

SPEAKING OF FLOWERS

By

PILAR HILARIO

AS I happened to stop a few minutes at the International Flower Shop at Taft Avenue. I came to think how this world is much more livable because of flowers. We have the orchids, roses, carnations, Benguet lilies, amaryllis, calla lilies, tuberoses, dahlias, pansies, sweet peas, zinnias, snap dragons, and cosmos. We use them for making corsages, bridal bouquets, bouquets for maids of honor, beautiful *bon voyage* bouquets, Christmas and birthday presents, and graduation bouquets.

These flowers have stories of their origin, the manner in which they are raised together, their uses, the places where they are taken, and even their varieties.

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The carnation is used in making crowns, garlands, and wreaths. It is a descendant of the love-pink which still grows on the slopes of

the turfs in Somerset, England. In most places it is cultivated in hot houses but may also be transferred to the gardens in warm weather. The carnation was once popular in England, when it was used to add a spicy flavor to wine and ale. It was the favorite flower at the time of Queen Elizabeth. In the United States, it is the symbol of purity, love and devotion, and is worn by many on Mother's Day. At present, different varieties are grown in our own Baguio.

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The rose, queen of all flowers, has played an important part in the history and legends of the world. Even among the oriental nations stories are told of its ori-

gin.

The rose gardens of Midas, King of Phrygia, were the wonder of the ancient world. In Rome the rose was dedicated to Venus and made the emblem of joy and beauty. Romans imported roses by the shipload, and used them in making wreaths given as awards in public contests; wealthy Roman citizens slept on mattresses stuffed with rose petals. In the fifteenth century, the famous "War of the Roses" was waged by the English.

The rose is found practically the world over, either as a roadside wild flower or in the garden. Preparations from the petals are used extensively in the manufacture of perfumes.

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The beauty of the orchid has only recently been appreciated. A century ago it was introduced to the hothouses of England, and later to north America. The layman rarely realizes that the orchid belongs to a large family of many species, which grow in almost every part of the world, but best in the moisture and warmth of the tropics. In the forests of South America, Mexico, and the East Indies, the greater number of varieties are found growing from the trunks and branches of forest trees. These are of the epiphytial group. The species that grows on the soil and crevices of rocks is called the terrestrial. Many native species, however, have not the exotic beauty of the carefully cultured flowers—seen in milady's corsage. Rare specimens of orchids are considered very valuable and men penetrate deep into forest and swamps in search of them.

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The pansy is one of the oldest of garden flowers. It is really a sister of the violet, and appears in many varieties. It would be difficult to describe the commonest type. Pansy means "thought". Shakespeare called it "love in idleness." It is one of the easiest of flowers to cultivate, and is noted for its quality of bloom, range of color and the velvety texture of its darker shades.

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The sweet pea, one of the best known summer flowers, is a plant of vigorous habit, delicately tinted blossoms, and exquisite fragrance. It has several varieties of which the "Spencer" is probably the most popular, the blossoms being larger

than those of other varieties. Its other advantage is its long, continued profusion of bloom. This flower is noted for its robust growth, the plants attaining a height of from six to ten feet. Three and often four of these queenly blossoms are borne on long, strong stems, rendering them unsurpassable as cut flowers, box vases and bouquets.

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The tulip, a prim, formal flower and a member of the lily family, came originally from Asia Minor. It is said the first tulip came to Europe from Persia by way of Istanbul. In Arabian design, especially in decorative painting, the flower is frequently represented. The finest tulips come from Haarlem, Holland, where there are extensive farms devoted to the culture of this splendid flower. The flower ranges without restriction through the chromatic scale except blue, although blue is suggested in the variety named Blew Celeste. Its varieties are simply endless. It flowers successively throughout the spring.



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