

died for, to bring us to Himself an' to God Almighty; but I don't rightly understand, Missy; only I be goin' to learn."

Una sat silent for some minutes. Her own secret was forgotten under the pressure of these more serious thoughts.

Then Kathie began, with kindling eyes, to speak of the lifeboat.

"Wild horses won't tear it from me, Missy. I'll give Jim up willin'ly to work at so great a job. Oh! it will be grand to save the poor wrecked sailors! I don't rightly see how it will be done; but when

the boat be ready, things will fit in, I reckon!"

"But, Kathie, do you understand the importance of keeping the secret? If Martin, Enoch, and others once heard about it, they would come and smash the boat to pieces!"

"Ay," said Kathie gravely; "an' the lads would be knocked to pieces, too. There would be murder, sure enough, if wreckin' an' robbin' were to be put a stop to! Missy, my Jim's life be in it, and mine too. Rest easy about my tongue!"



The Garden in Early Spring

By E. Kay Robinson

RECENT gardening experiences suggest that a few hints about wind might have been useful a month ago. The great thing in dealing with wind in a garden is firmness. Be positive and insistent in placing things exactly where you wish them to remain; because it is a great comfort to know on which side of the house you may look for them next morning. During the gales that we have had lately this was no certainty. Indeed, for some hours the other day it was almost feared that our cat, who had been left out over-night, would never get her fur the right way again.

After a prolonged and powerful storm it is interesting to observe how a sturdy unstaked plant in an exposed situation will have worked itself round and round till it stands, or rather lolls, in a funnel-shaped hole in the ground, and how its branches have whipped a smooth hard surface on the flower-bed round it, or even cut an accurate circle in the mould. Also you can observe how much vegetable fibre large-leaved plants contain when their foliage has been reduced to shreds by the battering of the ceaseless wind. These things are more interesting to observe in a neighbour's garden.

To avoid the experience you should tie your loose plants betimes—about three

weeks ago last Monday would have been a good date this year, if you had left it undone till then—to suitable sticks. If the stick is too stout and blunt you may find, on thrusting it into the ground, that it carries the plant down underground. This is because its blunt end covers so many tough rootlets. If the stick is large and too lightly inserted, an extra blast may carry it away and the plant with it. Also a thin and flexible plant, tied to too slender a rod will gradually work it out of the ground during the evening and use it like a flail upon the surrounding vegetation all night. Never give opportunities like this to an evil-disposed plant, but measure them all for their fetters. There is art in tying them too. You may make the ligature just a shade too tight and then be surprised next morning to find that the plant has flopped over at that point, or you may make it too loose and find that it has fallen down like an untidy garter and that the stick and the plant are standing coldly apart. But the great thing in tying plants in wind is to keep your temper. When you have the stake in position the wind will often blow the strand of raffia out of your hand and carry it away—just a yard or so. You lean over gingerly to pick it up, still keeping the stake and the plant—perhaps a thorny one—in position with one

hand, when the wind blows your coat-tails over your back and carries the string just another foot or two, playfully rolling it over and over to the middle of the flower-bed. Be deliberate at this juncture, else in your haste to recover the string you will certainly plant your foot upon your best hyacinths.

When you think that you will confine your gardening to a sheltered corner on a fine breezy morning do not be annoyed when the wind suddenly whisks dust and dead leaves at you out of the corner. Remember that providence so tempers the wind to a walled garden that it can make an all-round cannon on to you off any angle. If you are tying a loose creeper to a trellis you will also discover the interesting scientific fact that the wind can blow through both sides of the trellis at once, and that if you have a covered walk it will use this as a funnel to blow through at you when you pass the end of it with both hands occupied so that you cannot hold your hat. If there are boys in the house, the wind is likely to whirl on to the lawn various unsightly articles that they have left in the shrubbery; but do not be irritated into throwing such things over the fence without accurately calculating the force of the wind on the other side of it. I have known the old brim of a straw hat to behave like a boomerang in such circumstances and playfully suspend itself upon the creeper over the spare bedroom window whence ladders had to be procured from the barn to remove it. Thus gardening in windy weather teaches self-control.

But even in early spring gardening is not all wind and fury. Near the sea-coast lack of shelter for a new garden in the early year may nearly break your heart; but even there each bulb that flowers, nay, each bulb that sends up its stout, healthy looking spike of green above the soft brown mould, is a joy. From the swinging white bells of the snow-drops, the golden tapers of the crocus and the azure star-eyes of the glory-of-the-snow, to the delicate tints and tender graces of the daffodils, the rainbow hues of hyacinths, and the blazing glory of the tulips, the procession of spring marches onward in a crescendo of colour that gladdens the mind and quickens

the pulse with the same mixture of satisfaction and high hope as that with which one views the preliminary march-past of gay squadrons of cavalry leading the way for a royal pageant. For the charm of the beauty of spring lies in its foretaste of summer. It impels us to buy flower-seeds forthwith and sow them. So inevitable is this reaction of "spring-like" weather upon the human mind that florists could construct a meteorological calendar backwards, always telling us what kind of weather we had yesterday from the number of orders for seeds which they received this morning. And in sowing seeds, it may also be a generous spring impulse which prompts you to scatter them thickly because so few will come up: yet the wiser sower is he who distributes seeds in the niggardly spirit of one who has but a penny packet for half an acre. So will you save yourself much wasteful labour in "thinning out" or the alternative of weedy, starved, overcrowded, short-lived weaklings in summer; and more than half of the art of sowing seeds lies in marking the spot with a base, utilitarian label. Amid the changing circumstances of a thriving garden in spring, memory becomes amazingly fallacious: and three weeks hence an isolated bare patch of soil will be inviting you to fill it with seeds of some striking crimson annual, when a little label would warn you that it already forms part of a harmony that-is-to-be in mauve and scarlet. Why, by the way, should this combination of two unrelated colours be satisfying to the human eye, while the addition of crimson makes it loathsome? Artists may reduce colour-harmonies to rules; but who can give us reasons for the horror that we have for colours that, to our eyes, "clash"? Yet amateur gardeners who did not keep their bulbs properly sorted will have bizarre sensations on their colour nerves when a magenta-crimson tulip suddenly displays itself in a group of vermilion and gold.

But the tulips are not yet: and meanwhile the glamour of spring and the quick succession of charm upon charm in the filling flower-beds leaves no time for much mourning over mistakes. There is no day from February till May, save when lingering

frost binds or snow covers the ground, that a well-ordered garden does not yield you a new joy. For horticultural purposes we control now the botany of both hemispheres and most latitudes; and the dainty spring-flowers of semi-arctic regions give mid-winter blossoms in our temperate zone; while you may gather the May flowers of the Alps in a suburban rock-garden in March. There are more of these Northern and Alpine gems than there are gardeners in the British Isles who know them by sight or name. Then come the sweet company of wall-flowers, old and new, single and double, and their near relatives, the snowy arabis, the blue and purple aubrietia, and the gleaming yellow gold-dust—as the alyssum of the rocks is so well called. The wind-flower anemones, almost endless in number and styles of beauty, in colours that range from purple-black to snowy white, through every shade of scarlet, pink, and blue; the columbines, fantastic in shape of bloom and unlimited in hue; the early flowering clematises, especially the mountain clematis, covering large spaces with its veil of maiden purity; the hardy plants of our own country, such as the king-cup or marsh marigold, a blaze of royal yellow in moist ground meet for the coronation year; the lavish primroses, cowslips and oxlips with their rainbow-tinted relatives from many lands, besides florists' hybrids and varieties, the polyanthus of banded velvet and the auricula, each bloom a mosaic of deep contrasts and subtle harmonies. Is there any plant more glorious than the pæony of spring? more blazing than the Oriental poppy? more curious than the

Colchic hellebore and its quaint hybrids? more dainty than the fritillary? All these and the massed wealth of bloom in flowering shrub and tree we see in endless perspective behind the few bold blooms that splash our borders with their clustered stars in early March. The first wild violet of the year is not the sweetest, nor the finest; but it is by far the dearest, for it is the herald of the host of beauty, the first-born of the woodland's spring.

If you have taken pleasure in working for your garden in winter, you may be forgiven some indulgence in ecstasies in early spring, for the joy of new-born blossoms in the sheltered nooks which you provided for them is enhanced by the privacy of your pleasure. The flower-beds of summer almost shout with their loud colours to all who pass within a score of yards; but the whisper of the tiny scented hyacinth from the snow-capped mountains of the east, as it rears its fragrant three inches of pale azure from a tuft of glossy leaves between your rockery's blocks of quarry stone, which mimic the Alps at one inch to the mile, carries more tender meaning than the full chorus of colour in July.

But, alas! last year our spring flowers were more "forward" on the First of March than they are to-day, and yet in mid-March we were gathering starved foreign thrushes in our snow-veiled, wind-swept fields. Perhaps the chief joy of pleasant "garden" days in February or March lies, after all, in the fear of ill to follow. We dare not rejoice too loud: and the sweetest sentiment speaks always in the lowest key.

