

## A WALK IN AUGUST.

“The sixt was August, being rich arrayd  
In garment all of gold downe to the ground:  
Yet rode he not, but led a lovely Mayd  
Forth by the lilly hand, the which was cround  
With eares of corne, and full her hand was found:  
That was the righteous Virgin, which of old  
Liv’d here on earth, and plenty made abound;  
But, after Wrong was lov’d and Justice solde,  
She left th’ unrighteous world, and was to heaven extold.”  
—*Spenser*.

AUGUST was originally Sextilis, the sixth month, but July having been assigned to Julius Caesar, the month following was called after his successor Octavius, by whom the name Augustus, afterwards borne by each Roman Emperor in turn, had been assumed. Augustus was born in September, and it was first proposed that this should be the month to be re-named, but the preference was given to Sextilis, both as immediately following that of the Emperor’s predecessor, and because this month had proved an auspicious one to Augustus, in it he had been admitted to the Consulate, celebrated three triumphs, received the oath of allegiance from the Janiculum legions, brought Egypt under the power of Rome, and ended the civil wars. Sextilis, therefore, was selected by the Senate for the honour, and a day, taken from February, was added to the original thirty.

Verstegan calls it Arn (Harvest) Monat and Barne Monat,

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“meaning thereby the filling of the barnes with corne,” and that it is a busy month the French couplet attests.

“Qui dort en Août  
Dort à son coût.”

and

“En Août quiconque dormira  
Sur midi s’en repentira.”

for now

“The reapers to the scene repair,  
With hook in hand, and bottles slung,  
And dowlas-scrip<sup>1</sup> beside them hung.  
The sickles stubble all the ground,  
And fitful hasty laughs go round;  
The meals are done as soon as tasted,

And neither time nor viands wasted.”

The Germans say that fine weather on St. Lawrence’s Day (August 10th) means a good wine year, and “Regnet’s an Laurantii Tag, giebt es viele Mäuse,” while French and Italians believe that

“S’il pleut à la Saint Laurent  
La pluie vient à temps:  
Si elle vient à Notre Dame<sup>2</sup>  
Chacun encore l’aime;  
Si la pluie vient à S. Barthélemy  
Souffle lui au derriere.”

Another proverb, however, tells us that

“Si’l pleut à la Saint Barthélemy  
Il y aura assez de raves et de regain.”

while in England we say

‘[sic] Saint Bartholomew  
Brings the cold dew,”

for now the nights begin to grow chilly, the Summer is waning, the Blackcap is heard for the last time ere his departure for Africa, the Swifts are going or gone, the “Swallows are making them ready to fly,” and each young Robin is selecting which particular patch of ground shall henceforward be his own domain, a decision which sometimes entails the unseemly spectacle of a duel between father and son, should the latter wish to remain near his birthplace.

The pretty little Harvest Mouse (*Mus minutus*) is in its nest among the corn stalks, a nest described by Gilbert White, who  
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first discovered the little creature in this country, as “most artificially platted, and composed of the blades of wheat; perfectly round and about the size of a cricket ball, with the aperture so ingeniously closed that there was no discovering to what part it belonged.” In these nests live a furry family of from five to eight or nine tiny young, the mother herself measuring only four-and-a-half inches, of which the tail accounts for nearly half, the Harvest Mouse, with the exception of its cousin, the Pigmy Shrew, being the smallest of British mammals. There are probably several broods during a season, and the mice are often accidentally carried off among the ripened corn, spending their Winter in the hay-rick, in which case they remain active, but if living naturally in the field they construct a burrow and hibernate during the cold weather.

The Clouded Yellow Butterfly (*Colias edusa*) and Pale Clouded Yellow (*Colias Hyale*) are seen this month, the majority being most probably visitors from France, and their appearance, especially that of the Pale Clouded Yellow, is uncertain. Various “double-brooded” butterflies and moths also appear—the Green-veined and Bath White, the Azure or Holly Blue, the

Grizzled, and the Dingy Skipper Butterfly, and the Chocolate Tip and Pebble Hooktip Moths, etc. The epithet "double-brooded" is misleading, for no one butterfly or moth really produces more than a single brood in a year, their eggs are usually laid in Summer and the resulting caterpillars remain in the pupal state throughout the Winter, emerging as adult insects next Spring or early Summer. These, in their turn, lay eggs which undergo the same process, but in some species caterpillars hatched from eggs laid in Spring become butterflies or moths in later Summer and so there is, as it were, a second "crop" of this particular species. For instance, the Azure Blue, which is a double-brooded butterfly, emerges from its pupal state in April or May, and the resulting caterpillars will appear as butterflies in August, while the caterpillars hatched from the eggs of the August Butterfly will pass the Winter as pupæ and emerge next April in their turn. In the case of the Swallow Tail and Small Copper Butterfly (*Polyommatus phlæas* [sic] the number of broods is three; some lepidoptera, such as the Pearl-bordered Fritillary and the Wall Brown Butterfly, the Hook-Tip and Swallow Prominent Moths, are double-brooded in the South but not the North of England; while others, such as the Pale Clouded Yellow just mentioned, are double-brooded

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on the Continent, but single-brooded in this country. In some cases, as in that of the Lackey Moth, eggs laid in Autumn do not hatch till the following Spring, in others, as that of the Scotch Argus Butterfly (*Erebia Æthiops*) it is the caterpillar, and, in the case of the Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly, the perfect insect, that hibernates.

It is calculated that on an average every female butterfly or moth lays annually from two to six hundred eggs, but the ravages of Ichneumon flies, Wasps, and Birds, prevent the caterpillars attaining maturity. The Ichneumon Fly, dreaded by all who keep collections of caterpillars, lays its eggs in the very body of the poor creature, and the young grubs feed on the vital juices of their host, gradually absorbing them till when the caterpillar should become a chrysalis there is practically nothing left of it, its skin or chrysalis case being occupied with the pupæ of its invaders. The Fly itself feeds on the juices of plants. Wasps both devour caterpillars and carry them to their nests as food for their grubs, the solitary Wall-wasp (*Odynerus parietum*) first paralyzing them by stinging them, so that the caterpillar remains alive but helpless, and the young grub, emerging from its egg, finds food at hand.

Clouds of Ants now leave their nests, regularly rising and falling on gauzy wings as they float in vast columns through the air, selecting their mates in the moving maze. After this curious wedding flight, the object of which is to disperse the insects over fresh ground at a distance from the original nest, the males, and many of the females disappear—the prey of birds and fish, the remaining females bite off their wings, no longer necessary, and found new colonies, depositing their eggs in cracks of the ground, avoiding places that are likely to be disturbed and choosing the edges rather than the middle of a path.

Another insect now in evidence is the obnoxious Harvest-mite or Harvest-bug, this tiny crimson dot is the larva of the Silky Trombidium (*Trombidium holosericeum*) and lives a parasitic life, sucking nourishment from the unfortunate victim—human or animal,—into which it has thrust its sharp mandibles; it is allied to the harmless Money-spinner (*Tetranychus telarius*).

With the ripening corn the first touch of Autumn creeps into the names of our flowers, the rare Autumnal Squill (*Scilla autumnalis*), the Autumn Lady's Tresses (*Spiranthes autumnalis*) with spiral spike of little white blossoms, and the familiar Autumn-

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nal Hawk-bit (*Leontodon autumnalis*), the Fall Dandelion of America, which may be distinguished from the others of its genus by the fact that whereas the flowers of the other two species—the Hairy and the Rough Hawk-bit (*L. hirtus* and *L. hispidus*) droop while in bud, those of the Autumnal Hawk-bit hold themselves erect. The Common Autumn Gentian (*Gentiana amarella*) flowers this month, so do the Baltic Gentian and the rare Marsh Gentian and Scarce Autumn Gentian (*G. germanica*), the last similar to the first-named but larger and differing in the lobes of its calyx, which in the Common Autumn Gentian are nearly equal, in the Scarce Autumn Gentian unequal.

Various species of Goosefoot are now in flower, the scientific and popular name suggested by the shape of the leaves, Greek χήν, a goose, πούς, a foot. The small greenish coloured flowers grow in spikes, much like Sorrel, the two most common species are the White Goose-foot or Fat Hen (*Chenopodium album*) with powdered leaves, and the Red Goose-foot (*C. rubrum*). Good King Henry or All Good (*C. Bonus-Henricus*) is used as spinach and is cultivated and known as Mercury. The family is an important one, embracing the various Mangold Wurzels and Beet, and including the Jerusalem Oak. Other useful plants are the White Horehound or Hoarhound (*Marrubium vulgare*) with whitish, and the Black Horehound (*Ballota nigra*) with purple flowers, the latter belongs to a different genus and take its scientific name, βαλλωπή, rejected, from its strong scent, the popular name refers to the white, hoary appearance of the hairy leaves. Of the various Mints the most common are the Hairy or Capitata (*Mentha hirsuta*) and the Horse Mint (*M. longifolia*); both grow in damp places and are strongly scented, and both have lilac-coloured flowers, but those of the Hairy Mint are borne in rounded heads and those of the Horse Mint in a spike. The Spearmint (*M. viridis*) grown as a pot-herb and occasionally found wild, is probably a cultivated form of the Horse Mint. Now

“Fragrant the Tansy breathing from the meadows  
As the west wind bows down the long green grass.”

The plant is used in medicine and its leaves were formerly employed in making Lenten cakes, also for the tansy puddings described by both Anne Pratt and the Rev. C. A. Johns as “nauseous,” though the former impartially adds “many country people however, eat the puddings with much relish.” This custom of “eating tansy pudding and tansy cake at Easter,” says *Notes*

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and *Queries*, “is of very ancient origin, and was no doubt to be traced to the Jewish custom of eating cakes made with bitter herbs (Numbers ix., II.;) but, to take from it any Jewish character, at a very early date it became the custom to eat pork or bacon with the cakes.” Strype, in *Ellis’s Lit. Letters*, speaks of having “Fish at dinner, and tansy or pudding for supper.” The name is a corruption of the Greek ἀθανασία immortality, “as though,” Gerarde says, “it were immortal, because the flowers do not easily wither away.”

But the prettiest of the August flowers is the Common Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) with creamy-white blossoms about the size of a buttercup, streaked with delicate green veins, and a green centre surrounded with curious fan-shaped scales fringed with white hairs; it takes its name from Mount Parnassus and is so known on the Continent, where the

French call it *Fleur de Parnassus*; and the Italians, Spanish, and Portuguese, *Parnasia*. It is a native of the United States, and various members of the genus are found in cold and wet regions from the mountains of India northwards to the Arctic circle. The Soapwort (*Saponaria officinalis*) with handsome rose-coloured flowers, was formerly used for cleansing purposes, its leaves and roots being rich in saponin, which lathers freely in water, hence both its scientific and popular name, from the Latin *sapo*, soap, Anglo-Saxon *sape*, another name is Fuller's Herb. The Saw-wort, too, flowers this month, so does the Corn Sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) and the rare Alpine Saussurea with heliotrope-scented flowers, while by the shore we find the Sea Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) [sic] Sea-Purslane, and Marsh Mallow (*Althæa* [sic] *officinalis*); like the Common Mallow this plant contains a healing mucilage and is used in medicine. Here, too, we may find the rare Slender Hare's-ear or Buplever (*Bupleurum tenuissimum*), and the still rarer Seaside Knot-grass (*Polygonum maritimum*); the former in salt marshes, the latter on sandy sea-shores in the South-west.

The Sea Campion (*Silene maritima*) which flowers throughout the summer, may be distinguished from the Bladder Campion or White Bottle (*S. cucubalus*) by its larger flowers with *slightly* cleft petals, those of the Bladder Campion being more deeply cut. Here, too, are the Sea Lavender, the Purple Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*) and the Sea-Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*) without petals, but with pink calyx dotted with crimson. The Sea Holly (*Eryngo maritimum*) was formerly supposed to have the magical power

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of ensuring fidelity, and is said to have been vainly used by Sappho to win the love of Phaon; the roots furnished a tonic, and [sic] candied with sugar, were the Kissing Comfits of Queen Elizabeth's day.

And now let us leave the margin of the shore and walk for a while on the beach, exploring the rock pools and flat stretches of sand. Here, in deep water, grows the Common Grass-wrack (*Zostera marina*) with long stems, bright green narrow leaves, one to three feet in length and about three-eighths of an inch wide; though apparently a sea-weed it is a true flowering plant, with creeping root, and simple blossoms covered by a kind of sheath, whereas the true sea-weeds are rootless, fastening themselves to rock or stone by a kind of sucker, and propagating themselves by means of spores. Under the name of Alva dried Grass-wrack is largely used for packing china, glass, etc., and for stuffing mattresses.

The Sea-Grass (*Enteromorpha compressa*) covers both stone and wooden breakwater with soft narrow fronds, each fixed firmly at the base and absorbing its nourishment from the salt water in which it floats. It is a true sea-weed, as is the Sea Lettuce or Sea Laver (*Ulva latissima*) so well known to all keepers of marine aquaria for its capacity of forming oxygen in sunshine, so preserving the purity of the water. A fisherman's name is "Oyster green," the sea-weed being used for covering oysters for market. Both this and another species (*Ulva lactuca*) are sometimes used as food, as is the Purple Laver (*Porphyra laciniata* and *P. vulgaris*), which is superior in flavour and known in Ireland and Scotland as Sloke and Sloakan, it is also called Laverwort. The red Dulse is also edible and the Carageen or Irish Moss (*Chondrus crispus*) is used for making blancmange, soup, etc., also for size, and for fattening pigs.

The four most common wracks, the Bladder Wrack, Notched Wrack, Knobbed Wrack, and Channel or Channelled Wrack may be distinguished from each other—the first (*Fucus vesiculosus*), by its mid-rib and the oval bladders of air which pop so delightfully under foot, and

which serve to buoy up the weed under water; the second (*F. serratus*) by its notched edges; the Knobbed Wrack (*F. nodosus*) by the oval swellings or lumps along the frond, it has no mid-rib and is of lighter colour than the other three; and the Channelled (*F. canaliculatus*) by its deep furrow, the fronds, too, are narrower and more branched than are those of the first three. The beautiful Braided-hair Sea-weed has

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delicate pink fronds, Griffithsia is rosy-red, and the Peacock's Tail (*Padina pavonia*) is gay with rings of orange, green, yellow, grey, and red; it is from two to five inches in length and shaped like the tail of a peacock. The common Oar-weed (*Laminaria digitata*) grows in deep water and reaches the length of ten or eleven feet, detached portions of its long thick stem and broad ribbon-like leaves are constantly washed up on shore. The stem is used for making handles, the tang of a knife-blade being thrust into the soft sea-weed while it is still fresh. The drying of the weed contracts the handle firmly round the blade, and one good stem will yield a dozen or more handles. That long slippery, rounded strip of brown weed is the *Chorda filum*; it consists of one cylindrical, tubular frond and varies in length from one to thirty or forty feet. The brittle little Coralline (*Corallina officinalis*) was for long a puzzle to naturalists, but is now definitely relegated to the vegetable kingdom. While growing it is purple in colour, but taken from the water the purple tint disappears, leaving the chalky skeleton that misled the scientific world. The Sea-mat and Sea-fir, on the other hand, are members of the animal kingdom, the homes of myriads of tiny dwellers, each inhabiting its separate cell. The moss-like appearance of the Sea-mat, covered with the protruding heads of these little creatures, caused the general name of Moss-animals to be given to such colonies. The Sea-fir is related to the Jelly-fish, and the young of both Sea-fir and Sea-mat animals swim freely in the sea before settling down to colony life, they are propagated from eggs, and also by buds, like the fresh-water Hydra, etc. The white patches on Wracks and other sea-weeds are the work of various species of Moss animals.

Sea-birds are wheeling overhead, most of them various species of Gulls and Terns, but we may see the long-necked Cormorant, the Gannet or Solan Goose, the Shearwater, the Guillemot, and the quaint little Puffin, sometimes called Sea Parrot, from the shape of his bright red and yellow beak, while the lively little Oyster-catcher, or Sea-pie, runs briskly over the sand.

The rocks are dotted with Limpets, Acorn Barnacles or Acorn Shells, Periwinkles, and other species of Sea Snail. The Periwinkles and other snails feed on sea-weed, which they rasp off with their wonderful "tooth-ribbon," a gristly tongue supplied with hundreds of minute teeth arranged in rows of three, rolled up in the mouth in such a way that as the teeth in use are

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wearing out a fresh piece of tongue is brought forward. The Limpet feeds in the same way, usually returning to its old place on the rock when its hunger is satisfied.

The Acorn-Barnacle (*Balanus porcatus*) was described by Professor Huxley as "a crustacean fixed by its head, and kicking its food into its mouth by its legs;" like the Sea-mats it is a free-swimming animal when first hatched, but soon settles down to a sedentary existence, fixing itself, as described, by the back of the head, and fishing for food with the long filaments that represent its legs. Though furnished with a shell, the Acorn-Barnacle is not a mollusc, but belongs to the Cerripides, a division of the Crustaceans, and is therefore akin to the Crab and Lobster.

The Dog Winkle, or Dog Periwinkle (*Littorina rudis*) is rather like a whelk in the shape of its shell, which varies in colour from white to brown. The Dog Whelk (*Nassa reticulata*) may be known by the bead-like ridges running down its shell; it, too, feeds on sea-weed, but the true Whelk (*Buccinum undatum*) known in Scotland as the Buckie, is carnivorous and terribly destructive, boring with its file-like tongue through the thickest shells. Its soft masses of eggs are, like those of the Frog, diminutive when first laid, but quickly swell in the surrounding moisture. Other common egg-cases are those of the Skate and Dog-fish, known as Mermaid's Purses; the eggs of the Skate have a pointed "handle" at each corner, while those of the Dog-fish have been compared to a pillow-case with strings. The Purpura (*Purpura lapillus*) is about the size and shape of the Dog Periwinkle, indeed both this name and that of Dog Whelk are sometimes applied to it, it has a pale-coloured shell, usually marked with two or three bands of light yellowish-brown. The famous dye used for the Imperial robe of the Roman Emperors was prepared from this little mollusc, and as only a single drop was obtained from each animal, thousands must have been slaughtered for its manufacture. The colouring fluid is contained in a small sac, and is at first of a milky appearance, changing, while drying, through yellow, blue, and green, to reddish purple. The eggs of the Purpura look rather like grains of corn standing on end, each is fixed by a tiny stalk and contains several inmates.

Very fascinating are the shapes and colours of the empty shells cast up by the waves—the handsome Scallop or Pecten, the Ladder-Shell, or Wentle-Trap, the little Cowry, the Pearly-Top or Top-Shell (*Trochus zizyphinus*) like an inverted top, or

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pyramid, with mother-of-pearl-like mouth, the Sunset-Shell, chalky without and rosy pink within, the Gaper, the snowy-white cliff-boring Piddock (*Pholas dactylus*), the smaller brownish-yellow Little Piddock, the Razor-Shell (*Solen ensis*) the curious Pinna, the homely Cockle (*Cardium edule*) and Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) each with its tale of a little vanished occupant:

“Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push when he was uncurl'd  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world?”

“Some leap, some delve, some shovel out their homes  
In the soft sand; some fasten their frail selves,  
With self-made cable, to the half-merged rock;  
Some, patient, bore away the stony cliff,  
Forming a palace cellular.”

In the pools we may find the Bread-crumble and Grantia Sponges, and here lurk or dart the little Five-bearded Rockling (*Motella mustela*), blackish brown on the back and silvery beneath; the bright little Rainbow Wrasse (*Labras julis*); the Smooth Blenny (*Blennius pholis*) with crimson circled eye, also called the Shanny and Tansy; the One-spotted Goby (*Gobio unipunctatus*) with single spot on the first dorsal fin; the Two-spotted, and the larger Black Goby (*G. niger*), Prawns, too, and Shrimps with grey semi-transparent bodies, the Prawn with pointed and the Shrimp with blunt "face"; the Æsop Prawn (*Pandalus annulicornis*) is covered

with scarlet streaks and its antennæ ringed with the same colour, it takes its name from the hunched appearance of its back, like that of the supposed author of the Fables. The Sand-skipper or Sand-hopper (*Talitrus locusta*) may be found in the pools, or jumping on the sand—by bending the body and suddenly straightening it—or burrowed beneath the surface till the tide comes up.

Cockles, Razor-shells, and Sand or Lug-worms also burrow, and may be traced—the first two by the round hole left in the sand, and the last, much used for bait, by the twisted casts of sand at the top of its hole. The Nereis is a brown worm, at first sight rather like a Centipede, with a dark red line running down its back and a glossy pink below, it is usually found under stones. The pretty little Serpula worm (*Serpula contortuplicata*) makes a twisting stony tube, on shell or stone, from which a delicate tuft of bright crimson gills is protruded; the Sabella builds itself a narrow tube of grains of sand, fastened with a natural glue;

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the Terebellas do the same, one species, the Shell-binder, using little pieces of shell for the purpose; the tube of a Terebella differs from that of a Sabella in being furnished with a fringe, made of especially tiny grains, round the mouth. All these Sea-worms are furnished with bristles throughout their entire length, which bristles in the Sea-mouse (*Aphrodite aculeata*) take the form of a matted coat, choked with mud, but wash the little creature in clean salt-water and it glows with all the colours of the rainbow.

The curious Sea-egg or Sea-urchin (*Echinus sphaere* [sic]) is closely allied to the Star-fish, of which the Five-fingered and Sun Star-fish are the most common, the Brittle and the Bird's Foot Star-fish, living in deep water, are less often seen. The apparently dead Crabs lying on the sand are most probably cast-off shells, for when a Crab, Prawn, etc., changes its coat everything, even to the covering of the eye, is cast off, and in the case of the Crab, where the carapace lifts from the back and then closes up again after the animal has emerged, the cast shell looks exactly like the live animal. The Crab most frequently seen is the little Green or Shore Crab (*Carcinus maenas* [sic]), the Velvet Swimming, Velvet Fiddler, or Devil Crab (*Portunus puber*) with downy shell and flattened legs which enable it to move easily through the water and, from their action in swimming, give it its name of Fiddler, the motion resembling that of a person playing the violin; the Common Swimming Crab (*Portunas variegatus*) found on the coast of Scotland; the Hermit Crab (*Pagurus bernhardus*) [sic] the little Pea Crab (*Pinnotheres pisum*) living among Mussels and inhabiting their shells; and the various Spider Crabs, of which the most common are the Four-horned Spider Crab (*Pisa tetraden*), the Long-beaked Spider, the Masked, and the Thornback Crabs, the last furnished with spines on which it fastens pieces of wood, sponge, etc., to conceal it from its enemies. The Edible Crab (*Cancer pagarus*) lives in deep water, but young specimens may occasionally be found in pools.

Of the beautiful little Sea Anemones, the Smooth or Beadlet Anemone (*Actinia mesembryanthemum*) with smooth skin and turquoise "beads" round its mouth, is the most common, and the handsome Thick-armed Anemone (*Bunodes crassicornis*), the largest; the Daisy Anemone (*Actinia bellis*) may be known by its grey and white ringed tentacles, its colour is pale greyish yellow, while the beautiful Snake-locked Anemone, with long whitish tentacles, is found chiefly in Devonshire and Cornwall.

1 A wallet of dowlas-cloth.



2 The Festival of the Assumption, August 15th.