

HORTICULTURAL.

OUR PLANTS AND FLOWERS.—There is certainly a good deal to be said for ribbon-borders. It is a great mistake to sacrifice one's garden to such things, but at the same time we may gain great beauty by making use of them now and then—so much depends on adapting our arrangements to place.

Some people, mad after ribbons, would cut up a pretty lawn for them; others, devoted to "pin-cushion beds," would turf a long, narrow strip for the pleasure of making these pin-cushions.

Now, might it not be far better to keep the lawn for flower-beds, and to use the long border for what there suggests itself—namely, a ribbon-border, formed in such a way as never to be quite bare? As a rule, ribbon-borders are rather awkward to manage, because one flower failing to blossom at the proper moment, or one plant growing rampantly, or one other plant being *miffy*, has the tiresome consequence of throwing out the whole pattern. When ribbons are used, therefore, they should be woven of flowers, the growth and habits of which are perfectly well-known to us; and people who mean to make ribbons another year, should always be matching plants in their own minds for that purpose at the time that they see them growing. Thus they are reminded of flowers that will be flowering at the same time; and they should always note, too, any striking result or contrasts, being such plants as may do another year to beautify this said border. Ribbons have become far too elaborate; the prettiest borders still are surely the simpler patterns—two chains, for instance, simply crossing and recrossing—the chain being laid on turf, or filled up with a suitable color. Then the walls and borders under walls may be made brilliant and natural by the use of well-chosen flowers. Suppose a pattern thus:

1. An evergreen hedge—a low terraced-bed running along it.

2. Against the hedge, here and there, were white rose-trees.

3. All along, and between the rose-trees a thick belt of tall-trained dark-purple heliotrope. Heliotrope grows well on walls, and looked perfectly natural growing thus as a background.

4. A dense massive line of beautiful even-growing Tom Thum geraniums—a mass of dark, velvety leaves, and of glowing scarlet flowers.

5. A perfect shower, falling all down the low wall of luxuriant-growing pearly-white geraniums—the white ivy-leaf sort. These could be replaced by white verbenas.

A ribbon might be made here in autumn with a background of purple German aster, a center row of deep, clear rose-color, and the hanging fringe made of white verbenas.

Another arrangement for summer could be made thus:

1. Laurel hedge.

2. Alternate standard trees and tall white lilies.

3. A row of some blue or purple flower, a bright Mexican blue one, or a more slaty flower, or else blue campanulas.

4. Rose-colored geraniums of a sort with plain green leaves, as the light variegated foliage, pretty as it is, detracts so from the flowers.

5. A line of blue dwarf lobelias; or, if plain foliage was used for 4, there might be a line of variegated geraniums not allowed to flower for 5; and then for 6, the blue lobelia, or a row of nemophilas. You must decide, however, on two blues that either *match* each other or make a decided difference of *shade*, *not color*, or else the lines 3 and 5 will make the whole thing look muddy. For instance, there must not be Mexican blue and nemophila.

Another beautiful ribbon is most effective:

Scene—a long walk; a woody bank on one side, a wall about five feet high on the other.

1. Laurel hedge growing along the stone wall and clipped flat.

2. Row of hollyhocks and dahlias, planted alternately. (I should add orange or tiger-lilies for a show before the others bloom.)

3. A line of double white feverfew.

4. A line of compact scarlet geraniums.

5. A row of mignonette, for sweetness.

6. A row of nemophila.

The feverfew, the mignonette, and the nemophila sow themselves. They are merely covered in autumn with a sifting of light soil, and being autumn sown, blossom very early in the following spring. Supposing one saw they had failed, seeds, of course, would be sown in the spring.

Petunias and verbenas are, of course, most serviceable plants often. If one wants a clear, good pattern to look down on in a sunk-panel sort of garden, to look down on from a terrace, or from a window, no flowers are more effective. Scarlet, purple, and white verbenas, and the very pretty neutral gray-colored sort; the white and mauve petunias; the various shades of pink and rose verbenas, are quite like a box of colors with which one may paint any pattern. But in these flat things every plant should be strictly confined to such as the geometrical or kaleidoscope style, or to those which are formed of patterns and chains interlacing. Nothing is more effective than a long line of purple and another of scarlet verbenas, weaving in and out, and making together an open chain, the inside filled with white, and the whole framed in green. A chain like this might wind round the edges of a little lawn, and in the center there might be a deodara, if you do not wish to have the whole pattern flat, on a raised rustic bed or basket made of split wood, left with the bark on. A pretty pattern for this is three stems brought together supporting a round basket, or else two crossed posts supporting an oval basket. The shape of the center ornament should accord with that of the ground encircled by the flower-chain. Scarlet flowers and white creepers would be pretty for the center. Contrive to put in some heliotrope and mignonette for their scent.

If both the frame and basket are objected to, there might be, of course, a center bed—either a geometrical pattern or else a rather dark, massive bed, to which the gay outer chain would be a light, bright border.

Dark-blue heliotrope, edging widely a mass of scarlet geranium, would be as suitable as anything. The white in the chain being perfect in itself, and filling thus the place of the "highest light" in the picture, it is quite unnecessary to repeat it in the center, and would only produce the effect of those marvelous drawings in which the lights are arranged impartially on each side. The pattern would be lovely for a spring garden, and easily arranged.

Yellow and purple crocuses would form the long winding chain, and a clear white crocus would fill up the links.

The center bed ought to have some evergreen in it. One sunk for the winter would be quite easy to move away later, and a quite flat winter garden does look so cold. An ancuba or a fir would give some warmth or depth to the picture. Then trace a narrow border of cloth-of-gold crocuses all round the edge of the center bed, putting large mixed bunches, or a wide mixed border of purple and white within it. Large groups of snow-drops or of yellow tounesols, or of red Van Thol tulips, might be placed in the center bed here and there.

As the cloth-of-gold crocus flowers rather before the larger sorts, it might be sometimes arranged to have the chain-links of purple and white filled up with cloth-of-gold, which, on going off, might be just drawn up gently and unbrokenly, and replaced by brilliant groups of the glowing red Van Thols or of Vermillion Brilliant—a tulip whose fiery glow is invaluable in spring gardens.

These flat, sunk gardens look lovely with steep, green banks around them; but, in planting crocuses, if it is at all damp, some sand under each clump is useful; and if mice abound, they are not partial to soot.

HORTICULTURAL.

Root-Work.—There are many gardens where one large bed and a border, or a few small beds, are all one can have; and in a small inclosed space these beds are low, shady, and damp. The rock-work plants flourish then when few other things would succeed, and this dispenses with regular "keeping up" more than any other sort of flower-bed, so that a lady can manage it herself pleasantly. But rock-work forced in, in a very highly-kept garden, in the midst of neat flower-beds, or borders of some sort of stone, is most utterly wretched, and out of all kind of keeping.

There are great practical differences to be made in town and country rock-work and root-work. In town, for instance, the latter is nearly or quite inadmissible. Every one must have noticed the apparent discrepancies in the gardening-books—some speaking of old wood as invaluable for a garden, others, again, entreating you to cast it out as poison. Each of these, however, was true in its own place and way. There is no soil in the country to equal decayed wood. The crumpled contents of old trees were invaluable in our gardens, and for green-house plants in the country; but in town old wood is most dangerous: it gets covered with some kind of fibre, and kills and spoils everything it comes near. Burning it is the only way of getting rid of its infection. For towns, then, we must try rock-work—in the country, root-work; and as the former is cold and dampish, and chiefly suited to ferns or mosses, we will go on at once to the country root-work. For this you should secure some sort of drainage. Do not let a great hole in the wood be filled with soil and planted, while there is no possible outlet for the water, which, accumulating after a heavy storm, would not dry up gradually by evaporation, as it does in flower-pots, escaping at the sides, and as it does in beds, from surface evaporation. The thick, moist wood retains it; the plants themselves shadow the surface. What wonder if yellow leaves follow closely on sodden roots, and if the plants die when the roots are rotten?

Chinks and clefts in the wood, holes with some bore or outlet, holes, too, that run down to the ground, are what the plants thrive in. Then, too, there are little holes, too much on the side and too small to be hopelessly soaked—a vigorous plant would consume all the water they could contain. These holes may be made much of, and filled with good leaf mould, and a whole quantity of separate nooks may be thus provided. Then, for planting the clump, let each plant, above all things, have its proper aspect. Ferns, mosses, and Alpine plants, and the beautiful little woodruff, should be planted to the east and north. People who have seen abroad the extraordinary sort of "soil" in which the Alpine plants, especially, grow, will understand how unhappy they must feel in close, heavy earth, after their shambly, gravelly, porous, stony bed, mixed only here and there with an atom of loam, or of leaf soil. Drainage is thus emphatically the thing Alpine plants require. Amongst these plants we may as well give a list of a few pretty sorts.

Soldanella alpina, a little purple flower; *Alyssum saxatile*, little white sprays; *Campanula punilla alba*; the lovely white hair-bell and the blue hair-bell, also; only these like sunshine also very much.

Linaria cymbalaria and *alba alpina*, two pretty tooth-flaxs, one purple and one white; the leaves of the former are lovely for hanging down. Phlox, especially the trailing kinds. *Saponaria ocnoides*, a bright pink flower. Thyme of various sorts, and vinca, or blue, red, and white periwinkles, which grow capitally in chinks, or at the bottom of a clump, trailing half on the grass and half on the roots. Veronics and forget-me-nots; and last, not least, the various kinds of saxifrage, the old London pride being by no means forgotten amidst these. This list, with ferns and hart's tongue, and plenty of moss, and the *Spergula pififer*,

which—if not always suitable to supersede grass in lawns, as people once tried to find out it was, is, at least, a charming covering for patches we want greened over—will be, at least, sufficient to give abundant choice of tenants of the north and east of the clump. Try some violets, too, east and west, because when they *do* grow they grow well thus.

On the west and south sides there are abundant things, also, to choose from of a much gayer nature. It is only white, blue, and yellow that we can get for the shade. Here, however, we may have all kinds of brilliant flowers, only the more brilliant they are the more they want a green frame-work, and the more, very often, their roots require shade. Flowers use an incredible quantity of water. A plant in flower runs dry a few hours after such watering as would at other times content it for many days. And, of course, shade to the roots lessens evaporation. Some of the prettiest are those stumps which have much ivy. They look, also, all the more natural for having it. Now, ivy may "grow on walls;" but its roots require thorough good soil for all that. You will best get, then, a good growth of ivy by planting in ground that is thoroughly well manured, watering it frequently overhead, and also giving it soap-suds—that best of all manures in the flower-garden—to its roots. The soap-suds keep away insects, instead of increasing their number. You should take a shoot of ivy gently from some wall, finding a piece with a nice little white bunch of unfaded roots. Put these in a hole in the ground, or in a large cleft of the wood, and fill up entirely with silver sand. The ivy does best pegged firmly in, and the shoots should be fastened down as they grow, to make them put out roots everywhere.

A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER-BED.—Mark out an oval flower-bed, for this will look beautifully in a lawn, or on a large grass-plot. If there is room, it should be eighteen feet long and eleven feet wide, or in those proportions. Get some larch stakes, about three feet long, and two inches and a half in diameter, drive them firmly into the ground, side by side, leaving a foot and a half above the ground as a fence to the bed; fill up the space inside with good mould, and plant outside the stakes common ivy. What a pretty edging this same common ivy forms!

Ivy edgings, by clipping, become as thick as box ones; and if planted around a pond, or where there is much moisture, grow quite rapidly. But to return to the border. The ivy trimming round the stakes will keep them in place, and form a mass of green hold for the planting. In the center of the bed put six scarlet salvias, with a plant of the variegated *salvia fulgens* at each end of this row; encircling them with a row of blue ageratum, and around the ageratum a border of the Frogmore scarlet geranium, then a circle of yellow, (the Sultan calceolaria,) and at the very edge, mixing well with the dark ivy leaf, a row of the white ivy-leaved geranium.

OUR NEW COOK-BOOK.

Every receipt in this Cook-Book has been tested by a practical housekeeper.

MEATS.

Breast of Lamb Stewed with Vegetable Marrow.—Cut a breast of lamb into about half a dozen pieces, and fry them of a pale brown color. Peel a vegetable marrow, remove the seeds, and cut it into slices about half an inch thick; an old marrow will answer as well as a young one. Rub the bottom of a stewpan over with a little butter to prevent it from burning, and put in the vegetable marrow, and over it the lamb, with a seasoning of chopped parsley, pepper, salt, and Cayenne; let it stew very gently for an hour. When it is done, add two tablespoonfuls of catchup; put the meat into the middle of the dish with the marrow and gravy round it, and serve hot. It is a delicious dish.