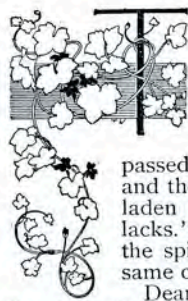


THE CARNATION: THE EMBLEM OF WIT

By Nancy Mann Waddle

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



HERE is a very pretty, and, of course, authentic legend of a story-book princess, who looked across her tall white garden Lilies, and vivid, flame-dashed Gladioli, and lightly-poised blue "loops of Larkspur," and sighed: "I tire of them all; but yesterday I passed the cottage of an old village woman, and the wind that blew over her garden was laden with spice. That is what my garden lacks." Every flower-plot which is without the spicy, individual Carnation is open to the same criticism.

Dear to the hearts of our grandmothers were the old-fashioned clove and snow Pinks, and from the reticule of many a Puritan Priscilla peeped the feathery, pink heads of the fragrant May Pink. The sight of an immense bed of the snow Pinks, when they begin to bloom early in the month of May, is very well worth a pilgrimage. They are flowers of eiderdown, and their petals bear strong resemblance to so many silky feathers.

Mr. Ellwanger, in one of his delightful floral essays, calls the snow Pink a charming subject when well grown, and says that he once saw a great patch of them in front of a country home, growing so luxuriantly that their fragrance drifted far out on to the highway. He continues: "I stopped to inquire how they grew them so profusely and so finely." "I pinch them, give them plenty of water, and keep up a fresh stock from cuttings every year." "The old story"—comments Mr. Ellwanger—"care."

Perhaps it would be as well to mention here that the Dianthus are a sub-order of the large Pink family, and to this sub-order belong all of the garden Pinks. The Dianthus Barbatus in-

colors. Snowflake has immense, pure white flowers. Eastern Queen runs a gamut of color from pink to lavender, and the rich red of Crimson Belle is positively imperial.

But, after all, it is rather useless to particularize, for the same high authority that I have quoted before has said: "The Dianthus are all of them pretty. Leave them alone and they will sow themselves. They vie with the Auriculas in their merry eyes, and are as brilliant and as fourfold as the Poppies."

In mentioning garden favorites one must not forget the Sweet Williams. In tiny German gardens, which could be completely covered with a sheet, I have often seen more varieties than I could count. There is something quaint and sturdy about them; they are so varied in color and lavish of bloom that their place in the garden can never be usurped by more gorgeous and more capricious blooms. Undoubtedly the highest type of the Pink family is the Carnation. Within the last few years the best growers have bestowed a great deal of attention upon the Carnation, which, by-the-way, is a rather recent importation.



color, immense in size, delicious in fragrance. The size is a matter of nutrition, the color is produced by crossing; but to prevent the bursting of the calyx, which allows the petals to fall, giving the flowers a ragged appearance, and to produce stems which will more stoutly uphold the flower—that is another story.

But alas! this *mondaine* of the Pink family is subject to diseases which appall even the stout heart of the inexperienced amateur grower. Of these, fungus troubles, which invade the system of the plant through the pores of the leaves, are the most to be dreaded. Blight is serious. When upon your Carnation plants you observe a grayish spot with a dark border you may well look grave, but when a colorless swelling appears you may realize that the curse has come upon your Carnations—they are the victims of "rust." If you wish to preserve the rest of the plants from infection, uproot the afflicted ones, even though they be the best and the bravest, and burn them. The rosette is a very pretty name for a disfiguring disease. A number of remedies are advised, but for the amateur the plain Irish of the case is that the quickest way to cure Carnation disease is to discard the infected plants.

Tidal Wave is a beautiful pink Carnation. Anna Webb is a rich dark red. Silver Spray is especially handsome, being pure silvery-white. The finest three varieties of the Carnation are, undoubtedly, the Malmaison, the Columbian and the Marguerite. The Malmaisons, only recently introduced into this country, have long been grown in England. The leaves are longer and broader than those of the ordinary Carnation, and the flowers are immense, the colors extremely rich. The principal recommendations of the Columbian Carnations are their delicious fragrance, their strong constitutions and their accommodating manner of blooming. American Banner is exquisite, the white of its petals is dashed with vivid scarlet. Sea Gull, one of the most beautiful of the Columbian Carnations, is white, and Norma Dee is a lovely pink. The Marguerites are the favorites of many people; they are so healthy, so profusely blooming, that it is a pleasure to grow them. Seed sown in the spring will produce blooming plants in midsummer, and in autumn the plants may be potted and will still continue to bloom.

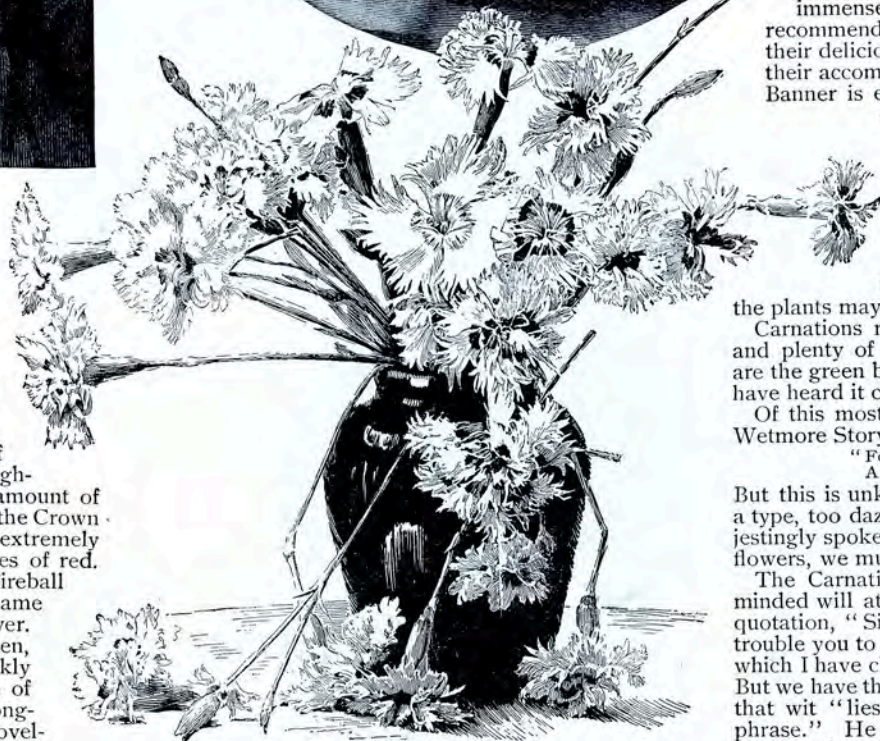
Carnations require excellent drainage, very rich soil and plenty of water and sunlight; their insect enemies are the green bug, and the little "Carnation twitter," as I have heard it called—a small black bug.

Of this most exalted type of the Pink family William Wetmore Story sang:

"For you, oh passionate, bright Carnation,
A boy's brief love, for a time, I knew."

But this is unkind. The Carnation is of too pronounced a type, too dazzling and piquant to be lightly forgotten or jestingly spoken of. The most fragrant, almost, of all the flowers, we must speak of it with reverence and respect.

The Carnation is the "Flower of Wit." The literal-minded will at once exclaim, in the words of a famous quotation, "Since you say you are so witty I must really trouble you to make a joke," and the poor Carnation, for which I have claimed so rare a gift, can only hang its head. But we have the authority of Mr. Justin McCarthy to prove that wit "lies not all in the spoken word, the written phrase." He has said recently: "It finds its expression in a certain subtlety of simplicity, a certain discretion of daring, a certain airiness, daintiness, lightly-soaring insolence." Surely the floral symbol of wit, as it is here described, is the Carnation.



cludes the bunch Pinks, the Sweet Williams; and the Dianthus Caryophyllus is the original of the clove Pink, from which has been evolved "the spicy Carnation freaked with passion." Florists and growers, however, do not classify the Dianthus and Carnation together, but make a distinction between them.

The Dianthus, then, of the growers, are truly garden flowers, and are exceptionally easy to grow. Any one procuring a package of mixed seed will have no difficulty in raising a large number of plants. Seed sown the first of April will produce plants which will bloom throughout the summer, and that without any great amount of care. One of the handsomest of the Dianthus is the Crown of Perfection. The flowers are very large and extremely double; the colors are white and various shades of red. Some of the varieties are curiously marked. Fireball is as brilliantly carmine as if it had stolen the flame of that torch of the woodland—the Cardinal Flower. Midnight is very odd: the leaves are dark green, the stem and buds black and the flowers darkly crimson. White Frill is attractive: the centre of the flower is a very deep purple, contrasting strongly with its fringed white border. One of the novelties in color is the Dwarf Copper Red, which is all that its name implies. The single Dianthus are lovely. The flowers are large and perfect, and each plant seems to follow its own caprice in the arrangement of

I do not think it has been grown in this country more than twenty years. The cultivators, however, are endeavoring to produce a flower that will be faultless in form and