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The language and poetry of flowers

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The Asphodel and Amarath.

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There spring the Sorrel's vernal flowers ;
 And, rich in vegetable gold,
 From calyx pale the freckled Cowslips born,
 Receive in jasper cups the fragrant dews of morn.

Charlotte Smith.



THE ARUN. (*Ardour.*)

THE shining berry, as the ruby bright,
 Might please the taste and tempt the
 eager sight ;
 Trust not this specious veil ; beneath
 its guise,
 In humid streams, a fatal poison lies.
 So vice allures with virtue's pleasing
 song,
 And charms her victim with a siren's
 tongue.

Rowden.

THE ASPHODEL AND AMARANTH.

(*Regret & Immortality.*)

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,
 Passed o'er the village as the morning broke ;
 The dawn was on their faces, and beneath,
 The sombre houses capped with plumes of smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,
 Alike their features and their robes of white ;
 And one was crowned with amaranth, as with flame,
 And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way ;
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt oppressed,
" Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray
The place where thy beloved are at rest ! "

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,
Descending, at my door began to knock,
And my soul sank within me, as in wells
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognised the nameless agony,
The terror, and the tremor, and the pain,
That oft before had filled and haunted me,
And now returned with threefold strength again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,
And listened, for I thought I heard God's voice ;
And, knowing whatso'er He sent was best,
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile, that filled the house with light,
" My errand is not Death, but Life," he said ;
And, ere I answered, passing out of sight,
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'Twas at thy door, O friend ! and not at mine,
The angel with the amaranthine wreath
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,
Whispered a word that had a sound like Death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features, fair and thin ;
And softly, from that hushed and darkened room,
Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God ! If He but wave His hand,
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo ! He looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are His ;
Without His leave they pass no threshold o'er ;
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against His messengers to shut the door ?

Longfellow.



THE BARBERRY. (*Sharp temper.*)
THROUGH the green lanes of the country,
Where the tangled Barberry-bushes
Hang their tufts of crimson berries
Over stone walls grey with mosses.

Longfellow.