and, like his mother, delights to tempt belated travellers into his
abode in "an ominous wood" in Wales.

And in thick shelter of black shades embowered
Excels his mother in her mighty art,
Offering to every weary traveller:
His orient liquor in a crystal glass
To quench the draught of Floribun, which they taste,
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the poison works, their human countenance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some British form of welf or beast,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat;
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect in their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves as comely as before;
And all their friends and native home forgot
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.

In this description, clearly based on Homer's tale and
subsequent allegories, we can see one or two further refinements
of thought. The men are not turned bodily into beasts; it
is their face which is transformed. Fancy is here in harmony
with sad fact. Next the men are doubly deceived; being
degraded into beasts they know it not but still think they
are fairer than before. We have got very far away from
Homer's conception now, but Milton has remodelled the ancient
tale into fancies not less beautiful although they carry a more
serious meaning to the thoughtfu[1] reader. Having seen the
various modifications which have been made by poets in writing
of the tale of Circe, we can now understand the further import
of this picture which I undertook to make clear. It is an
expression of this fact—that sensuality is not only sin, but a
contemptible mistake. In studying a great picture it is a real
pleasure to commit to memory those passages in the poets
which explain the painter's design.

T. G. RooPER.
the gardener; they heard it from the lips of many a customer, and they felt it every day when the morning-wind swept round the garden and drove away the night from their little heads, so that they could see and nod to each other. The whole garden offered homage to them.

So it came to pass, that, although the two roses were as good, and as well meaning as roses ought to be, they grew rather proud, and had great expectations regarding their future fate. It could only be a king, or a prince, or, at any rate, a very rich man. About man, who would buy them and take them to his home. About women, too; they loved each other tenderly, and when they thought what would become of them the roses would each shed a single large tear, which, when the daylight appeared, lay like a glittering drop in their chalices, and that was always pretty to see. Yes, it was so beautiful that the morning-wind, who passes over many lands, and who is therefore an authority in floral beauty, would halt in astonishment before them, make a bow, and say, "To the truly beautiful every thing lends grace, even pain." Then the two little sisters would nod to him, and say, "Oh, you are a nice young man, Mr. Morning-wind. You are so lovely in the early morning:" at which the morning-wind would feel very much flattered, and would tuck his coat tails under his arms, and fly far away.

So the days went on, and many visitors and customers came into the garden; but no purchaser was found for the two roses; it was as though every one felt unconsciously that they were to be reserved for a brilliant future. But one beautiful summer's evening a magnificent open carriage drove up to the garden door, and stopped there. The two roses could see down the garden through the iron gateway, and as soon as they saw the carriage their hearts began to beat as though they felt that some change was coming to them. And they laid their cheeks together, and whispered their thoughts to one another. A coachman sat on the box, and next to him a man-servant, and both had coats and hats with broad gold bands; and the roses, being unused to the world, thought, when they saw such splendour on the box, that these must be the principal people. But a little lady-bird, who had been in many big houses, and who had seen once the hand of a real Princess, came up to them, and when he heard what the roses were saying, said to them, "Not so! Only the servants sit on the box. You must look at the people inside the carriage." So the roses looked very hard, but they did not care for the people in the carriage; the lady was not at all young, and not at all pretty, and the other, a gentleman, had a huge black beard.

While the roses were exchanging their opinions, the little lady-bird began again, saying, "Why, you two really don't understand anything of the world at all; don't you know this man is the richest banker in the city, and the lady is his wife? Why should you want rich people to be pretty?—that is left for poor people, who have nothing else."

The roses were ashamed of their ignorance, and blushed, and that made them look fairer than ever.

The gentleman and his wife alighted from the carriage, and behind them came a little dog that had silvery white hair, and was so round that he could only slowly waddle, all the time making a melancholy face, and from time to time he gave a little bark, which sounded as if he were saying, "Go away, get away!" The gardener stood at the garden door, took his hat off, and made a deep bow. The gentleman nodded slightly to him, but the lady passed by him, looking into the air. When the lady-bird saw that, she called out to the roses, "Now you can learn something; see, rich people must behave as this lady does; then they understand how to be rich." The roses, however, felt a little ashamed of their bad taste, for they had not really liked this behaviour.

The procession swept down the garden walk straight to the place where the two roses stood, and with every step the lady took, her silk dress rustled, so that it seemed to say to all nature around it, "Hush, sh! I am from Paris, I am from Paris."

The gardener followed with his hat in his hand, and pointed them to right and left, now to this rose-tree, then to that, and the lady stood from time to time and raised her eye-glass to her eyes, and when the gardener had spoken so long that he was red in the face, she slightly opened her lips and said: "All that is nothing." Then the poor gardener made a long face, and the little dog barked, as if to say, "Serve you right, and serve you right," and the husband nodded to the gardener and said, "You must give my wife the very best." At last they came to the two roses, who were looking out...

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with great large eyes, and here, for the first time, the lady
looked at them.

When they saw the glasses turned on them, they timidly
bowed their heads, and a tremor of shame came over them, and
then the lady could not help being impressed. Then she said,
"Well, that possibly might suit order to show her approval. "That, possibly, might suit
her approval. "Well, that possibly might suit
everything, so exclaimed, "Truly, two fine specimens. What
is the price?"

When the gardener named a sum, the lady cried "Hoo,"
and held her hands, and the gardener said: "I also thought it would add to your
Yes," said her husband, "I also thought it would add to your
"My wife has the finest collection of tea-roses in the town."

A bargain was soon struck, and it was arranged that the
lady's gardener should call for yellow rose the next day, and
then the gentleman and lady, and the little white dog, stepped
into their magnificent carriage and drove away. When the
roses were quite alone, they felt very sad, for they knew that
now the hour had come when they must part, perhaps for their
whole lives, and they laid their cheeks together, and cried into
one another's hearts.

The white rose whispered to her sister. "Oh! you happy
sister! Oh! you happy sister! Why cannot I meet such a
glorious fate as you?" and deep, deep within her heart, there
rose a little bitter drop of envy, because she was obliged to con-
firm that she had been considered less beautiful than her sister.

So_C they stood, locked in each other's arms, not noticing that
other customers had entered the garden, and were looking at them.
They looked up on hearing two children's voices crying,
"Ah! father, father, the white rose, it is too lovely," and saw
a man standing before them, holding a child in each hand, one
a boy, and the other a little girl. These were the children who
had called out, and all three looked at the white rose with
adoring eyes. She, however, was not at all pleased, for the
man looked very different from the rich gentleman; he wore a
threadbare coat and a round felt hat, and the children were
also shabbily dressed. She did not like being admired by these
poor people, after the rich ones had rejected her, so she turned
away her head, as much as to say, "Go your way, I am not for
such as you." The gardener seemed to think this too, for he
came back from the garden gate, and looked very much
surprised when he saw them standing before his loveliest
roses.

The white rose could scarcely believe her ears when she
heard the poor man ask the gardener what she would cost.
He asked timidly, it is true, but he asked it, and that appeared
to the rose a great impertinence. She rejoiced inwardly when
she heard the high price named by the gardener, and when she
saw the sorrowful face of the poor man. But the two little
children pressed closer to their father, and the little boy cried,
"Oh, dear, dear father, please buy the beautiful rose;" and the
little girl said, "Only think, father, how pleased mother would
be when you brought the lovely rose home."

Then, for the first time in her life, unkind and naughty
feelings came into the white rose's heart, and she was
angry with the children, and would have liked to sting them
with her thorns. The poor shoemaker, for that was the
man's occupation, looked silently at his children, then wrote
something in the sand with his stick, as though making a
calculation, and then, going to the gardener, he said, as
though excusing himself for his temerity, "My wife has been
so ill, but is now a little better, and I wanted to give her a
great pleasure, and because she likes roses—especially white
ones—so much, I thought—"

"But I cannot take less," interrupted the gardener, and the
white rose murmured, "That's right, that's right." The children
looked anxiously at their father, and he drew out his purse and
counted and counted until the white rose trembled in silent
agony from her roots to her head.

Suddenly she felt as though a hailstorm had burst over her
head, and thought she must faint, for she heard the shoemaker
say, "Well, it is a great deal of money, but, all the same, I'll
take the tree."

She threw her arms round her sister's neck, and cried and
shrank back, but her anger and grief only made her look more
beautiful, and the children stood by and elbowed their hands.

The gardener received the money, then took the tree out of
the ground, and the white rose felt with a shudder that the
poor shoemaker took her in his hands and carried her out of
the garden, never more to see her beautiful, happy—ah! so
much happier—sister.

The next day, according to orders, the yellow rose was
taken to the house of the rich people, and she felt as proud
to be in the same house as the young princess. She had every reason to
be happy, for she had come to a new home where only very rich
gorgeous people lived, and only the richest of the rich lived in this
people lived, and only the richest of the rich lived in this
particular street. The streets were so beautiful that when a
sparrow flew through the streets, the horses stepped lightly, so that
the peace of the inhabitants was not disturbed, and in the
treasures that the air was filled with
gold-dust, and the sparrows when they flew through the street
always came out again with golden tails. Looking through
an artistically wrought-iron gate, you saw that before the house,
next to the street, was a little garden with yellow gravel. Behind
the house lay the real garden, which was very large and roomy.
A brick wall surrounded it, so that no one could look in.

This was the new home of the yellow rose, and in a
moment, as she entered it, she saw that she had come into
very aristocratic society. In the middle of the garden was a
big round lawn, and this was as wide as the head of a man
who goes every day to the hairdresser; round the lawn were
beds, and in the beds were flowers of every variety, so that
the air sparkled and glowed with their scent and colour.

In the middle of the lawn was a circular bed, and that was
the most distinguished place in the whole garden. There stood
a little wood of roses—yellow, yellowish, greenish yellow, and
reddish yellow roses; and this was the collection of tea roses
which the rich gentleman had spoken of the following evening.
Towards this place the gardener, who was carrying the yellow
rose, bent his steps.

Then it appeared for the first time that there was something
naughty in the heart of the yellow rose, for when she saw how
all the flowers in the garden bent their heads to her, and looked
at her attentively to see what the new comer to the select
bed was like, she felt very vain, and looked at them proudly,
thinking to herself, "What are you all compared to me?"

It is true that her pride fell a little, and she was even
embarrassed, when she arrived in the middle of the lawn and
was planted there, for all the tea-roses looked up at the new
comer with curiosity. She felt as if it was the looks pierced her
most heart, and at the same time she heard a buzzing and
hissing of many anxious-voicing voices, which almost
deafened her.

It was quite natural that the whisperings and hissings should
be about her, and here and there, out of the multitude of voices,
a word would strike her ear.

"Another one! Did you think we had too much room?"

"Quite the reverse; it's getting much too crowded."

"I really should like to know what our worthy mistress is
thinking of."

"We were evidently no longer pretty enough—hi! hi!"

"Have you seen the new-comer?"

"Yes, yes; she is just passable."

The yellow rose, who had kept her eyes on the ground,
now dropped a curtsey, and raised her glowing face. She
then saw close by, a few old rose-matrons, who nodded to
her in a friendly and compassionate manner, just like an old
Court lady who nods to a poor little débutante for the first time on the slippery floor of the Court. But she
saw at once that the rose-matrons were very beautiful, and so
were all the roses about her; and she felt that she was no
more the only one of her kind, but that she now stood with
many of her equals.

What gave the roses a very stately appearance were little
wooden tablets which each wore round her neck, and on these
were written the name of each rose, her descent, and the place
of her birth.

What wonderful tales they told. There were roses who had
come from China; others from Japan; again, others from the
East Indies; and one even from the Island of Bourbon. Yes,
the society she found herself in was truly very distinguished.

The gardener soon returned with the little tablet that was
to belong to the yellow rose, and while he was hanging it round
her neck the hissing and chattering ceased, while all the roses
stretched out their necks to see who the new comer was and
where she came from. Scarcely had the gardener left them
when the babble broke out again, only louder and more spiteful
than before. It was quite true that they saw from the tablet
The Month of Blossoms.

By Dr. J. E. Taylor, F.L.S., F.G.S., &c., Editor of "Science Gossip."

At last summer is upon us. Organic nature is nearing her highest-pitched note. Our country walks naturally shorten themselves, as regards distance, for there is so much more to hear and see and understand. All the members of our native flora and fauna are disporting themselves. You would hardly think most of the sweet birds that are singing from every green tree are quite as much African as English—if not more. In May nature holds her annual Eisteddfod. It is an avian singing competition—ranging from the melancholy but liquid flow of song from the nightingale to the "cheeky" chirrup of the sparrow. Shut your eyes and open your ears the first sunny morning in mid-May and you find yourself in the country. Myriads of bird voices blend in the wide-spread "Hallelujah Chorus!"

The low of feeding cattle in the meadows comes in as diapason. Even the distant watch-dog's echoing call drops in the harmonious universal gamut of sound. Life is nearly at flood-tide, but still flowing in. May is not a month for pessimists. The latter are at their best in November, for gloom and fog are their natural environments.

The migratory singing birds have nearly all arrived on our English shores. Even thus early, some are leaving us, for the British islands are like an ornithological railway station—some passengers constantly arriving, others departing. Thus the snipe (Scolopax gallinago) and field-fare leave us in May; the lesser whitethroat, lesser redpoll, turtle dove, and wryneck have arrived to take their places.

The one natural history fact, above all others, we have to