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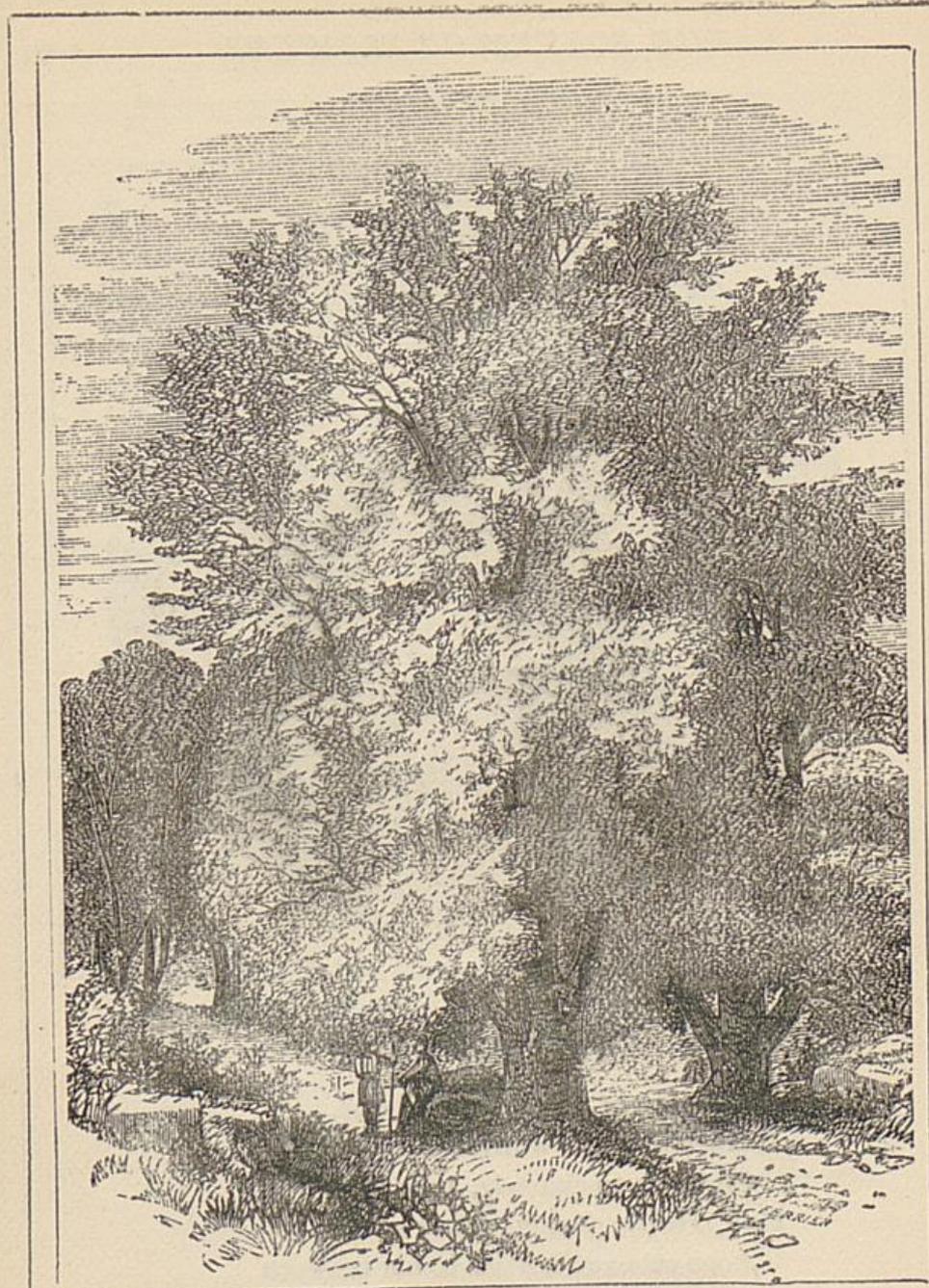
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The language and poetry of flowers

London, 1877

The Oak and the Broom.

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THE OAK AND THE BROOM.

I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat.
Out of its head an oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon—

The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-west :
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed :—

“ Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay,
Along this mountain's edge,
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up ! and think, above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred :
Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a Thing as you !

• • • • •
“ From me this friendly warning take ”—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose :

“ My thanks for your discourse are due ;
That more than what you say is true
I know, and I have known it long ;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

“ Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small ;
And he is oft the wisest man
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam ?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage ;
My father many a happy year
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

“ Even such as his may be my lot,
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant?
On me such bounty summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And, when the frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This plant can never die.”

One night, my Children! from the north
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day.

Wordsworth.

