

## SOME HINTS ON ARRANGING FLOWERS.

## FIRST PAPER.



WILD DAFFODIL.

THE following hints will not be on the arranging of exotics and the expensive choice flowers which only the few can possess, but rather on the very simplest and sweetest of blossoms—our dear “old-fashioned” garden

flowers, beloved and grown by the wise amongst our English gentry, and by the poorest of cottagers. And, added to these, I want also to offer suggestions relative to those gems of our country fields, hedgerows, woods, and ponds—the wild flowers. Many of the so-called commonest wild flowers ought to be more largely used for home decoration than they are, and now that the great yearly miracle of the resurrection of the flowers is wrought again for us, I am sure my readers will be amply repaid if they will follow my advice—take their daily “constitutional” (and thus kill two birds with one stone) in search of floral treasures to beautify their rooms. “Oh, but we have abundance of *garden* flowers for our use,” I hear some one say. To such a candid objector I would say, “Do not gather too many of your garden flowers, for is not the garden really the ‘outer court,’ and therefore part of the home which we desire to look beautiful? Let garden blossoms grow and adorn their allotted sphere, and commit your robbery, as a rule, farther afield.” This, I argue, is also true economy. Miss Wetherell makes her little heroine, “Fleda,” practise such economy—Listen!

“Oh, grandpa,” Fleda exclaimed suddenly, “won’t you stop a minute and let me get out? I want to get some of that beautiful bitter-sweet.”

“What do you want that for?” said he. “You can’t get out very well.”

“Oh, yes, I can—please, grandpa! I want some of it *very* much—just one minute!”

He stopped, and Fleda got out and went to the roadside, where a bitter-sweet vine had climbed into a young pine-tree, and hung it, as it were, with red coral. But her one minute was at least four before she had succeeded in breaking off as much as she could carry of the splendid creeper; for not until then could Fleda persuade herself to leave it. She came back, and worked her way up into the waggon with one hand full as it could hold of her brilliant trophies.

“Now, what good’ll that do you?” inquired Mr. Ringgan good-humouredly, as he lent Fleda what help he could to her seat.

“Why, grandpa, I want it to put with cedar and pine in a jar at home; it will keep for ever so long, and look beautiful. Isn’t that handsome?—only it was a pity to break it.”

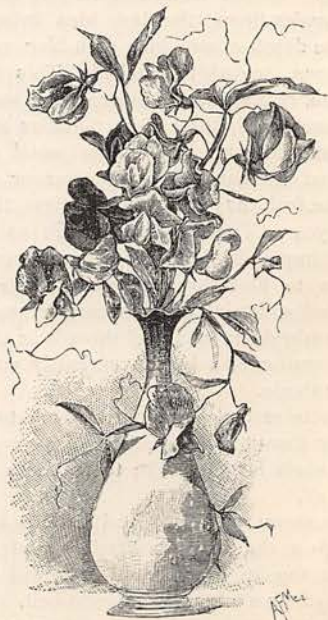
“Why, yes, it’s handsome enough,” said Mr. Ringgan; “but you’ve got something just by the front door there, at home, that would do just as well; what do you call it, that flaming thing there?”

“What, my burning bush? Oh, grandpa! *I wouldn’t cut that for anything in the world!* It’s the *only pretty thing about the house*; and besides,” said Fleda, looking up with a softened mien, “you said that it was planted by my mother. Oh, grandpa! I wouldn’t cut that for anything.”

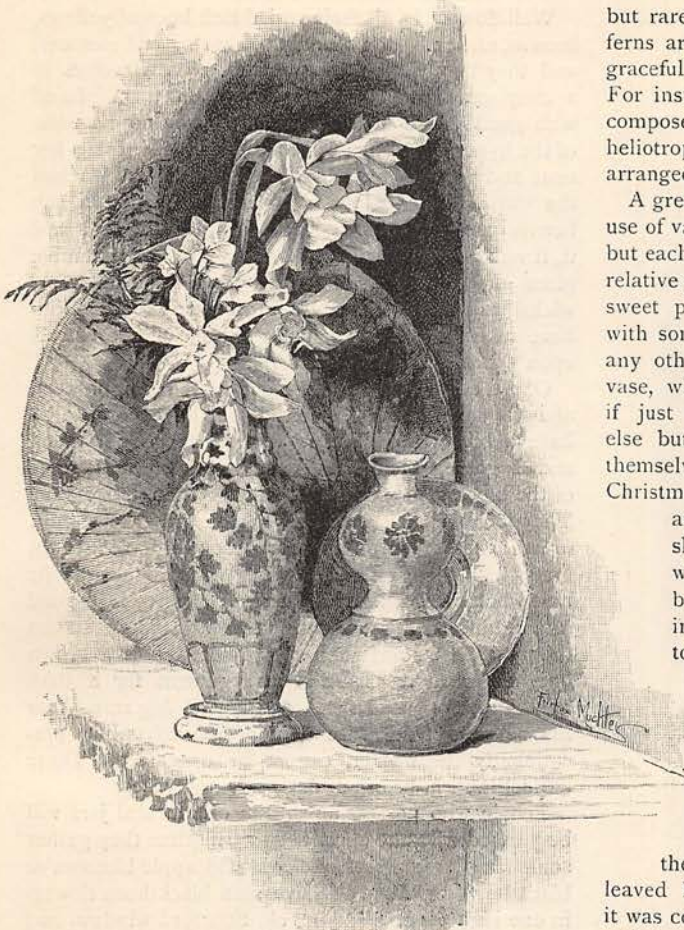
There was the artistic intelligence shown in the heroine of “Queechy,” which we should all do well to cultivate more and more.

Beyond this, I have another argument in favour of the wildings. One invaluable treasure for home decoration is the common buttercup. It is splendidly effective when grouped in a room which has much green (or brown) about it—on the walls, carpet, upholstery, and so on. And what a pleasure buttercup-picking is to small children! How such occupation will “keep them out of further mischief,” as the mothers say! Children should be *encouraged* to gather their flowers and bring them purposely to fill some honoured niche in the home rooms. They might even be taught to arrange the flowers, and stimulated to getting pretty effects, by a small money reward being offered.

I think the first and highly useful varieties of buttercup are *Ranunculus ficaria* (Wordsworth’s pet celandine, and this should have some of its dark, rich leaves always with it), *R. bulbosus*, and *R. acris*



SWEET PEA.



WILD DAFFODIL, NARCISSUS, AND COMMON FERN.

(crowfoot). The marsh caltha, which comes in May-time, and decks the meadows and marshy riverside spots, is a most valuable flower for green rooms. Its large golden flowers are too well known to need description. Knots composed of this flower should be accompanied by its own green leaves. Nothing could be prettier than a great bowl or jar filled with marsh marigolds. Always get plenty of stem with any flower you are getting. This is most important, and very few people seem able to comprehend the fact that their arrangements of flowers are more often a failure, from an artistic point of view, from the cause of too little stalk rather than anything else. There is no reason in the world why wild flowers may not be gathered with plenty of stem upon them. Chrysanthemums, pink, white, and yellow, Marguerite daisies, and wild oxeye daisies (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), sulphur-coloured sunflowers (large ones only useful for spacious rooms, and the medium-sized flowers for ordinary-sized ones), and nasturtiums are all very effective, and my favourites in a green room.

I would warn readers against mixing wild with garden flowers. It is not advisable, and I have

but rarely found it satisfactory. Some of our wild ferns are useful with garden flowers, and so are the graceful grasses (e.g., tufted aira) of the hedge-sides. For instance, as lovely an August bouquet as any is composed of Aimée Vibert roses, scarlet geraniums, heliotrope, and some sprays of tufted aira, all lightly arranged for a slender vase.

A great deal might be written on the choice and use of vases and other receptacles for holding flowers, but each respective reader must use her own judgment relative to the flowers and vases she possesses. For sweet peas, which are always so beautiful, I agree with some one who has said, "Never mix them with any other flower." Let them be placed in a tall vase, which has a narrow neck and wide top, and if just dropped in anyhow they can do nothing else but artistically fall into perfect arrangement themselves. In ruby glasses and vases, snowdrops, Christmas roses, jessamine, Seven-sister roses, and any white flowers look well. A ruby basket-shaped vase stands before me now. It is filled with double snowdrops, tied together in little bunches with pieces of box and dark shrub intermixed. Fragile flowers need to be done together in little knots always. This is the only secret of successfully using small flowers, and especially wild ones. Bunch them together in little masses, and then the commonest will be valuable. I once made an arrangement of bunches of the common dog daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and some branches of the catkin tribe, with their tassels, arranging the whole with small-leaved hedge-ivy in a wicker basket of moss, and it was considered very pretty.

Primroses with their own leaves in a wicker basket, which has ivy wreathed on the handle and sides, are very lovely. Some people have said you must never mix the primrose with other flowers. I partly agree with this, but there is one flower—the larger periwinkle (*Vinca major*)—which I find mixes with the fair pale-primrose admirably. Try it, reader, and you will be charmed. It is almost my favourite spring-time arrangement. It may be remarked, also, that masses of primroses are charming when placed by any purple hangings or upholstery. If there are any purple pots or vases in a house, primroses, when obtainable, should certainly fill them. Primroses, and indeed any light-coloured flowers, should be used for brightening up dark corners, or standing against any deep shade. The wild hyacinth, commonly called blue-bell, is a useful flower for decoration. I like it in profusion by itself, gathered with long stalks, and with some of its own graceful leaves. I have placed ground ivy with it; and the pretty white stitchwort is also a good companion, as it lends grace and lightness to the basket, or crock, which holds the hyacinths.

I have been told that a certain florist has quarrelled with another lover of flowers on the advisability of mixing certain other flowers with garden roses; and it is said to have been written in one of our magazines a year or two ago that "roses must



DOG DAISY AND RED POPPY.

never be put into vases with any other flower." Now I am one with the quarrelsome florist who thinks otherwise. I hold that all roses are so beautiful of themselves that with their own green leaves there is not much else to be desired. But, surely, no sane person will cry out if I say you may put white flowers of an airy, delicate nature with your roses? The wild clematis and the white jessamine are peculiarly adapted. Either will take off the heavy look which a vase of roses generally has. Cause your clematis to fall unstudied about the vase or basket, and trail upon the table or bracket, and you will, I think, be pleased. The contentious man alluded to says that flowering sumach and sprays of the palest wild apple blossom both combine exquisitely with roses.

Wall-flowers, in all their varied rich hues of yellows, browns, and reds, are abundant in spring and summer, and they may be put in profusion by themselves in a deep crock or bowl. I have seen them placed with good effect in a three-legged iron pot: a relic of the bygone, which a lady had been exercising her taste and practising her brush upon. She had blacked the outside and painted a wreath of mountain ash berries round it. Filled with wall-flowers, as I saw it, it was not out of place standing upon a venerable piece of furniture in an ancient room of an old Warwickshire hall. Perhaps there are many readers who have in their possession one of these unique vessels upon which they could perform!

Oxeye daisies are amongst our early spring flowers, and they are capital material for the decorator. I have a blue vase which is a favourite pot for them, and I gather them with long stalks so that some of the blooms may stand up higher than the others. They look well without greenery, or with fern-fronds, or branches of shrub or birch-tree; I have a light green gipsy-kettle-shaped vase, which looks at its best when filled with these daisies; and ivy is as good as anything to fall over the sides and partly screen the pot. The companion "gipsy-kettle" is a brown one, and a more beautiful arrangement for it than Scotch roses (Burnet rose), or the wild dog rose (*Rosa canina*) and field rose (*Rosa arvensis*), but pre-eminently the former, cannot be conceived. These all look well in brown or dark-coloured vases.

People who possess any *large* ornamental jars will be pleased with the effect if in springtime they gather some long large pieces of either wild apple blossom or blackthorn for them. I have seen blackthorn flowers in one such jar in a quaint old Stratford window, and I cannot forget it. The branches being straggling and not pliable, the effect could only be gained by guarding against crowding, and letting all the twigs be clearly defined. Of course I need not say that suitably-shaped and well-blossomed branches should be selected from the hedges. In the early summer the white and red lychnis will be found, and they suitably combine together and look well in a white vase. Being graceful, airy flowers—particularly the red—



WHITE SINGLE HAWTHORN.

they are useful in combining with bouquets of a more set character. One of our most charming wild flowers, and at the same time most useful, is the purple wood-vetch—plentiful in June and July. If only it would—*could* come in primrose-time, how useful we could make it! Owing to its twining propensities and its graceful beauty, nothing better can be found for twisting about vases, basket-handles, &c. It ought to be more largely utilised for épergnes. The yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), found by the water-side and in ponds in May, is one of the most beautiful of wild flowers; and a very pleasing sight it makes when placed in some heavy vessel, the stems being left sufficiently long to resemble the natural growth. I would have a profusion of the leaves (flags) with the flowers. If the vase be placed by a mirror the reflection heightens and is suitable to this effect.

Another mixture that I would recommend for the

front of a pier or other glass may be procured when any reader is out on a boating excursion in the habitat of the water-lilies. Never lose an opportunity of gathering these grand, wax-like blossoms of the river; the white ones are my favourites, but the yellow ones are very beautiful, and sometimes they may be gathered and arranged together. Make them as nearly as possible to resemble their growth, and be sure to have a few of their smaller leaves with them. A rather large and shallow receptacle is best to hold them; if your arrangement is one of the white lilies, you will be charmed by adding at the side of your vase a few tufts or masses of the lovely water-myosote.

I trust some of my hints may not be in vain, and when Autumn lavishes her rich wealth for my readers, I may have a few more remarks on this subject to offer.

E. E. A.

## THE STRUGGLES OF ABEL STRONG.

A LIVING CHESS STORY. BY HENRY FRITH.

Onward like kings, our duty done  
On each appointed square;

Alas! to find our cherished hopes  
Are "castled" in the air!



### CHAPTER THE THIRD. CASTLED IN THE AIR.

It was pretty evident to me while watching the game, as in my fancy I designated these events, that Abel Strong was disappointed at not having some acknowledgment from Miss Agginton—were the notice ever so little. But although many inquiries came from the Hall, though jelly, fruit, and other sick-room comforts, were freely and generously supplied by the squire, his daughter never sent a personal message. After several weeks had elapsed, Miss Agginton left home for change of air, and her sudden departure worked a marvellous change in Abel Strong.

He shook off his despondency almost immediately. The mind-worry which had possessed him he laid aside; he conversed with cheerfulness, and often hinted to me his grand idea for saving manual labour in the foundries, substituting steam-power and machinery, which he described, for hand-labour.

There had been an investigation into the circumstances connected with the accident, with the result that the foreman and three other men had been dismissed. Abel's evidence inculpated them, and Mr. Agginton promised the young man an oppor-

tunity to recoup himself fully for all his pains when he returned to duty.

Before three months had expired Abel was again at work, and busy with his new plans. The head draughtsman, whom we may term the superintendent, took great interest in Abel, and encouraged him. This man was a hard-headed, stern moralist, who made little allowance for human nature, but he prompted ideas in Abel's mind, and fed him with hope daily.

"Young man," he would say, "you have your career before you to make or mar your fortune. Go your ways steadily, swerve not, and you will win the prize. Never mind how high it *seems*, aim for it; and as you elevate yourself so will it be the nearer!"

Abel's heart responded. Did this stern-faced, hard man of business recognise the love which was burning so brightly, unseen, in his heart? It would almost appear so. Thus time passed, until the machinery which Abel had invented came to be tested, but the "hands" rebelled against it, as it had been feared they would do.

Mr. Agginton, however, determined to give Abel a trial, and appointed him overseer of the gang who were employed to forge and erect the machines. In this capacity he had many an opportunity to practise self-control, and one memorable day his courage was severely tested. The master's undoubted favour had made Abel many enemies in the "shops."

In all communities there are men who, idle themselves, wish to make others so, and if possible prevent any from rising from their own dead-level of mediocrity. In the Westonbridge Works there was

SOME MORE HINTS ON ARRANGING  
FLOWERS.



WHITE AND SCARLET PHLOXES AND  
QUAKE-GRASS.

THOSE who study the art of home decoration with flowers and plants should gather in late summer and autumn time such materials as will keep for winter use, for when the many flowers have disappeared we are all obliged to make the very most of what little colour remains. Any one who is not familiar with the numerous wild grasses will find immense stores awaiting their notice. I cannot, in a limited paper, discuss the merits of our British grasses, but readers of intelligence will quickly glean ideas as to the varieties most useful for decoration by turning to the

pages of some illustrated book on botany. I think it is best to gather grasses about July or August; earlier kinds, such as the common holcus, which is very pretty and most useful, must be sought for in mowing-time. I have, in a previous paper, alluded to the value of the tufted aira. Gather plenty of it. There is another graceful delicate little grass, the common mellick (*Mellica nutans*), which is my favourite of all grasses. It mixes admirably with garden bouquets. The common quake-grass is useful, and so are wild oats, which give grace and elegance to any large collection or arrangement. They should be gathered before they are quite ripe, as if laid to dry, the glumes will open of themselves, and reveal and retain their rich brown colour.

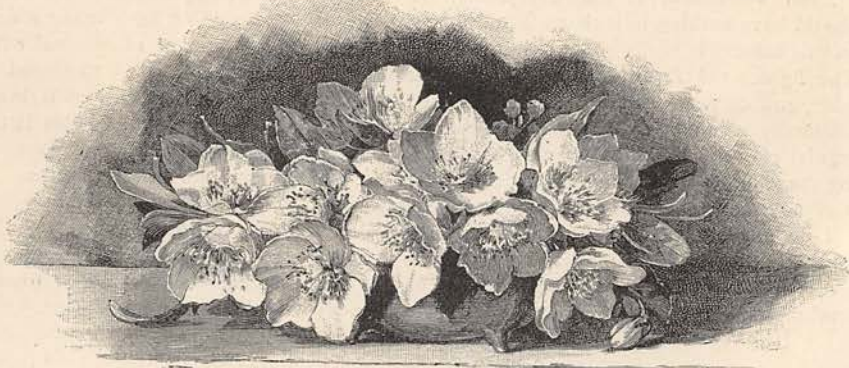
Our many beautiful sedges—more akin to flowers than grasses—will keep as well as everlastings, and they

should be sought after, and kept in readiness. Bul-rushes, teasel-heads, the capsules of the thorn-apple (*Thorn-apple datura*), the downy seed-pods of the wild clematis, and the lovely cotton-grass with its heads of silky-white durable down, are to be recommended.

Added to these, get moss and lichens, and hunt the fern world through for the most brilliant and gorgeously painted autumn fronds, which will retain their colour through the winter. I must also mention autumn leaves of other kinds too numerous to particularise. It is said that their bright colours may be preserved by dipping their stems in melted yellow bees'-wax. When required for use, a little ingenuity may accomplish much; artificial stems may be added to the preserved leaves to mix with winter flowers and greenery.

Just here I must also remark that if you possess short-stalked flowers they may be lengthened by a little management, the addition of a sort of "wooden leg," an artificial stalk attached with a bit of wire; but the living stem must be allowed to touch the water in the vase it is to occupy.

Before stern winter comes to take away our treasures there are many late summer and autumn flowers for our enjoyment, and some of my happiest recollections are of these. What can be more beautiful for filling large vases—capacious enough for straggling entire plants—than the bright scarlet poppy (*Papaver rhæas*)? Cut it off close to the ground, and use the plant entire, massing together a profusion of the flowers, buds, and leaves. It will of its own accord fall into its right and best position; it will arrange itself. Nothing better in the way of decoration for a room coloured with French grey or stone, or having light colours about, can be imagined. It is also, in my opinion, one of the best flowers for table decoration.



CHRISTMAS ROSES.



HER FAVOURITE FLOWER.

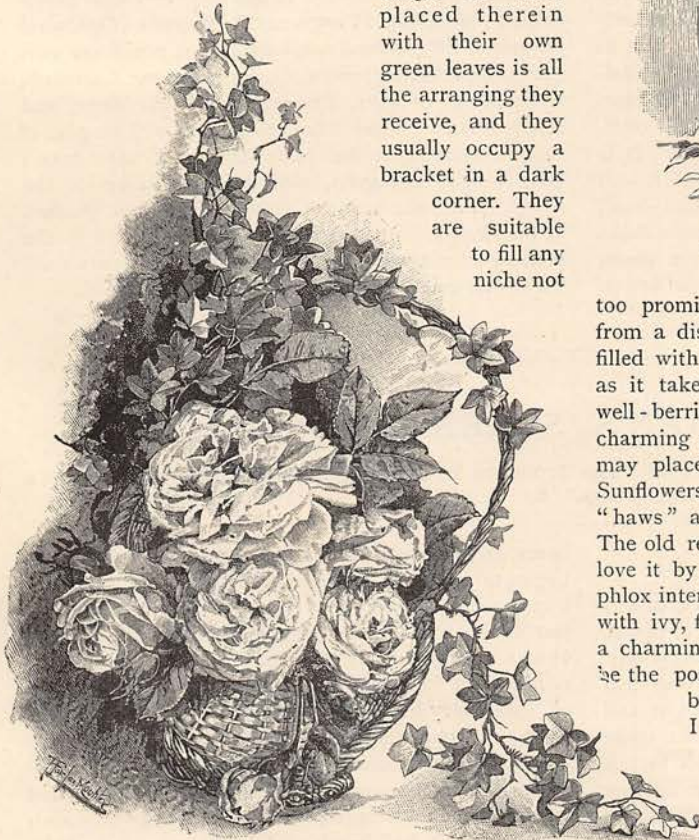
(See A. 542.)

By way of a change, you may get a pleasing effect by mixing some oats with your poppies, or wheat, barley, and oats. The meadow crane's-bill is a pretty flower, which, with its brightly-coloured leaves, will make a good arrangement for a tall vase, if some well-selected wreaths of the graceful black bryony (*Tamus communis*) be made to mix with it, and fall around the sides. You may choose pieces that have assumed the "black" leaves, and are berried. Instead of the bryony you might gather an equally bright piece of some bramble, which is ever valuable material for decorating. Both the last-named plants are to be highly recommended for épergnes. The following are flowers which I am best satisfied with when placed by themselves (using nothing but ferns with them, and perhaps ivy streamers falling over the sides of the vase) in tall pots or vases:—Gladiolus, larkspurs, delphiniums, lupins, tiger lilies; and amongst wild flowers, the foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*)—a most beautiful plant, with its own leaves, for a slender specimen vase—irises, and a few other plants possessed of similar erect characteristics. It is true we cannot often get the pink blossoms of the flowering rush without a wading, or the help of a boat.

Sunflowers are plentiful in the autumn. I have a stone-coloured jar which I use for these flowers; a couple of them placed therein with their own green leaves is all the arranging they receive, and they usually occupy a bracket in a dark corner. They are suitable to fill any niche not



WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUMS AND BRACKEN.



GLOIRE DE DIJON ROSES AND IVY

too prominent to the eye, and are most effective from a distance. This same crock pleases me when filled with autumn-tinted ferns—the bracken chiefly, as it takes the prettiest hues—and a good spray of well-berried mountain ash. Sunflowers are also charming objects to fill any heavy blue vase; you may place with them a few fronds of Pteris fern. Sunflowers with hawthorn branches covered with the "haws" are very pretty in any massive, deep bowl. The old red clove carnation comes in autumn, and I love it by itself, or with maidenhair fern and white phlox intermixed. White phlox and scarlet geraniums, with ivy, ferns, and heliotrope, in a high vase, make a charming arrangement. Every flower-lover should be the possessor of one or two lightly-made wicker baskets. I do not advocate the small ones; I would not care for one less than twelve inches from end to end, and it should have a very high handle. A person with an artistic eye will choose a prettily-shaped one. In such a basket I flatter myself that some of my

happiest inspirations have been put into shape. I have filled it with mixed flowers, and twisted its handle with ivy; I have filled it with a profusion of many roses, and left the handle bare; but it has been most admired when half filled with nice, fresh, carefully-picked—but not *too* carefully and regularly arranged—moss. A receptacle for holding water must be hidden under the moss. This forms the groundwork for various arrangements. I place in this basket two or three only of the very largest flowers of scarlet cactus, and arrange round and over them fronds of delicate maidenhair fern. The fern should make a beautiful veil for the beauty beneath it, taking off the too definite brilliance.

This is the plan for numberless pretty baskets, and yet needs but *one* basket. In the place of the scarlet cactuses you may use *any* flower, provided it is *very large*. Here are a few: white water-lilies, arums, *Lilium longiflorum* and *L. auratum*, Cloth of Gold and Malmaison roses. Do not use too many flowers, but let the moss and fern fill the basket; they will heighten the effect of your few choice blossoms. Be fearless in this, as in other arrangements, in departing from the truly frightful and old-time stiffness of floral work.

In such a basket as I have been describing, the large purple clematis, the popular house-creeper, is a beautiful arrangement, and it possesses a very praiseworthy quality—it will keep its original fair state longer than most flowers. It fades so slowly that, after being in *my* basket ten days, it was as goodly in appearance as at the first. The woodbine, or honeysuckle, which clammers over our hedges in autumn, is a sweet thing to fill a basket to overflowing with. No ferns are needed with this. It is also suitable for tall vases, and I have placed it with advantage in an old-fashioned china punch-bowl, which I keep for flowers. The purple clematis looks exquisite in any large vessel, or in tall, white vases, such as white marble: the purer-looking the better.

Any kind of *deep* crimson roses intermixed with white jessamine might well be placed in a similar vase. Any roses may with perfect effect be placed in specimen glasses, no flower suiting them better. One or two buds with their own green leaves are always sufficient, and such roses as Souvenir de la Malmaison, Maréchal Niel, Celine Forestier, Cloth of Gold, &c. &c., are to be commended. The old-fashioned cabbage roses of our big gardens may be heaped into a basket or a punch-bowl of the kind indicated. Drop them in anyhow, and they will look well enough. In winter-time we may make much of our scarlet geraniums, with grasses, or cotton-grass and ivy, or with pieces of the bracken we have garnered. And chrysanthemums are the peculiar treasures of the cold season. They may be easily grown indoors. I have seen a window made most elegant with their arrangement and wealth of colour, white, yellow, pale pink, almost white, and salmon-coloured. White chrysanthemums, with autumn red-tinted bramble sprays (which may often be found in perfection in the depth of winter if people will only look on the hedges), in a tall vase, are very lovely; or, instead of bramble, the brown and gold-tinted bracken, or other fern, or some preserved mountain ash sprays with berries may be adopted.

Finally, I cannot see why more people should not grow for use many of our hardy wild ferns; the following are easy enough to cultivate:—*Pteris longifolia*, *P. serrulata*, *P. argyrea*, *P. plumula*, *Asplenium fragrans*, *Blechnum brasiliensis*, *Scolopendrium vulgare*, *Adiantum formosum*, *Lastrea felixmas*, *L. cristata*, *Polypodium vulgare*, *Lycopodium denticulatum*, and many others. Those who grow them will be glad of their assistance in the winter-time. If any ideas I have sought to impart, stimulate my readers to the delightful artistic study of flowers, ferns, and grasses, in their exquisite forms and various hues, and to the making up of those "things of beauty" which are truly "a joy for ever," I shall not have written in vain.

ELEANOR E. ARCHER.

## A WOMAN'S STRENGTH.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Vere Thornleigh's Inheritance," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

#### MORDAUNT CAREY.



HE next day was Sunday, and I had to play the organ, as usual, in church. It was a lovely day, cold and frosty, and the dear little church looked bright and Christmas-like, as the sun came pouring in on the scarlet berries of the decorations, and lighting up the old brasses and monuments, of which the Challoner Chapel was full.

It seemed to lift some of the weight that lay on my

heart as I thought of my darling, and the hot tears began to gather in my eyes. With a supreme effort I restrained myself, and commenced the voluntary, just as the bulk of the congregation began to arrive. It was a large one that Sunday. January had come round, with its usual complement of festivities, and all the gentry had guests staying with them. There were two young ladies with Mrs. Talbot, and in the Bostocks' seat I could just catch sight of a pair of sloping shoulders, and a head of fair, sandy hair, that reminded me most unpleasantly of a former acquaintance, one who had liked, nay, loved me—at least he said so; and whose liking I had repaid with aversion.