

FLOWER-GATHERING

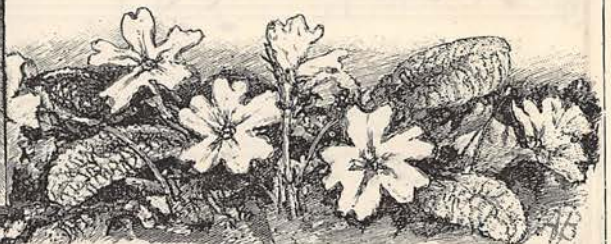
AND FLOWER-GATHERERS

IN NORTH NOTTS

IN a former volume of this Magazine, when writing upon Fruit-Culture in North Notts, I promised one day to introduce the readers to the Flower-Gatherers of the same district. I now propose, though somewhat tardily, to redeem my promise. Wild flowers flourish as luxuriantly in this favoured locality as do the plum, apple, strawberry, &c. Nearly every hedgerow is, in early spring, studded with "star-like primroses," and ever-fragrant violets. Women and children eagerly



seize upon these simple flowers, carry them home, and tastefully arrange them into bunches. The gatherers then dispose of their flowers to the hucksters, who in turn retail them to the lovers of nature in the manufacturing centres mentioned in the former article. But violets and primroses by no means comprise all the flowers so sent to market. When they are nearly all over, the meadows far and near will soon be resplendent with golden cowslips; and a busy time indeed is cowslip-gathering, for many hundreds of pecks are



annually gathered and picked for concocting that innocent and delicious beverage, cowslip wine. Daffodils, too, are in great request, especially about Eastertide; and such favourite woods as Babbington Springs are eagerly searched for them. Townspeople interested in church decorations must often feel their artistic talents sorely restricted by the paucity of spring flowers available at this Queen of Festivals; but our North Notts flower-gatherers make praiseworthy efforts to supply the ever-increasing demand of our nineteenth-century asceticism. But as spring swiftly glides into summer, so the sweet wild spring flowers quickly cease to bloom, and the flower-gatherer's occupation becomes limited. The gardens now supply, on a reduced scale, what the fields have hitherto done. Roses, wall-flowers, sweet-williams, candy-



THE HUCKSTER



GATHERING COWSLIPS

tuft, mignonette, &c., are now in demand; and so the flower-picking, bunching, and selling go on with little intermission until King Frost reigns supreme.

It is marvellous how such immense quantities of wild flowers are gathered, and still more marvellous how customers can be found for every bunch. But the flower trade, so far from showing any signs of decay, is rapidly increasing; and each succeeding season makes additions to the ranks of the flower-hucksters. Many women earn two shillings or more per day, gathering and "bunching" flowers; so that it is readily

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conceivable that, with the help of her children, the mother of a family may add fifteen shillings or a pound to the weekly income—a result in no measure despised by the hard-working, money-making dwellers in North Notts. In connection with women's work in this neighbourhood, I ought not to omit mentioning the blackberry trade. When plum-picking is over, women wander over the fields, armed with a hooked stick and

carrying a basket, in search of blackberries. Immense quantities of this homely fruit are gathered and conveyed—*viâ* the huckster—to the large towns of the neighbouring county of York. So remunerative, too, is blackberry-picking, that in a good season gleanings is utterly neglected, and the stray ears of corn lie unheeded among the stubble, until the blackberries are all gathered.

HENRY INGRAM.

REMUNERATIVE EMPLOYMENTS FOR GENTLEWOMEN.

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.



SOME time ago I mentioned Arrasene Embroidery; it still continues in favour, and as some of the details connected with this work are, I find, not widely known, I will give a few which will, I believe, prove useful to many readers. Designs for this special work, and skeins of the arrasene yarn, are obtainable at 27, St. Paul's Road, Bradford, Yorkshire. The correct stitch is that known as crewel or stem stitch. Chenille needles are used, and short needlefuls should be taken. Fruit-blossoms of many kinds are effective, such as apple, orange, apricot, horse-

chestnut, blackberry, almond-blossoms; foxgloves, begonias, orchids, and the thicker, heavier flowers are more suitable for representation than those having delicate petals.

This embroidery can be worked without a frame, but experienced workers affirm that the work is much easier and better done when a frame is used. When finished, a damp cloth should be spread over the back of the work and an iron passed over it. When the work is not in a frame, its face must be placed upon a thickly-folded flannel before this process is gone through; but should the material be velvet or plush, the work must be held tightly out by hand when ironed.

In many old houses there are cupboards in the sitting-rooms; it is the present fashion to hang curtains over these doors, and for the decoration of these curtains arrasene embroidery is particularly suitable; I have also seen panels for the doors of old-fashioned chiffoniers and movable cupboards, and open cases for coal-boxes, embellished with arrasene embroidery.

Counterpanes and eider-down quilts are made ornamental in various ways. A pattern in Russian embroidery is often worked in blue or red cotton on white counterpanes. For eider-down quilts, devices in silk patchwork look well: strips or squares of this interspersed with strips or squares of dark velvet.

The old-fashioned plan of marking linen with cotton is being revived; the present style differs from that formerly in use, in that it is more ornamental; initials, monograms, and other devices are embroidered on a large scale in satin stitch with white linen thread on sheets, pillow-cases, pocket-handkerchiefs, and other household possessions. For ordinary cross-stitch marking, sixpence per dozen letters is the charge usually made.

Menu cards are still in request; their present form is that of a small square with a double leaf, so that they stand on the table without aid. The newest designs appear to be tiny pictures—little views and landscapes—with flowers scattered about: a kind of medley, such as one sometimes sees on a page in this Magazine, wherein the pictures are to be seen placed here and there as in a kaleidoscope, apparently without rhyme or reason.

"Guest cards" are also in demand. The newest form for these is the shape and size of a gentleman's visiting card. Floral designs are the prettiest for these. A gold line should be marked round the space wherein the name is to be placed; then a slit is made at one end, and a slip of paper bearing the name can be inserted. This provision makes the card useable on many occasions and thus increases its value. The rate charged for hand-painted cards is about 12s. per dozen for menu cards, and 6s. per dozen for the guest cards.

There seems to be a great dearth in the matter of ornamental invitation cards for "At Homes" and tennis parties. A few weeks ago I went in search of some for a friend, to a shop in London of well-known name; only three designs were there to be found, and they were so uncommonly common-place and ugly, that all people who saw the specimens exclaimed against them. A crouching frog was the principal object in one, and a stiff young man and an inelegant young woman standing at a tennis net was one of the others; the third was even less attractive. I could not meet with this class of card at several likely shops where I inquired for them.

I have lately seen flowers painted on the backs of ivory brushes, more particularly on the diminutive brushes which are for the use of infants. At the present time the market is overstocked with painted