

But the jewel in the view is the island itself which fairly shines in the brilliant sunshine and clear air. This rapid change from grave to gay, from storm to calm, has, however, its dark side; as witness the loss of the *Eurydice* a few months back. A ship homeward bound, standing up channel for Portsmouth, with all sail set, the admiration of the beholders on shore, is struck by a sudden flaw of wind and a snow squall from out one of the many ravines before mentioned. The storm—it could hardly be called such—was past in less than half an hour, yet, when the sun shone out again, where was the ship? Gone, struck by the squall, and foundered, and only a few pieces of wreckage to mark her grave.

The island has perhaps received much of its notoriety during the past quarter of a century from the fact that Queen Victoria has made it her home, and looks upon Osborne House, near Cowes, with particular affection. Here many happy days have been spent by the Queen and the late Prince Consort, and it is stated in the book lately published by her Majesty, that Osborne is second only to Balmoral in her estimation. The mansion—it cannot be called a palace—is handsomely and comfortably furnished—nothing more—and might be readily mistaken for the residence of a wealthy commoner, rather than the abode of royalty. But the life of its inmates has always been a home life, pure and simple, and it is here, of all other places at her disposal in England, that its royal owner retires for rest from the cares of state.

In the castle near Cowes, Charles I. was confined for a time prior to his delivery to Cromwell for execution. Here the unfortunate Stuart was surrounded by a few—a very few—of his most devoted adherents, who were content to share his exile and brave the, in their eyes, dastardly Rump. Although sadly neglected, the rooms set apart for the king's use are still shown, and in one of them is the identical chair in which he was sitting at supper when the dispatch which was his doom was brought to him by his jailor.

There is but little commercial activity on the island, its exports being confined to sending early vegetables and sheep to the mainland, while the imports consist only of such supplies as are needed for the many visitors, who, as at Brighton, congregate here all the year round. Cowes, Ryde, and Ventnor are the three principal places for the pleasure seeker, though there are numberless charming nooks scattered through the island, where one may hide as secure from the bustle of the outside world as though in Arcadia. The capital is Newport, whose only importance is derived from the fact that it is where the elections for the two members of Parliament who represent the island are held.



To the west are those celebrated rocks, the Needles, consisting of six or seven slender columns rising perpendicularly out of the sea, some of them being covered at high tide.

A most wonderful view is spread out for the tourist who climbs up St. Catharine's Hill. The Channel, the Solent, the mainland, and near at hand the island itself spread out like a garden, its towns and villages, hills and valleys, looking uncommonly like a toy country.

The Language of a Tear.

BY MRS. L. A. W. G.

A LITTLE glistening tear
Lay in her eye;
My heart, with trembling fear,
Inquired *why*

THE little pearly drop
Had left its bed?
Was it to tell a tale
Just left unsaid?

IF pity for the pain
She fain would spare,
This makes thee, little tear,
Bewitching fair.

HATE'ER its import be,
I own its power;
And claim a trembling hope,
If but an hour.

ALL clasp that wakened hope
To my fond heart,
And take the bliss it yields
Before we part.

THE sweet, mute speech I read,
Modest and clear,
And learn all I could wish,
E'en through a tear.

The Blackberry.



HERE are few things that are oftener mentioned with contempt than the bramble. "Worthless as a bramble," is an expression of the esteem in which it is held; but there are few who would despise the rich clusters of fruits with which the reader is presented in the picture at the head of this article; but they are the product of the contemned plant, for the Blackberry is a true bramble, and every farmer once regarded it as an unmitigated pest. But horticulture, which has worked many changes in the estimation of the values of different plants, has taught us the worth of this.

It is too familiar to require description, for it grows almost everywhere, and is often found on soil so poor that it will support little else, and thrives in spots upon which the crow, as it flies, is said to drop tears of pity. But, like most other things in the world, it is all the better for care and culture, and is well worthy of both, since it returns a full reward for all labor that may be bestowed upon it.

In England it was long regarded as of little worth. In the old *Rural Encyclopedia* it comes under the head of "Bramble," and its fruit is said to be "generally worthless," though a favorite with children of the rural districts because it may be had for the trouble of gathering.

In fact I may as well give up the point that it is not of aristocratic origin, and the high estimation in which it is now held is an instance of the effects of civilization upon the rudest children of nature. But, in order to effect this beneficent change, there must be something really worthy to work upon, and, in this case, there certainly was. In some of the species the blossoms have attained such beauty as rank as valuable ornamental shrubs for color, scent, and grace of form. Other kinds yield a delicious addition to our bill of fare during the season of their maturity, a delicately flavored wine and a most excellent and useful cordial. As a conserve the blackberry is much more valuable than the strawberry, of a less cloying sweetness, and retaining more of its original flavor. It is also much more healthful.

Wherever the plant is found it is distinguished by the same general characteristics. It seldom chooses a rich soil, but grows abundantly on sandy levels or among barren rocks. It abounds in the Scottish Highlands, in the boggy lands of the north of England, and most profusely in Norway and Sweden.

The family is divided into two classes—the "high bush," and the low, trailing kinds. The flowers, which mark it as belonging to the Rosaceæ, are either white or rose-colored. In this country they are, I think, always white, or very slightly tinted by a faint blush, but in England they are often pink, and sometimes double.

The species which abounds, as I have said, in the extreme north, is called the Cloudberry. It has small, black, shiny fruit, of a very delicate flavor. The berries are gathered in large quantities in the rural districts, and sold in the large towns, where they find a ready market, and it is a matter of surprise they are not more cultivated as an article of trade. The great obstacle, however, which prevents this is probably the trouble which it is found to give when the attempt is made to restrain its growth within bounds, for it is a natural vagrant, and, like one of our own poets, is "beset by the temptation to wander off into infinite space, and to emancipate itself from the prosaic serfdom to respectability and the regular course of things."

Indeed I never see a row of neat blackberry bushes without a feeling of sympathy akin to what one might feel for a gypsy child subjected to the misery of "prunes and prisms," and the slow torture of "deportment."

It may be more useful, for it bears better fruit, and it certainly is not nearly so beautiful as in native wilds, where every line is grace, and where it wanders at its own sweet will, guided only by the love of sunshine and free air. But I console myself by remembering that the law of growth, in matter as in mind, is irresistible, and that, pinch and trim and bind them as we will, the time will come when the trim line will be broken, and the green sprays will overleap the garden bound and make their way back to freedom and beauty.

There may be those who doubt its claim to loveliness, but English gardeners have domesticated a species which bears exquisite double blossoms of a bright rose-color. It is a luxuriant bloomer and a good climber, and may be trained, with fine effect, over walls or unsightly fences, where its nomadic propensities may be turned to good account. The flowers resemble very small roses, and bloom in thick clusters in June. This sort may be grown in this country, but in the latitude of New York it requires protection, and does not do well further north.

Of all the kinds which are grown for the fruit, in the United States, the "New Rochelle," or, as it is commonly called, "The Lawton," is the largest and the best. It was introduced to the notice of the public by Lewis A. Seacor, who found it growing by the roadside near New Rochelle, and, seeing its superiority to the ordinary species, determined to give it the advantages of cultivation. The fruit is intensely black, oval in shape, and very large, tender, and juicy. The canes are

very long, with strong spines. It is a hardy and vigorous grower, and soon makes work for the gardener who attempts its cultivation by forming a dense thicket of thorny canes, which gives formidable protection to its tempting treasure of glossy and luscious berries. In order to prevent the entire defeat of his plans he must prune closely, *pinching* off the ends of the new shoots, and keeping the whole plant uprightly bound, thinning on two sides especially, severely, so as to make the bush have rather a flat look. If thus treated the yield will be abundant, and its quality of the finest. Another sort, the "Newman's Thornless," is esteemed for its having so few spines, which is a great advantage to the cultivator. It is in other respects, also, an excellent variety. The drawing represents the "Rittatumy," a kind which is nearly equal in size to the "Lawton," and, with "Wilson," completes the list of the leading kinds.

The low Blackberry, sometimes called the Dewberry (*Rubus Canadensis*), is not much cultivated, but bears delicious berries, as who does not know who has had the delight of going "blackberrying?" It would be hard to find in after life many pleasures greater than we have felt in heaping our baskets with shining fruit. There is something about the very difficulty of gathering among the sharp thorns, that renders success an achievement, while even a moderate degree of perseverance was sure to be so richly rewarded that it was rather easy to be heroic.

When the vines grow among rocks they are extremely picturesque, and in the spring, covered with wreaths of snowy blossoms, or in the autumn, when the leaves assume a great variety of tints, from bronze to crimson, they afford a study for the artist's pencil.

I have called them berries, but those acquainted with botany know that the fruit is composed of a cluster of drupes, and that, like the strawberry, it is not a true berry. The good housewife should cherish the Blackberry among her most useful stores, for it is capable of being used in a great variety of forms, and is always acceptable to the palate, and wholesome and nutritious as well.

When we estimate all its virtues we are inclined to be indignant that it was ever ranked among noxious weeds, and thankful that no amount of persecution in the shape of plowing up, and burning down, succeeded in destroying its Bohemian race.

