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CHRISTMAS AND BIRTHDAY CARDS,  
AND HOW TO MAKE THEM WITH DRIED BOTANICAL SPECIMENS.

By L. FANNY ROSE.

PERHAPS there is nothing which of late years has retained its popularity more than the complimentary card. It is used for all seasons and occasions, and doubtless there is hardly a girl reader who does not receive and send either a few or many during the course of the year. Nor is there any sign of its going

out of fashion at present, if we are to judge from the numbers we see everywhere exhibited in the fancy shops and windows, especially at Christmas and Easter-time. Each year something fresh is being brought out, both in design and effect, and exceedingly pretty cards can now be bought at a very

trifling cost. One of the "G. O. P." contributors (the Rev. S. K. Cowan) says:—

"Altho' a trifle buys a card,  
And few refuse to spend it,  
No gold can purchase the regard,  
That prompts the heart to send it."



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SOME SPECIMEN CARDS.



If however the card is painted or made by the sender it is more valued and appreciated by the recipient than perhaps one of the choicest of bought cards.

There are many who cannot paint, but cards of pressed flowers, ferns, etc., can be made by almost anyone, and the making of them affords a healthy, pleasant, and profitable occupation. The materials are within the reach of everyone who lives in the country, and can be collected from early spring, when the first flowers appear, to autumn, when the trees and hedges are aglow with their brilliant tints; and during the winter months many a pleasant hour may be spent in mounting them.

It will also make you better acquainted with the flowers, for when once you begin to collect them you will be sure to want to know their names, and perhaps it may stir up some of the more ambitious of my readers to make a collection of wild flowers, and to arrange them in their natural orders. The specimens should be gathered in dry weather, and if they are at all withered when you get them home, put the stems in water for a few hours, or until they have regained their freshness. The stems must be wiped quite dry with a soft towel or duster.

There are several methods of pressing the specimens. One is to arrange them carefully between sheets of blotting-paper, or old-news-papers, putting pieces of pasteboard the same size as the paper between each layer thus—pasteboard, two sheets of paper, specimens, two more sheets of paper, pasteboard, and so on until all the specimens are used up; then put them under a heavy weight. The paper should be changed every other day until the specimens are dry. The damp blotting-paper can be dried and used again.

Another method is to put the specimens between several sheets of blotting-paper, and to iron them with a well-heated flat-iron until all the moisture is extracted. The iron however must not be too hot, or it will make the specimens very brittle and cause them to break easily when they are being mounted. This method answers well for ferns, leaves, and many kinds of flowers.

If you wish to press a blossom so as to show the centre, the best plan is to pull it off the stem, and press it and the stem separately; it can be stuck over the stem when you are mounting it and nobody will be any the wiser. Flowers with corollas of only one petal, such as the forget-me-not, primrose, and pimpinell should be pulled out of their calyxes, and treated in the same manner. Of course all the blossoms must not be pressed in this way, as you will want to show the under-side of some of them.

Cards such as are used for painting, are best to mount your specimens on, and can be purchased at many stationers, in all sizes, shapes, and tints. Gum for affixing purposes can be made in the following way—pour about a tablespoonful of boiling water on a teaspoonful of gum-arabic, and let it stand until it has dissolved; stir it, and if it is too thick it can be diluted with a little more water. It should be about the consistency of honey.

The specimens should be gummed with a camel-hair brush, and pressed lightly on to the card with a soft rag. Care must be taken not to use too much gum, or it will exude beyond the margin of the specimens and show when it is dry.

The texts or mottoes can be done with gold paint, ink, or water-colours, according to your own fancy. The letters should first be sketched lightly with a pencil, then painted over.

The accompanying illustrations will give you a few ideas for using botanical specimens, but of course the designs that can be made with them are numerous.

In the first picture is a design for an Easter card. The cross is composed of white English wild flowers, with a background of maiden-hair fern. An effective Easter card can be made by painting a rustic cross in brown shades on the card, and then to arrange some flowers with their buds and foliage at the base of the cross in a natural way, so that they appear to be growing; some moss should be stuck over the stems at the bottom to form the ground-work. Snowdrops are suitable for this style of card, also white violets, daisies, and the pretty little wood-sorrel, with its delicate white or lilac blossoms, and bright green trefoil leaves, supposed by some to be the real Irish shamrock.

The flower on page 179 is the meadow crow-foot, perhaps better known under the name of buttercup, and nearly all the yellow flowers in this order (*Ranunculaceae*) are sure to give satisfaction if nicely pressed, because they retain their colour so well.

One card on page 179 is composed of autumn leaves, ferns, and grass. There are many leaves such as the bramble, wild strawberry, cranesbill, and virginian creeper, which change to lovely tints in the autumn and make exceedingly pretty cards. There is a fern-like moss that grows on shady banks, fir club-moss I think it is called, that looks well mixed with coloured leaves.

On page 179 also my readers will recognise some familiar English wild-flowers. These are the common burnet, which has dark purple-brown flowers, the daisy, buttercup, and three members of the order *Leguminosae*, or pea and bean tribe, viz., the meadow vetchling, hop trefoil, and the tufted vetch. This is a very extensive and interesting order, and many of the flowers press well, especially the yellow ones.

The flowers on one of the cards in the front picture are perhaps not so well known, as there are only a few places in England in which they grow, but are of especial interest because they were mentioned in vol. x of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, in the story called "A Young Oxford Maid," chapter 3. I remember how interested I was at the time in the description of them; and as I had never seen any, thought how much I should like to possess some. Imagine then my pleasure, when last spring I received a box by post from a friend in Oxfordshire, which on opening, I found to be full of these curious and pretty flowers, white and purple. I soon consigned some of them to the pressing and drying process, with the result as shown. They belong to the order *Liliaceae*, and are called wild tulips by some people, whilst others call them snake's head lilies, because they have a fancied resemblance to a snake's head when they are beginning to fade away; the three cleft style and the stamens representing the tongue and fangs. The correct name is fritillary, from the Latin *fritillus*, meaning a dice-box, because the petals are curiously marked with squares of dull purple and pink, and resemble a chequer-board, which is sometimes coupled with a dice-box.

There are many kinds of wild flowers which are rare, or grow only in certain localities, and if those of my readers who have opportunities for getting some of these were to press and mount them, they would make interesting and acceptable cards to send to friends who perhaps have never seen any like them.

The basket-card on page 177 is made with green and white straws, and as there is only one side to it, it fits close to the card. To make it, cut out a stiff piece of paper in the shape of the basket. Then glue (gum will not be strong enough for this) some white straws along the bottom of the pattern about a quarter of an inch apart. Bend them over on to the other side and plait in them green and white straws alternately, or any other colours

you choose. When you have reached the top of the pattern, bend over the upright pieces and glue them at equal distances on to the other side of the paper, then bend over the straws at the sides and secure them in the same way. For the rim and handle plait three straws together. Glue the rim on to the top of the basket, turn in the ends, and fasten off on the other side. The smaller kinds of flowers and foliage are best suited for this design, some of which should be gummed on the card, and some on the back of the basket before it is attached to the card. Two holes should be neatly cut in the top of the card, through which to insert a piece of narrow ribbon, which should be passed through the handle of the basket and tied in a bow. A very pretty basket can be made in the same way with raffia, such as gardeners use for tying up their flowers, or with narrow strips of red and cream-coloured paper to represent an ordinary chip or willow basket; but instead of plaiting the rim and handle, twist a narrow strip of paper over another piece cut rather wider.

The flower-pot on page 179 is made with crinkled paper which is used for a great many decorative purposes just now. Cut the shape you wish your pot to be out of a stiff piece of paper, then take a piece of crinkled paper three times wider than the pattern and three-quarters of an inch deeper. Run a cotton thread through one end of the width, and draw it up to the width of the pot at the bottom, allowing a quarter of an inch on each side for turnings. Glue this on to the bottom of the pattern, fold it over on to the other side, then turn in the edges at the sides and glue them on to the wrong side of the pattern. Gather up the paper about half an inch from the top. This forms a frill which should be caught down at intervals. Put on a bow of ribbon to hide the stitches. The ferns should be gummed on to the card before the flower-pot is put on. Vases for flowers can also be made with crinkled paper.

One card on page 179 is made with ferns which have been gilded. Gold paint with instructions for use can be bought at an artist's colourman's. The ferns should be gilded over and allowed to dry before they are mounted; and if well-pressed specimens are chosen, they have the appearance of being printed in gold on the card. The motto should be painted in gold letters to correspond with the gilded leaves. I might here mention that ferns done in this way look very nice mounted on door-panels, fire-screens, and other things.

Pretty wedding-cards can be made by painting the specimens with silver paint.

Sometimes at a wedding the bride or bridesmaid has a very beautiful bouquet of choice flowers, which she thinks she would like to keep as a memento of the auspicious occasion. After a time, however, the flowers shrivel up and change brown, the bouquet then becomes an eyesore and a thing in the way, and yet she feels loth to destroy it because of its associations.

If, instead, a few of the most suitable flowers for pressing were taken from the bouquet and mounted on a card with the date, etc., attached, the bride or bridesmaid would have a more convenient and pleasing memento. The flowers might be arranged in a bunch, and the stems tied with a knot of love ribbon.

On page 177 is a design in ivy leaves which can be carried out in two different kinds of flowers; the blossoms of the common daisy and the lesser celandine (our earliest buttercup) being a pretty combination. Two circles should be drawn on the card with some compasses for a guide, round which to arrange the leaves or flowers.

Grasses, mosses, lichens, and skeletonised leaves can all be utilised for making cards;





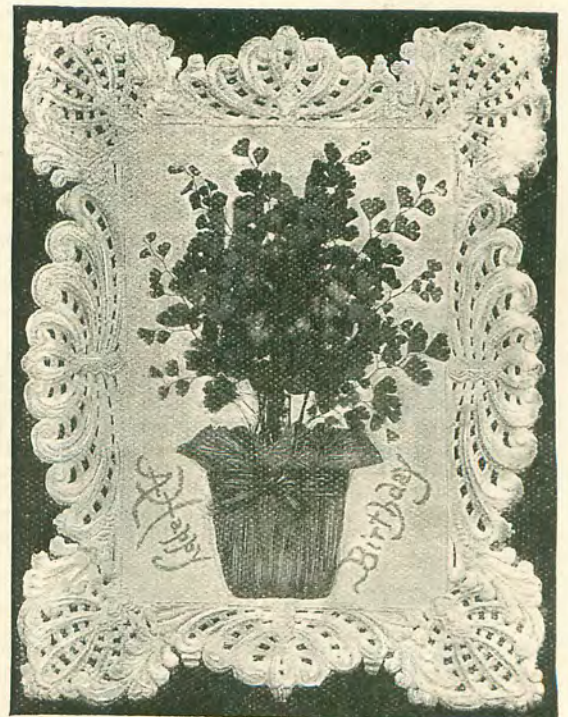
FAMILIAR WILD FLOWERS.



FERN LEAVES.



AUTUMN LEAVES.



FLOWER POT.



and on page 177 is a method of using the pearl-like seed-vessels of the honesty, which is grown in many gardens for winter decoration. The largest and most shapeable should be selected, and a piece cut out with a sharp penknife inside the rim, to make a space in which to paint the ribs of the fan on the card. Gum the seed-vessel round the edges (it is best not to gum it all over), and affix it to the card. Paint the handle and ribs on the card, and whatever subject you choose on the fan.

Seaweeds also make pretty cards. The one shown is made with some which was given to me by a lady who brought them from Australia. Many pretty specimens can be picked up on our own sea-coasts. They should be well washed in fresh water; then put them in a shallow dish of clean water; they will float out naturally. Put a piece of stiff paper underneath the seaweeds and lift them carefully out of the water, so as not to disarrange

them. Put them as they are on the paper between sheets of blotting-paper, and let them remain until the next day; then take them off the paper and arrange them in some dry sheets of blotting-paper, and keep them in press until they are dry. They can then be mounted in the same way as flowers and ferns.

Doubtless there is many a reader of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER who has the good fortune to be able to travel a great deal, either in the British islands or abroad, and if she were to put some sheets of blotting-paper and pieces of pasteboard into her box or portmanteau, she would be prepared to preserve many of the beautiful specimens that come across her path, which she could make into a very interesting collection for herself, or mount and present to her friends who are less fortunate.

I recently saw a very beautiful card, made with flowers from Palestine, with these words underneath—

NAZARETH.

We grew upon the very hills,  
Where Jesus used to stand,  
We blossomed on the lonely paths,  
Of God's own Holy Land.

And if any of you ever have the privilege of visiting the places which were frequented by our Saviour when he lived on earth, I would advise you to gather and preserve some of the flowers that grow there, for anyone would consider it a privilege to possess some, and cards made with them would sell well at a bazaar, and realise good prices too.

Cards made with wild or other flowers in some of the ways I have described, with texts written on them, would be acceptable little gifts to send to hospitals and other places, and would be much appreciated, especially when cut flowers are scarce.

## MARSH MARIGOLDS.

By ADA M. TROTTER, Author of "My Lady Marjorie," etc.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### THE PICNIC TO THE ISLAND.

BOB LOWE departed on a sudden mission to London, leaving Marion a great deal of work on hand, so that in case he might be detained, she, at least, should not have idle hours to dissipate. But he reckoned without his host, very literally speaking, for the next morning as Marion was preparing to work, Mrs. Trelawney looked up from the budget of letters on her table and observed calmly—

"We are going to take holidays during our friend's absence, my child. You have been working so diligently that perfect change will be a good medicine. This is Jack's day, and he is planning a picnic, so run off and see what it is to be."

"Such a lark!" cried Jack, in the height of a gala mood. "Jerry is coming over, you remember Jerry, he is no end jolly, and he rows like a brick, and we are going down to the island in the boats!"

The little river running through the park was perfectly safe for boating, being, in fact, a little more shallow than was agreeable, for the boats continually got aground. Marion had learned by this time to take her turn with the oar, and with Ellie had spent many a lovely afternoon on the water. The excursion to the island, however, was a day's work, and all its charms had been repeatedly dilated upon as a transcendent joy to the eager listener. Now she was to be one of this merry crew, she was to see the green island for herself.

Mr. Brown, with Ethel and Celia in charge, was to row one boat, while the larger one would take the two girls with Jerry and Jack. William would undertake to drive Mrs. Trelawney and the two little boys over by dinner-time, and would take care of the lunch-baskets. Just as it was time to start, Jack was found in the housekeeper's room, giving wild suggestions as to the picnic dinner, mentioning all kinds of impossible delicacies which usually figure at indoor

feasts. Mrs. Mathews, the old housekeeper, listened and smiled, and promised everything; but when the hour to unpack the baskets arrived, Jack had forgotten his desire for trifle and jelly, and was only too thankful for the solid comfort found within the covers.

"Now for a lark!" cried Jack; as the party took their seats. "Hallo, sir, shall we give you right of way?"

"No, let us see who reaches the willows at the bend first," cried Mr. Brown. "Come into line, and Miss Bosco will start us."

This tactful appreciation of the spirit of the hour was a master-stroke of art. The boys were, of course, more than delighted. The tutor, however, had not been of the elect eleven at Oxford for nothing, and made play with the oars in a manner that wrought the enthusiasm of both boat-loads to boiling-point. By the time Jack's boat reached the willows, Mr. Brown was holding on to a drooping branch and resting on his oars.

"After you, sir," said Jerry with an elaborate and solemn bow; but as may well be understood, Mr. Brown did not make use of his superior powers in a manner which would remove him too far from the effervescent spirits in the second boat.

Ellie elected to steer, but was in a provoking humour, and zig-zagged across the stream in an irregular way that was excessively irritating to the boys. Then she gave herself up to a provoking fit of the giggles, and everyone knew that she was in a mood which would be sure to end in some mischievous freak, perhaps landing them all in the shallows, whether they would or no.

"Ellie, now come, Ellie dear, do steer straight! What will Mr. Brown think of us? He goes straight as a die," from Jack. A blank look from Ellie, who, in apparent aimlessness, pulled the boat against the bank, and a moment later sprang ashore.

"Run and get her, Jack," said Jerry, "she'll be out of sight in a minute!"

"Well, you run one way and I will

the other," replied Jack, and without remembering that Marion was not so well practised in boating incidents as themselves, out sprang both boys and left her alone in the boat. Away went the small craft on the swift current, and who knows where it would have stopped had not the curate reached a ready oar to the frightened girl at the bend of the river. Meantime, howls and shrieks of dismay from the bank showed that the deserters were aware of the accident, and all three came flying towards the bend full of self-reproach as they caught sight of Marion's white face.

"Ellie shall not steer any more!" cried Jack, as he took up his oar. "That is, unless she will promise—"

"What shall I promise," asked she, innocently, "to keep you two boys still in the boat?"

"Yes, promise that," said the tactful Jerry, who had a great deal of influence over the wilful little lady. "If we had held to our oars this never would have happened. I hope you will forgive us, Marion, for leaving you so suddenly." Then, turning to the curate, "I assure you, sir, we will take better care of the ladies for the future."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Brown, the twinkle in his eyes meeting that of Jerry's with swift comprehension. As for Ellie, Jerry's amiable magnanimity made a saint of her for the rest of the day; she steered admirably, giggled no more, but related a marvellous story of a robber fortress whose ruins stood on the river bank, which held the boys enthralled.

"Whoop! There is the island!" cried Jack, at length. "Why, how shallow the water is; we shall have to carry the boats ashore. Off with your boots, Jerry, we can't get up to the wharf."

Mr. Brown was already in the water drawing his boat up to the gravel beach, and the delighted boys followed suit, so that the girls were able to take a flying leap from the bows of the boat on to dry land. Soon after they had safely landed,