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The Last Of The Flowers

Mrs. William Starr Dana

We found, you remember, that the dandelion head was made up entirely of strap flowers; and we saw that the daisy and aster and golden-rod were made up partly of strap flowers, and partly of tube flowers.

And here you have a great thistle head. If you should pull it to pieces, you would find only tube flowers.

The Composite family always makes up its head in one of these three ways, using either nothing but strap flowers, or nothing but tube flowers, or else using tube flowers for the center of the head, and strap flowers for the outside.

Now, I hope you will remember these three ways in which this important family puts together its little flowers.



When you go into the garden where a big sunflower is trying to peep into your neighbor's yard, I hope your eyes will be sharp enough to see that this sunflower is a cousin to the field daisy, and that, although its brown center is much larger than the daisy's golden eyes, it is made up of tube flowers shaped much like the tube flowers of the daisy.



And you will notice, I am sure, that the yellow circle about this brown center is made up of strap flowers just like the circle about the daisy center.

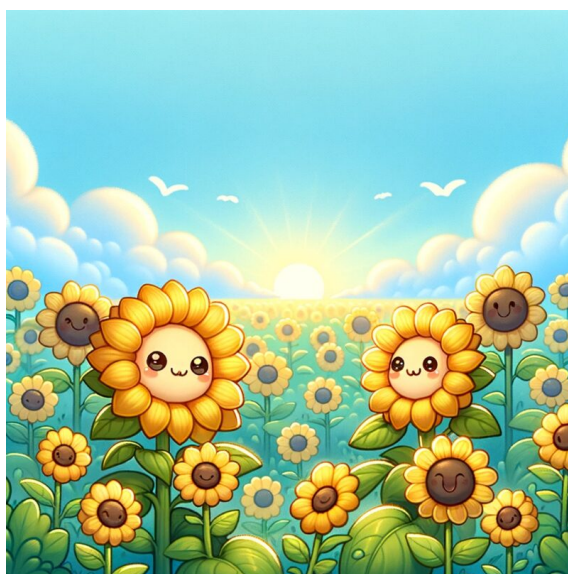
And what is that which falls like a golden shower from the great brown center of the sunflower? Ah, you know well that that is the precious pollen which powders thickly the visiting bees and butterflies, and goes to make new sunflower plants.



The picture at the head of this chapter shows the wild sister of the garden sunflower.

When you come across the bright blue flower of the chicory, you will be reminded, I hope, of your dear old friend the dandelion; for the chicory head, like that of the dandelion, is made up entirely of strap flowers.

But when you pick a spray of everlasting, whose white and yellow clusters you find on the rocky hillsides, you will have to use your eyes with great care if you are to discover that here, as in the great purple thistle head, are nothing but tube flowers.



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