

### *The Legend of the Poinsettia*

**I**N THE YEARS AGONE, man walked on earth hand in hand with the angels, knowing only their stainless innocence and radiating only their perfect beauty. Then never a thought of evil tinged his consciousness to be reflected abroad in divers colors. Flowers, which are reflections of consciousness, all shone in purest white, making the world a veritable dreamgarden of pure and fragrant beauty.

As ages passed and the vibrations of a mighty star opened the portals of matter for the entrance of man, and the spirit became more firmly enmeshed in its material form, gradually the petals caught and held the colors given to them by the varied thoughts and emotions of men. Only the rarest and finest of the flower-souls were able to blossom in all their pristine purity.

For a long time still there grew a flower so white that it rivaled the breath of mountain snows, and the neck of the swan was pale beside it. Tradition holds that wherever a pure soul lived unspotted by the world these flowers blossomed in wondrous profusion. Along pathways steeped in meditations of saints they shone as fair as the thought they reflected.

On that Holy Night, when the shepherds were watching upon the Judean hills, and the golden

Star guided them on their way to the sacred manger, their path was covered with these white, mystic blossoms, and the rays from the Star of the East turned their petals into shimmering silver.

When the Holy One carried the cross up the steep ascents of Golgotha the ground was a white carpet of their beauty. They clustered lovingly about his bruised feet as though they would fain make amends for the cruel nails and the crown of thorns. Silently their white faces watched in mute appeal the enactment of the crucifixion. The fragile petals shivered in sympathy with the great cosmic thrill that trembled through worlds when the mighty spirit broke his bondage of flesh.

As the blood flowed from the cut of nails and the clasp of thorns, one sacred drop fell deep into the heart of a little white blossom and nestled there. Almost imperceptibly the petals bent low beneath the horror, then softly, gently flamed to blood-hued crimson. All through the heart of the earth this wave was carried until everywhere that these mystic flowers had blown in radiant white their color was changed into the crimson of blood.

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The closing time of the flower-year is come. Each petal-month has blown into fragrant sheaves of memory. The Weavers of Flowerland sit in council to decide what flower shall be held sacred to the Christmas time. What blossom is fair enough to represent the month of Cosmic Birth. On silken pinions of the wind messages have gone to the Guardian Deities of the months asking them to come and present their claims before the council of the Flower-world.

Crooning the slumber-song of winter in faint notes of flickering sunlight comes pale January clad in sable garments. Her snow-white arms are laden with fragile hyacinth bells, that tremble in soft music to the yearning song her soul must ever sing of Silence and of Sleep. Toward the short days' end, across the western edge of a low, grey sky, February draws a line of gold. While from the earth's grey heart she gathers tear-drops and transmutes them into golden daffodils of promise for the weary world. Miracles she tells to land and sky. For her name of names is Hope.

March wraps the world in veils of vague and tender greens, and stands with clasped and eager hands, while the world-soul plays the wonderful prelude of awakening. Violets spring from her thoughts as blue as the sky toward which they lift their eyes. For the inner name of March is Aspiration.

Virgin April, clad in shimmering tears, bends above the tired world. Gathering up its pain and sorrows she bends lily-lips upon them. When they

are filled with a holy consciousness of peace, she fashions them into the Lily of Annunciation, to breathe upon humanity the secret of her soul-Attainment.

May, with lilting laughter, whispers deep to the heart of the woodland, causing him to open the doors of his treasure-house to her, where she wraps herself in fairy garlands to awaken the beautiful.

For May is the soulstring of harmony; that must ever be sowed to bring to life the latent beauties of the world.

Young June, the Soul of Love, in ecstatic music of dreams dips her brush in the tones of the sky, to the crimson of dusk and the white mists of dawn, the rose-blush of sunrise and the amber gleam of gloaming, she adds the smooth luster of starlight, and the sweet breath of dreams from human hearts. When, lo, the world knows the birth of a rose.

Resting idly upon blue, hazy pillows of sky, with coverlets formed in white, fleecy clouds, breathing an incense distilled from the hearts of millions of soft-hued poppies, rests calm July, the Home of Repose.

Bearing aloft rank upon rank of stately blossoms, that have fashioned their petals from the gold of the sunlight, and woven their hearts with love for its God, stands the month of shivering glory that is the very breath of the sun—stately August—the Soul of Perfect Beauty.



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September, the great cosmic mother, whose innermost name is Purity, shines across the sky. She builds the treasures of her secret thoughts into rich boughs of waving goldenrod to caress the world and to make it fairer while she holds it on her heart.

In the calm stillness, broken only by a fitful sighing through the trees, October, who is the Soul of Meditation, bends her head. All before and around, her magnificent forests of the world are shedding half-wistful, golden tears for the summer's ebbing beauty, and half fearful, crimson tears for the bleakness just ahead.

With majestic mien and stately tread comes royal November, crowned with garnered treasures and golden diadems. She bears the cherished blossom of her heart, the Queenly chrysanthemum, that flower born of consciousness of too great a pride. From November breathes Temptation, a breath so subtle that by it the brightest angels fell.

Cosmic bells are ringing throughout infinite space. A chorus of joy that first must be pain. A song of achievement that proclaims the coming of December, whose heart of hearts is Sacrifice. Her blossoms are wondrous tall and stately, with blood-crimson petals that enclose a golden heart.

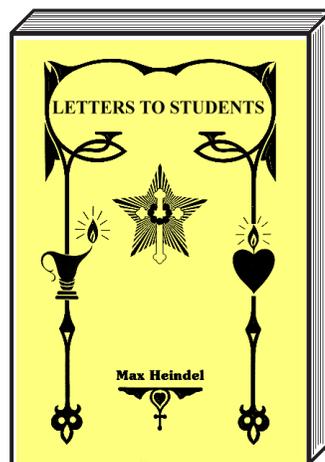
Involuntarily the Weavers of Flowerland give homage to them while the beauties of the other months lie half forgotten. All during the long years the sacred blood-drop has lived in the heart of the little blossom whispering day by day the wondrous meaning of its message, until with the joy of knowing the flaming petals have grown and the golden heart expanded into perfection of stately beauty. For as the white petals shone with the crimson of blood this purest flower-soul awakened to the beauty of its cosmic mission and knew that it must also take on the color of the flesh and go out into the flower world to bring its souls back into a realization of purity and love that manifests only in petals of purest white.

So each year when the Christ life is born into the earth at Christmas time comes the soul of the poinsettia in the gorgeous, sacrificial robes of red to bring its message to the world of flowers. □

—Corinne Dunklee

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