

## TIMBER TREES AS INDOOR ORNAMENTS.

BY MRS. JANE WEAVER.

Underneath the boughs of the oak may be found at the present season multitudes of ripe acorns that have fallen amidst the decaying leaves. These may, with the expenditure of an amount of trouble that is not worth a thought, be made to furnish most interesting and pleasing ornaments for our sitting-rooms—their great attraction being that, living and growing, they are ever fresh and ever new. The simple process is as follows: Select a large, well-grown acorn, and by the aid of a very stout needle run a strong thread through it, in such a manner that the acorn shall hang with the pointed end straight downwards. Now put the acorn so threaded in a clear glass bottle (for this purpose an empty gum bottle answers very well), place the two ends of thread over the opposite sides of the neck, and secure them by wrapping a few turns of fine thread or string around the neck, and fix the turns by tying the ends together. This done, pull upon the ends of the thread that pierces the acorn until the latter hangs fairly point downwards in the very centre of the bottle. Now pour in a little water until it just reaches, and no more, the point of the acorn. Then cut a small piece of card, with vandyked edges, which can be turned down so as to form a loose cover. The whole operation is complete, and the result is shown in Fig. 1.

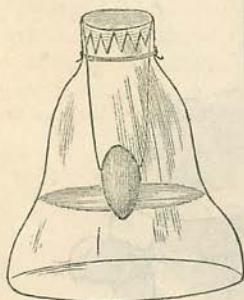


Fig. 1.

If the acorn so prepared be kept in an ordinary sitting-room or placed on the mantelshelf, it will be seen that after a few days, more or less dependent on the warmth of the room, the shell will open at the point, and a white radicle or long root will grow downwards into the water. This root will go on elongating for weeks. In a state of nature it would become the tap root of the oak; but, as in its glassy prison it cannot

obey the attraction of the earth, it coils round and round the inner side of the glass until a foot or more is packed away in the little bottle, and small rootlets grow forth profusely from its sides. At last the upper coverings of the acorn split, and the plumule, in the form of a little green stem, forces its way out, bearing delicate fairy-like leaves of the most exquisitely tender green. These will grow with vigor, borne on a straight stem; the card covering will then have to be perforated to allow the little timber tree to grow out into the open air and assume the appearance shown in the second figure.

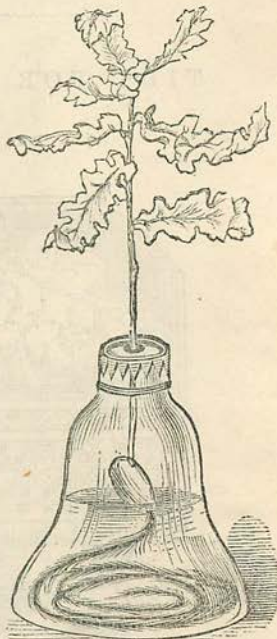


Fig. 2.

The interest excited by the growth of an acorn in this manner is very great. The little tree is, as it were, a child of your own rearing. All its requirements have been fulfilled by your own hands—the gardener has had nothing whatever to do with it; the little glass forcing house is all your own. You can set going a dozen or more if you like, and the growth of a forest of fairy oaks will gladden your eyes, even whilst the keen blasts from the icy north have checked all progress in the parent trees.