with its transparent lid, the air of profound tranquillity, the simple purity (elevated into an aspect of bright intelligence, as if the little cherub already experienced the beatitude of another and a better world,) were perfectly angelic--and mocked all attempt at description. "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!"

O flower of an earthly spring! destined to blossom in the eternal summer of another and more genial region! Loveliest of lovely children-- loveliest to the last! More beautiful in death than aught still living! Thou seemest now to all who miss and mourn thee but a sweet name--a fair vision--a precious memory;--but in reality thou art a more truly living thing than thou wert before or than aught thou hast left behind. Thou hast come early into a rich inheritance. Thou hast now a substantial existence, a genuine glory, an everlasting possession, beyond the sky. Thou hast exchanged the frail flowers that decked thy bier for amaranthine hues and fragrance, and the brief and uncertain delights of mortal being for the eternal and perfect felicity of angels!

I never behold elsewhere any of the specimens of the several varieties of flowers which the afflicted parent consigned to the hallowed little coffin without recalling to memory the sainted child taking her last rest on earth. The mother was a woman of taste and sensibility, of high mind and gentle heart, with the liveliest sense of the loveliness of all lovely things; and it is hardly necessary to remind the reader how much refinement such as hers may sometimes alleviate the severity of sorrow.

Byron tells us that the stars are

A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves *a star*.

But might we not with equal justice say that every thing excellent and beautiful and precious has named itself *a flower*?

If stars teach as well as shine--so do flowers. In "still small accents" they charm "the nice and delicate ear of thought" and sweetly whisper that "the hand that made them is divine."

The stars are the poetry of heaven--the clouds are the poetry of the middle sky--the flowers are the poetry of the earth. The last is the loveliest to the eye and the nearest to the heart. It is incomparably the sweetest external poetry that Nature provides for man. Its attractions are the most popular; its language is the most intelligible. It is of all others the best adapted to every variety and degree of mind. It is the most endearing, the most familiar, the most homefelt, and congenial. The stars are for the meditation of poets and philosophers; but flowers are not exclusively for the gifted or the scientific; they are the property of all. They address themselves to our common nature. They are equally the delight of the innocent little prattler and the thoughtful sage. Even the rude unlettered rustic betrays some feeling for the beautiful in the presence of the lovely little community of the field and garden. He has no sympathy for the stars: they are too mystical and remote. But the flowers as they blush and smile beneath his eye may stir the often deeply hidden lovingness and gentleness of his nature. They have a social and domestic aspect to which no one with a human heart can be quite indifferent. Few can doat upon the distant flowers of the sky as many of us doat upon the flowers at our feet. The stars are wholly independent of man: not so the sweet children of Flora. We tend upon and cherish them with a parental pride. They seem especially meant for man and man for them. They

often need his kindest nursing. We place them with guardian hand in the brightest light and the most wholesome air. We quench with liquid life their sun-raised thirst, or shelter them from the wintry blast, or prepare and enrich their nutritious beds. As they pine or prosper they agitate us with tender anxieties, or thrill us with exultation and delight. In the little plot of ground that fronts an English cottage the flowers are like members of the household. They are of the same family. They are almost as lovely as the children that play with them--though their happy human associates may be amongst

The sweetest things that ever grew
Beside a human door.

The Greeks called flowers the *Festival of the eye*: and so they are: but they are something else, and something better.

A flower is not a flower alone,
A thousand sanctities invest it.

Flowers not only touch the heart; they also elevate the soul. They bind us not entirely to earth; though they make earth delightful. They attract our thoughts downward to the richly embroidered ground only to raise them up again to heaven. If the stars are the scriptures of the sky, the flowers are the scriptures of the earth. If the stars are a more glorious revelation of the Creator's majesty and might, the flowers are at least as sweet a revelation of his gentler attributes. It has been observed that

An undevout astronomer is mad.

The same thing may be said of an irreverent floriculturist, and with equal truth--perhaps indeed with greater. For the astronomer, in some cases, may be hard and cold, from

indulging in habits of thought too exclusively mathematical. But the true lover of flowers has always something gentle and genial in his nature. He never looks upon his floral-family without a sweetened smile upon his face and a softened feeling in his heart; unless his temperament be strangely changed and his mind disordered. The poets, who, speaking generally, are constitutionally religious, are always delighted readers of the flower- illumined pages of the book of nature. One of these disciples of Flora earnestly exclaims:

Were I, O God, in churchless lands remaining
Far from all voice of teachers and divines,
My soul would find in flowers of thy ordaining
Priests, sermons, shrines

The popular little preachers of the field and garden, with their lovely faces, and angelic language--sending the while such ambrosial incense up to heaven--insinuate the sweetest truths into the human heart. They lead us to the delightful conclusion that beauty is in the list of the *utilities*--that the Divine Artist himself is *a lover of loveliness*-- that he has communicated a taste for it to his creatures and most lavishly provided for its gratification.

Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak or stain,
Of His unrivalled pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts then hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes
In grains as countless as the sea side sands
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Cowper.

In the eye of Utilitarianism the flowers are but idle shows. God might indeed have made this world as plain as a Quaker's garment, without retrenching one actual necessary

of physical existence; but He has chosen otherwise; and no earthly potentate was ever so richly clad as his mother earth. "Behold the lilies of the field, they spin not, neither do they toil, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these!" We are thus instructed that man was not meant to live by bread alone, and that the gratification of a sense of beauty is equally innocent and natural and refining. The rose is permitted to spread its sweet leaves to the air and dedicate its beauty to the sun, in a way that is quite perplexing to bigots and stoics and political economists. Yet God has made nothing in vain! The Great Artist of the Universe must have scattered his living hues and his forms of grace over the surface of the earth for some especial and worthy purpose. When Voltaire was congratulated on the rapid growth of his plants, he observed that "*they had nothing else to do*." Oh, yes--they had something else to do,--they had to adorn the earth, and to charm the human eye, and through the eye to soften and cheer the heart and elevate the soul!

I have often wished that Lecturers on Botany, instead of confining their instructions to the mere physiology, or anatomy, or classification or nomenclature of their favorite science, would go more into the poetry of it, and teach young people to appreciate the moral influences of the floral tribes--to draw honey for the human heart from the sweet breasts of flowers--to sip from their radiant chalices a delicious medicine for the soul.

Flowers are frequently hallowed by associations far sweeter than their sweetest perfume. "I am no botanist:" says Southey in a letter to Walter Savage Landor, "but like

you, my earliest and best recollections are connected with flowers, and they always carry me back to other days. Perhaps this is because they are the only things which affect our senses precisely as they did in our childhood. The sweetness of the violet is always the same; and when you rifle a rose and drink, as it were, its fragrance, the refreshment is the same to the old man as to the boy. Sounds recal the past in the same manner, but they do not bring with them individual scenes like the cowslip field, or the corner of the garden to which we have transplanted field-flowers."

George Wither has well said in commendation of his Muse:

Her divine skill taught me this;
That from every thing I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
By the meanest object's sight,
By the murmur of a spring
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a daisy whose leaves spread
Shut, when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree,
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.

We must not interpret the epithet *wiser* too literally. Perhaps the poet speaks ironically, or means by some other *wiser man*, one allied in character and temperament to a modern utilitarian Philosopher. Wordsworth seems to have had the lines of George Wither in his mind when he said

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Thomas Campbell, with a poet's natural gallantry, has exclaimed,

Without the smile from partial Beauty won,
Oh! what were man?--a world without a sun!

Let a similar compliment be presented to the "painted populace that dwell in fields and lead ambrosial lives." What a desert were this scene without its flowers--it would be like the sky of night without its stars! "The disenchanted earth" would "lose her lustre." Stars of the day! Beautifiers of the world! Ministrants of delight! Inspirers of kindly emotions and the holiest meditations! Sweet teachers of the serenest wisdom! So beautiful and bright, and graceful, and fragrant--it is no marvel that ye are equally the favorites of the rich and the poor, of the young and the old, of the playful and the pensive!

Our country, though originally but sparingly endowed with the living jewelry of nature, is now rich in the choicest flowers of all other countries.

Foreigners of many lands,
They form one social shade, as if convened
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
Cowper.

These little "foreigners of many lands" have been so skilfully acclimatized and multiplied and rendered common, that for a few shillings an English peasant may have a parterre more magnificent than any ever gazed upon by the Median Queen in the hanging gardens of Babylon. There is no reason, indeed, to suppose that even the first parents of mankind looked on finer flowers in Paradise itself than are to be found in the cottage gardens that are so thickly

distributed over the hills and plains and vallies of our native land.

The red rose, is the red rose still, and from the lily's cup
An odor fragrant as at first, like frankincense goes up.
Mary Howitt.

Our neat little gardens and white cottages give to dear old England that lovely and cheerful aspect, which is so striking and attractive to her foreign visitors. These beautiful signs of a happy political security and individual independence and domestic peace and a love of order and a homely refinement, are scattered all over the land, from sea to sea. When Miss Sedgwick, the American authoress, visited England, nothing so much surprised and delighted her as the gay flower-filled gardens of our cottagers. Many other travellers, from almost all parts of the world, have experienced and expressed the same sensations on visiting our shores, and it would be easy to compile a voluminous collection of their published tributes of admiration. To a foreign visitor the whole country seems a garden--in the words of Shakespeare--"a *sea-walled garden*."

In the year 1843, on a temporary return to England after a long Indian exile, I travelled by railway for the first time in my life. As I glided on, as smoothly as in a sledge, over the level iron road, with such magical rapidity--from the pretty and cheerful town of Southampton to the greatest city of the civilized world--every thing was new to me, and I gave way to child-like wonder and child-like exultation.[002] What a quick succession of lovely landscapes greeted the eye on either side? What a garden-like air of universal cultivation! What beautiful smooth slopes! What green, quiet meadows! What rich round trees, brooding over their silent shadows!

What exquisite dark nooks and romantic lanes! What an aspect of unpretending happiness in the clean cottages, with their little trim gardens! What tranquil grandeur and rural luxury in the noble mansions and glorious parks of the British aristocracy! How the love of nature thrilled my heart with a gentle and delicious agitation, and how proud I felt of my dear native land! It is, indeed, a fine thing to be an Englishman. Whether at home or abroad, he is made conscious of the claims of his country to respect and admiration. As I fed my eyes on the loveliness of Nature, or turned to the miracles of Art and Science on every hand, I had always in my mind a secret reference to the effect which a visit to England must produce upon an intelligent and observant foreigner.

Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around
Of hills and dales and woods and lawns and spires,
And glittering towns and gilded streams, 'till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays!
Happy Brittannia! where the Queen of Arts,
Inspiring vigor, Liberty, abroad
Walks unconfined, even to thy farthest cots,
And scatters plenty with unsparing hand.
Thomson.

And here let me put in a word in favor of the much-abused English climate. I cannot echo the unpatriotic discontent of Byron when he speaks of

The cold and cloudy clime
Where he was born, but where he would not die.

Rather let me say with the author of "*The Seasons*," in his address to England.

Rich is thy soil and merciful thy clime.

King Charles the Second when he heard some foreigners condemning our climate and exulting in their own, observed that in his opinion that was the best climate in which a man could be out in the open air with pleasure, or at least without trouble and inconvenience, the most days of the year and the most hours of the day; and this he held was the case with the climate of England more than that of any other country in Europe. To say nothing of the lovely and noble specimens of human nature to which it seems so congenial, I may safely assert that it is peculiarly favorable, with, rare exceptions, to the sweet children of Flora. There is no country in the world in which there are at this day such innumerable tribes of flowers. There are in England two thousand varieties of the rose alone, and I venture to express a doubt whether the richest gardens of Persia or Cashmere could produce finer specimens of that universal favorite than are to be found in some of the small but highly cultivated enclosures of respectable English rustics.

The actual beauty of some of the commonest flowers in our gardens can be in no degree exaggerated--even in the daydreams of the most inspired poet. And when the author of Lalla Rookh talks so musically and pleasantly of the fragrant bowers of Amberabad, the country of Delight, a Province in Jinnistan or Fairy Land, he is only thinking of the shrubberies and flower-beds at Sloperton Cottage, and the green hills and vales of Wiltshire.

Sir William Temple observes that "besides the temper of our climate there are two things particular to us, that contribute much to the beauty and elegance of our gardens-

-which are, *the gravel of our walks and the fineness and almost perpetual greenness of our turf*."

"The face of England is so beautiful," says Horace Walpole, "that I do not believe that Tempe or Arcadia was half so rural; for both lying in hot climates must have wanted *the moss of our gardens*." Meyer, a German, a scientific practical gardener, who was also a writer on gardening, and had studied his art in the Royal Gardens at Paris, and afterwards visited England, was a great admirer of English Gardens, but despaired of introducing our style of gardening into Germany, *chiefly on account of its inferior turf for lawns*. "Lawns and gravel walks," says a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, "are the pride of English Gardens," "The smoothness and verdure of our lawns," continues the same writer, "is the first thing in our gardens that catches the eye of a foreigner; the next is the fineness and firmness of our gravel walks." Mr. Charles Mackintosh makes the same observation. "In no other country in the world," he says, "do such things exist." Mrs. Stowe, whose *Uncle Tom* has done such service to the cause of liberty in America, on her visit to England seems to have been quite as much enchanted with our scenery, as was her countrywoman, Miss Sedgwick. I am pleased to find Mrs. Stowe recognize the superiority of English landscape-gardening and of our English verdure. She speaks of, "the princely art of landscape- gardening, for which England is so famous," and of "*vistas of verdure and wide sweeps of grass, short, thick, and vividly green* as the velvet moss sometimes seen growing on rocks in new England." "Grass," she observes, "is an art and a science in England--it is an institution. The pains that are taken in

sowing, tending, cutting, clipping, rolling and otherwise nursing and coaxing it, being seconded by the often-falling tears of the climate, produce results which must be seen to be appreciated." This is literally true: any sight more inexpressibly exquisite than that of an English lawn in fine order is what I am quite unable to conceive.[003]

I recollect that in one of my visits to England, (in 1827) I attempted to describe the scenery of India to William Hazlitt--not the living son but the dead father. Would that he were still in the land of the living by the side of his friend Leigh Hunt, who has been pensioned by the Government for his support of that cause for which they were both so bitterly persecuted by the ruling powers in days gone by. I flattered myself into the belief that Hazlitt was interested in some of my descriptions of Oriental scenes. What moved him most was an account of the dry, dusty, burning, grassless plains of Bundelcund in the hot season. I told him how once while gasping for breath in a hot verandah and leaning over the rails I looked down upon the sun-baked ground.

"A change came o'er the spirit of my dream."

I suddenly beheld with all the distinctness of reality the rich, cool, green, unrivalled meads of England. But the vision soon melted away, and I was again in exile. I wept like a child. It was like a beautiful mirage of the desert, or one of those waking dreams of home which have sometimes driven the long-voyaging seaman to distraction and urged him by an irresistible impulse to plunge headlong into the ocean.

When I had once more crossed the wide Atlantic--and (not by the necromancy of imagination but by a longer and

more tedious transit) found myself in an English meadow,--I exclaimed with the poet,

Thou art free
My country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, *to tread the grass*
Of England once again.

I felt my childhood for a time renewed, and was by no means disposed to second the assertion that

"Nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower."

I have never beheld any thing more lovely than scenery characteristically English; and Goldsmith, who was something of a traveller, and had gazed on several beautiful countries, was justified in speaking with such affectionate admiration of our still more beautiful England,

Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride.

It is impossible to put into any form of words the faintest representation of that delightful summer feeling which, is excited in fine weather by the sight of the mossy turf of our country. It is sweet indeed to go,

Musing through the *lawny* vale:

alluded to by Warton, or over Milton's "level downs," or to climb up Thomson's

Stupendous rocks
That from the sun-redoubling valley lift
Cool to the middle air their *lawny* tops.

It gives the Anglo-Indian Exile the heart-ache to think of these ramblings over English scenes.

ENGLAND.

Bengala's plains are richly green,
Her azure skies of dazzling sheen,
Her rivers vast, her forests grand.
Her bowers brilliant,--but the land,

Though dear to countless eyes it be,
And fair to mine, hath not for me
The charm ineffable of *home*;
For still I yearn to see the foam
Of wild waves on thy pebbled shore,
Dear Albion! to ascend once more
Thy snow-white cliffs; to hear again
The murmur of thy circling main--
To stroll down each romantic dale
Beloved in boyhood--to inhale
Fresh life on green and breezy hills--
To trace the coy retreating rills--
To see the clouds at summer-tide
Dappling all the landscape wide--
To mark the varying gloom and glow
As the seasons come and go--
Again the green meads to behold
Thick strewn with silvery gems and gold,
Where kine, bright-spotted, large, and sleek,
Browse silently, with aspect meek,
Or motionless, in shallow stream
Stand mirror'd, till their twin shapes seem,
Feet linked to feet, forbid to sever,
By some strange magic fixed for ever.

And oh! once more I fain would see
(Here never seen) a poor man *free*,[004] And valuing more
an humble name,
But stainless, than a guilty fame,
How sacred is the simplest cot,
Where Freedom dwells!--where she is not
How mean the palace! Where's the spot
She loveth more than thy small isle,
Queen of the sea? Where hath her smile
So stirred man's inmost nature? Where
Are courage firm, and virtue fair,

And manly pride, so often found
As in rude huts on English ground,
Where e'en the serf who slaves for hire
May kindle with a freeman's fire?

How proud a sight to English eyes
Are England's village families!
The patriarch, with his silver hair,
The matron grave, the maiden fair.
The rose-cheeked boy, the sturdy lad,
On Sabbath day all neatly clad:--
Methinks I see them wend their way
On some refulgent morn of May,
By hedgerows trim, of fragrance rare,
Towards the hallowed House of Prayer!

I can love *all* lovely lands,
But England *most*; for she commands.
As if she bore a parent's part,
The dearest movements of my heart;
And here I may not breathe her name.
Without a thrill through all my frame.

Never shall this heart be cold
To thee, my country! till the mould
(Or *thine* or *this*) be o'er it spread.
And form its dark and silent bed.
I never think of bliss below
But thy sweet hills their green heads show,
Of love and beauty never dream.
But English faces round me gleam!
D.L.R.

I have often observed that children never wear a more charming aspect than when playing in fields and gardens. In another volume I have recorded some of my impressions

respecting the prominent interest excited by these little flowers of humanity in an English landscape.

THE RETURN TO ENGLAND.

When I re-visited my dear native country, after an absence of many weary years, and a long dull voyage, my heart was filled with unutterable delight and admiration. The land seemed a perfect paradise. It was in the spring of the year. The blue vault of heaven--the clear atmosphere-- the balmy vernal breeze--the quiet and picturesque cattle, browsing on luxuriant verdure, or standing knee deep in a crystal lake--the hills sprinkled with snow-white sheep and sometimes partially shadowed by a wandering cloud--the meadows glowing with golden butter-cups and be- dropped with daisies--the trim hedges of crisp and sparkling holly--the sound of near but unseen rivulets, and the songs of foliage-hidden birds--the white cottages almost buried amidst trees, like happy human nests--the ivy-covered church, with its old grey spire "pointing up to heaven," and its gilded vane gleaming in the light--the sturdy peasants with their instruments of healthy toil--the white-capped matrons bleaching their newly-washed garments in the sun, and throwing them like snow-patches on green slopes, or glossy garden shrubs--the sun-browned village girls, resting idly on their round elbows at small open casements, their faces in sweet keeping with the trellised flowers:--all formed a combination of enchantments that would mock the happiest imitative efforts of human art. But though the bare enumeration of the details of this English picture, will, perhaps, awaken many dear recollections in the reader's

mind, I have omitted by far the most interesting feature of the whole scene--*the rosy children, loitering about the cottage gates, or tumbling gaily on the warm grass*.[005] [006]

Two scraps of verse of a similar tendency shall follow this prose description:--

AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE.

I stood, upon an English hill,
And saw the far meandering rill,
A vein of liquid silver, run
Sparkling in the summer sun;
While adown that green hill's side,
And along the valley wide,
Sheep, like small clouds touched with light,
Or like little breakers bright,
Sprinkled o'er a smiling sea,
Seemed to float at liberty.

Scattered all around were seen,
White cots on the meadows green.
Open to the sky and breeze,
Or peeping through the sheltering trees,
On a light gate, loosely hung,
Laughing children gaily swung;
Oft their glad shouts, shrill and clear,
Came upon the startled ear.
Blended with the tremulous bleat,
Of truant lambs, or voices sweet,
Of birds, that take us by surprise,
And mock the quickly-searching eyes.

Nearer sat a fair-haired boy,
Whistling with a thoughtless joy;
A shepherd's crook was in his hand,

Emblem of a mild command;
And upon his rounded cheek
Were hues that ripened apples streak.
Disease, nor pain, nor sorrowing,
Touched that small Arcadian king;
His sinless subjects wandered free--
Confusion without anarchy.
Happier he upon his throne.
The breezy hill--though all alone--
Than the grandest monarchs proud
Who mistrust the kneeling crowd.

On a gently rising ground,
The lovely valley's farthest bound,
Bordered by an ancient wood,
The cots in thicker clusters stood;
And a church, uprose between,
Hallowing the peaceful scene.
Distance o'er its old walls threw
A soft and dim cerulean hue,
While the sun-lit gilded spire
Gleamed as with celestial fire!

I have crossed the ocean wave,
Haply for a foreign grave;
Haply never more to look
On a British hill or brook;
Haply never more to hear
Sounds unto my childhood dear;
Yet if sometimes on my soul
Bitter thoughts beyond controul
Throw a shade more dark than night,
Soon upon the mental sight
Flashes forth a pleasant ray
Brighter, holier than the day;

And unto that happy mood
All seems beautiful and good.
D.L.R.

LINES TO A LADY,

WHO PRESENTED THE AUTHOR WITH SOME ENGLISH FRUITS AND FLOWERS.