

GAY WINTER GARDENS.

SOME enthusiasts on gardening matters have gone so far as to say that it is possible to have a garden as gay on Christmas as on Midsummer Day. But, at any rate, we must all admit that by a little pains-taking and ingenuity, a greater part of the gloom and too usual desolation that pervades our gardens in the winter months can be got rid of. Before giving, then, our outline of hints for the general management of the garden in January, it may be well to say something as to the best method of making it look as bright and gay as we can at once.

Now, the large variety of hardy evergreens at our disposal is one of the first things that we should avail ourselves of at this time of the year. For these evergreens are really, it may be said, more varied in colour, figure, and foliage than most of the deciduous plants that we usually deck our garden with. The very glossy brightness of their leaves and variety in their tint are, too, a considerable compensation for the absence of flowers. Many of these evergreens we can often purchase in pots, or we can always have by us a small selection, and when our bedding-out plants are removed in the autumn, these can be plunged at intervals in our beds, to relieve them of that desert-like appearance which too many half-hearted gardeners are content to put up with. In the system of flower-beds, however, that we have always advocated, namely, the combination of plenty of perennials with our bedding-out plants, it would surely be a good plan to have, in any large flower-bed, some three or four variegated and shrubby evergreens permanently standing, though not allowed to attain at any time unwieldy proportions so as to overshadow too much of our bed in general. It seems to us that were a small-sized and well-chosen stock of these distributed as we have suggested, and dispersed in proportion to their size and shape among our perennials and our annual assortment of bedding-out plants, a great part of the evil of which so many complain at this season, namely, the desolation of the garden, would be done away with, from the mere fact that these bushy evergreens would be always allowed to remain. Let us enumerate a few of them with their characteristics. Take, for example, some of the *Arbutus* tribe; they bear fruit resembling an oval strawberry, and flower in little bunches. There is the Irish *Arbutus Unedo*, the *Arbutus Procera* from North America, or the *Arbutus Andrachne*. These will thrive in ordinary soil, and when planted in that which suits them best will grow rapidly. You will then have the white blossom of the *Unedo* in October, and the pretty berries in the winter months.

Now the pine, though it be one of our hardy evergreens, cannot be made a shrub of by any system of pruning, yet one or two specimens might well relieve the monotony of the lawn which is not wholly devoted to tennis. Of course, however, it is only dwarf specimens of any evergreens that can stand well in the flower-beds themselves; yet as a back-ground and all round the borders and extremities of our gardens can well stand the Portugal laurel, the *laurustinus*, the *Aucuba Japonica*, and all varieties of the holly tribe. Enough, then, as to the hardy evergreens for the present.

In a mild winter, however, we very often begin at an early date to hail the approach of spring flowers. Last month we spoke of the Christmas rose: very soon we shall find ourselves rejoicing over the little yellow blossoms of the winter aconite. A word, then, about this spring herald, the *eranthis*. This welcome herbaceous perennial boasts of a small yellow flower that is seated solitaire-like upon a circle of narrow leaves. It is best that its roots be not disturbed too often. An early floral authority says of it that the roots can

best be transplanted after their leaves have decayed, between June and October. The roots themselves should be planted in small clusters, as the flowers being so small, it is best that there should be plenty of them for the purpose of effect, especially at a time when every flower is precious.

In our greenhouse we should be, among other things, paying some attention to our camellias; where the buds are swelling for bloom, the plants should be kept uniformly watered, as otherwise the buds will fall off; too great fire-heat also has unhappily the same effect upon them. Where your few camellias are in the same house, therefore, with the stock of cuttings that you are preserving for the following season, have the precaution just now to let the camellias stand in the coolest part of the house, and, as far as you possibly can, give them uniformity of temperature. Many amateur growers of these beautiful flowers are at times apt to abandon their cultivation on the ground of the mortification and disappointment occasioned by this falling off of the buds just at the time that a fine flower was shortly expected. Camellias will really stand a degree of frost, but they cannot stand the heat of a fierce fire lit up immediately afterwards. Keep their foliage clean by wiping it, leaf by leaf, with a piece of sponge or moistened rag. Myrtles and oranges in your house will require the same attention: you will, though the operation is a rather tedious and finger-aching one, find yourself, on some gloomy wet January day, well repaid by this removal of all that black fly deposit from the stems and foliage of the plants named.

Your orchids, where possible, should have a separate house for their culture; very little ventilation will they require this month, and if you can protect your house at night by mats, awnings, or any kind of covering, it will be all the better, as less fire-heat will then be required. An orchid in flower, however, may now find its home in your drawing-room, only do not expose it to any sudden draught or current of air.

And then as to the kitchen garden, during frosty weather, wheel manure on to the beds that you are about to trench, and scatter it over them so as to be ready to set to work with spade and fork as soon as the weather breaks: many parts of your kitchen garden have probably, however, been already well trenched, and the soil left in large lumps exposed to the beneficial action of the frost. And it is this heavy labour and enriching with good manure that is really the secret of good crops afterwards, more especially on a hard, stiff, and ungenial soil. Rhubarb and sea-kale may be forced on now, or late in the month, by covering with boxes or pots and heaping on and around them hot stable dung. Sometimes a good heap of leaves may be used for this instead of the manure, though it can hardly be so effective; but a little economy is what some of us have to look to. Lettuces and all kinds of salads under cover should be kept dry, while in our fruit garden all the wall-trees should have been carefully pruned and trained by this time, though when the frost is upon us, the pruning-knife must be sheathed and safe in our pocket.

THE GARDEN IN FEBRUARY.



TOO many of us make so much account of the cultivation of summer flowers only—flowers, we mean, that are to blow throughout the summer, that we are apt to pass over any thought of the short-lived, but not the less beautiful, spring flowers, unless it be some such old friends as the crocus and snow-drop, which as often as not we allow to take care of themselves.

On the other hand, what more beautiful object can there be at the end of a long and dreary winter than to have in this and next month a gay collection of early spring flowers? In this busy greenhouse month, then, let us notice first those cinerarias, whose brilliant variety and gaiety of colour amply repay us for the trouble we bestow on them. Their name of cineraria would seem to be derived from the grey and *ash-coloured* appearance of their foliage; but if this have a mournful sound, what shall be said of the brilliancy of their florescence of every shade of blue, lilac, purple, and crimson?

And, first, then, as to the soil best suited for the cineraria: equal proportions of loam, peat, and thoroughly well-decomposed manure, making up a light porous soil, are, perhaps, best adapted for its growth. Make a sowing of the seed in May in any shallow pans, and keep them fairly moist. When they are well up, place them for awhile in a frame, or, at all events, where they can have some shade when necessary. When your young seedlings have sent out some half-a-dozen little leaves, pot them off singly into sixty-sized pots, and, of course, in the same sort of compost that we have already named.

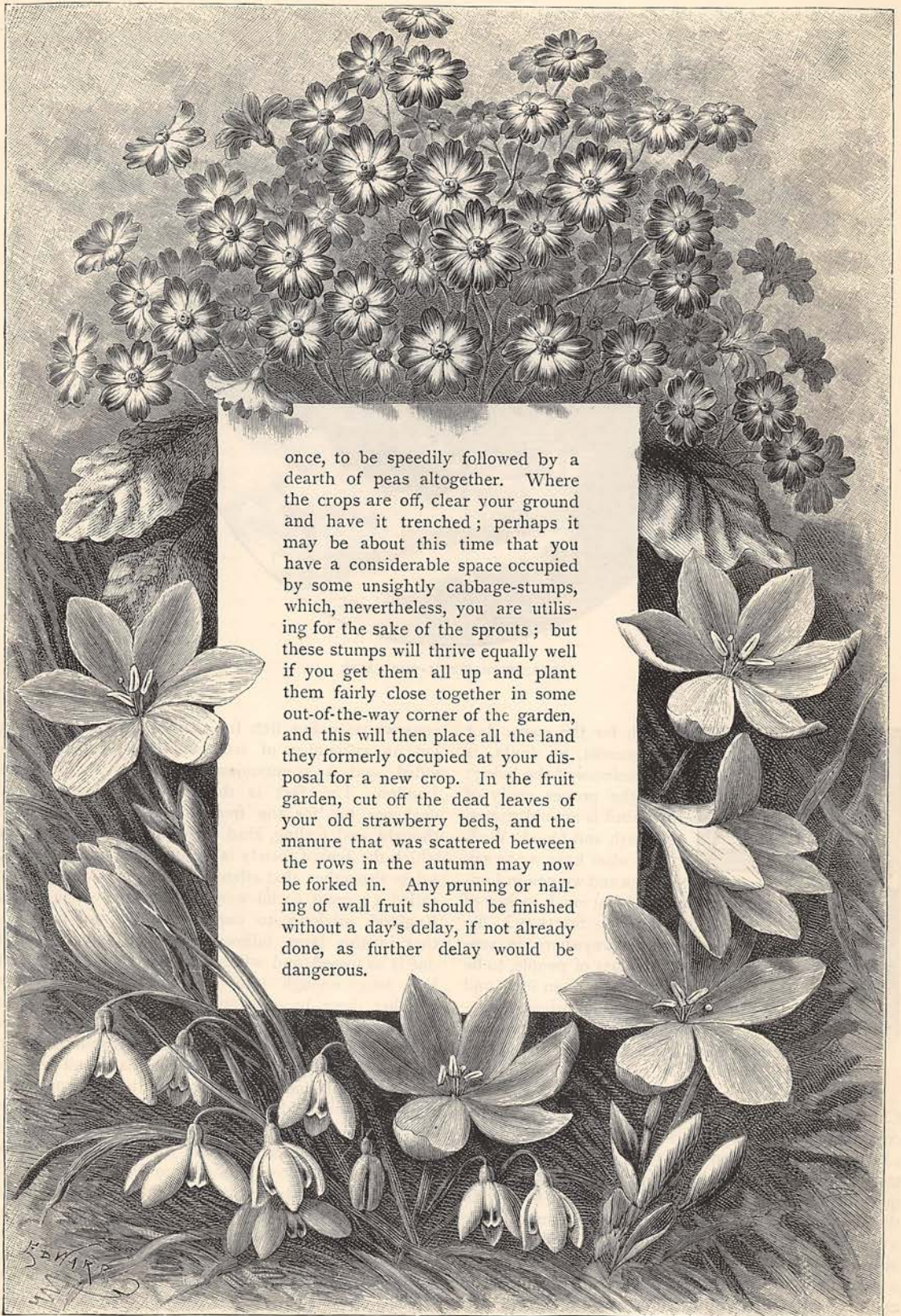
Now, unhappily, that terrible nuisance, the green fly, appears to have a wonderful partiality to the cineraria tribe, so that syringing and fumigation are perhaps more necessary where many of these flowers are reared. Once potted off, they can be either ranged in a frame, where you can get well at them for this purpose, or, as in the month of June your greenhouse is emptied out of all your bedding-out stock, you might stand your seedling cinerarias on an empty shelf in it. Or, lastly, if you cannot spare room for them in your house, they will take no possible harm out of doors provided only

your pots stand on a dry and hard substance, such as slate, or on a plank, where they will have plenty of ventilation, and not be in any mouldy and unused corner of the garden. Early in September you must have your collection brought into the greenhouse, which probably by that time will again be pretty full, and a good fumigation, therefore, very desirable. And then in this early spring month of February you will begin to have your reward of flowers, and very shortly afterwards—that is to say, as your flowers come into bloom—you will be able to judge which of your seedling plants are worth preserving for propagation, and which are poor and of little merit.

Some cineraria cuttings can easily be raised in the following manner. When your plants have done blowing, cut down the stems of them, stir up the surface of the soil in the pot, and throw it away, filling up, however, with fresh, but precisely similar compost; the pots can then stand for awhile either in a frame or in a dry and sheltered spot in your open garden; in a few weeks time you will notice some side shoots have struck out; take off those that have no root to them, and, removing the few bottom leaves, strike them in pots of similar compost, with the addition of a little sand, and under a bell glass, pressing your glass gently into the sandy surface to exclude air until your young cuttings have struck; water them, but remember good drainage is essential.

A few words now about our open flower garden. Wall-flowers, Sweet-Williams, Canterbury-bells, or any thoroughly hardy herbaceous plants may be moved into the spots in the garden in which you intend them afterwards to blow; only, in disturbing your borders, take care not to damage underneath by cutting or bruising any of your bulb collection. And as for those bulbs themselves, the hyacinth for example, and others, as soon as their green spike is above the ground, carefully stir the surface of the soil between the bulbs. These will also, probably, and more especially after a mild winter, need some protection from the early spring frosts and winds which are often the more severe; cover over, then, your tulip and hyacinth bulbs, that have made an early start, with any long litter, peas-haulm, or rough broken straw. Pansies, too, will benefit by a similar protection; should the roots of your pansy beds get disturbed by the action of the frost, or indeed by any other cause, gently press your plants more into the soil, and add a little top-dressing of leaf-mould; keep, too, a careful look-out here for slugs, which love to harbour in the short foliage, and soon make havoc of your collection.

Though in the kitchen garden March is the month for sowing the majority of our crops, yet a sowing of peas may be made this month. Indeed, it is with them, as with some other things, a far better plan to have from about this time and quite through the summer a small sowing of peas, made regularly at intervals of two or three weeks, rather than to have a large stock coming on ready for use all at



once, to be speedily followed by a dearth of peas altogether. Where the crops are off, clear your ground and have it trenched; perhaps it may be about this time that you have a considerable space occupied by some unsightly cabbage-stumps, which, nevertheless, you are utilising for the sake of the sprouts; but these stumps will thrive equally well if you get them all up and plant them fairly close together in some out-of-the-way corner of the garden, and this will then place all the land they formerly occupied at your disposal for a new crop. In the fruit garden, cut off the dead leaves of your old strawberry beds, and the manure that was scattered between the rows in the autumn may now be forked in. Any pruning or nailing of wall fruit should be finished without a day's delay, if not already done, as further delay would be dangerous.

AN IMPORTANT MONTH FOR GARDENING.



WE have entered again upon a very arduous and important month in our gardening annals—perhaps one of the most anxious for the gardener and the farmer that we have. For it is our seed-sowing month, so that anything like a persistent rain, and the consequent absence of the “peck of March dust,”

occasions us almost a panic. A few words, first of all, we must have about those flowers that are either in bloom in our open beds, or about to break out in all their spring beauty. In sheltered situations, by about the middle of the month, the hyacinths will be showing colour; if, however, they are in a backward state, and the weather be severe, a little protection with hoops and mats, or with light litter, may be advisable; the tulips also, which come a little later, ought to have the soil pressed about their stems as soon as they are well through the ground, in addition to protection against either severe rain or intense cold. Then, again, those hyacinths that are in a more advanced state had better have their flower-stem tied, but not too tightly, to a small stake, as the weight of the flower or bud at the top is very liable to make it break off easily in a heavy gale of wind or a hail-shower.

But it is more particularly about our melons and cucumbers that we must have something to say this month, it being the one in which we always make up our hot-beds. And this preparation of our hot-bed is an important operation, and failure or carelessness in preparing it means the failure of the crop that we are forcing under the glass. First, then, have your stable dung laid out in a heap to heat, and let your heap be as near as you can conveniently have it to the spot on which you have decided to have your hot-bed. Fork the whole of it over in a few days' time, and shake it out into another heap, giving, if there be any indication of dryness, a little water to moisten it, and in about a fortnight's time it will be ready for use. Next, lay your frame on the ground, and mark out the space you want by driving in four stakes at the corners, each of your stakes being about a foot outside the corners of your frame. Of course, to make up the bed the frame must be, first of all, temporarily removed.

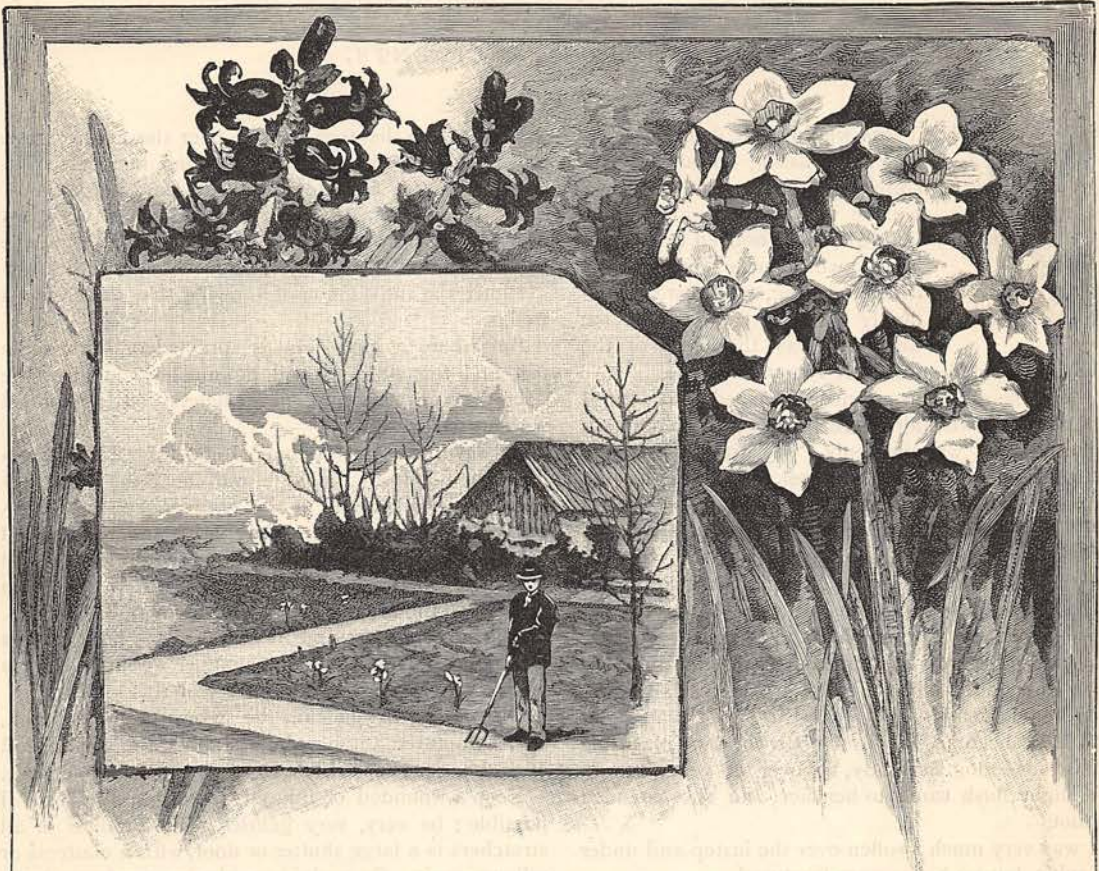
While on this subject, let us say that a good opportunity offers itself here of getting rid of much garden rubbish and litter, and in this way:—Some persons first dig out the soil from the space over which they afterwards place their frame, perhaps a foot deep. Not only will this soil be useful elsewhere, but the hole thus made can be filled up with unsightly garden rubbish and lumber—*débris* that you, perhaps, did not quite know where to stow away; a little of the soil can then go back on to your rubbish

heap, and upon this pile your manure some three feet high, or still higher if you can manage it. A good plan also is to contrive that your frame when placed on the manure shall be on a gentle slope, having its south side lower than the north, or back of it. Indeed, the very shape of the frame shows the wisdom and expediency of this device; your rubbish foundation and manure heap should then be built up with this design in view. This finished, place on your frame, and then its glass, and thrust a long stick deep down into the centre of your bed, so that you may now and then pull it out to test the heat. In a few days' time add some three inches of good mould, decayed turf making the best. Should it be too stiff, add a little sand to lighten it.

For the growth of cucumbers in your frame, have a further little heap of similar soil placed in about the centre. Into this, a few days later on, plant out your young cucumber plants that have been previously sown in pots, of course in heat. Now, the value of your frame at this sowing-time of the year is that you can force on seeds of all kinds by sowing them in pots and placing them in your frame, and two or three weeks later bringing your pots into the greenhouse, so as to have by the month of May several flowers or various annuals ready to turn out into the open beds as soon as the weather will allow of it. And in the first month or six weeks before your cucumber plants in the hot-bed have attained their full size, you will be able to use your frame for the successional forcing on of many flowers in pots, which will be a very great convenience.

Now your young melon plants can be similarly planted as the cucumbers, only it had better, perhaps, be a month later than the cucumbers: that, at least, would seem to be the custom in the more ordinary and domestic gardening; though, of course, where there is every appliance, and expense is no object, forcing can go on in many cases all through the year. Strawberries, for example, can be gathered in this way every month, though their flavour certainly cannot always be guaranteed equal to our ordinary open-air July ones. Your melon seed should be sown in a sixty-sized pot, and when your little seedling plant has got two good rough leaves, shift it into a larger-sized pot; and when two pairs of these rough leaves have developed themselves, pinch off the top of your plant pretty close down to the second pair of leaves; and in a fortnight afterwards, or it may be less, your seedling can be turned out, as we have described, into the frame in which it is to fruit. To their after-treatment we may occasionally in other numbers advert. The frames should always, as a rule, in the late spring be quite closed an hour or more before sunset.

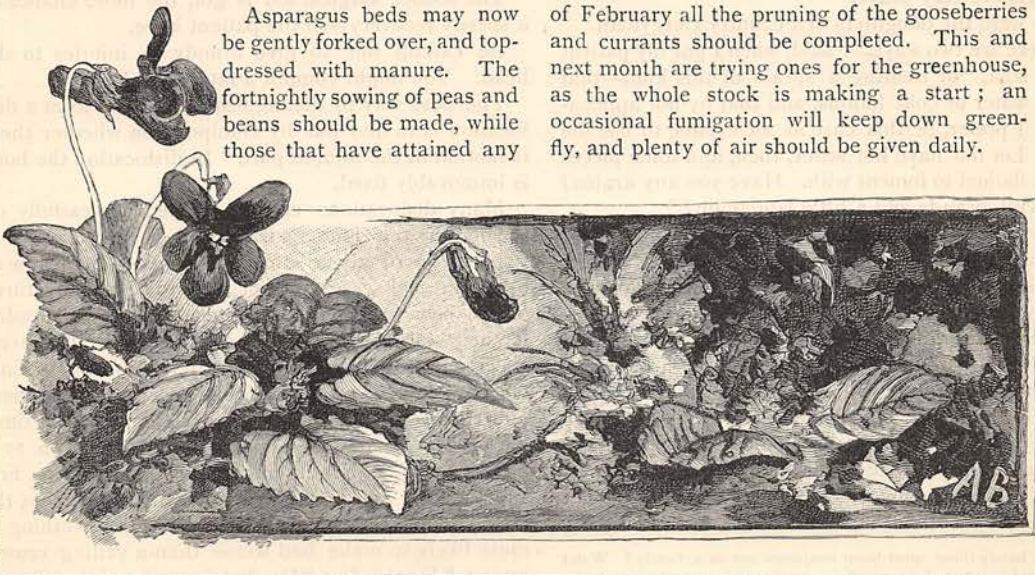
Other heavy work in the kitchen garden demands our attention this month. First and foremost, the planting of our potatoes should be made, as being the only vegetable in daily demand. Not, however, be-



fore the middle of the month should they be got in, as there is always a risk, as a general rule, of having them cut off by some of our terrible spring frosts which a month or more later than this often make such havoc in our garden.

Asparagus beds may now be gently forked over, and top-dressed with manure. The fortnightly sowing of peas and beans should be made, while those that have attained any

height should have their sticks put in as early as possible, if only because the pea-sticks are a protection certainly against any severe weather, and probably against the depredations of the birds as well. And then, by the end of February all the pruning of the gooseberries and currants should be completed. This and next month are trying ones for the greenhouse, as the whole stock is making a start; an occasional fumigation will keep down green-fly, and plenty of air should be given daily.



liver seems chiefly at fault, the diluted nitro-muriatic acid does good; whereas if nervous symptoms are most predominant, the diluted phosphoric acid will be indicated. Either may be taken in quassia-water, or in the infusion of chiretta.

I had almost forgotten to say that an occasional Turkish bath was prescribed—once a week, if I remember rightly.

I wish, then, to warn all my readers, especially the infirm or invalid, against the pernicious habit and folly that rests in that phrase—supporting the strength or system. If you want perfect health, be abstemious.

But as to suppers: I have always been of the opinion that slops are bad. I have not the slightest doubt that my readers will bear testimony to the truth of what I say from their own personal experience. A fluid supper generates acid, and it is ten times worse if beer is to be partaken with it. Beer and milk food, or soup, would ruin any digestion. No; let the little you do take be solid, and easy of digestion; an egg that has been pretty well boiled and allowed to get cold, with a slice of cold toast and butter, is a simple supper, but one that agrees. Meat should not be

eaten, nor, as a rule, fish. In fact, supper should really be an off-put, if one has dined fairly well.

The food we eat during the day—its quantity and its quality—has a very great deal more to do than most people think with the kind of sleep we obtain at night and the amount thereof; and the *kind* of sleep is of far more importance than its actual amount. Disturbed, restless, or dreamful sleep is not refreshing, no matter how much thereof we obtain. Even pleasant dreams destroy the good effects of sleep.

Now, leaving heart complaints out of the question, I have always observed, then, that species of complaint known to medical men as irritability, with partial congestion of the lining membrane of the digestive organs, whether in whole or in part, is invariably accompanied by restlessness and disturbed sleep. The restlessness by day takes the form of nervousness and excitability; but by night there are often frightful dreams.

Well, would not some portions of indigestible food lying about the system be likely to produce the same nocturnal symptoms?

I leave my readers to meditate upon the question, and answer it for themselves.

HOW TO LAY OUT A KITCHEN GARDEN.



A GOOD deal of sowing and of planting out is done here in April, so perhaps a few words may be said with advantage at this time of the year on the laying out and stocking of a kitchen garden in general.

And first, then, as to the situation and aspect of our kitchen garden;

notice the locality chosen by some of our florists or strawberry growers; perhaps it is the gentle slope of a hill that looks south-west, backed at some little distance, on the north and east, by a plantation of trees, and more dense on the north, perhaps, than on the east. Now, of course, we could not possibly have a thick grove of trees all along the north-east side of our garden itself; but we should certainly contrive, if we can, to avail ourselves, in the selection of a garden, of any moderately distant protection. At all events, a wall should run along the north and east sides of our garden. The next best substitute for a wall is a good stout and close wooden fence, though you must bear in mind that, as time goes along, exposure to weather will decay it; so that really a wall is by far the cheapest in the long run.

And then, also, we must remember that a wooden structure does not absorb heat as the bricks of a wall do; and this is a very important consideration when we meditate the cultivation of wall-fruit trees. There is an advantage, again, in having the

highest part of the wall on the north side, for the double reason of having cut off the north wind, and also to have a greater southern expanse of wall for the growth of our fruit trees.

And drainage is the next important consideration. Nothing can flourish in a damp and undrained swamp; the heavier your soil is, the deeper should be your drain; but a gravel soil, for instance, can have a less deep one. The circumstances, however, of our surroundings must naturally a good deal render us more or less dependent in this respect; but some sort of simple or modified garden drainage we can often, for the most part, contrive ourselves to set up. And this done, for we are of course supposing the case of a garden that has been just taken in hand, and is as yet unstocked, our next step is the preparation of the soil for the various crops. And this must a good deal depend upon the nature of the soil itself. Should it prove to be a free deep loam, the only preparation it will require will be the ordinary deep and regular trenching—indeed, whatever the nature of the soil, trenching will be, of course, necessary. Where, however, clay largely predominates, get away, if possible, some of the stiffest of it, and replace it by any coarse sandy soil, or indeed any mixture of porous material; such, for example, as fine coal ashes, small charcoal, or road sand. All this is heavy, perhaps uninteresting, but very necessary work, when we are, so to speak, laying the foundations of our future gardening hopes. But even when we have the misfortune of an undeniably heavy soil, there is always this consolation: it will become largely modified and improved by the mere operations of trenching and culture, when



done regularly and with a will. Then, again, in the alternative that we are supposing, frequent deep hoeing and turning over just the surface of the soil will also improve it, and do away with much of the drawback.

And now as to stocking our garden—a more pleasant matter for discussion. Our hot-beds, of which we spoke last month, had better be near the



north-east corner of our wall, though, of course, not too close to it, but leaving ample room to walk all round them, and throw the lights well back whenever it is necessary. All the borders nearest to the walls should always bear merely a light crop, and never a heavy or deeply-rooting one; and for this reason: you would otherwise impoverish the roots of your fruit trees on the wall itself; and again, any very deep digging quite close to the wall fruit might damage the roots, and perhaps destroy your tree. Say a foot away from your wall, then, have a row of young cauliflower plants put in, and next to them a row of lettuces. The cauliflowers, supposing they have been put in for preservation through the winter, can be removed and planted out elsewhere in the spring; and as for lettuces, they are always a very light crop. Having regard however, now, to this more immediate April stocking of our kitchen garden, let us say, get in at once the entire potato stock, and sow also the successional pea crop, taking care that these, or any tall crops, such as scarlet-runners, do not overshadow your wall fruit, or anything that especially values the sunshine. Beans, whether kidney or broad, should be planted where they are to grow, and any autumn-sown beans should now be planted out. The middle, or perhaps the end of the month, is best for getting in the turnip crop. For this, dig and dress your soil uniformly even, and sow the seed, either scattering generally, or in drills nine inches apart. And should

you have any young celery plants in your greenhouse—pan forward enough for pricking out, dig a trench a foot deep in the usual way, and plant all along in the centre.

Spinach, again, should be sown now in drills, and when it has grown large enough to be taken hold of, thin it out two or three inches apart for the first time; and again, when the young plants have grown large enough for eating, pull them up by the roots, thinning them thus again to some eight inches apart, or more. An onion bed can do with a good strong manure; indeed, we do not put it too strongly if we say that it cannot do without it. Nor must we in this important and very practical kitchen garden forget altogether other departments. Our cherry, and apple, and pear trees are all bridal in their white array of blossom, and over these, as well as the wall trees, we are always anxiously watching when this is the case. Our best advice is, perhaps, let them alone, and we trust that high winds will have like compassion on them. From grafted trees, however, we carefully rub off any buds that the stock is throwing out. In the open flower garden we are, of course, gay with tulips, and many hyacinths are still flowering finely. All our annuals we get in at once, marking carefully with a small stick and label where each is sown. As for our now crammed greenhouse, we may begin to relieve it by hardening off, and carry away to a sheltered spot some of the hardiest calceolarias and geraniums.

MY COURTSHIP.

SECOND CHAPTER.



THINK the very pleasantest part of our engagement came towards the end, when we began getting together the furniture for our future home.

We did a little house-hunting, and that was terribly fatiguing; but we were spared any great amount of it, because a friend

of Charlie's, who had built himself a house at Notting Hill, suddenly had an appointment given him in the West Indies, and asked whether he could take it off his hands. Charlie would not decide till I had seen it, and I had rather set my heart on Kensington, which would have been nearer home. Mother said this was very silly of me, and bade me not to raise any obstacle if the house really was suitable.

It proved to be as nearly perfection as a house could be, and a better one than I had hoped for, as the hall and hearths were tiled, the stoves of the slow combustion order, and the kitchen on the ground floor, behind the dining-room, which was provided with a hatch, so that dishes or anything else could be handed in without the servant who might be in waiting leaving the room. There were also three sitting-rooms, and a nice little conservatory, heated

by hot-water pipes, that crossed and warmed the hall, and were supplied by a circular boiler in connection with the kitchener.

The possession of quite a nice piece of garden, too, was very delightful, and as dear Charlie said everything was quite within his means, I felt like a queen, as I told him.

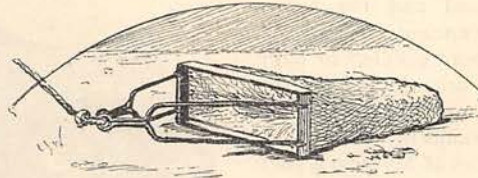
He explained that he could not have afforded such a house if it had not been arranged with a view to saving labour, and with certain things in it, such as the tiled pavements, stone fenders, &c., which would save expense in furnishing. I, having had a timely hint before starting, suggested that before the matter was quite settled Mrs. Sumner should be asked to go and look at the proposed house, and went home with Charlie to talk about it; and she very kindly, as she had an engagement, to which Charlie was to be her escort, asked Clara to go with me and ask whether my mother would drive with her to Notting Hill the next day, that they might inspect our future abode together. It is my belief that the two dear women made a very pleasant little jaunt of it, and were almost, if not quite, as much interested as Charlie and I.

Then began the process which my father called "nest-building," and certainly it was getting together

in our dredge, these old stories came rushing over them, covering their uncanny forms with a mystic halo, and suggesting how much of romance there is in science, and how "cold" science is interwoven with the world's mythology and folk-lore, impressing anew the fact that all the old stories of goblin and geni, of fairy palace and haunted castle, are as nothing com-

pared to the stories revealed to us in this day by the microscope, the telescope, and the dredge.

The day is coming on apace, let us hope, when our young people will find their wonder-lore not in yellow-covered novels, but in sky and rock, on mountain-side and sea-shore, and in such treasures as were garnered during the cruise of the *Spindrift*.



THE DREDGE.

THE GARDEN IN "THE MERRIE MONTH."

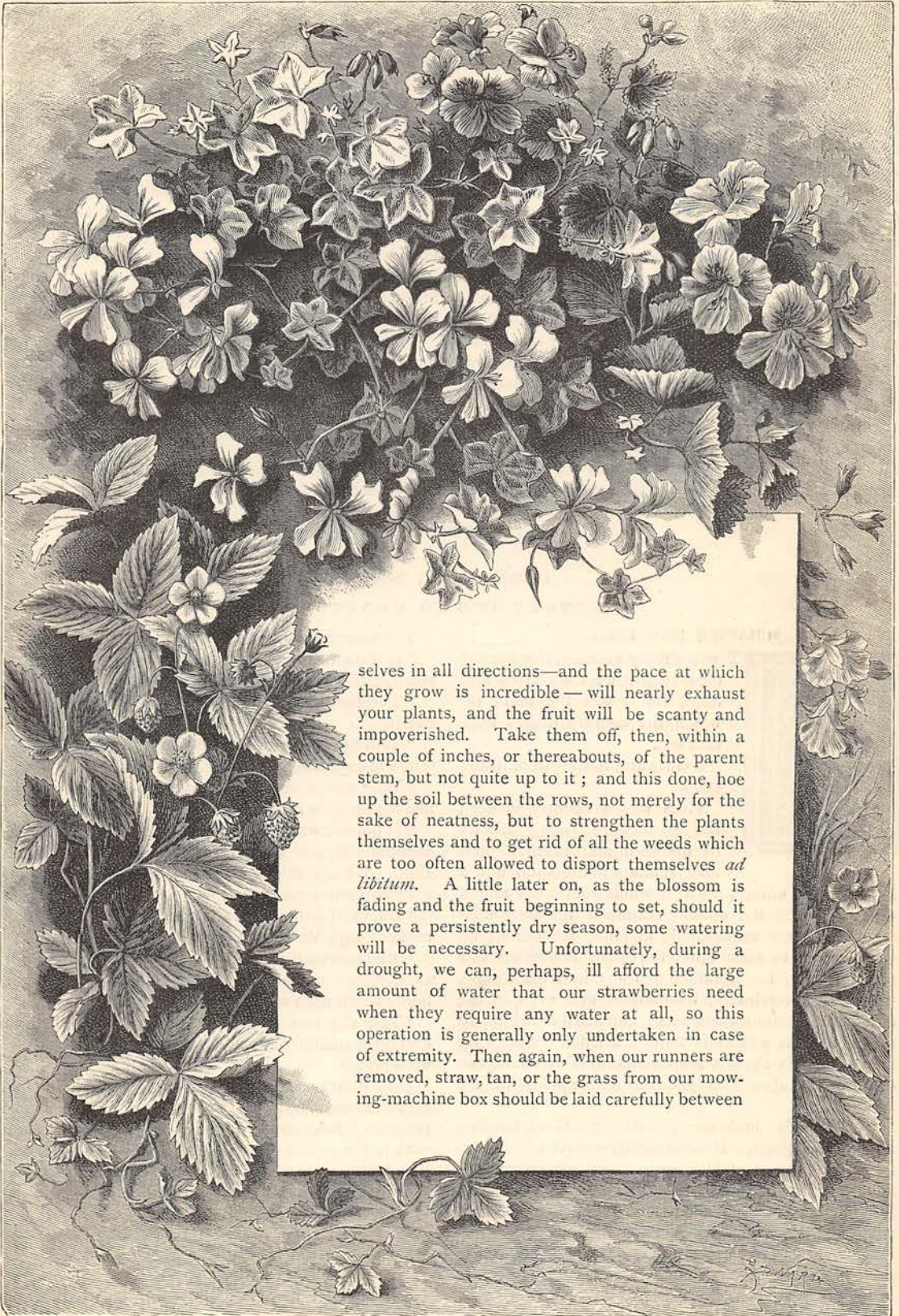


WITH the return once again of the "merrie month of May," we may consider ourselves as fairly embarked in the summer gardening campaign. And yet these deceitful east winds and occasionally lingering frosts make us doubly careful in beginning to expose our entire gardening stock very early in the

month to all the fanciful and fitful changes of our English climate. In our greenhouse, however, one of our floral exhibitions ought to be now in its prime. We refer to our pelargoniums, or fancy geraniums, and it is to their general culture, as also to the attention that has to be paid to our strawberry-bed, that we shall mainly address ourselves this month. And the brilliancy and great variety of their colour it is which give us a double interest in the cultivation of these fancy geraniums. And these, of course, can be either raised from seed or propagated by cuttings. Seed sown, say, towards the end of February will under ordinarily favourable circumstances not flower before August or September. The seed sown should have been gathered ripe and dry in the autumn, and stored away in its pod and in some dry place until brought out for use. Sow in wide shallow pans or pots, and be most careful to have an ample drainage in the way of crocks and pieces of tile. As for the soil, it should consist, say, of loam from well-decayed turf, leaf-mould, and sand in about equal proportions. Have all three ingredients thoroughly mixed and the whole somewhat pressed into your seed-pan, sowing your seeds on the surface of the soil, and covering them over lightly only, with similar soil. All the better if you can place your seed-pan in a warm frame, or in the absence of such a con-

venience, these young seedlings can be raised in the greenhouse. In this case, however, a little additional warmth and protection can be gained for them by placing your pan, if possible, inside another one and having a coating of moss placed all round its edge. Your young pelargoniums, when of a sufficient size to admit of being handled, should be potted singly into sixty-sized pots, or if you prefer it, pot them three at a time in forty-eights. As the summer advances, a further shifting will, of course, be necessary. Now these seedling pelargoniums sown, as we have said, about February, and that only begin blooming, therefore, in the very wane of the summer, can hardly be said to have had a thoroughly fair chance of showing the full merit of their flowering, so that it is well, say about the middle of August, at the time, in fact, when we take cuttings of our other plants, to take off and strike in the ordinary way the best and healthiest of the tops of these young seedlings. Strike them in a soil of sandy loam, either in your greenhouse or a spent cucumber-bed, or even in a warm and well-sheltered part of your open border, that is, if the season be a good and favourable one. May and June are, as we have said, the months in which our fancy geranium show should be at its best, but in the spring months of the year these pelargoniums, as also our cinerarias, seem terribly liable to be troubled with a visitation of the green fly, in which case a good fumigation and afterwards a syringing should be given them.

Nor can there be a better month of the year than May in which to say something of our strawberry culture, as we are, of course, just now watching their progress with considerable care. And, perhaps, we cannot do better than give at the outset a few directions as to their more immediate mode of treatment at the present time, which is too often a very turning-point for success or for failure in our strawberry-garden. Let us say at once that leaving a strawberry-bed to take care of itself during the month of May will certainly involve failure. By the middle of the month, and perhaps earlier, the runners, if allowed to extend them-



selves in all directions—and the pace at which they grow is incredible—will nearly exhaust your plants, and the fruit will be scanty and impoverished. Take them off, then, within a couple of inches, or thereabouts, of the parent stem, but not quite up to it ; and this done, hoe up the soil between the rows, not merely for the sake of neatness, but to strengthen the plants themselves and to get rid of all the weeds which are too often allowed to disport themselves *ad libitum*. A little later on, as the blossom is fading and the fruit beginning to set, should it prove a persistently dry season, some watering will be necessary. Unfortunately, during a drought, we can, perhaps, ill afford the large amount of water that our strawberries need when they require any water at all, so this operation is generally only undertaken in case of extremity. Then again, when our runners are removed, straw, tan, or the grass from our mowing-machine box should be laid carefully between

the rows. This will not only tend to keep moist the soil underneath, but the fruit as it develops will be kept clean, and what is also of much importance, you will be able to detect the arrival of slugs, which are most certainly watching with a keen interest the colouring of the fruit and marking out the very finest for their evening meal. But a few turns up and down between the rows at night-fall, after, perhaps, a warm shower, will enable you, lantern in hand, to capture the enemy with great success, and an occasional sortie of this character will amply repay you for your trouble. In the actual fruiting season you will notice the almost magic effect that a good warm thunder-shower has in ripening. Yet strawberries for preserving must never be gathered wet. A couple of days' cessation from gathering will find you next harvesting a fine and abundant crop. The fruiting over, let your bed have an entire rest—that is, leave it alone for awhile. New beds should be made up not later than the middle of August, planting out your runners a foot apart and in rows some two feet from each other. The runners, nevertheless, may be got away from your old bed, but the foliage should be allowed to remain undisturbed. Quite late in the autumn, however, all the then decaying and de-

cayed leaves may be got off and the entire débris of your plants dug in between the rows, for there is no better manure and dressing for them than this with an addition of some decayed stable dung.

May, however, finds us very busy in our flower-garden, especially during the latter half of the month devoted to the bedding-out system. Interspersed among perennials we have our bright and gay annuals now making rapid progress, and thirdly, among these we now dot up and down our bedding-out geraniums and calceolarias, with an occasional show of the varying-coloured verbena. Much just now depends upon the taste and good sense of the gardener; and in the disposition of the plants, see that the tallest are at the back of your border, and the dwarf plants in the front of all.

The cucumber-frames require careful watching during this fitful and uncertain month, and sometimes in a cold or chilly season some fresh manure must be added for the purpose of maintaining or renewing the heat. And in the kitchen-garden the successional sowing of peas and other vegetables should be persisted in, so as to avoid a superabundance of them at one season and a dearth of them at another.

GOSS AND SONS.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.



IT was Friday evening, the busiest time in the week for Goss and Sons, for it was the night on which the country orders were sent out.

"Goss and Sons" were in the shop.

Goss was a country grocer; the sons were young fellows of nineteen and twenty, John and William; the shop was a

low wooden edifice, with a window in front and a window round the corner crammed up with mixtures the most remarkable, and not set out at all with an eye to effect; but the place altogether was pretty roomy, for it rambled away into back shop, warehouse, storehouse, bakehouse, and even in the family sitting-room there was a cupboard full of patent medicines. It was in fact quite a small "store," for it was the only shop in Hepburn, unless we count two or three cottages with goodies and apples in the windows.

"Now, lads, look alive," said Mr. Goss, bustling about in his glory. He thoroughly enjoyed his business; the mixture of fuss, gossip, and money-making suited him exactly; and there was enough interest in the different fancies of customers and qualities of goods to occupy his mind amply. He looked upon the great shopkeepers in his own trade much as a clergyman looks upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, or even as a literary man upon Shakespeare.

The three worked on in silence for some time.

"Is it twopenny or threepenny sugar Mrs. Reece takes, father?" said William presently.

"Threepenny, of course!" struck in John impatiently.

"Will never knows what belongs," said his father, "he's always wool-gathering, Will is!"

"Will never supposes anything's worth thinking about that isn't printed in a book!"

"It doesn't want much thinking to tell him that Sir Benjamin Sykes' housekeeper doesn't want common stuff. What's this? If it's meant for half a pound it's uncommon good weight."

"Oh, well! I thought a few butter-scotch drops didn't matter," said Will turning crimson.

"Butter-scotch drops!" said John, pricking up his ears, "they must be for Miss Dulcie; she must be home again from school then."

"Yes, she was in the shop to-day. We had two carriages standing at the door at once!" said old Goss with pride.

John didn't speak, but he was very vexed indeed that he had chosen just that time to slip out about some potatoes. Even to serve Miss Dulcie across the counter with half a pound of butter-scotch drops was a privilege highly prized by either of these rustic admirers.

Will, tying up a parcel, gently hummed—

"Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot—how nourished?"

"Nay, lad, you mustn't talk about fancies," said old Goss, "not for many a long year; you needn't blush

of the housing of the poor. Mr. Barnett expressed the belief that improved local government would not only simplify the task of keeping tenement houses in better condition, but would reduce the rates and make it easier to acquire open spaces. In reply to one of my questions, Mr. Barnett said he thought the bitter and socialistic feelings of the poor towards the rich, of which so much has been heard, have been greatly exaggerated. "But," he went on, "it seems to me inevitable that there should be some such antagonism so long as the rich and the poor quarters of London are so widely sundered. For the most part, however, the people are dumb on this point; and those who do talk, don't talk for the million. At the same time, I feel very strongly that the best cure for the discontent that does exist would be a more constant mingling of rich and poor. That is the idea upon which we work at Toynbee Hall, and my experience there has confirmed my opinions."

I asked how the movement for inducing people of education and position to live in Whitechapel, with the object of bringing classes into closer connection, was progressing. Mr. Barnett told me that quite half a dozen families—people of wealth and culture—had gone to live in his own parish; and that he looked to an exodus from the West to the East to do far more to improve the position of the poor than anything else could do. "East London," he remarked, in the

tone of a man himself keenly influenced by surroundings, "is so terribly dull; there is so little to raise men's hearts or lead them to believe in the existence of a better condition of things. You go for a walk, and see no shop window that is interesting in itself. You meet thousands of people in dirty garments, and you never see a carriage, unless it be a doctor's brougham hurrying along. The streets are never brightened in any of the ways familiar at the West End. The Horse Guards are never sent through our streets, and a uniform is rarely seen." The experiment tried by the lady collectors of inviting a number of their poor tenants to their houses and giving them an entertainment, and of taking some of them down to their country houses for a day's holiday in the summer, had been very successful. It was better to make a break in these people's lives than to give them money, for—

"The gift without the giver is bare;
We only give in what we share."

"In short," exclaimed Mr. Barnett, "the development of the sense of responsibility on both sides is the only cure for existing evils. If the rich and well-to-do would become more sensible of their duty to their poor neighbours everything would be righted. Legislation, of whatever kind, would, in this particular case, always let through the people legislated for."

THE GARDEN IN JUNE.

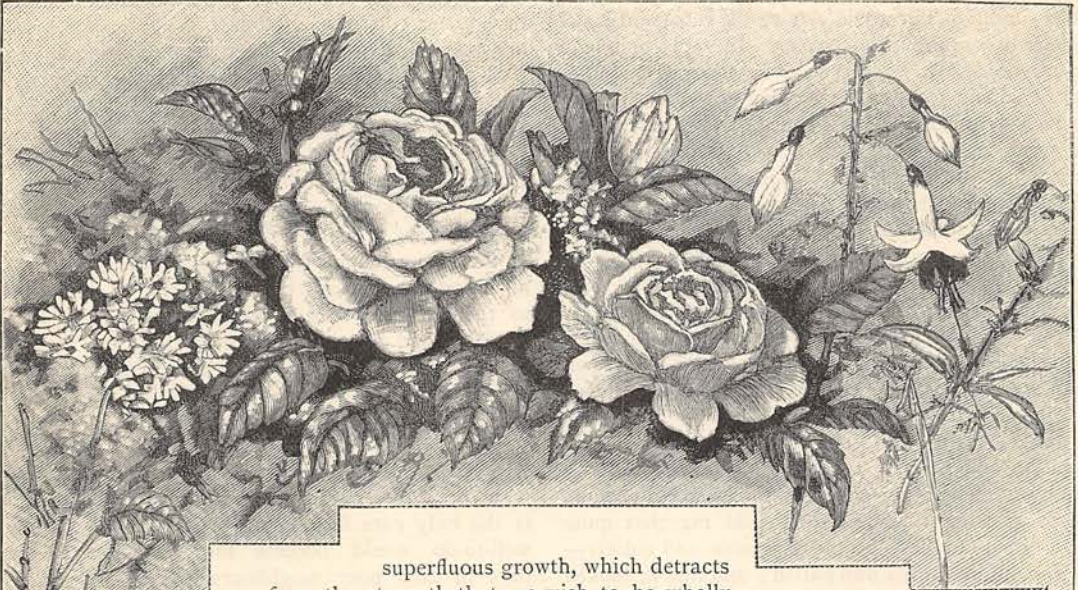


THIS month, let us say we are entering upon a very critical and important period of our rose culture. Our already established standards are fast breaking into bloom in all directions, and we shall find it here and there advisable to sacrifice some buds, where several have made their appearance in too close proximity to each other, the side buds pressing all the shape and beauty out of an opening rose that is in the centre of a small knot of buds.

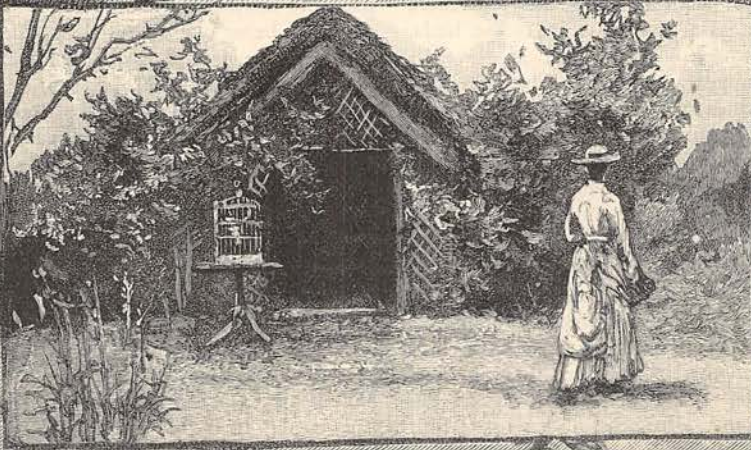
But it is towards the end of the month more particularly that we find ourselves preparing for the interesting operation of budding upon our new stocks. At present, then, we must redouble the watchful care that we are bestowing upon the stocks themselves, by going over them every two or three days, and rubbing all the little buds off that are making their appearance along the stock, while anything in the shape of a sucker must also be grubbed up. Still more important is it to watch the stocks we budded last year, the shoots of which will now be making rapid growth, and into which it is most necessary that all the strength of the stock should be thrown by this persistent removal of all superfluous growth.

It may, however, be more practical to give a few general hints as to the monthly routine management of our roses.

In January, then, see that the stakes are well secured in the ground, and that the standards are also well secured to the stakes; for in this month they are exposed to another peril besides that of gales of wind—we mean being overweighted by a heavy fall of snow. The damage caused by the snow-storm of January last to our old-established standards, and, indeed, generally, to trees of all sizes, was enormous. Many of us must have then noticed, in passing along our gardens, that the tops of many handsome shrubby trees were broken off short by the weight of the snow. Yet we noticed our careful old gardener, while he shook the worst of the snow from such shrubs as laurels, &c., allowed the snow to lie along the branches of standard roses that seemed well supported, for the purpose of protection from the keen frost that then set in. Stocks may in good open weather in the month of January be yet planted out, and secured to a rail if you have a row of them, in the way that we have often suggested. In February, any roses that you may be forcing—should you have the luxury of a forcing house—will want syringeing and fumigation; but outside, in the month of March, we prune all our standards, and from this time we must be regular in the removal from our stocks, whether new or established, of all the



superfluous growth, which detracts from the strength that we wish to be wholly thrown into the head. April is a very late month for pruning, but not a moment later should that operation be delayed. Of their present treatment we have already spoken; but in July we begin budding. The operation, while it is an interesting and a familiar one, yet requires some considerable ingenuity, dexterity, and experience. If, on making a small incision in the bark of your stock, say an inch long, you find that you can lift each side freely, the stock is then in a condition to receive the bud. Buds that have struck well may have their worsted or bass matting loosened slightly in September, while in October we shorten



the long, spindly, and straggling boughs of our established standards, which if too long, or allowed to remain on, would only expose the whole tree to increased damage, from the gales that usually happen about that time. And in November and December we can procure new stocks from the florist, unless we prefer the adventure of going to the woods to procure them for ourselves, planting them out afterwards in our garden in open and seasonable weather.

Thus much, then, for our roses. Old-fashioned pink and pansy beds should now be in all their luxuriance. As for the pansies, get in a succession of cuttings for a supply of young plants: set them out in a cool situation and in a good loamy soil. As your blooms fade, remove them, except, of course, in the case of any good specimens you are wishing to save for seed. Your pinks, too, should be watered in a dry season, so as to enable them better to open their flowers, while towards the end of the month they can be propagated by pipings.

By the end of May we complete what is popularly known as the bedding-out system in our flower-garden. This, however, is a practice that we have uniformly condemned when it is carried out with too great a formality and stiffness. Just at this time, then, we take care to have our borders well supplied with a few annuals, and still keep sowing them, and forcing on a few, so as to have a perpetual relay of them to interperse among our perennials and bedding-out plants, such as geraniums and calceolarias, &c.

Yet a little notice must surely be taken of our kitchen and fruit gardens, as also of our frames. Let the little branches of the cucumbers and melons be regulated to lie uniformly and evenly over the beds: let your frames have plenty of air in the day-time, and, in a backward or chilly season, some re-lining with hot

stable manure may even be necessary, though this, let us hope, can hardly be the case in the month of June. As for the kitchen-garden, the chief attention that can be paid to the growing crops is to keep them watered in a very dry season, and to have them at all times free from weeds. Then, again, there is the successional sowing of peas, as also of spinach, to be seen to. Spinach already up can be thinned out for use, and not necessarily thrown away, for where there are four rough leaves, they will do to eat. Another sowing of onions may also now be made for drawing small, while other beds that are in a more advanced state should be both thinned and weeded. And in any spare piece of ground plant out cabbages, a vegetable nearly as much in demand as our potatoes, which last, by the way, will require earthing up. And this operation needs neatly carrying out, as potatoes carelessly earthed up will probably have their produce exposed on the surface of the soil, and where this is the case, or even where there has been merely a thin coating of earth over them, such potatoes will only do either for seed or for the pig-sty.

In the fruit-garden this month we must carefully thin out the wall-fruit, and especially where there is a promise of a heavy crop. A good syringing will occasionally benefit the trees, and a sharp look-out kept in the evening time for slugs and snails. And do not have on the borders either any tall vegetable crops near your wall so as to overshadow it, or any crops that thoroughly cover over and exhaust the soil, such as beet or horse-radish: lettuces, and perhaps French beans, are the best near your wall, if you are crowded for space. Vines should be shortened to the first joint past the bunch, and all branches removed that are not required for next year's fruiting.



A MAIDEN'S DREAMS.

NO foot-fall wakens the mansion
Asleep in the sun's warm rays,
The Lady Clare is awearry
Of silence and lonely days,
Love's magic of late has stolen
The charm from her life's still ways.

She turns from her book, and rises,
To gaze through the casement low,
The languorous lily perfumes
Towards her on soft airs blow—
White lilies! Ah, once she loved them,
She gathers red roses now.

Oh, when will the noon be sunset,
And over the green hillside,
And up through the beechen shadows

The lover she looks for, ride?
And when will this life be ended,
And bring the bright life untried?

While thus she waits in impatience,
Nought guesseth the Lady Clare,
That sweet as are Love's red roses,
Full often a thorn they bear,
And the new life that seems so joyous
May bring with it weight of care.

Perhaps in the years that follow,
When cares press heavily,
And the thorns have pierced through the roses,
Then, all her dreamings will be
Of the old, sweet life 'mid the lilies,
In maidenhood blithe and free.

KATE THOMPSON SIZER.

JULY GARDEN GOSSIP.



IT is, we suppose, sufficiently common-place to observe how wonderfully ordered everything in nature appears to be. Those of us who make much of domestic pets often remark in the wane of the year what fine winter coats our dogs and cats are putting on : or here again while we are lurking about in the shady corners of the garden to find the pleasantest retreat from the scorching rays of a July sun, the currants, gooseberries, and strawberries which now fill a well-ordered garden in such lavish profusion prove to be a resource grateful in the extreme. Yet, what a wry face would not a few of us have pulled had that same bunch of currants been suddenly put between our teeth only four months ago, when the east wind seemed to be cutting out the very marrow of our bones !

Such a simple platitude as this, however, just now naturally sets us thinking whether we cannot say a few words as to the general cultivation of some of our most popular fruit-trees.

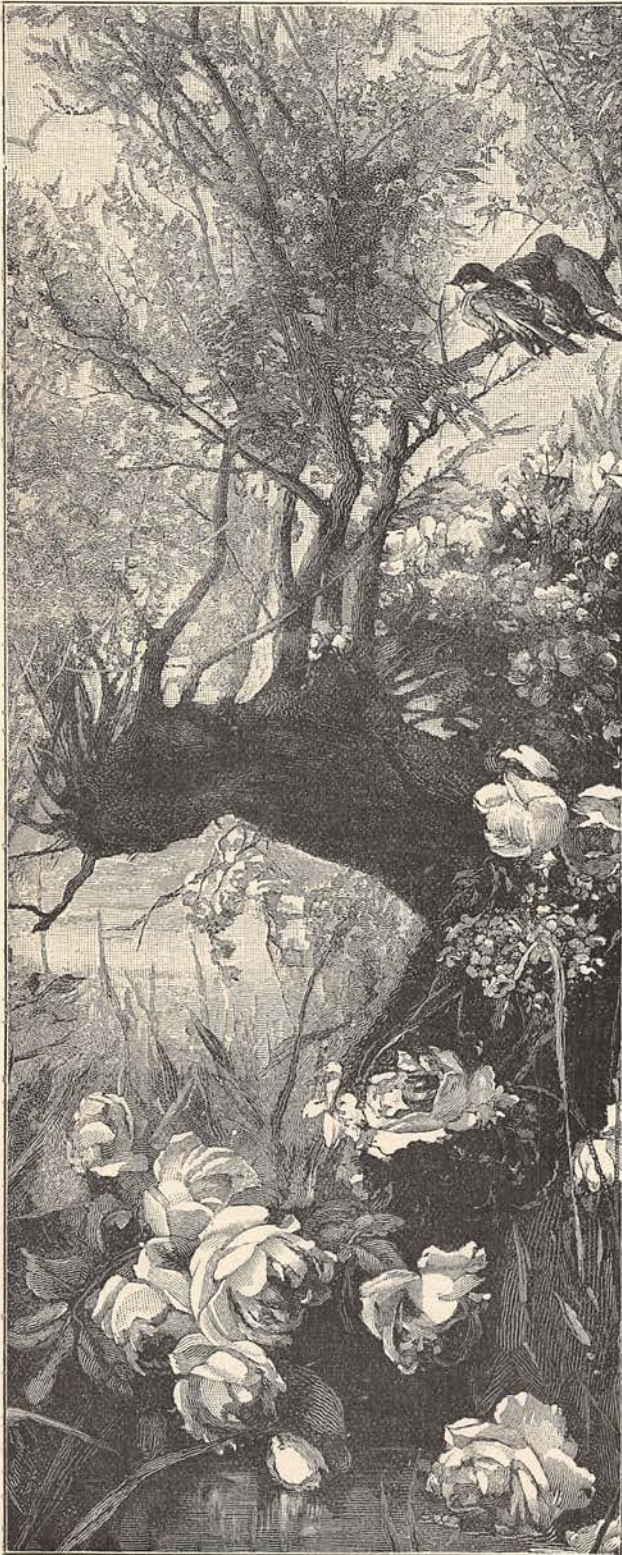
The autumn of the year, then, about November, is the best time for planting out young currant and gooseberry trees ; and at the most they should not be more than three years old from the cutting, or, if older than this at the time of planting, they should be cut back a little to strengthen the growth of the new wood. But, to be more in order, it is perhaps of the cuttings themselves that we should first speak. In the wane of the year, choose some good straight young shoots, healthy and well-grown, of about a foot in length or a little over ; and from the part that you are about to insert below the surface of the soil, cut carefully out all the little eyes and buds, as this will afterwards serve to prevent suckers growing up and detracting from the strength of your young tree. As for the soil, the ordinary kitchen garden soil that is uniformly trenched and manured will do admirably well for your young cuttings. Take care to plant them firmly in, but not in a too sunny situation. By the end of the following summer they will have sent out some two or three good shoots. By the end of the first year, that is to say, about November, prune the young shoots slightly back, and in two years' time you will have a fairly respectable little shrub. Do not, however, eventually retain

more than four or five shoots on your tree. At two years' growth you can remove your young trees to the spot you have selected for their final destination, though they can stand where the cuttings were put in for three years, if necessary ; or indeed it is well to plant them at the outset in the spot you intend them to remain finally in.

Next, a word must be said as to the remedies for that terrible pest, the gooseberry caterpillar. It is melancholy and disheartening in the middle of the bright month of May to find, when our trees are crowded with well-set and promising fruit, that the foliage also is crowded with a well-set and promising crop of young caterpillars. In an incredibly short space of time they will eat the leaves entirely away, and the fruit, though they will not touch it, remains on, still green and unripened ; for it is the very presence of the leaves that assists in the ripening process. The remedy of picking off the caterpillars by hand is a tedious operation and seldom successful, for, of course, plenty cannot fail to be overlooked. Then, again, there are the remedies of soot, quicklime, or the dusting with white hellebore powder. Perhaps, however, the best remedy can be arrived at by a study of the habits of the caterpillar itself. Now, we must remember that the eggs of the mischievous moth are hatched about September on the leaves of your fruit-trees : when the leaves fall, then, as one remedy, take care to have them all carefully burnt. But we are not yet "out of the wood," for the young larvæ shelter themselves during the winter in the soil just under and around your gooseberry and currant bushes. Towards the end of March, then, have recourse to further measures, by removing to the depth of two or three inches the surface of the soil from around your bushes for the diameter of about a yard. Replace with fresh maiden soil, and burn the old soil, which you can afterwards use as a dressing elsewhere. As your trees break into leaf, sprinkle a slight covering of soot and quicklime over the surface of your new soil, so as to catch any chance stragglers, and with all this merciless routine you ought to escape from the enemy. Amongst the gooseberries, our fruiting season may be said to begin towards the end of May, for we thin out then for bottling or for our early tarts. This gathering, judiciously made, tends much to improve the size and quality of the fruit we allow to remain on. We must not, however, devote all our space to the fruit garden : yet the strawberries, and our early summer fruits and their preserving, occupy us necessarily just now very much. Take care to gather them, if for preserving, only when dry.

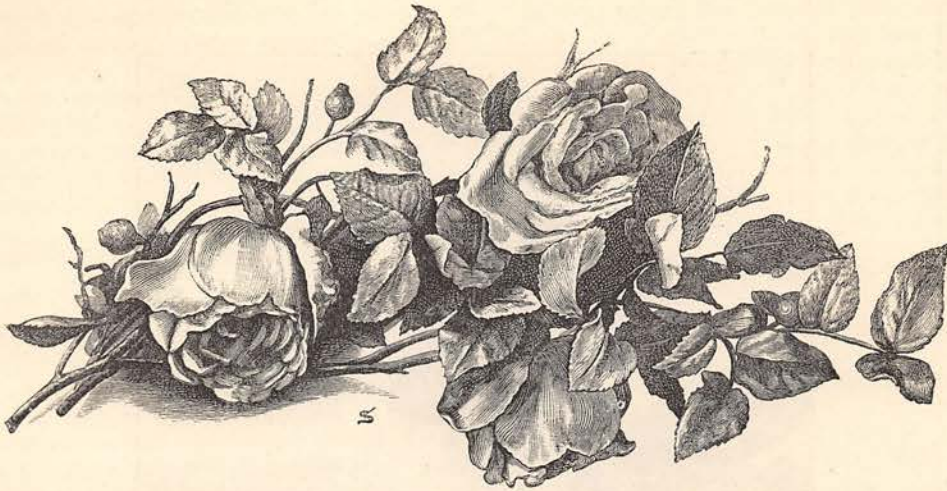
In our flower garden, flowers of all varieties are now, of course, in their glory, from the red and full-blown rose to the pale water-lily : this last, however, luxuriant in July, only those can grow who have such luxuries as forcing houses and plant stoves : just now they should be kept near the light, and the water frequently changed so as to avoid the collection about them of any dirt or scum.

And another old friend in whom we delight now is the honeysuckle, a hardy fellow who rarely gives us much trouble. In one matter it is particularly obliging for, in addition to being so good-natured as to thrive in nearly any soil, it is perfectly willing to flower even under the shadow of trees. It can be propagated either by layers or cuttings, the latter method being certainly preferable, though by either it will easily send out roots. Cuttings are best made soon after October, but take care to choose the strongest of the young shoots of the previous summer.



In the greenhouse, the camellias that have been maturing their growth and making their new wood, will now be really benefited by being stood out of doors and placed in some sheltered and protected situation, and not in the full blaze of the sun. Stand them, say, along a plank, or in any case never allow plants of any kind in pots, when placed in the open, to stand upon the soil or where worms or any vermin can get at them. And indeed very often about this time our greenhouse, where no very large variety of plants is kept in store, is in a great measure empty, so that where one house is made to serve for all purposes, this perhaps is as good a month as any for general repair inside or for painting; for in August or by the middle of that month we begin to house our stock of cuttings for the next season, though not until Michaelmas perhaps do we fill up the house itself entirely. Of the roses and the budding operation we spoke last month, though this month of July is, of course, the budding time *par excellence*. A vigilant look-out must still be made for the stock shoots and suckers, which in this month, when everything grows so vigorously, tend so terribly to exhaust the rose-tree and spoil your buds. And then as to the anemones, the roots of any choice varieties that remain in the ground may be taken up as soon as the leaves have died away. Have them well dried in the shade before storing them away.

But of our kitchen and vegetable garden something must be said. Choose showery weather for planting out a crop of Brussels sprouts, taking care in a drought to water well at the time of planting. And by the end of the month, prepare your ground for a sowing of cabbage seed for spring use. Crops for use in autumn and winter should now also be set out. A good season is this also for making a principal sowing of turnip seed: successional sowing of peas too may still be made, the last sowing being not later than the end of the month: indeed it is by this successional plan that we contrive to keep our household well and long supplied with vegetables.



THE GARDEN'S BEAUTY-MONTH.



BLAZE of beauty—such should a well-ordered garden be in the month of August. There is perhaps one flower about which we might with advantage give a few hints at this time, if only that it is as much suggestive of a “blaze” as anything we can well think of, and that is the poppy. One precaution, however, we might give at the outset: take care to constantly remove the seed-pods before the seed perfects itself, or in a single season you may have your whole garden overspread, and a gay flower rapidly transformed into a troublesome weed. Unhappily the poppy is somewhat short-lived, but its brilliancy and gaiety of colour



is so effective, that in our sowing months of March or April we like to put in a pinch of well-selected seed, at intervals of a few yards, just at the corners of our garden, of our carriage-drive, or even here and there along the borders of our kitchen garden or shrubbery. When the plants are well up, thin them out with your hoe, so as to allow them a proper distance to grow and bloom well. As they come into flower, pull up at once

all that we may call failures—we mean all such as the single or semi-double ones—and, on the other hand, mark afterwards such as are undeniably good ones for seed. Little remains to be said about them. Against the brilliant red and scarlet of this flower we may remark, in passing, the bright blue of the corn-flower—another old-fashioned and simple favourite—presents a pleasing and effective contrast.

Just at this time of the year, however, when our peaches, nectarines, and greengages, and indeed our wall-fruit in general, are rapidly ripening, a few words might be said with advantage as to their routine management. And though to begin with some August hints is certainly beginning at the end, let us say at once that some considerable care and caution are necessary just now in the manipulation of our trees. First, then, we must be busily engaged in trapping all large flies and wasps by day, and all slugs and snails that attack our fruit by night. And a little examination of your trees in the twilight, or more particularly after a thunder-shower a little later on, with a lantern in your hand, will enable you to capture the more crafty of the snails and slugs. But especially avoid at this time touching and handling, and, most of all, the disastrous habit of slightly pinching the fruit to see if it be ripe. Be content to allow the fruit to remain on your trees as long as it chooses, or at all events the first half of your number, for it rarely happens that the whole stock even on one tree ripens in the same week. A net, or very thin canvas or gauze, also serves as a protection against birds and vermin in general. Some material of this kind, however, unless it be well contrived, occasionally keeps off the sun, which just now is certainly not desirable. And then, again, there is a good method of protecting the fruit from falling to the ground, and getting hopelessly bruised, by placing some light gauze or net-work so projecting from the wall in a slanting position as to catch the fruit when it falls from the tree.



POPIES BY THE RIVER-PATH.

Of the budding process—a method the most general for the propagation of the peach-tree—we shall not now say much. The months of June and July are perhaps the best adapted for the operation, and the stocks mostly employed are those known as plum stocks. Many, however, prefer buying outright some young trees already well started. And these latter, October perhaps is the best month for getting in. But older and established trees are often immensely improved by the following process: one, indeed, which the writer of this paper on one occasion found by experience

seemed quite to throw a new life into four trees that had the season or two previously turned out comparatively failures:—Late in the autumn of one year the roots were well dug round and sharply pruned, and some rich manure given to them. The next season they were breaking down with a luscious show of fruit. The pruning of wall fruit should not be delayed later than about the middle of February, but the operation of nailing might perhaps be put off a little later than that, in order to keep the buds from swelling too quickly. Avoid also using too many nails and shreds. Place

these latter alternately, so as to bear in an opposite direction on the shoot. And then, later in the season, perhaps by the end of May or during the first fortnight of June, comes that delicate and cautious process of thinning the fruit. Any roughness, violence, or hurry might be very disastrous in this operation. In June, too, the wood will probably still want nailing and thinning, and the branches may want raising or lowering according to their strength and condition. A little liquid manure in the same month will benefit both peaches and nectarines. But in this month of August any newly-budded trees should be carefully examined, and all portions of growth removed from the stock, and suckers from the root.

And among our flowers we are busy this month taking cuttings, but as to the general stocking of the greenhouse we may have more to say next month. Annuals in pots will want watering and shading, and their dead leaves got away. Those who care to raise perennials from seed should sow it at the beginning of the month, and by the end of October the young plants could be planted out in warmer aspects to acquire strength; but it is better to sow perennials a

month or two earlier than this, and afterwards to plant them out in the spots where they are to flower. And then, again, the carnations and piccotees should be layered this month.

And in the kitchen garden also we have a busy time of it now. Succession crops may yet be planted out: give a good hoeing, and dig well in or clear off all exhausted crops. Tomatoes should be kept well nailed to the wall, and laterals removed; only allow a few to remain on. Spinach may be twice sown this month, the prickly sorts being the most hardy; and August being a great time for the sowing of all biennials, get plenty of parsley sown, as well as the chief winter onion crop; previously, however, to undertaking this last operation have the land well trenched and manured. As for your celery bed, be especially careful when you give your first earthing-up that you throw no soil on to the heads of the plants, and choose a dry day for your work. For the main spring crop of cabbages sow the first week in this month, and have broccoli in all your spare corners. Potatoes too will want hoeing, and probably earthing up. A very good month also is this for making up an asparagus bed.

WHAT TO WEAR.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS: BY OUR PARIS AND LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.

I. FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



MARRIVING or giving in marriage is never likely to be out of fashion as long as human beings are on the face of the earth, and I do not doubt that some of my readers are at that golden period of life when they are contemplating taking, in the near future, this all-important step, and will be glad to know the latest fashions in bridal attire. It seems to me, however, that England does not copy very closely French modes in this particular. Satin or silk, plain or brocaded,

is the invariable rule on your side of the Channel; while with us, muslin, soft washing silk, and other unpretending fabrics are very frequently used, a plan which it would be well to follow in Great Britain. Fashionable brides in Paris have the front of their gowns showered over with detached sprays and petals of orange-blossom, as though their friends had pelted them with the same, and the veil is so full and voluminous that it entirely envelops the whole dress.

When the veil is lace it falls only to the waist in front, but reaches to the hem of the gown at the back. Often the train is covered with a long veil of lace, and only a small one placed on the head, very full, however, and quite masking the head. Another new feature in bridal attire is, that the orange-blossom wreath is placed outside the veil, not a becoming plan. Pages bearing the bride's train have found no favour in France, and if all is true that we hear, the plan is not always carried out with wisdom.

Many French brides are wearing large-patterned damask silk outlined with silver.

Cream-coloured coarse woollen stuffs find special favour for young ladies' wear this summer time, sometimes made quite plain, save for large looped bows of ribbon, which, as a matter of course, appear on the shoulders; sometimes there are brown, red, or mousse-green velvet waistcoat and cuffs.

Straw hats are worn with such costumes, generally entwined with gauze. This material plays an important part this year. Many of the best gowns for full morning toilette have the front filled in with a gauze

mitted himself the use of some very forcible language in his repudiation of the charge. The owner of the chain could not maintain the charge, but she felt, all the same, that she was being robbed. Years had passed away, and the family had emigrated to America, when the servant one day brought to her mistress a piece of gold chain which she had shaken from a long-haired mat. The chain had been snapped in two places, not only in one as had been supposed, and the wearer had picked up only the longer portion. The shorter piece had got entwined in the mat, and remained there for a dozen years.

No great harm was done in this case, but in another of which I am cognisant, the mischief was irreparable. At a sale which took place on the death of the rector of a parish near Chester, a piano was knocked down to a tradesman of the city. On being tuned and repaired, two costly rings were found beneath the keyboard. The finder communicated with the rector's widow, when the following sad story came to light. Eleven years before, a lady staying at the Rectory had lost these very rings. She had evidently taken them off while playing, and laid them on the

piano, and they had then somehow slipped in under the keys. Suspicion, however, had fallen upon a maid then in the service of the family, and she was sent home. Her father, a small farmer, was terribly upset at the disgrace which had fallen upon his name and family, and refused to receive her. The poor girl went away from the neighbourhood; in fact, she disappeared. On the finding of the rings, every endeavour was made to find her, but in vain. Advertisements were even inserted in the public newspapers, promising her a considerable annuity, but with no result. Unjustly suspected, she had hidden herself from all her former belongings, and was never heard of again. And who can wonder if she sank beneath the weight of a lost character?—who can blame her if her thoughts of her employers and of their class were hard and bitter?

Who can hear such a story without a resolve never lightly to harbour suspicion? It is surely more likely that I should be mistaken than that my neighbour, however poor, should steal. My neighbour's character is, at the least, more precious than the costliest trinket ever made.

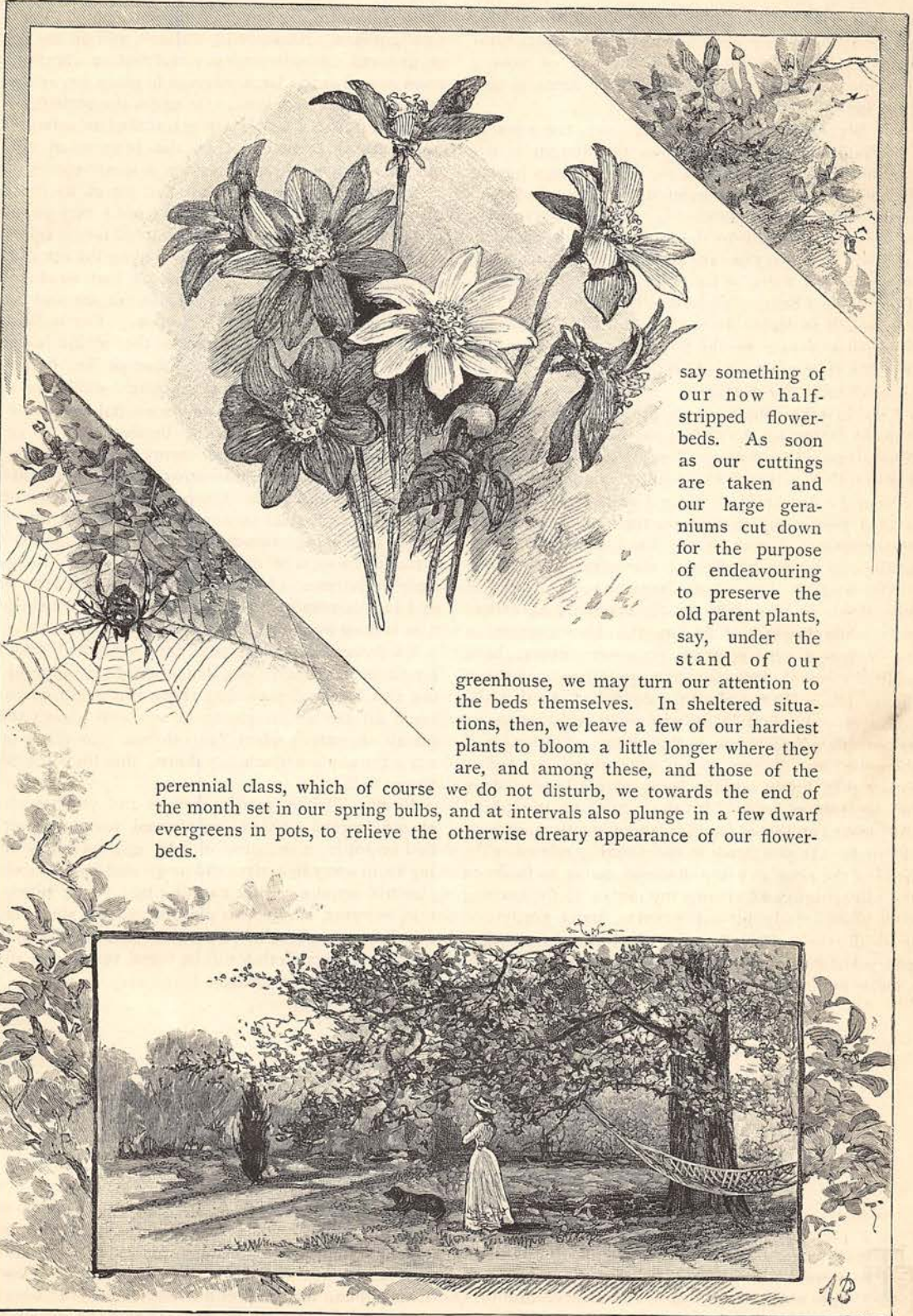
THE GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER.



HOUGH we say, with a certain degree of sadness, that the summer flowers are now visibly on the wane, the same cannot certainly be said of our work in the garden this month. For, in addition to the carrying on of our fruit harvest and our general garden routine, we find ourselves towards the end of September commencing what we will call our annual garden change: namely, stripping our borders to a great extent of many of their flowers, and stocking our greenhouse for the winter. And further, we find it occasionally necessary, when this is done, to undertake a yet more laborious garden change, and one perhaps that we have been intending to carry out for some time past as soon as the season for it came round. Of these two changes, then, we shall first of all have something to say this September.

Now, it may have happened that, from pressure of work in August, we were compelled to postpone the taking of cuttings from our open beds until the present time. If so, not a day longer should this operation be put off, as should—what occasionally occurs—a gloomy and semi-wintery September set in, your young cuttings will not root so readily, or will very likely afterwards damp off and fail altogether. It is better, therefore, to have your stock taken not later than by the end of August. And then, again, it may be borne

in mind that a large variety of our bedding-out plants—or rather, cuttings from them—can be preserved without all the nursery care of greenhouse temperature. Calceolarias, petunias, verbenas, and many fuchsias, for example, will do well in an ordinary pit; or we have seen many such plants preserved in this way: the young cuttings are planted out under the protection of a rickety and worn-out cucumber frame, care of course being taken to place it in a good sheltered situation, while in a period of intense frost any pieces of carpet, or some sort of additional protection, could easily be thrown upon the glass. In taking cuttings, use plenty of sand; four or five geranium cuttings can readily be stowed into one large flower-pot. But avoid getting over-stocked at this time of the year, for there is a great temptation just now to multiply our stock of any particular favourite. In filling the greenhouse then at this time, see that your tenderest plants are placed as nearly as possible in the warmest places: have the tallest plants and those that want most light on your middle and top stands, and the whole stock of cuttings in one place together, where you can most easily manipulate them. Camellias, as much as anything, can do without artificial heat: they merely want protection from frost, while the constant proximity or a sudden exposure to much fire-heat will make them cast their buds: a very annoying, but by no means uncommon catastrophe, to which under these circumstances you are liable between the present month and January. Nor must we, when speaking of our annual garden change, neglect to



say something of our now half-stripped flower-beds. As soon as our cuttings are taken and our large geraniums cut down for the purpose of endeavouring to preserve the old parent plants, say, under the stand of our

greenhouse, we may turn our attention to the beds themselves. In sheltered situations, then, we leave a few of our hardiest plants to bloom a little longer where they are, and among these, and those of the

perennial class, which of course we do not disturb, we towards the end of the month set in our spring bulbs, and at intervals also plunge in a few dwarf evergreens in pots, to relieve the otherwise dreary appearance of our flower-beds.

It is about Michaelmas, however, that we now and then find it necessary to undertake some radical and more arduous garden changes. These we never commence until the sap is down, as the risk of moving such things as valuable shrubs at other times is certainly great.

We begin then by marking out, say, the edge of a newly-proposed gravel walk, or the margin of our new shrubbery or flower-bed, our whole design having of course, some time beforehand, been sketched upon paper, or else clearly planned in our mind's eye. As far, however, as concerns the moving of evergreens, no harm will accrue if they are moved a little on in the year, provided there be no frost about. The outline of our designs being marked out, then, the next thing is to trench as deeply as the soil will allow of it all those parts of your ground to be used as beds, or that are to be set out as a shrubbery. All this is certainly better done in dry weather.

Now, in taking up a shrub, great care is necessary to avoid damaging the fibrous roots as far as possible. Where, however, a few roots have been at all damaged, it is best then to remove with the clean and sharp cut of your garden knife all ragged ends and broken or bruised pieces, and at the same time also cut away a proportionate amount of the head of your plant, to balance, as it were, the loss of the roots.

And next, dig your hole large enough to take in your shrub or plant with its fibrous roots all *spread out*; while instead of having the hole deepest in the centre—a very common error—contrive to have a little cone of loosened and pulverised earth in the middle. Do not plant too deep, but see that the collar of your plant in its new position is as nearly as possible where it was in its original situation, or if there be any difference, let your shrub be higher rather than lower, nothing being so injurious as deep or over-deep planting. In the act of planting, hold the plant in its proper position, and carefully spread out the roots. As you throw in the mould, gently move the head of the plant in every direction, so as to facilitate the soil settling well among the roots; lastly, keeping your plant steady in one position, tread gently and gradually the soil in all round. And in these changes, pay particular attention to the height to which various shrubs and trees generally grow, as well as to the

pace at which they grow. Firs, for instance, are rapid growers, as also are laurels, but cedars and hollies are slow growers. Rhododendrons look well in the foreground, and almonds, large thorns, laburnum, or guelder roses go well at the back, whereas to place any of these in front would be absurd. Or again, the barberry, for instance, from its terrible spines, makes an admirable hedge shrub: we do not by this propose an entire barberry hedge, but at all events it is sometimes useful as a stop-gap, in addition to the use of its fruit as a preserve, although perhaps it is not a very popular favourite. A sandy soil is best adapted for its culture.

In our flower garden, however, among the last of the more brilliant blooms that remind us that summer is on the wane, is the dahlia. And in August and September they are in their perfection. For brilliancy of colouring nothing surpasses the single dahlia. Formerly, anything single was more or less despised in the flower garden; but the single dahlia is still very popular. It prefers a well-manured soil. One of the great hindrances to the development of good blooms of course is our old enemy the ear-wig, about whose depredations in this department of horticulture so much has been said. One suggestion among others that has been named to ward off this implacable foe is that of daubing some cotton with tar, and then tying it round the stem of the plant. One earwig destroyed early in the season is worth many destroyed later on; and in this respect it resembles the wasp, which just now is busy over our plums and wall fruit.

To flower dahlias in pots, they should at first be struck in sixty-sized pots, and afterwards removed to the next larger size, placing them, when they can well stand all the air, in plenty of sun, and giving them plenty of water: when next shifted into thirty-two-sized pots, plant them low down, and they will then flower well.

In our kitchen garden, onions not yet harvested should be got in, after being allowed in dry weather to lie for awhile on the surface of the ground before storing them away in a dry and cool place. The celery also will require careful earthing up: young plants of this, however, may yet be planted out in a small drill: not that we expect them from this time to attain any proper size, though they will be found very useful afterwards for soup flavouring.

THE CASE OF MR. HAYMANN:

BY LUCY FARMER.

(THE CHRONICLES OF CARDEWE MANOR.)

CHAPTER THE FIRST. OUR NEW TENANTS.

THE events which had occurred in Norfolk were discussed often by us. When the summer came round again, and Captain and Mrs. Armstrong—she had been Lady Pardock—had gone away, Mr. Hemphill came, for he had quite “made

it up” with the Martin-Henrys, who were doing well with the mining, I believe. There was little in the way of amusement for us. Miss Katie and her sister came now and then, for she had not married Gideon Grasper, and didn't seem likely to do so. But Charley told me one evening in summer that he heard Mr. Cardewe was going away from the Manor for awhile.

As to tinned provisions, a few words will suffice. First, then, they are over-cooked, and there is always the suspicion that they may not be what they seem.

There are brands and brands, however, and many respectable firms would not put up a bad article. Tinned mutton or beef I cannot personally endure: my taste tells me to avoid them, and I do; but tongues tin well, if properly put up, and are nice for lunch or breakfast.

As a rule, with few exceptions, fish is more easily digested than flesh. It also makes a delightful change.

There is, weight for weight, however, less nutrition in fish than in fowl or flesh, owing to the former containing a larger quantity of water. As I shall have more to say on fish another day, I may here merely warn the dyspeptic against the stronger, oilier fishes—salmon, mackerel, &c.—and add that fish agrees better if eaten in the fore part of the day.

Without going far in the direction of vegetarianism, I must say again, as I have always said, that too much meat and too little of a vegetable nature is consumed by the people, and that if the reverse were the case, we should be, as a race, far hardier and healthier, and better able to battle against the wear and tear of life. Moreover, our death rate would be considerably diminished, and many ailments that now are rife would be almost unknown. Farther even than this I will go, and say that if more vegetable food and less animal were used, there would be less stimulants partaken of, because people would not feel the need of them.

Over and over again have I advocated the use of oatmeal in these columns. For breakfast or supper, what a stay and support to life is good porridge! Not over-long boiled, however; and made of a medium oatmeal, and eaten with butter or milk, or both.

Oat-cakes again—not the horrid imitation they sell at the confectioners'—but wholesome home griddle-baked cakes, with nothing in them but oatmeal and salt and a pinch of carbonate of soda, are excellent.

As to flour-bread I am, of course, a firm believer in the whole-meal bread, in which there is more nutriment and less binding qualities. Bread should never be eaten new. It should be a day old at least. Even toast ought to be made from stale bread. Toast should be thin and allowed to cool, if for breakfast. But toast for tea may be, and is better, thick. Here is my receipt: Cut the slices from a loaf a day old, with a strong sharp knife; let the slices be one inch thick or more. Toast them slowly, then butter abundantly, pricking the surface with the knife's point that the butter may run well in. Crush the edges of the toast with the back of the knife, sprinkle a little salt over the surface, and eat while hot.

But independent of oatmeal and flour, there are many valuable farinaceous foods which are, unhappily for our population, made to take a back seat in the scale of diet. Lentils, peas, beans, and maize are among the number.

If those who suffer from dyspepsia could only be got firmly to believe that frequent change of diet is most essential to well-being, and believing this, were to give these farinæ a fair trial, thousands among them would be restored to health, and be dyspeptics no longer.

There was a pamphlet written some years ago, called "One Hundred Ways to Cook Eggs." I have no idea what these hundred ways were, nor even a tenth of them, but as eggs are so very nutritious and easily digested, dyspeptics would do well to learn some of the many methods of rendering them palatable.

THE GARDEN IN OCTOBER.



THE last of the harvesting months is upon us once more, and our attention is therefore naturally turned to the harvest field under the trees, and to ladders and hampers in place of the sickle, for we are busy over the collection and storing of our apples and pears.

A few words, then, about the orchard in general will be advisable before entering our flower-garden; and we have chosen the best possible month in which to talk about these popular fruit-trees, for October is the time for garden changes, and tree-planting in particular.

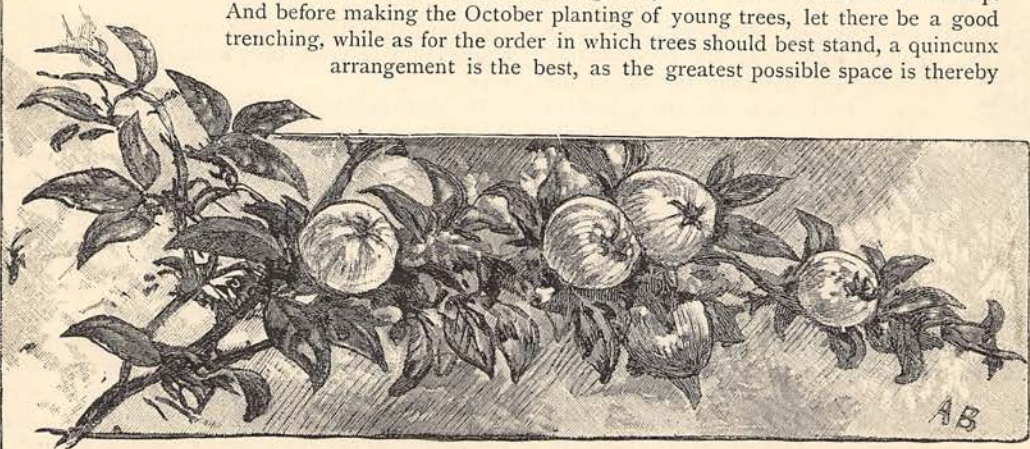
First, then, as to the best site for our proposed orchard; and as to how *not* to do it, let us say, avoid any aspect that looks or slopes towards the north. Indeed, such a caution will hold true in most of our

gardening operations, while any one must have remarked of late years the greater prevalence of north winds.

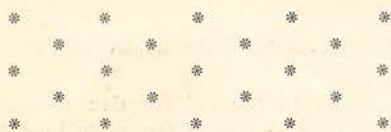
We shall decide, then, to be as shy as possible of this bleak and gloomy quarter. Almost as ineligible, too, is a slope having a direct westerly aspect, for from the west we get most of our gales and keen searching winds. It is then the sunny south or south-east that we prefer for most things, and especially for our apples and pears. A very high situation, too, is inexpedient, as liable to exposure to rough weather; one perhaps fairly low, but certainly not damp, is the best. It is also a mistake to have too many large fruit-trees in a kitchen or vegetable garden; mutual destruction is the result of this too frequent experiment, for under these circumstances neither trees nor vegetables attain their full perfection, as the constant shadow of and drip from the trees injure the vegetable crops, while in



their turn the trees themselves are damaged by the repeated diggings, and it may be also by the amount of manure that a kitchen garden requires. An orchard, then, should rather adjoin a kitchen garden, to which, if placed upon the exposed side, it can form a sort of shelter. And of the last importance, good drainage is essential; fruit-trees, or anything else, will never thrive in a swamp. And before making the October planting of young trees, let there be a good trenching, while as for the order in which trees should best stand, a quincunx arrangement is the best, as the greatest possible space is thereby



obtained for each tree, as the accompanying simple sketch will show :—



When, however, you are unavoidably growing your apples and pears in the kitchen garden, let them be standards as far as possible; some pears will generally do well against a wall—such, for example, as the Marie Louise, Winter Nelis, Glou Morceau, and many other selections that could be named. As for apples, for kitchen use are still recommended the Blenheim Orange, Codlin, Wellington, and for dessert use the Irish Peach, Syke House Russet, King of the Pippins, &c.

Turning again, however, to the orchard proper, we might again recommend the experiment at the end of the month which we have occasionally advocated. Some of our good old trees are too often allowed to gradually, perhaps almost imperceptibly, fade away for want of a little proper nursing and attention. On these you will often remark a few fine fruit at the top only, while the rest for the most part will be small and poor, and perhaps much of it cracked all over, the little fissures being covered with a rusty fungus which appears to be eating the fruit away, and at all events destroying all hopes of your ever gathering a keeping crop.

Under these circumstances, take up the surface turf and soil to the depth of some inches, and fill up with all the strongest of the manure, no matter if it be in a semi-liquid state, upon the whole replacing your turf, so as to retain as far as possible the nourishing properties of your manure. In addition to this give a sharp pruning to the tree itself and “top” it, and the next season you will find a new vigour imparted to your tree, and the fruit will largely recover its former good quality.

As for the apple-gathering itself, which just now so busily engages us, take care that the fruit is in no way bruised in the process, or it will be certain not to keep. Up to the present time it is best to have used wind-falls only; the collection next for use should be those that have had a tumble or got bruised in the gathering; while lastly the carefully gathered should be stored away in the apple-room or dry out-house.

Before leaving the fruit department we might notice the strawberry-beds. All the runners and large yellow leaves on these should now be cut off, and this waste of their own growth dug in between the rows as a manure; the raspberry canes may be pruned, and if all the leaves are off they can be removed and planted out as well. Gooseberry and currant cuttings may be taken off for propagation, only let them be of this year's

growth. The last of the October peaches will ripen quite early in the month; a little previously to their ripening off they will swell a good deal, and it is a pity to have them gathered too early.

Even though it be “chill October,” we cannot afford to pass by the flower-garden. Of course, our stock of bulbs we are getting carefully in this month, merely taking care that no frost is about when we are getting them in. Crocuses and snowdrops and all the smaller varieties of bulbous roots should be set in masses, and not singly, like the larger of our hyacinths. Perennials, too, may now be planted; if they have grown too large take off the piece from the plant where it can best be spared, and set it out where most wanted.

And into winter quarters our greenhouse stock is also entering. For the preservation of the vast majority of its inmates, all that we are anxious about is the actual exclusion of frost; two or three degrees above freezing point at night time need cause us no alarm.

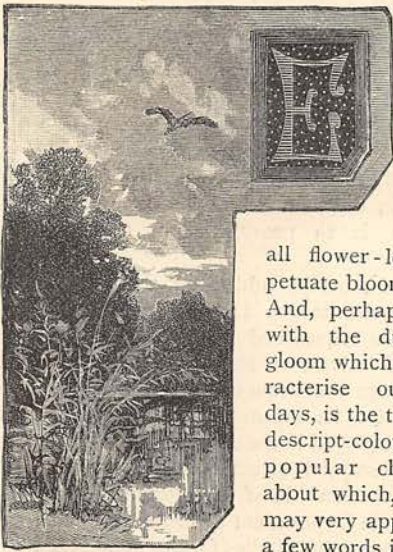
Provided, then, that frost is wholly excluded, there is a new cool greenhouse plant lately successfully imported into this country to which we might as well here call attention. It is known as the *Microloma*, or Wax Climber, the foliage being graceful and the flowers lasting. It can be trained to run over trellis-work or grown in pots, provided it has a few light sticks or twigs to run over, and being nearly hardy, it is well worth trying as a charming and most effective novelty.

It is well again at this time of the year to repeat the caution against overheating the greenhouse upon the arrival of the first cold day; indeed, as much colder weather is, of course, in store for us, it is far better just now to err on the side of air-giving rather than of overheated atmosphere. Some air, in fact, our plants must have all the year round, or they will die or commence mouldering and damping off.

In the kitchen garden also there is plenty to be got through this month. Potatoes not yet got up should at once be got in and secured safely against frost; and a good many crops will now have to be cleared off the ground, after which have a good and thorough trenching of the soil made; and take care to leave it all quite rough-dug and in ridges, so as to enable the frost to act well upon it, thus rendering it afterwards, when broken up, friable and adapted for an early planting of spring crops. Have your winter spinach thinned out so that the plants are some eight or ten inches apart; and for small salads the season may yet be prolonged by sowing under some now discarded cucumber or melon frame such things as mustard and cress, radishes, or even a few onions. For mushroom-growing we have frequently recommended, too, the employment of an old frame, into which some horse-droppings have been thrown, and upon which the spawn is placed and afterwards covered over with a little dry mould.



THE GARDEN IN NOVEMBER.



ENTERING as we do now on the first of our winter months, there is still the wish, strong as ever among

all flower-lovers, to perpetuate bloom of some sort. And, perhaps in keeping with the dusky fog and gloom which too often characterise our November days, is the tawny and nondescript-coloured, but yet popular chrysanthemum, about which, therefore, we may very appropriately say a few words just now.

For a bushy plant, then, take your struck cutting, or a good strong and healthy sucker, early in the spring of the year—by the end of February, indeed, in a forward season—and remove the top within some two or three eyes of the ground. Should your pot be well filled with roots, shift the plant into a couple of sizes larger, placing it in a cold frame, and take care for awhile that there be some protection from the sun. Very soon it will begin to start some shoots, in which case take off the tops of any that push further than the rest. By about the middle of May, or perhaps a little earlier, your young chrysanthemum plants can be stood out of doors, but take care to have them fairly in the shade, or, at all events, not exposed to the full power of the sun at mid-day, though a little of it early and late will not hurt them. Some further supervision and occasional watering just now is all that is necessary for them; your plants, however, had better stand along a plank, so as to prevent them striking their roots by any accident through the bottom of the pot. As the shoots continue pushing they will still require an occasional shortening, but when finally you have decided upon the shape and size of your plant and the number, we might almost say, of the little branches upon your plant, let it quietly grow on until September in the open, when, in the wane of the year, remove it to your greenhouse for protection from frost or too rough weather. Before, however, you remove it to your greenhouse or exhibition room, see that it has not become pot-bound. As your buds afterwards begin to open, and expand more, give your plant a little liquid manure; this may be done some two or three times; the next watering should be with simple and ordinary water of the same temperature as the house. This method, then, of growing chrysanthemums gives you a fine

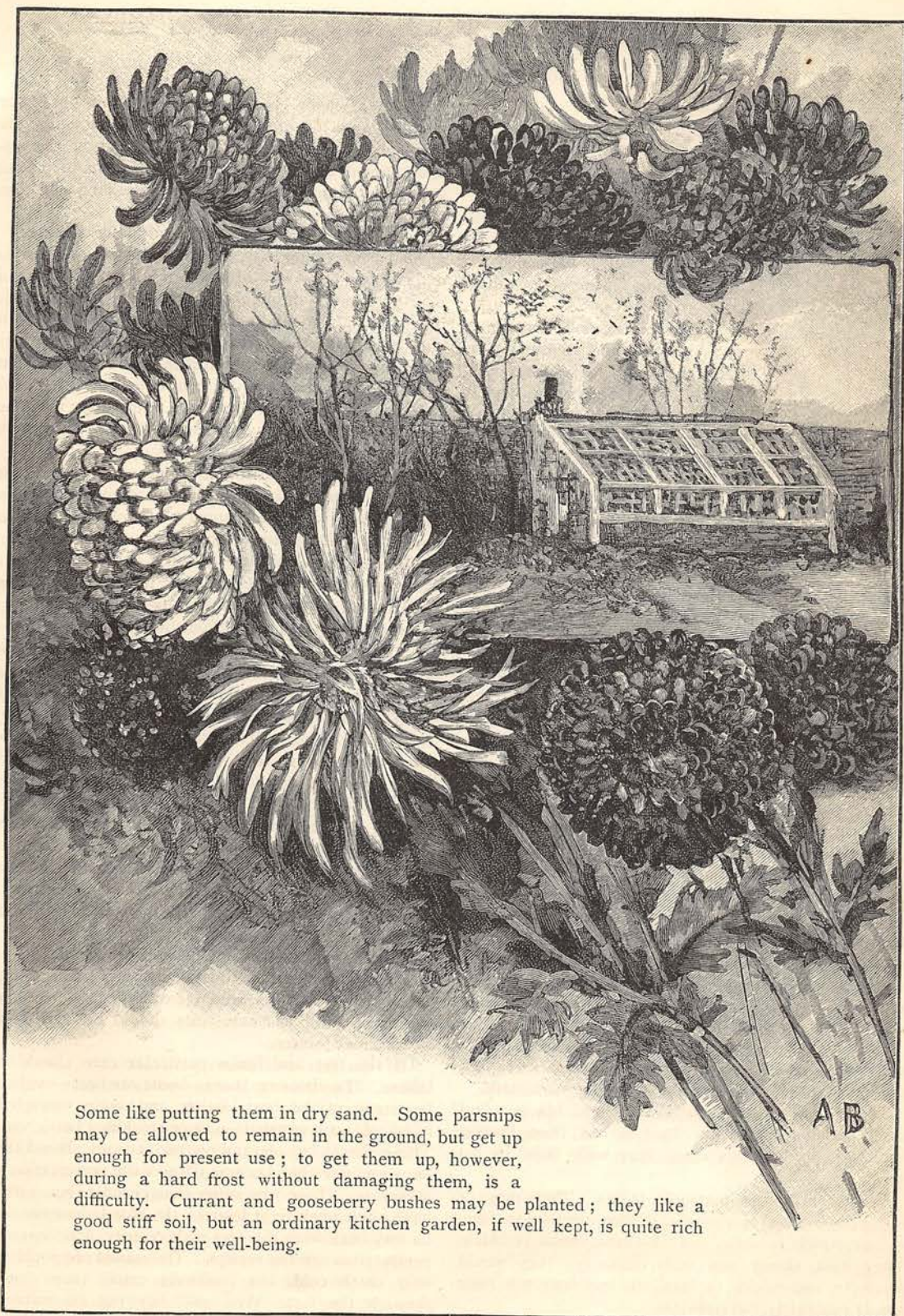
shrubby plant with plenty of bloom; but, of course, the flowers are not nearly so large as the others that we are about to name.

The second method of growth that we hinted at is as follows:—Strike the top cutting of a chrysanthemum in July, pot in a small pot, and place in the open garden. In order, however, to show the largest-sized blooms, grow the early suckers, or cuttings, as luxuriantly as you can, and do not care how high they grow. Of course, they will require well supporting by means of a stake; let them have rich soil and liquid manure as before.

Enough, then, as to the chrysanthemum; for the general garden, even in November, must not be passed over. This is the month in which we have often advocated the endeavour to enliven our flowerbeds with a few bright evergreens, which could easily be plunged in pots to relieve the otherwise desolate appearance of some part of the garden. No time, too, should be lost in getting the spring bulb show in. Indeed, this ought to have been done last month, but if not yet complete, this is an operation that will admit of no further delay, unless there be frost about. Then, again, all shrubbery work, the shifting of larger evergreens, and even of young trees—anything, in fact, in the way of garden changes, about which we spoke last September, may go on even still more vigorously this month. A grand month, too, is November for laying new turf, taking up and re-leveling a lawn.

For the greenhouse generally, let us say, avoid as far as possible any undue artificial heat. Much, of course, in this respect, must depend upon the kind of season that we have between now and February next, but it is highly imprudent to pile on the fire merely because it is November. Take care, also, to have plenty of air daily in your house. Then again, everywhere at this time are the leaves falling in abundance, and no more beautiful sight is there of its kind, though perhaps a somewhat sad one, than the variegated tint of the decaying foliage. Store up these dead leaves in preference to burning them; they make a fine protection for your rhubarb and sea-kale; your pigs, also, rejoice in the dry leaves, which in a short time they will tread into fine manure. All these are simple, but economical considerations, worthy the attention of a careful gardener who is not, perhaps, overburdened with the means of too many horticultural appliances.

In the kitchen garden, the experiment may be tried, if you will, of getting in a row of peas. Of course, a very severe winter, or a return of winter after an unforeseen and early spring, may kill them; if, however, you put them in, a little ridge of earth on the north-east side is well as a sort of protection. Potatoes should all be up by this time and housed, nor should this operation be postponed a single day longer. Your beet-root, too, should be all stored away.



Some like putting them in dry sand. Some parsnips may be allowed to remain in the ground, but get up enough for present use; to get them up, however, during a hard frost without damaging them, is a difficulty. Currant and gooseberry bushes may be planted; they like a good stiff soil, but an ordinary kitchen garden, if well kept, is quite rich enough for their well-being.

HINTS FOR DECEMBER GARDENING.



birthday—the only event which makes life bearable—we are going to try if we cannot find something even gayer and brighter than the dear old conventional holly-berry

with which to decorate our peace-making board.

And one of our first suggestions is naturally the Christmas rose, and very strange it is that this beautiful specimen of hardy perennials is not more cultivated than it is. Given a shady situation and nothing more than the most common and ordinary soil, and there is no difficulty in rearing it. It can be either raised from seed, or the plants can be parted in the spring, in the way that we serve other perennials when we want to increase our stock of them. From among the fingered root-leaves the beautiful and delicate cream-coloured flowers spring, which we can gather and utilise so well for table decoration. These Christmas roses will flourish all the better when they get well established, while of course all our winter flowers will also be improved by taking care to have them planted in spots the most sheltered and secluded, and not exposed to all the fury of the north-east blast.

But, with the aid of our small greenhouse, we can readily encourage some even of our summer flowers to spare us some winter blooms. Often our geraniums, if we train a few especially for the purpose, can be got to give a few sprays of blossom in December, while we know that with heliotrope and salvias, whether blue or red, our chances of success are still greater. Fragrance, however, is a great charm to have in flowers at the dead season of the year, so perhaps we can recommend no more popular experiment than that of a few pots of mignonette for winter bloom. For this purpose there must be an August sowing in pots of any ordinary size. Let the soil be good loam, fairly enriched with decayed manure, while it will be also improved by an admixture of lime or old mortar rubbish. Most important also is it to have the pots thoroughly well drained, and an experienced authority also recommends that next upon the

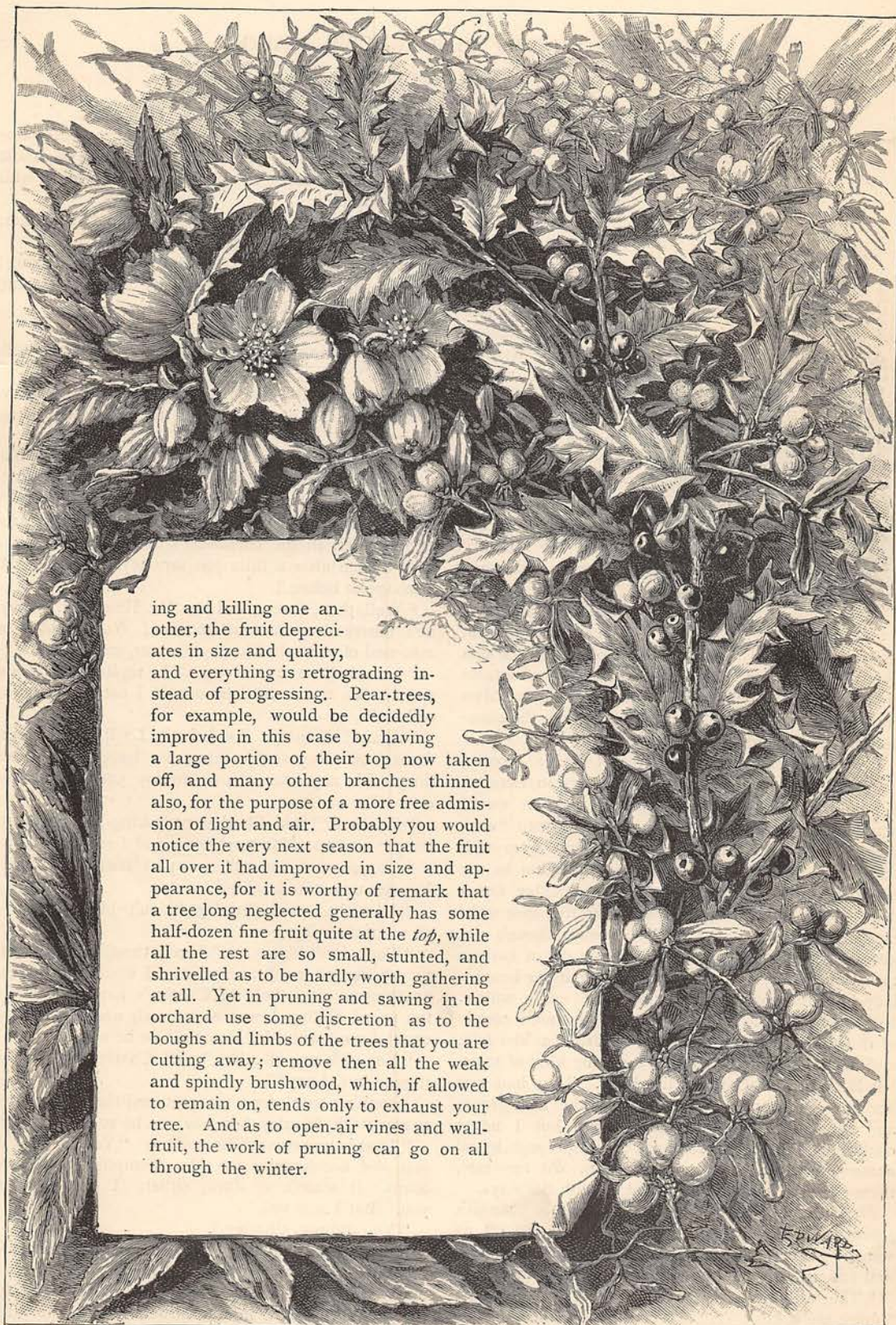
IS it possible to have anything gay and bright in the dreary month of December? Are there really such things as winter flowers? we think we hear some incredulous and indifferent gardeners ask. At any rate, in this venerable month of our annual reunion, when we gather round the hearth to celebrate the great

drainage should be placed, if it can be procured, some one-year-old pigeon's dung. Now these mignonette pots do not care to have too much water, in fact it would injure them to have it, but in the third week of August we could easily find a little room in our cucumber frame in which to place them, where they will find protection against heavy rains. As the young plants advance in size they must, of course, be thinned out, and ultimately retain from three to five plants in your pots, according to the size of them. From this time only water when they really require it, and pinch off all early dispositions to bloom. The pots, too, might be always exposed and stood out in the open air during the first three weeks of September, so long as they escape any drenching showers, while in order to secure continuity of bloom, a second and similar sowing in pots might be made in the first half of that month, the pots in unfavourable weather still standing under the protection of your unused frame; and finally have all removed to the greenhouse.

And perhaps with our cuttings, and all our general greenhouse stock, this month of December is the most inactive month of all the year, and indeed we wish it to be so: we do not want to encourage the growth of plants that we are now merely wishing to save alive for another season. We avoid the unnecessary fires under our glass, we give air daily, and very little water; what we do give, by the way, being always of the same temperature that our house is, so that it is a good thing to have a tub of water standing always in the greenhouse, from which to draw when necessary. Nor must we forget that variegated holly and mistletoe come to our assistance this month. The holly should never be clipped with shears in the way that we trim most of our evergreens, but any cutting of them should be made with a sharp knife. Still, we should say generally that much pruning of any kind is not desirable for our holly—not perhaps very amiable advice to give in this month of the year of all others, many of our readers will say; yet, alas! many a noble holly-tree has been half ruined for our decoration purposes. As for the mistletoe, we sow it in the early spring of the year by squeezing one or two pips from the berry and placing them under a tongue of bark that we carefully raise from one of our apple-trees, gently pressing the bark back again afterwards, or tying it down, *not too* tightly, with some strong bast matting or string, for of course we must not crush the mistletoe seed on the one hand, nor on the other hand must the bark be so loosely replaced as to allow the seeds to fall away.

In our orchard and fruit garden we shall in all probability find plenty of heavy work to be done. Indeed we cannot too often deprecate the custom of allowing our fruit-trees in too many instances to take care of themselves, and only taking notice of them when the fruit season itself comes round.

The consequence of all this neglect is that in the orchard boughs become interlaced, and begin weaken-



ing and killing one another, the fruit depreciates in size and quality, and everything is retrograding instead of progressing. Pear-trees, for example, would be decidedly improved in this case by having a large portion of their top now taken off, and many other branches thinned also, for the purpose of a more free admission of light and air. Probably you would notice the very next season that the fruit all over it had improved in size and appearance, for it is worthy of remark that a tree long neglected generally has some half-dozen fine fruit quite at the *top*, while all the rest are so small, stunted, and shrivelled as to be hardly worth gathering at all. Yet in pruning and sawing in the orchard use some discretion as to the boughs and limbs of the trees that you are cutting away; remove then all the weak and spindly brushwood, which, if allowed to remain on, tends only to exhaust your tree. And as to open-air vines and wall-fruit, the work of pruning can go on all through the winter.