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THE
 HERB OF THE FIELD.

REPRINTED FROM

"CHAPTERS ON FLOWERS,"

IN THE "MAGAZINE FOR THE YOUNG."

"And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good."—*Genesis* i. 12.

"By His care the tender grass
 Springs where flock or herd shall pass;
 He the riper blade assigned
 For a treasure to mankind.
 So might earth her store impart;
 The new wine cheer man's sinking heart;
 So with oil his brow might brighten,
 Bread his sinking spirit lighten."—

Psalms civ. *Oxford Psalter.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE KINGS OF ENGLAND," "LANGLEY SCHOOL,"

"SCENES AND CHARACTERS," ETC.



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P R E F A C E.

THESE Chapters must not be considered so much as a work on Botany, as an attempt to bring the wonders of the vegetable world under the notice of children, and lead them to take interest in the plants around them.

Of their irregularity the author is well aware. They were begun with a view to the flowers of each month; but the necessity of some plan, caused each chapter to contain a sketch of a natural order; in which, however, she begs she may not be supposed to include the "last bells of summer," or the "Christmas evergreens."

After the twelfth chapter, the Linnæan classes were gone through, in order to pick up such plants as had been omitted, and in arranging them for separate publication, the same order has been preserved, as the earlier chapters are the easiest, and after going through them, a child will be better able to understand the latter ones.

Long words have been avoided as much as possible; and something of system and science has been sacrificed to the desire to give no formidable appearance to the page. It is hoped that there is nothing contrary to scientific botany, and that such as pursue the study further, will find their way smoothed, and that they have nothing to unlearn.

We believe that the want has been long felt, of a book on plants sufficiently free from botanical terms, and with amusement enough to give young children a pleasure in the knowledge of flowers; and it is hoped that the "Herb of the Field" may be found in some way to supply this need. A few of the chapters read to a child, with the examination of the flowers therein described, would probably excite its interest in the rest.

It was with a view to village children that the

chapters were at first written, in the hope of rousing them from the indifference to wild flowers, that causes almost everything to be classed as a lily or a poppy. To teach them to value and observe, and perceive the wide-spread beauties in the woods and fields around them, is opening a great source of happiness, and leading them to a pursuit of a refining and softening nature, one of the best of the subordinate means of cultivation.

And it is very easily done. To ask if they know the name of a plant, to notice the pride of their Sunday nosegays, to reveal some of those marvels they have never perceived in the interior of a blossom, is a sure way to produce delighted smiles and animated looks; and simple lessons on natural objects are certain to be enjoyed and remembered. Or when connected with the subject where all teaching begins and ends, there is surely no means better suited for showing to young minds at once the mercy and majesty of the Creator, than the display of the exquisite loveliness and perfect contrivance of those minute plants, so common that they have hitherto passed them by without heed.

It is for such readers as these, who will never

be likely to have time or means for the study of complete botanical works, but who nevertheless take delight in knowing intimately the dwellers in meadow, wood, or wayside, that the classification of English plants has been given at the end, hoping that they may be thus assisted in learning the names of the fair forms that refresh their eyes.

May 7th, 1853.