

FRAGRANT LEGACIES.

CHAPTER I.



THE beautiful things scattered over and under the earth's surface are full of latent charm and sweetness, which are ready to spring into life at the touch of the magic wand of man's intelligence, exactly as in Nature the warm and gentle kiss of spring awakes the grace and beauty of every living thing, reminding one of the old allegory of the "Sleeping Beauty."

It very often happens that the charms so ready and anxious to be recognised never come out of their hiding-places, because we human beings lack the knowledge and power to call them forth and endow them with life.

Just as it is with people we have known, even those nearest and dearest; they have passed out of life without our dreaming of the grand qualities hidden away in their nature, simply because there was nothing in us or in their surroundings to evoke them.

Think also of the trees, which grew for centuries before man discovered the music embodied in them or knew how to use it. The flowers also have grown up around us, charming us with their colours and fragrance. We enjoyed them while they were fresh, and threw them away when they became withered, without a thought that they could charm us for years after they themselves had passed away. Rich gatherings-in of fruit, too, were often allowed to rot or manure the ground before we learned that by fire and sugar we could preserve them to our use, in all their beauty and lusciousness, till another year's fruits fell in. And so it is with hundreds of things which God has placed in the earth with power to make man's life beautiful, pure, and graceful. He has left it to us to call forth the fulness of colour, perfume, poetry, and music by our own intelligence and for our own use. It may be a foolish thought of mine, but it always seems to me that God is pleased when, with His gift of intelligence, we are able to see into the deep things of Nature, and develop their hidden graces for our use and to His honour and glory.

There is no place, perhaps, in the whole world where the latent properties of flowers have been developed so largely by the intelligence of man as in the quaint and picturesque corner of ancient Provence known as Grasse. Until our Queen's sojourn there last year we knew little about it except that we obtained from it our most exquisite perfumes. It seems that from time to time a few royal personages have appreciated it and enjoyed a sojourn there, from the time of King René of Provence in 1437 down to the Emperor of Brazil in 1890, and our own Queen in 1891.

It has been handed down to us that the Duke of Guise, in 1505, paid it a visit, for the purpose of receiving the homage of the burgesses on behalf of Henry IV., and for his own personal use was presented with some flasks of perfumed and myrtle waters in addition to twelve cheeses.

Of ordinary tourists and travellers up to last year there had been very few; for until quite lately there had been neither hotel nor lodgings to receive them, even had they desired a nearer acquaintance with its steep, narrow streets and winding ways, its lemon and orange groves, its orchards of rich fruit, including figs and pomegranates, and its many-coloured parterres of flowers. Yet Grasse is well worth a prolonged visit, for it is a very interesting town and for hundreds of years has enjoyed many curious customs and privileges.

Early in the middle ages the Saracens came down upon Grasse, pillaged it, and destroyed or carried off its inhabitants; but about the year 890 the town was re-peopled by the inhabitants who had escaped destruction and by families of Provence; and considering the nearness of Italy, it is not surprising that many Italian families asked hospitality of Grasse and settled there also. These flower-loving people soon settled down to the making of olive oil and the growing of flowers. They introduced new methods of horticulture, and endowed their gardens with hitherto unknown varieties of heliotrope, roses, narcissi, jasmine, and lilies, and the mild climate and sheltered situation seconded their efforts and brought them success far beyond their wildest expectations. It was also greatly to their advantage that the place was well supplied with water from a rivulet which rises above the town.

The orange-tree, from which doubtless the flowers were first distilled, was introduced into Sicily in the tenth century, and in the thirteenth into the south of France, where the lemon-tree made its appearance a century and a half later.

Naturally such a wealth of flowers and fruit would not be allowed to waste by the clever enterprising inhabitants of Grasse, and it is not surprising that about the fourteenth century they commenced to distil the orange-flowers, and that the making of perfumes and crystallising the fruit rapidly came to the front, driving some other trades into a secondary position, though not affecting the olive-oil trade, which still forms one of the great industrial resources of Grasse. It is an interesting fact that Catherine de Medicis sent a Florentine named Tourbarelli to open a laboratory in Grasse, and occasionally sent her chief physicians to report progress. It must not be thought that she created the industry of distilling perfumes, the credit of this belongs entirely to the people of Grasse themselves. Of course the amount of flowers used at that time for making perfumes was very small compared with the enormous quantity absorbed in the present day, neither was the perfume sold to any large extent. It will give some idea of this industry in Grasse if we mention that every year, on an average, 1860 tons of orange-blossom are used, 930 tons of roses, 147 tons of violets, 127 tons of jasmine, besides immense quantities of other flowers, and the area taken up in flower farming for perfumery is 115,000 acres.

So little is known of this giant industry, and its sister industry of crystallising fruit, that I am induced to tell of what we saw and heard when we were in this quaint old town a short time since; and unless we had seen with our own eyes we could not have imagined how much patience and care, ingenuity and

skill, are required in the poetic industry of manufacturing perfumes.

Just as there are but a few primary colours and a few notes of music which in combination create new harmonies of colours and sounds, so it is with perfumes, the basis of which are eight flowers, viz., orange-blossom, rose, violet, jonquil, mignonette, jasmine, tube-rose, and cassie; this last grows in Provence and has a yellow flower. All flowers are, however, pressed into the service, as well as scented woods and herbs, iris-root, and lavender; but they serve, as it were, under the eight principal ones. Of the eight, three stand out as queens among the flowers, viz., the orange-blossom, the rose, and the violet.

Just as trouble, and what is called "roughing it," are said to bring out the sweetness of certain characters, so the beauty and sweetness of these exquisite flowers are only to be obtained by crushing and heavy pressure, and by companionship, which, if they could speak, they would declare very objectionable. Yet, strange to say, the flowers are not in the least contaminated by contact with this rough matter, but rather they impregnate it with all the delicate qualities which each individual flower possesses. It is necessary to know the flowers well, and to take them at the right moment, and subject them to the necessary discipline, in order to collect their fragrance in such a manner as to delight the whole world.

There are many good distillers of perfumes here in Grasse, but as we are only to speak of what we saw, we must confine ourselves to the house of Bruno Court, which is devoted chiefly to the production of essences and so-called pomades—in reality fat and oils impregnated with the odour of flowers, and despatched in large consignments to the great perfumers of the world for the preparation of the various essences and toilet waters sold to the public. This poetic industry owes its progress in a great measure to the family of Bruno Court, who have worked it since 1812, and who, together with their successors Anthony and Augustin Merle, know more, perhaps, of flowers and their capabilities of giving out sweet odours, and the treatment necessary to catch and to hold them, than any one living.

We made our way to the ancient convent of Cordeliers, occupied now by Bruno Court, and were shown the whole process by which the flowers, herbs, and scented woods are made to give out their sweetness. Between sixty and eighty men and women are constantly employed, but in the flower months of April, May, June, and July an extra three hundred women and girls are taken on, whose duty it is to manipulate the flowers brought in in the early morning. Especially are they employed in separating the pistils from the petals of orange-flowers and roses; the former, being acid, would spoil the softness of the perfumes if treated with the petals. There are fixed days in the week for receiving violets and mignonette, but all other flowers are plucked and brought in every morning during the whole period of the flower season. They receive as many as 100,000 kilogrammes of roses a month—roughly speaking, 216,250 lbs.—so it is necessary to be very systematic and orderly in their proceedings, otherwise many of the flowers would wither and waste before they could be used.

We had never associated anything so gross as fat, grease, and oil with such a delicate process as the making of perfumes, and yet both pork and beef fat are largely used to extract the full strength of the flowers. We were taken to an underground room or cellar, where the fat is carefully prepared for

its dainty work, and in such proportions that the extreme firmness of the one should correct the undue fluidity of the other. We then went into the pomade-room, where girls were stirring the rich yellow pomade round and round till it became quite smooth. In our ignorance we thought this was to be sent out exactly as it was for the hair, but were told it was only raw material, and not half done with yet. It was a medium, so to speak, whereby perfumers could obtain the odours or foundations of the delicious perfumes. It takes several pounds of flowers to make one pound of pomade.

The methods employed for extracting the perfumes are three in number, viz., by *maceration*, by *enfleurage*, and by *distillation*. There are some flowers so extremely delicate, such as jasmine, tube-rose, and violet, that they can scarcely be induced to yield any essence or attar by distillation, and are subjected therefore either to maceration or enfleurage, both of which depend for success upon the wonderful property possessed by fat and oils of absorbing odours.

Maceration consists in soaking or steeping the flowers in heated fat, where they are left till all their strength is extracted, after which they are drained on little wire trays in wooden frames, and subsequently subjected to hydraulic pressure. The presses are very ingeniously constructed for the extraction from the flowers of the last particles of the pomade or oil which they carried away with them after maceration, and are the very best which modern science can supply. It is interesting

to note the hand-presses originally used, which are carefully preserved, and mark how the industry must have progressed since the time when they were sufficient for the work.

But to go back to the maceration. The fat, having absorbed the essence of the flowers, is known as pomade, in which convenient form it is sent to retail perfumers in all parts of the world, who in their turn compel the pomade to give up its treasure of sweetness by means of alcohol, and in its bereft state it is made into cakes of unperfumed soap. The flowers whose perfume is so volatile and of such extraordinary delicacy that it cannot be caught by the hot fat are laid on sheets of glass, framed with wood about three inches deep. These glass trays are spread over with cold fat about half an inch thick, in which ridges are made to facilitate absorption, and sprinkled with freshly gathered flowers, renewed every morning. Great care is taken to prevent the evaporation of the aroma, and at length the pomade is scraped off the glass, melted at as low a temperature as possible, and strained. If the flower be jasmine, about three pounds of blossom will perfume one pound of fat.

For the manufacture of essential oils or essences, *distillation* is employed. The room set apart for this division of work contains large alembics with double receivers, which are so beautifully made that they can be moved by steam or *barbotage*, according to the greater or lesser volatility of the essences required. Distillation by *barbotage* is that process by which the steam of water is directly intro-

duced into the alembic in the midst of the mixture of water and flowers to be distilled.

The store-room is a very attractive sight, with its long rows and piles of bright metal cans, which, as they were brought in by the various workers, were weighed and examined by the foreman in his spotless white dress, in order to see if they were up to the proper standard both in quantity and quality. Very attractive were the pomades in their variety of shades of colour, according to the flower essence they had imbibed, from creamy white tinged with palest sea-green to rich deep daffodil yellow, filling the air with the delicate fragrance of lily of the valley, rose, violet, and many another.

In the show-rooms, placed in the centre of the factory, their special products are exhibited in most attractive guise, designed principally for visitors who desire to carry away with them some souvenir of this wonderful industry.

When the Queen was staying in Grasse, she and all members of her family visited this factory, and were much interested in it. The Prince of Wales amused himself by perfuming a piece of soap with his own hands, and when it was satisfactorily accomplished he remarked laughingly, "See what a good perfumer I am!"

Of course the whole of the inhabitants of Grasse are occupied more or less in the production of fruits and flowers, and in preserving them for our use; and for those who are interested in this quaint old city and its poetic industries there is a really beautiful hotel, with an outlook almost unequalled and reaching even to the Mediterranean.

(To be concluded.)

VARIETIES.

A CURIOUS SENTENCE.

The following curious sentence, "Sator arpe tenet opera rotas," is pretty bad Latin, but may be freely translated—"I cease from my work; the sower will wear away his wheels."

It has these peculiarities:—

First, it spells backwards and forwards the same.

Second, the first letter of each word spells the first word.

Third, the second letter of each word spells the second word, and so on with the third, fourth, and fifth.

Fourth, the last letters, read backwards, spell the first word; the next to the last the second word, and so on throughout.

Fifth, there are just as many letters in each word as there are words.

HOPE THE BEST.

In hope a king doth go to war;

In hope a lover lives full long;

In hope a merchant sails full far;

In hope just men do suffer wrong;

In hope the ploughman sows his seed:

Thus hope helps thousands at their need.

Then faint not, heart, among the rest,

Whatever chance, hope thou the best.

—Allison.

AN ERRING RACE.

Declare, ye sages, if ye find

'Mongst animals of every kind,

Of each condition, sort, and size,

From whales and elephants to flies,

A creature that mistakes his plan

And errs so constantly as man!

A TEST OF GREATNESS.—Great souls are always loyally submissive and reverent to what is over them. Only small mean souls are otherwise.

WARNED BY A DREAM.

Mrs. Graham, a well-known Scottish authoress, was in October, 1825, about to take her passage in a steamboat for a short jaunt from "her own people and her own place," when for two or three nights before her intended departure, she was haunted by a dream respecting the vessel. It greatly disturbed her, though in waking hours she could only recollect that she was on board it, in company with a gentleman in an officer's undress—a blue braided military coat and shako—and who was attended by a fine Newfoundland dog.

The recurrence of this dream was singular; but how startling to Mrs. Graham was the actual appearance of the officer and his dog on board the boat when she reached the place of embarkation. Indeed, so singular did the coincidence appear to her, that she relinquished the opportunity of proceeding by the vessel, and thereby saved her life; for the steamboat in question was the unfortunate Comet, which on that very day, the 21st of October, 1825, was run down by the Ayr steamer, when every soul on board perished.

A TERRIBLE DREAM.

Two tramps had been sleeping in a wood. In the morning, one observed to the other that he was looking pale and ill.

"Yes," was the reply, "I have had a fearful experience. One of the most terrible dreams I ever had in my life."

"What was it about?"

"Well, I dreamt I was working."

LIFE AND DEATH.

Many there be that seek Thy face

To meet the hour of parting breath;

But 'tis for earth I need Thy grace,

Life is more solemn far than death.

—Matheson.

NEVER SATISFIED.

A laundress, who was employed in the family of a great man once, was overheard by him saying—

"Only think how small a sum would make me happy."

"How small?" said he.

"Oh, my lord, twenty pounds would make me perfectly happy."

"Then I will send it to you to-morrow, upon the understanding that that amount will make your happiness 'perfect.'"

"I thank your lordship. I assure you it will," said she, and took her departure.

She was no sooner outside the door than she thought she might as well have asked and received forty; so she stepped back, saying, "Would your lordship be pleased to make it forty?"

"No," answered he. "I shall now send nothing. You have proved that twenty would not make you happy, nor would any other sum."

RIOTOUS WOMEN.—In the year 1792 the women of Toulon declared themselves in a state of insurrection, and, assembling in crowds, threatened to hang the magistrates. The procurator-syndic at first laughed at their threats, but the multitude refusing to disperse, he assembled the council-general of the commune, and ordered the fire-engines, with a plentiful supply of water mixed with soot, to be drawn out in battle array. By a vigorous discharge of this smutty artillery the insurgents in petticoats were completely routed, and quietly returned to their homes.

THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM.—The key to the kingdom of heaven consists not in the mere knowledge of the Bible, nor in the ability to follow what is called its higher criticism, but in a loving obedience to its precepts.

to one shilling and sixpence. In most of them the American magazines are included, with two or three half-crown reviews, three shilling magazines, and several sixpenny ones. The members send in a list, which is then voted upon; or each member sends in the name of a review or magazine. The W— Magazine Club consists of eight members, one guinea a year being the fee paid by each, and one dozen magazines are taken, the price of the twelve being £7—£1 8s. is thus left for postage, etc., as well as the discount taken off the magazines when purchased. The list contains one review, seven sixpenny and three shilling magazines, and two at one and sixpence each. But I only give this as a specimen. I find that it is considered best to have fewer members in a magazine club than in a book society, as the former are circulated oftener and much more trouble is entailed, the magazines being kept only one week. Magazine club rules are a little different. The following come to me from Scotland:—

MAGAZINE CLUB RULES.

To be kept six days—Sundays excepted—and returned to the secretary by the member who last received it. If received any day after Tuesday may be retained till the next Saturday week. Day of transfer for all maga-

zines, Saturday. One penny a day fine if kept beyond six days, unless as above. No fine to exceed sixpence. Any member wishing to see a magazine a second time, to put a cross opposite his or her name on list and apply for it to the secretary on the completion of the circulation. The magazines are allotted by ballot at the end of each year. Subscription £1 1s. yearly.

The list pasted in each magazine.

NAMES.	RECEIVED.	FORWARDED.	SUNDAY.	FINES.

The magazine club may, of course, be much smaller. Indeed, I often find that in the country it takes the shape of two or three ladies arranging to take in a certain magazine each, and exchanging them, when read, with each other. In the case of three ladies, each

has a magazine for ten days, and pays for her own. Of course, in this case, *there are no fines*. It has been a little difficult to write so as to make myself understood; but I shall be very glad if my description of these useful little clubs incites any of my readers to start one among their own circles of friends. The magazine club is specially delightful; and now that so many of our best and most able magazines are sold at sixpence, there is no difficulty in the way of those with very slender purses. In the case of families *joining*, I should recommend a selection of Sunday monthlies being put in; and also that illustrations should be thought of, as young people learn much through them, I think, and through their means take more interest in what they read.

There is no doubt that the newest, freshest work goes into our reviews and magazines to-day; and we shall find our zest in life will be enhanced, and the happiness of our home-circle increased, by the appearance of our monthly visitors in their dresses of blue or yellow, or vested only in sober brown and drab. The advent of all new ideas is calculated to keep us young in thought, and, what is still better, youthful and fresh at heart. So shall our love be larger for all good, and our sympathies wider, with every effort towards the higher ideals of life.

FRAGRANT LEGACIES.

CHAPTER II.

THE CRYSTALLISING OF FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

THE poetic industry of extracting the sweetness of flowers appeals more especially to the grown-up and refined classes of society; but who among all ages and conditions would refuse or fail to appreciate the products of Mons. Nègre's industry if they were given a chance of accepting? In fact, I felt quite mean, as I walked through his factory, when I thought of the thousands of young people who would like to have been in my place.

The fruit which grows in and about Grasse is specially beautiful; some of it will grow only in a warm and clear atmosphere such as obtains here. Among these are the fig, the *mandarin orange*, the lemon, and the Japanese medlar. These and the commoner kinds are a treat when eaten fresh; but when they have passed into their new form under the hands of Mons. and Madame Nègre they are simply irresistible.

In addition to these fruits, incredible as it may seem, the magicians dish up for us *faïry food* such as real violets, orange-flowers, and rose-leaves, which are as agreeable to the taste as, when fresh, to the smell.

For nearly three quarters of a century this firm has been engaged in its charming work, and has gained a reputation not only for the taste and beauty, but for the wholesomeness, of its sweets.

Naturally, the work in this factory is much more simple and easy to describe than the perfumery manufacture of Bruno Court, for the reason that no elaborate machinery is used here, and only two kinds of processes.

The house in which this work of crystallising is carried on is in itself a real curiosity, and well worth seeing. It is entered on one side through a small door in a narrow and sombre street, and one is quite unprepared for the magnificent prospect which opens out to view on the opposite side.

Both fruits and flowers are first of all cooked slowly in sugar and water, the latter being exceptionally good in this district, and helps to give the fruits their delicate, transparent look. They are then slowly cooled off in syrup in order to glaze them; and we noticed that the

syrup used for cooking was not available for the process known as glazing.

Passing through the store-room, where a few people were engaged in packing the finished stock for export, we came into the cooking room, or kitchen, as it might really be called, where a low range occupied one end, and the greater portion of the remaining space was taken up by rows and piles of red earthenware pans filled with every variety of fruit, violets, orange-flower, and rose-leaves all cooling down in syrup, and presenting such a tempting display as fairly made one's mouth water.

We asked Madame Nègre, who kindly accompanied us, as to the quantities of fruit and flowers consumed by them; but she could give us no information on this point beyond saying that eight or nine thousand kilos of apricots and plums are preserved every season, and about the same quantity of other fruits, such as figs and strawberries, etc., making in all about eighteen thousand kilos, or, roughly speaking, nearly forty thousand pounds.

All fruits must first be cooked, as I have said, slowly in sugar and water; and it is necessary that the sugar be of the very best quality. This being done, the man-cook ladles the fruit slowly out on to a wire netting over a table, where it is carefully examined by girls, who remove every imperfect one, no matter how slight the imperfection, leaving only those without crack or blemish to cool and drain. After this they are glazed or crystallised; and as two syrups are used both for fruits and flowers, the process is somewhat long.

When the glaze is dry, and does not come off on being touched, it is a sign that the fruit is ready for use, and it will be found that in the process to which the fruit has been subjected it has suffered no detriment, the juice has not dried up in the least, neither does the most delicate fruit lose its flavour or brilliancy.

Seeing lovely fruit placed on one side owing, perhaps, to a slight crack in the skin, I wanted to know what became of it, and found it was made into *household jam*, with just the same care and ingredients as are used in the crystallising of the fruit; indeed, so good is it that it is eagerly sought after and bought up.

The manner of cooking violets for eating is

slightly different, these being cooked in sugar only; and great care is needed to have the exact quantity of sugar—just so much and no more; then the violets are taken into an adjoining room heated by pipes, where they are left twelve hours on a wire-covered table to drain and crystallise.

These gridiron tables enable the workers to detect in a moment any imperfect specimen, which is at once removed. All the violets are brought in from the environs—that is to say, from the gardens of Grasse, Cannes, Nice, and Bordighera, where the culture of the orange, the rose, and the Parma violet has become a very lucrative industry. The peasant flower-farmers contract to give the firm the same quantity every year.

The sweet chestnut, which grows abundantly in and about Grasse, holds quite a prominent place among the crystallised fruits, and having passed through the transformation scene, is known as *marron glacé*. It requires only three days to arrive at perfection, and the same syrup in which it is cooked serves to crystallise it.

There are no duties in England on these fruits, though there are on alcoholic perfumes such as are produced by Bruno Court. As Madame Nègre laughingly said, "*Sugar and fruit* seemed a more natural and pleasing combination than flowers and fat;" and yet we reminded her of the exquisite result of this apparently incongruous blend.

The home of these magicians is, as I have said, quaint and curious enough to set it apart from ordinary houses; and surely the transformation imposed on every flower and fruit that finds its way within its portal is not to be surpassed in any fairy story, and the beauty of it all is, that nothing so transformed loses anything of its beauty and wholesomeness.

Both here and at Bruno Court's success has been obtained, and a reputation made by thoroughness, skill, and patience, urged to the exercise of these qualities by the incessant need of meeting the ever-increasing demands for their stores.

From Cannes to Grasse is but a short railway journey, and a day spent amid its beauty and quaintness, together with a sight of the poetic industries carried on within it, would be a day to remember always. EMMA BREWER.