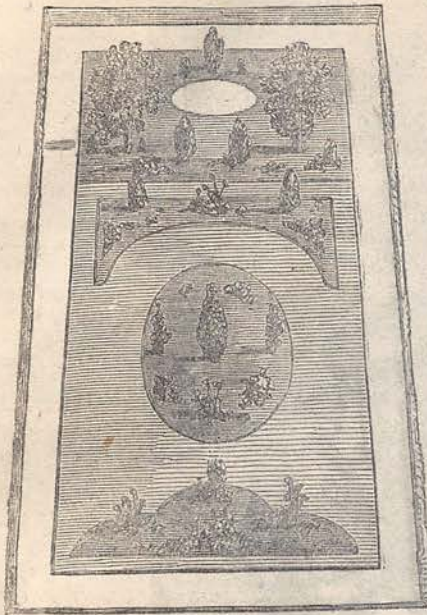


The Amateur Gardener.

BY GEORGE CLENNY.



It is curious to watch the progress of gardening in the fore courts of thousands of buildings in the suburbs of great cities and towns, and more especially where the builders of interminable rows of cottages leave the tenants to exercise their own tastes in the laying out of their single rods of ground; but, where he ventures to lay out the plan himself, or to get some third-rate jobbing gardener, or garden-labourer, to contract for the whole row or rows, there is a sameness that is wearying to the eye of the outsiders, and not pleasing to the inmates.

There is a monotony that pleases nobody, pretty as a single garden might appear; and, in a general way, the owner buys a "job lot" of trees and shrubs that nobody can value; and a man no sooner finds himself in a row of squares or circles, decorated with measly laurels and consumptive lilacs, than he wants to make a change for the better. He sets about his work like a "navvy," with a sort of consolation, that if he should fail he cannot make his front garden worse.

We feel a great inclination to make it better; and, first of all, we should say, never introduce a deciduous tree or shrub: it painfully reminds us of winter before it comes. Deciduous subjects are pretty enough when they form a subordinate part of a plantation, but in small plots of ground we require things that look green and lively all through the dreary season. Among the follies committed by jobbing gardeners and builders' garden-labourers, we may mention a prevalent blunder—narrow paths; as if the place was meant to look at, but by no means to tread upon. People who adopt such silly work seem to forget that the same full-grown men and women have to walk upon them that move about the streets.

We could find many gardens with paths scarcely wide enough for anybody to stand on to weed. In fact, many who think themselves gardeners will lay out a fancy front, with gravel-walks, as they call them, a foot wide, whereas two feet is the narrowest that any man of common sense would tolerate before the invention and adoption of crinolines! Many laughed at us because we widened our paths from five to six feet on account of the fashion, for our box-edgings got awfully damaged until we robbed our side borders of six inches each. Leaving, however, the fashion to wear itself out, no path ought to be less than two feet wide, however small the garden. The direction of the paths must be according to the intended form of the beds and borders. We have given a sketch above, which may be varied according to the fancy of the person intending to lay out the borders.

The first step is to dress and trench the ground, and then level it; remember, then, that everything straight can be marked out with a garden line, stretched tight in whatever direction you want it, and that, by patting the line down on the ground, you make a distinct line on a smooth surface; you may then stretch it in any other direction where straight lines are required. If you want to make circles, or

segments of circles, drive a stake down, make a loop with a bit of string just the length you want the circle from the centre, and, with the point of a stick, walk round and mark the ring, supposing always that, by means of the lines and circles you have marked out, you plan, dig out the paths, and throw the stuff you remove on the places intended for beds. In a general way, six inches will be deep enough for ordinary paths; and you must be careful to chop down the sides exactly with the line. The paths are filled up with any rough stones at the bottom, and about two inches of gravel at the top. But this leaves the gravel and beds without anything for an edging.

It is, however, quite necessary to have edging of some kind as a finish. For cheapness, use white arabis, which may be had at a shilling per 100, and if planted with a dibble three inches apart, a hundred will do eight yards. This is a pretty evergreen dwarf plant, blooming white early in the spring, and continuing in flower a month or more. The dearest edging, and the best, is box, but this should be planted before the gravel is put down. The sides of the beds should be trodden down hard before they are cut into shape, and the edges should be very neat and sloping. The box being prepared by tearing it into very small pieces, and the tops cut square, you place them side by side, so that they stand an inch above the level of the soil, and you bank them up in their places with the earth that you have chopped into the path. The sides against which you place and press them being hard, you cannot well go wrong. Then, when you fill up with the gravel, the outline is perfect, and you have only to roll the gravel walk, which should be exactly even with the bed where the box edging meets it, and raised in the middle a little to throw the wet on to the beds.

Never raise the beds—keep them flat, for they have got all the benefit of the rain. As to planting, use those shrubs that are always full of leaf, holly, laurel, laurustinus, arbutus, arbor-vitæ, yew, and such-like, and do not plant too thickly.

Oddities.



OLD HARRY, an innocent street showman of the last century, is accurately portrayed in the above sketch. Once he was familiar to all Londoners, from Moorfields to Temple Bar; but he died before our grandfathers were born, and his curious menageries vanished from the streets. Old Harry was accustomed to exhibit in the box which is slung before him, three or four small animals, and to hear him expatiate on the natural history of these creatures was the most interesting part of the entertainment. Harry was no pretentious cheap Jack, pouring forth an endless stream of vulgar slang, but a really well-informed fellow, who knew how to express himself in an intelligible way. He loved the little animals in the box—the hedgehog in particular—with a sincere affection; and, when the poor hedgehog died, his epitaph was written on the front of the box. Harry and his menagerie were popular favourites, and well deserved all the approbation he received. His singular

figure, odd ways, and box of curiosities, were long remembered, after he, like his poor hedgehog, had quitted for ever this world's stage.

NATURAL ANTI-PATHIES.

The seeds of our aversion and antipathy to particular things are often lodged so deep that in vain we demand a reason from ourselves for what we do or do not love. Thus, Shakespeare makes Shylock urge before the Ducal Court of Venice—

"There is no firm reason to be rendered
Why one should not abide a gaping pig,
Why he a harmless seeming cat,
Why he a swollen bargaine. * * *
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and certain loathing
I bear Antonio."

The following curious facts, illustrative of these antipathies, will be found interesting:—Cardinal Cardona would fall into a swoon upon the smell of a rose; Laurentius died from their odour; Cardinal Carassa would never permit any one to approach him who had a rose about him, and during the season of roses shut himself up from society; rue had a similar effect on a veteran warrior, who invariably fled at the smell of it. There are many cases in which the sight or smell of apples has produced sickness, fainting, and bleeding at the nose. A Neapolitan princess could never touch meat without falling into a fit; on Guainerius pork produced all the effects of poison; another instance of this is related of a gentleman who swooned at the mere sight of a pig. Beef, and indeed all kinds of meat, have been equally repugnant, as fish of all sorts is to the writer of this notice. An old writer tells of a person of "prime quality," who fainted at the sight of an eel, even though brought to table inclosed in a paste. Johannes Henricus could never touch pepper; and the Count of Arnstadt fell into a swoon at the presence of olive oil, in however small a quantity. There is the story told of a boy who, if at any time he ate of an egg, his lips would swell and his face rise in black and purple spots, while his mouth frothed as though he had taken poison; still more singular are such instances as that of Germanicus, who could never endure the sight of a cock; of that nobleman who was seized with illness on seeing any elderly woman, and who at last died from such a cause; of that of the man who was attacked with convulsions in the left hand on the sight of a dog; of the officer who always trembled on crossing a bridge; of the girl who fainted at the sound of a bell; of the nun who fell into fits at the sight of a beetle; of the Italian nobleman who was thrown into a cold sweat at the sight of a hedgehog; and of the young German who entertained an unspeakable antipathy to cats. Numerous other instances might be given, but these are enough to show that these sensations are not within our own control, although there is no doubt they may become so, to some extent, by judicious treatment.

Facts and Scraps.

THERE are a good many words that do not sound as they look; but, perhaps, the following varieties are a little out of the common:—

"Wife, make me some dumplings of dough,
They're better than meat for my cough;
Pray, let them be boiled till hot through,
But not until they're heavy and tough.
Now, I must be off to my plough,
And the boys (when they've had enough)
Must keep the flies off with a bough,
While the old mare drinks at the trough."

He that from small beginnings has deservedly raised himself to high station, may not always find that full satisfaction in the possession of his object that he anticipated in the pursuit of it; but although the individual may be disappointed, the community are benefited, first by his exertions, and secondly by his example.

SOME men of a secluded and studious life have sent forth from the closet or the cloister beams of intellectual light that have agitated courts and revolutionised kingdoms; like the moon, that, far removed from the ocean, and shining upon it with a serene light, is yet the chief cause of all the eddyings and flowings of that world of waters.

As the diamond is found in the darkness of the mine, as the lightning shoots with most vivid flashes from the gloomiest cloud, so does mirthfulness frequently proceed from a heart susceptible of the deepest melancholy.

DON QUIXOTE thought he could have made beautiful bird-cages if his brain had not been so full of ideas of chivalry. Most people would succeed in small things if they were not troubled with great ambitions.