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The language and poetry of flowers

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IV.-Two Bouquets; a Poem.

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Two Bouquets.

A circle of azaleas, white as snow,
Edged by a delicate fringe of maidenhair,
And then a row of clustered violets,
And in the midst camellias pale and cold ;
Fit flower for those who have no heart to love.

That is your bouquet, and a costly one,
But to my mind, for lady's hand too large,
Too artificial, and too stiffly planned.
Fancy it painted ! just a mass of white
Not softened by the one dark heavy line.

Now look at mine, fresh gathered, leaf by leaf
From a green hedgerow. First a slender fern,
A common fern, but green as emerald ;
Spreading its delicate fronds out like a fan,
And then another like a bishop's crook,
Tinged with bright gold and russet, now a group
Of lovely grasses, some like fairy plumes,
Some silvery tufts, and mosses soft and smooth,
And some so light as if a spider's threads
Had caught each shining seed upon their tips,
And hung them to the slender bending stem.
Here is a spray of dark ground ivy, bright
As polished jet, beside the sober grey
Of nun-like folded buds with silver touched,
And then for colour, here's a glowing leaf,
Shaded from palest brown to deepest red.
And here the rose tips of a sprig of thorn.
And here and there, amid these many hues,
Nestles a primrose in its own green leaf,
While some white violets peep out from the ferns,
And blue ones give a perfume to the grass.
I would not change this handful of the spring
For twenty clumps of costly hothouse flowers.