

## CHAPTER I

### *Mr and Mrs Buttercup Their Home and Families*



LITTLE 5 year-old Bobby sat playing<sup>1</sup> in the sand pile one lovely afternoon in May and judging by the glimpses his mother had of him through the open door of their cottage his mind was to all appearances intent on making a sand fish perfect. For in and out the damp sand was thrown from the pile to the fish mold many times until at last being perfect at least to his satisfaction he got up and ran to find his mother who was busy within the small two room shack where they were living for the summer.

He caught hold of her apron to attract her attention and said "Mother where did I come from?"

Needless to say his mother was greatly surprised at this question just at that time for she had not the faintest idea that his thoughts were on anything but the perfection of that sand fish. However she quickly recovered from her surprise and taking his little face between her hands said

Bobby dear that is the most wonderful story in all the world and if you are quite sure you can keep a secret and only talk about it to father and mother I ll tell you all about it

The curly head bobbed up and down in answer to this and as his eyes grew big and bright he answered

Do tell me the story mother I ll not tell

Then she said    Let me ask you a question dear    Do you know where the baby flowers come from?    Or the baby birds or chickens or all the baby creatures in the world?

No no    he answered simply but excitedly

Then she told him that as soon as the dishes were put away she would take him for a walk in the woods and show him where the baby flowers come from where the mother kept them when they were baby seeds and also tell him how the father and mother flower gave life to the little baby seeds which afterward grew into the lovely flowers we see all about us    She would show him that he was once a little seed like the flower seed and kept in a soft little nest in the same way

Bobby s mother now regretted that she had not begun earlier to tell this story of the flowers to him    For she realized that had she done this then now when he had reached te stage of

development where he was curious about his own being she could at once have taken up the story of his own creation and of course referred back to the story of the creation of the lower species. This would have simplified matters greatly. However she decided it could never be too late and the easiest and quickest way even now was to begin with the flowers.

It now occurred to Bobby's mother that to teach only her child the truths of Nature would be a most fruitless task for in playing with his companions they would undo all her work unless they too were taught the truths and in the same way.

She consequently set about gathering in the children of the neighborhood with whom Bobby played. She explained to the mothers what she was about to do. Most of them strongly objected to their boys learning these things which they considered of interest only to grown ups. But five of the mothers consented and seemed delighted to have their children taught the truths in this most beautiful and interesting manner.

Accordingly she took five little children together with her own ranging in ages from five to six and one half years and started in the woods to hunt for the common wild flowers. Soon they were scrambling over boulders and

fallen trees in search of mountain pinks violets buttercups anemones etc calling and shouting to each other at each new find their faces bright and happy with the glow of health It was a picture never to be forgotten and as they gathered around Bobby's mother who was seated on a moss covered fallen tree they received their first lesson

As the buttercup was a little early—those on this particular outing being the first ones found of the season—they naturally made it the most popular flower and so it became logically the first family to be studied

They were told that the whole buttercup as they held it was the Buttercup House whose color was yellow and that inside the house within the petals was the Buttercup Family

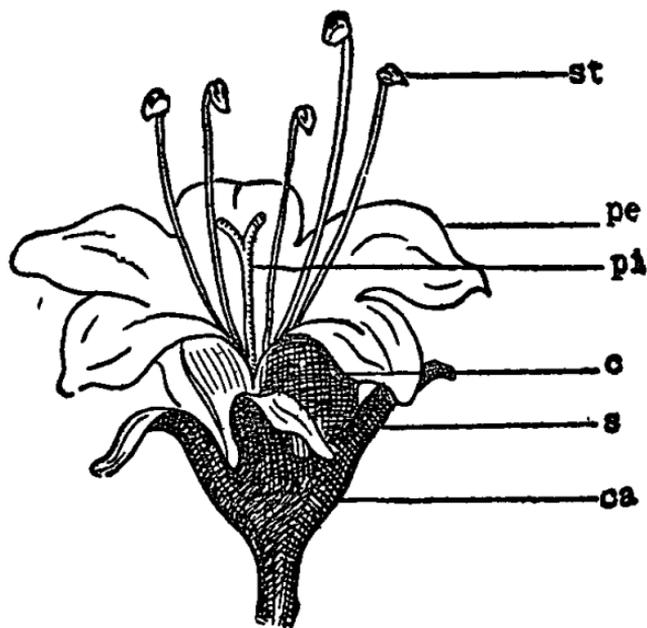
Is there a father? asked one and a mother? asked another

Yes indeed there must be a father and mother if there are to be any seeds was the reply

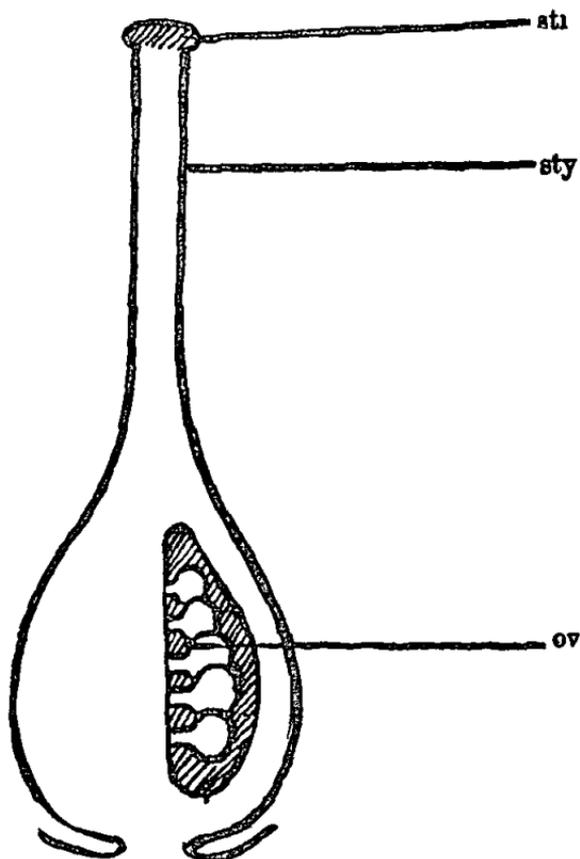
Then they were told that all forms of plant life have but one object and that object is to reproduce their kind—to make more flowers

They were told that the flowers have reproductive organs—parts that make more flowers—called pistils and stamens

The pistils were called the mothers because at the bottom of the thin tube are the



*A complete flower st stamen pi pistil pa,  
petal s sepal ca calyx c corolla  
After Bergen*



*Pistil sti stigma sty style ov ovule After  
Bergen*

ovules or seeds The pistils were examined carefully and the very top or stigma was found to be very sticky Why? asked the children But they were told they must wait and find out about the father before they found out why this part of the pistil was sticky

Now attention was again called to the seeds lying within the pistil or mother and the fact that they were not developed yet Why? Again we must wait to learn something about the father

Now we come to the stamen or father This is a slender thread like fibre which has at its ends a little case or sac which contains a very fine powder like substance called the pollen

In most of the flowers there are several stamens and one pistil but in the buttercup there were several of each—so that the Buttercup House contained several families the children were told

Now to come back to the fathers or stamens and the tiny sacs containing the pollen This pollen is a very important part of the growing of all flowers The children were asked to name some of the flowers which they knew that had this powder on them Answers came in the names of golden rod wild rose cherry blossom and many others

Now it was explained that this pollen from the stamen or father must get into the pistil

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or mother and reach the ovules or seeds or the seeds cannot grow and develop into new plants. This union of the pollen with the ovules we called mating or to mate. And as this process of developing the seeds is the one object of plant life we shall see how they go about accomplishing this object.

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