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### **The language and poetry of flowers**

**London, 1877**

Flowers.

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## FLOWERS.

SPAKE full well, in language quaint and olden,  
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,  
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,  
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,  
As astrologers and seers of eld ;  
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,  
Like the burning stars which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,  
God hath written in those stars above ;  
But not less in the bright flowerets under us  
Stands the revelation of His love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,  
Written all over this great world of ours ;  
Making evident our own creation,  
In these stars of earth,—these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,  
Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part  
Of the self-same, universal being,  
Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.

Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,  
Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,  
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,  
Buds that open only to decay !

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,  
Flaunting gaily in the golden light ;  
Large desires with most uncertain issues,  
Tender wishes, blossoming at night !

These in flowers and men are more than seeming ;  
Workings are they of the self-same powers,  
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,  
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,  
Some like stars, to tell us spring is born ;  
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,  
Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn ;  
Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,  
And in Summer's green emblazoned field,  
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing  
In the centre of his brazen shield ;  
Not alone in meadows and green alleys,  
On the mountain-top, and by the brink  
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys,  
Where the slaves of nature stoop to drink ;  
Not alone in her vast dome of glory,  
Not on graves of bird and beast alone,  
But in old cathedrals, high and hoary,  
On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone ;  
In the cottage of the rudest peasant,  
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,  
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,  
Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers ;  
In all places, then, and in all seasons,  
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,  
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,  
How akin they are to human things.  
And with childlike, credulous affection  
We behold their tender buds expand ;  
Emblems of our own great resurrection,  
Emblems of the bright and better land.

*Longfellow.*

