

every tint of green to brown, and if they are pressed they become black. It is called "Rattle" because its dry seeds rattle in the capsules when ripe. This is not a true plant, being a parasite on the roots of other plants. It has received its Latin name, "Pedicularia," because it is supposed to encourage lice in sheep.

The Purple Orchis (*Orchis Masculata*) is an April flower. Its purple spikes grow on a stiff stalk in copses and pastures. The odour is not pleasant. The tuberous roots yield salep.

The small, blue-purple flowers of the Ground Ivy (*Glechoma Hederacea*) brighten the trailing wreaths of this recumbent creeper in hedge-banks and copses in April. It is a plant of many virtues. It used to be put into ale instead of the Hop for the bittering principle, hence it has been called ale-hoof. It used sometimes also to be dried for a kind of tea, and was a component part in many drug mixtures. The leaves were supposed to take away the humming sound in the ears, and decoctions removed sciatica and liver complaints. Stamped and strained with Celandine and Daisies it was supposed to be good for all troubles in the eyes.

Next to the Cowslip, the delight of the month is the Wild Hyacinth, or English Blue-bell (*Hyacinthus Non-scriptus*), a kind of Scilla or Squill. The fairy charm of copses and cut-wood, of banks shimmering with a blue haze, can only be understood by those who have gone forth to gather them, and come home with sheaves. "Hyacinth" is supposed to be named so in memory of the youth loved by Apollo. Old writers call it the English Jacinth. The root is bulbous, full of a slimy juice which Gerard says "will serve to set feathers upon arrows in place of glue, or paste books with; whereof is made the best starch, next unto that of Wake Robin roots." This was supposed to heal the venomous bite of the field spider, and its seeds to prevail against the falling sickness.

Charming as a flower as well as the promise of fruit is the Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria Vesca*), one of the Rosacea, which generally blooms about the middle of the month. It is the origin of all the cultivated varieties of strawberries. The Golden Saxifrage (*Chryso-splenium Oppositifolium*) also appears about the same time. In this month also flowers the Ash (*Fraxinus Excelsior*), the Box-tree (*Buxus Sempervirens*), the Elm (*Ulmus Campestris*), the Gooseberry (*Milus Grossularia*), the Currant (*Ribes Hortensis*), the Pear-tree (*Pyrus communis*), the Blackthorn (*Prunus Spinosa*), the Beech (*Fagus Sylvatica*), the Larch-tree (*Pinus larix Rubra*), the Wild Cherry (*Prunus Cerasus*), the Plum (*Prunus Domestica*), the Hawthorn or the May (*Crataegus Oxycantha*), the Apple-tree (*Pyrus Malus Sativus*), the Sycamore (*Acer Pseudo Platanus*).

While the orchards are dreams of beauty, the gardens are gorgeous with Hyacinth and Tulip early in the month, and later more modest Saxifrage, Daisy, Spiræa, Valerian, Flowering Currant, Wallflower, Venus' Looking-glass, Jonquil, Cyclamen, and Auricula; there used to be a rage for its culture quite extravagant, and there are very many varieties of this odoriferous plant. Lilac trees were introduced to our gardens in the reign of Henry VIII., and of these we have now great variety in shades of lilac and purple and of pure white, of which some species are more fragrant than others.

A Book of the Week.

THE ETERNAL WOMAN.*

The book before us is written with all the raciness, all the quick, vivid, narrative power which we have learnt to expect from this author. It is not of the depth, the tragic force, which characterised "The Supreme Crime"; it is of altogether lighter structure, and charmingly worked out. We shall none of us like it less because a little good-humoured fun is poked at the "Woman" movement, by a caricature of the editress of a Woman's paper, who labours for the abolition of marriage!! Like everyone who wants to make fun of a certain subject, the authoress is obliged to begin by misrepresentation, but she stops short at asking us to take her misrepresentation seriously. Perhaps the very best bits in the book, though not those which will most attract the ordinary reader, are the scenes in the "Governess's Home" in Edinburgh, where the hard-worked women discuss their life and its hardships among themselves. The different points of view are here very ably given.

The heroine, Clara Wood—could not the author have selected a somewhat more sympathetic name?—is left, at twenty, with nothing but the clothes on her back, having been adopted by a rich Baroness de Seifert, who fully meant to provide for her, but died without having made a will, so that the whole of her property went to her next-of-kin. Clara, full of good health, good spirits, and energy, sets herself to consider what to do. A chance to enter a University and qualify for one of the learned professions is offered her by the delightful editress of the "Coming Sex." But Clara, with insight extraordinary for a girl of her age, decides that her talent does not lie in that direction, though her abilities are excellent. She feels within herself that her mission is to make people happy, by the thousand and one feminine methods—to be a household "treasure," to be actively useful in everyday life; finally, she believes that it would lie in her power to make almost any man happy. The authoress seems to think that if a woman have this opinion strongly, it is almost universally correct, a theory which does not seem to be borne out by facts, since a wholly disproportionate view of her own charms, and of her own claims to happiness, seems to be an almost universal characteristic of the silly woman, who makes an execrable wife and mother, and spoils the life of the wretched man who has become her "vocation."

Clara, however, is made of stronger stuff. She embarks upon the life of a resident governess, having, half in jest, half in earnest, put before herself the ideal of a virtuous Becky Sharpe; one who shall use, to her own advantage, her knowledge of the foibles of those with whom she comes in contact. The account of her various "situations" makes excellent comedy, never penetrating too far below the surface, and showing us poor Clara, in spite of almost phenomenal successes, left stranded for the fourth or fifth time at the age of twenty-three, and beginning to think the occupation of living on her wits neither a very amusing nor a very remunerative one.

Now comes the part where she deliberately uses all her art to get herself installed in the house of a marriageable man, as attendant to his imbecile mother.

* By Dorothea Gerard. Hutchinson and Co.

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