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The language and poetry of flowers

London, 1877

The Compass Flower.

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THE COLTSFOOT.* (*Justice.*)

WHEN all other scents have fled,
 In the winter months so dreary,
 When all other flowers are dead,
 And the heart grows cold and weary,

Longing for the balmy hours
 Of the lagging, tardy spring—
 Longing for the leafy bowers,
 And bright creatures on the wing.

Tussilago, then 'tis sweet
 To inhale thy soft perfume,
 And thy lilac blooms to greet
 'Mid surrounding wintry gloom.

Ancn.

THE COMPASS FLOWER. (*Guidance.*)

LOOK at this delicate plant that lifts its head from the meadow,
 See how its leaves all point to the north, as true as the magnet ;
 It is the Compass-flower, that the finger of God has suspended
 Here on its fragile stalk, to direct the traveller's journey
 Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless waste of the desert.
 Such in the soul of man is faith. The blossoms of passion,

* The sweet-scented Coltsfoot (*Tussilago fragrans*) is not an indigenous plant ; but we find it in almost every cottage garden, and as widely diffused amongst us as though it sprang spontaneously from the soil. It has been called the Heliotrope of the open gardens, and Phillips has attached to it the motto, "You shall have justice," because such was the exclamation of M. Villan of Grenoble, who found it at the foot of Mount Pilat, in his astonishment that it should not have been noticed and cultivated before.

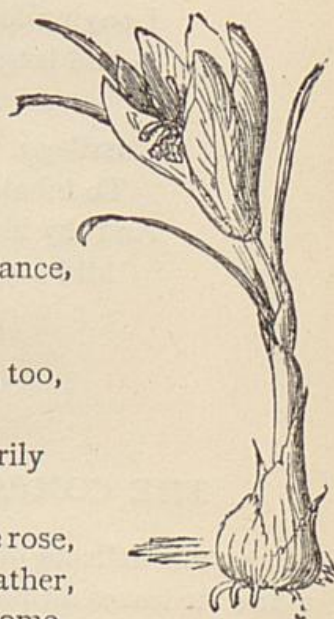
Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and fuller of fragrance,
 But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and their odour is deadly.
 Only this humble plant can guide us here, and hereafter
 Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are wet with the dews of
 nepenthe. *Longfellow.*

THE CROCUS. (*Abuse not.*)

AND presently the Crocus heard
 The greeting, and awoke,
 And donned with care her golden robe
 And emerald-coloured cloak ;
 And, springing from her russet shroud,
 Stepped forth to meet the sun,
 While broke the clouds with one bright glance,
 And his jocund race begun.

The Crocus brought her sisters, too,
 The purple, pied, and white,
 And the redbreast warbled merrily
 Above the flowerets bright.
 Oh, the nightingale may love the rose,
 And the lark the summer's heather,
 But the robin's constant flowers come,
 And brave the wintry weather.

Twamley.



THE DAFFODIL. (*Regard.*)

OH, Proserpine.

For the flowers now that, frightened, thou lett'st fall
 From Dis's waggon ! Daffodils
 That come before the swallow dares, and take
 The winds of March with beauty !

Shakespeare.