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## Silver-rod

*Edith M. Thomas*

Who doesn't know Silver-rod, the lovely, venerable Golden-rod, transfigured and sainted, looking moonlit and misty even in full sunshine? In this soft, silvery afterbloom, which begins at the tip of the flower cluster and slowly spreads downward, the eye finds welcome relief from the recent blaze of yellow. I almost forget that the plant is no longer truly in bloom, no longer tended by sunshine and dew. Is there not, perhaps, some kind of bee that loves to work among these plummy blossoms, gathering a concentrated nectar, a powdery flower of honey? I stir the tufted stalk gently, and away floats a little cloud of down. In it I recognize the golden-rods and silver-rods of another year, if the feathery seeds find a welcoming place in the earth.

Two other plants in the wild herbarium deserve to rank beside it for the grace and dignity with which they wear their seedy fortunes. One is ironweed, with its pretty daisy-shaped cups. The other is life-everlasting, which has provided its own grave-clothes and spices and now rests embalmed in every pasture. It is still sweetly fragrant, and whenever I meet it, it reminds me of an old verse that speaks of "the actions of the just" and their lasting bloom and sweetness. On a chilly November day I fancy the air is a little softer wherever Silver-rod holds sway, and that spirits of peace and patience have their favorite haunts there.



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