

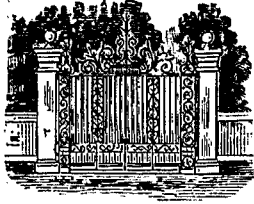
## Outside the Gates.

### FLOWERS OF THE SEASON.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

#### AUGUST.

By Mrs. C. CARMICHAEL STOPES.



Most of the flowers which bloom in July continue into August, for the temperature changes little during these two months. It depends very much what part of the country you go to what kind of flowers you find. If you have the good fortune to go north-west to the Cumberland or Scotch Highlands, you will find the hills and moors purple with great sweeps of Heather, and, in the little green or brown islands in this purple sea, you may find several varieties of Heath—the branching Heath of darker tint and smaller bells; the lighter Heath, with larger bells on single stalks, pink, lilac, or white; and a whitish and pinkish variety of waxen beauty, equal to those grown in greenhouses; by the edges of the banks of Bracken, and interweaving with its shorter fronds, are the delicate Blue Hare-bells (the Bluebells of Scotland), waving with every breeze on their slender stems, often associated with the smaller Stitchwort or Stellaria, or the yellow Tormentil. Where the ground is marshy, their tall, straight stems bear the snow-white flowers of the Star of Bethlehem, beautiful amid beauties. On the patches of mossy grass are strange tufts of paler green leaves, flat against the ground, somewhat of the shape of a star-fish, and out of the heart of the green star rises a slender stem bearing a little violet flower called *Pinguicula*. This is still used to curdle milk in Lapland, and probably it served the same purpose among our ancestors, whence the local name of Butterwort. Amidst these special plants you find other species, such as Eye-bright and white Bedstraws. But the queen of them all is the Heather. This is not a true Heath. Its corolla is very small, parted in four, and set in rows up the tips of the stem. It is small enough to go into the fairy bouquets that children are fond of making. If by chance you come upon a cluster of pure white Heather, be sure to pick and wear a spray, for they say it is certain to bring its wearer good luck, as does the four-leaved Clover. The Heather is not only an ornament to the bare hillsides, but it is also very useful. You may remember that when Walter Scott described the arrival of the uninvited guest in Ellen's Isle on Loch Katrine, he mentioned how the henchman made his bed. Great armfuls of Heather were cut, as nearly as possible equal in length, they were tied in bundles, and the cut ends set on the ground. Over the soft and feathery top a plaid was spread, and the mountaineer could sleep on his impromptu spring mattress in luxury. Those can easily understand this who have flung themselves down to rest on the dense tufts as they grow. Another of its uses is the making of brooms from the slender, straighter, tough twigs. Indeed, the Latin name that botanists given it is "*Calluna*, the sweeper." The smaller twigs cut off in broom-

making serve as bedding for animals in the farmyards. Bees love its flowers, and the honey of a heather district has always a peculiar fragrance and flavour of its own. Old Gerard says of it: "Heath or Heather grows upon dry mountains which are hungry and barren, as upon Hampstead Heath, near London, where all the sorts grow except the white"! The tender tops and flowers used to be believed to be good to be laid on a place bitten by any venomous beast, and the bark and leaves of the Heather were used instead of Tamarisk in decoctions.

In the same districts, though not so high on the hills, grow the tall, straight-stemmed, pale yellow Globe-flowers, charming alike in outline and in tint; the sweet little yellow Rock-rose, with its Thyme-like leaves, grows on the banks and the clefts of the rocks; and down in the still sweeps of the quiet lakes and canals are the great green leaves and the yellow, green-veined flowers of the yellow Water Lily. The white Water Lily on the Cumberland lakes is a dream of beauty. From its roots much tannic acid can be extracted. Nor should the grasses be omitted from your bouquet. There are many varieties common to other districts, though one peculiar to hilly marshes the Cotton Grass, with its white fluttering tufts. This is the *Canna*, famous in Celtic song as the whiteness to which the fair skin of beautiful maidens was compared. Varieties of Thistles grow everywhere.

By the seashore there are some special plants of this month, as in Norfolk and Suffolk the beautiful Yellow-horned Poppy; and the white-veined, blue-flowered Sea Holly, so beautiful to look at and so very prickly to handle. And in the inland reaches of country lanes or the sides of woody hills there are still to be found the great spikes of the purple Foxglove, so noted in its action on the heart as the medicine *digitalis*. In grounds a little more marshy the great Rose-Bay Willow Herb grows profusely, with its delicate odour that passes all too soon after being gathered. In denser woods may be found the Canterbury Bells, white or blue. Amid hedges and bushes now often blooms the Fuller's Teasel, with its angular and prickly stems, its connate leaves that catch and preserve the water during the showers for its refreshment in times of greater drought, and its great tufted, blue-tinted heads. This is one of the few plants that is still used in manufactures in its natural state. No artificial production of man has been discovered able to take its place entirely in combing or dressing woollen goods. The delicate little hooks of the Teasel pull out the wool as long as it is smooth, but when they come to a knot they snap, whereas any mechanical invention tugs at the knot, does not give, and injures the surface. The pale lilac of the Scabious is seen round the field banks; the bright yellow of the pale yellow Field Marigold, so beautiful to look at by any eyes but those of a farmer; the dark blue Cornflower and the scarlet Poppy wave among the yellowing grain, and everywhere is the white Yarrow or Millefoil. In the marshes there are fine weeds and grasses—Water Celery, Water Cresses, Spear-worts, and the purple flowers of the wild Mint; and lovely above them all are the turquoise-tinted flowers of the Marsh Myosotis, the true "Forget-Me-Not" of legend and of song. The plantain Fritillary, the yellow Succory, the Sow Thistle are more modest but yet useful plants. The Rest-Harrow, with its pretty purplish flower like a

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