

On mischief bent, with saucy showers she dashed his new-found splendour;
 He made her cherry-blossom crowns, she flouted them with hail,
 Now near and sweet, now far and fleet, most wilful, arch and tender,
 For her all lures that lovers know were spent—without avail.

But, when full thirty days had sped, Earth cried, in wrath and sorrow,
 "O changeling maid of many moods, yet never one to spare,
 When wilt thou deign to share my reign?" And April laughed "To-morrow—
 To-morrow, maybe, hand-in-hand we'll climb Love's shining stair."

Again ere dawn the Earth awoke to chide the Sun's delaying,
 And vainly sought his errant love in all her flower-lit ways,
 Until he heard the stranger bird pipe softly, "Gone a-maying,
 And none shall see her face again for thrice a hundred days!"

A fickle April, dazzling all with short-lived gleam and glory,
 Shall ever May-day loveliness those yester-dreams restore,
 Yet this indeed we learn, who read Earth's tender, old-time story,
 Wherever love hath blent with life the world grows young once more!



THE GARDEN IN EARLY SPRING.

WITH the first gleams of sunshine and soft breath of the balmy winds, which generally come to us with the opening days of March, we instinctively turn our thoughts to the garden. The rich brown earth is just emerging from the iron bands of winter, and seems to cry out to us for the touch of a friendly hand. Indeed, if we wish to reap the rich harvests of summer, we must lose no time in commencing the necessary preparations now, and seed-sowing is one of the most important of these.

The due preparation of the ground in both kitchen and flower-garden is, however, of the first importance. If it was not thoroughly dug over in the autumn, it must be done at once, and manure added where it is required, the beds marked out for seed-sowing, the paths and lawns weeded and rolled, and new gravel laid where required. While this is being done, we can purchase and prepare the seeds that will be necessary for our summer crops.

Peas will crop much better if planted where the ground has been deeply dug and enriched with good manure, burnt rubbish, and lime. They should be sown in rows, from four to seven feet apart. The first early peas are sometimes sown in November; they appear above ground late in January, and one can then tell how many have "missed" owing to frost, and can fill up the vacant spaces. These autumn sown peas will fruit very early, and a succession can be kept up during the summer with fortnightly sowings of different kinds. Some of the best varieties of peas for general use are the following—"English Wonder," "Earliest of All," "Ringleader," as first early sorts, and "Champion of England," "Sharp's Queen," and "Stanley" (dwarf) for second crops. "Mammoth Marrowfat," "Ne Plus Ultra," and "Veitch's Perfection," for late summer gathering.

The main crop of broad beans should also be sown now, and of these "Early Mazagan," or

"Green Windsor," will be the best. Runner beans are not so hardy, and should be left till April or beginning of May, but some French or dwarf kidney beans can be sown in pots or boxes in a frame and hardened off for early planting out. A very sheltered border should be chosen for the first sowing of spring carrots—the "Early Scarlet Short Horn," which can be followed by a general crop sown in the open in April. A portion of the same border should be reserved for a sprinkling of broccoli seeds, celery, parsnips, and early salads, all to be planted out when large enough to handle.

The main crop of onions and turnips can be sown in the open ground now, but it will be well to sow vegetable marrows, cucumbers, and tomatoes in pots in the frame or greenhouse, so that they may have time to be well hardened off before planting out in May. Radishes sown broadcast once a fortnight from now until August will keep us well supplied, and ensure their being fresh and crisp. Mustard and cress for early salads is easily raised in boxes indoors. At the end of March we may proceed to plant the first crop of early potatoes. The border under a south wall will be the best place for them; it will probably be occupied with fruit-trees, but the potatoes will not injure them. "Early Regent" and "Myatt's Ashleaf" are perhaps the best early varieties.

Herbs and garnishing plants must not be omitted from our list. Of these the most useful for the kitchen department are basil, chervil, fennel, marjoram, mint, parsley, sage, sorrel, thyme, also summer savoury; whilst such medicinal herbs as balm, borage, horehound, hysop, lavender, rosemary, and wormwood should always flourish in a lady's garden. From many of them simple teas and drinks are made, and also washes and cosmetics, an employment by no means unremunerative, and which essentially belongs to the housewife's department.

In the flower-garden we need to look over the beds which should now be gay with crocuses, snowdrops, aconites, scillas, and early tulips, removing decayed leaves and forking up the earth between the bulbs. Sow seeds of climbers, such as nasturtiums, morning glories, sweet peas, cobeia scandens, convolvulus, and in the borders mignonette, nemophilla, Virginian stocks, sunflowers, especially the sunflower-milflowered, a wonderful variety, and not forgetting some annual chrysanthemums and Michaelmas daisies for autumn blooming. The poppies, both Shirley and Iceland, will be better left until April.

The green-house should be gay with pots of azalea indicans, azalea mollis, spiraea, heaths, cinerarias, winter carnations, and pelargoniums, etc. In the hot-bed we may sow asters, begonias, lobelias, musk, mimulus, petunias, verbenas, and other sweet-scented favourites.

Hanging baskets and wall-pockets for indoor or outdoor decoration are best prepared at this time, so that they may hang in the green-house and become thoroughly established before being removed to their permanent quarters. For sunny windows out of doors, the ivy-leaved geraniums—pink, white, or cherry-coloured, with musk, lobelia, and a foliage plant or fuschia for the centre will thrive well. For a north or east window, out of doors, a creeping jenny, tradescantia, with ferns, or an aralia for a centre piece, is more suitable. Indoors, mosses and ferns are perhaps the best. Hanging baskets are a great addition both inside or outside the house; over doorways, or under arches, or on terrace-walks they are exceedingly effective.

The rockery should be well looked over and all decayed fronds removed, and fresh ferns and roots be added where required. Some forget-me-nots, sedums, etc., will improve it.

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