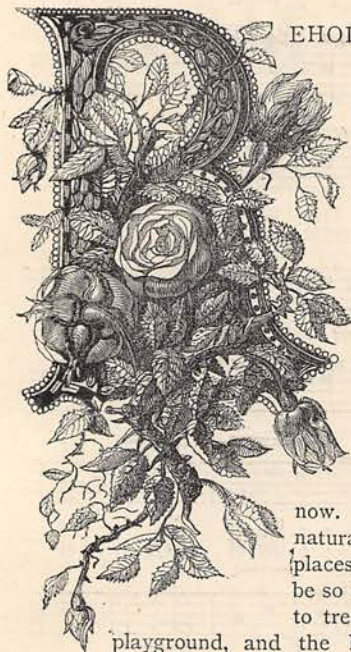


Musical score for a piece with lyrics: "closing of day,..... at closing of day.....". The score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *dim.*, *pp*, *ritard.*, *mf*, *pp*, *colla voce.*, *p*, and *pp*. Performance instructions include *1st time. a tempo.*, *2nd time. a tempo.*, and *Con Pedale.*

### OUR ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW.



EHOLD the leaves are out, the birds are in full song, and though now and then the wind will still indulge in a vigorous romp, it plays no worse antic than to shake over us the sweet blossoms of hawthorn or pear-tree. Croquet sets are out again, lawn tennis is remembered, and it is time to think about our annual flower show.

We have flower shows everywhere, now. They may seem most natural in sweet country places, where an awning can be so easily swung from tree to tree, in the school-house playground, and the head gardeners from the two Halls will be the judges, likely to be just indeed, if their opinions will agree! Rich indeed may be the flower shows in these places where sunshine, and pure rain, and fresh air are the common

property of all, and where prizes may be offered not only for home-grown and carefully cultivated beauty, but for diligently collected and beautifully arranged wildlings—representative, perhaps, of the county flora. At such a flower show, held in a little town perched on the rocky hills beside a Highland frith, we have seen glorious bunches of wild flowers and shrubs, which must have involved hours of active exercise, with its concomitants of health and happiness. And at the same show we have seen a number of light and graceful things—amongst them a crown which might have served for a fairy queen—wrought in various grasses by the busy fingers of a poor herdswoman, a proud and happy woman that day, tasting all the sweetness of distinction, in the praise of familiar and honoured voices.

Nevertheless, though not so beautiful as the country gathering, far more pathetic and interesting is a city flower show. For it tells of a strong instinct for beauty and nature, surviving where bricks and hard pressure have done their best to squeeze it out. The city flower show must needs be held where it can be. Some fortunate parishes have open places at command, not absolutely treeless, nor quite destitute of turf, but these are the exception. Before the time of Board schools, and the chance of their asphalted enclosures, many city flower shows were fain to hide their sweetness inside the local school-room, and the poor flower-rearers trembled for their pets in the dry





OUR ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW.

(See p. 438.)



summer atmosphere of the crowded room. Let us hope these days are nearly past. Dwellers in all cities are waking to the fact that life itself is worth something, and that it may be but poor economy to build on every inch of land, even if it be worth a thousand pounds a foot.

Yes, even a city flower show must be in an open place, where a few flags can flutter in the fresh air, and the sparrows are free to come and go, and make remarks upon things in general—which remarks, as we guess their unwritten language, we feel are generally impudent. There must be plenty of awnings, not only over the flowers, but over the visitors also; for why spoil all if it happen to be a wet day, or compel the hoisting of parasols and umbrellas if it be a hot one? And why not always have a refreshment tent? Do not think this is a low catering for animal pleasures. Two or three nice iced drinks, a little fresh fruit, and a few biscuits make a repast light enough even for a poet. And later on in the day, when the workmen shyly come in to “take a look at the old woman’s fuchsia,” or at “Jem’s” creeping-jenny, they may be tempted to find out how nice and refreshing are things which can be had without entering a public-house.

As with the places, so with everything else. For starting a flower show in a village or a little country town, the requisite organisation is very simple and ready to hand. The village school, the village choir, the village reading-room, and the village shop are all the agencies needed. Raw material, too, is abundant. There are lovely flowers to be found round cottages, within which “butcher’s meat” may be rarely seen. All that is wanted is to awaken a more intelligent interest and to develop taste. Fruit and vegetables should be always features of any show held where these commodities are within reach of the exhibitors. As we have already hinted, a prize should be always offered for the most exhaustively collected and tastefully arranged bunch of wild flowers. It would be also well if one of the promoters of the show exhibited a stand, displaying simply carved wooden flower stands and pretty baskets made of pine-cones. Why should the British peasant be doomed to sit about in loutish idleness when his work is done, while his German and Swiss peers have such profitable and pleasing resources? Even a few quaintly cut figures might be permitted, for the introduction of such would be a vast advance on the tawdry china pieces which make the sole ornaments of so many English cottages. Such could be got, by a little effort, home-made in districts of Norfolk and Lincoln, and those places in which Danish and Dutch names and influences linger. For it would be an immense gain to be able to label these as coming from some English village, since Britons may be often piqued into ambition by fellow countrymen, where they would lazily feel that they had nothing in common with “a furriner.”

But when the object in view is a city flower show, the means of attainment are much more complicated and difficult. Again the school and the church choir form a valuable nucleus, but these are too near the surface; we must not plant our new seed of wholesome

pleasure only where all good seeds fall; we must penetrate, not indeed into the “highways and hedges,” but into the “courts and alleys.” Bills must be exhibited in shop windows, announcing that a flower show will be held in such a place on such a day, and that intending exhibitors must send in their plants before such a time. But in the first instance the promoters must be prepared for no unexpected exhibitors. For the amateur British public is shy, and besides, the more thoroughly a city flower show is needed, the fewer flowers will it find when it is started. We must be provided against opening our show with “a beggarly account of empty benches.” Common plants, and packets of seeds, must have been distributed in due time among the school-children, and definite promises of co-operation must have been secured beforehand from teachers, choristers, and all other available friends. And the attempts of this first show must not be shot too high above the possibilities of the average population of the place, or future aspirants will be daunted rather than encouraged. Nay, let the first show be very simple indeed, chiefly of such plants as the very poorest have at times possessed, and have suffered to dwine and perish through want of skill or care. It should be rich in creeping-jennies, in musk-plants, in every variety of geranium and fuchsia, in hardy ferns, nasturtiums, sweet-williams, myrtles, heart’s-ease, calceolarias, and stone-crops. In after-years, when the rank and file of the exhibitors have learned the value and beauty of these, the promoters of the show may slip in costlier and more delicate plants, and so keep alive interest and ambition.

One prize should always be given for the best case of ferns. A statement should be required of when and where the roots were gathered. There cannot be a prettier or more refreshing object in a London room than a well-kept fern-case, and after the first outlay it need cost nothing. Fern-cases may well be admitted among prizes given; and they should also be displayed on a stand, with simple window-boxes, training frames and pot decorations, all of which will be gladly sent for exhibition by any dealer in such goods. Prizes might also be offered for home-made window-boxes, and as in the country for carved flower stands, herbariums, those collections of nicely grouped dried flowers, might also be made a feature in a town flower show. These flowers should have been all dried and arranged by the exhibitor, and gathered by him or her within a ten miles’ radius of the show itself. Great care must be taken of these herbariums, and during the show they must remain in charge of some person, who alone must touch their leaves and display their treasures.

Has a prize ever been given for the best window-garden *in statu quo* in the parish? For this a notice should be issued, that anybody possessing such a thing, and desiring to compete, must send his address to the judges a week before the show, to give them time to make their round of visits of inspection. This would encourage the planting of Virginian creepers, that most lovely mural decoration, to which surely no objection can be raised by anybody, since, unlike ivy,



it dies off in winter and therefore does not retain the damp, while just when the grey autumn days are beginning, and our hearts are failing us at the thought of the coming cold and darkness, it flushes out in that marvellous beauty which, like the sinking sun, and the butterfly rising from the chrysalis, seems God's own whisper of a glad secret to cheer human failure and decay.

It would be better if the prizes given at these shows were never given in money. Some of the best of the working class very naturally shrink from anything which seems to ticket them as belonging to an inferior social grade. Surely some promoter of the show can make such a skilful purchase of prizes, that a fit one can be found for each winner. Let us see how it can be done by watching the prize-winners as they come up, blushing and fluttered, at a show which will stand as a type for many.

Our first prize is for the best filled, arranged, and kept fern-case. It is won by a young lad, the son of a respectable small tradesman. If a guinea had been offered, that boy would not have competed. But he is delighted with a neat little writing-case. He stays about the tent all day, and keeps that with him, and we see him showing it, privately, in corners.

Knowing that everybody in our almshouse will compete, and calculating that possibly there will be a tie, our prize-giver is judiciously provided with a smart tea-canister (full) and a soft white woollen shawl, and each old lady goes off radiant.

Now comes the need for quick and happy selection of books from the row standing on the table, quite dazzling in the sunshine. They are all of the same value. The first name on the list is that of a city policeman. Some wretched little street Arabs, outside the railings of the show, give a derisive cheer when they see him go up, and the good man is quite put out of countenance thereby. Our prize-giver is on the alert. We all like pictures of places we know, and some knowledge of the strange histories of London palaces and churches may give the policeman some pleasant thoughts in his long night watches, so he goes away with an illustrated history of London. A trim servant-maid carries off a nicely bound edition of the Bible. A stalwart fireman, whom everybody at the show knows as standing at the door of his engine-house with a baby in his arms, mildly suggests that he would like "something to amuse the young uns," and is quite delighted with a volume of British ballads. A husband and wife, arm in arm, next present themselves. The husband's name is down for the prize, but his good lady is evidently of the opinion that the greater includes the less. They are elderly and neat, though dingy, and he wears goggles. They are the last on the book division of the prize list, and as there are several volumes on hand, the prize-giver ventures to ask whether they have any particular fancy. "I don't want to be troublesome," says the old gentleman, "but if there is anything poetical?" He is offered a choice between selections from Tennyson or Longfellow, and accepts the former because "he has the other gentleman's already, and

believes Mr. Tennyson wrote about the Charge of the Six Hundred, and he would like to see some more in that style." Meanwhile the good wife simperingly informs the group that "Snow is just a beautiful reader," and Mr. Snow modestly nudges her to be silent.

There are a few more prizes—hanging baskets, window-boxes, and such like—chosen in the assurance that some of the competitors will be schoolboys, to whose hearts such things will be dear, and in whose homes they will invest the love of floriculture with respectability, not to say with dignity. Last of the winners comes one who only on such occasions as these will ever taste the sweets of earthly triumph and success. He will be the pride of no Board school; he will compete at no open examination. The cramped, unbalanced brow, the protruding eyes, the hanging mouth, all proclaim the imbecile—the idiot. But this poor blossomless plant of God's earthly garden has tended into rich luxuriance a humble creeping-jenny which he picked, fading, from the gutter, where some careless hand had flung it. His widowed mother's window in the dull court is the brighter for the idiot's flower. And when we see him to-day, cleanly, kindly treated, and happy in his humble share of a common pleasure, and then remember the idiots of old days, hunted, desperate and vengeful, we feel that indeed we do not wisely when we allow ourselves to fancy that those times were better than these.

Then, hurrah! for the evening of the flower show, be it held in town or country, among the affluent or the indigent. For, after all, the enjoyment begins when all the ceremony is over. How many pretty things have been whispered among the radiant flowers! Even a dunce can scarcely blunder in a compliment amid such surroundings. We once saw a courting couple pause in front of a shop-front, filled with gay and tawdry bonnets, and when the fair one cried, "How pretty!" the swain responded, "Just like you!" But among roses and lilies, nay, among geraniums and creeping-jennies, no comparisons can be quite odious.

We may be as wise as ever we can, and arrange our flower shows on the best principles, and we shall do well to consult to our utmost the probabilities and possibilities of our neighbourhood, not to raise ambitions solely to azaleas in places where enterprise can scarcely compass more than fuchsias or musk-plants, nor to limit all attention to garden pets in districts where equal glories are growing broad-cast over moor and in hedgerow. We should be careful of our refreshment stand, and critical of our music, but we may be comforted by the reflection that while our care may do much to promote pleasure and benefit, no blunders of ours can possibly spoil a thing so blent of healthful elements as our annual flower show—a festival wholesome to prepare, exquisite in its manifold enjoyments, and sweet and pleasant to remember. How many gentle thoughts, how many kindly household ways, have clustered round each of those plants! How many maidenly fancies and youthful hopes have gone



forward to the freedom of that sunny day, mixed too with but few baser vanities or fears, for the local annual flower show is not a place for the display of costly elegance, and the prettiest girl is sure to be the plainest dressed. Who would not spare a few hours or a little trouble to brighten the scene where many an

innocent love may dare to strike its trembling root, or to lift the first bud of its perennial blossoming, which scorns time, and flings itself over graves to find a brighter sunshine and a richer soil beyond? Let not the gravest spurn our annual flower show.



## THE PHONOGRAPH.

**N**OT seldom have the poets lightly scattered from their teeming fancy the ideas which later ages of science have slowly made good in fact. In Shelley's *Witch of Atlas* occur the following lines :—

“The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling  
Were stored with magic treasures, sounds of air,  
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,  
Folded in cells of crystal silence there,  
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling  
Will never die—yet ere we are aware,  
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,  
And the regret they leave remains alone.”

This beautiful poetic dream has within the last few months been rendered possible of material realisation by the invention of the Edison phonograph. The words of our lips, which formerly wasted themselves in air and were lost for ever, may now be treasured up and recalled for our pleasure, or rehearsed as a witness against us; and soul-compelling music may be caught in its flight and “folded in cells of crystal silence” for ages, then re-invoked to charm the ears of a generation yet unborn.

As the telephone enables us to propagate sound into space, so the phonograph admits of its being perpetuated into time. By the telephone, under favourable conditions, a person may converse with another over a distance of several hundred miles, as has been done recently in the pure atmosphere of Persia and Spain, without any stress of voice, and with the instantaneous velocity of electricity, rather than the

comparatively sluggish progress of sound in air. Similarly, by the phonograph, the words we utter now may be heard weeks, months, or even centuries hence, and in any part of the world to which the record may be sent meanwhile.

The telephone and phonograph are twin inventions—their names appeared almost simultaneously, one helping to suggest the other. Although differing essentially in their nature, it is a true instinct which classes them together, for they jointly confer on human speech its two most marvellous powers of extension. They are twin stars in the firmament of science, and one of the brightest constellations in the splendid galaxy of invention which has irradiated the nineteenth century. In CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE for February, we gave a full account of the articulating telephone, and all that was at that time foreshadowed of the phonograph. Since then the latter has been developing towards maturer powers, and making its *début* before the public in different countries. Wherever it has gone it has fully vindicated the startling reports which were circulated of its wonderful faculty, and has excited universal admiration. For the time at least, the phonograph, whose capacities are even more wonderful, has cast the telephone into the shade. Every highly novel invention passes through an early phase of cold incredulity, indifference, or repudiation, then is borne aloft on a burst of admiration and praise, which is succeeded by a period of calm criticism and practical tests. It is then relegated to its proper