OLD-FASHIONED GARDENS.

THE notion of putting down a few ideas on

gardens and gardening occurred to me while

staying with a most enthusiastic grower of

flowers in Norfolk this year. The wealth of

flowers that met my gaze every time

I looked out of a window, or for that

matter looked round the rooms—for my

friend was not one of those growers who are afraid

to pluck a flower—might have awakened en-

thusiasm for gardens and gardening in the

breasts of the most indifferent; and as my

friend kindly put at my disposal his own

experience as a grower of flowers for many

years, I determined to make the present

attempt to say something practical, to help

those readers of The Girl's Own Paper who

are interested in the subject of gardening.

That I shall attempt to write a sort of

professional treatise on this inexhaustible

theme (even if I were capable of doing so,

which I am not), for if the Editor consented to

print it (which I doubt), the readers of The

Girl's Own Paper would, I am thinking, not

give me their attention for long. I have

my own ideas about what a garden should be,

as I dearly love many other people. The

subject of gardens has occupied my mind on

and off for the last few years, but it is only

recently that I have attempted to fix my

thoughts on paper. One of my methods of

study ever since I took up art has been to

draw from plant form, and this has led me

to a good many gardens at various times;

and while seated, as I have often been, draw-

ing some flowers that have attracted my attention

by their beauty or quaintness of form, I have

had ample opportunities in the pauses of my

work to note any striking effect of grouping;

contrast of colour, or the way one plant will

throw up and bring into prominence another

one growing in front of it. Nay, these very

effects are often what I have gone into

gardens to seek, as well as for plants whose

forms, flowers, foliage and growth are beauti-

gul; and I shall in these articles dwell as

much on the aesthetic—i.e., beautiful side of

gardening—as on the practical aspect of the

question. Depend upon it, the management of

the flowers in a garden is every whit as

important as the successful growing of plants,

for unless great care be exercised in the placing

of your flowers, much of their beauty will be lost.

Gardening is not a matter of chance, as

some people may imagine. Gardening is an

art, the art of decorating a confined area—for a

garden, no matter how large, is relatively a

small plot of ground—with plants of varied

forms, colours, and growths. If we decorate a

room, we seek for pleasing tints and happy

combinations, so that the eye shall appear

satisfied with a feeling of completeness. And

we should do the same in a garden; and, let

me tell you, a very difficult task it is to put all

your various plants in appropriately, so that
each is seen to its best advantage, and made

the most of. But, say you, perhaps, the

flowers in the field have no landscape gardener
to fit them into their places, and yet who can

deny their beauty? I would answer to such an

one a garden is not nature, but an artificial

product, just as much as a picture is. In a

garden you have in a comparatively small

area flowers that are distributed over a wide

area, and which in their wild state are

never found blooming together. And as you

bring these widely different plants together, it

is your duty to do the best by them. The

hand which collects must also direct. And
then, again, some flowers are so much more

interesting to grow than others, and so much

more beautiful when grown; and when there is

such endless variety as there is now, seeing

that novelities from all corners of the earth are

continually being collected and brought to

England, it behoves us to make a judicious

selection.

I hope my readers don't imagine that by

novelties I refer to hothouse or stove plants—

plants that require a constant artificial atmo-

sphere to keep them alive. Let me emphati-

cally state that my gardening is open-air

gardening, and the plants I grow are hardy

ones, and quite capable of taking care of

themselves.

There is a talk now about herbaceous

borders, and many people are going in entirely

for hardy herbaceous plants. This is a most

excellent move, and one quite in the right

direction. Gardening a few years ago had

resolved itself into having a few beds of

geraniums and roses, two very good things in

their way, but by no means the only flowers

worth cultivating. Indeed, geraniums don't

come under the head of hardy plants, and it is

a question whether they are worth growing,

unless you have plenty of glass for them in the

winter; for, as you know, frost is death to them.

There seems to be some misconception as to

what is meant by hardy herbaceous plants,

and as it is a term often employed I shall

give a definition of it. Herbaceous plants are

those whose stems die down annually, such as

the chrysanthemum and hollyhock; but unless
disease attack the root, the plant sprouts into

life again the following year, often increasing

by the plant throwing out fresh shoots. It is

therefore possible to have


plants—annuals that die after flowering, and

require to be replanted; biennials—plants

that die the second year; and perennials—plants

that live five years after year under favourable

conditions. There are some plants which come,

strictly speaking, under the head of hardy

plants, which by florists are separately classified.

These plants are tuberosous, as the dahlias, and

bulbous, as the daiffodils and lilies.
Old-fashioned gardens were generally rich in hardy herbaceous plants and annuals; and very brilliant and even gorgeous is the effect of an old garden, with its hollyhocks, and white lilies, and bergamot, and Aurum's roots, and yellow larkspur. To look at those flowers is a great pity that these grand old flowers, that came up year after year, often with little care and trouble on our part, should have been allowed to fall into disuse for the newer and what would be considered more fashionable plants. The greatest charm of a garden is variety and profusion of bloom, and diversity of growth and arrangement, and this is far from being realized by beds of geraniums and coloured leaf plants, arranged with a geometrical precision. I like a garden where the eye is sufficiently occupied with the beauty, a garden where one is constantly getting fresh peeps at flowers, and not one that is exhausted by a bird's-eye view. I like order and I like uniformity, but I do not mean nor do I like the repetition of a picture frame, which to my thinking is always better the straighter and plainer it be, so as to throw into relief the beauty of the thing itself in the variety of the garden.

Good hardy herbaceous plants have their distinct uses in a garden. They are always something to start with when you begin your garden. It is a great help to the nature Lover and the gardener, which is true, the quantity of plants a small square of ground will absorb, and it is a great relief to think, as one surveys a long border, that there are so many plants to choose from. But one would think that there would be infinite number of plants, and not a brilliant coloured flowers! and I always lament that there are now comparatively so few real cottage gardens. Now and then you come across some country labourer who is a gardening enthusiast, and who has the strip of ground in front of his cottage gay with many an old-fashioned flower, with here and there perchance a little river from the great house that has given him. And let me tell you some very choice hardy plants are to be found in these cottage gardens, and I know my relique, my old-fashioned flowers. But the trouble with the great house that has given him, and you cannot do better than try to effect a exchange of some of your newer plants for cuttings or seeds of these old-fashioned flowers. Two or three or four of these old-fashioned flowers were much more diligent gardeners than they are now. The wives of the farmers were often great flower-growers. These were the days when there was no financial gardener became so plentiful, and it was looked upon as one of the duties of the female members of the house to see after and tend to the garden. And they naturally, having so much of the work to do themselves, grew plants which gave the best results with the smallest amount of labour, and hence it was that hardy annuals and perennials formed the backbone of the garden.

And your old-fashioned gardeners were not content to have a brilliant display for just two or three months in the year, with scarcely a flower to brighten up the garden all the rest of the year. They planned the whole year round, and the whole twelve that had not some plant blooming; and I hold it to be the duty of all gardeners to try and have a succession of flowers the whole year round, and to that end, I should like to have a show for a brief space, like a display of fireworks succeeded by utter darkness, all the more gloomy by contrast to what has been. Of course, except in very favored situations, it is difficult to have many flowers in midwinter, but as we shall see later on there is something to be had in flower even then.

I have observed that when the event makes it the more prominent—seen the small patch of ground in front of an old lady's cottage that for wealth of colour and variety of plant life is all one garden, and then near by, where a gardener is always kept at work. And what matters it if we see whether the flowers in this cottage garden are plants, and also the plants that are in bloom, exquisitely, as long as the garden presents rich harmonies and subtle contrasts to the eye? While we are trying to force these plants that are not yet in bloom, as you call it, you are missing the opportunity of making your garden a perfect blaze of flowers. Colour is what I look for in a garden, and what is very often reported to be satisfactory, I care not how it be produced, but I must have colour. Flowers have a wonderful way of harmonising themselves, and what in a picture would be intolerable, is in a garden, perhaps, just as gorgeous. Of course you can greatly help the effect by placing together flowers that harmonise or agreeably contrast with each other. It is one of your duties, I have said somewhere else, to do the best for your plants, but still you must not be frightened at getting too much colour in your garden. That time should ever come it will be a sure proof that you have obtained the secret of the garden. And even when all else is said, the grand secret of all gardening. Among old-fashioned flowers may be enumerated the following:—

Butterflies. One of the old-fashioned flowers is the hyacinth, and the old-fashioned "hose in now" of all colours. Double wallflowers when in bloom make as handsome a bed of flowers as anything in a garden can show. While staying this spring in a little country village on the Thames, I was struck with the beautiful rich appearance of a bed of wallflowers (double and single), from pale yellow to deep purple. The great variety of colour in the wallflower is one of its most striking features. Wallflowers are generally grown from seed, but can also be propagated from cuttings.

Dianthus or male pinks are very showy in beds and borders, and as it is a hardy perennial plant, and will stand the worst the weather can do to it, and will bloom from March till late autumn, and is more brilliant at certain times than at others. Raised easily from cuttings in almost any soil, and will bloom from July to late in the fall. They are very much given to "sporting," that is, sending off varieties different to the parent plant, and some of these spots are very fine and true, and well worth propagating from cuttings taken from the "sport." Dianthus stratiatus multiflorus (French) is the best variety.

The monumental Chinese pinks soon broadcast are deserving of attention.

Delphinium bollardianum, a lovely sky blue, is the most beautiful of the delphiniums. It can be perpetuated by division or from seed. After throwing up magnificent spikes of flowers in May and June, it can be cut down, and will in the autumn throw up a sheet of short spikes of blooms. It is a very welcome addition to the garden beauties of this time of the year. It can be planted either in the autumn or spring. There are many varieties of colour, from pale mauve to the deepest purple, and planted against a dark background of yew, are most striking in the corners of a garden.

Phlox decussata is the late flowering her- baceous plant, and is a very handsome one. It is better to take cuttings from early shoots, as when the root throws up many shoots you can take the surplus ones for striking, as it is never necessary to leave more than three or four stems to a plant.

Phlox subulata is an earlier flowering variety, with a dwarfer habit than the former.

The dwarf white Campanula (C. grandiflora alba), and C. persicifolia alba, are single and double, and are some of the choicest of the campanulas.

The Columbia blue, Campanula lactiflora, has bright white, blue, and violet flowers, and is one of the most striking.

A. chrysanthemum, with its many coloured flowers and glaucous, green foliage, is one of the most striking.

Lysichiton cheloneoides, single and double, is a native plant that blooms in the fall. It is a high, having dense compact foliage, covered with heads of scarlet or crimson flowers.

The sweet-scented bergamot (Monarda didyma) is a native plant, a native plant, and one distinctly worth growing, if it were for the scent of its foliage alone. It grows about three feet high, and flowers in distinct whorls of a brilliant scarlet colour.