There's joy in the mountains,
There's life in the fountain,
Small clouds are sailing.

Bills—

The rain is over and gone.

And what a wealth of wild flowers do we now find in the meadows—primroses, daffodils, anemones, may all be seen being chased out of the woods by honeysuckle, where to look for them; and the fern family now begin slowly to awaken after their long rest, and throw up delicate fronds to assure us that the winter has really departed.

But to turn to practical work.

People with a small garden and no greenhouse are often very much interested to know how to make the plots of ground look gay and effective with as little outlay as possible. The present prevalent system of bedding-out plants is both costly and troublesome some for the amateur. Where, however, 'money is no object,' nothing, perhaps, is so satisfactory as a good show of geraniums. These plants begin to bloom about the first week in July, and continue to throw out flowers until the first frosts. They require but little looking after, beyond an evening watering in the heat of the day. The flowers are useful in bouquets, and the leaves, even when the blossom may sometimes fail, give a pleasant, fresh, green appearance to the garden when laid on the table, but will not bear a long period of half-dead places, where they can be frequently supplied with water, are useful and effective. But all these, unless you have a good sized greenhouse, capable of holding heated snow which your old plants can be housed for the winter, must be purchased every summer from the florist at no small cost.

What is to be done then?' exclaims some despairing one. Why, go back to the old muffin method (because out-of-fashion) annuals, and at a nominal expense, and perhaps a little work, they may have flowers for three or four months as pleasant a looking garden as you could wish. We will just call to mind a few of the most desirable of these charming flowers.

First in alphabetical order come the Asters, of which some are tall, some are of medium height, while others are small. A packet of seed of each is readily displayable, if you are minded to spare them so much room in your flower-bed. Of the first sort, choose the tall Victoria; of the second, the German Emperor, the Dwarf Centaurea, or the Dwarf Bouquet. Asters usually bloom throughout the months of August and September, and may therefore be considered as a substitute for the late escape of blooming. One can with some degree of accuracy be secured by the time of sowing the seeds, which should range from the end of March to the end of April. Among half-hardy annuals, the seed should be sown in moderate heat, under glass, in pans or shallow boxes, according to means; and the young seedlings should be transplanted to a frame, or other sheltered place, as soon as is safe to do so. Asters love rich soil, and prefer very old leach-ground, or anything of the nature of manure. They also require a good deal of moisture. Balsams are our next choice. These are more tender and difficult to raise than the Asters, but they will repay any trouble and labor in blooming for you during the balmy days and long nights have disappeared for some months to come, and should begin to busy ourselves with our preparations for the summer. The husbandman likes the dusty day, for he remembers the old proverb that 'a peck of March dust is worth a king's ransom,' and accordingly he does not lose a moment in digging and raking the ground for his necessary planting and sowing. And number agriculturist (like ourselves) must do the same; for, as Wordsworth sings:

'The oldest and the youngest,
Are at work with the strongest.'
operations begin. One packet of each of the following flower-seeds will give a capital display, and make your garden as gay and varied as you could wish—Calendrinas discolor, Chrysanthemum Barbigerum, Chrysanthemum Clarica, Consolida major (to creep over a wall), Cynus (the blue cornflower), Echscholtzia (very pretty, with orange-yellow flowers), Echinacea purpurea (red, yellow, white), Erodium cicutarium (the sunflower—are you aesthetic?), Lapines (blue and white, to stand at the back of your border), Mignonette (somewhat capricious, but when well treated and planted in a deep border it will do well enough), nasturtiums (philosophical insignis not to be despised), Sweet Peas (tied on sticks), Prince’s Feather (very showy), Saponaria officinalis. You may not have room for a border, but the same results may be obtained by putting the plants in the front of the border, or in the flower border. These plants would add much new beauty to your borders and extend their useful period for the rest of the season.

Now a word on the mumul opera. The seeds should be sown on a carefully prepared surface which has been during the winter deep and well broken up, with a liberal supply of manure added thereto if it be at all poor. Sow thin, in round patches, about eighteen inches apart, and ramble over the hill. As the seedlings grow the soil must be kept well watered. Do not leave them to get dry, for they soon die. When they are about two inches high move them while still in the soil to the place you wish to plant them, and then water them abundantly. Do not allow them to be dry, for they will do harm. After a few days move again, and as they grow larger still, and make a beautiful border as early as next April. The young plants should be thinned out to about two inches apart. The mums should be planted in the ground as early as possible, and the soil must be rich and well manured. The plants must be kept well watered, and the soil should be kept moist. The mums should be planted in the ground as early as possible, and the soil must be rich and well manured. The plants must be kept well watered, and the soil should be kept moist. The mums should be planted in the ground as early as possible, and the soil must be rich and well manured. The plants must be kept well watered, and the soil should be kept moist. The mums should be planted in the ground as early as possible, and the soil must be rich and well manured. The plants must be kept well watered, and the soil should be kept moist. The mums should be planted in the ground as early as possible, and the soil must be rich and well manured. The plants must be kept well watered, and the soil should be kept moist.