

## A New Industry for Ladies.

By MISS GRACE HARRIMAN.



THE object of this New Industry is to open up a new, profitable, and, I hope, pleasant way out of the present congested state of the Lady Labour Market. The Ladies' Fruit and Salad Gardens have been established at Grange Gardens, Sawley, near Derby, to provide pleasant homes and remunerative employment for gentlewomen who have a taste for gardening work and wish to add to their incomes or to earn a living.

It seems to have been seven or eight years since the idea first came to me that ladies with a taste for gardening might possibly earn a living by it; but so much needed thinking out, and detail after detail fitting in, that it is only five years since I myself became a practical gardener.

The more I inquired into the matter the more plainly I saw that market gardeners, as a rule, made a good thing of it.

After trying two rented gardens that only proved quicksands, as far as money-spending on them went, the soil being worn out, and the fruit trees that were in them most uncertain, I determined to take new ground in hand, *i.e.*, break up old pasture and plant a garden after my own idea of obtaining the greatest amount of produce with the least amount of labour. I advocate planting dwarf hardy fruit-trees in the open; and for this reason, that during nine months of the year they need no labour expending on them after they are once well planted and securely fenced from rabbits, their winter depredators, and with reason we

may look for a good crop of fruit five years out of seven.

My own experimental garden was planted, March, 1889. That year we had enormous crops of vegetables of splendid flavour, and a very fair amount of fruit. Last year our crop of fruit, in addition to the vegetables, was very considerable. Had the produce of this garden been for sale, it must have realised a very handsome sum.

To my mind it would be unwise for a woman single-handed to expect to make a sure, comfortable living out of one isolated garden, but by well-directed co-operation, thereby being able to grow a great variety of fruits and vegetables and salads to meet the wants of a private trade, the chance of the possibility of failure is reduced to a minimum.

It is not desirable for more than six owners of gardens to live in one house. When fruit, salads, and vegetables are grown by the acre, and sold by the dozen, the bunch, or the pound, the book-keeping necessary must be very considerable. These six ladies can well



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look after the three-acre garden, or, rather, fruit plantation. Each lady has her own portion of half an acre solely under her care, and she keeps a strict account of everything sold off her portion; and, after all necessary expenses are paid, the profits are divided exclusively among the lady cultivators in proportion as each may, by diligence and constant atten-



tion, have produced abundant crops or otherwise.

Our cultivation of flowers is mainly directed to late autumn, winter, and early spring ones, those for Christmas and Easter decorations paying as well as any. The ladies gladly undertake table and other



BEDDING OUT.

decorations at any time, as we do not entirely confine ourselves to autumn, winter, and spring flowers.

Well directed co-operation being so much more powerful than single-handed efforts, as soon as the sufficient number of ladies have definitely signified their intention of joining and showed us they have the necessary £100 capital (for my five years of active practical gardening work have plainly showed me that a little capital is absolutely necessary for a woman to start successful market gardening), a private Limited Liability Company will be formed—of course composed entirely of lady gardeners. The first year they must not expect to make more than covers expenses, including board of each household. The work is such that any lady is well able to perform; the produce grown, all kinds of hardy and dessert fruit under glass and in the open. Especial attention is given to delicate vegetables and salads, mushrooms, &c., with flowers and poultry as an adjunct.

The market of the produce grown has from the beginning stood out plainly before me as the vital point of success.

Fortunately by starting in a thickly populated consuming neighbourhood there seems every probability of the greater portion, if not the whole, of the produce being taken by people kind enough to open up deposit accounts with the lady gardeners. After April 1, the gardens may be seen each Thursday between 2 and 5 o'clock. Those going will kindly write their names in the visitors' book, and pay one shilling each for being shown over. This latter is a necessity, as it takes up the valuable time of the lady gardeners.

The household arrangements are conducted with the greatest regularity; the details of the *menu* even may be gathered by those visiting the place. The hours of meals are as follow:—

Breakfast at .....	8 a.m.
Early dinner.....	1 p.m.
Afternoon tea .....	4 p.m.
High tea .....	7 p.m.

During the busiest months of the year, April, May, and June, most of the day will be taken up with one kind or other of light gardening work. The long holidays must be taken in the winter. Those left at home can send off with ease the stored crops as ordered, attend to the plants under glass, and feed the poultry.

I have been repeatedly asked why I have



THE VINERY.



not started the industry near London. My reasons for not doing so are many:—

(1) Well-situated, good land, near to a station within a few miles of town, commands far too high a price to be thought of.

(2) The London market all the year

ripen, a moment's reflection will point out to all that these health resorts are, as a rule, whether by the seaside or inland, usually in a non-fruit-growing district. But it would not answer to rely on these places entirely, because for some



PRUNING AND POTTING.

round is far from being the best obtainable. Some instances have come under my notice where Middlesex growers have sent their garden produce to one or other of the great Midland markets, the far higher price obtainable more than outweighing the greater amount of freight.

(3) It seemed wiser to start the industry in a neighbourhood where the promoter was well known, and had many friends and acquaintances. It is also within easy distance of one or more of the late summer and autumn crowded health resorts. The late summer and autumn being the season when the bulk of all perishable fruits

months of the year they are practically empty.

(4) No sane people would plant fruit trees on other land than their own without the protection of a long lease, the very shortest being thirty years.

I am continually receiving offers of land from all parts of the country, but I wish it distinctly understood that we entertain the idea of none unless owned by those of sufficient influence and enterprise to secure a ready market for the



PLANTING POTATOES.

produce grown by the lady gardeners. I gather from my correspondents that some do not even grasp the fundamental

fact that their £100 is required solely to provide their own share of garden and house; the smallest, and at the same time the largest, number to be advantageously placed during the summer is thirty-six, as many expenses necessary to a fewer number could well be common to all. More than that number I can also easily and advantageously place. I have had some hundreds

of applications, but I prefer none to decide until they see the exact model of the Industry, in full working order now.

Full particulars may be obtained of the business part by sending a stamped address to the promoter,

MISS GRACE HARRIMAN,

The Hut, Mount-park.

Harrow-on-the-Hill.

