NOTES BY AN ARTIST NATURALIST.

On New Year's Day I had the "Mummers" round in the evening to amuse some friends I had staying with me. The young unmarried men in the village prepare for Christmas by going round to the different houses in the place during Christmas week, dressed up in a fantastic part consisting chiefly of bright-coloured stuff cut into strips and sewed on to their clothing. There is the look of a ham-fritt about the arrangement. You are expected to invite them in, and then they go through their performance, each taking a distinct part carefully rehearsed beforehand. I got one of the mummers to write down the words for me, for in their broad Oxfordshire I found it most difficult to understand what they said, especially as some of the performers suffered from nervousness and didn't speak up. The mummers range themselves against the wall, and then Father Christmas comes forward with his broom and walking round and round the place chants the following lines—

"In comes old Father Christmas, welcome or welcome not;
I hope old Father Christmas will never be forgot.
Last Christmas-time when we came here
You never asked us to taste your beer;
So now I've come with bladder and broom
To sweep the cobwebs from your room."

Here Father Christmas uses his broom vigorously to sweep imaginary cobwebs out of the holes and corners, for of course in all well-ordered households such a thing as a cobweb does not exist.

"Let all your voices merrily ring,
I am the royal and Prussian King!
I value neither Spanish, French, nor Turk,
And there's no man in this room can do me any hurt.
Walk in my eldest son!"

At this command the mummer addressed comes forward and follows Father Christmas in, going round and round the room, saying while he goes—

"In comes this Turk, this Turkish knight,
Just come from Turkish lands to fight,
If his blood be hot I'll soon make it cold.
I'll hit him, I'll hew him as small as flies,
And send his body to the cook-shop to make mince-pies.
Mince-pies hot, mince-pies cold,
Nine days in the pot, ten days old."

King William is then bidden to walk in, and a third mummer steps forward, and after addressing the former speaker the two have a mimic combat with wooden swords. King William falls wounded, thereupon Father Christmas offers a reward to any doctor who will cure the wounded man. The offer of a reward brings to the front the doctor, who is asked what he can cure. He replies—

"All those little cases such as my physic pleases,
Such as the hip, hip, palsy, and the gout,
Pains within and pains without.
So take one of my pills and try,
And if this man should die
Never you believe me any more.
So if you are as you were before,
Rise up King William, and fight once more."
However this doctor's physic does not produce the desired effect, so Father Christmas says—

"Walk in, Jack Finney."

"My name is not Jack Finney, nor John Finney, but Mr. Finney, a man of great fame, who can do more than what thee canst or any man again."

"What canst thou do then, Jack?"

"Cure a magpie with the toothache,
Or a jujub with the headache."

"How canst thou do that, Jack?"

"Cut his head off and throw his body in the ditch."

Father Christmas calls him Barabbas and rascal; but Jack Finney gives the wounded man, who has all this while been lying on the floor while the rest of the mummers marched round him, a pill which at once performs a cure. Father Hubbabub is asked to walk in, and he finishes the entertain-ment with these lines—

"In comes old Father Hubbabab,
On my shoulder I carry my club;
In my hand a dripping pan,
Don't you think I'm a gallant old man?
Green sleeves and yellow laces,
All pretty maidens take your places,
Make room for the fiddler this merry Christmas-time,
For Jack's gone to Ireland, and Sal's gone to France,
So we'll all rise up and have a merry dance."

So many of these old customs are yearly dis-appearing that one is glad to preserve what few still linger on. These mummers are evidently a survival of the ancient morris dancers, and in this village an old shepherd instructed the young fellows in the mystery of mumming, it having fallen into abeyance for some years. When the old generations are gathered to their fathers, traditions which have been preserved orally for centuries will be buried with them. The disposition abroad is to seek amusement far afield, and those
literally as beautiful as anything I know, and from a painter's point of view more worth doing than the same scene in midsummer when everything is uniformly green. I was much struck by a mass of dead bulrushes while skating on a pond. These particular rushes are never cut, and the yellow-grey stems and purplish-brown flowers made a beautiful passage of colour in the landscape. My brother painted a small picture of this pond which is engraved in this number of the "G. O. P.," for it illustrates the material a painter has to his hand in January. The sunlight in the afternoon, falling on the pollarded willows with the elms beyond, making the willows quite warm by contrast, only wanted to be realised in paint to be a most beautiful passage in a picture. I suggested some lines from a poem by Myers as a title.

"She watched the glories fade in one,  
The round moon rise while yet the sun  
Was rosy on the snow."

Have you ever noticed how just a few days in every year stand out clearly against the background of the whole fifty-two weeks, and years after one can recall them. One such walk I took, when staying just after Christmas in the country, along by the Nene River some few miles from Peterborough. The day was sunny though cold, and in the shade the horn-fruits still silvered the leaves and herbage. The dead reeds were quite golden in colour in the sunlight, and in one hedgerow came to the silvery silky seed vessels of the traveller's joy (Father Christmas' beard we might term it), "Pascal-bearded with the traveller's joy," in Tennyson's words, and the crimson four-sided seed vessels of the spindle"

See "A Winter Landscape," next page (Ed.)
tree, which had split open and showed the bright orange seeds inside, were both striking and beautiful features in the landscape. These seeds of the spindle-tree being dry make most beautiful indoor decoration for winter, and we took advantage of the occasion to carry a quantity home to put in our empty vases.

I give a drawing of dead hedgerow herbage, which I used as the motif in a screen I painted one year. The silvery greys of the dead thistles and the warm tones of the dock against a background of ploughed land made a capital harmony. The introduction of gold-linches and rabbits adds to the interest; and I commend this material to my decorative readers.

In addition to our summer visitors, like the swallows, we have those birds which, coming from the north, stay only the winter with us. The fieldfares, buntings and bramblings are among the most noticeable of these winter visitors, and then we have among the smaller birds the siskin and redpole, birds which easily reconcile themselves to captivity, and live for years in cages, growing exceedingly tame, as so many stories about them attest.

In the winter in the Thames Valley, gulls, terns, and some of the rarer ducks like the golden eye and red-bearded pochard, are yearly shot, while the common mallard and pintail in hard winters are comparatively common. Wild geese and an occasional swan also fall to keen sportsmen. One young farmer I know, out very early to have a chance shot at some wild ducks, stalked a pair very carefully for some time in the hallow, and finally got within range and secured both, only to find that he had shot a neighbour's tame Muscovy ducks. His bag that morning was an expensive one, as the birds he had secured were old and tough, and it cost him nearly a pound to buy another pair to replace those he had secured.

There is a strange feeling of loneliness about winter when one is out alone, walking over ice-bound fields or skating. The world puts on a disguise in winter, familiar landmarks are obiterated and changed beyond recognition, and there is little life stirring. Two painters I know spent the severe winter of 1891 in a house-boat on one of the Norfolk bridges—ice-bound for six weeks. At night they could hear the pattering of rats over the ice as they came to steal any food they could find on board, and even an otter came and stole some fish they had caught and put aside for the next day's meal. Every little sound seemed magnified as it came over the ice. They told me that the feeling of loneliness was almost unbearable at times, as though they alone peopled the world. I can quite imagine it, as I have experienced the same thing when skating on the Thames alone in the gathering dark. The ice, as you skate over it, will give slightly and crack behind you as it splits.
right across the river, and Tam O’Shanter could not have felt more scared than I have done once or twice when skating home on the river in the evening. The feeling is too awesome to be agreeable, and the sound is quite appalling and seems to run down the river for a long way.

Of flowers there are few so early in the year as the garden near me some seeding anemones, with the rich ornate foliage, started flowering in November and kept in bloom till March. Christmas roses are the most beautiful, and it just protected by a hundred give much later blooms. Pisaster reticulata, in a mild season, will be found in flower in the garden, and so will snowdrops and aconites. White, in his Naturalist’s Calendar, gives a flowering in Jan. the polyanthus, double-daisy, daphne mezereum, red dead nettle, groundsel, hazel, heptica, primrose, fritillary, wallflower, stock, white dead nettle, dandelion and cress. Selborne being in the south, would be more than we are in the Thames Valley, which is notable for its extreme cold at times.

Birds are all getting active as soon as January is here, and the wren, robin and thrush make their voices heard in the gardens, while the beautiful coloured nut-hatch may be seen running up the trunks of the trees after insects. These are the first birds to "chirp full choir," and they are soon followed by the whistle of the blackbird, the songs of the larks and chaffinches, while the rooks may be seen visiting the elms to see what remains of last year’s nests, and to prepare themselves for building operations in the next month.

With the break up of the frost the earth seems to grow into distinctness after being blunted by snow and ice, very much as a dishevelled, or newly shaved, is exhilarating than to see the first flowers like the aconites thrust through the soil and open to the sun of the new year. On a warm day I can see swarms of insects dancing in the sun against any yew-hedge. One hears from travellers how striking is the growth of herbage after rain in India, and English people are astonished at the rapidity with which nature puts on her mantle green in America after the disappearance of the frost. Spring comes with leaps and bounds to our American cousins, and one is told that there you go from winter into spring with no interval to bridge the two together; but with us the seasons are much more uncertain. I have known January quite a warm month—too hot for fires, but even then we are ready to expect fair weather, we find that "lingering winter chills the lap of May."

ANSWERING LETTERS.

Of all the minor social civilities, not one, perhaps, is so much neglected as the simple courtesy of answering letters, and it is a remarkable fact that, although other less important matters are punctiliously attended to in society—or if disregarded the delinquent would be made to feel the penalty by the proverbial “cold shoulder” or the “cut direct”—yet careless correspondents escape without reproof; for, excepting in the case of a relative or a very intimate friend, it would be considered an affront to be reminded that a letter had remained unanswered, or to hint that any inconvenience had been caused by undue delay. Formal eams must be returned, “thanks for kind inquiries” must be sent, and all such little attentions are scrupulously observed; but the forgetful or idle correspondent may fail to answer letters, and no notice is taken of the omission without the risk of giving dire offence. Thus, the real delinquents in such a case, as in most other cases, escape blame; but the sufferers, who are put to much inconvenience, dare not complain.

It is worth remark, as throwing some light on this subject, that, while some persons have very great facility in the use of the pen, and can readily express their thoughts on paper, yet others, though fluent in conversation, find great difficulty in constructing a few sentences in writing; they will take any amount of trouble of another kind to avoid the task of penning a few words. People have been known to walk a long distance in order to accept in person a friendly invitation, rather than write a brief note in reply.

But setting aside such extreme cases—of positive repugnance to the use of the pen—there are individuals in whom mere indolence is often a cause for neglect of letter-writing; a habit of procrastination is thus formed, so that if from day to day the duty is put off, till at length the convenient excuse occurs that it is then “too late” to reply. People who are thus habitually indifferent to the convenience of others, are wanting in that most valuable quality, sympathetic imagination, which would enable them to fancy, and almost realise, the feelings of their correspondents. How little such indifferent people think of the daily, hourly waiting and watching for the answer that never comes. The anxious mind fancies illness may be a cause of silence, or the thought may arise that some unintentional omission may have been conveyed in an unanswered letter; and all such annoying doubts might be avoided by a few lines, if only to acknowledge the receipt of a letter, which acknowledgment is undoubtedly required, not only as a mere act of courtesy, but as a duty.

I do not wish to make an apparently trivial matter too seriously by carrying the question into the domain of social ethics, but I think it may reasonably be asked whether thoughtless and indolent individuals do not commit a wrong by causing needless inconvenience and anxiety to those with whom they associate; and in the matter of letter-writing a small expenditure of time and trouble would suffice to avoid the evils described.

Postcards ought to be a great boon to lazy correspondents, but, strange to say, it is the most tardy and unwilling letter-writers who seem to have the strongest prejudice against the use of postcards; it is true they are sometimes missed, but that is not a good argument against their proper use; everything is liable to abuse. Some of the devices that are adopted for the purpose of baffling curiosity are questionable; the best plan is to write a plain message straight off, as brief as possible, and so worded that no unnecessary information can be afforded to servants and others who may come across the postcard. A lazy or a busy writer might say, “Your letter received, will attend to your request”; or, “Will write more fully in a day or two.” Such a message on a postcard would be a very good substitute for a letter pro tem.

Correspondents, of course, always arrange between themselves the method, whether secret or open, most convenient to them to carry on. The object of the suggestion is to put in a plea for the postcard as a very convenient institution, and to show that the prejudice which is entertained against the system may be chiefly due to the objectionable way in which messages are sometimes written, and such objections could be removed by the exercise of a little thought and care on the part of the senders.

Of course, numbers of letters are received that do not require any notice or acknowledgment by postcard. Such applications for votes, charitable appeals for money, etc., etc., and, unless when a stamped envelope is enclosed, those may be ignored. There are, however, letters which do require some answer and yet remain unnoticed. In pity for the writers of unanswered letters, these remarks have been penned.

It is said that “consideration for the feelings of others is the essence of true politeness.” So testing the subject by that rule, it may be insisted on that the courtesy of answering letters should be made a point of etiquette of as much importance as some other social civilities which are punctiliously observed by those who claim to belong to “polite society.”

M. A. RAINEY.

Victorian Times • 13 • January 2019
February

By an Artist-Naturalist.

Now, when the catkins of the hazel swing With'd above the leafy nook.
—Buchanan.

This is the month of catkins. The hazel, with its pale yellow blossoms hanging down in groups of two and three from the ends of the twigs, is a conspicuous feature under our woods and in our copses and spinneys. The catkin is the type of inflorescence of many trees like the arbutus and elm, and if we examine one of these "pussy cat's tails," as children call these blossoms, which fall in such countless numbers after they have cast their pollen to the winds, we shall find that it is composed of a central rope or hanging stalk, upon which are numerous little tufts of stamens, each such collection of organs being a separate flower. Botanically, a catkin is a unisexual spike that falls away after fruiting or flowering. Early in the year, if we examine a hazel catkin, we find that it appears to be a solid mass, brownish in colour, sticking out angularly from the twigs. By February it has expanded and loosened out; and as the month progresses the catkin gradually lengthens, and finally hangs down like a tassel, swaying about with every breath of wind. The anthers burst open under the warmth of a February sun, and clouds of yellow dust or pollen are shaken over the tree, and the female blossoms are thus fertilised. These latter flowers (if such they can be called), which in the autumn produce the nuts that everyone is so eager to gather, are quite inconspicuous, and are only seen by those who look for them. I have drawn one taken from a filbert tree. It consists of some darkish green bracts, with a number of reddish filaments projecting from the end of the bud. These pinkish hairs constitute the pistil, and are ready to catch the pollen that is floating about. Nature is prodigal in all her processes; and though there would be enough pollen in one catkin to fertilise some hundreds of blooms if every grain fell in the right place, we have dozens of catkins to effect this, so that the chance of a single female flower remaining unfertilised is small indeed. All wind-fertilised plants produce their pollen in abundance. A field of corn—for all grasses are wind-fertilised—must produce an amount of pollen out of all proportion to the quantity actually made use of. We are reminded by Tennyson that Nature—

"Out of fifty seeds, She often brings but one to bear."
the leaves to remain for a month or two after the blossoms have fallen. The two most beautiful snowdrops are *Galanthus plicatus*, which has broad rich green leaves, with a glaucous band down the middle of each leaf, and *G. In- termedius*, which has longer leaves than the former, and all glaucous in colour.

The snowflake (*Leucojum vernum*), like a large snowdrop, only with each petal distinct, and marked at the end with a yellowish-green spot instead of the inner cusp, as in the snowdrop, should find a place in every garden. So too should the mauve-blue anemone hepatica, which throws up its flowers from the midst of its worn brownish-green leaves, that have come over from a heritage from the previous year. There is a double variety.

In most years violets are in full bloom in February. The large pale Russian violet must be grown in a cold frame to flower it early in the year. The scent of violets, like mimoseette, is an odour that comes in waves. It is not persistent, like the strong scent of such flowers as lilies, which soon satisfy one, and then, with their abundance, repel rather than hold one to themselves. The scent of violets, on the other hand, is a perfume that I always feel I could kiss or fold in my arms. It is an invigorating, life-giving odour, so unlike the languid, insignificant smell of orange flowers or stephanotis. Put your nose

interest. The day was not wet, but it was certainly dull and gloomy.

In a note in my diary I saw the first of our spring flowers, the aconite. I always greet this humble flower with a smile, for it is the very first to put in an appearance. It is one of those plants that seem to have had its energy imprisoned underground, and so soon as it pushes through the ground, with its leaves wrapped round like a shepherd's crook, it expands, and, seemingly in a few hours, where the soil was erstwhile bare is now a golden cup standing in a saucer of bright full green.

Aconites, like so many other flowers, are entirely sensitive to the sunlight, and only open when the sun shines upon them, which they open and become quite important. The aconite goes on growing while it is in flower, and at the end of a fortnight is twice the size it was when it first showed its little globules of amber. Snowdrops follow at the ends of the aconite, and should be grown in profusion, as they tell well in a garden. I consider that every lover of a garden—which is synonymous with every gardener—should pay great attention to these flowers of the opening year, for a bloom in January has a far greater value than a dozen or two in June, when Nature's banking account is at its full. And all these earliest flowers do well under trees and hedgerows, and in shady places that later on do not suit other flowers. Flowers like the aconite, snowdrop, and violet, bloom at a time when most trees are bare, and on sunny days on spots that later in the year are always shaded. In Regent's Park the plan has of late years been adopted of sowing these early flowers in the grass; and certainly they are much more beautiful when so grown, the grass being so much better a background than earth to show them off. Crocuses, I think, should only be grown in grass, for a certain stiffness and formality that obtrudes itself when these flowers are planted in borders is quite lost sight of as they push their way through the blades of grass. Where flowers are planted in lawns, they must not be moved as soon as they have finished flowering, but must be allowed to ripen their bulbs by allowing

And we find this abundance in all Nature's handiwork. If you pick a catkin that is in full blow, and shake it over a piece of white paper, you will get a cloud of yellow dust; and those who have a microscope should examine this pollen, as it is very beautiful when magnified. The pollen of the mallow is a favourite slide in all microscopic displays, and no idea of the structure and beauty of each grain of pollen can be formed by the naked eye.

According to the old country saying, February is supposed to "fill the ditch," but our last February (1891) was an unprecedentedly dry month. The long frost which marked this last year vanished completely when it did break up, and we started the month with a warm sunny day. I was reminded by my mother, who is a Cambridgeshire woman, that the 2nd of February was Candlemas Day. The word Michaelmas is hardly used there, and yet in the country almost everything dates from this day.

"If Candlemas Day be wet and foul,
Half the winter is June at Yule;
If Candlemas Day be fair and dry,
Half the winter's to come by-a-bye"—
is a quatrain that is still used by villagers, and we watched this 2nd of February with some
into a bunch of violets, and after the first
whiff you receive no definite sensation; but
let that bunch of violets be put in a vase in
the room, and its sweetness will keep stealing
in upon your thoughts like the lines of a
favourite poem. I class all scents under two
heads—those of the violet class, that endeavor
and invigorate one, and those of the lily kind,
that fill and satiate one.

So Valentine’s Day came and went without
my being reminded by anything that it was
here; but on Shrove Tuesday, just as I was
sitting down to breakfast, a number of chil-
dren, both girls and boys, came in the garden,
and forming themselves into some sort of
order round the front door, set to vigorously
singing some lines which were quite incompre-
hsensible; all I caught was “Give me penny,
give me tuppence,” yet they sang the verse
through two or three times, though each time
faster than the previous performance, as
though the important point was to get through
the song as many times in five minutes as was
possible. I got one little girl living near by,
who had sat to me on several occasions, to
write down the song, and here it is. I must
tell you, though, that it took me some time to
punctuate it, for it was written down without
stops, and I didn’t quite take it in until I had
studied it a bit.

Pity! pity! pan’s hot; I be come a-shoving;
Give me penny, give me tuppence, I will
be a-going.

Lord, dear flour, dear
That makes me come a-shoving here.”

The money presumably the children collect in
this day is to go to making pancakes. Mother
tells me that in her native village, when she
was a girl, the children used to assemble in a
field opposite the vicarage, and there have
games. Stalls with sweets and cakes were
there, and some pancakes were cooked outside
and given by the vicar to the children. There
was also an opportunity of trying one’s hand
at tossing a pancake—a feat I have only heard
about.

As February grows older the buds begin to
bust their coverings, and the life within just
puts forth the tip of its nose. The buds in
the briars show pink at the tips, while the
thorns, with their beds of buds, just brighten
on one side. Gooseberries and currants do
more than this—they put forth the tips of
their leaves as well; and if it is a forward
spring, by the end of the month the goose-
berries will be in small leaf. The blue is one
of the forerunners of our shrubs, and its bright
pale green buds are a conspicuous feature in
gardens.

I have given a page of bud studies so that
those who have paid little heed to the world of
herbs in its infancy may be induced to do
so. I recollect that almost my first
attempts at drawing from Nature were done
from the buds I used to gather by the
Botanical Gardens in Regent’s Park. There
are two distinct recollections about the spring
that have come down to me from my early
schooldays in London—the gathering of
buds on Sunday afternoons, and watching the
young ducks, when they were just hatched,
darting from side to side after the flies that
skimmed over the surface of the water. I have
a distinct recollection, too, that I found
these buds very difficult things to render satis-
factorily; and to the best of my recollection
all my earliest attempts at drawing brought
nothing but dissatisfaction and disappointment
to me, to think how far behind Nature always
left me.

The buds of the ash are a velvety black, and
are still very dormant, as this is one of the
last trees to come into leaf. The one from
whence I drew the twig was covered with its
bunches of seeds or “keys,” and I was trying
to account for this, seeing that other ash trees
near were without seeds. Turning through
the pages of White’s Selborne, I came across
this note: “Many ash trees bear loads of
keys every year; others never seem to bear
any at all. The prolific ones are naked of
leaves and unmingling; those that are sterile
abound in foliage, and carry their verdure a
long while, and are pleasing objects.”

The chestnut buds are swollen to bursting
by the end of February, and the gummy
evacuation that covers the buds can be seen
standing in beads. This gum is evidently a
protective covering, and in all plants—but
particularly those that are forward—Nature
is most careful to wrap up her buds and
blossoms with horny beads, that drop off as
the bud opens, and with a thin semi-trans-
parent brownish tissue, which one might call
Nature’s brown-paper. In the acorn we
find the leaves wrapped over the flower, and
the plant itself curled over so that its head
is buried in its breast. In apricot and peach
—both of which flower this month—the
calyx is of a thick fleshy nature, and entirely
envelops the petals, whereas in the apple the
leaves wrap over the blooms, and when the
outer sheath that covers the buds is burst, and
the leaves expand, the pink buds are disclosed,
and are ready to open. The apricot, which
flowers nearly three months sooner than the
apple, has no leaves to protect the buds, but
this office is performed by the dark pinkish
sepal. The apricot, with its pinkish-white
petals and yellow anthers, and the peach, with
its rose-pink flowers and dark red anthers, are
highly suitable for all decorative purposes.
The Japanese constantly use them as motifs in their work.

In the drawings of oak and rosebuds you will notice I have given instances of the transformation will undergo. On a branch or twig you will find the magnolias inside. Later in the year the oak-apples have a small hole in them, which the insect bored in order to take flight, to live its brief space in the air. On rose trees and briar tubs of a goosewood or wool-like growth are frequently seen. If these are found on sweet briars, the scent of the briar seems concentrated in these growths. This is produced by the leaves and when you cut them you will find several cells, each of which is a small white maggot.

Until I came to make a drawing of the cutting of the apple, I don't remember to have seen a tree before. I did not know it when I was attracted to it by seeing it covered with its dark pink blossoms sticking out at a wide angle from the tree and as they matured enough to hang down and scatter their pollen. It is a handsome tree, resembling an ash, but the trunk is smooth as it ascends, and the branches are curving.

The grey velvet flower-buds of the willow, when they catch the light, glisten like silver, and as they expand and open the yellow anthers show themselves. In closer with with the blossoms, when the sun shines upon them, are a very telling feature in the landscape, and quite distinct in their beauty.

The rocks are busy now pitching up old nests or building upon last year's foundation, for the birds thus provided with a nest in which they can build in a tree that has never been used, but that as fast as these would-be indestructible birds pitch their twigs in the tree, the roots from the colony came and pulled them out, and in the end these seedlings had to cast in their lot with the colony. White says:

"Rooks are continually fighting and pulling each other's nests to pieces; these proceedings are one of the characteristics of these birds and their community. And yet if a pair offers to build on a single tree, the nest is plundered and demolished at once. Some rooks roam on their nests for a long time. The twigs which the rooks drop in building supply the poor with brushwood to light their fires. Some unhappy pairs are not permitted to finish any nest till the rest have completed them. As soon as they get a few sticks together a party comes and demolishes the whole."

Rooks prefer elms to any other trees, as the numerous nesting-places at the top of the tree afford good anchorage for their nests.

February is the month in which all our resident birds pair, though it is not before March that much is done in the way of nest-building. I fancy they take some time in selecting a suitable site. I noticed at the end of the month my walnut tree, which is thickly covered with green moss, was being visited by birds to pick some of it off. The silvery grey lichens—by the way, covers some of the hazels growing on the old fence—are used here—largely by birds like the chaffinch to decorate the outside of the nest. This lichen is like a miniature stag-horn fern, or even more like some of the tiny mosses of plants it belongs. It might be a made a very decorative feature, as it yields every time to the touch of a spray that the eye of a painter could desire.

Brushes, vines, and weeds sing very cheerily now, and, with chaffinches and sparrows and tits, are the most familiar birds in the garden—rather too familiar with the berries and currants and currant leaves and currant stalks. I am fond of watching the tit darting up and down the apple trees and rapidly pecking the leaves into every crevice, and then hanging downwards under a twig for a bird that can climb in any position. They are accused of being bud stealers, but I fancy they are more after insects than buds.

With the worst culprits in this respect, and a good many are trapped under the fruit trees when they are on their preliminary expeditions.

On a sunny day the pale brimstone or sulphur butterfly, which has been hibernating in some crevice all the winter, will come out to stretch its wings and visit some of the flowers that are in bloom for their nectar. My aconites were always haunted by bees on a warm day.

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**WHAT TO COOK, AND HOW TO COOK IT.**

Among fish that are especially good in February, we have whiting and skate. A very good way of cooking the first-named now that they are lean, and to be done without when possible, is to turn them round, the tail in the mouth, dip them in dissolved butter, lightly sprinkled with pepper and salt, and on a baking-dish. Put them in a baking-dish and add in a quart of water and cook them for an hour or an hour and a half. They are also delicious, especially for an invalid, when boiled; for which place them in a saucepan with a pint of water and a pinch of salt, or better—hot milk; let them simmer gently for five minutes, then serve with a creamy white sauce.

Some improve with being kept for a day or two, and should always be skinned. It is best cut into fillets and simmered in a white sauce, then laid on a dish. A few fine bread-crumbs sprinkled over and grated Cheddar or Parmesan cheese. Slightly browned before a quick fire, and serve very hot. Or if boiled in water, then drained and served with brown butter sauce, i.e., butter that has been allowed to frizzle until it is a good brown and good. Boil the fish in sufficient water to cover it, after which stir in a little thick white sauce, a tablespoonful of cream, and season rather highly.

Here is a Dutch way of cooking carrots. Take long well-shaped carrots, split them lengthwise into thin strips and cut across in short lengths. To a vegetable dish full of carrots add one medium-sized onion cut small. Place the vegetable in a saucepan with a good-sized piece of beef dripping or butter, and pepper, salt and half a teaspoon of caraway seeds. Stir until well mixed, then put the dish into a vegetable dish when ready for the table.

**Brussels Sprouts**—If drained when partly boiled, then laid in a stewpan with several little dabs of butter and a sprinkling of salt and pepper, and tender through, are very much nicer than when plainly boiled.

**Chestnuts in Brown Sauce** make another good winter vegetable dish. Boil the chestnuts until the husks begin to crack, then throw them into cold water; they are then easily removed from the skin. Make a thick brown sauce with stock, a spoonful of soy sauce and finely chopped onion to thicken; season rather highly and make very hot, letting the chestnuts simmer for a few minutes in the sauce, then pour into a vegetable dish.

**Leeks** are very good and large this season, and—

**Lob Scram** is both stimulating and invigorating. Into an iron saucepan put a piece of good beef dripping, when it is hot add to it a bunch of leeks cut up small. Cover the saucepan and simmer slowly occasionally—until the leeks are tender and nicely browned. Dust a little flour over them, pepper and salt them liberally and add a grate of nutmeg. In a little oil put a slice of bacon and a half of water (cold), and add to it a slice of white bread an inch thick, cut into dice and without crust. Boil this, then add the leeks to it and simmer all together until wanted.

**Stewed Figs** are excellent; the best figs cost but sixpence a pound, and they are by far the best for cooking purposes as well as for dessert. Separate them and place in a stewpan with sufficient water to cover them, let them stew in a corner of the oven for a couple of hours at a gentle heat. When cold, and with the addition of a little cream, these make a good stand-by for the dinner or nursery table.

**A Rice Soup** to eat with stewed figs or prunes. Simmer a quarter of a pound of rice in sufficient milk to well cover it until all the milk is absorbed and the rice is dry and fluffy. Whilst it is cooking take a pinch of saffron and stir it into the rice, which to it will give a beautiful golden colour. Add a spoonful or more of golden syrup to sweeten it, then pour on a small or small plate and sit more sugar over.

**Quaker Oats**, if boiled as directed on the wrappers, and then poured into scallop-shells or little tins moulds previously wetted with cold water, and turned out after a few minutes, make an excellent nursery stew to go with baked apples or stewed fruits.

LUCY H. YATES.
FEBRUARY FLOWERS

SOMETHING LIKE A TITLE.

We have seen many singular title-pages in our time, but "never aught like this." It indicates a volume of extracts from several authors:—

Astonishing Anthology from Attractive Authors.
Broken Bits from Big Men's Brains.
Choice Chips from Chaucer to Canning.
Dainty Devices from Diverse Directions.
Eggs of Eloquence from Eminent Essayists.
Fragrant Flowers from Fields of Fancy.
Gems of Genius Gloriously Garnished.
Handy Helps from Head and Heart.
Illustrious Intellecients Impertinently Interpreted.
Jewels of Judgment and Jests of Jocularity.
Kindling to Keep from the King to the Kitchen.
Loosened Leaves from Literary Laurels.
Magnificent Morsels from Mighty Minds.
Numerous Nuggets from Notable Noodles.
Oracular Opinions Officially Offered.
Prodigious Points from Powerful Pens.
Quirks and Quibbles from Querulous Quarters.
Rare Remarks Ridiculously Repeated.
Suggestive Squirts from Several Sources.
Tremendous Thoughts on Thundering Topics.
Utterances of the Uppermost Use and Unction.
Valuable Views in Various Voices.
Wisp of Wits in a Wilderness of Words.
Xcellent Xtracts Xactly Xpressed.
Yawnings and Yearnings for Youthful Yachtsmen.
Zeal and Zest from Zoroaster to Zimmerman.
NOTES BY AN ARTIST NATURALIST.

"Daffodils that come before
the swallows dare
To take the winds of March
with beauty."

Tennyson's epitaph of
"The Revery of Delph and
Crocus." as applied to
March, is both literal and
poetical, for these two flowers are as characteristic of
the month as any found blowing. The wild daffodil, or
Lent-lily, is found in woods in certain localities, and
Wordsworth speaks of it as—

"Beside the lake, beneath trees;
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

The garden variety, which is a deeper-colored double
flower, is often naturalised in woods, for bulbous plants
seem able to hold their own against those that are wild;
whereas a good many cultivated plants, if not cared for,
become choked and killed by the more sturdy-growing
wild ones. I know an orchard in Norfolk, attached to
an old vicarage, in which bulbs were planted many years
ago, and have gone on increasing year by year, until now
many thousands of blooms could be picked in the spring.
The daffodil is a plant which has had a great deal of
attention bestowed on it by florists, and by hybridising
an immense number of varieties have been raised. Some
of these florists' flowers are twice the size of the Lent-
lily, though very similar in appearance, having the yellow
cup and the whitish-yellow petalanth, as the six petals
which form a collar at the base of the cup are called.

Bulbous plants of grass-like foliage, like the daffodil
and crocus, are much more beautiful when grown in
grass than in borders, and in many of the London
parks this plan has been adopted the last few years
with most excellent effect, and in lawns in private
gardens it is well worth planting snowdrops, crocuses,
and daffodils. When the flowers are over, the leaves
must not be cut down for a month or more, as the
bulbs are ripened through the leaves; whereas, if these
are cut off too soon, the chances are that the plants
will fail to bloom the next year. Having to leave
portions of the lawn unmown is a drawback, but under
trees and at the edges of lawns this is lost of an
eyesore than might be imagined.

The crocus is said to be naturalised at Saffron
Walden, in Essex, where the stigmas of the flower
are used for making the dye called saffron. The
flowers are purple, the leaves appearing after
the bloom; but it is a doubtful native, while the meadow-
saffron, or mauve autumn crocus which I have seen
growing in large patches in meadows in Norfolk, is truly
a wild flower. *Narcissus bijlaria*, with its two creamy
white flowers and pale-yellow eye, grows in some
orchards here, and, if given a chance, would soon increase.

"Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheet of daisies white
Out over the grassy lea.

Now blooms the lily of the bank,
The primrose down the brant.
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the she.
This is Lowell, in the Biglow Papers, written in the Yankee dialect; true poetry for all that, and could only have been penned by one as observant as a naturalist as imaginative as a poet.

I have given a drawing of willow in flower. These blooms are known as "Cathkins," and consist of pollen-bearing flowers; the female, or seed-bearing, flowers being of a greenish colour, and of the form as shown in sketch.

Middle of the village, has its twigs thickly encircled with these winged seeds, which make a conspicuous feature and quite carpet the ground when they blow down. A good many people never think of such things, as the elm flowering, and yet in March the colour of the flowers make the topmost branches of the trees look quite crimson, especially when the sun shines on them.

The birds that stay with us through the year are all busy building this month, and the gardens are filled with the songs of blackbirds, thrushes, robins, chaffinches, and wrens. Two thrushes built in a yew tree just in front of the house, and I could watch them hard at work as I dressed in the morning. My walnut-tree, which is thickly covered with moss, is visited a good deal just now by birds to check the material for their nests. Where there is a rookery, the birds may be seen busily engaged in repairing old nests or laying the foundations of new ones; for during high gales in the winter some of the old nests are sure to fall out of the fork in which they are placed. It is always a marvel to me that their nests stand the wind as they do, for the twigs composing them are very loosely put together. When the young ones are hatched, a good many get blown out during rough weather, and last year some rookeries were considerably thinned in this way, owing to the high winds we had in April. Tennyson, in the "May Queen," alludes to this bird—

"The building rock caws from the windy tallin-tree,
And the tufted plow pipes along the hollow lee."

It is well known that birds will frequent the same trees for years; while, on the other hand, they will avoid building in certain trees which, to our eyes, appear equally whit as suitable as those they select. Indeed, some birds begin building in certain trees, the other members of the colony at once set to work to pull their nests to pieces and compel these innovators to show their intention of using fresh trees to build in.

It is often forgotten that a large number of birds which are very familiar to us only visit us for the spring and summer. The swallow tribne come in the following order—

Sand-martin, swallow, and martin, while the largest of the tribe—the swift—does not come much before the end of April or the beginning of May. The wayneuck, or encoo’s maste, as it is called in country places, arrives towards the end of March (White gives the date March 5th as...

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**PRIMULA, DOG-TOOTH VIOLET, AND PERIWINKLE.**
The earliest time of seeing it, and its marked note, somewhat like the swaying of wood, distinguishes it from all other birds. The willow-wren, which I have drawn perched on the willow, is another early visitor. It is a small bird of a dull greenish hue. I have had it build in some old fagots in my garden, its nest being spherical, with a hole in the side to admit the bird. Many of the warblers, like the blackcap, sedge, and red warblers, are also migratory; the first of these, known as the mock-nightingale and but little inferior to it, may be seen towards the end of the month. The grey plover or lapwing, with its mournful whistling cry, is a conspicuous bird in the fields in spring. It lays its eggs on the bare ground, in rough grass, or ploughed fields; and if a dog happen to go near its nest it will fly about the dog, almost touching it with its wings, to call the dog off from its nest to itself, in order that it may lure the intruder to a safe distance. All birds are in their gayest plumage in the spring, and the brilliancy of such a bird as the yellowhammer or chaffinch is very striking to those who have not seen these birds outside a cage or museum. One recalls those well-known lines in “Locksley Hall”:

“In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin’s breast, In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest.”

March is very dependent upon the weather, a cold, frosty month, such as we get some years keeping vegetation very much in check. Wild flowers are not numerous. The “wild marsh marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray;” the cuckoo-flowers, or lady-smocks, are to be seen here and there, though April is really the month for them; the wind-flower, or anemone, and primrose and violet, may be found in the woods, but, like the cuckoo-flower, April sees them in perfection. In the gardens, the snowdrops are nearly over, while the crocuses and daffodils are in full splendour. In a note I made on March 14th, 1890, I found the following in bloom in the Oxford Botanic Garden:

Tris reticulata, a dwarf-growing variety, with purple flowers; the earliest to bloom.

Crocuses. There are several varieties of each of the three colours—yellow, purple, and white. Squill, the white and blue; always an early bloomer. A wild variety is found near Bath. The Snowdrop. There is, besides the ordinary single and double kinds, one with large leaves and larger flowers.

Erica Carina and the blue anemone Hepatica, besides polyanthus and wallflowers.

Among the primulas, the one I have drawn

**Development of a Horse — Chestnut Bud**

*This alludes to the bird’s strange wayward flight, as it will apparently go away and then return a few moments afterwards.*
(known as Pulchellum) is a beautiful variety, having mauveish-white flowers. The flower at the back—the dog-tooth violet, as it is called—is its flowers are red-brown, and its leaves strikingly marked with purple brown. The flower in front is the small pinkish, found growing wild in hedges. There is a larger variety which flowers later in the year. I have introduced the peacock and sulphur butterflies, these being the two that are seen earliest in the year. I have noticed the sulphur as early as February on a warm day, and very commonly it is to see it flitting about like primroses on the wing. These butterflies are hyperbolic specimens, remnants of late autumn broods. During the winter they are seen in some holt or crevice, out of reach of the frosts and which are tempted out by the first sunny day. Most of these early butterflies are more or less damaged, their wings often torn, and the feathers rubbed off; some, indeed, being quite dilapidated.

The spring of 1893 was so exceptional that the south was making a note about its cattails. The exception of a few hours rain we had one day towards the end of April, our spell of continuous sunny weather has lasted since the beginning of March. A spell of dry weather, the like of which has not been seen for over forty years. As I write this June the 16th, the weather is intensely hot—nearly 90° in the shade, and all the meadows are burnt up. Farmers have raked up enough grass and hay and turned their cattle into the fields instead of moving them. What little hay there is, is mostly stacked; the wheat is in flower and apples are quite large. Cherries and pears were blossoming the beginning of April, while apple-trees were over before April was out. Hawthorn was out in April, and all over by the middle of May, while chestnuts were in bloom in April, which makes the season quite four weeks earlier than usual. The drought has continued now for so long, and the sun has been shining continuously for so many weeks, that the ground is as parched as it is in August, and on the Chiltern Hills water is being bought at 2d. per barrel. There is a great variety of food for cattle and no prospect of any, as the clover is quite burnt up. My gooseberry-trees are completely stripped of every leaf by caterpillars, and the fruit has had to be picked and to prevent them from falling off. A few thunderstorms have occurred around us, but none have visited this particular locality, and rain, to judge by the glass, seems as far off as ever. The times are so dry, and the leaves so thickly covered with honey-dew that it drops on to the plants below, and I have seen it in the sunlight falling through the air.

Towards the end of the month the wild cherry, or gean, and the pear should be looked for, as in mild seasons both these are to be found in bloom about this time. The wild cherry is plentiful in Burnham Beeches, and on Whitchurch Clumps there is a very fine specimen of the bird-cherry growing in the ancient earthworks of the camp; the fruit is small, bright scarlet, and quite bitter. The wild pear is not so common as the cherry; there is a fine specimen in the Oxford Botanic Gardens, which is covered with brown topknots. In the summer the pears seem to dry the mouth, and the cultivated pear what the crab is to the apple. I give a drawing of the buds of the pear, showing how the leaves are wrapped around the unripe flower-buds.

The leaf-bud, as it expands, presents a very symmetrical form, as do those of the unripe fruit. The leaves of all shrubs are protected by leaves which are wrapped around the flowers, which fall away as the leaves expand; and in the pear we have stipules in addition—elongated greenish filaments, which seem to protect the joints in the harness, so to say. The flowers again are protected by the leaves which are wrapped around them. Nature is most careful to pack her treasures so as to keep them out of harm as far as possible, though late frosts play sad havoc with such trees as the horse-chestnut.

A frost one night in May killed every shoot on the walnut just as they were expanding; while last year we had 10° of frost on the 27th of May, which killed the potatoes in many places. I have given a series of sketches of the buds of this tree, showing the gradual opening of the bracts and unfolding of the leaves; the flowers themselves are not seen till May. The leaves, it will be noticed, are at first protected by bracts, which are covered with a gummy substance, evidently a non-conductor of cold. Many buds have this varnish, but in none is it seen so plentifully as in the chestnut, which is one of the first trees to break bud. The young leaves, which form a sort of pouch to the flowers, are very downy at first, though this peculiarity is quite absent in the full-grown leaves.

Another of the lowly flowers of March is the smaller celandine, which Wordsworth celebrated in song. I had occasion to look into Culpepper's Herbal, and I may interest my readers to see his notes on this plant.

The true juniper is the common Juniperus communis, and after each plant described by him gives its "government and virtues"; "This is an herb of the sun, and under the celestial Lion, and one of the best curers for the eyes; for all that know anything in astrology know that the eyes are subject to the luminaries. Let it be gathered when the sun is Leo, and the moon Aries, applying to this time; let Leo arise, and then may you make it into an oil or ointment, which you please, to anoint your sore eyes with. I can prove it doth—both my own experience and the experience of those to whom I have taught it—that most desperate sore ones have been cured by this only medicine. Also I have read (and it seems somewhat probable) that the herb being gathered as I showed before, and the elements drawn apart from it by the art of the alchemist, and after they are drawn apart rectified, the earthy quality still in vestigating them added to the Terra Damnata (as alchemists call it), or Terra Sacratissima (as some philosophers call it), the elements so rectified are sufficient for the cure of all diseases, the humourings offending being known and contrary elements given. It is an experiment worth the trying and can do no harm."

The clove-leaf, which flowers before the leaves appear, somewhat resembling a dandelion, and this latter flower—both old-fashioned country remedies—are in bloom in the fields in March. Patent medicines have driven out most of the old herbal remedies, which were at one time made in every village by some old dame, whose lore on such matters had come down from a remote past. Many of these herbal medicines were useful, but there was a good deal of the superstitious, more suited to the times of old Culpepper than these enlightened days, about these cures for all diseases; though it cannot be said we have made much progress in such matters, seeing the implicit belief we place in someone's pills or the other one's balsam.
APRIL

BY AN ARTIST-NATURALIST.

Nature grows space in April. The world of herbs leaps into life, and the rapidity with which vegetation pushes ahead, bursting buds and flower-sheaths in order to unfold its leaves and open its blossoms, is very striking to those who notice it for the first time.

I was sketching in Burnham Beeches one spring, and studying carefully the same spot day by day for some three weeks. I found that during this time the whole aspect of nature had changed, and the sketch I had in hand was no longer true to the scene before me; I put the last touches upon it. April with us is usually a most delightful month. Winter, which too often has not lost her grip of March, has passed out of harm's way by April, to reappear perhaps in May, bringing those late frosts which do so much damage to gardens.

April is the first month to bring us wild flowers in profusion. Nuneham Woods, so well known to Oxford men, is one sheet of that marvellously subtle purple blue of the wild hyacinths. They grow in such profusion that one living poet was literally true when he described the effect of these myriads of bluebells as a "wisp of sea blown inland." The colour is best described as resembling the sea under a sunny blue sky. It is a most difficult colour to paint, as three of us found one year when we attempted to represent it in colour. It just escapes one.

The wild hyacinth is rarely found outside woods, and it flourishes best under the shade of leafless trees. Two other flowers keep it company—the delicate wind flower, or wood anemone, and the primrose. The anemone is a very thin white-petalled flower, slightly tinged with pink on the under-side—the unopened buds are quite pink — and it usually hangs its head in a characteristic way. These three flowers make a perfect harmony of colour, and any girl wishing to combine three colours in a dress might get a suggestion from this harmony "in three parts."

Poets have always sung in praise of spring; and Matthew Arnold, who knew the Nuneham and Bagley Woods so well, tells us—

"Oft thou has given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leaved, white anemone,
Dark bluebells drenched with dew of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves."

These purple orchises are very common in our meadows in the spring. Children call them snaker's leaves, owing to their purplish black markings. The poet goes on to say—

"The sweet spring days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And bluebells trembling by the forest ways."

The still more delicate wood-sorrel is also in flower in the woods. You generally find it growing in small close patches at the foot of some tree, or the brilliant yellow-green leaves, like three hearts joined, quite carpeting the ground, while the almost transparent white flowers, with faint purplish veils, push their way through between the leaves. These leaves if chewed have an acid flavour, due to the presence of oxalic acid; hence its botanical name, oxalis acetosella.

The primary impulse with most of us is to gather huge handfuls of these spring flowers in our exuberance at the first sight of them at the year's awakening, and yet nothing is more disappointing than the effect of them when gathered. They wither so rapidly, that before one can get them into vases they have got into so limp a condition that many people throw them away in disgust. Primroses, "Orphans of the flowery prime," are the only ones that at all revive in water; but how different is the effect of these dense bunches of blossoms sold in London and the delicate flowers growing on their thin pink stalks, with their accompanying background of yellow-green leaves! My own feeling is, that crowned flowers are the only ones worth gathering for the house, and for two reasons—they keep better when cut, and are much more effective as decoration. There is a certain modesty and diffidence—if I may use
the expression—about all wild flowers that
makes them out of place in our necessarily
artificial surroundings.

"The violet by a mossy stone, half hidden
from the eye," is a beautiful sight, and worthy
of Wordsworth's genius to celebrate it; but
that same violet, when picked and bundled
together with many more, yields one no thrill
of pleasure; and I have often felt grieved to
see the way wild flowers are picked, and
before the day is over thrown away because
they have drooped for want of moisture.
Wild flowers are getting so scarce around all
our big towns, that it belies us all to be on
our guard not to lessen the number.

The fields in April have put on their gay
attire, and we have the brilliant delicate
yellow of the cowslip, with its most beautiful
pale green calyx as beautiful as the flowers
themselves; the white to pale pink of the
cuckoo flowers, or lady smocks as Shake-
spere calls them; the rich orange of the
marsh marigolds or king-cups, which grow
wherever there is any marshy ground. In the
fields about here bordering the river the king-
cup is a striking plant, throwing up its sturdy
flower stems from a mass of large rich green
leaves. We have here, too, the still more
beautiful snowflake, like a bunch of enlarged
snowdrops growing out of a tall fleshy stalk.
This plant is found wild in a few places in the
Thames valley, but is very local. To grow it to
perfection requires a damp
situation, but it is often
grown in gardens. The
snake-flower, or spotted
fritillary, is found in some
fields, but I have not been
fortunate enough to come
across it myself. It is
quite unique, looking not
unlike astilbe, growing with
its head downwards, and
covered with dark spots.

"I know what white, what
purple fritillaries,
The grassy harvest of
the river fields,
Above by Egham,
down by Sandford,
yields,
And what sedged
brooks are Thames' tributaries."

I must visit these spots where Matthew
Arnold saw these flowers this next spring, and
see if I can find some fritillaries.

The orchards are gay now, for though the
apple trees are not as a rule in full bloom until
May, the cherry, with its bunches of pendulous
cup-shaped blossoms, and the pear, with its
thick clusters of brilliant creamy-white flowers, as well as the plum, all give their sent to the passing breeze.

Speaking of scents, it has often astonished me how few people seem alive to the fact of the sweetness of perfume given off by flowering trees. The wych elms, which flower in April, are very fragrant, and yield as much smell as lime trees. The blossoms appear like dense frills around the twigs, and have been likened to Brussels sprouts. We have a fine specimen in the centre of the village, and when the greenish-yellow petals fall, the ground is quite carpeted with them. The leaves do not come out until May. I have given a drawing of a piece of larch to show the curious, thick, flaky, pink blossoms, and also a spray of willow, with its beautiful golden flowers, or rather tufts of stamens, not unlike a thick, bushy tail.

We are not accustomed to think of some very familiar trees as flowering, and yet of course they all have to bear blossoms before they fruit or seed. The bright-red cat's-tail blossoms of the elm are familiar to all of us. The leaves in all these cases, as well as the ash, succeed the blossom. The oak, walnut, and chestnut, on the other hand, come into leaf before the flowers appear; but the majority of trees are still asleep in April, though the buds are swollen almost to bursting. It is no exaggeration to call April the month of breaking bud and bursting blossom. A week of genial weather is sufficient to bring the willows with delicate green leaves that at a distance have the appearance of a vapour over the branches. The flower-buds of the elm, of a reddish-purple hue, are very striking when seen in the sun against a blue sky, the trees literally glowing with colour at such a time. Gooseberries and currant trees flower and come into leaf about the middle of May, willow, lime and elder are among the earliest trees to come into leaf, followed by the elms, chestnuts, and willows. The beeches, birches, and oaks have to wait until next month to put on their spring attire.

Poets, we know, have ever been loudest in praise of spring, and there is an exhilaration about spring that makes many prosaic folk almost attempt to verify, though it is fortunate for the reading public that editors do not accept such rhymes. Everything is before one in spring. It is all anticipation, with no regrets that come of looking back. Browning describes this feeling in the song—

"The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His Heaven—
All's right with the world!"

In the gardens we have quantities of wallflowers, one of the most effective of our perennials. The colours are very varied, and I obtained a few cuttings of a fine double-yellow wallflower growing in a near garden, which, I hope, will bloom this spring. To propagate any particular wallflower, the vigorous young shoots from the old plants should be pulled off and stuck into some good potting soil in the summer. These will strike, and form good plants to flower the next spring. Seed should be sown in the early summer to get good bushy plants for the next spring's flowering; but these plants will last for some years if desirable, though they are apt to get leggy and unshapely. The double German wallflowers that are so striking, with their spikes of dense blooms, are annuals, and must be sown the previous summer, and then bedded out in the autumn for spring flowering. They are not so hardy, and a very hard winter is apt to destroy a good many.

Pansies are easily raised from seeds, though cuttings are better if you desire to propagate any particular colour, for seedlings are apt to vary in colour from the parent plant. April should see a good show of these effective plants, which keep in bloom right until the late autumn.

The forget-me-not makes a most effective bordering plant, flowering during this and the next month. When exhausted, they should be plunged into the earth, only leaving their tops out of the ground. The plants will send out roots from every joint, and in the autumn these can be separated and planted out for the next spring. It may be said that all herbaceous plants can be increased by dividing up the roots.

Polyanthus, or cultivated primroses, are a feature in our garden early in April. The colours are very varied, every tone of red and yellow being found. The ordinary primrose can be made to assume a deep pink colour by cultivation, but personally I prefer the colour of the wild flowers.

Tulips and hyacinths are in flower now. In many of the cottage gardens the bulbs are left in the ground year after year; but the result is that they degenerate, the flower stems increasing in length and the blooms decreasing in size. To keep them true, the bulbs should be taken up every year and dried. On the other hand, the narcissus and several of the lilies do not degenerate by being left in the ground, but, on the contrary, the chumps get larger year by year. I have seen clumps of the ordinary white lily that had been left for years, so much like a dota. These flowers have a long flower-spikes. Pansies too very soon degenerate unless the plants are lifted or fresh cuttings struck; and the same is true of all flowers that have been largely improved both as to size and colouring by careful cultivation. I have found from experience that pansies better repay the trouble of growing them well, as they offer as large a

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**LARCH IN FLOWER**

**WILLOW IN FLOWER**
variety in colour as any flower growing, and keep in bloom for months.

By the beginning of April, the birds that visit us during the summer months add their songs to those birds who stay with us throughout the year. The sand martin comes first, then the swallow, and after these two the martin, the swift fort in putting an appearance until the end of the month. The cuckoo, which is such a herald of spring, is heard about the second week in April, and as the evening comes on the nightingale begins its well-marked song with its trill, guttural, and whistle. The outskirts of woods or small plantations and spinneys are favourite building places. The nightingale's song is very striking when heard in a wood, as they call to each other, one cock bird answering a near one until the whole plain echoes with them. Singing through the night when other birds are quiet, everyone notices its song, and I think that is the reason it has such a reputation as a songster, rather than its superiority over other feathered singers. One remembers Mrs. Browning's lines, "The fireflies and the nightingales sang each to other, flame and song," in speaking of this bird, and if we substitute glowworm for firefly—though glowworms do not make any sound—the association of the two is true of April in this country.

Birds are all busy building now; indeed, several, such as the blackbird, thrush, and some of the finches, have hatched their eggs by the end of April, and even earlier if the spring is a mild one.

Our migratory birds begin building very soon after they land on our shores; and it is while building operations are progressing, and more particularly while the hen is sitting on her eggs, that the cock birds fill our woods, hedgerows, and gardens with their notes. April and May are the months that birds sing at their fullest, and it is now that they are in their finest plumage. The brilliancy of a chaffinch (to mention one familiar example) in the spring would astonish those who have not seen one in April, and particularly those who know them best from stuffed or caged specimens. The coloring of all birds fades after death, and caged specimens are rarely so large or full-colored as wild ones. I had occasion to make a sketch of a goldfinch, and went to a cottage where some were kept; but to have painted literally from such specimens would have been a libel on this handsome bird.

The blackcap and whitethroat are two of our garden birds that come in April. The former is a most sweet singer, and has been christened the mock-nightingale. I do my utmost to encourage birds in my garden; and though my fruit buds suffer, it is very pleasant to be able to watch birds building in front of your windows, and to see them coming around the house for crumbs. I had two thrushes build on two small firs in front of the house, and from my bedroom window I could look into one of the nests and see the old one sitting on the eggs. I will allow that gooseberry and currant trees suffer somewhat through the finches picking out the buds; but some old fish net thrown over the trees will protect them. But to watch a thrush creep under a yew hedge, find a snail, and then bring it out and crack its shell on the tile sedging until he can get the body clear of its covering, and then, after rubbing it up and down on the gravel path, swallow it with all the relish of a gourmet, is worth a gooseberry or two.

Birds very soon get to know whether they are molested or not, and act accordingly. It is a pleasing sight to see the sparrows in the public promenades in Paris alight on the hands of those who daily take food to them. The London sparrow is tame, and in the parks we can soon get a hundred round one by throwing down a few crumbs; but I have never seen a bird actually alight on one's hand. Birds in towns get very fearless, and I have known wood pigeons build and bring off two broods in a season in a London square; yet this bird is one of the rarest we have in the country, as those know who try to shoot them.

FRED MILLER.

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HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

MEAT sandwiches are much nicer if the meat is minced before it is placed between the slices of bread. The sandwich should then be pressed well with a clean cloth, to keep it together. Great variety can be made in the seasonings, and hard-boiled egg finely chopped with watercress may be used instead of meat.

NEVER put potatoes on the dinner-table in a closed dish, the moisture from the steam on the dish-cover runs back into the dish and makes the potatoes sodden.

MIRRORS should be washed with warm soapuds, then dusted over with powdered whitening in a muslin bag, and finally polished with a soft leather.

A GRIND remedy for rheumatic-gout is a boiled-potato poultice applied to the part affected.

So many people use enamel for renovating and adorning articles of furniture, that it is well to know that it should be used warm. Care should also be taken to use a good and fine brush for painting it on, otherwise it is apt to be smearable, and the hairs come out and stick on the enamel.

The misery of cold feet on a railway journey may be obviated by the use of a newspaper wrapped round the legs and feet. A penny spent on a paper for that purpose is money well spent.

If you want window-plants to keep fresh and look well, a spray-producer, with a fine spray and lukewarm water, should be used over the plants once or twice a week, and in summer every day when the sun is not on them; this keeps the foliage from getting too dry and dusty. Ferns especially enjoy this treatment.

KID-GLOVES get very dirty inside long before they are worn out. They should then be turned inside out, and cleaned with bread-crumbs.

A BAG of flax-seed soaked in water for some time makes a good wash for varnished paint, and keeps the paint bright.

Victorian Times • 14 • April 2019
A SOCIAL REVOLUTION: THE MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT, 1882.

BY A LAWYER.

NEW Acts of Parliament are of much immediate interest to the domestic circle, but the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, which came into force upon January 1st of the present year, is an exception to this general rule.

For the scope of this Act is wide enough to affect not only those who are already married or are contemplating matrimony, but also every one who has dealings with married couples. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the Act has wrought a social revolution, by reversing the ancient principle of the Common Law, through which, upon marriage, the husband and wife became one person (who, in practice, always turned out to be the husband), and by enabling a married woman to stand before the law, in all relations of private life, upon the same footing as, and apart from, her husband.

By the old Common Law the husband acquired by marriage an absolute right to all his wife's property except her lands, in which he had a qualified right of very large extent. He could also sue for any debts that might be owing to his wife; and if a wife owed money, she had not even a legal right to pay her debt without her husband's permission.

But perhaps the most scandalous provision of the old law had regard to the earnings and savings of a
NOTES BY AN ARTIST NATURALIST.

"Oft thou hast given them store
    Of flowers—the frail-leaf’d, white anemone,
    Dark bluebells drench’d with dews of summer eyes,
    And purple orchises with spotted leaves."

"The sweet spring days,
    With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
    And bluebells trembling by the forest ways,
    And scent of hay new mown."—Matthew Arnold.

It was my privilege one year to spend the first three weeks of May at Burnham Beeches. I went there to sketch, and being out of doors the whole time I had every opportunity of watching how rapidly nature leaps into activity and rushes into life. In this, the month that sounds pleasantest in our ears of the whole twelve, for May is the month of breaking bud and bursting blossom. The cynic may say that May is disappointing, and its pleasantness exists as an idea that has come down to us from a past when the season was in harmony with its name: that May is chilly and makes the tooth of the east wind felt. Lowell was in such a mood when he penned—

"May is a pious fraud of the almanack,
    A ghostly parody of real Spring
    Shaped out of snow and breathed with Eastern wind."

But perhaps American Mays are more disappointing than ours, for "Mr. Biglow" says, "For half our May’s so awfully like Mayn’t." But when all that can be urged against May is placed on the debit side of the account, its assets are quite enough to leave a substantial balance in its favour, and the hearts of men will fortunately “bound as to the taboor’s sound” when May comes round once more. We forget past disappointments in anticipation of coming joys. As Pope said, "Man never is but always to be blest."

What we remember of any particular month depends upon the incidents that are associated with it. Unless certain events are linked with a season, the year becomes merely a procession.
of uneventful weeks, and awakens no associations when we look back upon what has gone. To those who dwell in cities, as I did myself for so many years, the procession of the seasons makes very little impression upon them, for if you do link events with times, the events themselves are those pertaining to our artificial life, and so May to an artist may come to mean the month when the Royal Academy opens; but with country folk the planting or gathering of the herbs for the service of man marks off the different months, so that each one stands out like a distinct personality. In that thoroughly country story of Ruth the season is spoken of as the time of barley harvest, and if you live in a village and associate with the peasantry, you will find that it is the time of "tatter planking" or "hay-making" that is spoken of more often than the particular month when such duties are performed. I heard an old farmer say that when the parson began the Bible was the time to plant beans, and the lies—

"When elm leaves are as big as a shilling, it's time to plant kidney beans if you're willing;"

When elm leaves are as big as a penny, You must plant kidney beans if you mean to have any."

carry out the same idea of linking two events together to remember one of them—the essence of artificial memory. I learnt May as it were during my sojourn in the Beeches, for it was the first time that I had spent May out of doors, watching, during the pauses of my work, the rapid growth of everything around me, for whether I would or not, I could not help being made aware of the ever-changing scene that I was trying to get down on my canvas. One of the subjects I had in mind was a study of some willow trees bending over a pond. When I began the sketch, the trees were just tinted with a bloom of pale green produced by the opening leaf buds. The leaves were unwrapped just enough to clothe the branches with a veil as of delicately-tinted gauze. In three weeks those same trees had become masses of green, the opened leaves hiding all but the main branches, and even these were almost concealed. The beeches, which were quite bare the first week of May, were tinted with a green of a quite vivid tint, which most artists find very unattractive owing to its crudity; the bracken, which was only just through the soil with all its leaves wrapped tightly together in a characteristic scroll, were some eighteen inches high in three weeks, and all over the common, and in the open spaces in the woods a thick miniature forest of rich brownish-green stems had pushed their way where before the ground was bare, so quickly does bracken grow.

In the middle of the month I noted that primroses still lingered in the woods, now purple and blue with wild hyacinths. Matthew Arnold also noted this in "Thyrsis":

"And only in the hidden brook-side gleam, Primroses orphan of the flowery prime."

Wood anemones hang their heads on the banks and outskirts of the spinneys. Pansy is in full blow, and broom is just opening into flower by the road-side. A few apple trees are out in blossom, but the bulk of them want another week to be in full pink and white perfection, while the cherry and pear trees are carpeting the ground below them with their petals. The woodruff was a conspicuous plant with its straight stems and intensely yellow-green flowers and dark azalea-like leaves growing out of the low clumps of bramble and
The delicate, white, fragile starwort found its way through these bramble clumps, Nature scurrying through its thorny path so that no damage befell it. The oaks are now covered with their rich, warm-brown, half-opened leaves, quite reddish beside the birches and beeches, while the ash trees are slowly spreading out their leaves.

On May 20th, I noted that I picked the first white campion in a cornfield. What a delicious scent it has! I noticed the glow-worms shining brilliantly as I walked home in the dusk. It quite startled me to see one shine forth suddenly, for as it flashes out in the dusk and shadow of a hedge the light appears most brilliant, as though a star had accidentally slipped out of its place and fallen earthwards.

The birds are full of song now, and while the hen birds are sitting their mates spend a good deal of their leisure in letting the world know that they have voices. I had never until this visit to Burnham Beeches heard the song of the nightingale, or if I had heard it, it had left no distinct impression on my mind; but their song in the woods was to the music of the woods what a violin is in a concert. About nine o'clock in the evening one bird would begin, and in a few minutes he would be answered by another bird, and then a third would join in, and every few minutes the chorus would be augmented until all through the woods you could hear the whistle, the trill and the gurgle, for the three bars in a nightingale's song are all very marked and distinct. The nightingale's song is heard at a time when so many other birds are still, that it has attracted perhaps more attention to itself than would have been the case had it sung only in the day; for the nightingale sings through the day, and yet the casual person does not notice it then. The nightingale appears early in April (Gilbert White gives its date as the first), and sings through May into June, and leaves us in August.

In speaking of glow-worms and nightingales I am reminded of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem, "Bianca among the Nightingales," the first verse of which I cannot refrain from quoting:

The cypress stood up like a church
That night we felt our love would hold,
And slyly moonlight seemed to search
And wash the whole world clean as gold;

The olives crystallised the
Broad slopes until the hills grew strong:
The fireflies and the nightingales

The nightingale has been heard in Victoria Park and Kensington Gardens. The blackcap is another beautiful songster, and is the earliest of the summer emigrants to visit us, and instances have been known of its staying the winter with us. Both male and female assist in incubation, though the male will often feed his mate as she sits on her eggs, and then perch by and sing to her. Birds at this season of the year put on their gayest dress, and the brilliancy of the plumage of such a bird as a cock chaffinch must be seen to be appreciated. No idea can be formed of the colouring of birds from those kept in captivity, and even stuffed specimens fade even if they were originally brilliant. The linnet's...
breast is, in a wild state, most brilliantly marked with crimson; but it loses this after its first moult in a cage, and never gets it back.

I noted that a nest of young thrushes was concealed before the leaves had opened. The “pink-pink” of a female chaffinch as one walked through the woods told one that a nest was in the vicinity, and it would have been comparatively easy to have taken a good many nests only in May, so little are they hidden until the leaves burst their buds and expand. Young birds, when they are just capable of flying a short distance, cannot keep on the wing for more than twenty or thirty years, unless victims to cats, stoats, and boys. I have frequently had opportunities of catching these fledglings, and one morning in walking through a wood I was startled by a thrush suddenly starting up close to me. I guessed something was wrong, for a thrush does not in a general way allow one to get almost step on it, so I looked about, and presently saw a youngster on the ground that had evidently ventured out on its own account, too soon for its own well-being as I noted on the picked bit of a nest up, but the old bird, whom I had disturbed in looking after the youngster, and who had perched on a near bough, exhibited much concern, and was away in a manner that told me plainly how upset she was, that I left the young thrush on the ground for the old bird to do what she could to get her offspring out of danger.

I often had my attention called to the woodpeckers by the tapping of their beaks on the branches of the trees. The succession of rapid short taps instantly tells you where the bird is, and by waiting and watching you can generally see him as he runs up and down the branches. We have three woodpeckers in this country—the large green, called in some places the wood-poor, the spotted, and the small one. This latter I have seen on the walnut tree in my garden, but they are essentially woodland birds.

On May 28th I made this note which emphasizes my opening remarks. It is hard to realize how rapidly everything grows in the spring if the weather be warm. During the time I have stayed at Burnham, I have seen the beeches, and oaks, and birches become almost full foliaged, and when I came the leaf-buds were only just bursting. Cherries have flowered and fallen, and apple trees have blossomed and been scattered by the breeze. Cowslips have been succeeded by violets. Arnold says—

"Where thick the cowslips grew and far descried,
High tower’d the spikes of purple orchids."

And primroses and anemones have paled before the hyacinths, which in turn are seeding and giving place to foxgloves. The colour of a mass of hyacinths in a wood often becomes commented upon. The tint appears to vary very much as the sea under sunlight, and one minor poet has likened the hyacinths in Nuneham Woods to a "Breath of sea blown inland." Tempean speaks of Guinevere riding with Lancelot over "Sheets of hyacinth that seem’d the heavens up-breaking through the earth." The grass has flowered and is now succeeded by its warm seed-pods, and the bough has filled up the gap in colour. The hawthorns have just put on their leaves, the "mantle green" which Nature spreads, as Buras so happily puts it, and are now white with feathery sprays of blossom. The bracken must have grown daily by inches, seeing that now it is from eighteen to twenty-four inches high.

In this Thames village we have many apple orchards, and there is no more beautiful month to make its first acquaintance than May, when the air is perfumed by a scent between rose and almond of the apple blossoms. Unquestionably the apple is the most beautiful of all flowering trees, the pink of the blossoms, and the white of the petals—more silvery than the pear, which is a creamy white—and the grey-green of the leaves produce a harmony which makes an apple orchard one of the most striking sights in a village—making Arcadian what at other times may be almost squallid. The medlar and quince are much less seldom met with. The foliage of both these trees is more laurel-like, while the blooms are much larger than apple blossoms, though in the quince and medlar they grow solitary instead of in clusters as in the apple and pear.

It must be borne in mind that locality considerably influences the flora of a district, and that the plants which I saw in the woods in May at Burnham would not all of them be found, say, on the hills in Surrey. The hyacinth, for instance, and woodruff, are not to be found on beeches or hills, while the whortleberry or huckleberry, which belongs to the heath or heaths is only found growing in sandy soils, such as the Surrey hills, where the children gather the berries in August to make into jam. Then again such flowers as the buckbean, with its petals covered with a sort of downy fringe, the water violet, somewhat like the lilies, ragged robin, with its pink, ragged petals, myosotis or forget-me-not, and water buttercups, are all aquatic or bog plants, and are only to be found in such situations.

The cuckoo pint or wild arum, called by children lords and ladies, is pretty commonly met with in hedgerows and shady spots, and in the woods; the wood-sorrel, with its frail, mauveish-white flowers may be met with growing in clumps at the foot of a tree. It is said by some to be the plant St. Patrick took to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity.

The spotted orchis, so named from its leaves being marked with purple spots, is plentiful in moist situations, while the bee and fly orchises are found, on the other hand, only on chalk hills. There are flowers again only found in a few restricted localities. The fritillary or snakeshead, with its spotted purple flowers is one of these local plants. Around Oxford it is plentiful in low-lying meadows. It is found
almost white as well as purple, and there is a garden variety, which is very effective in the borders.

"I know what white, what purple fritillaries,
The grassy harvest of the river fields,
A love by Eyesham, down by Sandford,
And what sedge brooks are Thames' tributaries."

Some birds too are only found in certain situations, and those who have stayed on the Surrey hills in spring are familiar with the melancholy cry of the nightjar or goosander, which lays its eggs on the bare ground on heaths and commons.

Most of the summer migrants arrive in April; but the house martin is seldom seen before May, while the swift is not common until the middle of the month, and leaves us again the third week in August.

The flycatcher is another late visitor, arriving with May. A pair built in some ivy just over one of the windows, and brought off four young ones; and we could watch the old birds flying to and fro the whole day long, bringing insects in their beaks to feed their eternally hungry children. The corncrake, with its monotonous, guttural, rasping cry, is heard in the meadows both day and night, but it is a bird which is very rarely seen, keeping in the thick tall grass.

Poets have ever delighted to honour May, and when every village had its maypole country folk sheltered in May with rejoicings and maymerrymaking. These old customs die hard, and in this Thames village the children gather wild flowers and make them into garlands, and dace with their hats, and then go from house to house to show themselves and their floral trophies and sing. I was agreeably surprised the first year I lived here to have May-day announced by a gathering of children before the door carrying a large garland upon a stick held by two of the company. "Nor was this all; for in a sing-song, such as is familiar in children's games, they chanted the following rude stave:

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a happy day;
We've come to show our garland, Because it's the first o' May.
First of May is garland-day, Second of May is my birthday, Third of May is my wedding-day."

A bunch of Bowers I've brought you, And before your door I stand; 'Twas God who made all things, And made the world so grand."

I cannot pretend to explain the meaning of some of these lines. I give them as I wrote them down from the lips of one of the little girls whose song they overslowly—trying to say, I thought, the manner of speech."

AN AMERICAN TEA-TABLE.

In travelling through America it is not at all unusual to be invited to partake of supper at six o'clock in the evening. The guest will in time, however, come to understand that this is the same meal as tea in New York, and that "supper," as English people understand it, is not an every-day, or rather every evening, meal in America. Ball suppers, theatre suppers, and sometimes gentlemen's supper parties there are, but "supper" as a family meal is a rare exception among the classes in which it is a rule in England, from the bread-and-cheese and beer of the working man, to the more dainty meal of the well-to-do who prefer an early dinner to a late one.

In New York almost all except the working classes dine at six o'clock, and a cup of tea is served with dinner. The three meals of the day consist in this city, therefore, of breakfast, luncheon, and dinner. In other large cities, however, the hour varies from the two o'clock dinner of the Eastern States to the four o'clock dinner of New Orleans, and in most of these teas, or suppers, as it is indifferently called, is always served.

Tea in these cases is a very substantial meal, being indeed a sort of supper and tea rolled into one, the hour of taking it being from six to seven; and as cooking in the different parts of the States differs as much as it does in the various counties of England, there is great diversity in the dishes served at these teas. Different sorts of hot breads, of course, are inevitable at an American table; rolls, both Graham and white, hot biscuit, corn muffins, rice bread, hominy bread, baked muffins, and among country people very often hot griddle cakes are served, besides wonderful things in the way of pies, fried cakes (under which head come dough-nuts, an exceedingly popular dish with Americans, and crullers, which deserve to be popular anywhere), and cakes of every kind. America has certainly a good right to the title Land of Cakes for there is more variety of that article than in any other country I have ever visited.

Among savoury dishes, oysters in every form—although scoloped are par excellence the favourite mode for tea—stewed, fried, broiled, all are popular. In addition to these, there are various viands that would be no novelty to English readers, and one or two that are familiar to them, but novel from the manner in which they are treated. Even so plebeian a dish as pig's feet becomes quite dainty cooked as they often are in this country; and as in England they are so despised, I will append the recipe among others, and may thus rescue them from the contempt in which they languish at present.

Chipped beef is a savoury morsel very frequently met with at country tables, and in warm weather is to many more acceptable than more substantial fare.

I am now speaking of the teas of the middle and lower classes; those of the upper classes in this, as in many other things, so nearly approach our own English dinner that description would be superfluous. This, true of teas, is also true of many other things American. The upper strata of society here, Europeanised by travel, approaches as nearly as circumstances (in the shape of cooks and other servants) permit to the European standard. Kettledrums are fashionable in England, they become the rage in New York, and so with most other things; and in so far as they thus approximate to European manners, they lose the racy native flavour: there are no typical Americans among the crème de la crème here. It is not uncommon to hear them speak among themselves of a person who has been unable to shake off the provincialism, or has not tried to do it, that he is "so very American." I suppose it will be a somewhat new view of the Republic to see Americans spoken of as upper, middle, and lower classes; yet the classes are very distinct here: that is to say, each class believes in several stratas beneath itself, but none in one above.
from a painter's or a botanist's point of view. And how difficult to render it is! There were three of us, and we started by making studies of an apple orchard, with the grass below. At the end of our afternoon's work, when we came to compare notes, we had to confess that day after day we were beaten. Nature was too infinite for us to make definite. Some days it would look all grey—silver and gold, for the buttercups were in full blow—another day it would look green and yellow, and then we got our work rank, and it mightily offended our artistic sense.

It was no use individualising either. Painting from knowledge is useless to obtain effects. The painter must work entirely from observation. Many a man who fails completely to get the effect he sees, could draw more faithfully any individual grass or flower that goes to make up nature's treasury.

And yet it interested me to individualise, and see what went to make up the grass-field. And my studies in this direction proved to me the truth of an expression my fellow-worker was fond of using: "Throw on everything in your box; it's your only chance." This was said to counteract a tendency on my part to get my field too much one colour. Quite true, I said to myself, when I looked into the matter. There were buttercups, ox-eye daisies, pink clover, wild sage, sorrel, and grasses too numerous to mention. I found upon examination, however, that there were some six very familiar forms; and as all grasses lean to a warm purple hue when in bloom, the field where much has run to seed present a very reddish-purple tone, as subtle as it is beautiful.
palette of reddish tones, the sorrel in particular being found from crimson to a yellowish pink. Ox-eye or moon daisies are a conspicuous feature for the fields, and usher in June. By the river itself the wild rose is now in bloom, many of the branches drooping over into the water so that the blossoms are reflected in the stream.

Imagining the field before one as a large map, the various territories are severally coloured by the particular group of plants in flower, for among the grasses themselves you will find all one kind growing together, occupying a territory to themselves, while another kind claims its acre alongside. The comfrey is a striking wayside flower just now, delighting in ditch banks and the sides of streams. The pink campion, erroneously called ragged robin by some people, and the blue meadow crane's bill, delight in a damp situation. The comfrey is one of the few wild flowers that is many-coloured, for you can find them purple, pale yellow, white, and pink side by side. It is full of ornamental suggestion when examined, the curve taken by its flower spikes being full of meaning to the eye that sees aright.

Designers are aware that wild flowers are fuller of suggestion than cultivated ones, and amateurs might pick up many a hint in the colouring of their rooms and the art of combining colours. This last remark is particularly addressed to Miss Mantillini, for I have heard experts express the difficulty they find in harmonising contrasting colours. A well-known flower, the cowslip, suggests a good scheme for a dress, the pale green of the calyx carried out in some soft thin woollen material, while the pale yellow of the flower with its accent of orange forming the trimming in two tones of silk.

Birds, again, are full of suggestions in this way; and now that any tone can be produced by skilful dyeing, the most striking and original harmonies might be carried out in dress by following the plumage of a male chaffinch, for instance.

In arranging bouquets and vases of cut flowers, lightness, variety, and chasteness can be obtained by the judicious use of grasses and the introduction of a few spikes of sorrel in the midst of the flowers.

But the beauty of the flowers of the field is only seen by those who go into the fields and have the taste and leisure to drink in what they see; and by waiting quietly birds come and show themselves in a way that surprises those who only know birds in museums. The reed bunting I have frequently watched fly on to a spike of dock, and I found two nests of the reed warbler cleverly woven around four reeds. In one case the bird had collected pieces of string, worsted, and thread, to bind round the outside of the nest. In another nest a cuckoo had dropped its egg.
NOTES BY AN ARTIST NATURALIST.

This is the month to see the most striking and certainly some of the most beautiful of our wild flowers in perfection. By the side of any stream the loosestrife, willow herb, blue meadow, cranes-bill and meadowsweet are conspicuous objects. Indeed, the meadowsweet might be called the flower of July, as it grows in profusion in all the ditches, attracting notice by its scent as well as form, and is quite a note in the landscape. It succeeds the wild roses of June, and is a most decorative plant, and one I have frequently introduced into my work. The meadowsweet belongs to the rose tribe, little as it may appear to the casual observer like a rose, but in natural botany plants are classed according to the arrangement of their stamens and seed-vessels, and this brings together as cousins many apparently dissimilar flowers. It also separates others, as in the case of the lantana, which has leaves exactly like the white water-lily, and bears delicate yellow flowers of five petals. It can be found growing side by side with the “Nymph of the rivers,” and one would say it must be closely related; yet this is not so, as it belongs to the gentians. The white water-lily flowers during June and July, and on the Thames is frequently met with in the backwaters and wherever the stream is not too rapid. It is first-cousin to the giant lily of the Amazon, the Victoria Regia, which by the way can be seen growing in Kew Gardens—though hardly in perfection, I imagine.

I am inclined to think, though this may be because I have for some time lived in a village on the Thames, that the flowers which grow in the vicinity of water are the most beautiful of any that we possess. Of this I am sure that the edge of a stream is a very happy situation for flowers and plants, either when reflected in the water or seen against it, as one does when walking along the bank. Old Isaac Walton says—

"Let me live harmlessly, and near the brink Of Thames or Avon have my dwelling-place, Where I can sit and watch my float down sink At eager bite of perch, or bleak or dace."

but though I have carried out his wish practically I haven’t the old angler’s enthusiasm for watching a float, and very rarely trouble to throw a line into the Thames with a hook at one end and a worm at the other.”

Johnnson might have said in one of his frank outbursts. Fishing is a capital excuse for sitting out in warm weather to slowly drink in the beauty of the day and prospect, for I am not keen enough an angler to enjoy the sample of weather reserved for him. Much comes to one that one does not go for, just as it does when one is sketching out of doors. Fish come to the surface, and you may see a trout or a barbel jump right out of the water, and the bleak and small roach and dace leap out as a jack or perch shoots into a shoal to make a meal. It may be your fortune, too, to see a kingfisher fly off with a fish in its mouth or a heron alight and wade in on the shallows, and with his head bent and head pointing downwards keep motionless until his head darts forward, and having secured his prey flies off with stately flight to eat it at his ease. Kats come out of their holes and swim across the river, while dragonflies dart about and swallow the surface after insects. These sights are not often seen if you go out in a business-like way to see them, but while sitting quietly at your work, be it sketching or fishing, many a little drama is enacted before you which the restless individual never sees.

In the marshy country by the Norfolk broads I have found the grass of Parusinnus with its delicate white flowers, each on a tall slender stalk. It belongs to the sedgeweeds, our representative of the insect-eating plants, which are also found growing in boggy places. The spearwort is another flower I have gathered in Norfolk. This belongs to the buttercups, but though the flower resembles our familiar yellow friends of the fields, the leaves are long and...
tapering somewhat like an iris. The frog-bit, with its three-petalled white flowers, somewhat like the flowers of the arrow-head and the water-soldier, which rise to the surface to flower, and then sink, with its flowers set in the centre of its leaves, edged like a saw, I have seen in Norfolk, though neither of them grow in the upper reaches of the Thames. On the other hand we have two flowers, the fritillary and snowflake; plants very locally distributed, and both found in abundance about here. In tidal rivers and in salt marshes, the aster with its numerous blue star-like flowers, and the hoary poppy may be found, the latter a striking plant with its glaucous green leaves.

The teasel, sometimes growing five to six feet high, and decked, are conspicuous plants in July when both are in flower. The latter is a strikingly decorative plant with its long broad leaves of many colours, green, purple, yellow and red, and its purple brown seeds, and I have frequently used it in screens. Along the river some very large clumps of it are to be seen. The fig-wort with its tall, square, purplish stem, three to four feet high, round seed vessels, and inconspicuous reddish purple flowers, and the toad-flax, looking like a yellow snap-dragon, are also common plants in July. One must not forget to mention too, the water plantain, not unlike asparagus in growth, and the beautiful flowering rush with its umbels of pink flowers. It is a conspicuous plant growing three to four feet high among the rushes and flags. The common reed with its long spear-like leaves and feathery-purplish flowers, covers large tracts of marshy land in Norfolk, and is now the only place where the bearded bittern is to be found. It is a beautiful bird having conspicuous tufts of black feathers growing by the side of each eye, which has the appearance of a beard. Among these reed fens the bittern is occasionally found, and in the winter wild ducks, snipe and many of the rarer birds are to be seen. This reed (Arundo phragmites) is to be found in some of the backwaters of the Thames, but like the bulrush, it prefers a marshy slow stream, or stagnant water. The wild iris or yellow flag is plentiful all along the river, but has by July ceased flowering, and has developed its triangular seed-pods, which later in the year split open and disclose the reddish round seeds. The plant which has similar flag-like leaves, only that they are crimped at the edges, is the sweet flag. The leaves, if crushed in the hand, are highly aromatic, not unlike walnut leaves, and were probably the reeds used by the Saxons to strewn on their floors, and in Norfolk it is said to be strewn on the floors of churches on festival days. The flower of this scented flag is quite inconspicuous, being merely a greenish spathe growing low down so that it is rarely seen, and many people therefore think that it does not flower.

The lime trees are in bloom this month, and in the evening the scent given off from a row of trees in the village is powerfully fragrant. What is known as honey-dew drops off the limes like globules of gum. This was particularly noticeable in the hot summer of 1893.

By the third week in July the harvest has begun in all the southern counties, and in Sussex, where the land is forward, wheat is frequently carried before July is out. Rye is the first to be cut, but there is not nearly as much of this corn grown in this country as on the continent, and rye bread is a thing unknown here. Winter oats come next, then wheat. Barley and beans follow, and it is no uncommon thing for these latter to be out when the snow comes. The old plan of letting out the harvest to the men for a stipulated sum is seldom
followed now, as so much of the corn is cut and tied by the self-binders. When corn was "bagged" with a sickle, the whole of a village were in the fields, the women and children making bands and tying, the men reaping, and shocking and carting. The villagers worked from early till late, for the sooner harvest was finished the better was it for all concerned. Harvest men used to go about the country (many coming over from Ireland), and beginning in the south work their way northward where the harvest was later, but around me few casual hands are taken on, for machines do the work so rapidly that the ordinary farm hands are sufficient to get through the harvest. Harvest at one time was looked forward to as the great event of the year and as a time of plenty, and when the last load was taken home, boots and clothes were bought for the year, rent was paid, and occasionally a few days holiday taken to see friends and relatives who had left their native villages to find work amid new scenes. I remember as a child staying in a Cambridgeshire village during harvest-time, and the recollection of the light-hearted activity and good-humoured toil of the whole place is an abiding one. Everyone looked forward to the time, and though the work was hard, yet all appeared contented and each did his share with a will. "Man should rejoice in his labour for that is his portion." The few who did not work in the fields were at home cooking for those at harvest, or taking the meals into the fields, and even the older women and young children took their turn at gleanings. For once in their lives each year the villagers had more than supplied their immediate wants: they were as rich as the richest then.

July is not the most paintable month in the brick almshouses crowning a hill. I saw it for the first time one evening when the buildings were seen en silhouette against the sky, and I was enthusiastic about the place;
and yet friends who have gone at my suggestion and have only seen it in the glare of a midday sun (especially after a hot dusty walk of two miles from the nearest point on the river) come back with a most injured air, to say how disappointed they were with the place—that they could see nothing in it, a reflection upon one's judgment. If they had seen Ewelme as I first did my friends would have been spared their disappointment, and my reputation as a guide to the picturesque might have received a warranty. I have seen some most beautiful effects while walking to bathe in the evening when the crimson and orange of the sunset is whisked into the faint blue, and the meadows appear a warm, soft, musk-green, and the dew rises heavily obscuring all objects low down, while the cattle nearer the eye stand out sculpturously against the white mist. One feels that one can do something with such a subject, "when the long day wanes and the slow moon climbs," and you may depend upon it that one is not likely to be successful when one does not feel drawn to the subject.

Most of the hay is in by the second week in July, though in some wet seasons hay-making trends upon the heels of harvest. When the hay is all cut and carted the fields have a shorn, bare appearance that is not more picturesque than is a prisoner when he comes out of jail. One notices the change after one has been enjoying the luscious abundance of the meadows, with their oxeye daisies, sorrel, cranesbills and meadowsweet, but by this time the corn is becoming the feature in the landscape, and the joys that nature gives are quite equal to those she takes away. On the other hand this year (1893), owing to the long spell of dry weather and hot sun, most of the hay is stacked by the middle of June. This season has been so exceptional that it is worth while making a note about it. Since the beginning of March we have only had one afternoon's rain, and now we are in the third week in June, and during this time we have had almost continuous sunshine. Apples are now quite large, currants are ripe and will be over in a week or so, wild roses are getting over, and lilies, campanulas and carnations are in full bloom in the gardens, while meadowsweet and loosestrife are in flower by the river. Wheat is in ear, and so is barley and oats, and in short everything is quite four weeks earlier than usual. The fields are as burnt up as they are in a hot summer in August, and the drought is making itself severely felt in this part of the country, which is naturally hot. On the hills people are giving five shillings a barrel for water, or two pence per pailful, a state of things difficult for us to imagine who have water in abundance. Ordinary garden flowers like pansies, campanulas, sweet peas and dahlias can only be kept
alive by daily watering, while ten weeks stocks, asters and zinnias are stunted in growth, and will do very little good this season, as they do not make root growth. Last year I gave a quantity of annuals such as larkspur, escholtzia, limem and poppies in a part of the garden and many of these seeded themselves, and this year among the potatoes I have many annuals in bloom. Poppies and escholtzias appear to stand the drought better than anything, doubtless owing to the long tap root they send into the ground, which enables them to get moisture which the shallower root planted do not obtain. I have rather despaired of annuals hitherto, but I can see that at least they are a second string to one's bow in gardening; for many herbaceous plants like hollyhocks cannot stand the drought. I shall certainly scatter some mixed seed in my borders this autumn, for I find that autumn sow annuals are stronger and more forward than spring sow ones. I just walked up to a garden I have away from the house to see what plants had stood the heat and drought, and was astonished to see how freely the Shirley poppies were blooming. Some which sowed themselves against a wall on the gravel have done as well as any, and are flowering so profusely. Bartonia aurea, with its golden handsome flowers and thistle-like foliage, and sweet santol, are also in bloom, as well as some self-sown larkspur and cornflowers. The sunflowers too look promising.

Among the conspicuous flowers in a garden in bloom during July are argillacus, delphiniums, campenaria, Iceland poppies, mimulus, cardinals, potenillas, salvias, bergamot, veronicas, erigeron, evening primrose, sunflowers, Indian pens, everlasting flowers, lima and lilies. A pair of fly-catchers built their nest two years in some ivy just above one of the windows, hatched four young ones, and in three weeks a few days they were ready for flight. We often watched the old birds as we sat indoors flying constantly to and fro with insects to feed their eternally hungry children. The old birds would alight on the top of the open casement before perching on their nest. To show that birds do not always hide their nest these fly-catchers placed theirs in the most conspicuous place, where there were no leaves to hide it, as it merely rested on the thick stems of the ivy. Another pair have built almost in the same spot this year. A faggot heap is a favourite place for birds to build in, and in my yew tree and hollies I generally have two or three thistles build, though this year a pair half finished a nest and then forsook it. Towards the end of July swallows and martins begin to congregate, and the swift flies southwards, being rarely seen after July.

HOM-MADE ICES.

WILL commence by stating that this paper is intended for the sole use of amateurs; by which I mean those who not only have never made an "ice" in their lives, but who, perhaps, have never entertained the idea that they could make one; and to such I will endeavour to prove that it is a simple matter to manipulate a score; indeed, so far as suggesting variety is concerned, my difficulty will be to know where to stop. It would be useless to speak here of the professional system of making ices, because the "freezer" and "spatula" are not in the possession of ordinary people, neither could time be given to the process, which is tedious, whereas in following out the "blocking" system the ices are, in a great measure, independent of attention.

The necessary utensils—which ought to be found in every house—are a bucket, or small tub, or pan, of earthenware or zinc, and a tin mould, having a close-fitting lid. Any size or shape will do, so that it is watertight, and the lid really fits; if at all loose, a piece of stout calico should be laid over the top of the mould before the lid is put on. I know of nothing that will answer the purpose better than a "Devonshire cream" tin, which is a plain round canister, but having loops of tin on the lid and canister too, it can be securely tied down; besides, as the cream is sent in to all parts of the country, they are of better make than the ordinary tins, containing mustard, coffee, &c., which, as a rule, will not hold water. A cake tin, or jelly mould, will answer your purpose, but the rim must be plain—a fluted one will not do—for which any tinman would make a lid for a few pence.

For a mould that holds a quart or thereabouts, you will need from fifteen to twenty pounds of ice, according to the weather and the nature of your preparation. In winter time it may probably be collected from your own tubs and pails; but if you buy it at a fishmonger's, ask for "table ice," and you'll get the right thing. Don't have that in which fish has been packed. Presuming, therefore, that you have to purchase it, it will cost but about a penny a pound, and as a quart mould would be sufficient for a dozen people, the extra expense (taking into consideration that the dish is a real treat) is not much. More than half the weight of ice would, however, be required to freeze a pint; so it is cheaper in proportion to make the larger quantity, as for two quarts not more than twenty-four to twenty-six pounds would be needed. I am giving the maximum amount when the weather is really hot, and the recipes are, in most cases, for one quart, and can easily be reduced or increased at pleasure by the reader.

Now for the process, which, besides being simpler than that of "freezing" proper, referred to at the commencement, is cheaper as well, though I do not claim that ices "baked"—though they are equally delicious and refreshing—are so smooth; this is owing to their not having been worked with the "spatula" at intervals during the "freezing."

First cover the bottom of the tub or pan with ice, broken up into pieces the size of an egg, and mixed with common salt. Next set the mould in, and entirely surround it with more broken ice, until the top is reached; then spread another layer of ice and salt—of which a pound or more will be wanted altogether—all over the top of the mould. You see now the necessity for a tight-fitting lid. Set it in a cold place until required. In cool weather it will probably be firm in two hours, but in hot it may require four, or six, so some of the ice must be reserved and added, with salt, the water being drained off from the first supply as it melts; for unless the mould be kept well covered, the mixture will not be uniformly frozen.
In all the southern counties of England harvest is well in hand in August. Here, in this Thames village, the winter oaks were cut the last week in July, and by the middle of August the wheat was nearly all stacked. A good deal of barley is still uncult, but if the weather keeps fine by the time September comes in, the bulk of the corn will be down.

The children's holidays in most villages coincide with the harvest, so that the older ones may help in the fields, making bands and helping to tie; for the self-binders (machines that not only cut the corn but tie it up in sheaves) are not used by all farmers, and the ordinary cutters only place the corn in heaps ready for tying. As soon as the wheat fields are cleared, the children go gleaning, or "leasings," as they term it, and I constantly meet them returning with the amount each child gleaned being reckoned by handfuls: that is, they glean until both hands are full, and then tie each one up and start again. One family here, where there are some five or six children, gleaned nearly two sacks of corn—enough to last them for some time in the winter. Bread made from "leased" corn, if well made, and baked in the old-fashioned brick ovens heated with faggots, is the sweetest bread I have ever tested, and I generally try to buy a few loaves those weeks that the villagers bake.

Poppies are mostly over by August, only lingering here and there by the roadsides, but the beautiful golden corn marigold is to be found in plenty in some fields. It is one of our most striking wild flowers, and keeps fresh a long time in water, which is more than can be said of many wild flowers. The blue cornflower I only saw growing in one field some three miles away. The corn cockle, a purplish flower somewhat resembling a campion, but with a more marked calyx, was not at all frequent in the fields about this village. The blue succory, or wild chicory, so striking in stony, arid places by the wayside, was not nearly as plentiful as I saw it in Cambridgeshire, where, with the plant resembling pinkish broom (Rust-harvee Oenoth), it quite decorated the sidewalk. The flowers grow close to the stems, which look incapable of producing such delicately-tinted blooms, for it is a tone of blue quite distinct from the blue of the forget-me-not or borage. This latter flower I have found growing in a few waste places, though it is said to have been originally introduced into this country from the Mediterranean.

I gathered a bouquet the last week in August that presented a most striking appearance. It consisted of succory, borage, blue meadow-crane's-bill, forget-me-not, oxeye daisies, and meadow-sweet. Blue is the least common colour met with in wild flowers, and yet here were four blue flowers together, and in some localities a fifth might have been added—the cornflower.

In one field that was cut in June for hay-making and completely cleared of its flowers, a second crop has sprung up, quite fresh as though it were early summer, and it was in this field that I gathered the crane's-bill, meadow-sweet,
and oxeye. By the margins of streams and rivers by the river, the water foliage is looking its best in August. The long purples or loosestrife, and the beautiful four-petal pink flowers of the willow herb—called in some localities "rédins and cream"—are the features of the river banks in August. The willow herb is particularly striking, if you look at large masses of it, as the foliage is a warm, yellowish-green, and the pink flowers seem then to float over the foliage in tints resembling those seen in a soap bubble. The sedges too make themselves felt in the landscape in August, as most of them are in flower now, and when viewed in masses, the purplish-brown of the flowers contrasts well with the deep bluish-green of the stems.

August is the best month to dry the large reed mace or bulrush, as well as sedges and grasses for putting in large vases, ornamented drain pipes, and other receptacles for winter decoration; and a charming decoration those dried plants afford if some little care be taken in collecting and arranging the specimens. Cut the bulrushes low down (in the water itself where possible), so that you have leaves as well as flowers and their stalks, and be careful not to break off the upper part, or the flower, which is thinner and yellower than the lower portion, nor break the leaves. I spread
those I cut upon the lawn for a few days to dry out some of the moisture before putting them in vases. The teasel makes a striking addition. These should be cut low down and put in the sun for a few days. The tall, purplish-stemmed figwort, too, I have dried to add to the winter bouquet, and also the tall grass that grows by water; and later on I shall get some of the flowering reeds, and add to the collection. The meadow-sweet when it is just beginning to run to seed, and some of the tall spikes of dock as it is turning from green to those many colors of red and pink that make it so striking an object by the river, I am also drying with a view to adding to the collection; and I can assure my readers that the sitting-room in which these “herbs” are placed is made both characteristic and picturesque by this natural decoration.

The edges of fields and old ditches are the best places to search for plants suitable for drying. Just now the large hemlock is in flower, and if we can divest our minds of the prejudice some people have to “weeds,” we should have to acknowledge that the hemlock is a striking plant. For decorative purposes, such as a screen panel, a striking effect could be produced by painting a piece of hemlock, natural size, against a background of dark foliage. Dock when in flower, meadow-sweet now that it is seeding itself, and figwort could be introduced, and with a bird or two or butterflies, to give life to the whole, a striking and at the same time beautiful panel

might be painted by anyone with some little knowledge of art. An important point to remember in this decorative work is to paint everything in the natural size. Everyone finds it much easier to work to the full scale than either larger or smaller than the object to be painted.

The word “weed” is too often used as a term of opprobrium—the measure of our disgust. “Weed” is a corruption of the Saxon word wort—a herb, a word used with great effect in the Old Testament. I would keep the term “weed” for some few noxious pests that prove such a sore hindrance to us gardeners, especially when we get a little slack, and neglect to use the hoe regularly. The beauty of hedgerow plants is manifest to anyone who goes to collect specimens to dry for vases, and especially to anyone who essays to make drawings of them.

The yellow snapdragon or toad-flax is to be met with very generally, and August. It is a slightly poisonous-looking plant, and its appearance has perhaps gained it its rather gruesome name. A plant much more beautiful, and one constantly seen growing out of river banks, is the fleabane. Its golden flowers with their rays of narrow petals, and its glossy green foliage, ought to have procured it a sweeter name than the one it bears, which is evidently a survival of some old superstition, as are the names of so many familiar plants.

The flowering rush, with its beautiful pink,
cup-shaped flowers, can be found by the rivers, but I have never seen it in great profusion.
So many plants are local, and though plentiful in localities, are not to be met with in many places. Difference of soil produces a marked change in the flora. Leave the moist fields in the Thames valley and go on to the sandy hills in Surrey, and you meet with the heather and bilberry. Hereabouts neither is to be found. On the other hand, some flowers are to be found all over the country, and apparently any soil does for them; but as a rule the most beautiful wild flowers are those which are particular as to their surroundings.

The bindweed, or large white convolvulus, is always associated with harvest-time, for it is seen trailing over hedges with its pure white blossoms when the corn is turning yellow. There is a smaller and much less beautiful bindweed with pinkish flowers that is fond of climbing up corn-stalks.

The most distinctive flowers in the gardens in August are the phloxes and mallows, including the tall, elegant hollyhocks, one of the handsomest of our hardy perennials. It was once general in all cottage gardens, but seems to have died out in many places. Some readers may have seen a picture in the Grosvenor Gallery a few years ago by the late gifted painter, Cecil Lawson, wherein hollyhocks and bee-hives were the most striking objects, and really made the picture. I fancy a good many people who saw that picture determined henceforward to have hollyhocks in their gardens. I remember as a child the hollyhocks that used to grow in the garden attached to my grandmother's house, and how fond I was of gathering the seed pods and getting out the flat seeds so closely packed in the circular calyx. This year I have raised
some plants from seed, and hope next year to see some of them in bloom. The perennial phloxes are despised by many people, and yet some of them are beautiful plants, especially the white ones. Some of the pink ones are crude in colour, I allow, but there is no necessity to have those that are objectionable.

The annual phlox (P. Drummondii) is a very showy plant, blooming in an intermingling of various shades of pink and purple. To be effective it should be grown in beds, so that a perfect kaleidoscopic effect is produced.

The double German aster is always a favourite in village as well as in the big gardens, and it is certain to show a plant in borders and flower-beds. The ten-week stocks are still blowing, especially where the first blooms have been cut, as this causes the plants to throw fresh flowers. In many gardens I notice sweet peas are over, but I have plenty in flower, simply because I have kept all seed pods cut off. If those who grow flowers were careful to keep them from seed, they would be able to cut flowers weeks and even months longer than they now do. I have pansies well in bloom still, and yet in all the gardens around me they have long been over. My white galega and scarlet galea are still throwing up blooms.

Sunflowers greet the entrance of August, and are, I always think, some of the most striking flowers a garden can produce. Against walls or shrubberies they are particularly effective, but I find that they must be in full bloom. Some I planted slightly under the shade of trees have thrown small miserable blooms. The perennial sunflowers and bapalum are well worth growing. In a garden near me, where there is plenty of space, a varied and rich effect is obtained by rows of annual chrysanthemum, cornflowers, clarkia, and scabious, and I noticed a pale-coloured sunflower which is well worth growing, as it is effective when contrasted with the ordinary yellow ones.

Those who grow balsams should have them in full power. In August, and indeed there is no month in which gardens should look gayer than in the one to which we have devoted these few scattered notes.

F. E. MILLER.

TAPESTRY PAINTING.

HERE are many girls who, desiring to learn some sort of artistic employment for leisure moments, have as yet found no existing form of artwork exactly congenial to their tastes, or suitable to their capacities. And there are, doubtless, many others who, already engaged in pottery painting, embroidery, and the like, desire to have yet another medium for the exercise of their talent, and one that shall be of practical service, either pecuniarily or for the beautifying of their own homes.

Tapestry painting, or painting on a specially woven canvas with liquid indelible dyes, seems to offer so many advantages, the method being readily learnt, the technical difficulties being few, and the uses for painted tapestries manifold, that we cannot do better than lay before the readers of The Girl’s Own Paper in a clear and concise manner, the mysteries, difficulties, and pleasures of this so-called new art.

We say so-called, for in reality it has claims to be ranked as an ancient handcraft, on its native soil of France, there being specimens of this painted tapestry as old as three centuries. But on English ground it is new, and offering the advantages it does, we think, to become both a fashionable and useful work among women.

But without wasting any time in preliminaries, we hasten to the practical teaching of tapestry painting. And, first, to give a list of the articles required in pursuing this art, strictly confining ourselves to those absolutely necessary.

There are thirty colours put up in ful.

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Those in Italy are the most useful, and you will find these twelve selected colours all that are required for general work. It must be borne in mind that these dyes are all of them dyestuffs, and are not really the colours they are simply approximating tints, for these dyes do not exactly correspond in colour to their namesakes in oil and water colour painting. The only use the colours can be put to at first is to make a test palette by putting a small patch of each colour upon a piece of canvas, and likewise mixtures of certain of the colours as a sure guide for future use. But for the benefit of beginners we will append here a note on each of the twelve colours enumerated.

COLOURS.

1. Prussian Blue.—A very powerful colour, requiring much diluting if required for sky painting, but when employed as a background may be used in about the proportion of one part colour to one or two of water. Good greens can be made with it and burnt sienna, cadmium, and any of the yellows, and when toned with brown it produces good greys; with pink it produces purple.

2. Indigo.—More permanent than the foregoing, but not so intense, therefore does not require diluting so much. Good for backgrounds and dull greens.

3. Holbein’s Green.—A useful colour mixed with yellow, but when pure should be sparingly used, as it is apt to look crude. Can be cooled with Prussian blue.

4. Emerald Green.—A very bright, telling colour, useful in small patches where brilliance is required, but too vivid in large masses.

5. Light Chrome.—A delicate yellow, but of little power. Is useful for light backgrounds and flowers, and makes good greens with any of the foregoing colours.

6. Deep Chrome.—A stronger and more generally useful colour than the last, with much the same use. Requires more diluting than light chrome.

7. Cadmium.—A powerful orange yellow, requiring much diluting. Useful for shading the lighter yellows, and producing rich warm greens, but care must be exercised in its use, as it has the effect of killing the colours with it if too much be employed. For this reason a small quantity goes a long way.

8. Burnt Sienna.—A rich red-brown, powerful and penetrating, and therefore very useful for in drawing the work. Must be diluted.

9. Cassel Earth, or Burnt Umber.—Similar to the ordinary burnt umber in tone, and useful for dark browns and also for outlining.

10. Rose Pink.—A powerful colour, warm in tone, producing purple with blue, orange with yellow, and rich reds with the greens.

11. Permanent Red.—A more orange red than the last, with much the same use.

12. Red Brown.—A strong Indian red colour, useful for draperies in figure painting, and for outlining and backgrounds.

Some might be added to the foregoing, as it is a thinner brown than Cassel earth, and produces good greys with Prussian blue.

This list of colours should be carefully worked out on the test palette, keeping of course a key to each mixture, and would afford ample work for the first lesson. It must be observed that all the dyes require dilution with plain water, and where no direction has been given as to this in the foregoing list, it must be understood that these colours do not require thinning so much as those where the direction has been given.

These colours being liquid, it follows that there is no white dye, the plain canvas doing duty for this colour. White would of necessity
NOTES BY AN ARTIST-NATURALIST.

SEPTEMBER

THE mornings in September are often misty, and the sun does not show itself much before eleven o'clock—not until it has sufficient strength to dispel the vaporous clouds and fog which wreath the river at this time of the year. But these misty autumnal mornings, warm without being hot, are delightful. A pull up the backwater then, when the distant elms tell only as a pale grey tint, vague and phantasmic, and only the heath of the woods pencilled out with sunlight, and has distinctness and actuality, is among the treasured memories when winter is upon us. To the artist, September is a much more paintable month than July, for in midsummer the glare of the sun makes the full green of the trees somewhat black, and the intense light cannot be rendered in paint. The softer light and more subdued colouring of fields and trees as the foliage slowly fades, yield effects which are much more possible in paint, and those who sketch from nature might remember that some effects cannot be adequately rendered with the materials at command, and it is only courting failure to attempt such. The glitter of sunlight on a hot day in July cannot be realised with pigments, the brightest of which are dull compared to sunlight itself. A great deal of the disappointment the young landscape painter experiences is due to an unwise selection of material and an unpromising moment when there is either no effect—i.e., no concentration of effect which can be grasped mentally before an attempt is made to commit the same to paper or canvas, or one that, as I have just said, is impossible. From September onwards are the best months in which to sketch, for as the trees change colour, they declare their individuality, an oak colouring quite differently to an elm, and a willow different again from either of them. Sketching from nature, disappointing and tantalising as it is, seeing that one's fingers come so far short of what one realises in the mind's eye, is among the most delightful pursuits one can engage in. The sitting out of doors in anything like decent weather with such exacting and fascinating work to chain one to the spot has compensating advantages, in spite of manifest drawbacks. Like the angler, who said, “he hadn't had a bite but he had had the day,” so, though the sketch you bring back may only have helped the artist's colourman, yet you have sharpened your perception, gathered experience, and had an excuse for sitting out of doors. I spent the whole of one September working at some figure, thistles and dock which grew by the backwater in a Thames village, and though the actual result, so far as work went, was inadequate to the time I spent upon the canvas, it was very enjoyable in every other respect, for like so many autumns, the unsettled weather of August cleared up, and September and October were beautiful. Walking home in the twilight with the white mist rising off the river and lying in long bands over the fields, and that merrilyness over everything as the light fades out of the sky, making you feel that the whole world is peopled by yourself, rounded off the days spent in trying to catch some of those fleeting beauties which inspire one to begin and disappoint one in the doing, I remarked then how very distinctly mushrooms can be seen in the evening. The white glistening surface can be detected fifty or sixty yards away. In one of the meadows I had to cross there were several “fairy rings,” as they are called. The grass in these rings is much richer in colour than in the surrounding meadow, and the fungi grow in these rings, some of which are quite a circle as though struck with compasses. Other fungi, such as puff-balls grow in circles besides the aegis, but there is no mistaking a mushroom if its points have once been mastered. Some fungi are very gorgeous in colour—orange, scarlet and yellow, and in some of the recesses in Epping Forest many of the rare kinds are to be found, and the society which
countryman saying, as he stood in Oxford Street, “Let's hide in this doorway awhile until the crowd goes by, for the sight o' so many folks bothers ye.” The old chap did not realise that the crowd, as he termed the people, would go on until quite late at night.

In most seasons in the southern counties harvest is over by the first week in September, but this is not always the case, and the further north you go the later is the inauguration: so that in the more exposed parts of Derbyshire corn is sometimes out until November. In 1892 we had a good deal of rain during the latter part of July and through August, and though a good deal of corn was cut and shocked the rain prevented it being carted. The result was that the wheat sprouted badly, for the showers were followed by hot sunshine and this caused the kernels to send out a tap root several inches long. This sprouting spoils the wheat, and I am told bread made from flour of sprouted wheat will not rise, but is “clung” when baked. A wet harvest is a very trying time for everyone. Even the on-looker-like myself cannot help feeling for those whose livelihood depends upon the produce of the land, and to see a bountiful harvest spoiling in the fields is one of the most depressing experiences I know.

Farmers are accused of being chronic grumblers. I notice that all people having much to do with the soil are a serious, almost mournful race, as though they were always looking out upon nature when she is in an unkind mood, and had to put up with weather that was the reverse of what they desired. The wit and gaiety and humorous light-heartedness one finds in London among the same grade of workers is quite absent in the country.

At our village concerts I have heard villagers sing comic songs in the style of funeral dirges. Those unequated with the songs would never guess that it was comic. Mournful songs relating to the deaths of soldiers and sailors, or flowers from mother's grave are those generally given and most appreciated by the audience.

If there is a month in the year when there is a pause it is September, for with the gathering in of harvest the anxieties attending the year are over. Nothing now can make a bad crop good or spoil a good one that is gathered. There is a feverish unrest in the early year—anticipation and expectation—the weather playing an important part in the
he is, and for good or ill can rest awhile and contemplate his past labours. The weather, now that so much less depends upon it, appears to be more calm and settled, in tune with his feelings. The sun may be warm, but it does not burn as it does in midsummer; and the colouring of all nature is becoming subdued and suggestive of rest rather than excitement.

It is too early yet to begin sowing wheat, and the roots are not yet ready for pitting. A good many pleasure fairs take place towards Michaelmas. There was a time when servants of all kinds were hired for the year at Michaelmas, and these fairs were known as "statute" or "hiring fairs." Men seeking fresh places—and women too, for that matter—went to the fairs, and the farmers attending made their selection and settled the labour question for the following year. The permanent hands on a farm, such as carterers or horsemen, faggotiers and shepherds, are still engaged by the year, and I know farmers and labourers attend Wallingford and Abingdon fairs to hire and be hired. But fairs are no longer what they were, and it will not be many years before most of them will drop out. Much of the romance of life goes with the growing matter-of-factness and unsentimental character of people. Harvest-homes were universal at one time. The "orkey load," as it was called, supposed to be the last load of corn taken to the farm, was the occasion of much mirth and hilarity, and the farmer gave his men and women a supper to celebrate the completion of harvest. I am sorry to say that this custom has almost dropped out, gone with much else that decorated life and its labours.

Even gleanings is now largely discontinued, and in 1892, owing to the wet, scarcely a handful was "leased." At one time the church-bell used to ring to announce that all could go into the fields which were ready. Wheat was then worth double what it is now, and bread, instead of being fourpence halfpenny a loaf, was ninetepence and tenpence. Pure wheat bread was at one time a great treat to villagers, as they used bread made of tall wheat (the indifferent kernels which come out at the end or tail of the machine) or wheat mixed with barley. I am sorry to say that in this village, except to compete at the annual flower show, there is not a cottager makes her own bread. Yet home-made bread is not only cheaper, but has more heart in it.

Steam-threshing machines have quite superseded thrashing with a flail, except in the case of a few beans and peas, and in September you hear little about the continuous mellow hum of the "drum," revolving at a very high rate of speed, beating out the kernels. I question whether the younger men on a farm could swing a flail without knocking their heads or legs. Women are employed in thrashing, generally on the machine, untying the bands around the sheaves of wheat or barley, or if the corn has been cut with a self-binder, cutting the string that holds the sheaves together. Women are employed, too, in hoisting, "scutching" (getting couch grass), and binding. In the next village a most extraordinary woman lives who does bird-keeping and other work on a farm. She is a most inhuman-looking object, quite a Caliban in fact, and the first time I saw her on Whittenham clumps with a gun over her shoulder, and her weather-beaten look-like face, her appearance was most startling. Had she not had an apology for a dress on, and a shapeless weather-beaten bonnet or hat, you would not have known that "Kizzy" was of the gentler sex, so entirely absent was anything approaching gentleness in her appearance. Many quite old women still earn their living working on the land, and I photographed two old dames taking their lunch while sitting on a horse-harrow, one of whom was eighty-three and the other seventy-nine. In the winter some of these old women go into the Union; but so strong is their love of liberty, and so great their dislike to the "House," that as soon as
the winter has turned they come out to earn a few shillings a week weeding, picking stones, or swede cleaning for the sheep. These women must have had out-of-the-way constitutions, for this latter job is a rough hard one, and they are exposed to the inclement weather of the early year.

Towards the end of the month blackberries and hazel nuts are ripe. In Norfolk there must have been tons of this fruit left to decay, for following the rains when out partridge-shooting I came across quantities of blackberries, delicious when quite ripe. We always make some blackberry jam, and most popular it is with our friends owing to its novelty. The jelly is even finer, as the seeds, which are somewhat dry, are taken out. Crab-apples make good jelly, but few people trouble to use them. Sloes again are to be had by the bushel in favourable seasons, yet few people trouble to get them. Oil-fashioned people used to make a wine from sloes which resembles port in colour, and it was said to be good for diarrhea, just as cowslip wine was reckoned good for fevers. Mrs. Primrose in the Vicar of Wakefield was proud to offer her guests some of her home-made gooseberry wine.

By the end of the month the swallows are getting ready to go, while the fly-catcher, so common in gardens in the summer, has left. This is the last of the swallow tribe to leave us. The concorde, which keeps up that continuous grating noise day and night in the spring, leaves towards the end of September, and then the shortness of its wings and its disinclination to fly, make it all the more wonderful that it can migrate. It must ever be a source of wonder how small birds can get through such immense distances in journeying from their winter to their summer quarters.

The berries are a great feature towards the end of the month. The wild service-trees, for instance, is most beautiful at this time, and among the green leaves and bright berries. The wild hop, too, as it climbs over the hedges is a feature wherever it is found.

A garden ought to be majestic in September, as the taller-growing perennials are now in bloom, such as sunflowers, asters and Michaelmas daisies, hollyhocks, phloxes, galanthus, and dahlias. Among the annuals, zinnias, asters, sweet peas and phlox are the most noticeable; but many plants that flower earlier in the season can be kept blooming if only the weather and care is carefully attended to, as soon as they form, for nothing so exhausts a plant as allowing it to seed. By this simple device I have had a row of sweet peas over six feet high in September, and yielding blooms until cut off by the frost. These, too, inustinums, canaeis, convolulus and other climbing annuals have gone on growing like Jack's bean stalk until they lose themselves in the shrubs they have made their mistresses, and this healthy profusion and negligent abundance which characterises gardens in September makes them to some eyes more beautiful at this time of the year than at any other, for all the plants have by this time asserted themselves, and have got out of leading-strings to a liberty which at first we would not allow them to enjoy, because we would train them in the way we thought they ought to go.

PRACTICAL POINTS OF LAW.

BY A LAWYER.

DOGS.

He owner of every dog that is six months old must take out an annual licence for the same.

The cost is £1 6d. for each dog, and the licence is obtainable at a post office.

The licence must be produced when required by a constable or excise officer.

Dog licences expire on the last day of December; they should therefore be renewed early in January or during the month.

Dogs kept by shepherds and blind men are exempt from duty. Hounds under the age of twelve months not entered in or used with the pack are also exempt.

The person on whose premises the dog is found is deemed to be the owner until the contrary be proved.

The penalty for keeping a dog without a licence is £5 for each dog.

Any person may keep a ferocious dog to guard his premises at night.

The person who suffers an unmuzzled savage dog to be at large renders himself liable to be fined.

A person has no right to keep a savage dog unchained on his premises to the danger of people calling there for a lawful purpose.

A person who keeps a dog which is in the habit of biting people does so at his peril, and will be responsible for any injury the dog does to people.

A Court of Summary Jurisdiction may order a dog which is dangerous and not kept under proper control to be destroyed, without giving its owner the option of looking after it more carefully.

The penalty for non-compliance with this order is £1 per day until the order is complied with.

The owner of a dog is liable in damages for injury done to cattle, or sheep, or horses by his dog. Even though he were unaware of his dog's propensity to worry sheep or cattle.

And it is not necessary for the person seeking damages to show that the dog had betrayed any previous disposition to worry cattle; or that the injury was attributable to neglect on the part of the owner of the dog.

It is generally supposed that every dog is entitled to one bite, and this is true to the extent that a person seeking damages on account of being bitten by a dog must show that the dog had bitten or attempted to bite some other person, and that the fact was known to its owner or his servant.

A constable may take possession of any dog which ha reason to suppose is savage or dangerous and which he is星巴克ing in the street or highway and not under any person's control.

No one has the right to maliciously kill or wound any dog; or to wilfully place poisoned meat upon land for the purpose of killing them.

Powers have been conferred upon the Board of Agriculture to make orders from time to time as to the muzzling and keeping of dogs under proper control; as to the seizure and detention of stray and unmuzzled dogs; as to regulating the importation of animals from abroad, and all other matters connected with the suppression and extinction of rabies.

Therefore it is an offence to do anything in contravention of an order of the Board of Agriculture or the regulation of a local authority, or to omit to carry out their orders.

Such as omitting to supply water to an animal travelling by rail.

Neglecting to keep an animal isolated or failing to give notice of disease with all practicable speed.

It is the duty of the dog owner to find out what regulations are in force in the district in which he resides and act accordingly.

Ignorance of such regulations will not be treated as a lawful excuse; but may serve to mitigate the penalty.

The publication of the order as an advertisement in the local paper will be taken as proof of its having been duly made.

A certificate of a veterinary inspector to the effect that an animal is or was affected with a specified disease will be accepted as conclusive.

For the purposes of enforcing the Muzzling Orders it has been held that a dog driving with its mistress in an open private carriage requires a muzzle. And that a dog is not under proper control who is lying outside the garden gate.

One of the latest regulations of the Board is to the effect that all dogs brought into this country from abroad and intended to be kept here for more than forty-eight hours must be isolated away from their homes for six months in the care of a certified veterinary surgeon.

The regulation does not apply to performing dogs.
Grimalkin.

AN ELEGY ON PETER—METR 12.

In vain the kindly call; in vain
The plate for which thou once wast fain,
At morn and noon and daylight's wane,
O King of mousers!

No more I hear thee purr and purr,
As in the frolic days that were,
When thou diest rub thy velvet fur
Against my trousers.

How empty are the places where
Thou erst wert frankly debonair,
Nor dreamed a dream of fellow care,
A cowering kitten;
The sunny haunts where, grown a cat,
You pondered this, considered that,
The cushioned chair, the rug, the mat
By firelight smitten!

Although of few thou stood'st in dread,
How well thou knew'st a friendly tread,
And what upon thy back or head
The stroking hand meant!

A passing scent could keenly wake
Thy eagerness for chop or steak,
Yet, puss, how rarely didst thou break
The eighth commandment!

Though brief thy life, a little span
Of days compared with that of man,
The time allotted to thee ran
In smoother meter;
Now with the warm earth o'er thy breast,
O wisest of thy kind and best,
Forever may'st thou softly rest
In peace, Peter!

Clinton Scollard.

WILD-ROSE BERRIES

OCTOBER.

By AN ARTIST NATURALIST.

This is the month of berries. The two most familiar, known amongst children as hips and haws, decorate every hedge and hedge. Hips are the fruit of the wild rose, and vary slightly in shape and size, but the colour remains much the same wherever they grow, every shade of orange and scarlet being found. When quite ripe the fleshy part of the hip softens, and has not an unpleasant taste; and I have read somewhere that a conserve can be made of these ripe hips. If one could get the flavour without the seeds, I can well imagine that such a conserve would be pleasant. Haws, the fruit of the hawthorn, or May, are much deeper in colour, and in some cases are quite a purplish-black. Last year hips and haws were very plentiful, and O! how beautifully decorative they look! But they are of little use for vases, as the berries soon shrivel and lose all their charm. I have found asparagus seed, on the other hand, keeps very well when dried; and no more beautiful object in the garden or house in October is there than a tall, branching, feathery spray of asparagus, with its numerous scarlet berries gemmed over the delicate branches. A spray in the midst of a bouquet gives grace and elegance—a point a skilful arranger of flowers is always careful to attend to. The idea that because a thing is common it should be discarded betrays a certain vulgarity of mind. I could wish for no more beautiful natural decoration in a room than sprays of wild foliage such as bramble, with its leaves in every tone.
of red, yellow, and green; and maple, with its bunches of seeds like keys, and leaves of the most exquisite shades of yellow—to mention only two of the most familiar that come to hand. Girls with time on their hands, and who wish to display their taste in decoration, should fill the vases entirely with objects gathered in their walks. The margins of streams yield a wealth of suitable subjects. Take the seeds of the meadow-sweet, with the yellows and greens playing one into the other. The figwort again, with its dark purplish stems, would find a place in my bouquet.

I have been much struck this autumn, as I have walked along the bank of the river, at the exquisite beauty of the river-side foliage when seen against the purplish-blue water. The rich bright colours of the meadow-sweet and loosestrife (often with quite scarlet leaves); dock, with its reddish-purple seeds, side by side with the warm greys of the thistles; willow herb, whose seed vessels split open, curling backwards, and showing the silver lining of the pods; and countless grasses and seedling plants coming against this background of purplish-blue water (for water, when you look down upon it as you do from the bank, is a deep rich blue going into purple), make the most exquisite harmony. Girls who paint might produce something very uncommon and striking in the way of screens if they would literally copy what was before them. The foliage should be treated the natural size, so that nothing would be lost in the painting.

The great feature of some of our hedgerows here was the wild hop, which clambered all over them where it grew, twining itself round the thorns and wild roses, and hanging its pendulous flowers in great profusion over the hedgerow. The
leaves, in shape resembling a vine, are yellowish
and even golden in colour, while the flowers
are a warm russet. I dried some sprays of it,
and I find it looks very well hanging over a
picture-frame. For any decorative purpose,
either embroidery or painting, the wild hop
would be a most useful material.

The small deep-red berries of the black
bryony, that will at times climb into the
branches of a tree, festooning them when the
leaves of its supporter have fallen, and the
larger pink berries of the white bryony, are
two of our familiar plants that decorate the
hedgerow. I saw the latter in bloom early last
October. I bear clusters of greenish flowers.
The vivid crimson berries of the bitter-sweet,
and woody nightshade, is another plant familiar
to everyone. This plant is one of the Solanums,
to which the potato and tomato belong. The
deadly nightshade, or belladonna, a much less
common plant than the bitter-sweet, having
large purplish-black berries, is the most
poisonous member of this large family. Black-
berries have been very plentiful this year,
and the long spell of sunny weather this autumn
made them large and rich in flavour. The
fact that flowers and fruit are found growing
on the same stem has made the Bramble a
favourite subject with decorative artists. Slices,
on the other hand, were so scarce that I looked
over several large bushes without finding more
than one. Plums in our gardens were equally
scarce. Crab apples again were not plentiful,
and I only saw one tree that had any quantity
on it. Apples, too, are by no means abundant,
and evidently the same climatic conditions that
interfered with the setting of plums and apples
affected in a like manner their less sophisticated
relations.

Painters are all agreed that October and
November are the two most paintable months
of the twelve, and, so far as weather goes,
these two months are as fine as any. I was
able to work outside without a coat until the
middle of October, so hot was it; and from
some years' observation I should say that we
neither get much frost nor wet in October.
Nothing can exceed the beauty of a sunny
day at this time of the year. We often
get heavy white mists in the early morning
when we enjoy a spell of fine weather;
and as this slowly clears away, and the sun
shines forth, the river is a perfect dream, for
there is a slight veil over everything, and even
the reeds close to the eye melt into the further
elements, so that nothing has a hard, materialistic
look, as it often has in midsummer. The elms
showed little signs of colouring at the begin-
ing of the month. They still retained their
full rich tints, which form a grand back-
ground for the willows, which with October
begin to mingle the gold with the grey of their
leaves. The orchards are now very rich in
tone, the pear trees, which are more architec-
tural looking than the dwarfed apple trees,
being very conspicuous with their orange-
coloured leaves. The apples show up too
now that they have absorbed the year's sun,
which is reflected on their cheeks; but by the
middle of the month very little fruit is left
unpicked. My two Blenheim orange trees
only gave me a few apples this year, but what
there were were fine, and turned a mellow
yellow colour before I gathered them to put
by till Christmas, when they are most tooth-
some. I had them placed on straw, so that
they did not touch each other—an important
point to observe in keeping apples.

It was not until the 25th that we had a frost
that made itself a reputation, and then we had
a very sharp one. On going out before break-
fast everything was covered with hoar frost,
that sparkled in the bright morning sun.
Gossamer festooned the hedges, each web like
frosted silver, and it was not until eleven o'clock
that the sun effaced all traces of the frost.
My walnut tree was the first object to show
what the cold had accomplished, for as soon
as the sun shone upon its leaves they began
falling, simply of their own weight. The noise
of the dropping leaves attracted my attention,
and by the afternoon more than three-fourths
of the leaves had carpeted the lawn and
border. I gathered up some four or five large
wheelbarrowfuls of leaves, and by the next
day the tree was bare.

The effect of one severe frost is very con-
spicious among flowers and vegetables. I
have seen a frost in the first week in Sep-
tember kill in one night all the runner
beans, vegetable marrows, and canlieflowers,
besides devastating the flower garden. The
frost this October quite finished the zinnias,
nasturtium, balsam, and sweet peas that
were in flower. I do not know a more
melancholy sight than to walk in a garden
that still had plenty to gladden the eye after
the first severe frost. Plants that nobly reared
their heads lie prostrate on the borders, a
rotting, shapeless mass. My row of sweet peas
yielded me an enormous quantity of blooms,
for in order to keep the vines bearing it is necessary to cut off all seed pods, and by cutting plenty of flowers for the house this is to a great extent effected. A garden should be able to show something in bloom every month in the year. In a neighbour’s garden I noted in the middle of October some fine rows of the early flowering or summer chrysanthemums, zinnias, crotolds, African marigolds, and annual chrysanthemums, besides dahlias, chrysanthemums, and roses. These will practically go on flowering until a severe frost comes. At the end of the month I could gather some nasturtium, annual phlox (this annual is harder than many others), large oxeye daisies, and a few pansies, besides chrysanthemums, which are now the chief feature of our gardens.

It is interesting, in going round a garden late in the year, to notice plants that you have allowed to cumber the ground only because you have overlooked them, throwing out what one might call good-bye flowers. Several of my stocks flowered again in this way. Pinks and carnations, too, have thrown up a second lot of blooms, and in one garden I was shown some apples, the produce of the second flowering. Cutting off stems that have flowered, and, in fact, cutting back plants as they cease flowering, will often cause them to throw up again, and in a mild autumn they will continue to flower until the frost finally cuts them down. Great changes are seen in nature between the entrance and exit of October. As I write this the elms are a golden brown, while the beeches are scarlet, and the oaks are getting their rich brown foliage that often hangs on until the young buds shoot in the spring. Chestnuts and walnuts are leafless, and the poplars and willows have only a few solitary leaves on the topmost
SOME RATHER ODD DISHES.

Here is nothing about which we more unjustly abuse our ancestors than their habits at the table. "Probably," says one writer on the subject, "the bullock, or the eternal "swine," they seemed to live on, was seldom cooked through, and each guest fuget himself upon his favourite food, tore it in his hands, and crammed it into his mouth, and what he could not swallow he would cast upon the table-cloth, which, as no plates were used, must have been drenched with grease."

What a foul libel is this on an age which had tastes almost as exquisite as those of Brillat Savarin, and cooks nearly as dexterous as Soyer! Why, strange as the assertion may seem, our ancestors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were scarcely less "nice" in their eating than are the epicures of to-day. So far from limiting themselves to roasted bullocks, and the "eternal swine," they had a choice of at least 300 curiously devised dishes; and, as for insufficient roasting, those who care to do so may read in the "Liber Niger Domus" of Edward IV, how even Hardicane, who, the historian observes, "died drinking at Lambeth," engaged "cunying cooke in curiosite," that "the honest peopull resorting to his courte" might be decently and abundantly fed.

Our ancestors had, indeed, their books of cookery, two of which have descended to us; and it is particularly noticeable that, whilst they contain some hundreds of recipes, there is nowhere any mention of the roast bullock, and scarcely a single reference to the "eternal swine."

The most authentically dated of all ancient books of cookery is "that choice morsel of antiquity" the "Forme of Cury," compiled by the "Maistre Cookes" of Richard II. It seems, however, to have been preceded by another cookery book, a manuscript of which is also extant, and which, although its precise period is in doubt, is supposed to date as far back as 1285.

Either of these ancient documents furnishes a complete refutation of the libel that our ancestors ate half-raw food with their fingers. On the contrary, they were somewhat dainty, preferring soups before joints, and having many varieties of sauce and garniture. This, for instance, is how they dealt with cabbages:—"Take cabaches and cut hom on foure, and mince onyons therwith, and the white of lekes, and cut hom smale, and do all togedur in a pot, and put therto gode broth, and let hit boyle; and colour it with saffron, and put therfo pouder douce, and serve hit forth." Saffron was the most popular of all articles for colouring and garnishing. It is mentioned in almost every ancient recipe, and was used indiscriminately with green peas or "Boor in Brasey."

"Raisynge of Coranese" were also used very frequently, and in very singular combinations, as, for instance, with the aforesaid boar, with "conyes," and with "drye stewe for beef." Whether the "drye stewe" would please present-day palates is perhaps doubtful. The "cunying cooke" was directed to make the following singular mixture:—"Take a great glass and do thi beef therin, and do thereto onyons mynced, and white clowes, and maces, and raisynge of Corance, and wyn; then stop it well, and sethe it in a pot with watur or in a cawdron, but take gode care that no water goe in; or take a fair urthen pot, and lay hit well with spentes at the bottom, that the flesh may hit not; then take ribbes of beef, and couche hom above the splentes, and do thereto onyons mnced, and clowes, and maces, and pouder of pepur, and wyn, and stop it well that no cyre goe oute, and sethe it wyth esy fyre."

Among our ancestors, as these ancient manuscripts show, roasting and boiling were processes frequently used as auxiliaries to each other. Here, for example, are directions to cook "felettes in Galantyne":—"Take felettes of porke, and roste hom till that byn nere ynoth, then take hom of the spitte and do hom in a pot, and chop hom, if thowe wyl, on gobettes, and do thereto gode broth of beef, and draw up a lyoure of brede stepe in broth and ynyngur, and do thereto powder of clowes and maces, and put thereto galentyne, and let hit sethe, and colour hit with saunders, and serve hit forthere."

Again, we have this recipe for making "Goos in Hochepot":—"Take a goos not fully rosted, and chop her on gobettes and put hit in a pot, and do thereto broth of fresh flesh, and take onyons and mync hom, and do therio; take brede and stepe hit in broth, and
NOTES BY AN ARTIST NATURALIST.

NOVEMBER

November, for by the end of the month all deciduous trees are bare save a few oaks which will often carry their dead leaves until pushed off by the new growth in the following Spring. Last year was very remarkable for its early frosts. In the third week of October we had ten and a half degrees of frost, with the result that in one day the walnut tree at my gate dropped its leaves, amounting to a good many barrow loads, while the willows, ashes, poplars, and chestnuts were made nearly bare by this frost. As soon as the sun gets out the day following the first severe frost the leaves will begin to fall of their own weight, and by the evening the trees that a day ago were in full dress will be stripped to nakedness, as was the case with my walnut.

Quite early in October we had a frost which killed the dahlias, nasturtiums, marrows, and beans, and very melancholy is it to walk out into your garden the morning following the first severe frost, for the scorching white frosts we get in the autumn are not severe enough to do any harm to even such tender plants as dahlias. Did we go without a sharp frost till quite late in the year we should find that the half-hardy flowers like zinnias, phloxes, nasturtiums and dahlias would go on blooming, for when mine were cut down last year we were gathering quantities of flowers every day, and it is a great privation when you have been accustomed to having many vases always filled with flowers about your rooms to have to search diligently to find enough to fill so much as a specimen glass.

Of course there are blooms still to be had. I gathered myself some eschscholtzias, scented candytuft, clarkias, gillian Virginian stock, nemophila and mignonette from a bed of annuals I sowed in the spring. These were not killed by the frosts, and if we had had another spell of mild weather I should have had plenty of annuals for cutting, as those which bloomed early had done themselves, and their offspring were just showing their bloom. This is the time all gardeners have to have a bed of annuals, not only because of their free blooming in the summer, but also on account of their hardiness. Cut these down all through October by keeping all flowers from seeding you greatly prolong their flowering season, as they will keep throwing fresh blooms in an endurance of their root stock which is just to produce seed. I have at this moment got Canterbury bells, which were quite a sight to see in June, covered with a third crop of flowers simply because we kept the seed-pods picked off, and we have been cutting sweet peas until the frost killed them, by not allowing them to seed. Poppies again are plants that if allowed to seed will only bear one lot of flowers; but some Shirley poppies (quite the best annual poppy you can grow, with their thin delicate petals of exquisite shades of pink, red, and white) are even now after these months giving us blooms, because we kept the seed-pods picked off, while some that were neglected have been over this last two months. This is the first season I have grown hardy annuals, having had a stupid prejudice against them, which, like many other prejudices, has been dispelled by knowledge. I drink the whole patch of golds, which I sowed in March with a five-shilling collection of annuals, and though they were sadly neglected and got very weedy through not keeping the hoe at produced a most excellent result, from June to late autumn. The ones that did best with me were the crimson linum, one of
the showiest annuals grown, the red mallow, a tall-growing free-flowering plant, gilia, with its white and mauve flowers, larkspur, Virginia stock, and as the quickest of all annuals and capital for borders, clarkia, eschscholzia, Shirley poppy and dwarf convolvulus. Most annuals are sown too thickly, and then they choke each other and are very unsatisfactory. It is better to sow fairly thickly and then thin severely. It is astonishing how much ground an eschscholzia for instance will occupy where plenty of space is given to each plant.

As the year wanes, out-door flowers necessarily grow scarce, but as each month has its own particular characteristics and delights which we should dwell upon and get what enjoyment one can out of, so there are plants coming into bloom every month of the year. For November one looks to chrysanthemums to relieve the barrenness of the borders, and when grown in a sheltered spot they do very well out of doors, though, of course, you cannot get them as large or as fine as those one sees, say, at the Temple Gardens, where they are grown under glass. Asters of many colours and Michaelmas daisies are in flower now, and these brilliant coloured flowers are a striking object in the garden. There are many varieties, from the minute flowers no larger than a forget-me-not to those the size of a florin. Pansies again will yield blooms for a very long period, and plants raised in the early summer will flower freely in the late autumn, and in fact in mild seasons there is hardly a month when pansies cannot be picked. Just to see what flowers can be had in November I went the beginning of the month to the Oxford Botanic Garden, and noted that there were in bloom herbaceous asters, gaillardias, calendula officinalis, or pot marigold, coreopsis, lupins, penstemons, scabious, and anemone japonica, and this did not exhaust the list, as I noticed that an Oriental poppy and an iris (I. Centaurium) and a tritoma or poker plant were sending up late blooms. The Oxford Botanic Garden is the oldest in England, as it was founded in 1632 on the site of a Jews' burying ground, and as it has a fair collection of hardy herbaceous plants it is a useful place for reference, as one can note down things worth growing. Kew Gardens contain the best collection of herbaceous plants in England, and my readers who wish to add to their collection of hardy plants should, if possible, make a pilgrimage there in the spring, summer, and autumn, and see what is in bloom. The object all gardeners should keep before them is to have as many plants in bloom as is possible every month in the twelve, and not merely have a gay time just for a brief summer season.

Wild flowers are certainly over in November,
Vases can be kept filled with these November glories, and though the berries soon shrivel and drop, the seed-vessels of traveller's joy, like tufts of cotton, willow herb, teasel, wild hop, thistles and meadowweet can be kept right through the winter. Everlasting flowers, too, should be dried for winter decoration, and with the seed-vessels of honesty (like oval rings stretched over with thin parchment), and winter cherry quite take the place of flowers. Dead hedgerow herbage affords the decorative artist a wealth of suggestion which he should not be slow to avail himself of. I painted a screen, using thistles, dock, and out-grass as the motifs, and I cannot do better than give a sketch of two of the panels to show how such material can be utilised. You can hardly fail to get the colouring harmonious, for the dead herbs are rich in subtle grey tones, and as decoration is a background to life it should never be obtrusive by calling undue attention to itself. Berries of the sloe, ivy, privet, hawthorn, and cotoneaster (a capital evergreen shrub for training against walls), Japanese briar, with its large decorative berries, the egg-like fruit of the passion-flower, bright orange in colour, and berries of the bramble, all make capital indoor decorations, and afford many suggestions to the decorative artist.

A good deal of wheat is planted in October, but drilling goes on all through November while other land is being ploughed and got ready for spring planting. Potato lifting is carried on far into November in many localities, and very picturesque it is to see almost a whole village out in the fields gathering in the potato harvest; for while the men, and women too, for that matter, lift, the children can pick up, sort, and put in bags. The figures of the men in their shirt-sleeves, of many colours, and the women in their cotton sun-bonnets and varicoloured garments against the rich low-toned surroundings of freshly surrounded earth and autumn-tinted herbage gives the painter every opportunity, if he be equal to making use of such magnificent material:

It only wants doing to be a masterpiece.

The latest time swallows are seen according to Gilbert White's calendar is Nov. 5, while Markwick gives it as late as the 10th; but both these dates are very late. White also gives in his calendar for November the primrose and heath in flower, but many other plants may be seen in bloom if the autumn is a mild one. Hollyhocks, for instance, were in flower in November, and some that I raised from seed early in the year were just coming into bloom when the severe frost we had killed the flower-buds.

Many of us are like Genevieve, who liked best the songs that made her grieve," and though I have just now said it is as well to look for the humour and comedy of life, poetry and pathos will, in our more exalted moods, steep us in a calm, sweet melancholy, and then the feeling that must often assert itself at this time of the year must be one bordering on sadness. Man is never so lifted up as when moved to tears, and to walk through a wood in November, when the wind sighs through the trees, adding to the purple carpet of dead leaves the few that still kept heavenwards, one thinks of the lines written many years ago by the poet whose death came home to so many of us—

"The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours wreath their burden to the ground;
Man comes and tills the field, then lies beneath;
And many a summer dies the sun."

So Tithonus spoke, and his words find an echo in our hearts as we see, in such a mood, so much that we delight in going to dust. We see the dead stalks of what a few weeks ago were flowers, and we remember the words of the Hebrew poet, "Man is but as grass; he flouriseth as a flower of the field; the wind goeth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

Such moods should come upon us, few in them we rise to the full height of our nature; but let us not spur our fibre by vain regrets.

"If there are thistles there are grapes;
If old things there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true."

Autumn has its joys, its beauties; let us see for ourselves what they are, and enjoy them when we find them, and not allow the thought of shortening days and the year's decay to weigh on our spirits, and bedim our eyes with tears of excessive sensibility so that we miss those sunny days in November, which by their rarity and unexpectedness are worth so much more than such days in midsummer.

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"LOE PRIVET"

"JAPANESE BRIAR"

"AMERICAN MANTHORN"
FATHER CHRISTMAS.

He comes in his snow-robés so soft and so white,
With a smile on his lip, with a form round
And jolly,
The genius of all that is generous and bright,
The foeman of sadness and grim melancholy.

He comes with "A hearty good-will to all men,"
And pledges us deep in an innocent chalice,
Till the hardest of hearts melts with kindness again,
And love reigns supreme from the cot to the palace.

He brings back the truant, and seats him once more
By the oldingle-side 'midst his friends and his neighbours,
Whose bosoms are touched to their tenderest core
At the story they hear of his wanderings and labours.

The pale city student he hurries away
To the old house at home and to all that it treasures,
That mother so wrinkled, that father so grey,
Who in their lad's progress find trust of pleasures,

He gives to the statesman and teacher awhile
Repose from all labour, fair freedom from duty,
On the grimmest of faces bids blossom a smile,
And eyes grown a-dull re-illumines with beauty.

Wherever he moves mirth and gladness abound,
For to give all hearts joy is his highest endeavour;
And wherever he pauses, there plenty is found,
Love and charity follow his footsteps for ever.

JOHN GEO. WATTS.

DECEMBER

BY AN ARTIST-NATURALIST.

The fairy who transformed the rats and other things for Cinderella, could not have effected a greater change in a brief space than does hour frost the face of nature. On several occasions in December I have seen in the space of an hour all the trees frosted over with rime; and as this goes on collecting all day when there is moisture in the air and a low thermometer, the scene the next morning is fairy-like in its beauty. It completely transforms nature, and the trees remind one of delicate branching coral, so abnormal do they become under the magic spell of winter. One could imagine that the world looked something like it does at such times as these, with the snow covering the ground, in the Glacial epoch, when, as the geologists tell us, this world was completely ice-bound. And there is a feeling of loneliness, too, which heightens the illusion as one walks over the snow-covered fields, for everything seems unfamiliar to one, when the well-recalled landmarks are obliterated or altered beyond recognition. The hedgerow plants, like the meadow-sweet and hemlock, are like silver jewellery marvellously fashioned, and have a beauty that pen cannot describe. The crystals that stand out from the stems and edges of the leaves bring out the beauty of form and delicacy of details that one hardly notices in an ordinary way, and anyone wishing for a unique decorative scheme could not do better than paint some of these familiar hedgerow plants when covered with hour frost.

A sunny morning adds greatly to the beauty of the scene, as it gives the frost a rosy hue with delicate blush-grey shadows. When I came to notice the landscape narrowly I found that snow has much more cold in it than I was aware of. In painting it, rose madder and cobalt would have to be used—of course very delicately. Birds tell out like brilliant spots of warm colour, and I think they never look more beautiful than in winter. I strongly advise those of my readers who paint, and who are looking out for a subject, to try a winter scene, such as a spray of meadow-sweet, with some birds upon it, somewhat after the style of the illustration on page 26. I have not attempted to indicate frost upon the foliage, as I wanted to show the full beauty of the reliefs of summer that fill our ditches and remain right into the spring—until, in fact, they are hidden by the new growths. The meadow-sweet, with its seeds and dead leaves, gives a beautiful colour scheme, the former being yellowish-brown, while the latter are purple and silver, for the leaves have a way of curling over the winter. For vase decoration, a collection of these dead plants is beautiful in colour and form. I gathered a few and made a sketch, which accompanies these rambling notes, so that those of my readers who have hitherto passed them by as weeds may be induced to treat them with a little more deference in future. The most conspicuous are the loose-strife, willow-herb (with its curling thread-like seed vessels), figwort, teasel, burdock, dock, and sedge, all of which are shown in the sketch. The general colour of these dead plants is a warm purplish-brown; but they are at the same time very grey in tone; and in painting them no positive colour must be used. It is much more difficult to hit these tertiary colours than appears, for the tones are very subtle, and are easily missed. I painted a threefold screen, using dead plants as the motif, though in this case I chose thistles and dock with dead oat-grass, just as they all grew at the edge of a ploughed field. The purplish earth made a capital background for the silvery greys of the thistle and the warm reds of the dock. As each panel was five feet six inches in height, I reproduced them life-size, and I was well satisfied with the effect when finished. I shall be tempted to try another screen, using similar motifs, only seen under the conditions of time frost.

There are some ponds near my house where bulrushes grow in profusion, and this winter, while skating upon them, I was much struck by the beauty of these dead reeds. The general colour is a golden brown, and the flower heads are a rich deep brown, and when slightly silvery with frost are most telling. Some of our beautiful birds, like the bearded
December's Bouquet of Hedgerow Plants

FRED MILLER

tit, could be introduced perching upon the reeds. Beyond these bulrushes were a row of pollarded willows coming against some elms. Willows in winter are a great feature in the landscape, especially when the sun shines upon them, for the colour is a reddish-purple inclining to golden brown. The elms, on the other hand, are very bluish when seen at a distance; but it is a superficial, ill-considered opinion that affirms that leafless trees are uninteresting or wanting in beauty. Most painters will tell you that trees never paint so well as they do when nearly leafless or quite bare, for they have much more individuality than when hidden beneath a mass of foliage. I noticed some oaks in a wood while I was painting outside in December, when the sunlight was upon them. The trunks were a lovely greenish-grey, and were thrown into relief by the purple of the underwood beyond. Oaks, too, generally carry their reddish-brown dead leaves all through the winter, and it is not until the young leaves push these last year's relics off that the trees are really bare. An oak wood on a sunny December day is a sight to be remembered. Mrs. Browning makes Lady Geraldine speak...
of her "woods in Sussex with their purple tints at gloaming," evidently alluding to oaks, which grew in great perfection in that county.

December is a month, too, of berries. The scarlet hips of the wild rose, the haws of the hawthorn, the white snowberry, the black bunches of the prunes, the deep red of the holly, and the delicate greenish-white of the translucent mistletoe, are conspicuous features wherever any of these abound. I have given a series of sketches of this last plant, because, although very familiar in Christmas decoration, many folk have never seen mistletoe growing. It is a true parasite, only living upon other trees as though it could not derive its requisite nourishment from the soil itself, but had to live upon the inorganic matter assimilated by some friendly plant. In the Botanic Garden at Oxford, a quantity of mistletoe is to be seen growing on two hazelwood trees, and it was from one of these that I sketched the pieces given in the illustration. The whole tree seems impregnated with it, for on almost all the branches a thickening of the wood is to be seen with a small shoot of mistletoe growing out of it (Fig. 3). This is the first year's growth, and in Fig. 2 a more advanced sprig is shown, which in time will develop into a thick branch having quantities of berries growing from the joints, as in Fig. 1, which is one shoot of a large spray. The absolute regularity of its growth is plainly seen from this piece. I have the recollection of reading in some child's history when I was a small boy of the reverence attached to mistletoe by the Druids when it was found growing on an oak, and that these ancient Britons used a gold sickle to cut it from its foster-parent. Mistletoe most frequently grows on apple trees; but I have also seen it growing very freely on black poplars.

Before the frost set in, a root of primroses had a quantity of blossoms in the centre of the leaves, and would, if I had continued mild, have been in flower by now. Several wall-flowers had small tufts of bloom on them, and in one garden some biennial stocks were in bloom. The annual phlox kept on blooming until quite recently, as they withstand the less severe frosts we had in November. It is a capital plant for late blooming, and is very varied in colour. I sowed the seed in boxes in a frame in March, and put the plants out in the borders in June. It is better to grow them in masses, so that the full effect of the varied colour is obtained.

The most beautiful of our winter flowers is unquestionably the Christmas rose (Helleborus niger, major). The plant is perfectly hardy, but to get the flowers in perfection a hand light should be put over the plant in wet or frosty weather. One good root will continue to throw up blooms from early in December until February. There are many varieties of hellebore; but the one named is the only one worth cultivating. The flowers of most other varieties are greenish in hue. Another familiar plant always to be found in bloom at Christmas time is the yellow jasmine, which blooms before it comes into leaf. It is a climbing plant, and looks very effective over a porch.

Gilbert White, in his well-known book, gives some particulars of severe frosts he experienced; and the frost that began here at the end of last year seems likely to take its place among the historic frosts of the century. The river froze over in one night, so that by the morning it was completely covered with ice. I was told by one of our villagers, who has lived all her life by the river, that she has never known this to happen before. Last Christmas was what folk called an old-fashioned one. Snow covered the ground, and it was possible to skate for miles upon the river; in fact, I saw no reason why one could not do the Thames on skates. One would have to walk round the locks; but with that exception the ice was perfectly safe, especially at the sides where the river flowed over the old ice during a rise in the height of the river and frozen through. I saw a hole made with a pickaxe, and the ice was from five to six inches thick. The villagers told me that it is over thirty years since the river was so completely frozen over. The last two days of last year were intensely cold, all the water in jugs, cans, and bottles in the bedrooms being frozen. The lowest temperature recorded by a self-registering thermometer in this village was twenty-four degrees of cold; but on several occasions we have had eighteen and twenty degrees.

So soon as the frost set in in right earnest I fixed a tall thin pole shakingly in the ground opposite one of the windows, having previously nailed a crosspiece on, so that when the pole was in the ground the crossbar was horizontal. I then tied on to the bar some pieces of fat, and from the pole hung a common tallow candle. This very soon attracted the birds,
though for a day or two they were somewhat shy of venturing upon the perch. Robins, of
course, were the first to visit the larder, they being fearless of all the feathered tribe; in fact, robins have none of
that timidity shown by other birds. You have only to start digging, and you will be sure to
find one hop in the freshly-turned soil
within a few inches of your feet.

My bird perch acted admirably, and as I sat
indoors I had an ever-changing table to
look at. There is no better way of studying
birds, and I keep some paper and a pencil
always handy to make rough sketches of some
of the characteristic attitudes, for nothing
teaches one so much as these rough notes
from nature. With these, and access to a
collection of stuffed specimens, one ought to
have little difficulty in getting life-like effects,
which is so rarely the case if you rely wholly
upon mounted specimens. Watching the birds
constantly as they flew to my improvised larder
soon makes me aware how far short of nature
the best stuffed specimens come. There is a
plumpness and a roundness in a live bird
that always departs in the stuffed specimens,
which are usually too long and too thin-looking.

And how beautiful a robin is in colour,
with his brownish-purple back and brick-red
breast going into greyish-white on the belly,
and his large black fearless eye. Very
pugnacious too are the robins, for if one flies on
to the hop on to the perch there a disposition
to come also, the one already there
sets up his back, drops his wings, and shows
fight— and means it too.

Tits are the next most fearless birds, and it
is very amusing to see them clinging to the

and pecking a hole in it. I get the
two kinds, the small blue tit, with its delicate
colouring, and the larger and more highly-
coloured ex-eye. These come all day long, and
while one is feeding, the others perch near by,
and look on until their turn arrives, for they
rarely feed in couples. Tits seem always masters
of the field, and allow no competition. They
are most sprightly, active little birds, and seem
well able to take care of themselves. So long
as any berries remained on the yew tree they
were to be seen all day long clinging to the
sprays to get at the coveted berries. Being
able to cling in any position, they can get
food that perching birds, like robins, cannot
reach, and it afforded me much amusement, one
winter in Norfolk, to watch the robins sitting
on a rail near which the candles were sus-
pended, watching with envious looks the tits
scrambling their bellies with the fat of the candle
that they themselves could not obtain. Now
and then, in sheer desperation, they would fly at
the candle, causing it to swing to and fro, but
were unable to get a morsel of the coveted
dainty through their inability to cling to it.

Thrushes sometimes visit the larder and
make a meal, but they do it in a very
furtive, suspicious sort of way, that shows
how little at home they feel themselves. The
longer the frost continues, the more hard-
pressed the birds become; but so far I have
seen no other birds on the perch. A wren
has occasionally flown over to it, but not to eat.
These and tits will frequently fly at the
windows, but I noticed it was in their
efforts to get any insects that may be lurking
in the corners of the recess. Wrens are by no
means shy, however, as I more than once
found them indoors this autumn. Blackbirds
and thrushes come around the house to pick
up any stray crumbs. I notice, too, that both
these birds come to the holly hedge to get the
berries, and by the end of the year not a berry
remained.

We had no wait here before Christmas,
but some mummers came round the few nights
preceding Christmas Day, and on invitation
came inside and sang two or three songs, and
did their best to amuse us. The men who
played the parts dressed themselves out in cut
paper dresses of divers colours, which made
them not unlike North American Indians on
the war-path. Of course they expected, and
generally received, the largess of those who
invited them indoors. On Christmas morning,
just about breakfast-time, a whole group of
children, girls and boys, came into the garden,
and ranging themselves round the hall door,
sang some doggerel lisses, which I got one
of them to say slowly so that I might write
them down. Here they are. They are prob-
ably the corruption of some old English song,
and as ancient as the rhymes that are recited
in such games as "Oranges and

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"I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy
New Year,
A pocketful of money and a cellar full of
beer.
Bounce a bawse, a barrel of beer,
Christmas cometh but once a year.
Holly, ivy, and mistletoe,
Give me red apple and then I'll go.
Give me another for my little brother,
And then I'll go home and tell my mother."
I never called yer 'tintion
To the roasted aigs an' goobers,
An' I clean forgot to mition
The 'possum — an' — pertater —
But there 's no use 'numeration',
For I see yer mouths is waterin',
An' I know yer yurs is waitin'
'To hur about the frolickin'.
That foller'd after eatin'.
Yer hear'n tell o' that lassie, lads,
What married Billy-Boy —
Could make a cherry-tart es quick
'S a cat could wink its eye:
I hain't partic'lar marked what time
A cat imploys a-winkin',
But, lads, thim wimin folks 'clared
That table, to my thinkin',
Quicker 'n a cat e'er wunk; an' we
Men folkses, in a twinklin',
Had slid it back, an' 'listed thar
Ole Joe, who sot to tinkle'
The banjer, 'n callin' "Han's all roun'!"
Tell every mortil sinner,
Young an' ole, po'ly 'n' hale,
Ups 'n' dances down his dinner.
Warn't partic'lar 'bout the step, lads,
So 's yer kep' in banjer-time;
Go's yer please — no Garman fangle,
No silk tails yer feet fer tangle,
Youth thin days wuz in its prime.
Pass yer cups, lads— drink it down:
Nog is nog the cent'ry roun'.
But Christmas thin days, lads— ay me!
None sich now'days, 's I kin see.
Wooden hosses, roaming candles,
Dolls o' wax, an' stricked candy;
Some with stockin's fat with goodies,
Yuthers none the' legs to khiver,
Fer the rich folks pow'ful handy,
Fer the po' folks —
Waar, I never
Sot out, lads, to preach a sarmint—
No philosopher I be,
Only, et I wuz remarkin',
Christmas thin times suited me.

Orelia Key Bell.