## The Closing of Day.







## OUR ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW.

EHOLD the leaves are out, the birds are in full song, and though now and then the wind will still indulge in a vigorous romp, it plays no worse antic than to shake over us the sweet blossoms of hawthorn or peartree. Croquet sets are out again, lawn tennis is remembered, and it is time to think about our annual flower show. We have flower

shows everywhere,
now. They may seem most
natural in sweet country
places, where an awning can
be so easily swung from tree
to tree, in the school-house
playground, and the head gardeners from

the two Halls will be the judges, likely to be just indeed, if their opinions will agree! Rich indeed may be the flower shows in these places where sunshine, and pure rain, and fresh air are the common

property of all, and where prizes may be offered not only for home-grown and carefully cultivated beauty, but for diligently collected and beautifully arranged wildlings—representative, perhaps, of the county flora. At such a flower show, held in a little town perched on the rocky hills beside a Highland frith, we have seen glorious bunches of wild flowers and shrubs, which must have involved hours of active exercise, with its concomitants of health and happiness. And at the same show we have seen a number of light and graceful things—amongst them a crown which might have served for a fairy queen—wrought in various grasses by the busy fingers of a poor herdwoman, a proud and happy woman that day, tasting all the sweetness of distinction, in the praise of familiar and honoured voices.

Nevertheless, though not so beautiful as the country gathering, far more pathetic and interesting is a city flower show. For it tells of a strong instinct for beauty and nature, surviving where bricks and hard pressure have done their best to squeeze it out. The city flower show must needs be held where it can be. Some fortunate parishes have open places at command, not absolutely treeless, nor quite destitute of turf, but these are the exception. Before the time of Board schools, and the chance of their asphalted enclosures, many city flower shows were fain to hide their sweetness inside the local school-room, and the poor flower-rearers trembled for their pets in the dry