



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

LITTLE
FLOWER FOLKS

VOLUME ONE

Mara Louise
Pratt-Chadwick

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

This edition published 2025
by Living Book Press
Copyright © Living Book Press, 2025

ISBN: 978-1-76153-679-3 (hardcover)
978-1-76153-691-5 (softcover)

First published in 1891.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any other form or means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner and the publisher or as provided by Australian law.



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

Little Flower Folks

or Stories From Flowerland for the Home and School

Volume 1

by

Mara Louise Pratt-Chadwick



Contents

Introduction.	1
---------------	---

PART 1

I. – The Plant.	3
II. – The Root.	9
III. - The Stems.	15
IV. – The Leaves.	19
V. – The Flower.	27
VI. - Arrangement of Leaves and Flowers.	31
VII. - the Fruit.	40

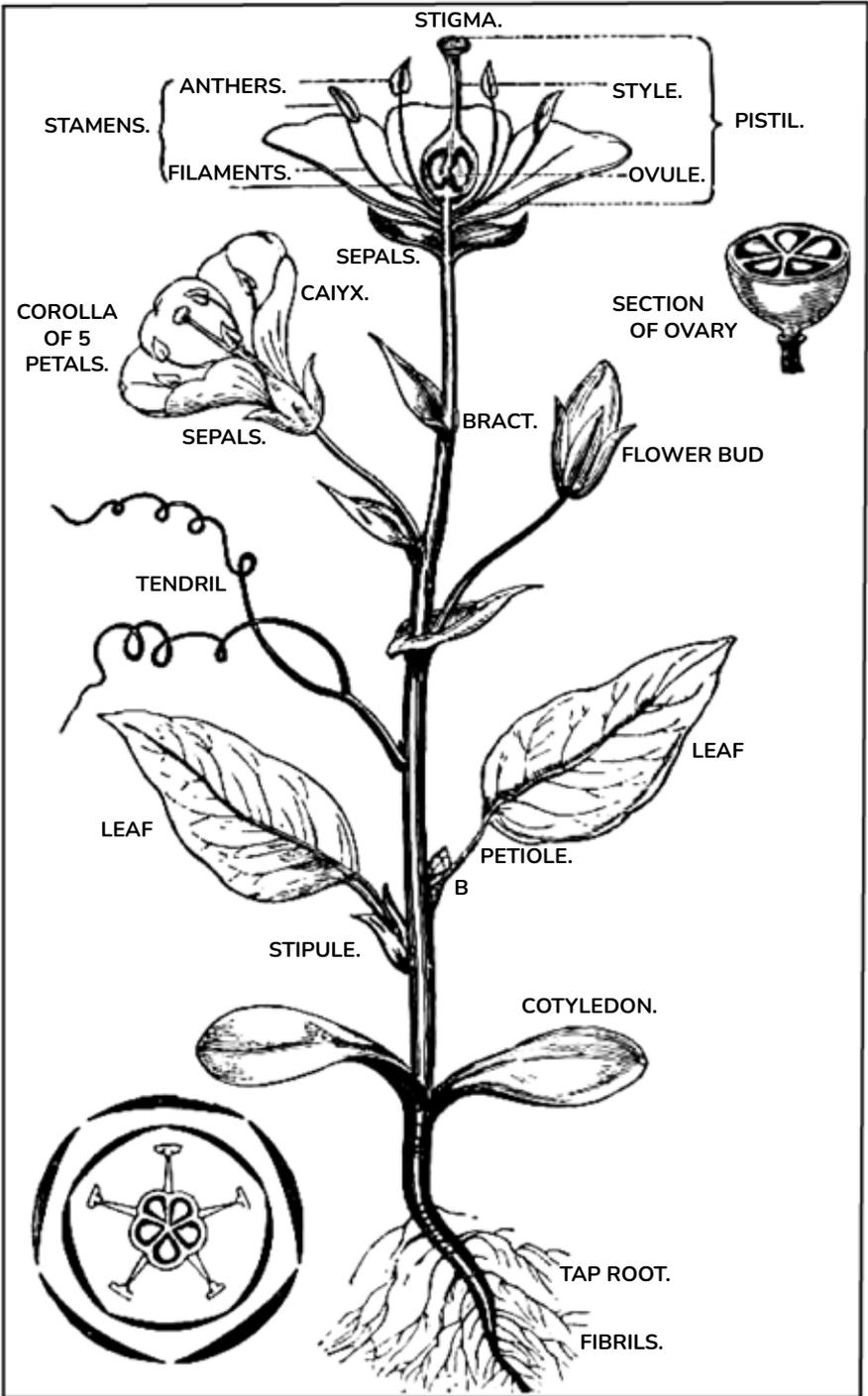
PART 2

The Fairy Garland.	49
I. - Hepatica or Liverwort.	55
II. - Sanguinaria, or Blood-Root	63
III.- Trailing Arbutus.	71
IV. - Marsh Marigold and Anemones.	76
V - Buttercup, Dandelion, Coltsfoot.	86
VI. - Shad-blow or June-berry - Saxifrage.	93
VII. - Trillium.	97
VIII. - Adder's Tongue, or Dog-tooth Violet, and Bellwort or Wild Oat.	101
IX. – Columbine.	110

Introduction.

There is in children an innate love for flowers. No one so enthusiastically welcomes the springtime as do the children — no one else has time to welcome it, to no one else is it all so new and beautiful. Then why not nourish and cultivate this taste of the child for the flower world? Is it not as elevating, as worthy, as refining as the taste for dogs and cats, mice and men to which the ordinary reading book so sedulously caters?

Then the flower world is so full of beauty, so full of legend and lyric — and it is so free to us all! Let us in the springtime when the flowers are waking, and in the autumn when the flowers are closing their bright eyes in sleep, leave our hum-drum reading books and open out this big book of Nature to children — it is their book, it belongs to them because they seem to belong to it, because they understand it, because they love it. Why not bring to them what is their own — why should we, what right have we to keep them from their own?



PART I.

I. - The Plant.

<i>root</i>	<i>leaves</i>	<i>buds</i>
<i>stems</i>	<i>leaflet</i>	<i>blossom</i>
<i>leaf</i>	<i>flowers</i>	<i>seed-cradle</i>
	<i>plantlet</i>	



THE flowers are coming! The flowers are coming!" cried the children in a little country school one day at recess.

"O, I am so glad," answered the teacher.

"I thought these April showers must bring out the May flowers."

"Why, that's just what mamma said!" cried Alice, delighted and surprised that mamma and teacher should say exactly the same thing.

"Did she indeed?" answered the teacher, with a queer little smile. "Ask mamma for me how she supposes it ever happened."

"I suppose, children, if we wish to go out 'botanizing' by and by, as the big boys and girls down in the village do, we really ought to begin to be getting ready. A journey into Flower-land is like a journey into Europe; beautiful as it is, there is a certain amount of plain, hard work to be done before we are ready to start."

"Why can't we begin now and have it over with?" said

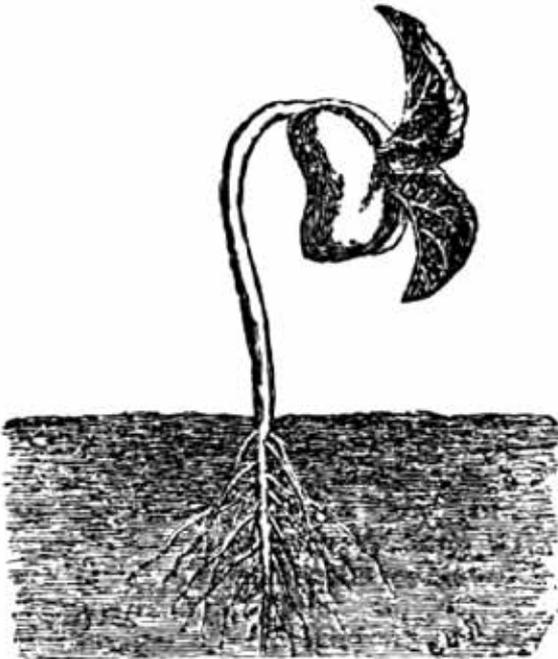
Harry. "That's the way I do with my wood-box. I hate wood-boxes; but if I must fill 'em, why I'd rather do it in the morning than to have the horrid things on my mind all play-time."

"You are a real philosopher, Harry!" laughed the teacher.

Harry looked puzzled and stuffed his hands hard into his pockets. But there was a kind, warm light in his teacher's eyes that told him that, whatever the big word meant, she wasn't making fun of him. And he was content.

"I don't know but Harry's plan is a good one," continued the teacher. "All those in favor of Harry's plan of beginning now and having it over with, say 'Aye!'"

"Aye! Aye! Aye! Aye! Aye! Aye!" came the hearty shout in reply.



SPROUTING BEAN.

“All those opposed” —
Not a sound.

“I think there’s no doubt it is a vote. Now for work. First of all, let us see what a plant has to do. It doesn’t have geography lessons to learn, well enough that her children are out of mischief, busy at something. She, like all wise mothers, knows to be sure; but Mother Nature is happy and busy. Harry, tell me, if you plant a seed, what is the first thing that happens as far as you can see?”

“It begins to grow — to sprout.”

“Yes, to grow; then we will say that the first work a plant has to do is to *grow*.

“You have all noticed that a plant is made of root, stem, and leaves. These are all a plant needs to make it grow even to the size of a tree; and if growing were all a plant had to do, very likely a *root*, a *stem*, and some *leaves* would be all we should ever see in any plant.



SNOW – DROP.

“But plants do have something else to do. By and by they have to *flower*. And later still while you are watching the beautiful flower, and admiring its rich color, in there among the green leaves, it is busy forming little seeds, rolling them away snugly in their little seed-cradles, telling them to take a good, long nap that they may be big and strong by and by to send out their own little plantlets and train them up into beautiful, tall plants.

“So we may say that the mission of the plant is:

- a. to grow,
- b. to flower,
- c. to form seeds.

“And if it is an honest, busy little plant, think what a world of beauty it makes for us; and how happy it makes the people. And the best of all is that it never once thought of that when it was working away so patiently. I think that must be Mother Nature’s reward to her children for ‘well-doing.’”

ACORN AND CHESTNUT.



One pleasant day in October an acorn and a chestnut were lying side by side on the brown earth where they had fallen. “I hope I shall be safe in the ground before winter comes,” said the acorn. “Snow and ice do not agree with me. In fact, if they come before I am under shelter they will kill me and it would be sad indeed, if so fine and large an acorn as I am should

be lost; for I expect to become a great oak some time, and oaks, as you know, are the kings of the forest.”

“Yes, I hope so, too,” said the chestnut, “I want to be safe before winter comes. I would like to grow into a tree; for the swallows have told me that in all lands a strong, tall tree is thought to be one of the finest things in the world.”

“Oh, chestnut trees are not much,” said the acorn. “No one cares anything about them except the boys, who think it fun to climb up among their branches and shake down the nuts. For my part, if I were a tree, I shouldn’t care to live just to please a few children; and I am sure it would make me very angry to see them eating the fruit which I had taken the trouble to bear.”

“Well,” said the chestnut, “every tree to its taste. Some trees would rather have their food liked by boys and girls than have it to be fit for nothing but pigs.”

“What?” said the acorn, growing angry. “The oak is the noblest of all the trees. From its wood are made the great ships that go sailing over the ocean. It lives hundreds of years and gives shade to thousands of people, and homes to millions of birds; and if, as I heard a man say one day, ‘great oaks from little acorns grow,’ what a noble tree may be expected from such an acorn as I am!”

“But how will you be planted?” asked the chestnut.

“Oh, that’s easy enough,” answered the acorn. “Every day I feel myself sinking deeper and deeper into the ground; and when I am deep enough the wind will throw some fine rich earth over me, and there I shall lie snug and warm until spring.

“Then, after putting out two little green leaves, I shall

grow no more above ground for some time, but only keep spreading my roots and making them stronger. I shall grow slowly for years, until at last I shall spread out my branches for a great distance around, and become the king of the forest. Ah, how glad I am that I'm an acorn and not a chestnut!"

Just then a squirrel, who had been peeping at them from her nest in the hollow of a tree, jumped down and seized the chestnut in her little gray paws.

"Good-by," sneered the acorn, as she carried it away. "That's the last of *you*. But there is no great loss. You would have been only a chestnut tree, at the best. Chestnuts are good enough for squirrels."

But, when the squirrel had put the chestnut away in her nice little house, she sprang down again, seized the acorn and carried it up too.

"Hello," said the chestnut, "here we are together again. There is little hope now that either of us will ever become a tree. And, as matters stand, I cannot see that an acorn is very much better than a chestnut after all."

But the acorn said nothing.

11. - The Root.

<i>radicle</i>	<i>iris</i>	<i>air-roots</i>
<i>plumule</i>	<i>turnip</i>	<i>plantlet</i>
	<i>cotyledons</i>	

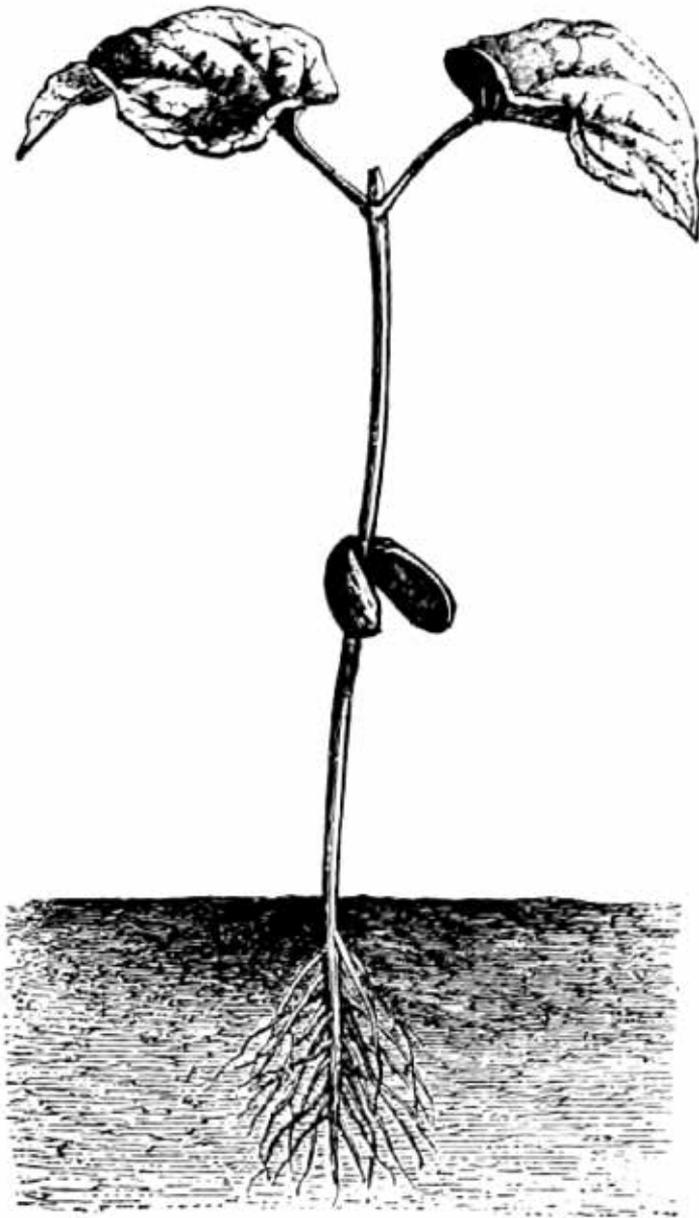


IN order to live we have to eat and drink, and breathe in good air. So with the plant; with its roots it takes in what food it needs from the soil about it, with the stem it carries the food up to the plant above; and with its leaves it drinks in the air and sunlight.

Inside each seed, small as it is, there is already formed a little plantlet — that is, there are two tiny leaves and a little wee, wee root; all so small that you would need to take it out from the seed very carefully, and then would need a magnifying glass to see them with.

Take a bean for example. Soak it, and the shiny covering will shrivel away from the hard part inside. Examine that hard part. Do you see there are two parts to it — that they separate very easily? These are the cotyledons. And see again the two little points! One of those, called the *radicle*, will grow down into the ground, forming the root of the plant. The other one, called the *plumule*, will stretch up out of the earth into the sunlight to form leaves.

This radicle, or root, may take on different forms. The Iris, or Flag Plant, that boys so delight to wade into the water after, has an odd, irregular, knobby root; the common



YOUNG BEAN PLANT.



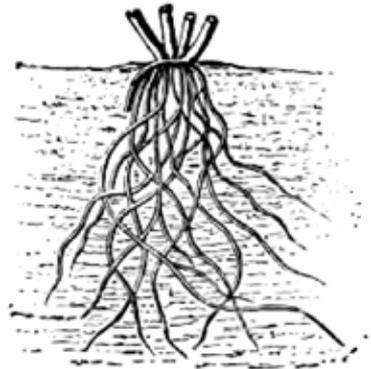
COUCH GRASS.



TAP ROOT OF TURNIP
AND CARROT.



BRANCHING ROOT.



FIBROUS ROOT.

turnip plant has a cone-shaped root; other plants have roots like threads, reaching and spreading in all directions.

Sometimes, if a branch chances to be flattened down, so that for a long time it lies on the ground, it will send out little roots of its own, as if to say, "Since I cannot stand up in the bright sunlight with my brother branches, I may as well start a root here all of my own."

Another kind of root is the air-root. These you find growing all along the stems of certain climbing plants.



FLAGROOT.



AIR – ROOTS ON IVY.

These little air-roots strike out from the vine, and seize upon the wall or tree upon which the vine is growing, and so hold it up in place.

HOW THE LEAVES CAME DOWN.



'LL tell you how the leaves came down,
The great tree to his children said:
“You’re getting sleepy, Yellow and Brown.
Yes, very sleepy, little Red.”

“Ah! begged each silly, pouting leaf,
“Let us a little longer stay;
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief;
‘Tis such a very pleasant day,
We do not want to go away.”

So, just for one more merry day
To the great tree the leaflets clung,
Frolicked and danced, and had their way,
Upon the autumn breezes swung,
Whispering, all their sports among.
“Perhaps the great tree will forget,
And let us stay until the spring,
If we all beg, and coax and fret.”
But the great tree did no such thing —
He smiled to hear their whispering.

“Come, children all, to bed,” he cried —
And, ere the leaves could urge their prayer,
He shook his head, and far and wide,
Fluttering and rustling everywhere,
Down sped the leaflets through the air.

I saw them; on the ground they lay,
Golden and red, a huddled swarm,
Waiting till one from far away,
White bedclothes heaped upon her arm,
Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare tree looked down, and smiled.
“Good night, dear little leaves,” he said,
And from below each sleepy child
Replied, “Good night,” and murmured,
“It is so nice to go to bed.”

— SUSAN COOLIDGE.

III. - The Stems.

<i>erect</i>	<i>creeping</i>	<i>trailing</i>
<i>decumbent</i>	<i>climbing</i>	<i>brier</i>
<i>tendrils</i>	<i>twining</i>	<i>thorn</i>



NOTICE the different shapes of stems. Many of these forms, I have no doubt, you have drawn in your drawing books.

We will not stop in this little book to learn the names of these shapes. Keep that for by and by.

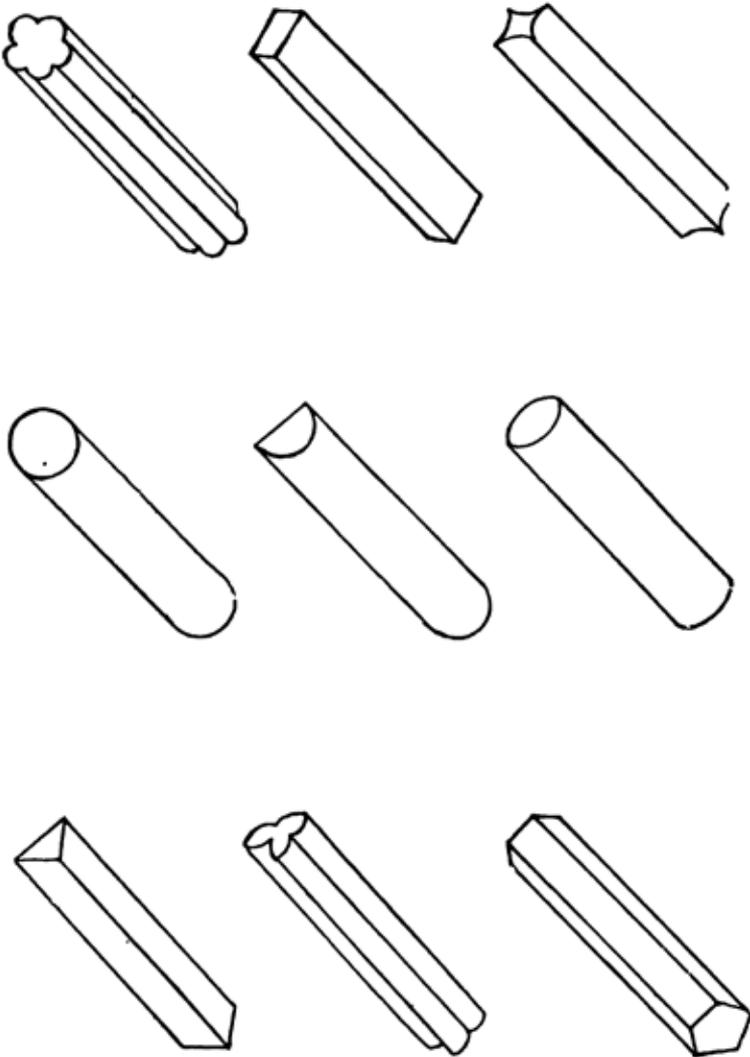
But these stems not only take on different shapes, but they have so many ways of growing.

There is the *erect* stem that grows straight up, or



CREeping STEM

nearly so; the *decumbent* stem that lies along the ground for a while, and then, as if it suddenly had grown strong and had made up its mind not to be lazy, takes a turn upward. Then there is the *trailing* vine that never gives

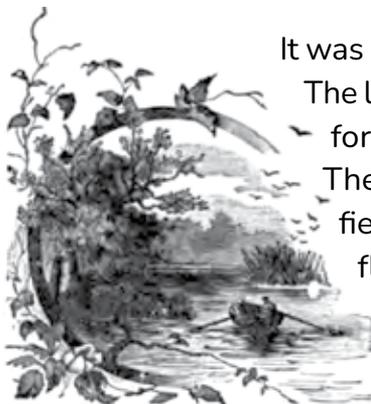


SHAPES OF STEMS.

up its first plan of lying abed forever but devotes itself to looking pretty and graceful as it lies, smiling up at the sun; then there is the *creeping* or running stem that not only has made up its mind to lie abed forever but, lest someone might insist on shaking it up into a standing position, has driven down, here and there, some little roots that hold it very firmly in place. Then there are the *climbing* stems that, although they don't quite like to lie forever on the ground, yet haven't quite strength enough to "stand alone," so fasten themselves around the erect stems of other plants; then there are the *twining* stems, like the climbers, except that I fancy they grow to love the brave erect stems upon which they climb, and so twine themselves about them.

There are other stems too. The comical little curls on the grape-vines – tendrils - are stems. Yes, and thorns and briars, stubborn, willful, aggressive little fellows - they too are stems.

THE KIND OLD OAK.



It was almost time for winter to come. The little birds had all gone far away, for they were afraid of the cold. There was no green grass in the fields, and there were no pretty flowers in the gardens. Many of the trees had dropped all their leaves. Cold winter, with its snow and ice, was coming. At

the foot of an old oak tree, some sweet little violets were still in blossom. "Dear old oak," said they, "winter is coming; we are afraid that we shall die of the cold."

"Do not be afraid, little ones," said the oak. "Close your yellow eyes in sleep and trust to me. You have made me glad many a time with your sweetness. Now I will take care that the winter shall do you no harm."

So the violets closed their pretty eyes and went to sleep; they knew that they could trust the kind, old oak. And the great tree softly dropped red leaf after red leaf upon them until they were all covered over.

The cold winter came with its snow and ice, but it could not harm the little violets. Safe under the friendly leaves of the old oak, they slept and dreamed happy dreams until the warm rains of spring came and woke them again.

IV. - The Leaves.

<i>variety</i>	<i>blade</i>	<i>veins</i>
<i>peculiar</i>	<i>foot-stalk</i>	<i>vein lets</i>
<i>genteel</i>	<i>stipules</i>	<i>netted</i>
<i>sullen</i>	<i>mid rib</i>	<i>parallel</i>

SUCH a variety of leaves as there is! Every plant has its own peculiar leaves just as each of us has his own peculiar face. There are the long, narrow, genteel leaves like the long, narrow, genteel faces; the broad, happy leaves like the broad, happy faces; sometimes, too, there are the rough, coarse leaves like the rough, coarse faces;



LEAVES AND STIPULES.