

A WALK IN JULY.

“Then came hot July boyling like to fire,
That all his garments he had cast away:
Upon a Lyon raging yet with ire
He boldly rode, and made him to obey:
(It was the beast that whylome did forray
The Nemæan forest, till th’Amphytrionide
Him slew [sic]
and with his hide did him array:)
Behinde his back a sithe, and by his side
Under his belt he bore a sickle circling wide.”

—*Spenser*.

JULY was originally named Quintilis, as being the fifth of the Roman year, but as “Caesar the Dictator was borne at Rome, when Caius Martius and Lucius and Valerius Flaccus were consols, vpon the fourth day before the Ides of Quintilis, this moneth after his deathe was, by vertue of the law Antonia, called, for that cause, Julie,” in honour of the Emperor whose labours had reformed the calendar, and whose birth-month it was. July is said to have been the first month of the Celtic year, and was known to the Anglo-Saxons as Hen Monath, or leaf month, from the Germain *hain*, a grove, and also Hew, or Hay, monat, mead month, the grass being now ripe in the meadows.

The *Booke of Knowledge* tells us that “Thunder in July signifieth the same year shall be good corn and loss of beasts if their strength shall perish,” a prophecy that, as far at least as the corn is concerned, is consolatory in a country whose summer is said to consist of “three hot days and a thunderstorm,” and it is curious that all through northern Europe certain days are set apart on which, if the rain falls, wet weather may be expected

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for some time after. In England the festival of St. Swithin (July 15th) is the day of destiny for

“S. Swithin’s day if thou be fair
’Twill rain for forty days no mair.
S. Swithin’s day if thou dost rain
For forty days it will remain.”

In Scotland the 4th (Translation of St. Marten of Tours, “Saint Martin Bouillant”) is the critical date, if the deer rise dry and lie down dry on Bullion’s day, a good harvest may be expected for

“Bullion’s day if ye be fair
For forty days ’twill rain na mair.”

and the French say

“S’il pleut le jour de la Saint Marten bouillent,
Il pleut six semaines durant.”

In France, S. Médard (June 8th) and S.S. Gervase and Protasius (June 19th) are bad weather saints; in Belgium S. Godliève [sic] (July 6th), and in some parts of Poland S. Harold (July 19th), but the 2nd of July, the Festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is the favourite date. On the Rhine this day is known as Marie Eintropfentag or Mary Drop Day, because it is said that should it rain but one drop on that day it will rain on and off for forty more. An Austrian couplet runs

“Wenn zu Maria regnen mag
So regnet’s noch manchen Tag.”

and the Belgians say “Quand notre Dame dit le jour de la Visitation à S. Jean, Nous ferons pleuvoir. Cela gâté toute la récolte.” July 2nd was also dedicated to S. Processus and S. Martinian, and an old manuscript of the 13th century tells us

“Si pluit in festo Processi et Martiniani,
Quadragesima dies continuare solet,”

and still another

“Si pluit in festo Processi et Martiniani,
Imber erit grandio et suffocatio grani.”

We have practically the same idea in the English

“If the first of July be rainy weather
'Twill rain more or less for four weeks together.”

German proverbs inform us that the weather on S. James’s Day (the 25th) foretells what we may expect at Christmas,

“Jakobi klar und rein
Wird Christ fest kalt und frostig sein,”

and

“Der Vormittag vom Jakobstag
Das Wetter bis Weihnacht deuten mag,”

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while of white clouds at sunrise on this day they say “Der Schnee blüht für nächsten Winter.” In an old book, *The Husbandman’s Practice*, we read, “When it is fair three Sundays after S. James

his day, it betokeneth that corn shall be very good, but if it raineth then the corn withereth. S. James his day before noon betokeneth the winter-time before Christmas, and after noon it betokeneth the time after Christmas. If it be so that the sun shine on S. James his day, it is a token of cold weather; but if it is between the two, then it is a token of neither too warm nor too cold." S. James's day also decides the Hop crop, for

"Till St. James's Day be past and gone
There may be hops or there may be none."

Now the days are growing shorter, but there is no perceptible difference in heat, in fact the blazing sunshine and the accumulated warmth of the previous weeks make July the hottest of the months. Save for the buzzing of insects or the chirping of the Grasshoppers the lanes and woods are almost silent, the little Chiff-chaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) has changed his monotonous notes to a shrill whistle, but the majority of birds are busy attending to their nestlings or entering on their summer moult. Now tiny Frogs leave the pond, for with the appearing of the fore-legs the lungs develop and they can no longer remain in the water. The portion of tail left is rapidly absorbed into the body, but the little creature will continue to grow for about five years before attaining its full size.

On dry sunny banks the Lizards hunt for flies; the Blind-worm or Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), Shakespeare's "eyeless venom'd worm," that curious link between lizard and snake, feeds by night, chiefly on slugs, but may be found during the day. Spite of its snake-like appearance it is perfectly harmless; a true lizard, though without legs—which, however, are easily traced in the skeleton—it possesses particularly bright eyes, and its tail snaps readily, so that, if captured, or struck, this is invariably severed; but this is not all—the severed tail will twist and curl about as it lies, and even spring into the air, it is supposed as a protection to the animal, which meanwhile makes its escape.

Now the Purple Emperor Butterfly is on the wing, his favourite haunt the top of an oak-tree; various Fritillaries, too, the Dark Green (*Argynnis aglaia*) the High Brown (*A. adippe*) and the Silver-washed Fritillary (*A. paphia*), largest of our native Fritillaries, and distinguished by the absence of the characteristic

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silvery spots on the lower wing. The Comma Butterfly may be known by the jagged appearance of its rusty-red wings, which are much indented; it takes its name from the comma-shaped mark on the lower wings. The Grayling Butterfly (*Satyrus semele*) is frequently found by the sea, the little Mountain Ringlet (*Erebia epiphron*) prefers the mountains, while the Ringlet (*Epinephele hyperanthus*) frequents dry pasture fields or grassy paths. The Small Meadow Brown and the Large Heath are July Butterflies, so are various Skippers, and most of the Blues, the scarce Long-tailed (*Lycaena* [sic] *bætica*) and the Mazarine (*L. semiargus*), both probably visitors from the Continent, the Silver-studded Blue (*L. ægon*), [sic] the Chalk-hill (*L. corydon*), and the Large Blue (*L. arion*). The Hairstreaks are easily identified by the thin streak or row of tiny dots that runs across the under surface of their wings, as also by the little tip to the lower wings similar though smaller than, that of the Swallow-tail. The Black Hairstreak (*Thecla pruni*) is the rarest, the Purple Hair streak [sic] (*T. quercus*) the most common, and the Green (*T. rubi*) the smallest of the genus.

Among the moths are the Old Lady, the Magpie, the Six-spot Burnet, the Marbled Beauty (*Bryophila perla*), various Yellow Underwings, the Goat Moth, the Wood Leopard, the Large Emerald, with pale green wings, the little Muslin Moth (*Nudaria mundana*), the Willow Beauty (*Boarmia gemmaria*), and the Tree Lackey (*Bombyx neustria*), whose little bracelets of eggs may be found later encircling the twigs of apple trees. The Caterpillars of the Cinnabar Moth (*Euchelia jacobææ*) [sic] are hatched this month, and are readily recognised by their alternate rings of black and orange. The Ghost, Northern Swift, and Gold Swift Moths are seen in the early evening; they take their name from their rapid flight. The Ghost Swift at first sight seems able to appear and disappear at will, the reason being that the upper surface of the wings is white and the lower dark brown, so that the creature is visible or invisible as it lowers or raises these. The Drinker Moth (*Odenestis potatoria*) is said to have the habit of dipping down as if drinking when passing over a sheet of water, though another explanation of the name is that the caterpillar drinks the dewdrops on the long grass on which it feeds, and to which it fastens its shuttle-shaped cocoon. The Peach Blossom Moth has five large spots, coloured like the petals of a peach, on its upper wings; its larva, which feeds on bramble leaves, has a cuirous [sic] trick of hunching itself in horseshoe attitude. Two curious

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caterpillars that may be found this month are those of the Eyed Hawk-moth and the Puss Moth, the former pale green with seven white stripes down each side, and a pale blue horn at the end of the body; the latter bright green, the front of the body forming a hump with two big black eye-like spots upon it, two long slender hairs at the end of the body and white and purple stripes upon back and sides.

That long black beetle on the path is a Devil's Coach Horse, and when disturbed it opens its strong jaws and "cocks" its tail. There are ten British species, of which *Ocypus olens*, black, *Ocypus cupreus*, bronze, and *O. morio*, are the most common. The pretty little Green Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela campestris*) scurries along in the sunshine, the Wood Tiger (*C. sylvatica*) is rather larger and of a coppery-black colour. The Violet Ground Beetle with others of its genus, protects itself from its enemies by ejecting a caustic fluid, as does the little Bombardier Beetle (*Brachinus crepitans*), common in the south of England. In the case of the Bombardier Beetle the fluid volatilizes with a slight explosion of pale-blue flame and "smoke," hence the name. The Glow-worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*) belongs to the family of soft-skinned beetles, as do the Soldiers and Sailors so common on flowers. The female Glow-worm is wingless and rather larger than her mate; both sexes are luminous, as is the larva; the latter resembles the female in appearance, it feeds on snails. It is these luminous larvæ that in spring are sometimes mistaken for the adult insect.

The Bees are murmuring in the flowers of the Lime, of which we have three species, the Common Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) and the Large and Small-leaved Linden, the last two occasionally found in old woods. Other blossoms dear to bees are the purple bells of the Ling or Heather, and the various Heaths which make the glory of our summer moorlands, for heather

"sparkles, lives and dances,
By every gust swayed down and fanned,
And every rain-drop glances.

Never in jewel or wine the light
 Burned like the purple heather;
And some is the palest pink, some white,
 Swaying and dancing together.

Every stem is sharp and clear,
 Every bell is ringing,
No doubt, some tune we do not hear
 For the thrushes' sleepy singing."

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The plant takes its name from the ground on which it grows, a *heath* or open, uncultivated space. Its fine needle-like leaves present little surface for evaporation and enable it to thrive both in cold and exposed situations and on the driest soil, the Common Ling (*Calluna erica* or *vulgaris*) being found from the Arctic Circle downward to central Europe at heights varying from 6,000 feet to sea-level; it also grows in Asia and parts of North America. The Ling, like the Iris, Columbine, and Orchis, is an instance of a flower where the calyx and petals are equally brightly coloured, indeed the little bell-shaped corolla is almost hidden by the rosy sepals that enclose it. The dried blossoms remain on the plant for many months, for

"though grass and moss are seen,
Tann'd bright for want of showers,
Still keeps the Ling its darksome green,
Thick set with little flowers."

In the same way the seeds furnish an almost inexhaustible supply of food for Grouse and other moorland birds. The scientific name is from the Greek *καλλύνω*, I beautify, cleanse, in reference to its use in making brooms.

Of the four species of Heath found in Britain the most common is the Fine-leaved Heath (*Erica cinerea*), the badge of the Clan Macalister. The Cross-leaved Heath (*E. tetralix*), the badge of the Macdonalds, has rosy pink flowers, of curious wax-like appearance, and its leaves are set cross-wise on the stem, hence the name. The beautiful Ciliated Heath (*E. ciliaris*) bears its crimson blossoms in a one-sided cluster; the Cornish Heath (*E. vagans*), abundant on the Lizard, has a tapering head of flowers. Two other species are found in Connemara. Besides furnishing food for sheep and goats, Heath is much used for bedding, thatching, etc., also for fuel, and Anne Pratt tells us that "the People of Jura and Isla brew very good beer by mixing the young heath-tops with their malt. ... In Rum, Skye, and Long Island, leather is tanned with a preparation of its branches, and in most of the Western Isles it is used for dyeing yarn of a yellow colour."

Another genus of plants requiring little moisture is that of the Stone crops, of which the Orpine or Livelong (*Sedum telephium*) is the largest. This was the plant known as "Midsummer Men," from its use by village maidens on Midsummer Eve, when a sprig was stuck into the wall or a piece of clay, and examined next morning to see whether the leaves drooped to the right

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left, according to the direction taken so would their lovers prove true or false. The Biting Stone-crop or Wall Pepper (*S. acre*) is the most widely distributed; the English Stone-Crop (*S. anglicum*) has white flowers spotted with red, the Hairy Stone-crop (*S. villosum*) with pinky-white flowers, grows in the North of England; the White Stone-crop (*S. album*) is easily recognised by its white blossoms, and there are six other British species, most of which, like the Biting Stone-crop, have yellow flowers; those of the Orpine are crimson, and of the Rose-root (*S. roseum*) greenish-yellow.

Other July flowers are the Wormwood, Mugwort, Hemp-nettle, White Melilot, Self-heal, Woundwort, Golden Rod, Winter-green, Yellow Toad-flax, Sneezewort, Teasle, Hawkweed Picris, Fool's Parsley, Nipplewort, Ploughman's Spikenard, Knapweed, Burdock, Skull-cap, Hound's-tongue, Centaury, Red Bartsia, Vervain, Bell-flower, Filago, Succory, Salad Burnet, Harebell, Hop, Catmint, Wild Angelica, the curious parasitic Dodder, the Sea Holly, with grey-blue flowers and blue-green spiny leaves, and a host of others.

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) may be distinguished from Wormwood by the absence of aromatic scent, the darker colour of its flowers, and the fact that its leaves are only whitish on the under surface. Tea made from this plant is a celebrated rustic remedy for rheumatism, and its virtues, according to the ancient rhyme, were recognised by the Scottish mermaid, who, as the funeral of a young girl who had died of consumption was passing along the road by the Firth of Clyde above Port Glasgow, raised her head out of the water and remarked, to the astonishment of the mourners,

"If they wad drink nettles in March
And eat muggins in May,
Sae many braw maidens
Wad not go to clay."

Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) is also a medicinal plant, being considered not only a certain cure for quinsy, but also for injuries, hence it was known as Carpenter's herb, Hook-heal, and Sicklewort. The Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) was used in the same way, and was named Clown-heal by Gerarde for this reason; it is also called Clown's Allheal and Clown's Woundwort. Marsh Woundwort differs from the Hedge Woundwort (*S. sylvatica*) in its hollow stem and paler flowers, whereas the stem of the Hedge Woundwort is solid and its flowers dark purplish-red.

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The Corn Woundwort (*S. arvensis*) has pale flowers with white markings; the Wood Betony (*S. betonica*) may be recognized from the other species by the fact that there is a clear space between the upper whorls of blossoms and the lower, these latter, too, have a couple of leaves immediately below them. The Romans so prized this plant that they had a proverb, "Sell your coat and buy Betony," and Antoninus Musa, physician to the Emperor Augustus, claims for it that it will cure no less than forty-seven diseases. Franzius, in his *History of Brutes*, says that a stag "When it is wounded with a dart, the only cure he hath is to eate some of the herbe called Betony, which helpeth both to draw out the dart, and to heal the wound."

The Golden-rod or Aaron's Rod (*Solidago virgaurea*) was also formerly known as Woundwort, and received its scientific name from the Latin *solidare*, to unite. Ancient

physicians speak of it as “one of the most noble wound-herbs”; it was also used as a dye, and a species, *Solidago nemoralis*, is known in America, where there are nearly 100 species of this beautiful plant, as Dyer’s-weed. The Common Yarrow or Milfoil (*Achillea millefolium*) is also a healing plant, and takes its name from Achilles, who employed it in this way; the Sneezewort (*A. ptarmica*) belongs to the same genus, but its leaves are undivided, the flowers are individually larger than those of the Yarrow. The Fuller’s Teasle is probably only a form of the Wild Teasle (*Dipsacus sylvestris*), the flower-heads, which figure in the arms of the Clothmakers’ Guild, are still set into frames and employed for combing cloth, the advantage being that if a hook becomes entangled in any obstruction it is torn out and the cloth is uninjured, whereas the unyielding teeth of machinery would tear the fabric. The leaves grow in pairs, united round the prickly stem, and the water that collects in these natural cups prevents ants crawling up to take the honey reserved for the winged insects that alone can fertilize the flowers. It is in allusion to this water that the scientific name was given, from the Greek *δίψα*, thirst.

The dingy yellow flowers of the Ploughman’s Spikenard (*Inula conyza*), owing to the shortness of their ray-florets, have the appearance of not being fully open, the scent is only perceptible when the plant is bruised. Clare, in his verses to Cowper Green, speaks of

“Ploughman Spikenard’s spicy smell
And Thyme, strong-scented, neath one’s feet,
And Marjoram buds so doubly sweet.”

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The plant is sometimes called Flea-bane, and is known in France as *Herbe aux puces*, but the Common Flea-bane is the *Pulicaria dysenterica*, with yellow rays round a yellow disc, and pale green woolly leaves; it grows in moist situations. The Blue Flea-bane (*Erigeron acre*) with blue rays and yellow disc, belongs to a different genus. The Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*) takes its scientific name from the Greek *όρος*, mountain, and *γάρος*, joy, it is the only English species and is cultivated as a pot-herb, and also employed in medicine, while an infusion of its leaves makes a refreshing “tea.” Anne Pratt tells us that Majoram [sic] was formerly called Organy, “and the long-disputed Oregon territory is said to have received its name from the prevalence of this plant there.”

The Great Knapweed or Matfellow (*Centaurea scabiosa*) with large purple flowers, belongs to the same genus as the Corn-flower, it was formerly known as Iron-weed from the hardness of its calyx, from which, too, it takes its name of Knap, viz., Knob, weed. The smaller Black Knapweed Hard-head (*C. nigra*) resembles a thistle minus its spines and is a familiar roadside plant. The Field Scabious (*Scabiosa arvensis*) belongs to the Teasle family, certain species of the genus were considered a remedy for leprosy, Latin *Scabies*, and the Premorse or Devil’s-bit Scabious (*L. succisa*) in which part of the root appears to have been cut off, is so-called from the “fable” quoted by John Parkinson in his *Theatrum Botanicum*, that “the Devile, envying the good that this herbe might do to mankinde, bit away parte of the roote, and thereof came the name of *Sussica* and Devile’s Bit.” After the first year of growth the main root becomes woody and, decaying underneath, causes the bitten appearance, while new branches grow from the sides. The French name, too, is *Mors du Diable*. Unlike those of the Field and the Small Scabious (*S. columbaria*) the leaves of the Devil’s-bit are undivided. In the South of England the scabious

is known as Gipsy Rose, and another name for this plant is Pincushions. The Sheep's-bit or Sheep's Scabious (*Jasione montana*) much resembles a true Scabious but really belongs to a different genus and family. It is easily recognised by its blue flowers, of which the anthers are united.

The legend of the Common Persicaria (*Polygonum persicaria*) accounting for the curious dark spot on its leaves, is the same as that of the Early Purple Orchis and Cuckoo-pint. The leaves of the Spotted Persicaria (*P. maculatum*) are similarly marked.

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The Amphibious Persicaria (*P. amphibium*) grows either in water or on land, in the former situation its leaves are floating, oblong, and smooth, but in the latter hairy and lance-like. The Biting Persicaria or Water Pepper (*P. hydropiper*) with drooping spikes of greenish-yellow flowers, grows abundantly in ditches, and another common species is the Pale-flowered Persicaria (*P. lapathifolium*) with pale pink blossoms.

Aquatic plants are the Arrow-head (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*) from the Latin *sagitta*, an arrow, easily recognised by the arrow-shaped leaves peculiar to itself; the Water Milfoil, the Water Lobelia, with pale lilac flowers, and the Water Soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*) which, like the Arrowhead, takes both its scientific and popular names from the leaves, sword-like and edged like those of an Aloe, that surround the flower, Greek *στρατιωτης*, a soldier. Old names are Knightwort, Crab's-claw, and Water-sengreen. The plant, which is rare, is the only one of its genus, and belongs to the same family as the Frog-bit, which also flowers this month. In similar moist situations we find the Water Dropwort, the Broad-leaved Water Parsley, the poisonous Cowbane, the Trifid Bur-Marigold, the Bulrush or Great and Lesser Reed Mace, also known as Cat's-tail (*Typha latifolia* and *Typha angustifolia*) and the true Bulrush (*Scirpus lacustris*). The Great Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*) and the Yellow Monkey-flower love the banks of rivers, and on marshy ground grow the beautiful Bog Asphodel and Bog Pimpernel, and the curious Sundew, its spoon-shaped leaves thick set with sticky red hairs that hold fast the numerous insects they entrap.

The Rock or Sea Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) takes its name from St. Peter, being probably a corruption of Herbe de S. Pierre. Edgar in *King Lear* refers to the Samphire gatherer (*Act IV., sc. 6*) and the plant is still used as a pickle, as is the similar Jointed Glasswort (*Salicornia herbacea*), often called Marsh Samphire. The latter may be distinguished from the true Samphire by its absence of leaves; the flowers of both plants are very small, the greenish blossoms of the Glasswort are borne in spikes at the end of the stems, the white flowers of the Samphire grow in clusters. Glasswort, on account of the soda contained in it, was formerly used in the manufacture of glass, hence the name.

The Horse-tail, so frequently found in ditches and on waste ground, resembles the Mare's-tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*) in its jointed

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stem but is a flowerless plant, allied to the ferns and mosses, propagating itself by means of spores, which form a club-shaped cone at the top of the stem. These fall when ripe, and each is furnished with four filaments which, when moist, coil themselves round the spore, and as they dry, uncurl themselves with such force as to propel the spore along the ground; in this way a considerable distance may be travelled, and if the plant once obtains footing in field or garden, it is almost impossible to eradicate it. The green jointed branches grow in whorls, and close-

pressed at the base of the joints are the tiny brown leaves. The stem contains a considerable quantity of silica, hence the plant is used for polishing metals, marble, ivory, etc., especially a species grown in Holland (*Equisetum hyemale*) and imported as Dutch Rushes. There are nine British species, interesting as being certainly allied to, if not actual descendants of, the once important *Calamites cannæformis* [sic] of our coal-measures.