

envy the communication she had so innocently made had roused in her cousin's breast. She could not know that Maud, on her first coming to Rome, had been ambitious of securing lessons from Herr Schmitz, and had sought an introduction to him with that view; but the master, as soon as he saw some of her work, had brusquely declined to receive her as a pupil. But as Maud continued silent, Enid knew instinctively that her cousin was annoyed.

"Why do you not speak, Maud?" she asked presently. "Are you not pleased that I should have lessons of Herr Schmitz?"

"What would you have me say, Enid?" demanded Maud in a cold, hard tone. "How can it make the least difference to me of whom you take lessons?"

"But it is so kind of Herr Schmitz. I thought you would be glad. Miss Strutt says he hardly ever gives lessons now, and he has always been very particular what pupils he took."

"Miss Strutt is an old simpleton. She must know that it is only a whim of Herr Schmitz's. He is the most whimsical man in the world. I wish you joy of your lessons, Enid."

"I expect to enjoy them very much,"

said Enid, feeling nettled. "It will be a great advantage to learn of such a master."

"Of course you think you are on the way to becoming famous now," said Maud scornfully; "but it takes more than a few lessons from Herr Schmitz, however he may flatter you, to make a great painter, let me tell you, Enid."

"Thank you; I was aware of that before," said Enid coolly; "but I thought you had had sufficient experience of Herr Schmitz to know that he is not given to flattery."

Her words carried a sting which Enid did not intend to convey. She had forgotten how bluntly Herr Schmitz had criticised her cousin's drawings when he made his call at her studio; but Maud, in whose mind the memory of his words still rankled, believed that Enid deliberately reminded her of them.

Enid was sorely hurt by the way in which her news had been received. She had come, glad and eager, to share her happiness with her cousin, and had met with a sharp rebuff. But she would not show how much she felt it. She was a proud little person in her way, and she quitted her cousin's presence with an air of quiet dignity, of which Maud was conscious in the midst of her annoyance.

Alone in her own room, however, Enid could no longer keep back her tears.

"I cannot understand it," she said to herself; "why should Maud be annoyed at the thought of my taking lessons of Herr Schmitz? Sometimes I fear she is beginning to dislike me. Whatever shall I do if she does? It will be dreadful being always together if we cannot be friends. And I thought everything was going to be so delightful!"

Then she remembered that her mother had warned her that she must not expect to have gold without alloy. How true the words were proving! But the thought of her mother brought comfort. There could be no doubt that she would be pleased to hear of the kind encouragement Herr Schmitz had given her daughter, and his proposal to give her lessons in painting. So Enid took her desk, and sat down to relieve her wounded feelings by writing a long letter to the mother of whose loving sympathy she felt so sure.

And Maud sat alone, nursing the bitter, wrathful feelings that resulted from mortified vanity. She, poor girl, had no mother to whom she could unburden her heart, and she had never been wont to confide in her father.

(To be continued.)



By AN ARTIST-NATURALIST.

THE fairy who transformed the rats and other things for Cinderella, could not have effected a greater change in a brief space than does hoar frost the face of nature. On several occasions in December I have seen in the space of an hour all the trees frosted over with rime; and as this goes on collecting all day when there is moisture in the air and a low thermometer, the scene the next morning is fairy-like in its beauty. It completely transforms nature, and the trees remind one of delicate branching coral, so abnormal do they become under the magic spell of winter. One could imagine that the world looked something like it does at such times as these, with the snow covering the ground, in the Glacial epoch, when, as the geologists tell us, this world was completely ice-bound. And there is a feeling of loneliness, too, which heightens the illusion as one walks over the snow-covered fields, for everything seems unfamiliar to one, when the well-remembered landmarks are obliterated or altered beyond recognition. The hedgerow plants, like the meadow-sweet and hemlock, are like silver jewellery marvellously fashioned, and have a beauty that pen cannot describe. The crystals that stand out from the stems and edges of the leaves bring out the beauty of form and delicacy of details that one hardly notices in an ordinary way, and anyone wishing for a unique decorative scheme could not do better than paint some of these familiar hedgerow plants when covered with hoar frost.

A sunny morning adds greatly to the beauty of the scene, as it gives the frost a roseate hue with delicate bluish-grey shadows. When I came to notice the landscape narrowly I found that snow has much more colour in it than I was aware of. In painting it, rose madder and cobalt would have to be used—of course very delicately. Birds tell out like brilliant spots of warm colour, and I think they never look more beautiful than in winter. I strongly advise those of my readers who paint, and who are looking out for a subject, to try a winter scene, such as a spray of meadow-sweet, with some birds upon it, somewhat after the style of the illustration on page 128. I have not attempted to indicate frost upon the foliage, as I wanted to show the full beauty of these relics of summer that fill our ditches and remain right into the spring—until, in fact, they are hidden by the new growths. The meadow-sweet, with its seeds and dead leaves, gives a beautiful colour scheme, the former being yellowish-brown, while the latter are purple and silver, for the leaves have a way of curling over, and wherever the underside is seen it is a brilliant silver-grey. These relics of summer are a conspicuous feature along the river-bank, as they remain so erect and defiant all through the winter. For vase decoration, a collection of these dead plants is beautiful in colour and form. I gathered a few and made a sketch, which accompanies these rambling notes, so that those of my readers who have hitherto

passed them by as weeds may be induced to treat them with a little more deference in future. The most conspicuous are the loose-strife, willow-herb (with its curling, thread-like seed vessels), figwort, teazel, burdock, dock, and sedge, all of which are shown in the sketch. The general colour of these dead plants is a warm purplish-brown; but they are at the same time very grey in tone; and in painting them no positive colour must be used. It is much more difficult to hit these tertiary colours than appears, for the tones are very subtle, and are easily missed. I painted a threefold screen, using dead plants as the *motif*, though in this case I chose thistles and dock with dead oat-grass, just as they all grew at the edge of a ploughed field. The purplish earth made a capital background for the silvery greys of the thistle and the warm reds of the dock. As each panel was five feet six inches in height, I reproduced them life-size, and I was well satisfied with the effect when finished. I shall be tempted to try another screen, using similar *motifs*, only seen under the conditions of rime frost.

There are some ponds near my house where bulrushes grow in profusion, and this winter, while skating upon them, I was much struck by the beauty of these dead reeds. The general colour is a golden brown, and the flower heads are a rich deep brown, and when slightly silvered with frost are most telling. Some of our beautiful birds, like the bearded





*December's  
Bouquet  
of Sedge-row  
Plants*

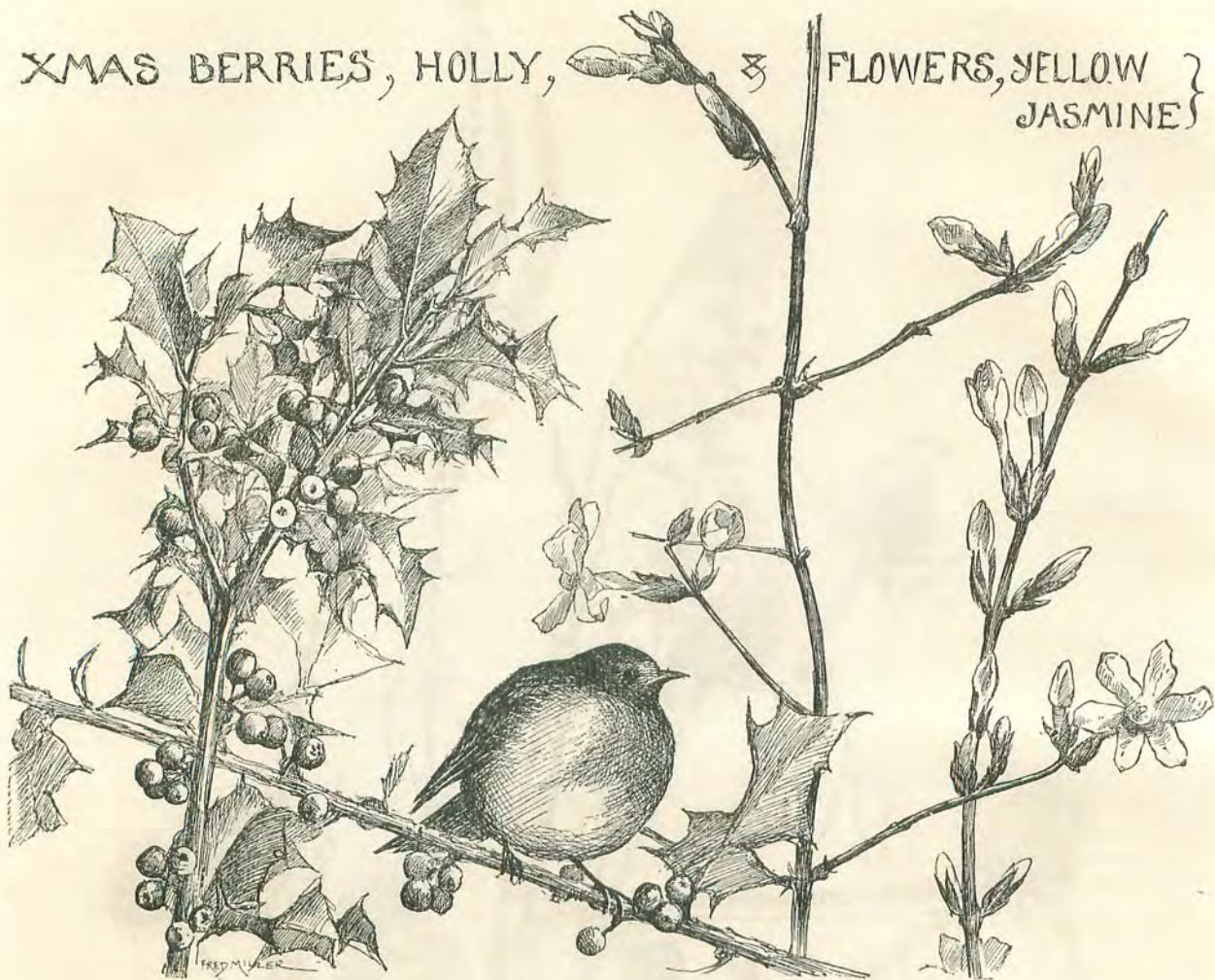
FRED MILLER

tit, could be introduced perching upon the reeds. Beyond these bulrushes were a row of pollarded willows coming against some elms. Willows in winter are a great feature in the landscape, especially when the sun shines upon them, for the colour is a reddish-purple inclining to golden brown. The elms, on the other hand, are very bluish when seen at a distance; but it is a superficial, ill-considered

opinion that affirms that leafless trees are uninteresting or wanting in beauty. Most painters will tell you that trees never paint so well as they do when nearly leafless or quite bare, for they have much more individuality than when hidden neath a mass of foliage. I noticed some oaks in a wood while I was painting outside in December, when the sunlight was upon them. The

trunks were a lovely greenish-grey, and were thrown into relief by the purple of the under-wood beyond. Oaks, too, generally carry their reddish-brown dead leaves all through the winter, and it is not until the young leaves push these last year's relics off that the trees are really bare. An oak wood on a sunny December day is a sight to be remembered. Mrs. Browning makes Lady Geraldine speak





of her "woods in Sussex with their purple tints at gloaming," evidently alluding to oaks, which grow in great perfection in that county.

December is a month, too, of berries. The scarlet hips of the wild rose, the haws of the hawthorn, the white snowberry, the black bunches of the privet, the deep red of the holly, and the delicate greenish-white of the translucent mistletoe, are conspicuous features wherever any of these abound. I have given a series of sketches of this last plant, because, although very familiar in Christmas decoration, many folk have never seen mistletoe growing. It is a true parasite, only living upon other trees as though it could not derive its requisite nourishment from the soil itself, but had to live upon the inorganic matter assimilated by some friendly plant. In the Botanic Garden at Oxford a quantity of mistletoe is to be seen growing on two hawthorn trees, and it was from one of these that I sketched the pieces given in the illustration. The whole tree seems impregnated with it, for on almost all the branches a thickening of the wood is to be seen with a small shoot of mistletoe growing out of it (Fig. 3). This is the first year's growth, and in Fig. 2 a more advanced sprig is shown, which in time will develop into a thick bunch having quantities of berries growing from the joints, as in Fig. 1, which is one shoot of a large spray. The absolute regularity of its growth is plainly seen from this piece. I have the recollection of reading in some child's history when I was a small boy of the reverence attached to mistletoe by the Druids when it was found

growing on an oak, and that these ancient Britons used a gold sickle to cut it from its foster-parent. Mistletoe most frequently grows on apple trees; but I have also seen it growing very freely on black poplars.

Before the frost set in, a root of primroses had a quantity of blossoms in the centre of the leaves, and would, if it had continued mild, have been in flower by now. Several wall-flowers had small tufts of bloom on them, and in one garden some biennial stocks were in bloom. The annual phlox kept on blowing until quite recently, as they withstood the less severe frosts we had in November. It is a capital plant for late blooming, and is very varied in colour. I sowed the seed in boxes in a frame in March, and put the plants out in the borders in June. It is better to grow them in masses, so that the full effect of the varied colour is obtained.

The most beautiful of our winter flowers is unquestionably the Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger, major*). The plant is perfectly hardy; but to get the flowers in perfection a hand light should be put over the plant in wet or frosty weather. One good root will continue to throw up blooms from early in December until February. There are many varieties of hellebore; but the one named is the only one worth cultivating. The flowers of most other varieties are greenish in hue. Another familiar plant always to be found in bloom at Christmas-time is the yellow jasmine, which always blooms before it comes into leaf. It is a climbing plant, and looks very effective over a porch.

Gilbert White, in his well-known book, gives

some particulars of severe frosts he experienced; and the frost that began here at the end of last year seems likely to take its place among the historic frosts of the century. The river froze over in one night, so that by the morning it was completely covered with ice. I was told by one of our villagers, who has lived all her life by the river, that she has never known this to happen before. Last Christmas was what folk called an old-fashioned one. Snow covered the ground, and it was possible to skate for miles upon the river; in fact, I saw no reason why one could not do the Thames on skates. One would have to walk round the locks; but with that exception the ice was perfectly safe, especially at the sides where the river flowed over the old ice during a rise in the height of the river and frozen through. I saw a hole made with a pickaxe, and the ice was from five to six inches thick. The villagers told me that it is over thirty years since the river was so completely frozen over. The last two days of last year were intensely cold, all the water in jugs, cans, and bottles in the bedrooms being frozen. The lowest temperature recorded by a self-registering thermometer in this village was twenty-four degrees of cold; but on several occasions we have had eighteen and twenty degrees.

So soon as the frost set in in right earnest I fixed a tall thin pole slantingly in the ground opposite one of the windows, having previously nailed a crosspiece on, so that when the pole was in the ground the crossbar was horizontal. I then tied on to the bar some pieces of fat, and from the pole hung a common tallow candle. This very soon attracted the birds,



though for a day or two they were somewhat shy of venturing upon the perch. Robins, of course, were the first to visit the larder, they being by far the most fearless of all the feathered tribe; in fact, robins have none of that timidity shown by other birds. You have only to start digging, and you will be sure to find one hop on to the freshly-turned soil within a few inches of your feet.

My bird perch acted admirably, and as I sat indoors I had an ever-changing tableau to look at. There is no better way of studying birds, and I keep some paper and a pencil always handy to make rough sketches of some of the characteristic attitudes, for pothing teaches one so much as these rough notes from nature. With these, and access to a collection of stuffed specimens, one ought to have little difficulty in getting life-like effects, which is so rarely the case if you rely wholly upon mounted specimens. Watching the birds constantly as they flew to my improvised larder soon makes me aware how far short of nature the best stuffed specimens come. There is a plumpness and a roundness about a live bird that always departs in the stuffed specimens, which are usually too long and too thin-looking. And how beautiful a robin is in colour, with his brownish-purple back and brick-red breast going into greyish-white on the belly, and his large black fearless eye. Very pugnacious too are the robins, for if one flies on to the perch and another one shows a disposition to come also, the one already there sets up his back, drops his wings, and shows fight—and means it too.

Tits are the next most fearless birds, and it is very amusing to see them clinging to the

candle and pecking a hole in it. I get the two kinds, the small blue tit, with its delicate colouring, and the larger and more highly-coloured ox-eye. These come all day long, and while one is feeding, the others perch near by, and look on until their turn arrives, for they rarely feed in couples. Tits seem always masters of the field, and allow no competition. They are most sprightly, active little birds, and seem well able to take care of themselves. So long as any berries remained on the yew tree they were to be seen all day long clinging to the sprays to get at the coveted berries. Being able to cling in any position, they can get food that perching birds, like robins, cannot reach, and it afforded me much amusement, one winter in Norfolk, to watch the robins sitting on a rail near which the candles were suspended, watching with envious looks the tits filling their bellies with the fat of the candle that they themselves could not obtain. Now and then, in sheer desperation, they would fly at the candle, causing it to swing to and fro, but were unable to get a morsel of the coveted dainty through their inability to cling to it.

Thrushes sometimes visit the larder and make a meal, but they do it in a very furtive, suspicious sort of way, that shows how little at home they feel themselves. The longer the frost continues, the more hard-pressed the birds become; but so far I have seen no other birds on the perch. A wren has occasionally flown on to it, but not to eat. These and tits will frequently fly at the windows, but I noticed it was in their endeavours to get any insects that may be lurking in the corners of the recess. Wrens are by no means shy, however, as I more than once

found them indoors this autumn. Blackbirds and thrushes come around the house to pick up any stray crumbs. I notice, too, that both these birds come to the holly hedge to get the berries, and by the end of the year not a berry remained.

We had no waits here before Christmas, but some mummers came round the few nights preceding Christmas Day, and on invitation came inside and sang two or three songs, and did their best to amuse us. The men who played the parts dressed themselves out in cut paper dresses of divers colours, which made them not unlike North American Indians on the war-path. Of course they expected, and generally received, the *largesse* of those who invited them indoors. On Christmas morning, just about breakfast-time, a whole group of children, girls and boys, came into the garden, and ranging themselves round the hall door, sang some doggerel lines, which I got one of them to say slowly so that I might write them down. Here they are. They are probably the corruption of some old English song, and as ancient as the rhymes that are recited in such games as "Oranges and Lemons."

"I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy  
New Year,  
A pocketful of money and a cellar full of  
beer.  
Bounce a bounce, a barrel of beer,  
Christmas comes but once a year.  
Holly, ivy, and mistletoe,  
Give me red apple and then I'll go.  
Give me another for my little brother,  
And then I'll go home and tell my mother."

## MISTLETOE.

PART OF SPRAY GROWING

ON HAWTHORN

IN OXFORD

BOTANIC  
GARDEN

FIG 1

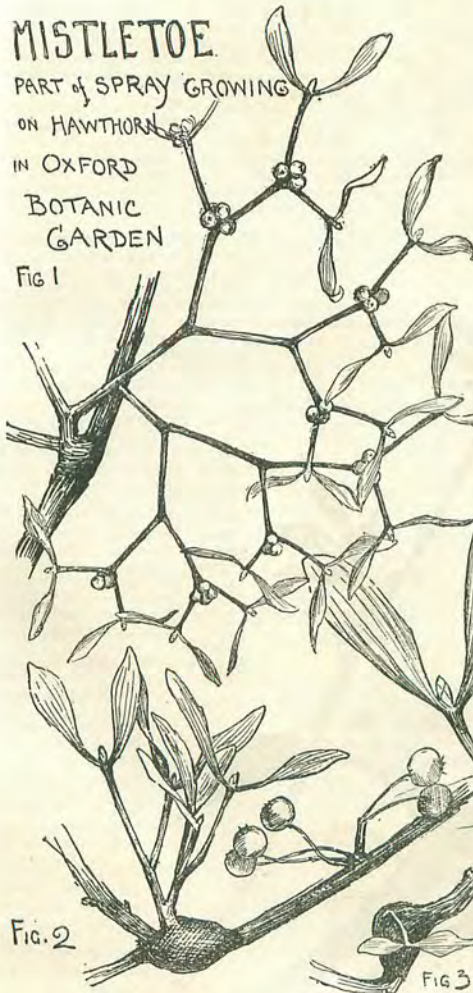


FIG. 2

FIG 3

## IVY

IN FLOWER



FIG 4  
FULL  
SIZE

Finey Miller



## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

ESMERALDA.—We advise you to order a small book which gives a long list of such charities, and the terms on which ladies in poor circumstances may be received—*The Englishwoman's Year Book* (1s.), F. Kirby, 17, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, E.C.

POPPIE would do well to varnish the Christmas cards on her screen with white transparent varnish, such as bookbinders employ. She can obtain it at any artists' colourman's.

ALYS CAMERON.—We thank you warmly for your most gratifying letter. We never heard of a case in which blue eyes in infancy turned dark afterwards; but the contrary is not uncommon.

ECCLESIASTICUS.—Yes, it is called a "stole." We cannot give addresses of shops nor prices of articles. You should go to an artistic embroidery shop for what you want. Beware of injuring your eyes.

BLOODLESS.—Your writing is very good. Porridge does not agree with everybody. It is too heating for some, and will bring out a rash on them. Wheatmeal, oatmeal, cornmeal, and rye meal, each and all, will help to keep bones, teeth, nerves, and brain in good order, if you get them unadulterated. For bones and nerves and pure blood you also need liberal supplies of fruit and vegetables. To breathe pure air and take in plenty of oxygen is also essential for the blood. Fresh air, free ablu-tion, and good friction with clean towels are blood purifiers.

BERTIE'S JOY.—1. We believe that the *Great Eastern* is the largest ship ever built (with the exception of Noah's Ark). A careful measurement of this enormous ship, which we once had the pleasure of seeing, gave 2,366,242,816 cubic feet. The number of cubic feet in the Ark was 364,530,184 cubic feet more than the *Great Eastern*.—2. If you have a mother, confide your trouble to her, and ask for her interference; if not, you should tell your father, and on no account accept any present from him.

AILEEN.—1. Give your left foot to the groom who helps you up to your saddle.—2. Perhaps Mary Cowden-Clarke (*née* Novello) may supply you with the critical work you require. Procure it under the title, *A Complete Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare*, 1845.

"A GIRL OF THE PERIOD, WITH THE CHILL OFF," writes to us thus: "Would you kindly tell me of some way of finding out who you are going to marry?" Now we are not prepared to inform you whom we are going to marry, however "kindly" you would regard the confidence. If you felt it an urgent necessity to "find out" any personal prospects of ours, we think you would have a somewhat troublesome task. How do you know that we are not already married? or, perhaps, "crossed in love," and "laid on the shelf" for ever and a day? What sort of garment is your "chill"? and why did you take it off?

MARY T. S.—It is impossible for us to tell you for what sort of remunerative work you are qualified, more especially when you say that you have no great amount of education. Perhaps you could be a shop-assistant if you know the common rules of arithmetic.

M. A. L.—The use of a backboard and faceboard, which we have so often described and recommended, for even an hour daily, would probably result in putting the shoulder in again. You should lie down on an inclined board also for a time every day.

EDELWEISS.—The tone of your letter is unseemly and offensive, and we strain a point in deigning to answer it. Many of those benevolent persons who take the trouble of promoting the education of girls and try to benefit them, without payment in return, may retire from their work through ill-health or other circumstances; may change their residence, or resign the undertaking into other hands. Of such events we cannot be aware unless they write to apprise us of the same. Thus, sometimes it may happen that a letter may not reach the hands for which it is designed. Try Miss Hacking's, Seymour Grove, Old Trafford, Manchester; or Miss Clift's, Fernbank, Cheltenham.

A WOULD-BE ARTIST.—1. The length of your notice for a wedding invitation could not be governed by any hard and fast rules, because such events are sometimes hurried at the last, and drag at a slow pace on other occasions. But perhaps about a month or six weeks might be considered a fair notice. You should specify on your card of invitation whether the guest is to accompany or meet the wedding party for the ceremony at the church, or only to be expected at the breakfast.—2. You must enquire yourself at shops where you wish to dispose of your paintings.

CON-NUT.—The 25th of March was dedicated to the Virgin, in commemoration of the Annunciation by the angel Gabriel.

SOUBRETTE.—You must enquire at a music publisher's. We are always glad to hear from our readers, but cannot answer all their questions. One of yours is not suitable for a magazine of this kind.

LONDON.—1. We think that your best way of pulling yourself straight will be to carry the baby on your right arm. You ought not to have been allowed to carry it at your early age, and not nearly finished growing. You should also lie down for a full hour on a board every day after your early dinner, to rest the spine and muscles, which have been both overstrained and strained the wrong way.—2. Put some harmless bitterns on the fingers. Go to a chemist, and he will give what will do no harm, yet prevent the child from sucking her fingers.

DAISY may certainly have a dressing-gown, although only thirteen; at any rate, it is desirable to wear a loose washing *peignoir*, or jacket, to keep your clothes clean when brushing your hair. We do not undertake to give answers "in the next" following number.

GRACE PELISSIER.—We do not give trade addresses. Pronounce "piccolo" as "pe-kolo," "Zuinglius" as "Tzwing-le-oos," "Spohr" as "S'por," "Mattei" as "Mat-tay-e," and "Straduaris" as "Stra-doo-a-reus."

ARIADNE.—We advise you to make enquiries at the Royal School of Art Needlework at South Kensington. Lace, point, etc., are still made. If you procure *The Dictionary of Needlework* (Gill, 170, Strand, W.C.), a standard authority, you will find exhaustive information on the subject of lace, and illustrations of every description of the same, as well as of all other work, appliques, and textiles.

(NO NAME GIVEN).—The bride stands at the bridegroom's left hand during the marriage ceremony.



THE RELICS OF  
SUMMER  
MEADOWSWEET IN SEED



# FEBRUARY

By AN ARTIST-NATURALIST.

loosened out; and as the month progresses the catkin gradually lengthens, and finally hangs down like a tassel, swaying about with every breath of wind. The anthers burst open under the warmth of a February sun, and clouds of yellow dust or pollen are shaken over the tree, and the female blossoms are thus fertilised. These latter flowers (if such they can be called), which in the autumn produce the nuts that everyone is so eager to gather, are quite inconspicuous, and are only seen by those who look for them. I have drawn one taken from a filbert tree. It consists of some darkish green bracts, with a number of reddish filaments projecting from the end of the bud. These pinkish hairs constitute the pistil, and are ready to catch the pollen that is floating about. Nature is prodigal in all her processes; and though there would be enough pollen in one catkin to fertilise some hundreds of blooms if every grain fell in the right place, we have dozens of catkins to effect this, so that the chance of a single female flower remaining unfertilised is small indeed. All wind-fertilised plants produce their pollen in abundance. A field of corn—for all grasses are wind-fertilised—must produce an amount of pollen out of all proportion to the quantity actually made use of. We are reminded by Tennyson that Nature—

“Out of fifty seeds,  
She often brings but one to bear.”



“Now, when the catkins of the hazel swing  
Wither'd above the leafy nook.”  
—Buchanan.

THIS is the month of catkins. The hazel, with its pale yellow blossoms hanging down in groups of two and three from the ends of the twigs, is a conspicuous feature under our woods and in our copses and spinneys. The catkin is the type of inflorescence of many trees like the arbele and elm, and if we examine one of these “pussy cats’ tails,” as children call these blossoms, which fall in such countless numbers after they have cast their pollen to the winds, we shall find that it is composed of a central rope or hanging stalk, upon which are numerous little tufts of stamens, each such collection of organs being a separate flower. Botanically, a catkin is a unisexual spike that falls away after fruiting or flowering. Early in the year, if we examine a hazel catkin, we find that it appears to be a solid mass, brownish in colour, sticking out angularly from the twigs. By February it has expanded and







the leaves to remain for a month or two after the blossoms have fallen. The two most beautiful snowdrops are *Galanthus plicatus*, which has broad rich green leaves, with a glaucous band down the middle of each leaf, and *G. Imperati*, which has longer leaves than the former, and all glaucous in colour.

The snowflake (*Leucojum vernum*), like a large snowdrop, only with each petal distinct, and marked at the end with a yellowish-green spot instead of the inner cusp, as in the snowdrop, should find a place in every garden. So too should the mauvish-blue anemone hepatica, which throws up its flowers from the midst of its worn brownish-green leaves, that have come over as a heritage from the previous year. There is a double variety.

In most years violets are in full blow in February. The large pale Russian violet must be grown in a cold frame to flower it early in the year. The scent of violets, like mignonette, is an odour that comes in waves. It is not persistent, like the strong scent of such flowers as lilies, which soon satisfy one, and then, with their abundance, repel rather than fold one to themselves. The scent of violets, on the other hand, is a perfume that I always feel I could kiss or fold in my arms. It is an invigorating, life-giving odour, so unlike the languorous, enervating smell of orange flowers or stephanotis. Put your nose

interest. The day was not wet, but it was certainly dull and gloomy.

In a note in my diary I saw the first of our spring flowers, the aconite. I always greet this humble flower with cheers, for it is the very first to put in an appearance. It is one of those plants that seem to have had its energy imprisoned underground, and so soon as it pushes through the ground, with its leaves wrapped round like a shepherd's crook, it expands, and, seemingly in a few hours, where the soil was erstwhile bare is now a golden cup standing in a saucer of bright full green. Aconites, like so many other flowers, are entirely sensitive to the sunlight, and only open when the rays fall upon the petals, when they open and become quite important. The aconite goes on growing while it is in flower, and at the end of a fortnight is twice the size it was when it first showed its little globule of amber. Snowdrops follow at the heels of the aconites, and should be grown in profusion, as they tell well in a garden. I consider that every lover of a garden—which is synonymous with every gardener—should pay great attention to these flowers of the opening year, for a bloom in January has a far greater value than a dozen or two in June, when Nature's banking account is at its full. And all these earliest flowers do well under trees and hedgerows, and in shady places that later on do not suit other flowers. Flowers like the aconite, snowdrop, and violet, bloom at a time when

most trees are bare, and when sunlight falls on spots that later in the year are always shaded. In Regent's Park the plan has of late years been adopted of sowing these early flowers in the grass; and certainly they are much more beautiful when so grown, the grass being so much better a background than earth to show them off. Crocuses, I think, should only be grown in grass, for a certain stiffness and formality that obtrudes itself when these flowers are planted in borders is quite lost sight of as they push their way through the blades of grass. Where flowers are planted in lawns, they must not be moved as soon as they have finished flowering, but must be allowed to ripen their bulbs by allowing

And we find this abundance in all Nature's handiwork. If you pick a catkin that is in full blow, and shake it over a piece of white paper, you will get a cloud of yellow dust; and those who have a microscope should examine this pollen, as it is very beautiful when magnified. The pollen of the mallow is a favourite slide in all microscopic displays, and no idea of the structure and beauty of each grain of pollen can be formed by the naked eye.

According to the old country saying, February is supposed to "fill the ditch," but our last February (1891) was an unprecedentedly dry month. The long frost which marked this last year vanished completely when it did break up, and we started the month with a warm sunny day. I was reminded by my mother, who is a Cambridgeshire woman, that the 2nd of February was Candlemas Day. The word had no significance to me; but then I am a Londoner, and the poetry and romance of life has but a sterile soil to take root in in a huge city like London. The word Michaelmas is hardly used there, and yet in the country almost everything dates from this day.

"If Candlemas Day be wet and foul,  
Half the winter is June at Yule;  
If Candlemas Day be fair and dry,  
Half the winter's to come by-a'-bye"—

is a quatrain that is still used by villagers, and we watched this 2nd of February with some







into a bunch of violets, and after the first whiff you receive no definite sensation; but let that bunch of violets be put in a vase in the room, and its sweetness will keep stealing in upon your thoughts like the lines of a favourite poem. I class all scents under two heads—those of the violet class, that endear and invigorate one, and those of the lily kind, that fill and satiate one.

So Valentine's Day came and went without my being reminded by anything that it was here; but on Shrove Tuesday, just as I was sitting down to breakfast, a number of children, both girls and boys, came in the garden, and forming themselves into some sort of order round the front door, set to vigorously singing some lines which were quite incomprehensible; all I caught was "Give me penny, give me twopence," yet they sang the verse through two or three times, though each time faster than the previous performance, as though the important point was to get through the song as many times in five minutes as was possible. I got one little girl living near by, who had sat to me on several occasions, to write down the song, and here it is. I must tell you, though, that it took me some time to punctuate it, for it was written down without stops, and I didn't quite take it in until I had studied it a bit.

"Pity! pity! pan's hot; I be come a-shroving;  
Give me penny, give me twopence, I will  
be a-going.

Lard, dear, flour, dear—

That makes me come a-shroving here."

The money presumably the children collect in this day is to go to making pancakes. Mother tells me that in her native village, when she was a girl, the children used to assemble in a field opposite the vicarage, and there have

games. Stalls with sweets and cakes were there, and some pancakes were cooked outside and given by the vicar to the children. There was also an opportunity of trying one's hand at tossing a pancake—a feat I have only heard about.

As February grows older the buds begin to burst their coverings, and the life within just puts forth the tip of its nose. The buds in the briars show pink at the tips, while the thorns, with their beads of buds, just brighten on one side. Gooseberry and currant trees do more than this—they put forth the tips of their leaves as well; and if it is a forward spring, by the end of the month the gooseberries will be in small leaf. The lilac is one of the forwardest of our shrubs, and its bright pale green buds are a conspicuous feature in gardens.

I have given a page of bud studies so that those who have paid little heed to the world of herbs in its infancy may be induced to do so. I recollect that almost my first attempts at drawing from Nature were done from the buds I used to gather by the Botanical Gardens in Regent's Park. There are two distinct recollections about the spring that have come down to me from my early schooldays in London—the gathering of buds on Sunday afternoons, and watching the young ducks, when they were just hatched, darting from side to side after the flies that skimmed over the surface of the water. I have a distinct recollection, too, that I found these buds very difficult things to render satisfactorily; and to the best of my recollection all my earliest attempts at drawing brought nothing but dissatisfaction and disappointment to me, to think how far behind Nature always left me.

The buds of the ash are a velvety black, and

are still very dormant, as this is one of the last trees to come into leaf. The one from whence I drew the twig was covered with its bunches of seeds or "keys;" and I was trying to account for this, seeing that other ash trees near were without seeds. Turning through the pages of *White's Selborne*, I came across this note:—"Many ash trees bear loads of keys every year; others never seem to bear any at all. The prolific ones are naked of leaves and unsightly; those that are sterile abound in foliage, and carry their verdure a long while, and are pleasing objects."

The chestnut buds are swollen to bursting by the end of February, and the gummy exudation that covers the buds can be seen standing in beads. This gum is evidently a protective covering, and in all plants—but particularly those that are forward—Nature is most careful to wrap up her buds and blossoms with horny bracts, that drop off as the bud opens, and with a thin semi-transparent brownish tissue, which one might call Nature's brown-paper. In the aconite we find the leaves wrapped over the flower, and the plant itself curled over so that its head is buried in its breast. In apricot and peach—both of which flower this month—the calyx is of a thick fleshy nature, and entirely envelops the petals, whereas in the apple the leaves wrap over the blooms, and when the outer sheath that covers the buds is burst, and the leaves expand, the pink buds are disclosed, and are ready to open. The apricot, which flowers nearly three months sooner than the apple, has no leaves to protect the buds, but this office is performed by the dark pinkish sepals. The apricot, with its pinkish-white petals and yellow anthers, and the peach, with its rose-pink flowers and dark red anthers, are highly suitable for all decorative purposes.



The Japanese constantly use them as *motifs* in their work.

In the drawings of oak and rosebuds you will notice I have given instances of the transformation that buds will undergo when pierced by a weevil or boring insect, in order to deposit her eggs in the bud. Oak-apples are produced in this way, and if you cut a young oak-apple open you will find the maggots inside. Later in the year the oak-apples have a small hole in them, which the insect within bored in order to take flight, to live its brief space in the air. On rose trees and briars tufts of a moss or wool-like growth are frequently seen. If these are found on sweetbriars, the scent of the briar seems concentrated in these growths. This is produced by an insect, and if you cut them open you will find several cells, in each of which is a small white maggot.

Until I came to make a drawing of the cutting of the arbele, I don't remember to have seen a tree before. I did not know it when I was attracted to it by seeing it covered with its dark pinkish blossoms sticking out at all angles from its twigs until mature enough to hang down and scatter their pollen. It is a handsome tree, resembling an ash, but the trunk is smooth as it ascends, and of a silvery-grey colour.

The grey velvet flower-buds of the willow, when they catch the light, glisten like silver, and as they expand and open the yellow anthers show themselves. In osier or withy beds the blossoms, when the sun shines upon

them, are a very telling feature in the landscape, and quite distinct in their beauty.

The rooks are busy now patching up old nests or building upon last year's foundation, for the same nests, providing they do not get blown away in the winter, are used year after year. They are birds that always live in colonies, and I was told last year that in a neighbouring rookery some birds wanted to build in a tree that had never been used, but that as fast as these would-be independent birds placed their twigs in the tree, the rooks from the colony came and pulled them out, and in the end these seceders had to cast in their lot with the colony. White says:—"Rooks are continually fighting and pulling each other's nests to pieces; these proceedings are inconsistent with living in such close community. And yet if a pair offer to build on a single tree, the nest is plundered and demolished at once. Some rooks roost on their nest trees. The twigs which the rooks drop in building supply the poor with brushwood to light their fires. Some unhappy pairs are not permitted to finish any nest till the rest have completed their building. As soon as they get a few sticks together a party comes and demolishes the whole."

Rooks prefer elms to any other trees, as the numerous short-forked branches at the top of these trees afford good anchorage for their nests.

February is the month in which all our resident birds pair, though it is not before March that much is done in the way of nest-building. I fancy they take some time in

selecting a suitable site. I noticed at the end of the month my walnut tree, which is thickly covered with green moss, was being visited by birds to pick some of it off. The silvery grey lichen—which, by-the-way, covers some of the hazels growing at the outskirts of a wood near here—is largely used by birds like the chaffinch to decorate the outside of the nest. This lichen is like a miniature stag-horn fern, or even not unlike seaweed, to which class of plants it belongs. It might be made a very decorative feature, as it yields every tone of grey that the eye of a painter could desire.

Thrushes, robins, and wrens sing very cheerily now, and, with chaffinches and sparrows and tits, are the most familiar birds in the garden—rather too familiar with the gooseberry and currant buds. I am fond of watching the tits darting up the apple trees and rapidly poking their beaks into every crevice, and then hanging downwards under a twig, for they are birds that can climb in any position. They are accused of being bud stealers, but I fancy they are more after insects than buds.

Bullfinches are the worst culprits in this respect, and a good many are trapped under the fruit trees when they are on their predatory expeditions.

On a sunny day the pale brimstone or sulphur butterfly, which has been hibernating in some crevice all the winter, will come out to stretch her wings and visit some of the flowers that are in blow for their nectar. My aconites were always haunted by bees on a warm day.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## ART.

WANTING ADVICE.—Unless you have very decided talent you cannot teach yourself drawing without help of any kind, and if a School of Art should be beyond your reach, the only other way is to get some of the many shilling manuals which have been published on perspective, drawing, and painting. There are some very excellent articles in the *Girl's Own Indoor Book*, now being issued in monthly numbers.

S. M. L. T.—1. The pencil drawing you send us is very well shaded, but quite in fault as regards perspective. The size of the child and the dog, as compared with the man, is quite wrong. If you study carefully from nature in your drawings you would learn much, as you appear to have some talent and much perseverance.—2. Your spelling is inaccurate, and your writing needs improvement.

KATHIE.—If you use a water-colour medium called aquarelle you will be able to paint on the satin without further preparation.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

MABEL.—The origin of the Government mark, called "the broad arrow," consisting of a *chevron* with a line downwards from the centre, is Celtic. It represents an arrow-head, though the central shaft is too short; and it may perhaps represent also the broad "a" of the Druids, which letter is typical of superiority, as in the numeral "1." With the combination of the first letter and first numeral, as indicating the greatest excellence, you are probably aware. Whatever bears the symbol of the "broad arrow" or (arrow head) is the property of the Government.

MATER.—February 21, 1859, was a Monday. HONEYSUCKLE B.—August 6, 1873, was a Wednesday. THE SECRETARY OF THE RAGED SCHOOL UNION thanks "Trilobite" for her kind contribution of 2s. towards the Children's Holiday Fund.

FELLZEROW.—1. May 29, 1875, was a Saturday.—2. You can have the dress dyed.

EMILY J. W. may apply for the French books she wants at the office of the Religious Tract Society, 65, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C., enclosing postal note.

BASHFUL FIFTEEN.—If you do not know the definition of "home," you hardly deserve to be helped by us. For is it not the place, no matter where it is that you live, surrounded by those you love, and who love you, and which you can make happy by obedience to your parents and by acts of kindness and self-sacrifice?

ÉPIGRAMME.—You should have spoken first, being the lady, of course.

TWILIGHT.—The habit of snoring depends greatly on not breathing in the natural and proper way through the nose. Be sure that you place the head in a proper position, neither too high nor too low, and avoid lying on the back. Relaxation of the uvula and tonsils will produce snoring, especially in advanced life.

A LANCASHIRE LASS.—The climate of the Scilly Isles is so mild that the flora is semi-tropical, palms, cacti, and aloes flourishing there unchecked by the winter's cold.

E. F. G.—Doubtless we have many indications in Great Britain of volcanic agency active in ages gone by, which the mere existence of hot mineral springs must prove. The crystallisations procured from Penmaenmawr, in North Wales, specimens of which are exhibited in the cottage windows, and supposed by the people to be fossil seaweeds, prove beyond doubt the agency of heat such as a volcano alone could bring to bear upon the rock. The basaltic formations of Staffa and the Salisbury Crags, near Edinburgh, as elsewhere, confirm the fact; and at Comrie, Perthshire, slight shocks of earthquake are of nearly annual occurrence. It would seem that there must be a line of subterranean connection between Etna, Stromboli, Vesuvius, and Hecla, taking its way northwards through England and Scotland.

DOT.—The change in the colour of your cat's eyes is one that also occurs in babies' eyes likewise. The latter are often born with blue eyes, which become hazel when older. You will not understand the explanation of the phenomenon, but the older ones in the family may. At the time of birth "the pigmental structure of the choroid coat of the eye is not complete, with the result that the blue and violet rays of light are more fully reflected by the iris." (We quote from a scientific author.) But in most infants the colour of the eye is decided from the time of birth, and we find them grey, blue, hazel, brown, and black, fully and definitely decided.

WHITE HEATHER.—1. The confinement inseparable from the life of a teacher is probably the cause of your headaches. You might, however, find that a hot water bottle applied to your feet would do much good.—2. Gardening is now an employment for women and girls, and you might try that.—3. As a text-book, Angus's *Handbook of the English Tongue* would answer; but we should never advise any woman to trust to her efforts in a literary way. It would be cruel to recommend it.

ANXIOUS GREYDA.—Checking the perspiration of your hands otherwise than by seeking to improve and strengthen the general health, would be highly dangerous.

L. J. C.—We agree with you in part, but we fear that public opinion does not affect the state of the labour market, which is governed by the laws of supply and demand. An *over-supply* will reduce salaries, and the labour market is free to everyone.

ALLIE C.—The bride is supposed to make the first cut into the cake, and it is then cut up by the best man, we believe; but it signifies little who does it.

E. D. (Scarborough). FORGET-ME-NOT, FAITH, CHARLES STUART, TRIXIE, JEAN SMITH, M. F. J., and others send "poetry," which shows religious and good feelings, but is not correct in metre, and possesses no originality.

ELLAINE.—No, London was not always the capital of England, for Winchester enjoyed that distinction after Egbert was crowned there (in 827)—in the cathedral church—sole monarch of the whole kingdom. Winchester previously to this time was only the capital of Wessex. On this occasion Egbert published an edict to the effect that all distinctions of petty kingdoms should be abolished, and that the whole population throughout its length and breadth should thenceforth be called "English." The precedence and dignity conferred on Winchester were maintained during two centuries, and the Saxon monarchs built in that city their magnificent royal palace. It was the Battle of Hastings that brought that line to an end; and subsequently the dignity of representing the metropolis was conferred on London, and the Royal Mint, Treasury, and national archives were transferred from their original seat.

J. B.—We cannot tell you positively how the fines imposed on offenders in the police courts are disposed of in each individual case; but some portion is applied to the Police Superannuation Fund, some may go to the defendant or complainant, some to the county or the borough fund, and some to the Exchequer.

SMYRNA.—A very pleasant book, of recent date, is written by Mr. William Cochran, called *Pen and Pencil in Asia Minor*.

DOROTHY.—The home at Dover is for convalescents. At Eastbourne there is a Home of Rest (Burlington Place), from 7s. to £1 a week. Write to Miss Mason. At Folkestone there is another Ladies' Home of Rest, 6, Oxford Terrace (with or without board), from 5s. upwards a week.

E. P. R. H.—We should advise you to take house linen, carpets, and bedding with you to Canada as you have them, and the expense of freight is not great.

IVY R.—Give the Christmas cards to a children's hospital.

PANSY R.—"An harmonium" is the proper way to speak of it.



## FEBRUARY FLOWERS



SNOWDROPS  
 ACONITES  
 HEPATICAS  
 VIOLETS  
 SNOWFLAKES

**TITANIA.**—The Jewish months begin with Nisan, or Abib, for the sacred year, because they reckoned from the first new moon in April, as they left Egypt on the 15th of that month, and they regulated the course of their feasts by it. The prophets use this reckoning. In the civil year the first new moon in October is the beginning, and this was used in civil and agricultural concerns only. The names in order are Nisan, Zif, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab, Elul, Tisri, Bul, Chisleu, Tebeth, Sebat, and Adar. Each would mean part of a month. Thus, Nisan would be March and April, etc.

**E. B.**—Eating oatmeal, slate pencils, dry rice, etc., are all signs of what is called "depraved" or unhealthy appetite, common amongst young girls in bad health. Such habits should be decidedly checked, and nothing should be eaten between meals.

**M. G.**—Mountain-ash and rose berries may be dried in a cool dry cellar; but they may also be kept in salt and water till wanted for purposes of decoration.

**PEARL,** and others who write to us about obtaining work at home, are informed that all such work must be obtained by their own personal exertions. The new articles now in our paper on "New Employments for Girls" will be of much help, no doubt.

**META.**—Such a decision must only be taken, we think, with the full consent of your parents. It is quite true that there are temptations in every calling and in every life; and there are good men and good women too, who are in the midst of them. But we should be very sure of our ground before we thrust ourselves in the way of temptation, and especially as we are commanded to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." At your early age the risks run are great.

**WANKY.**—Do you mean to ask whether a marriage performed by any man whatever is legal, whether he be a minister or not? We do not see the sense of your question. Marriages are effected in England by special and common licenses, by banns, and by certificate of registrar, either with or without license.

**AUNT JACK.**—Sealskins have become too expensive for ordinary purses. A recent account says that they are three times as dear this year as they were four years ago. Imitation fur seal jackets are very pretty, however.

**TWICK.**—1. A hospital nurse wears uniform when on duty, and a nurse in private practice does so always when in charge of a case.—2. The Castle of Scarborough was erected in the reign of Stephen. In it Piers Gaveston, the favourite of Edward II., was besieged by the Earl of Pembroke in 1212; and in the Civil Wars it twice underwent a siege.

**FORMULA.**—When introduced to either a lady or a gentleman you should bow and smile; but you should not shake hands unless your friend be particularly anxious to make you special friends, or you are particularly interested in the parties, or know something of or about them already. There is nothing to prevent your saying both "Good morning," and "How do you do?" if you like to do so.

**D. R. D.**—The coloured sheets of paper could be found at a stationer's, or perhaps a wall-paper might be found to suit, especially those called "varnished papers," made for halls and bathrooms.