

## THE HYACINTHS.

"OH, mamma, how beautiful they are!" cried Rosamond, running up to the hyacinth bed—"pink, and blue, and lilac. I don't know which I like best, they are all so pretty; and they have a delightful smell, mamma. But what can be the meaning of this?" added she, pointing with a look of mournful surprise to a ridge of earth, on which lay several faded hyacinths that had been newly pulled up. They were lying with their flowers downwards, and the gardener was just going to cover them up with earth. "And must they be buried alive? What a pity! May not we save the life of this beautiful pink one, mamma? The others, to be sure, are a little withered, but this," she said, lifting up the head of a tall pink hyacinth, "look at it, now it stands upright. The new earth has soiled it a little, but we'll shake off the earth."

Rosamond gave the hyacinth a gentle shake, not such a shake as she gave the sweet-briar bush; the earth still clung to the flower. Rosamond shook the stem a little more, and several of the pink flowers fell to the ground, so that only the bare green stalk now remained upright.

"Well, that may be buried," said Rosamond; but she raised another of its companions from the earth. "A blue hyacinth—quite fresh, mamma!"

"Look at the other side of it, my dear," said her mother.

"It is a little withered on the other side, to be sure, mamma," said Rosamond, "but it would look very well in a flower-pot with others. Why must they be buried?"

"The gardener, who has had more experience than you or I upon this subject, says that he buries them in this manner to strengthen their roots."

"Their roots!" said Rosamond. "But what signify those ugly roots, in comparison with these beautiful flowers?"

"These beautiful flowers, you know, come from those ugly roots."

"But why need they be strengthened any more, mamma? We have the flowers already."

"Next year we shall have fresh flowers, if we take care of these roots, but if we were to throw them away, we should see no blooming hyacinths next spring."

"Next spring! It will be a great while, mamma, before next spring."

"Yesterday, my dear," said her mother, "you thought that to-day would never come; but you see my rosebud is blown," said her mother, taking the early rosebud out of her nosegay.

"Ah! very true, mamma," said Rosamond, "but a year is quite another thing."

"To look forward a whole year," said her mother, "is certainly rather too much to expect from a little girl who has only just learned to look forward a whole day; but, however, it is possible that Rosamond may in time learn to think of next year as well as of to-morrow. Now, Rosamond, take your choice. You may have either those six hyacinth flowers that lie upon that ridge, or you may have their six roots, whichever you please."

As she finished speaking she gathered the hyacinths, and the gardener, by her desire, picked up the roots, and placed them in a heap before Rosamond.

Rosamond looked alternately at the flowers and the roots.

"The flowers, to be sure, are withered, and next year there will be fine fresh flowers that will last a fortnight, or perhaps a month, and these will be quite gone in a few hours," said Rosamond.

Yet the idea of the present pleasure of putting the hyacinths into her flower-pot charmed Rosamond's mind, and she looked in her mother's eyes anxiously.



"Don't consult my eyes, Rosamond," said her mother, smiling, "you shall see nothing in my eyes;" and her mother turned away her head. "Use your own under-

standing, because you will not always have my eyes to see with."

"Look at me again, mamma, and I will use my own understanding. Do you mean that if I choose the roots, you will give me leave to keep them in your ground? You know, if I have no ground to plant them in, they would be of no use to me, and then I had better choose the flowers."

"Very true, Rosamond," said her mother; "I am glad that you are so considerate. I *do* mean to give you some ground to plant the roots in, if you choose the roots."

"Then, mamma, I do choose the roots. Are you pleased with my choice, mamma?"

"My dear," said her mother, "I hope *you* will be pleased with it, for it is your affair, and not mine."

"But don't you think I have made a wise choice, mamma? A little while ago, when I chose to have the thorn pulled out rather than not have it in my finger, you said I had done very prudently, to choose the least of two evils, and that you were glad of it. And now, mamma, I have chosen the greatest of two pleasures, and that is prudent too; and are not you glad of it?"

"Yes."

"Thank you, mamma. And when shall I plant the hyacinths? To morrow, mamma?"

"No, my dear, not till next spring; leave them here, and the gardener shall take care of them for you, till it is the proper time to plant them next year."