

**THE FAIRYLAND OF
FLOWERS: A POPULAR
ILLUSTRATED BOTANY**

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The Fairyland of Flowers: A Popular Illustrated Botany by Mara L. Pratt

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MARA L. PRATT

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THE
FAIRYLAND
OF
FLOWERS.

A POPULAR ILLUSTRATED BOTANY

Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged.

BY MARA L. PRATT.

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INTRODUCTION.

Botanists tell us always that the way to study flowers is to take the Flora and go out into the fields. Then educators tell us that the time to study Botany is in childhood; that flowers are the natural play-fellows of the children.

Both these statements seem plausible and just. Intelligent teachers everywhere will admit that both are ideal and true. But can it be done? "Ay, there's the rub!" The fields are there, the children are willing to be taught, the teacher is glad to teach—but the Flora! Children cannot follow the Flora. The hard words are so numerous! The headings with their sub-headings, and their sub-sub-headings, their references with their sub-references and their sub-sub-references, are so perplexing, puzzling, confusing!

And so, year after year the teacher reluctantly lays aside this beautiful study, or teaches it only very superficially and unsatisfactorily, and the pupil waits until he reaches the High School when he can understand the "Flora."

In the FAIRYLAND OF FLOWERS we have tried to make a plan of the Flora so simple and untechnical, that, with a little guidance from the teacher, the child can trace a flower from its great "class" down to the particular number of the particular family to which it belongs. How children enjoy studying out new things! travelling along new paths! untangling strange snarls! working out new puzzles! It is the natural bent of the child-mind. Then why not present to him this never-ending, ever-varying puzzle of the Flora. Is it not as interesting as "sliced animals," as instructive as "dissected maps," and a thousand times as ennobling as "gen puzzles?"

With a blank-book, in which the child shall write out his description of the plant and mount his specimen, much can be done in the long spring Friday afternoons to arouse in the children a love for nature, and a real tenderness for the beautiful flowers in the woods about us.

Nothing fixes a lesson in a child's mind like "writing it out." On another page we submit, as an example, a brief analysis of the *Corael*. Let each pressed specimen be fastened into the child's book, — little strips of court plaster will be found excellent for holding the flowers in place. Then, step by step, trace the flower along from the great division, the teacher writing the description on the board as each step in the analysis is studied out.

Teach your boys, also, the little legends and the poetry of the flowers — make the flowers real, living things to them — teach them that the grandest men, many of the most noted writers have always loved the flowers, and have thought it worth while to be very tender in their dealings with them. Break up in your boys any existing notion that flowers are "good enough for girls;" or that it is manly to trample down the little purple violets, or to snap off the heads of the bright-faced daisies.

The average, healthy, wide-awake boy may rebel at "set" moralizing; but he is not insensible to the beauty and grandeur of nature, if only we are wise enough to present it to him in a way that he can accept and understand.



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