

A PLEA FOR CONVALESCENT HOMES.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

IN unhomelike City houses,
 With a hot and throbbing brow,
 Many a weary girl is struggling
 Through a convalescence slow;
 While o'er cool and verdant mosses
 Other maidens careless stray,
 Where across the dancing rivers
 Dart the dragon-flies at play.

Days go by with leaden footsteps
 In the narrow, noisy room,
 Where no ray of God's sweet sunlight
 Breaks the close, unlovely gloom;
 Yet the merry merle and mavis
 Make the woods resound with song,
 And the dusty bee rejoices
 That the summer day is long!

Only jarring City noises
 Fall upon the tired ear;
 There is not a leaf or blossom
 Wistful eyes to bless and cheer;
 Yet the summer's breeze is playing
 O'er the glowing, purple moor,
 And the tiny waves are kissing
 With soft lips the shining shore.

Ah! ye gay and gentle maidens—
 Ye, to whom God giveth all,
 Let a share of your abundance
 On less happy sisters fall.
 Hark! a still, small voice is saying,
 "Are My gifts not full and free?
 What ye give to these my sisters,
 Ye have given unto Me."



OLD-FASHIONED GARDENS.

THE notion of putting down a few ideas on gardens and gardening occurred to me while staying with a most enthusiastic grower of flowers in Norfolk this year. The wealth of bloom that met my gaze every time I looked out of a window, or for that matter looked round the rooms—for my friend was not one of those growers who are afraid to pluck a flower—might have awakened enthusiasm for gardens and gardening in the breasts of the most indifferent; and as my friend kindly put at my disposal his own experience as a grower of flowers for many years, I determined to make the present attempt to say something practical, to help those readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER who are interested in the subject of gardening. Not that I shall attempt to write a sort of professional treatise on this inexhaustible theme (even if I were capable of doing so, which I am not), for if the Editor consented to print it (which I doubt), the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER would, I am thinking, not give me their attention for long. I have my own ideas about what a garden should be, as I daresay have many other people. The subject of gardens has occupied my mind on and off for the last few years, but it is only recently that I have attempted to fix my thoughts on paper. One of my methods of study ever since I took up art has been to draw from plant form, and this has led me into a good many gardens at various times; and while seated, as I have often been, drawing some flower that has attracted my attention by its beauty or quaintness of form, I have had ample opportunities in the pauses of my work to note any striking effect of grouping, contrasts of colour, or the way one plant will throw up and bring into prominence another one growing in front of it. Nay, these very effects are often what I have gone into

gardens to seek, as well as for plants whose forms, flowers, foliage and growth are beautiful; and I shall in these articles dwell as much on the æsthetic—*i.e.*, beautiful side of gardening—as on the practical aspect of the question. Depend upon it, the management of the flowers in a garden is every whit as important as the successful growing of plants, for unless great care be exercised in the placing of your flowers, much of their beauty will be lost.

Gardening is not a matter of chance, as some people may imagine. Gardening is an art, the art of decorating a confined area—for a garden, no matter how large, is relatively a small plot of ground—with plants of varied forms, colours, and growths. If we decorate a room, we seek for pleasing tints and happy combinations, so that the eye shall appear satisfied with a feeling of completeness. And we should do the same in a garden; and, let me tell you, a very difficult task it is to put all your various plants in appropriately, so that each is seen to its best advantage, and made the most of. But, say you, perhaps, the flowers in the field have no landscape gardener to fit them into their places, and yet who can deny their beauty? I would answer to such an one a garden is not nature, but an artificial product, just as much as a picture is. In a garden you have in a comparatively small space flowers that are distributed over a wide area, and which in their wild state are never found blooming together. And as you bring these widely different plants together, it is your duty to do the best by them. The hand which collects must also direct. And then, again, some flowers are so much more interesting to grow than others, and so much more beautiful when grown; and when there is such endless variety as there is now, seeing that novelties from all corners of the earth are continually being collected and brought to

England, it behoves us to make a judicious selection.

I hope my readers don't imagine that by novelties I refer to hothouse or stove plants—plants that require a constant artificial atmosphere to keep them alive. Let me emphatically state that my gardening is open-air gardening, and the plants I grow are hardy ones, and quite capable of taking care of themselves.

There is a talk now about herbaceous borders, and many people are going in entirely for hardy herbaceous plants. This is a most excellent move, and one quite in the right direction. Gardening a few years ago had resolved itself into having a few beds of geraniums and roses, two very good things in their way, but by no means the only flowers worth cultivating. Indeed, geraniums don't come under the head of hardy plants, and it is a question whether they are worth growing, unless you have plenty of glass for them in the winter, for, as you know, frost is death to them.

There seems to be some misconception as to what is meant by hardy herbaceous plants, and as it is a term often employed I had better give a definition of it. Herbaceous plants are those whose stems die down annually, such as the chrysanthemum and hollyhock, but unless disease attack the root, the plant springs into life again the following year, often increasing by the plant throwing out fresh shoots. It is therefore possible to have plants—annuals that die after flowering, and require to be replanted; biennials—plants that die the second year; and perennials—plants that live year after year under favourable conditions. There are some plants which come, strictly speaking, under the head of hardy plants, which by florists are separately classified. These plants are tuberous, as the dahlia, and bulbous, as the daffodils and lilies.



THE GARDENER.

Old-fashioned gardens were generally rich in hardy herbaceous plants and annuals; and very brilliant and even gorgeous is the effect of an old garden, with its hollyhocks, and white lilies, and bergamot, and Aaron's rods, and giant pyrethrus, and lychnis, and it is a great pity that these grand old flowers, that came up year after year, often with little care and trouble on our part, should have been allowed to fall into neglect for the sake of newer and what would be considered more fashionable plants. The greatest charm of a garden is variety and profusion of bloom, and diversity of growth and arrangement, and this is far from being realised by beds of geraniums and coloured leaf plants, arranged with a geometrical precision. I like a garden where the eye is continually meeting with some new beauty, a garden where one is constantly getting fresh peeps at flowers, and not one that is exhausted by a bird's-eye view. I like order and precision and neatness in a garden, but not too much formality, at least not formality of detail, though I think a certain formality of the principal lines in a garden, such as the walks, hedges, and main divisions, is desirable; as these are analogous to a picture frame, which to my thinking is always better the straighter and plainer it be, so as to throw into relief the richness and variety of the painting.

Good hardy herbaceous plants have their distinct uses in a garden. They are always something to start with when you begin your gardening for the spring. Only those who garden are aware of the quantity of plants a small space of ground will absorb, and it is a great relief to think, as one surveys a long border, that here are one's white lilies, phloxes, pyrethrus, delphiniums, geums, and other perennials, and that all one has to do is to fill out the intervals with annuals and a few bedding plants, such as geraniums and lobelias. Perennials come up year after year, and, once planted, all they require is manuring in the winter or spring, and just forking round the roots. It is a good plan when you cut down the dead stalks, or when they die down in the autumn and winter, to cover your plants with some good stable manure. This protects the roots from very severe frosts, and the plants are nourished by the rain washing the manure into the earth. It is always well, too, to place sticks or labels wherever you have any roots or bulbs. This is a most necessary precaution, as when the plant has died quite down, in forking over the bed one is very apt to inadvertently disturb the roots, or even fork into them, and perhaps ruin a choice clump. Bulbs frequently suffer from these accidents, and it is very probable that the reason so many bulbs get lost every year is, that they get disturbed and bruised, and eventually rot in the ground. It is even a good plan to mark down on paper the position of your plants, so that in sowing your annuals, or planting out your dwarf plants, due regard can be paid to what is already in the ground. When once a plant has got well established and appears to thrive in the particular spot in the garden, it is most important it should not be disturbed. Many of the lilies, irises, and hemerocallis grow into grand clumps and throw up dozens of spikes if the bulbs are not damaged. Therefore, be most careful when forking over the ground in the spring not to damage or disturb these corner stones of your garden.

In going into a strange garden, I always take in the general effect before studying the details of the gardening, for that is what, after all, is most pleasing in a garden. If the eye rests upon gorgeous masses of colour, great wealth of foliage and beauty of form, one's eye is satisfied, and it little matters what the plants are that produce this grand *mise en scène*. The general effect is what all gardeners should aim at, instead of, as they too often do, wasting all their time in bringing a few

flowers into bloom of some particular plant they have made their hobby. Make some one particular flower your especial study if you like, but don't do this to the exclusion of all else. A good gardener I consider one of the most generous of beings, for in gratifying himself (or herself), he gives pleasure, may be to thousands. Seeing it is so easy to be generous, no gardener should be selfish, and sacrifice the general effect of his garden for the sake of some particular plant. What matters it how common (if any flower is common in this sense) the plants that produce this wealth of effect be, so long as the general effect is one of splendour?

What a relief it is to the eye as one is driving along a country road or through a village, to have it cheered by a sight of brilliant coloured flowers! and I always lament that there are now comparatively so few real cottage gardens. Now and then you come across some country labourer who is a gardening enthusiast, and who has the strip of ground in front of his cottage gay with many an old-fashioned flower, with here and there perchance a rarer plant, that the gardener at the great house has given him. And let me tell you some very choice hardy plants are to be found in these cottage gardens, and I know my Norfolk friend is always on the look out as he drives through the country for some new acquisition for his own garden. Some of the flowers that our great great grandmothers grew still linger on in these cottage gardens, and you cannot do better than try to effect an exchange of some of your newer plants for cuttings or seeds of these old-fashioned flowers. Two or three generations ago our country folk were much more diligent gardeners than they are now. The wives of the farmers were often great flower-growers. These were the days before professional gardeners became so plentiful, and it was looked upon as one of the duties of the female members of the house to see after and tend to the garden. And they naturally, having so much of the work to do themselves, grew plants which gave the best results with the smallest amount of labour, and hence it was that hardy annuals and perennials formed by far the larger portion of the plants grown.

And your old-fashioned gardeners were not content to have a brilliant display for just two or three months in the year, with scarcely a flower to brighten up the garden all the rest of the time. There was hardly a month in the whole twelve that had not some plant blooming; and I hold it to be the duty of all gardeners to try and have a succession of flowers the whole year round, and not a brilliant show for a brief space, like a display of fireworks succeeded by utter darkness, all the more gloomy by contrast to what has been. Of course, except in very favoured situations, it is difficult to have many flowers in mid-winter, but as we shall see later on there is something to be had in flower even then.

I have occasionally—the rarity of the event makes it the more prominent—seen the small patch of ground in front of an old lady's cottage that for wealth of colour and variety of plants would put to shame some gardens near by, where a gardener is always kept at work. And what matters it to me whether the flowers in this cottage ground are old-fashioned, as though that were in itself derogatory, so long as the garden presents rich harmonies and subtle contrasts to the eye? While you are trying to grow some out-of-the-way novelty (as you call it), you are missing the opportunity of making your garden a perfect blaze of flowers. Colour is what I look for in a garden; given that and I am all but satisfied. I care not how it be produced, but I must have colour. Flowers have a wonderful way of harmonising themselves, and what in a picture would be intolerable, is in a garden, perhaps, just as gorgeous. Of course you

can greatly help the effect by placing together flowers that harmonise or agreeably contrast with each other. It is one of your duties, as I have said somewhere else, to do the best for your flowers; but still you needn't be frightened at getting too much colour in your garden. If that time should ever come it will be a sure proof that you have obtained the secret of blooming plants, and this is, when all else is said, the grand secret of all gardening. Among old-fashioned flowers may be enumerated the following:—

Butter polyanthus flowers soon after Christmas; primroses and oxlips, double yellow, mauve and crimson, and the old polyanthus "hose in nose" of all colours. Double wallflowers when in bloom make as handsome a bed of flowers as anything a garden can show. While staying this spring in a little country village on the Thames, I was struck with the beautiful rich appearance of a bed of wallflowers (double and single), from pale yellow to deep purple. The great variety of colour in the wallflower is one of its most striking features. Wallflowers are generally raised from seed, but can also be propagated from cuttings.

Dianthus or male pinks are very showy in beds and borders, and as it is a hardy perennial gives little trouble when once established. It flowers from March till late autumn, and is more brilliant at certain times than at others. Raised easily from cuttings in almost any soil, provided cuttings are particularly shaded from the sun. They are very much given to "sporting," that is, sending off varieties different to the parent plant, and some of these sports are very beautiful, and can be perpetuated from cuttings taken from the "sport." *Dianthus striatus multiflorus* (French) is the best variety.

The biennial Chinese pinks sown broadcast are deserving of attention.

Delphinium belladonna, a lovely sky blue, is the most beautiful of the delphiniums. It can be perpetuated by division or from seed. After throwing up magnificent spikes of flowers in May and June, it can be cut down, and will in the autumn throw up a sheet of short spikes of blooms, a very welcome addition to the garden beauties at this time of the year. It can be planted either in the autumn or spring. There are many varieties of colour, from pale mauve to deep purplish blue, and if planted against a dark background of yew, are most striking in the corners of a garden.

Phlox decussata is the late flowering herbaceous one, and is a valuable autumn plant. It is better to take cuttings from early shoots, as when the root throws up many shoots you can take the surplus ones for striking, as it is never necessary to leave more than three or four stems to a plant.

Phlox suffruticosa is an earlier flowering variety, with a dwarf habit than the former.

The dwarf white Campanula (*C. grandis alba*) and *persicifolia alba*, single and double, and *cerulea*, single and double, are some of the choicest of the campanulas.

Of the Columbines, *Aquilegia chrysantha*, with its canary coloured flowers and glaucous, green foliage, is one of the most striking.

A. chrysantha hybrida, with red and yellow flowers; and also a striking one is *cerulea grandulosa*, with its striking blue and white flowers. These are all hardy perennials.

Lychnis chalconica, single and double, is a striking plant growing from three to four feet high, having dense compact foliage, covered with heads of scarlet or crimson flowers.

The sweet-scented bergamot (*Monarda didima*) is an old-fashioned hardy perennial, and one distinctly worth growing, if it were for the scent of its foliage alone. It grows about three feet high, and flowers in distinct whorls of a brilliant scarlet colour.

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