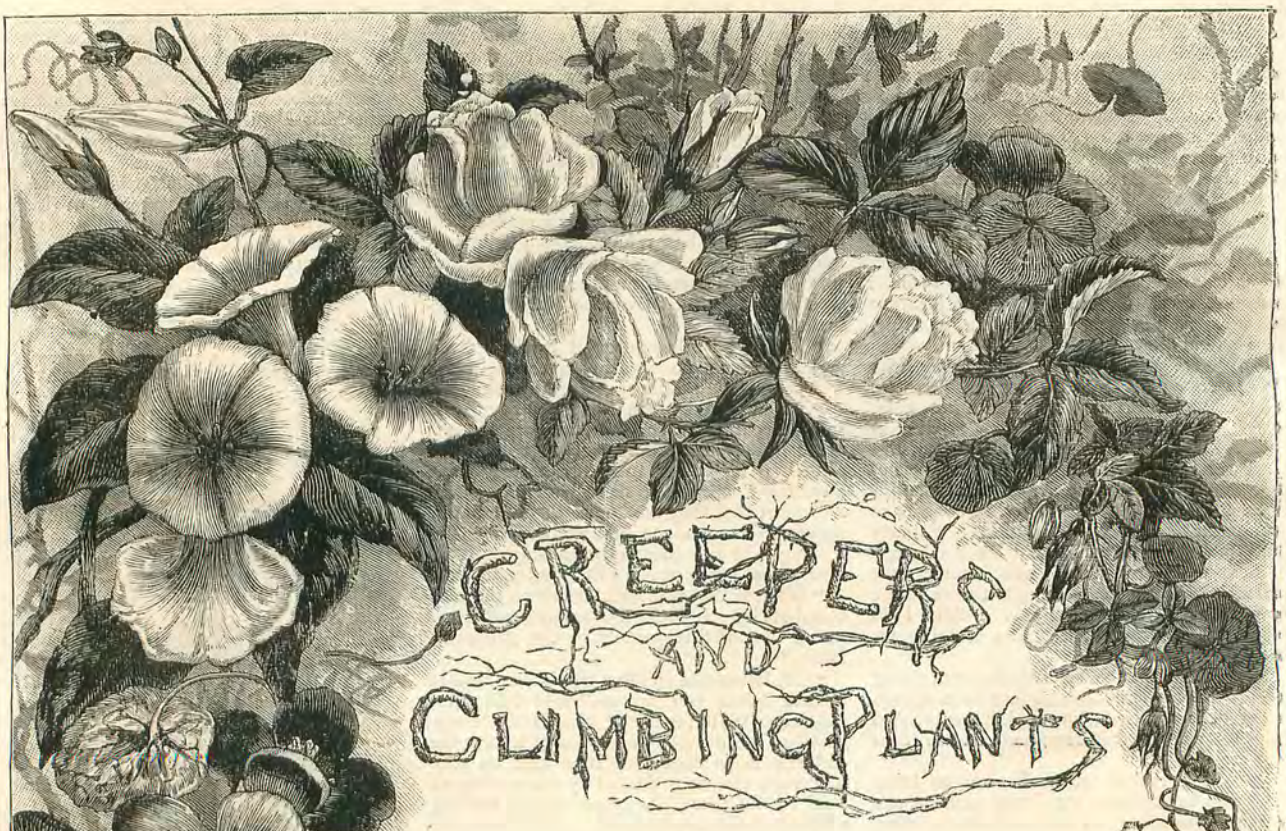


CREEPERS AND CLIMBING PLANTS

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

"I sat me down upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle."

"Resplendent rose! to thee we'll sing,
While we invoke the wreathèd spring."

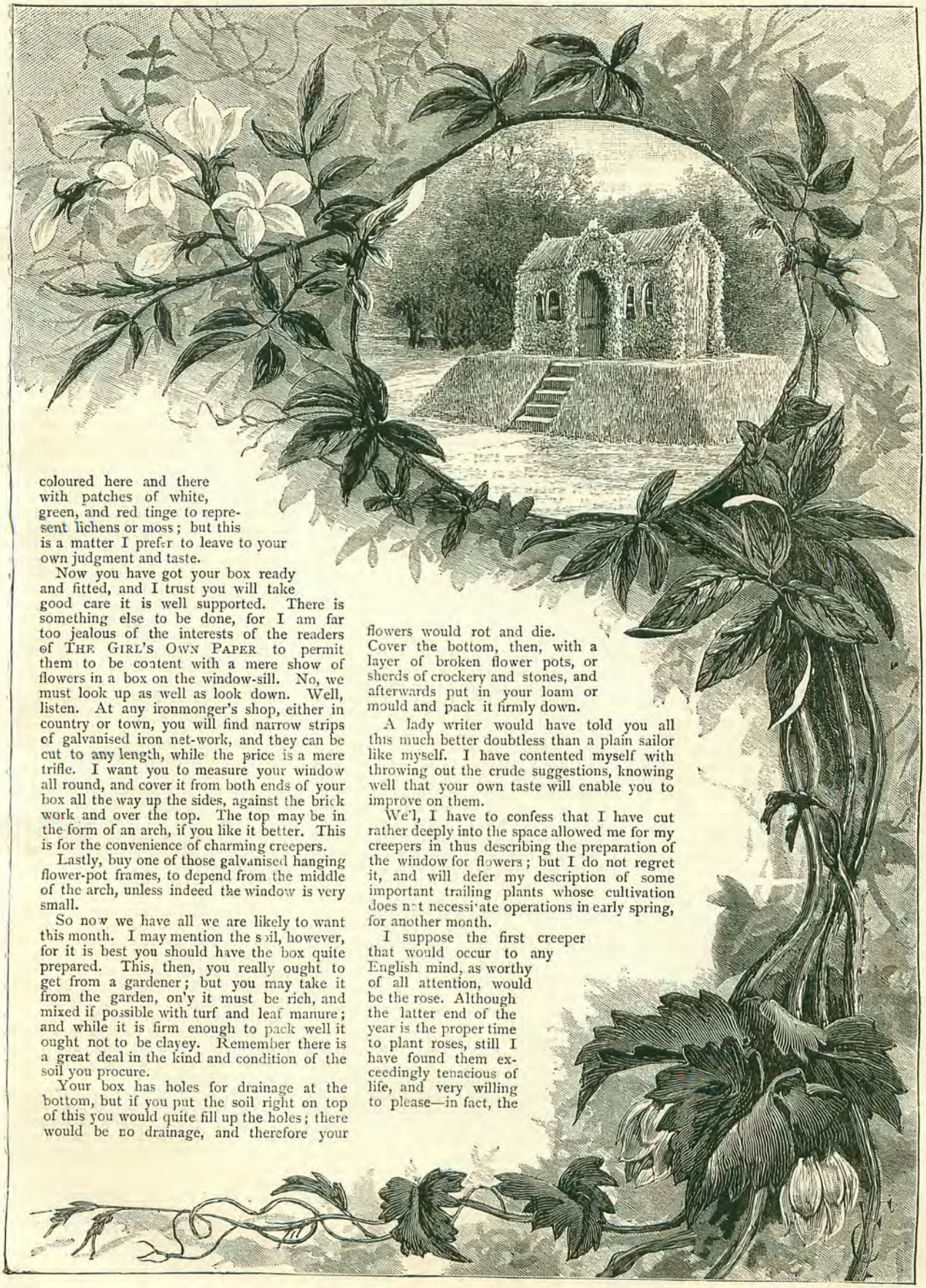
THIS is a paper on creepers and climbing plants; but as next month, with the Editor's kind permission, I shall have something to tell you about window gardening, both outside and in, I wish to remind every girl who is fond of flowers—and most are—that it is now time to get the window-boxes ready and the mould put in. I daresay, then, I shall not be far out of order if I now give a few preliminary hints about these. They will fit in well with the subject in hand.

Girls who live in the country hardly miss the flowers; but what dweller in the smoky town whose eye has not many times and oft rested fondly and lingeringly on the sight of a beautiful garden in spring or in summer? Now, I do not care where a girl dwells, whether the window of her room is large and ample, and overlooks some lordly park or splendid terrace, or whether it be small, that of a mere attic in fact, amidst the gloom and smoke of a large city, I tell her that she may at a trifling cost beautify that window, so that it may be gay and lovely all the year round. I *was* going to say, so that it shall look more like the entrance to some fairy's bower than that of a humble human being; but that would have been putting too poetic a touch to it.

Well, then, to be practical, the extent of some people's taste in window-gardening is that of sticking a few flower-pots outside the sash, offending the eyes of people with taste, and endangering the heads of passengers whenever the wind blows. It is so much easier and better to have a box with mould in it. If you mean, then, by-and-by to cultivate window-gardening, you must get this box ready at once. Perhaps you can find one about somewhere that is exactly the length or nearly so of the window ledge, and probably only wants a little cutting down to make it just the thing. For, mind, it does not matter so much as to the width; indeed, I myself very much prefer a good wide box, only, of course, it must be most securely fastened. If not so, it might come down in a gale of wind, and thus, if from a top window, the consequences might be lamentable. Suppose your window sill is about five inches wide; well, your box could be ten inches, or nine at least, and really in a box like that there is no end to the pretty things one can grow. Divide ten by two, and you get the depth of your box—five inches. If you have not haply a box that will fit the window, a shilling will get a new one of ample size for ordinary use.

The outside of the box will have to be ornamented in someway; if I were writing for boys I should say this is best done by covering it entirely over with small pieces of peeled and split branchlets, and afterwards varnishing; but I shudder to think of any of my girl readers cutting their shapely fingers, so I say paint the box, but beware of gaudy colours; or the box may be covered with encaustic tiles, though these are more expensive. What is the price? did you ask. Well, if you put me in a corner in that fashion, I can tell you that, too: they are about fivepence per tile of five inches square. If the colours are well chosen, they look very rich and ornamental.

On the other hand, Virginia cork may be used, and very pretty this looks, with tendrils of the canary creeper, or the rich blossom of trailing tropæolum falling over it. Virginia cork has this advantage: it is easily worked; all you want is a strong sharp knife to shape the pieces, and a few French nails to tack it on with. It looks nice on either upstairs or downstairs windows, and it may be



coloured here and there with patches of white, green, and red tinge to represent lichens or moss; but this is a matter I prefer to leave to your own judgment and taste.

Now you have got your box ready and fitted, and I trust you will take good care it is well supported. There is something else to be done, for I am far too jealous of the interests of the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER to permit them to be content with a mere show of flowers in a box on the window-sill. No, we must look up as well as look down. Well, listen. At any ironmonger's shop, either in country or town, you will find narrow strips of galvanised iron net-work, and they can be cut to any length, while the price is a mere trifle. I want you to measure your window all round, and cover it from both ends of your box all the way up the sides, against the brick work and over the top. The top may be in the form of an arch, if you like it better. This is for the convenience of charming creepers.

Lastly, buy one of those galvanised hanging flower-pot frames, to depend from the middle of the arch, unless indeed the window is very small.

So now we have all we are likely to want this month. I may mention the soil, however, for it is best you should have the box quite prepared. This, then, you really ought to get from a gardener; but you may take it from the garden, only it must be rich, and mixed if possible with turf and leaf manure; and while it is firm enough to pack well it ought not to be clayey. Remember there is a great deal in the kind and condition of the soil you procure.

Your box has holes for drainage at the bottom, but if you put the soil right on top of this you would quite fill up the holes; there would be no drainage, and therefore your flowers would rot and die. Cover the bottom, then, with a layer of broken flower pots, or sherds of crockery and stones, and afterwards put in your loam or mould and pack it firmly down.

A lady writer would have told you all this much better doubtless than a plain sailor like myself. I have contented myself with throwing out the crude suggestions, knowing well that your own taste will enable you to improve on them.

Well, I have to confess that I have cut rather deeply into the space allowed me for my creepers in thus describing the preparation of the window for flowers; but I do not regret it, and will defer my description of some important trailing plants whose cultivation does not necessitate operations in early spring, for another month.

I suppose the first creeper that would occur to any English mind, as worthy of all attention, would be the rose. Although the latter end of the year is the proper time to plant roses, still I have found them exceedingly tenacious of life, and very willing to please—in fact, the

rose will grow almost anywhere; but, nevertheless, it well repays all care and attention. "Roses from May till November" is a line I remember reading on some advertising board, but if December had been substituted for November it would be equally near the mark.

The rose has been called the Queen of flowers. Scotchman though I be, I will not gainsay it, I will not even put the thistle before it. Stay though, the rose is the Queen of flowers, and the thistle is the King; now I am safe with my readers on both sides of the silvery Tweed.

As I am not writing an essay on rose culture, I must content myself with saying that at this time of the year you must plant the rose-trees you intend as creepers in particularly good, rich soil. Close to the wall the soil is very often inferior, and mixed with lime and rubbish, that make the ground too poor and open. Put the bushes pretty deep in the ground, and several inches from the wall, and pack the earth well down around them. Keep the roots clean while they are growing. As to site, it ought to be a sunshiny one, but they do better when sheltered from high winds.

If they are to be trained against a wall, the branches must be well spread, and as they grow year by year, so train them that they shall cover every part of the wall, fairly and evenly, without any interlacing of branches.

Roses creep beautifully up and over porches, all around windows, where they may be trained to quite encircle it, all about verandahs, and summer-houses of every description, about and around garden aviaries or up iron rods or poles made tripod fashion to form a rose-covered pyramid; wherever they are, they are charming, and if well attended to, and manured in November, they will bloom profusely all the summer and autumn, their last buds succumbing only to the first hard frosts of winter. They may be even grown in pots and trained on window-sides high up above the street.

You can get climbing roses of various shapes and shades. The Dundee Rambler and the Provence rose both look pretty round a porch. The same may be said for single wild roses or dog roses. *The Félicité Perpétuelle* is another nice creeper, and there are some splendid white roses. I must not forget Marechal Niel, nor, last but not least, Gloire de Dijon, or "Glorious John," as an old gardener friend of mine persists in calling it. He is a favourite of mine is this same Glorious John rose, so tall, so handsome, so hardy. And his bonnie yellow tinted buds, how lovely they look in May and June! From one tree last summer I culled over three hundred buds. Glorious John isn't a bit shy; he will creep over porch or fence, or even up a tree, with the greatest pleasure in the world, and will form garlands round the parlour window. So contented and happy a fellow is John, that if you but help him up the gable of a country cottage he will spread over the roof and curl round the chimney of his own accord, and even attempt to peep down and see what is cooking for dinner. For all this, John likes good treatment, but he does not in the least object to another kind of rose growing at his feet, and will even lend it a hand up in quite a brotherly kind of way. The second crop, or autumn bloom, is as rich, though not so numerous, as the first.

Well, the roses I have mentioned are tall climbers, and probably the quickest of all growers is the beautiful White Wells rose, though I do not think it very hardy. But in open parts, at the foot of a wall, you may train any ordinary rose. It is not exactly a creeper, but it grows well when thus spread out.

I have fallen in love with two common hedgerow creepers, and taken them for garden pets; and I now have the greatest pleasure in the world in introducing them to you. One is the common wild convolvulus; the other white bryony.

When I first became the proud possessor of a bit of garden-patch—there are no gardens at sea worth speaking about, though we did use to cover an old sea-boot with flannel and sow mustard and cress thereon—I used to poke my fun at this same wild convolvulus. I find, for instance, the following entry in my note-book: "Of all the weeds that ever invaded a garden, the wild convolvulus is undoubtedly the worst. It will not be reasoned with in any way, and its powers of propagation are on a par with its positive impudence. Other weeds are, as a rule, content to grow from seed, and it is all fair and above board with them. The wild convolvulus knows a plan worth ten of that. It sends its shoots beneath the earth in all directions, makes a sort of underground railway of itself, and pops through the ground with the first warm rain in fifty places all at once, which is confusing. Nor is it particular what it catches hold of. It dearly loves a currant-bush, and delights in raspberry cane. But nothing was ever made that it would not get to the top of. To see it squirm up a telegraph-pole, or a lightning-conductor, would make even a navy midshipman stare, and I do believe that if one were to plant a wild convolvulus at this side of the Atlantic cable it would find its way to the other—in time." Well, this was only my nonsense, but one day—this is figurative—while walking down the garden I came upon a group making the best of their way up one of my favourite red currant bushes.

"Hullo!" I said, "you seem to be enjoying yourselves, and I really can't help admiring your go-ahead spirit and determination. How would you act if I took you and cultivated you, I wonder?" "Oh! just try us," they all cried in a breath. One part of my house facing the south is pretty bare of creepers, having merely some plum trees against it; so I dug and manured the border, all along the foot thereof, and making a trench I laid the long white stringy shoots of my wild weed friends therein. In two or three days their purple heads appeared in hundreds all in a row. So then I got my man to bring the ladder, and we ran a rope right under the eave all along, and to this attached strings and brought their ends down and fastened them to another rope close to the ground. In less than a week—it was early May—my wild friends took the hint to go, and began spinning up those strings against the sun, for that is the way they curl, and, lo! and behold, in a month's time the whole of that wall was a sea of glorious green, not a brick was visible. By-and-by they threw out their charming white cup-like flowers, and the beauty of the wall was the admiration of everyone that saw it. No, they do not destroy the plums, the fruit takes a week longer to ripen, that is all, but every plum is bigger than if entirely exposed to the sun.

Thus cultivated, the wild convolvulus is in leaf and flower treble its original size. Some of the leaves of those that in summer time creep around and beautify my wigwam or garden study, are fully seven inches long by five wide, while the flowers are as large and beautiful as water lilies. Why I specially recommend this creeper is for the exuberant beauty of its foliage, its willingness to grow anywhere almost, and for the quickness of its growth. The common garden convolvulus looks pretty towards the end of summer, but it is but a poor, puny thing compared to its brother of the wilds. The height the latter grows to is marvellous.

Just a word about my wigwam, or rather the creepers around it. The wigwam, then, is a house I had erected a year or two ago, on the top of a green mound at the foot of the orchard. It is a small hermitage, or "sulky" you might term it, because when the proprietor is inside or outside, with book or paper, he is not supposed to be at home. It contains but one room, furnished as a cabin, or rather boudoir, because, although originally intended for the former, fairer fingers than mine have set to work and made it more of the latter. However, it is retired and quiet. There are inside my books of reference, my favourite poets, a guitar, and a violin, so that I have always music when wanted. But I have my favourite poets outside also, in the shape of the wild birds and the flowers, to say nothing of the wild convolvulus, and a weasel, who has made its home underneath the wigwam.

What more could any author desire? Nothing, I should think. But touching the convolvulus. Last spring it found its way inside, at the two corners of the gables of the wigwam, and I rather encouraged it than otherwise, by placing strings handy for it to hold on by. Well, up it came, dividing and dividing, and throwing out tendrils. I cut those tendrils off that were not desirable, and trained the others in festoons over the curtains and door in the front. These, from one stem, threw out branches fourteen feet in length and ten in number, and were the wonder of all beholders. Meanwhile, the convolvulus came up quickly at the other corner, and made for a picture that hung above a small bookcase. This is a framed photograph of two favourite Newfoundlands, now dead and gone. The frame is black and gold. I trained my wild convolvuluses to grow all round it and up each string. For about a month they were all bright green leaves; then, to my joy, out came the flat, papery-looking buds, and by-and-by the glorious flowers of snowy white. You do not now know, reader, how much I loved one of those dogs. He had saved my life, and not mine only, but one dear to me; and for ten years, by sea and land, he had been my constant companion. So that my grief when he died, this time three years ago, may be imagined, and now to see his picture wreathed, as if by nature, in living green and white, raised feelings in my heart that I care not to express—perhaps could not if I tried.

Now what do you think of my wild, pet convolvulus? Once more I recommend them to you. Get the roots and plant them in large pots. Be good to them in the matter of water, plenty of soil and light, and they will grow up all around your room, and form garlands about every picture in it, to your own intense delight, and the marvel of everyone who visits you. They will grow better out of doors. They will cover palisades, old walls, whether wood or brick; and there is this to be said about them, which I cannot say for any other creeper: they come up in April and last till November.

Another wild friend of mine is, as I said, the white bryony. It will only suit for an out-of-door creeper, however, because the root is as big as an old-fashioned eight-day clock. The first one my man and I dug up was from the root of a hedge. We began to dig at twelve o'clock.

"It is one o'clock, sir," said my man, apparently about five minutes afterwards.

"James," I said, "if you don't mind waiting a little for dinner I don't mind luncheon, but if this fellow is as long as the flag pole, out he must come."

So we went to work for another hour, and finally lifted it whole. If we had not been most careful we would have cut the roots. When laid on the garden path the root looked like a small crocodile.

I have these beautiful creepers now in plenty. The leaf is vine-like, the flower a

tiny, yellowish-green one; all the summer they cover arches and walls with a splendid show of light, feathery green foliage. They run up long before any other creeper, save the wild convolvulus, has a notion it is spring, their tendrils spread over a whole tree and quite encanopy a hedge-top. I have measured some of their branches and found them nine yards long. The leaves fade about the end of August, then they are covered with a mass of small bunches of berries, green and crimson, which last in beauty till winter.

One other creeper might be reclaimed from the wilds; I mean the belladonna.

By the time this reaches your eyes it will be time to sow seeds of the charming, fairy-like canary creeper. Sow them in flower-pots in rich soil in the house, or under glass. It makes one of the prettiest of window-garden creepers I know, it will quite cover the iron net-work around your window, and trail along the ledge, or over the handle of a flower-basket, or, indeed, anywhere you wish it. So pray do not neglect it, if you want a show.

Sow now tropæolum. This is the name usually given by gardeners to the trailing nasturtiums, that show so well in pots, in basket-work, in vases, but above all in flower-boxes. The soil they are planted in must not be too rich or they will not be compact. There are all colours, and it is better to get them unmixed. The canary creeper is a species, but in fact the whole genus is charming and most showy for trellis-work of any kind.

Plants of clematis if put in now will grow rapidly. They are exceedingly beautiful.

Ivy, I ought to tell you, grows well indoors. Get the young plants and put them in pots on brackets in the corners of rooms; you may then train them up around the picture-frames, and you will find the effect to be very charming.

The blue and the white periwinkle require a word *en passant*. I like the flower, it is very pretty, with its broad, dark-green, shining leaves. It is one of the earliest spring bloomers we have, and it is not difficult to cultivate; indeed, if once placed in a good situation in a garden it makes its own living in a manner of speaking.

I shall give a few more hints about ivy in my next, also about several other favourite creepers, such as the Passion flower, jasmine, hop, clematis in different varieties, begonia, honeysuckle, Virginia creeper, and Wistaria.

THE GIRL'S OWN HOME.

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Total, £94 0s. 11d.

The Editor wishes to remark that, up to the present, only a few girls have applied for collecting cards, hence the small sum here named. Pray, dear readers, come forward with your energies to aid the homeless girls of mighty and wicked London. Write to the Countess of Aberdeen, Haddo House, Aberdeen; or to John Shrimpton, Esq., Hon. Sec., "Homes for Working Girls," 38, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, for collecting cards, and they will be sent to you, bearing your name and our signature.

VARIETIES.

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURES.

THE following analysis of the Scriptures is by an anonymous writer, who originally published it under the heading of "The Old and New Testaments Dissected." It contains an enumeration of all the books, chapters, verses, words, and letters which occur in the English Bible and Apocrypha. For its accuracy, however, no one will venture to vouch, unless she has followed the steps of the "painfully laborious" author of it, who is said to have spent three years of his life in the calculations necessary for its completion:—

	Old Testament.	New Testament.	Total.
Books	39	27	66
Chapters	939	260	1,109
Verses	23,214	7,959	31,173
Words	592,439	181,253	773,692
Letters	2,728,100	283,380	3,466,480

In the Apocrypha there are, chapters, 183; verses, 6,081; words, 152,185.

The middle chapter and least in the whole Bible is Psalm cxvii.

The middle verse is Psalm cxviii, 8th verse.

The Old Testament.

The middle chapter in the Old Testament is Job xxix.

The middle verse would be Chronicles, 29th chapter, 17th verse, if the Old Testament were a verse more, and 18th if a verse less (query 1st or 2nd Chronicles).

The shortest verse is 1st Chronicles, 1st chapter, 25th verse.

The word Jehovah occurs 6,855 times.

The word *and* occurs 35,543 times.

The 19th chapter of the 2nd Book of Kings and the 37th chapter of Isaiah are alike.

The New Testament.

The middle book in the New Testament is the 2nd of Thessalonians.

The middle chapter would be Romans xiii., if there were a chapter more, and the xiv. if there were a chapter less.

The middle verse is Acts, 17th chapter, 17th verse.

The shortest verse is John, 11th chapter, 35th verse.

The word *and* occurs 10,684 times.

A CODE OF MORALS.

The following list of moral virtues was drawn up by Dr. Franklin for the regulation of his life:—

Temperance.—Eat not to fulness; drink not to elevation.

Silence.—Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

Order.—Let all your things have their place; let each part of your business have its time.

Resolution.—Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

Frugality.—Incur no expense but to do good to others or yourself; that is, waste nothing.

Industry.—Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; avoid all unnecessary action.

Sincerity.—Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.

Justice.—Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting benefits that are your duty.

Moderation.—Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries.

Cleanliness.—Suffer no uncleanliness in body, clothes, or habitation.

Tranquillity.—Be not disturbed about trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

Humility.—Imitate Jesus Christ.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Two rival cities in the days of yore;
To find their names, consult your classic lore.

1. The lily palace; its Chaldaic name
   That of the town and province then became;
   And here the girl, by charm of form and face,
   Enthrall'd the king and sav'd her fated race.
2. A city on a village may depend
   For what that village to the town can send;
   Essential aid may from that hamlet come.
   Say, what was Ostia to imperial Rome?
3. An emperor subdu'd his fellow-men,
   And march'd victoriously home again;
   Admiring subjects built this, as his meed,
   Engraving on it each triumphant deed.
4. A range of hills 'mid Thracian valleys rise:
   The ancients thought their summits reach'd the skies.
5. A Spaniard, whose good sword carv'd out the way
   To fame and fortune, in the olden day;
   As conq'ror fam'd; as ruler, even more;
   Kind to his friends; and friendly with the poor;
   Trav'lers may see the column that records
   His valiant deeds without the aid of words.
6. A king, who took in feuds and wars no share:
   He lov'd his gardens, all his thoughts were there.
   Their beauty was renown'd, and they became
   The glory whence the monarch draws his fame.

XIMENA.