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Gardens

Past & Present

By

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PART I

Gardens—Past and Present

PART I

CHAPTER I

IN THE FAR PAST

“That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

“Is there a thing whereof men say, See, this is new? it hath been already in the ages which were before us.”—ECCLES. i. 9, 10.

SOME two thousand years ago, speaking in rough numbers, when Rome was already hastening to her fall, this England of ours consisted mainly of huge tracts of forest and morass—mist-laden, dank, malarious—in the lowlands. It was interspersed, it is true, in the south with patches of grain hard won from thicket or dune; further north with a few recovered breadths of thin pasture land whence, in rude fashion, meat and milk and meal were drawn from the sparse-tilled soil to feed the fierce and untamed, but scanty tribes that peopled Britain. There seemed little

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indication in those early days that, centuries ahead, these islands would become pre-eminently a land of gardens.

Yet we may gather that even then, Nature-taught like the Hottentot and the Kaffir of the South African continent, the ancient Briton had some practical acquaintance with the uses of herbs. A remote derivation has even been assigned for the very name of Britain—from the Celtic “brith,” or “brit,” meaning painted—in which may lie hidden an allusion to the woad-stained bodies of its earliest inhabitants, implying in itself a more than superficial knowledge of the properties of plants. It is, moreover, on record that noble youths of Gaul were sent to Britain to perfect their education under the tuition of the Druids, who were far-famed, amongst other learning, for their surpassing attainments in plant lore; though it may be a question how much of it these mysterious teachers would be willing to part with. We are not greatly concerned, however, to prove the truth of assertions such as these. It may even be that all traditions of the kind, with the time-honoured story of sacred oak, and cult of the consecrated mistletoe, stand in danger of being relegated to the dim regions of myth. Yet we may not doubt that the waking to life, in the springtide, of the green things of the earth, the soft gleam of primroses in sylvan glades, the blue shimmer of nodding bells and the whispering leaves of the forest, found answering voices even then in the gentler human instincts of the time, which were destined to re-echo for ever and aye.

Probably there were two sources from whence, as a people, we may have drawn our earliest conceptions of horticulture.

First in order came the Roman occupation of Britain.

To lightly-passing thought the connection between English gardens and that misty period after the Roman invasion may appear far-fetched enough. The mere conquest of the British was no easy task, even for the overlords of the world, and left little leisure for the intromission of the gentler graces of life. But when arms failed again and again to subdue the stubborn tribesmen, the softer seductions of the city stepped in to weaken their hitherto unbroken spirit. The name of Julius Agricola will always be associated with untiring efforts to introduce, amongst other ameliorations of their lot, the refinements of civilisation. By persuasion and, more potent still, by example, the younger chiefs were enticed to partake of the comforts and enervating excitements of urban life. Intentionally or not, luxury was fast riveting the fetters of bondage, their hardihood gave way, and, before long, their subjugation was complete. One far-reaching benefit, at any rate, remained. Putting on one side the art of war, the Romans considered agriculture the only occupation worthy of men. Thus the cultivation of the land was fostered, and under the rule of Agricola and his successors, husbandry not only prospered exceedingly, but received so great an impetus that Britain became in time one of the granaries of the world of those days.

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Even in the matter of trees we are now reaping the benefit of that bygone invasion.

Next to the oak, and even before the beech, we are apt, in a hap-hazard way, to place the hedge-row elm in the forefront as a distinctly British tree. Yet it is practically certain that it is not native, but naturalised, and that we are indebted for this familiar tree to Roman importation. To begin with, its common English name is evidently derived from a Latin source. Also, unlike most trees that are indigenous to the soil, the elm does not ripen seed in England. It is, therefore, not quick to spread, and the suckers which cluster about its roots have to be planted and cared for to make good increase. Those who are interested in such research may read in Pliny of the care recommended to be spent upon the *ulmarium*, and the minute directions given for the nursing of the young trees until the time of transplanting. Nor is it, indeed, a sociable tree. An elm wood is rare to find; where it exists it has been planted of set purpose. On the contrary, the elm prefers to stand apart in stately grandeur, in freedom of earth and sky, unshadowed and unhustled by crowding companions. To strengthen the evidence, the true home of the elm is in Essex and those south-eastern parts of the country which came first and most completely under the Roman yoke. From thence, it is true, it advanced westwards; but as we travel beyond the midlands, we find that it gradually gives place to other trees in the landscape. Why the elm should have been thus specially cultivated in Italy, and subsequently imported into Britain,

is not so clear, until we recall the "happy marriage" of vine and elm so often sung of old, examples of which may be seen to this day in the hedgerows of fertile Lombardy. For practical reasons, therefore, it is probable that elm and vine were introduced hand in hand. With them too, no doubt, came the sweet chestnut—the "Sardian nut" valued in southern Europe from earliest times, and abundant still in the woodlands and coppices of Sussex and Kent, where it has survived the vine, more perhaps on account of the worth of its timber at a certain stage of growth, than for the produce of nuts which demand more sunshine than our cool grey skies can give to bring to any size or perfection.

Again, on the coast of Sussex a rich and sheltered belt of land crops out from the prevailing chalk of the district, and here, at the present time, numerous fig orchards in favourable seasons produce abundance of their luscious fruit. The fig was the most popular fruit of ancient Rome, and so it has remained to this day. No less than twenty-six named varieties are on record as having been cultivated in very early times. Now tradition has it that the fig-trees of that Sussex district date their existence from the time of the Roman rule. Certainly there is no reason why they should not be the descendants of trees so introduced, for their origin is unmistakably ancient. It may be only right to add, however, that there are other claimants for the honour. One story relates how Thomas à Becket, returning from a pilgrimage to Rome, planted at Tarring the first fig-tree that

ever grew on British soil. Another, earlier still, that an illustrious Abbé de Fécamp in the days of the Norman kings, who was some while domiciled at Sompting in the same locality—a village still bearing the name of Sompting Abbots—was the originator of Sussex fig culture. At this distance of time, the question of priority can scarcely be settled beyond dispute; but we may not be far wrong in giving some credence to the Roman theory. Survivals as remarkable are not unknown in the annals of horticulture.

There is, however, no doubt at all about the introduction of the vine. It is well authenticated that in the third century Britain was one of the Roman colonies in which the privilege of vine-growing, not by any means granted to all her provinces, was permitted by edict. England, it is true, is no longer a wine-making country, though one vineyard, belonging to the Marquis of Bute, still exists near Cardiff which produces excellent claret; but for hundreds of years there were vineyards in many parts of the kingdom. The memory of these, if not the reality, still lingers in the names of plots of ground in Surrey and Kent and Devon, and as far north as Staffordshire; and it is even stated that as late as 1763 there were sixty pipes of home-grown Burgundy in the cellars of Arundel Castle.

Thus the elm-tree and the chestnut, the fig-tree and the vine, may not unreasonably carry our thoughts back to the days when Rome set her indelible stamp upon Britain.

To turn to a less remote source, we must look

back to the establishment of religious houses for the early fostering of the gardening art.

From the very nature of its circumstances, the monastery became the focus of arts and crafts as well as of learning; and the mother-art of all others is the art of husbandry. In the first days of all, gentle hearts, and too often, alas! maimed bodies, wearied, sickened, and unfit to cope with the fierce clash of arms and rapine and cruel bloodshed of that savage age, longing for the peace and rest denied by the world, fled to the only refuge that was then open to them, donned the monk's habit, and settled down in company with a few kindred spirits to a life of rule and prayer, and this, not seldom, in such poor dwellings as their own efforts enabled them to construct. Here, in the days before prosperity laid its withering finger upon such communities, the best and holiest of the brotherhood, in a daily round of prayer and manual labour, looked upwards, and not in vain, for the vision of God. In what better way could men of this turn of mind employ their hours of leisure than in making the barren acres which fenced about their sanctuary to yield some fruits of increase, while they endeavoured to instruct the untutored churls in their vicinage, whose huts clustered about the minster foot, in the tillage of their land, and the softening of their rude manners. By slow degrees, orchards took the place of tangled brake and noisome marsh. Vineyards crept up the sunniest slopes. Within the precincts of the monastery itself, no longer by that time built of wattle and daub as erstwhile, but solidly walled

and secure from all assault of foes, there was a garden.

The very word garden, which has a close affinity with the Anglo-Saxon "geard," or yard, suggests an enclosure within walls; and in those earliest days, when Britain had as yet scarce begun to emerge from the thralldom of the dark ages, the arches of the cloister shut in a "garth," a quiet rood of grass, where the inmates of the monastery found a safe and sheltered pacing ground, and, in some cases, a final resting-place for feet that would pace no more. Beyond, again, a plot of ground was set apart for esculent and medicinal herbs whose properties were well understood for the mingling of healing drinks and ointments for the sick, who asked for no better physicians than the monks. There, too, not a few simple flowers found their home. At first there would be merely primroses from the woodland glade, scented violets from the hollow in some steep chalk cliff, meadow-sweet from the brook side, or pink-blossomed rush to grace the reedy bank of the fish pool. These, transplanted from their native haunts by some brother who loved and carefully tended them, soon outshone the wildings left behind in thicket or field. But other flowers than these followed later on—blossoms rare and strange, of gorgeous colouring and passing fair. Anemones, purple and scarlet, from the land of the Holy Cross, pure white lilies and legendary crown-imperials, painted tulips and scented jacinth, borne over sea and plain in the wallets of wandering pilgrims, and gladly offered in gratitude for hospitality freely bestowed,

began in time to make a monastery garden, here and there, an oasis of delight in the midst of rough and ready surroundings. Ay, and were, sometimes, even the innocent cause of upbraiding on account of the soft luxuriousness they were supposed to encourage and betray. The indignant outburst of the Grand Master of the Knights Templars in "Ivanhoe" comes to mind: "This very garden, filled as it is with curious herbs and trees sent from the eastern climes, better becomes the harem of an unbelieving Emir than the plot which Christian monks should devote to raise their pot herbs!"

Ah! well, grant as we may that little is known of centuries so far away, is it not well sometimes to carry the thoughts back to those fevered days—sketch them lightly as we may with faint, uncertain touch—when doing and daring carried all before them, while, all unnoticed, the beneficence of silent ceaseless working, from such feeble beginnings as these, stealthily transformed the face of this little island, which we are now proud to call GREAT BRITAIN?

CHAPTER II

OF PHYSIC GARDENS

THROUGHOUT Anglo-Saxon times, and well onwards to the Middle Ages, these monasteries of Britain remained the storehouses of much of the herb-lore of which the world could then boast; but the art of gardening made little progress, for the times were turbulent. As the centuries drew on, the piety of the older age grew less and less simple and fervent. To this day there are extant in black-letter volumes of the fifteenth century, preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and elsewhere, strange prescriptions, quaintly worded, and intermingled with directions for many religious rites, which are superstitious enough, and show the trend of the times. One of these orders for a "fiend-sick" man that the concoction should be drunk out of a church bell; and others savour still more strongly of magic incantations; but their ingredients include such plant-names as yar-row and betony, garlic, lupin, and others no less familiar.

In times beyond all memory, the art of healing was almost wholly wrapped up in the study of plants. The doctrine of signatures had early impressed the minds of the thoughtful, and it was

imagined that certain definite signs and marks on leaves and roots had been divinely stamped for the express purpose of pointing out their restorative powers. Evidences of this belief can be traced in the names of well-known European plants, *e.g.* hepatica (liverwort) and pulmonaria (lungwort). Inherent qualities of such occult nature, half-hinted at and made as mysterious as ban or benison could make them, served to whet the popular craving for the marvellous; and no doubt many, if not most of the herbarists of olden time, drove a thriving trade by preying on the superstitious fears of their more ignorant clients. Plenty of fables of the kind—over and above the circumstantially related marvel of the barnacle-geese tree—are to be found in the pages of the best-known of all English writings on simples, the curious old “Herball” of John Gerard—a man of no great cultivation, as may be gathered from internal evidence, no less than from the carping allusions continually made to his shortcomings by Thomas Johnson, the editor of a later issue of the “Herball” after Gerard’s death, but possessed of intense ambition to take high rank amongst the learned of his time, to which end he devoted incredible labour, intermingled with no small craft. Perhaps he is not to be judged too severely, for is it not written, “How hard and vncertaine it is to describe in words the true proportion of plants . . . they best know who have deepest waded in this sea of simples”? All the same, the planting of a “rare peionie on a conny berry” in Kent, where the old herbarist afterwards pretended to find it growing wild, ought not to be condoned!

Another well-known treatise which appeared about the same time as this second edition of Gerard's "Herball," the "*Paradisus Terrestris*" of John Parkinson, is a more genuine work, and may take rank as the first English gardening book ever published. The full extent of the influence on the gardening of their own day of these famous writings, and of their wondrously faithful illustrations, can hardly be estimated at this distant date. Before these, and one or two others of like character, were published, any real knowledge of plants, much less of their properties and affinities, had been at a standstill in England for centuries. It was not, indeed, until the great awakening of the Middle Ages that botanical science, among other learning, received any serious impetus in Europe. The reason for going back to these early times is because it was certainly, first of all, to the revival of medicinal plant-lore, and later on to the botanical collections fostered by that new learning, rather than to any inherent love for the cultivation of the beautiful, that we may trace back the real initiative of all our modern proficiency in the art of gardening.

Strangely enough, besides, as must occur to any impartial student in respect of this national taste of ours, we English have never been an originating, though we have undoubtedly been a receptive people, and having once grasped a new idea, in true British bull-dog fashion we hold it fast. This much may be added, however, that while adopting the conceptions of other nations, we have contrived in many ways to put into them our own interpre-

tation, so that now it has come to pass that the tables are turned, and the English fashion in gardening leads the way.

It was in the fifteenth century that public "physic gardens," as they used to be called, were first founded in Europe, the earliest being established at Padua in 1545, followed by Pisa, and with little delay by the University of Leiden, and others in France and Germany. It was to these famous centres of learning that our English physicians travelled in those days for the completion of their medical course, and for the study of simples. So slow were we, as a nation, to follow their lead, that nearly a century passed before our own University of Oxford was endowed, and that through private munificence, with a physic garden of her own. Cambridge fell far behind Oxford in this matter, for while a feeble effort was made in 1696 to establish a botanic garden in connection with that university, nothing was accomplished until 1760, when the site of a former monastery of Austin Friars was acquired for the purpose. Within that very period when so much activity was astir throughout Europe, it was possible for an Englishman, one Dr William Turner, to bring this accusation against his Alma Mater; "Being yet a student of Pembroke Hall, whereas I could learn never one Greke, neither Latin, nor English name, even amongst the physicians, of any herbe or tree, such was the ignorance of that time, and as yet there was no English "Herball," but one full of cacographies and falsely naming of herbes." Upon this plea he rests his apology

for taking in hand the first reputable English "Herball," which appeared nearly fifty years before Gerard's more ambitious work.

It was not until 1632, when Charles I. was king, that a plot of land near the bridge which crosses the Cherwell, and lying between the water walks of Magdalen College and the Christ Church meadows, was given and endowed by the Earl of Danby of that day, for the purposes of a physic garden at Oxford. Those five acres were even then historic ground, for they had been the site of an old Jewish cemetery, not improbably secured by the charter of Henry II., which gave rights of burial to all Jews outside the walls of any town where they might be permitted to congregate; and it is recorded that in Oxford itself there once existed not only a ghetto, but a Jewish medical school, which no doubt at that time mainly busied itself with the study of medicinal plants brought over sea from the East. On this spot a house was built for the keeper, with greenhouses and stoves and all such appliances as were then considered needful to the "excellent art of simpling," as Gerard puts it. Sixteen years later a catalogue was published of the sixteen hundred plants, British and exotic, which had by that time found a home in this, the first English physic garden; and here, no doubt, amongst the simples, were grown rhubarb, a rare drug from Turkey, and asarabacca and liquorice, with lavender and rosemary, herb of grace, and peppermint and many another comforting and medicinal plant. Before that time no great excursions seem to have been

made into any knowledge of our native flora; and the special business, even from the beginning, of the physic garden had apparently less to do with the discovery of the properties of plants than of their varied genera and species.

The annals of the old garden are very pleasant reading—more particularly, perhaps, to the botanist, but also to any garden lover.* Many private gardens, more or less renowned, were by that time in existence, especially in London and its outskirts, where great collections of plants were being brought together. Gerard himself had been in charge of Lord Burleigh's London botanic garden; Dr Grindall, while Bishop of London, had begun, and his successor Dr Sheldon had added to the fine collection of trees at Fulham. Myrtles, a great rarity, were "nourished in a gentlewoman's garden in the village of Westminster," and green fields occupied what is now the heart of London. Memories of some of these once famous gardeners linger about the Oxford garden, which became necessarily in those days the focus of the most trustworthy scientific knowledge of plants. Chief amongst these, perhaps, was Dr William Sherard, who bequeathed his collections of plants living and dried, which were renowned throughout Europe, to the physic garden, and whose memory is perpetuated in the Sherardian Professorship of Botany which he endowed. The first name which modern plant-lovers will recognise is that of John Tradescant, gardener to the king, whose own garden at Lambeth was of good repute, and who was

* See Druce's "Flora of Oxfordshire" (Clarendon Press, 1886).

to have been one of the first keepers of the new physic garden, but for his death just after his appointment to the post. His name survives in the hardy spiderwort of our perennial borders as well as in *Tradescantia zebrina*, of which the handsome varieties now common in our greenhouses would then have been beyond imagination.

Amongst other visitors came John Evelyn, then eager about his own collection, to study trees and attend the botanical lectures, lately initiated; and we may find it on record that on his first visit in 1654, the sensitive plant, familiar enough now to most intelligent schoolboys, was shown as one of the living wonders of the physic garden.

But Linnæus was probably the most illustrious pilgrim of them all, for during that memorable sojourn in England when the great Swedish botanist knelt on the sod to give thanks for the beauty of the golden gorse, he found his way, naturally enough, to Oxford. Dillenius, another celebrity of the time, and a German by birth, was then Sherardian Professor of Botany. It might be wished—but this by the way—that a stronger element of English learning had pervaded the earlier years of the physic garden. It is curious, though strongly indicative of the indifference to the subject which had hitherto prevailed, to note the recurrence of foreign names amongst its first keepers and professors. Linnæus, though still a young man, had already thought out and made known his new system of classification of plants, which did not at once meet with unreserved approval from older botanists, perhaps on account of its

being far in advance of their own theories. How often in turning over the pages of scientific works of that date such petty jealousies are brought to light, often sharply acrimonious in spite of the thin veiling of studied politeness in which they find expression! The story of the meeting of Dillenius with his younger fellow-labourer in the fields of science is a case in point, though it had a happier ending than mutual suspicions and animosities often have. "This is the young man who would confound the whole of Botany," Dillenius remarked in an undertone to the mutual friend who had brought Linnæus to the physic garden to be introduced. The Swede was not an English scholar, yet he was not slow to catch the drift of the words, and was conscious that his presence was not altogether welcome. How easy it is even now, after the lapse of so many years—the site being the same and the general outline less altered than might be expected—to follow the group as they wandered amongst the rarities of the garden, feeling all the while mighty uncomfortable and ill at ease, bristling at all points as they were with thorny subjects of dispute. Presently there came a pause before a wall mantled with the ivy-leaved toad-flax, the structure and relations of which were distracting the learned of the day. One can scarcely come across the familiar little "Oxford weed" without being reminded of the occasion; for here Linnæus was craftily pressed to give his view of the matter, whereupon, far from being posed, according to expectation, he gave so clear and convincing an exposition of the difficulty that,

after a few more tests of like kind, from which he emerged equally triumphant, the stiffness began to melt, the heart of the old professor grew suddenly soft, and a friendship sprang up then and there which only ended with life. In fact, it is recorded in Linnæus' Diary that Dillenius pressed him to remain with him altogether, and even went so far as to offer to share his salary with him, which, he declared, would suffice for them both. The offer was not accepted, and Linnæus before his departure slyly took occasion to hope that he had wrought no "confusion" in Oxford, and received a frank apology—a generous trait of character pleasant to keep in mind. We are proud nowadays if we can succeed in growing the little Scandinavian plant *Linnæa borealis*, which recalls the memory of the great botanist, who at least cleared the way for still greater discoveries, even though his own system is now superseded.

A curious instance of the errors into which even learned people may be entrapped, can still be seen in one of the herbaria of this period preserved at Oxford—a leaf of wood anemone with a fungoid growth on its back which caused Dillenius, himself a special student of cryptogamic botany, to mistake it for a new species of fern! The fungus is now well known as a common "trencher friend" of the anemone (*Puccinea anemones*); but a correction in Latin by a later writer appears on the margin of the work to this effect: "This fern is no other than the leaf of *Anemone nemorosa* decorated on the underside with dots, occasioned by an insect laying its eggs

there"—the "eggs" being in reality the fungoid growths. The amendment stands as an amusing case of "even master don't know much."

We are tempted to linger in the old physic garden, with its gateway sentinelled by two ancient yews which once were clipped into semblance of guardian giants, its locust trees and its planes, its alien plants cultivated at first in the garden borders, but which afterwards betook themselves of their own accord to more congenial crevices of the walls, where some of them, naturalised like the Oxford ragwort, are still to be found. We can even now sympathise heartily with Dillenius in his dilemma and lament in a letter to Linnæus that "the situation of Oxford is low and watery, the neighbouring meadows being overflowed close to the garden, and heavy morning fogs will scarcely allow the plants of hot climates to attain perfection." We may wonder, too, why these old worthies of a former day forgot to mention the fritillaries, so familiar for generations past in the Oxford meadows, so that no record was made of them for more than a hundred years after the foundation of the garden, though they surely must have been there. We can only be thankful that, among the sundry and manifold changes and chances of this mortal life, the first English physic garden has been permitted to remain with all its old-world associations so far unobliterated, except indeed that it has been shorn of its time-honoured title.

The physic garden at Chelsea, which was of later establishment, and presented by Sir Hans

Sloane to the Apothecaries Company towards the end of the seventeenth century, is perhaps the only other English garden of the kind which still remains on its original site, and it is good to think that it has not been removed to make way for modern London improvements.

Let us not think scorn of the work done by these old gardens of simples, with their collections of plants which may seem to us now so poor and meagre, for they form a very considerable part of the early foundations, laid strong and deep, of the grand superstructure of English gardening which after-generations have built upon them.

CHAPTER III

RURAL ENGLAND IN THE PAST

“MEN come to build stately sooner than to garden finely, as if gardening were the greater perfection.” When those words were written, there was lack neither of stately buildings nor of fine gardens in England—amongst the wealthy. The small farmers, the tillers of the soil, and those in their employ, had long been and still were, even in Francis Bacon’s time, in very different case.

The beauty of the rustic cottage, bowered in roses and woodbine, has now for many a generation been the pride of England. Its praises have been sung by foreigners visiting our shores, who are never weary of discoursing on the charms of the country garden and the flower-begirt homes of a contented and happy peasantry, even when they find our country a trifle dull on other accounts. It is no less true that when we go abroad ourselves, we find French and Swiss and Netherlanders working hard indeed in gardens and fields, toiling at husbandry with far greater industry than we as a people ever display; but the soil as a rule is too precious to be wasted on flowers unless for some purpose of gain. We miss the charm of

the little forecourt bright with roses and lilies and hollyhocks which is an adjunct so ordinary of rural English homes, however lowly. Some window plants, or a flower-pot set in the loop of an iron rod and hung up against the wall of a *châlet*, perhaps an oleander or fuchsia in a tub that can be housed in winter in some safe corner of the rough stable, secure from the attention of cow or goat, may often be noticed—a pathetic tribute to the human hunger for flowers. In Norway only, overcoming every difficulty, are the peasants so clever as to make gardens of their housetops, by covering the roofs with sods and sowing gay annuals upon them.

But we may safely conclude that the village homes of England were not always flower-decked. We have only to take down an English history from our book-shelves to read, if we will, of the miserable hovels of the poor, the hardships under which they writhed, and the social discontent which led to continual outbreaks of revolt. "A life so wretched," cries out Sir Thomas More in his "*Utopia*," "that even a beast's life seems enviable." It was not then the Merrie England, surely, of which so many tales are told!

So long as serfdom existed, the churl was, assuredly, the slave of his overlord; but his food, if rough and coarse, was plentiful—there was no lack of meat or meal—but when the churl became a freed-man, he was the slave of bodily needs, and had much ado to provide for himself and his family the common necessities of life. The farmer was but little better off. We find his picture painted

thus in the complaint of Piers Plowman in the fourteenth century: "I have no penny, pullets for to buy nor neither geese nor pigs, but two green cheeses, a few curds and cream, and an oaten cake, and two loaves of beans and bran baken for my children. I have no salt bacon nor no cooked meat, collops for to make, but I have parsley and leeks and many cabbage plants and eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare to draw afield my dung while the drought lasteth, and by this livelihood we must all live till Lammas-tide, and by that I hope to have harvest in my croft."

The labourer did not even avail himself of the opportunities to better his condition that he might, for even the simple gardening that could provide beans and leeks and cabbage plants became a lost art. In the reign of Henry VIII. it is recorded that, because such dainties were not to be procured within the kingdom, the queen's table had to be supplied with ordinary vegetables and "sallets" brought over from the Low Countries. The skippers of Dutch sloops and pinks were only too glad to deliver the cargoes of onions and cabbages at Hull, which sold for fabulous prices—six cabbages and a few carrots are stated to have been purchased there at a cost equal to twenty shillings of our current coin for a nobleman's table—yet these the English peasant was too wretched or too ignorant to cultivate even for profit.

But in course of years the hardships gradually grew less, revolts and revolutions worked out their good and ill, the times became more prosperous. In the reign of Elizabeth a wondrous change came

over the land. It was then that the era of building stately houses set in, as Hardwick and Audley End and many another ancestral Elizabethan hall bears witness; and the amendment filtered down by slow degrees to the masses. The wealthy merchants began to set up their luxurious town mansions with spacious grounds about them; the smaller landowners and country squires had their comfortable manor houses, the farmers their roomy homesteads; and very gradually the improvement reached to the humble dwellings of the ploughman and the hind. Round the great houses picturesque surroundings naturally grew up—gardens of a style borrowed from Italy, with fountains and statuary and stately terraces. Avenues of exotic trees were planted, not so much for the present enjoyment of the planter as for posterity. The squire of the country manor must follow in the wake of the lord of the great house, and lay out the sheltered bowling green within its wall of yew—the pleached alley for shade in sultry weather. The farmer and even the thrifty labourer, taking example, must needs have, besides the rood or two of kailyard which belonged to their different degrees, their knots of flowers and clipped peacock or green archway over the cottage gate. Beneath it all was the innate love of flowers which lies hidden away in the nature of every true-born Briton, be he gentle or simple, kindled, it may be, by the soft gleam of primroses in the mossy woodland, the sweet breath of violets, the wreaths of June roses or trailing clematis in the autumn hedgerow—those wildings that are never more lovely than in that

WHEN MEN BUILT STATELY HOUSES.

England which, with all our grumblings, we love so well. We may well believe it is to that inborn love of flowers that England owes the cottage gardens which are now no less her glory than her grand ancestral homes, and which has saved for the English people some sense of artistic beauty which otherwise, in poor and often squalid surroundings, must altogether have perished.

But here again, perhaps, we may underrate, or are hardly aware of the debt of gratitude English cottage gardening owes to oversea influence. The day came when those same Flemish cloth-workers who, aforetime, had so willingly sent their shiploads of "sallets" and cabbages and onions to Hull, were driven by stress of cruel war and persecution from their own peaceful homes. Naturally they sought and found a harbour of refuge in the land which had in earlier times asked their help, and to whose prosperity they had so largely contributed by setting up their looms in north and east and west. We have but meagre records to tell of any influence other than with regard to the manufacture of wool that may have been exerted by those earliest emigrants, except that again and again references are to be met with to Norwich, a central point of settlement, as "a place very much addicted to the flowry part." It is an established fact, however, that the Walloon refugees of the sixteenth century, who were welcomed by the Cinque Ports, and who settled in considerable numbers in Sussex and Kent, left a very distinct mark on our horticulture. First of all,

for their own simple wants and in such little plots of ground as they were able to obtain, they grew the vegetables for the midday pottage—the salads which to them were a necessity of daily existence; but they were not slow to find out as well that for these comestibles a ready market was waiting at their very doors, while they could teach besides new ways of using them. As Parkinson, who evidently had a pretty taste in cookery as well as in gardening, wrote about that time: “Spinach is an herbe fit for sallets. . . . Many English that have learned it of the Dutch people, doe stew the herbe in a pot or pipkin without any moisture then its owne, and after the moisture is a trifle pressed from it they put butter and a little spice unto it and make therewith a dish that many delight to eate of.” The celery of Sandwich long held the reputation which it acquired in those days. Insular prejudice has always been strong, yet the more enlightened amongst the neighbours of these frugal industrious people, taking heart of grace, found out that they too could better their condition by like means, and began to cultivate vegetables on their own account. By and by, some of the cloth-workers, finding that their horticultural fame had reached even to London itself, forsook their looms, and wandering farther afield, set up vegetable gardens on a more extensive scale at Battersea and Bermondsey and elsewhere, in what were then the outlying fields of the city, and thus laid the foundation of the vast market-garden industry which exists round London in our own day. The hop gardens of Kent are supposed

to have had a like origin. As says the old couplet,

“Hops, Reformation, Bayes and Beere
Came into England, all in one yeare.”

In the end, England repaid the Flemish in some degree for their good deeds by introducing the potato into the Low Countries. Taking into account that of all culinary tubers and roots, the potato is now the most indispensable to rich and poor alike, and that it was certainly brought into this country by Sir Walter Raleigh about 1585, it is not a little remarkable, not only that the Flemish themselves should have overlooked its good qualities, but that nearly two hundred years should pass by before it found general favour. Gerard mentions, with his wonted self-complacency, that he grew potatoes in his own garden, where they succeeded as well as in their native Peru, but he esteemed them as a delicacy only to be tasted on rare occasions. Evelyn evidently thought but little of them, for he writes: “Plant potatoes in your worst ground. Take them up in November for winter spending, there will enough remain for a stock though ever so exactly gathered.” The gentry, in fact, did not take kindly to the potato, and no wonder, when it was recommended in this fashion: “The root is very near the nature of the Jerusalem artichoke, although not so good and wholesome, but that it may prove good for swine!”

Lancashire was the first English county where it was both cultivated and properly cooked. By

a happy inspiration some Lancashire lad or lass thrust a potato into the glowing embers. Like Charles Lamb's roast pig, from that time forth baked potato became a delectable article of food. It early made some way into the goodwill of the Irish, but it took the famine year of 1742 to overcome the prejudices of the Scotch farmers. Necessity compelled a trial, and in the following season the field plantations succeeded so well that the future of the potato in Scotland was assured, and by the end of the century the value of the crop was universally acknowledged. The episode suggests a curious little comment on the strength of prejudice.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century a larger influx still of foreign refugees for religion's sake streamed into England from the opposite shore of the Channel. Forty thousand Huguenots, slipping away by stealth and connivance from the terrors that too surely awaited them in the land of their birth, took sanctuary on free English soil, and were everywhere received with the open arms of sympathy. They brought with them simple God-fearing manners of life, and hands capable of various industries, but chiefly silk-weaving. They brought with them as well an intense love of horticulture; and it proved for them, as it has done for thousands of others before and since, a consolation and anodyne to the bitterness of affliction and exile. In innocent rivalry with each other and in pure love of flowers, they tended their pot plants and set up horticultural clubs and meetings where interesting points of practice could be discussed,

and the products of their loving labours exhibited. The first floricultural society in England was established, it is said, in Spitalfields, at that time the headquarters in London of the silk-weaving industry; and it became the source and spring of all the horticultural efforts, which have gone on increasing with ever new enthusiasm to this very day. Wherever they went—Dublin or Manchester or Macclesfield—they carried with them this same love of cultivating flowers, and in the north, by force of precept and example, it gathered as years went on even greater impetus than in the south.

Not many years ago, though most of them may have disappeared before this date, there were houses in that quarter of London where the long low rooms with windows the length of their sides in which the silk looms were set still existed, and where on wide ledges pot plants could conveniently be placed. In one such old-world room I have myself seen a weaver at his work on some rich silken fabric, which it seemed hardly possible to believe could be fashioned under such conditions or in a handloom so simple. On the broad window bench stood an immense bush of oak-leaf pelargonium, the veteran of many an East-End Flower Show, and the joy and pride of the hard-working couple who were occupants of the room. For the taste still lingers, in spite of smoke and fog and grimy surroundings; and there are, or used to be, few windows in that district without a flower pot or two.

The opinion may be taken for what it is worth that it has been mainly owing to Flemish and Huguenot influence of a former day that a real

taste for horticulture, as distinct from the natural love of flowers, was instilled and fostered both in town and country, until it leavened the mass of the English people, overcoming in some degree the lurking distaste for works of supererogation which is not far to seek in the national temperament.

CHAPTER IV

TREES NATIVE AND NATURALISED

“TIMBER of every kind which is found in Gaul also grows in Britain, except the beech and the silver fir.” But Julius Cæsar was in all probability mistaken in this pronouncement, for there is little doubt that we may reckon the beech amongst the natives, more especially of the South Downs. The trees that are strictly indigenous to British soil are more easy to count than might be supposed. When miles upon miles of Britain were still wrapt in silver mists of silence and solitude, oak, ash, and thorn were trees for Puck of Pook’s Hill to conjure by, as we may learn from the charming old English legends of Mr Rudyard Kipling; and these, not leaving out the beech, were in truth the main deciduous trees of the English woodland. Ivy, no doubt, crept up some of the rugged stems of ash and oak, clasping them in her sheltering arms and clothing them with her green winter mantle, as she does still; for ivy is not the cruel jade she was once thought to be, who smothered while she kissed. But there were native evergreens besides, chief and foremost amongst them the yew and the holly, both closely entwined with all old-time English memories; but

also juniper and box, which shared with the beech the chalk ridges and hollows of the south. The stern northern mountains produced the hardy pine, and the spruce may have found its way across the sea and settled itself in the moister lowlands; but the birch feared nor cold nor storm, and clung to bleak hillsides. Besides these, few other native trees of importance can be called to mind which furnished the huge tracts of forest of those early days. As before said, there is every reason to believe that elm and fruiting chestnut were not indigenous, though they were naturalised within the first two or three centuries of our history. Tangled thickets abounded, where lesser trees found place—wild crab and pear and hazel, with field maple and white beam on the chalk; while willows and alders and poplars of more than one kind marked the course of the larger rivers as well as of the streams and brooklets which had forced a channel through the ooze of ever-present swamps. From very early times, and onwards for hundreds of years, vast stretches of forest and moor were given up to herds of fallow deer, which roamed at will and, if truth were told, devastated the country while they fattened on the crops of the hardly won fields. A park, to the modern mind, suggests the stately surrounding of a stately mansion, with sheltering plantations and groups and clumps of fine trees, natural and exotic, planted for shade and ornament—a feature of the English countryside which could ill be spared. But the grievances of the early centuries were very great and culminated at length in the sixteenth when

the complaints of the deer parks became loud and deep. It was monstrous that "a twentieth part of the realm was employed upon deer and coneys," that "there should be more parks in England than in all Europe beside." All this came, practically, to an end in the troublous times of civil war; the greater number of such parks were demolished, the fences overthrown, the deer driven off; and their owners found a new and quite harmless pastime in the stocking and ordering of their gardens and pleasaunces.

As may be seen in the plates and designs of that period, long straight lines, varied by oblongs and squares, with plantations of trees set out in formal quincunx, expressed the highest excellence in garden art. In point of fact, the greater energy was at first expended not so much on the plan of planting; the important matter then was to collect the largest number of new and foreign trees wherewith to plant. Thus it came about that the introduction of many of our most familiar trees dates from this time.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that the Oriental plane should have been one of the earliest—1548 being the year assigned—for as an ornamental tree it held an unparalleled place amongst the ancients. Tradition tells of a historic tree of the kind which was all but worshipped with incredible honours and gifts by Xerxes, who camped about it with his army in full march, thereby delaying his warlike operations for many days, ordering that it should be nourished with libations of wine. To this day the plane is almost venerated in the East; but

perhaps we Westerns scarcely prize it as we ought, for we see it more often shorn and dismembered, with its roots cramped under paving stones, than in the grandeur of its natural form. It is one of the noblest of trees, however, and revels in a site by the water side, as many a fine specimen in the Thames valley bears witness.

The almond and the pomegranate, also of eastern origin, belong to the same period of English history. "The natural place of the almond is in hot regions," says Gerard; "yet we have them in London gardens and orchards in plenty." The pomegranate, apparently, did not take so kindly to English soil, for of it he makes this remark, "I have recovered divers yong trees hereof, by sowing seeds of graines, of three or four cubits high, attending God's leisure for floures and fruit."

The walnut was the next tree of importance to be planted in quantity. Acres of walnut trees flourished in different parts of Surrey and brought a fair revenue to their owners. According to the annals of the time they grew "in the fields neere the common high-wayes."

The horse-chestnut followed quickly on the steps of the eastern plane, and is said to have been brought from the mountains of Tibet in 1550. Not much could have been known of it in Parkinson's time, who ventures upon the statement that the nuts of the horse-chestnut "are of as good use for the fruit" as the sweet chestnut. It has always maintained its place in British affections; and Londoners, as long as the old trees last, will never

tire of an annual pilgrimage to Bushey Park, to see the horse-chestnuts in bloom.

Italy, no doubt, sent us the ilex, but it took some time to win its way into favour. Indeed, it is a moot point whether it can even now be said to be popular, though it is to be seen often enough. There are fine old ilexes at Kew, but in Evelyn's day it was still very rare, though he mentions in one of his letters that he had himself reared seedlings from the acorns of an English-grown tree, but adds: "I have now but few of them remaining, through the negligence of my gardiner, for they require care at the first raising till they are accusom'd to the cold, and then no rigour impeaches them."

The custom of planting avenues of limes came into fashion in the reign of Charles II., and was borrowed from France. For this purpose Evelyn recommends the lime as "of all others, the most proper and *béautifull* for walks, as producing an upright body, smooth and even bark, ample leaf, sweet blossom the delight of bees, and a goodly shade at a distance of eighteen to twenty-five feet." He has also great praise for the park at Hampton Court, "now planted with sweete rows of lime trees." For the great maple, *i.e.* the sycamore, on the contrary, he had not a good word to say. "It would by my consent be banished from all curious gardens and avenues."

One of the grandest of all the trees introduced about that period is the cedar of Lebanon; but though it was known from Biblical times, there seems to be no very authentic date given for its

arrival in England. Probably it was contemporary in this country with the ilex. There is a popular impression, though a greatly exaggerated one, that the cedar of Lebanon is both difficult to grow and out of ordinary reach on account of the untold number of years it takes to come to maturity. It may be because no tree carries a more venerable mien or gives a greater sense of mystery by the vague depth of its shadows, that it has taken to itself this character. In reality it is not remarkable for either of these traits. After it has passed the early stages of its seedling life, during which, like most other foreign trees, it does require some care, it becomes strong and hardy, well able to make shift for itself, and not unusually slow in growth. It is true that it has the character of not coming to the fruiting age till about fifty years old; but even if this be so, it arrives at great perfection of beauty long before it reaches maturity. A tree in the Chelsea physic garden, supposed to have been one of the first planted in England, produced cones in 1766, and from the seed of these cones, which were distributed far and wide, it is thought that a large proportion of the full-grown cedars now in the country have sprung. If so, a great many of them must have been raised in Essex, where, in some districts, the number of fine cedars is very noteworthy. Perhaps in this twentieth century a new development will encourage the planting of this magnificent tree in other ways than as an isolated specimen on a lawn—a plan which has hitherto been almost universally adopted. It might then, in time, take the place in English wood-scenery

AN AVENUE OF PINES.

of the grandest cone-bearer of the forest, for which, by natural conditions, it is well fitted.

Not many conifers were grown in early days, though arbor-vitæ was general enough, and both the Italian stone pine and the eastern cypress were planted on estates whose owners in their travels had fallen in love with Italian styles of gardening. The silver fir and the larch were of somewhat later importation than the stone pine and the cypress. The larch in Parkinson's day was "noursed vp but with a few, and those onely louers of rarities."

Many of our flowering trees were planted in the gardens of the sixteenth century. To name one or two, there was the Judas-tree, still far from well known, the buck's-horn sumach, and the very ornamental tulip-tree, which may have been introduced a little later than the others. Like the almond, most of these are still to be found in London or its immediate neighbourhood in considerable numbers, having strayed in the first instance from one or other of the famous collections of those far-off days. It is needless to prolong the list, for few present-day gardeners perhaps care to ransack the old-time records for such details with the same keen interest and goodwill as the writer. It is seemly and fitting, nevertheless, that the memories of those who have been garden pioneers and benefactors should be recalled by the many, and not only by the few who are students, and their good deeds retold once in a while. The names of some of these are well known to us all, and are quoted again and again, for they were famous in their own day and generation, and even

more so now—Burleigh, Francis Bacon, Sir William Temple, John Evelyn, whose long and useful life was passed in six reigns and the upheaval of the Commonwealth, the “worshipful chirurgeons” Turner and Gerard and Parkinson and the rest—a goodly procession. Many more were not famous, but only humble and nameless individuals, and perhaps the little deed they may have done which became a public benefit has died forgotten—some sailor lad who brought home the seed pod of a rare tree from distant parts; some poor lackey in the train of an ambassador or noble of other days who charged himself with the care of precious roots or grafts for the lowly garden plot at home. There have been many like the obscure French traveller who actually shared his scanty measure of water on a perilous voyage with the seedling cedar he was bringing back from Lebanon itself, which afterwards flourished in the Jardin des Plantes of Paris for a hundred years, until a railway had to be cut directly over its site, and the long-cherished tree was done to death. Shall not such as these, as well as the great ones of the earth, be remembered with gratitude as we rest under the shadow of the chestnut or plane or tulip tree planted long years ago?

CHAPTER V

MODERN BOTANIC GARDENS

THE modern botanic garden differs completely from its prototype of old in that its object and intention is national and popular no less than scientific. Let us take one which from beginnings which had primarily perhaps no grander motive in view than private gratification has grown in course of years to be the head and chief of modern botanic gardens, not in England only, but in the world. Not many years ago a foolish antagonism was in some danger of being set up between scientific botanists and the gardening craft. A glimpse into the past history of Kew, showing something of its rise and its fluctuations before attaining its proud position of the great public English garden of the present day, may serve to show how mistaken would be any want of sympathy or rivalry between those who should work shoulder to shoulder in all friendliness for the common weal. The gardener, in truth, owes more than can ever be repaid to the botanist.

The village of Kew, with its immediate surroundings, has been classic ground since, and perhaps long before, the days when Queen Elizabeth there "knighted a rich gentleman" by name of

Hugh Portman. Records tell that it was he who owned the land upon which now stands the picturesque but unpretending red-brick house, probably built during the early years of the Stuart dynasty, still known as Kew Palace, and which is now thrown open to the crowds of visitors who throng the gardens, as an interesting relic of the past. It was here that Queen Charlotte, in her widowhood, lived and died. Her love of plants had always been remarkable, of which we have the incidental proof that about the year 1788, when a famous herbarium was sold after the death of its owner and maker, Dr Lightfoot, one of the first members of the Linnæan Society, it was purchased by George III. for a hundred guineas as a present for the queen. This herbarium remained at Frogmore for many years, and may be in existence still, for dried plants have a faculty of long outlasting the fleeting human lives of whose labours they serve as a memento. To the end Queen Charlotte retained the keen interest she had always taken in the exotic trees and plants which in her time were already becoming famous in the royal botanic collection.

But we must look back to an earlier day still for the real beginning of Kew Gardens in their entirety as we now know them. Kew House, picturesquely situated in grounds of considerable acreage, and possessing even then an arboretum which was supposed to be the first of the kind established in Europe, had attracted the fancy of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and here he lived and occupied himself in extending and laying out the surround-

ing pleasure grounds. The house exists no longer, but the grounds so laid out remain. Of him, therefore, this much can now be said, at any rate, that to his inception we of the present generation, nearly two hundred years later, owe in some not inconsiderable measure, the pride and delight that all Londoners, no less than many country folk, must needs feel in the sylvan glades of Kew.

The work which he left unfinished was carried on and completed by his widow, the mother of George III., and to this date may be referred the various ornamental buildings, the familiar pagoda and the temples of *Æolus* and of the Sun which indicate the taste of that by-gone day. It is well to remember, besides, that it was under the auspices of this same Dowager Princess of Wales that the collection of foreign plants was first begun. As has been already said, the making of collections of plants had been more or less in vogue in England since the re-awakening of learning had given an impetus to botanical science; but about this period, or a little earlier, the smouldering embers of the cult would seem to have been fanned into brisker flame. John Evelyn at Sayes Court, by act and pen, had stirred up a mighty enthusiasm for arboriculture. In the eighteenth century great folk, like the Duke of Argyle at Hounston and the Marquis of Bute, were still vying with each other in planting all manner of foreign trees of new introduction on their estates. The Dowager Duchess of Portland chose her chaplain, Dr Lightfoot, for his eminent botanical knowledge no less than for his courtly manners! Collectors were abroad

ransacking South Africa, America and the Antipodes for flowering shrubs and bulbs. What wonder if in those unbridled, troublesome times the leading spirits of the day sought refuge from factious intrigues and strivings after place and power to float, for a brief respite from time to time, in the calm back-water of pursuits so gentle and soothing? Why should not the austere princess, narrow-minded and prejudiced as she was, lay aside her hardness for a while in the interest of seeing the new arrivals from abroad which were to make for the far-fame of her collection? Why should not my Lord Bute forget his cares of state and his consciousness of unpopularity in disbursing magnificently for the advancement of his favourite science of botany? or the aged queen of sorrowful memories find solace and calm in watching the well-doing of the rare plants sent home from the southern hemisphere, or in awaiting with interest the unfolding of the quaint beaked flowers of the orange *Strelitzia* named in her honour? There is something infinitely pathetic as well as significant in the fact that the chief actors on the stage of life have, many a time, found the same healing balsam growing unawares in the earthly paradise of a garden that the cottar may nourish amidst the few homely flowers by his cottage door.

During the reign of George III., and for some time later, Kew remained a favourite royal residence, and the gardens, which were private property, were well kept up, and placed under the care of competent superintendents. Those who are acquainted with the beautiful and faithful illustra-

tions of plants published about that period in such works as *The Botanical Register* and *Botanical Magazine*—which last is continued to this day—can thoroughly understand the enrichment of greenhouses and stoves which then took place through the importation of new and desirable plants.

But during the succeeding reigns there followed a time of great depression, and the flame of botanical enthusiasm, which had burnt so brightly, gradually sunk down flickering, and might have been altogether extinguished, but for the patient love and unwearied care of the superintendent and his able lieutenant. Twenty years later, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, the royal gardens had fallen from their once high estate, and it became a serious question whether they should be given up and dismantled or be raised on a different footing to the status of a great national garden. Happily the commissioners appointed took the latter view, the Government of the day acquiescing; and how amply their action has been justified in the wonderful establishment which is dear to English-speaking people all the world over by the short but comprehensive name of Kew is no secret. There have been plenty of ups and downs since then—how could it be otherwise in the evolution of so vast an enterprise? But perhaps nothing is more expressive of the present wide-spread interest in all subjects connected with horticulture than the way in which this and other botanic establishments, without losing one jot of their scientific efficiency, have become at the same time leaders

of the great national art of gardening. Time was, in the days of decadence, when a botanic garden was a name of horror to a garden lover, a spot where dry scientific arrangement precluded all idea of beauty, where stiff beds of plants—weeds, as they were styled by the ignorant and irreverent—gave, as it was expressed, no living interest to any but a botanist as dry-as-dust as his own hortus-siccus. With the examples before our eyes of Kew, Edinburgh, Dublin, and the no less attractive and well-cared-for establishments of the universities and others, we have learned to know not only the world-wide importance of a modern botanic garden, but its practical help to every member of the community who chooses to ask for it.

Do we ask the purpose of the great mother establishment of Kew as it exists in this twentieth century? In olden times, as we have seen, it was mainly medical science that laid the foundation of the physic or botanic garden. Nowadays it is clear that not medicine only, but all vegetable products which affect the economic welfare of the British people at home or in our colonies, in agriculture or manufacture, in commerce or in horticulture, all come under its jurisdiction. All vegetable products! Can an outside observer measure, even to the extent of a limited range, how they affect our common every-day life?—timber, cereals, roots and fruits, the indispensable beverages of the breakfast table, wines, spices, vegetable oils, dyes and scents, cotton, flax, hemp, with the innumerable plants of textile value of new discovery—the thousands of economic plants, in short,

known only to experts—all of which in some way or other it comes within the province of Kew to receive from all parts of the world, to study, to test, and to redistribute. The mildews and fungoid growths which attack such economic plants constitute in themselves one most formidable branch of microscopic investigation. The plant-life of the whole world, in consideration of our wide-spread colonies, may be said practically to centre in Kew. Living or dried, the student may expect to find there specimens of the greater number of all known plants; and any serious scientific inquirer can claim the courtesy and help of its staff in solving questions of doubt or interest. The practice of the science of botany is indeed no dilettante profession, though it is common enough, even in these days, to hear it spoken of as though it were of no account.

But there is a side-issue which belongs more nearly to the subject of English gardening. In the vegetable kingdom beauty in some form is inextricably intertwined with service; and the most recent development of the modern botanic garden is not only to make known in popular fashion the inexhaustible wealth of decorative plants, but to show the best ways in which they can be used and cultivated.

Take, for example, the lessons of a brief winter's walk which Kew offers to all garden-lovers who come there, looking for helpful and timely hints. How few, even of the most eager of these, recognise what can be done by suitable choice of shrubs and bulbs—by flower, by colour of stems and branches, or by fruit—to brighten the winter gar-

den! At Kew many object-lessons of the kind are presented in the earliest months of the year. The winter-sweet (*chimonanthus*) is in full fragrance of its brownish-yellow flowers, so welcome on a February day, when there is as yet only a suspicion of spring in the air, and tree-buds are scarcely daring to swell; and it comes as a revelation that it will succeed as a bush in the open shrubbery without the protection of a wall. Elsewhere witch-hazels (*Hammamelis*) are shining in the bravery of flowers of twisted gold set on the yet bare branches; and foolish bees, tempted out too soon by a transient gleam of sunshine, are humming weakly about the beds of pink winter heath. The earliest rhododendrons are in flower, a little battered, perhaps, unless the season has been more than usually kind; and Japan quinces are only waiting for a few warmer days to burst their scarlet buds. The crimson twigs of the still leafless dog-woods, the brilliant stems of the golden and cardinal willows by the water side, the glossy green of bamboos in their sheltered dell on a frosty day, the orange berries of sea buckthorn or the scarlet of spindle wood, the new species of early-flowering iris and hellebore and fritillary—all these are to be seen on a winter's day. Such harbingers of spring are rarely indeed to be met with in the ordinary garden; and many a one may well turn homewards after a visit to Kew with a mind filled with new suggestions. To one a bulb border with the latest importations from Asia Minor may offer the strongest attraction. To others the contents of the glass houses will appeal with greater interest;

the Alpine house, with its rare treasures of mountain flowers; the warm greenhouse filled with all kinds of decorative half-hardy plants; the temperate range with the Himalayan rhododendrons. Everywhere will be found examples of the highest culture, and excellent effects of grouping.

But at Kew we find as well illustrations of different types of gardening. The purely formal style is represented in spring by brilliant beds of tulips and hyacinths, and other early flowers adapted to the season, replaced as the year advances, and making at all times a display of colour which is most appropriate to the position they occupy. Elsewhere the contrast is presented of crocuses growing in the grass and daffodils and anemones in wild profusion on the slopes. Or again, there is the *via media* of beds of such graceful flowering shrubs as *Forsythia suspensa*, its slender wands all hung with countless sulphur bells rising out of a carpet of blue Siberian squills. Whether it be in the early flush of almond and peach blossom, or when the tree magnolias are opening their cups and azaleas are flaming about them, or the rhododendrons in the dell are at the height of their glory, or it is the season of the rambling roses—the garden-lover, gentle or simple, cannot fail to acquire much practical knowledge, while he marvels at the beauty which finds so much expression in the midst of the serious scientific work which is the legitimate function of the modern botanic garden.

CHAPTER VI

THE WISLEY GARDEN

THE story of a remarkable modern garden, now closely bound up with the advance of English horticulture, present and future, should find its niche in any record of the evolution of gardening in Great Britain.

Gardening is in itself a strenuous business; yet how many men of affairs of most diverse character have found in it a happy relaxation and rest from the wear and tear of occupations of greater strain and stress. It was for this reason that some fifty years ago one such business man, a managing director of a great manufacturing firm, and much engaged in scientific research and experiment in connection with its operations, was inspired to take up fruit-growing under glass. It was then the early days of orchard houses, when the virtues of the mere shelter of glass for the forwarding and perfecting of hardy fruit was for the first time being fully explained by precept and example by Thomas Rivers of Sawbridgeworth—a phase of gardening, this, which was caught up with eager enthusiasm by amateur gardeners of every calibre, and which has never since lost ground; for the unheated orchard house is now an indispensable

adjunct of every great garden establishment. Mr G. F. Wilson in 1900, not long before his death at a good old age, told in simple words and with a sly touch of covert humour of the success of his first venture at Weybridge. The orchard house was sixty feet long by twenty feet wide, in which, as he says, "being then a hard-worked man, I had to prune the trees by candle light." The rafters had proverbs, principally Spanish ones, pasted on them. An amateur asked Mr Rivers how it was that his fruit was eaten by wasps, while Wilson's escaped? The answer was, "How could they attack it with all those proverbs against stealing overhead!" The efficiency of the proverbs might have been questioned; not so the capability and zeal of the man whose perseverance and power of invention overcame every difficulty. Fruit-growing alone did not long satisfy a mind so keen and active, and the next branch of gardening to be taken up was the growing of Japanese lilies, not so well known then as now. The impetus in this direction was given accidentally by the purchase of some lots of bulbs damaged, as it was supposed, by sea water, which were going a-begging at one of the horticultural auction sales. The hope which instigated the venture was justified in the result. The lily-bulbs, planted in rough wine cases, and grown in the orchard house, proved to be quite undamaged, and flourished exceedingly, while one or two of them turned out to be of singular value. Henceforward all sorts of experiments were tried in lily-growing, both under glass and in the open air, and were so successful that his untiring efforts

in that direction earned for him at length the nickname of Lily Wilson. In other ways as well the most was made of the Weybridge garden. In course of time active business was relinquished, and in 1878 Mr Wilson bought Oakwood, a hillside farm of about sixty acres, consisting of woodland with two-thirds of pasture and arable fields, situated at Wisley, about six miles from his own home at Weybridge, with the intention of converting it into a garden after his own liking. In his own words: "My business work having been mixed up with many experiments and inventions, this place gave just what I wanted—a grand new field and plenty of work. The wood had not been disturbed for many hundreds of years, during which time oak leaves and bracken decaying had made a great depth of vegetable soil. This, with the light loam of the hill, gave great capabilities." At first, and naturally enough, the new garden presented many difficulties, and did not at once rush into perfection. Wild gardening, which to a great extent was Mr Wilson's aim, was in its infancy in those days, and many were the experts who were inclined to shake their heads over the experiment. Before many years had passed, the verdict was entirely favourable, for surely nothing succeeds like success. By that time the Oakwood garden had become "a place where plants from all parts of the world grow wild."

It would be impossible now to trace the steps by which this great purpose was accomplished. There were no radical changes made in haste, but a clearing here beneath the oaks was chosen for

a colony of lilies, a hillock there to be crowned with some choice free-flowering shrub, or again a level space, moss-grown, through which in spring a crowd of blue chionodoxas might spear their way, or earliest rosy-flowered cyclamens spread out their tiny round leaves. So the woodland garden grew bit by bit, and every variety of soil and aspect was used for the group of plants most likely to succeed in it. Space was ample, and from giant lilies to the tiny creeping partridge berry all plants were colonised in breadths and the idiosyncrasy of each carefully studied. It was Mr Wilson who recommended that white Madonna lilies, sometimes so stubborn, should be "conquered by kindness," viz. by liberal feeding. Perhaps it was he who discovered the love of gentianella for a hard gravel bed; at any rate, it used to grow to perfection in such quarters at Wisley, and probably does so still. The May Beauty (*Epigæa repens*), so dear to the heart of the Canadian or Nova Scotian, but so baffling to the skill of the Briton who would naturalise it, learned to grow rampantly in the oak wood. The parsley fern, another coy denizen, not of the forest, but of the bare and rocky mountain side, contrived to find a home amongst the ferns on the edge of the woodland. By one means or another thousands of the beautiful plants of other lands, or the scarce wildings of our own, like the rare cypripedium of northern limestone districts or the dainty *Linnæa borealis* of Scottish fir woods, were in time made happy, and thrive as they seldom have done away from their native habitats. But the converse was no less true; for plants that,

in added perfection of form and colour, were the products of garden skill and hybridisation, also grew in wild luxuriance, yet did not lose their cultivated characteristics.

The oak wood itself, however, was but a part of the whole. The hillside offered a variety of aspects, and a good deal of the lower-lying ground was damp, or wet, where moisture-loving plants could be established. Ponds and watercourses with fair lilies floating on their surface, and thousands of Japanese irises clustering along their banks, are a notable feature of this wonderful garden when summer days are long; and truly it would take a long day to become acquainted with even a part of the treasures of plant life to be found there, for they are well nigh inexhaustible. Few indeed were the classes of plants left untried. Rhododendrons of the rarer Himalayan species, lilies, roses, flowering shrubs, herbaceous perennials, bulbs of countless kinds, Alpines, primroses, water plants—all found their place. It is probable that to this experimental character a great deal of the charm of the garden is owing. There was no great effort after mere effect in the planting, the chief aim being to make the groups of plants, and those the best of their kind, happy each in its own way. Nature took the rest into her own hands, and in her keeping pictures grew and multiplied.

For nearly a quarter of a century the owner of this exceptional garden, happy in his self-imposed task, carried on the work of development, bringing a thoroughly practical mind to bear upon every detail, and what is more, being always ready

to impart to others the results of his own hard-won experience. Who can estimate all the value of the knowledge thus passed on, to those who love their gardens, and look upon them as one main source of health and refreshment amidst the dust and fray of daily life?

At length it fell upon a sad day that the garden at Oakwood lost its master, and it was whispered soon after that the estate was to be sold. Then a very happy event occurred; but to explain how it came about it is necessary to glance briefly at another side of the story.

The old experimental garden at Chiswick, belonging to the Royal Horticultural Society, which for fifty years had done excellent practical work, was doomed. Situated in earlier days on an open site, and with clear air in which all testing of new varieties and other experimental garden operations could be satisfactorily carried on, and also being within easy reach of London, it had once possessed every qualification for its purpose, and, by old association, was dear to the heart of every horticulturist. But London fogs and the encroachments of continual building threatened to destroy its usefulness in the near future, and there was much exercise of spirit over ways and means and the best course to be taken. One happy day the knot of the difficulty was severed once and for all. It was announced that Sir Thomas Hanbury, himself an ardent lover of plants and the owner of the famous garden at La Mortola, near Mentone, had bought the Wisley estate with the intention of presenting it to the Royal Horticultural Society as

their experimental garden, in lieu of time-honoured but worn-out Chiswick. No gift could have been more timely or felicitous. Generous in itself and patriotic, for it was no less a gift to a nation of gardeners like the British people than to the society, there was a peculiar fitness in dedicating to horticulture the spot which had been lovingly created and tended by so worthy a master of the art; and perhaps no tribute to his memory could have been more graceful. It is now five years since all this took place. The generous donor has in his turn passed away, but the beautiful garden at Wisley remains, a living memorial of both the maker of it and the giver.

Necessarily the garden, with its new and greatly extended purpose, has undergone considerable alteration and addition, for which there remained ample scope and space. New buildings had to be erected, new trial grounds laid out; but these do not interfere with the original garden. The giant lilies still lift their tall heads under the oaks, and others open their primrose cups in their wonted place under the old apple tree. The ferns dip their long fringes into the clear pool, and the water lilies ride on its surface. The feathery heads of spiræa rise up by the pathway in misty clouds, and the soft spires of yellow and white tree lupins still veil the rough banks. Primrose and iris, pæony and rose follow each other in the same quick procession as of yore, while spring glides into summer; the famous hedge of Ramanas rose is studded as ever in the autumn with its handsome fruit. If some of these disappear, as in the course of

SPIRÆA BY THE PATHWAY.

nature they must, their places, we may be sure, will be refilled, as far as it may be desirable; for every essential feature is to be faithfully preserved, and in time to come the garden, it may be, will attain to a degree of even higher perfection.

Could a better way of spending a bright day in spring or summer be found by a garden artist or a true lover of plants than in that beautiful and instructive garden at Wisley?

We are apt greatly to underrate the practical value of an experimental garden of the kind which has been so long maintained at Chiswick, and is to be perpetuated in this memorial garden at Wisley. Its motive and equipment is entirely distinct from that of the botanic garden, and in some ways it concerns even more intimately the everyday life of the nation. It touches the commercial side of the community by testing any new production in fruit, flower or vegetable that is submitted for rigorous and careful comparison, and awarding to that which is most worthy the good send-off of the approval, signed and sealed, of the best experts of the day. At the same time, the general public gain a warranty of merit which is of signal importance to them in their own gardening transactions. It helps to solve difficulties of culture. It brings to light new forces, natural and mechanical, by which the products of the soil can be augmented and improved. It keeps alive the enthusiasm in gardening matters without which progress of all kinds must come to a standstill. Here, too, the amateur, if he will, has ample

opportunity of studying object-lessons which are inestimable in their helpfulness for his personal guidance.

In fact, it is only when we have learned to recognise the full meaning of the influence exerted by the private gardens of England upon the welfare of our national life that we appreciate at their true value the far-reaching benefits of such a gift to the country as that of the Wisley garden, or of the patient and praiseworthy endeavours, through good report and ill, of such societies as the Royal Horticultural Society to promote the interests of all concerned in gardening pursuits.

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And so, having brought this slight and imperfect sketch of some of the aspects of English gardening in the past to a close, let us turn to the changes which time has accomplished in English gardens of the present.

PART II

PART II

CHAPTER I

OF FORMAL GARDENS

"GOD ALMIGHTY first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures."

FRANCIS BACON.

OF late years we have been so busily engaged in getting rid of the worst types of formality in the laying-out of gardens that it is difficult for us now to recall what used to be in the days of oblongs and squares and stiff trees set "all of a row." Moreover, we are apt, in the revulsion of feeling, to do less than justice to that formal planting; for how beautiful are the remains of it all, as it still lingers in some of the ancestral domains of England! To that passion for straight lines do we not owe some of the grandest and most distinctive features of English landscape—the magnificent avenues of lime and elm and beech and Scotch fir which tower, like columns of some vast cathedral of Nature, above our heads, and fill our hearts with awe and reverence? The massive garden walls of weathered brick or stone, the arched gateways, the broad grass paths and smooth

bowling greens guarded by their high sheltering hedges of yew and box, hallowed by the traditions and the growth of centuries, are as near to perfection in their way as may be.

So much cannot be affirmed of the curious and very ancient art of tree-sculpture—more truly to be described as tree-mutilation—which was revived with enthusiasm towards the close of the seventeenth century. It might have been in honour of the house of Orange—for William III. was an ardent admirer of the topiary's skill—that trees and shrubs were cut and clipped into all manner of grotesque shapes. Or was it rather a whimsical taste which had earlier taken root in the country, to minister, by way of sudden alarms and surprises, to the somewhat coarse humour of the day? Be it as it may, it was a usual thing in the finest gardens for a stranger-guest to find himself unexpectedly confronted with a crouching lion or rampant bear, to be entertained by an encounter with a verdant pig, or lost in wonder at the skill which had fashioned hen and chickens out of the growing branches. Indeed, when the topiary's art prevailed, trees and shrubs thus tortured—squared, turreted, and shorn into every conceivable shape but that which kind Nature had ordained—formed the principal attraction of the pleasaunce. A few historic gardens of the type still remain, and amongst them Levens, in Westmoreland, is one of the most remarkable. So often, indeed, has it been told of and pictured that there are few, even if they have never seen it, to whom the old-world, fantastic garden, with its close-cut evergreens of

CLIPPED YEW AT LEVENS HALL.

endless configuration, is not familiar. Such a garden is full of permanent value, being fitly framed in the setting of historic association; and all gardeners should be grateful to the owners for the reverent care with which such national monuments are cherished and maintained. But efforts have been made of recent years to revive the taste for this mechanical art, which surely is mistaken energy. Gardens like that of Levens should be held sacred from any attempt at paltry modern imitation. In a garden of to-day grotesque distortions of Nature cannot but be out of character and lacking in taste. With most of us such sculptured trees are not heirlooms, as they have been in many a Holland garden for generations; and it is as distressful to think of a Dutch family parting, for liberal largesse, with their ship, or church steeple, or armchair of greenery, which has been a daily care from father to son for time untold—a temptation not infrequently placed in their way—as to hear of the sale of some ancestral portrait.

Leaving out altogether the discordant element of grotesqueness, it is a question whether evergreens may not be used too profusely in our climate. A classic garden, perfect as it may be in all the formal grandeur of green walls and fountains and *amorini*, would soon become a weary monotony without some kind of changing relief. It mattered little, perhaps, in sunny Italy, the home, if not the birthplace of this style of garden, that flowers had little share in relieving the solemn shade of ilex and olive and cypress in the pleasure grounds of old. Judging from records of the past, flowers

were grown by the Romans, amongst other garden vegetables, merely on account of their decorative value in wreaths and garlands, and possibly for scent. Of planting a flower garden for its own sake in those days there seems to have been little idea; but it may be granted that there was a certain congruity in the deep shadows and enduring fitness of the clipped garden which accorded well with fine statuary and the music of falling water, in the glow and vivid colouring of the south. Not so with us in the chill grey north. The rigid severity of the style is too sombre for the ever-recurring neutral tints which drift across our cloudy skies. At Levens this has not been forgotten, for the brilliant hues of larkspur, pæonies, roses, hollyhocks, and a thousand flowers of the sort, mingle with the dark, inflexible evergreens, and chase away every suspicion of gloom by the magic spell of changing form and colour.

Wisely used, nevertheless, there is infinite beauty and repose in the massive hedge of yew or holly, whether close-clipped or not, which gave comfort and shelter to many a garden belonging to a seventeenth-century manor or rectory house. More of these than some may now care to remember have been ruthlessly done away with, to make room for "up-to-date" improvements so-called. Far better would it have been for many a present-day garden if this kind of formality had been respected. The slow rate of growth in their early stages of our finest evergreen trees, not to speak of the labour of the shears, now too often prevents planting that would take years to mature, and so we

content ourselves with makeshifts of less intrinsic worth and beauty. At the same time, it is well to bear in mind that there may be an abuse as well as a good use for evergreen trees and shrubs in garden design.

It is by no means a necessary condition, however, of the happy use of the formal yew or holly hedge, or evergreen verge, that the garden should be on a grand scale. An old garden, though of no great claim to fame, on the Cornish coast, with high box hedges after the Dutch pattern, and dating, presumably, from the reign of William and Mary, was in existence only a few years ago, and is worthy of a passing record, if only for the reason that we might do worse, for a restricted garden space, than in some degree to follow it as a guide. It belonged to an unpretending and rather gloomy granite-built house, with a semicircle of wind-tossed oak and ash trees planted for shelter to right and left of it. The plain grey front and yard-thick walls were pierced with many square-cut windows. A flight of high weather-worn steps led up to the stout oaken door, unprotected by porch, or even by rude stone coping. Before the house nothing but a roadway and rough greensward giving away slightly to the edge of the sheer cliff, where a heedless step might easily send the unwary, headlong, forty or fifty feet, to the boulder-strewn beach below. Beyond, far as the distant horizon, the wide expanse of open, ever-changing sea, now blue and sunlit as an Italian lake, now leaden and tossing with angry crests of foam as the mighty Atlantic waves dashed in.

thunder and shrank back, foiled, from the unyielding rocks. A ghostly looking place enough on its seaward front, and said to be haunted by the restless spirit of some bygone smuggler or tenant of ill-repute. But all its grim weirdness was atoned for by the unlooked-for charm of the half acre or so of garden which fell in a gentle slope from the back of the house. Standing on a circular brick-built landing from which some half dozen moss-grown steps descended, the eye could roam over a sheltered enclosure walled in with evergreens and flowering shrubs. The wide terraces were parcelled out into a many-angled pattern of flower-beds, each with its green border of box. Once on a time these had been kept smooth-clipped and trim. Now the box had grown into low hedges a foot and more high, a little ragged, indeed, but not less picturesque on that account. The beds they marked out were still plenished with many stray bulbs and plants rare to meet with. It was easy to read upon the face of it that the setting-out of this favoured spot had been the work of one who was both skilled and loving in garden craft. Steps of brick, like the upper landing, evidently an after-thought to the original building, led from terrace to terrace, and in one far corner, half hidden, stood a summer house embowered in greenery, quaint enough outside with rustic woodwork, which had often been renewed, but wondrous within by reason of a lining, carefully preserved, of choicest foreign shells let into walls and roof in strange intricate device. A garden it had been, without doubt, to live in and to love. Some Dutch

Mijnheer, plainly a seafarer, had here found, in the days gone by, a rest for the sole of his wandering foot in the country which had given a royal welcome to the sovereign of his fatherland, and had fashioned a chosen plot after his own heart's liking. A solitary man, to all seeming; for no memory of him remained—no child's child had claimed heritage in the old homestead. Not even the dim shadow of a name lingered to tell of that long-past ownership. The place had passed to strangers; yet the garden, almost untouched, had lived on through the changes of generations, to enshrine the work of hands long folded to their rest.

We are almost too ready in these days to lay it down as an axiom that tall and wide box-edgings harbour slugs and snails, and rob the soil of its richness; and, on the other hand, to declare that low and narrow ones are too formal to be tolerated. All depends upon the environment. For when we do come upon them, suitably placed, and guarding a treasury of flowers, the first impression is one of surprised satisfaction and pleasure, and, involuntarily, an expression of delight escapes from our lips. Certainly a worse mistake might be made than to lay out a narrow space of the kind as an evergreen garden somewhat after the pattern of this old Cornish paradise. A cosy sheltered spot, warm and snug, shut in by green, clipped hedges, with beds fringed with box and full of flowers, would be, at any season, a well-frequented loitering place in pleasure grounds, however spacious in other directions.

Fifty years or more ago formality in gardens took another phase. Those who are old enough may remember still the enthusiasm with which the gay hues of beds and ribbon borders of summer flowers were welcomed, and the eagerness with which every plant that might lend itself to the colour scheme was sought out and propagated. It was the outcome of that other style of geometric garden which came much into vogue with the squares and oblongs and quinquencial planting of the Stuart period and earlier, by some called Italian, by others Dutch, which was usually sunk at a lower level than its surroundings, and was laid out, more or less, to be looked down upon from the height of a terrace walk—a style eminently in keeping with a stately garden in its manifold and varied aspects, but not, in all circumstances, appropriate. The mode quickly became universal, for it had manifest advantages, and whether suitable or not to the size and accessories of the position, every owner of a garden plot, large or small, must needs indulge in “bedding-out” the flower borders thereof. It satisfied, in fact, for a time, the natural craving for colour. A wonderful impetus was given to the manufacture of glass, for even the small garden required its greenhouse for the preservation of the precious half-hardy plants through the frosts and damps of winter.

This fashion too had its day, and it was a long one; but at length people began to grow weary of the eternal sameness. Year after year

gardens were ablaze—to the right with scarlet geraniums, yellow calceolarias, and purple verbenas; to the left with verbenas, scarlet geraniums, and calceolarias. The changes were rung over and over again to one reiterated chime. Foliage plants were pressed into the service by way of variety—perilla, dark and lurid, “to remind us of our latter end,” as a worthy old gardener was fond of saying, with a twinkle in his eye, and crimson and golden beets. Then tessellated work with succulent plants came into vogue—grey-leaved echeverias and green-leaved sedums on a carpet of red altenanthera. But after a time every effort began to pall, and we turned regretfully to the memory of fragrant homely borders filled with pinks and gillyflowers and favourite old perennials, to sweet savours of rosemary and lavender, and to wish them back again.

But there is a place for all things, and it is very certain that wherever spectacular effect is desirable formal beds and parterres can never be quite dispensed with. The violent reaction, however, which set in against the stiffness and monotony of the earlier bedding-out system has done good work. We have only to make a tour of the parks and public gardens of London, Hampton Court, and elsewhere, to see the splendid use that is now made of the wealth of decorative material at our disposal—plants from all parts of the world of which no one would have ventured even to dream twenty years ago. The improvement is so manifest that the most inveterate hater of garden monotony can hardly fail to acknowledge that for

public gardens, as a rule, and for many positions in the private pleasure grounds of princely English homes, the formal system, in its present modified aspect of harmonious grouping and colour, is by far the most appropriate style of gardening.

CHAPTER II

OF HERBACEOUS BORDERS

IT must be a quarter of a century ago, perhaps a little more, since we were all beginning to ask again for the beautiful hardy plants of which old-fashioned gardens had once been full. The irises, the larkspurs, the sweet Provence roses, the laced pinks and richly scented clove carnations after which our hearts hungered—where were they? Alas, most of them had been grubbed up years before and carted away to the rubbish heap, and their ashes, by the irony of fate, had gone to feed the hundreds and thousands of bedding plants, turned out by routine as out of a machine, which had taken their places. The nurserymen could not help us, for they were completely at a loss. Hardy perennials had long disappeared from their catalogues, and they could only assure those who asked for them, with a perplexed and anxious expression on their faces, that “such plants had quite gone out of date.” How bitterly then we regretted the old favourites of our childhood’s days! How every farmhouse garden was scanned in hopes of meeting again with some long-lost treasure. How many unexpected shillings found their way into cottage purses—more scantily filled in those days

than in these—in return for the bits and offsets that could be spared from vigorous clumps still often to be found in village gardens. The turn of the wheel had come with a vengeance, and nothing would serve but that we must have our herbaceous borders back again. Very few indeed realised the difficulties ahead, and even now, after the lapse of so many years, those same difficulties are not altogether out of sight, except in one direction, that of being able to obtain unlimited material to work upon. Like our gardeners, we had become accustomed to the order and neatness of smooth-shaven lawns and trim flower beds. Those who possessed ample resources provided for a double flowering season. In November their borders were filled with hyacinths, crocuses, tulips—all the tempting suggestions of the Dutch bulb lists. Wallflowers, primroses, forget-me-nots, double daisies were called in to help, and added to the joys of spring. By the end of May, all these, whether they were past their beauty or not, had to make way for the summer occupants of the beds. The majority of garden owners, however, having less ample resources, and possibly only one solitary gardener, had to forego spring bedding and to content themselves with bare brown earth during the winter and spring; but this self-denial was not seldom rewarded by an earlier blaze of summer beds and ribbon borders, which was consoling. Though the monotony became unbearable after a time, at any rate we had colour and we had neatness—two factors in the case not to be despised.

It is more than possible that, at the back of our minds, there lurked a secret hope that henceforth, if we returned to the old allegiance and planting were once accomplished, the herbaceous plants would take care of themselves, if they were indeed perennial and worthy of the name, and half the labour of the year would thus be saved. Was it so? Alas, that hope, born of inexperience, soon proved to be a fallacy. Herbaceous borders, properly managed, entail more forethought and greater labour, because less mechanical, than the bedding-out system ever cost. But in the first place, the old plan was to die hard. The gardeners had grown accustomed to the routine and would have none of the new-fangled notions if by any means they could be nipped in the bud. Bedding-out might, and did, involve a considerable amount of work, but it was, in no sense, working in the dark. Initial principles once mastered, all was plain and straightforward. The veriest tyro could be set to make and put in cuttings of all ordinary bedding plants; while Nature, prodigal of her riches, did the rest. The chief trouble lay in devising the colour scheme. When the arduous undertaking of making a change from last year's arrangement was successfully thought out, the originator, whether master or man, folded his arms and contemplated the anticipation or surveyed the result of his work with supreme satisfaction, and recognised neither flaw nor imperfection. Gardeners of an earlier date, again, had been men both of brain and skill. A very cursory dip into garden literature of the middle of the

last century makes that fact abundantly clear; and there is very little doubt that the art sank altogether to a lower level during the bedding-out craze. Poverty of thought and of expression is the penalty exacted for too great a dependence on mechanical means. In many directions, however, we are beginning to return to better ways, and may yet live to see mechanical skill, not, indeed, displaced, but more evenly balanced by the high joy, so nearly lost, of creative art. May we not say that, in a sense, this has been one outcome of the new departure in gardening? In making the change, nevertheless, we were confronted with this very real obstacle, and one difficult to overcome, for if an intelligent spirit, eager in pursuit of the new knowledge and practice, were here and there to be found amongst the gardening craft, it was the exception, and not the rule. The majority of working gardeners hung back or rebelled altogether.

Another drawback followed hard on the heels of the first difficulty, though it did not at once reveal itself. With the revival of the quest for hardy plants, there entered a vast number of poor introductions from other lands which proved little better than weeds, and bid fair, at one time, not only to overrun our gardens, but to choke our new-born aspirations and smother them with ridicule. It took years to root out the worthless plants. It has taken much longer still to collect and to hybridise and to test and produce the best forms of those that are worth growing; and it is work that is apparently inexhaustible. We have only

HERBACEOUS BORDER IN JUNE.

to study the annual lists of new roses and larkspurs and pansies and sweet-peas, and the whole host of border plants that are undergoing continual improvement, to understand that these things are no longer "out-of-date," nor surely ever will be.

And yet, and yet, in the upkeep of herbaceous borders there is not a garden-lover of us all who does not find himself face to face with one supreme difficulty, that of having them, if not at all times bright with flowers, which is impossible, yet always interesting and, above all, sightly. "It gave me no pleasure, for it was the most untidy garden that ever was seen," was spoken scornfully of the best efforts of a true lover of plants, and one of the most skilful in their cultivation. Unfortunately the indictment is too often a true one. That furtive hope of less labour to come which we allowed ourselves to nurse in secret when we gave up our gay summer beds, vanished long ago. Instead of the precision of rule and compass, we have substituted that which is far more difficult of attainment, order without formality, method without monotony.

A well-ordered garden is like a shifting kaleidoscope. Be in it when we will, at morn or eve or sultry midday, in any week or month of the gliding year, in sunshine or in cloud, it will never be exactly as it was, even a short hour before. A subtle change has come to pass, a new charm is ready to greet us at every turn. It is just this ever-changing element that makes the dressing and the keeping of it a labour, yet a labour of love. Gardening, in truth, is work for an artist.

It is of no use to disguise the fact that to keep herbaceous borders bright and full of interest, with a succession of perennial flowers for every season, requires considerable knowledge of plants to begin with, and no less forethought in the detail of arrangement, to say nothing of the manual labour which is far from light. It can be done, however, and who can tell all the story of the far-reaching influence of such work when it is successfully carried out? A perfect garden of this type, lying under the shadow of one of the most beautiful of our English cathedrals is very dear to memory. It belonged to one of the ancient ecclesiastical residences of the close, and, in his leisure hours, was the constant care and pride of the venerable chancellor of the cathedral. A broad grass walk smooth as velvet led down to the swift-flowing river which formed the boundary of the garden. On each side of the green path was a long and wide border filled with choicest hardy flowering plants. That was all. There was no attempt at display, no wide-spreading lawn, no grandeur of terrace to distract the eye, over and above the borders which hid the vegetable garden; only a small green space where low rockeries held the minute and rarest treasures brought home from Alpine climbs. The herbaceous borders were at once the garden and the marvel of it. Gathered from all temperate climates, from mountain and from plain, the flowers stood in their serried ranks, a marshalled host of forms and hues unrivalled—every colour chosen, every contrast matched. And over all reigned the spell of most complete order.

Not even a rose leaf might rest ever so lightly upon the greensward; yet the garden gave no uncomfortable sense of stiffness, nor even of overstrained tidiness. It was a masterpiece of garden art of its kind as rare as it was lovely. Visit it when one might, except perhaps in the depth of its winter's sleep, the mosaic of bright colours was never wanting; decay found there no abiding place. It was a garden honoured by royalty, yet where the poor and the convalescent were always welcomed and none went empty away, for the treasures it contained were freely shared with all who knew how to value them. Alfred Parsons portrayed those borders in their midsummer beauty, and in his work they will abide; but the master's eye looks on them no more. When old age made the weight of duty too heavy to be adequately borne, he gave up the honoured position and the much-loved home, and choosing another abode elsewhere, let neither vain regrets nor failing health hinder the making of a new garden, which became beautiful in its turn, but could never claim the tender associations nor the old-world charm of the garden in the cathedral close. The river eddies and swirls onwards swift as ever between its low green banks; the chimes, unaltered, ring out their changes from the belfry beneath the tapering spire; but the revered head lies low under the sods of the cloister, and other feet now tread the green pathway between the flowers.

The story of this life and its close amongst the plants that were so well beloved has been told because, while holding within it many of the

highest of garden lessons, it has a direct bearing upon the special difficulty with which in much present-day gardening we have to do battle. Here were herbaceous borders, not to be excelled for wealth of colour and variety of form, entirely free from any blot of unkemptness or unsightly remnants of any kind, yet without a suspicion of stiffness or formality. It has always been somewhat of a problem to find out how it was accomplished. For, on the one hand, in the nature of things flowers fade, and only too quickly put on the garments of decay; on the other, the life, even of a plant, demands that the period of old age shall be respected. Annuals can be removed as soon as their beauty is over, for, as far as their immediate purpose is concerned, their life's work is done; but, with bulbs or perennial plants, the functions of stems and leaves must not be interfered with before their set time, for upon the due ripening of these depends the well-doing of the year to come. Nevertheless, when these functions have been fulfilled there remains no reason why withering stems and foliage should not be cut away at once; and herein very many gardeners fail, especially of the amateur class. As a rule all this useless rubbish is left long after it need be; nay, more, it is often recommended that dead stems should be retained as long as possible, as a ready-made rampart against frost, when a few handfuls of leaf mould worked in about the crowns of the plants that require it would protect as well, if not better, both roots and buds that are springing beneath the surface.

There are other factors, besides, which go far to make herbaceous borders one of the chiefest of garden delights, or the very reverse. A most important point is the choice of suitable plants. Out of the multitude of fine hardy perennials at our disposal, it is not easy to select this one and reject that to good purpose. Generally it is only after many failures and disappointments that we learn by hard experience the sober truth, that it is not enough for a plant to be admirable in itself, it must also fit the exact place it is destined to occupy, and that in close quarters with some neighbour in whose company it must at all seasons abide in harmony. Colour, height, habit, adjustment—all these have to be taken into consideration and weighed in the balance. Another point, and one to be carefully guarded against, is overcrowding. Whether the space be large or small, it is almost inevitable that the owner of a garden or his agents should want to pack into it every lovely variety of growth that comes within reach. But by this means the end in view is defeated, for there are only certain plants that are sociable by nature and prefer to live in a throng. Most of them, like human beings, crave for a breathing space, and return good interest besides for larger room. As a rule we measure the space to be allowed for plants by inches, when it should be reckoned by feet, or even by yards. Where room is thus generously bestowed, it serves another purpose, for it is possible then to make intermediary use of annuals, or even pot plants, to be plunged in vacant places,

which are often invaluable adjuncts to the general effect.

If these various means are given a fair trial, they will go far towards ensuring that orderliness in the herbaceous borders without which there can be no real enjoyment of a garden.

CHAPTER III

OF WILD GARDENS

Is it a sign that a renewal of youth is coming upon this old world that the past century should have witnessed a great upwelling of the love of what we comprehensively call Nature? The eyes of many have been opened as never before to see new beauty and new wonders in earth and air and sea. Our ears catch echoes of voices long unheeded. The restless activity and stress of life is, in some degree, working out its own redemption. For there is surely a spirit abroad making for rest, for greater simplicity. It asks for leisure to think, an occasional breathing space of silence. There are some who are gladly ready when they may to steal away from busy haunts, from the noise and strain of the thoroughfare and the mart, to betake themselves to forest, or river, or lonely moor—not to destroy or disturb the restful harmony that is there, but to listen and to learn. To such the solitude of the woodland is no solitude, it is peopled with life and colour and melody. The silence of the everlasting hills is no silence, for the air is full of speech. Flowers, in untended beauty, are eloquent with their own sweet story. Each flitting bird and humming beetle sings its glad song of life to the ear attuned to hear. The

marvel of the daily miracle of being fills the responsive soul with wonder and thanksgiving.

Now a garden offers, to most people, the best alternative for this healing balsam of untrammelled Nature. Some yearning of the sort, doubtless, lies at the root of the newer impulse which, of late years, has created the wild garden, the rock garden, the water garden. We long to transplant into our nearer reach, as a refuge from the fussiness and trivial annoyances of daily life, some little nook of our own, where we may recall the solemn stillness of the forest, the strength of the rocky fastness, half-veiled by clinging flowers, the rippling stream with its ceaseless murmur of life and blessing, the quiet pool, bearing white lilies on its breast, reminding us of the rest to come when at length it ringeth to evensong.

Within living memory, and owing mainly to the insistence of a master mind, whose untiring energy and insight soon drew others with it, a gradual but very real change has come over the whole character of garden design in Great Britain. The Garden Beautiful is laid out with greater art on less artificial lines. The feeling of the day is perceptibly more in touch with the freedom and unstudied grace of Nature. The mind and work of an artist is stamped now on many a garden as plainly as on the pictured canvas. A slumbering faculty has been awakened in not a few to whom a garden has become the only expression, within their compass, of that artistic sense which is seldom wholly wanting even in those who have but scant opportunities of culture.

The longing for calm retreat in unconventional surroundings was not unknown in other times. It is betrayed by the wood left to Nature beyond the ordered formality of the garden of the Roman villa, the "wilderness" belonging to many an old English home. Above all, we find the wild garden foreshadowed in the six acres of heath or desert, "framed, as much as may be, to a natural wilderness," which Francis Bacon liked well to have in the going forth of his princely garden. Yet the image of the wild garden set forth in such fair colours left no mark upon the mind of even the most ardent disciple of Nature, until the "fayre idea" was presented as an inspiration.* It was the re-birth in England of a beautiful ideal; and that ideal, though many years have passed since it was first evolved, is still a living force.

Naturally, many mistakes have been made as to the true meaning of a wild garden, which is somewhat of a contradiction of terms; and unconsidered attempts at wild gardening have now and then ended in nothing less than disaster. For what it was never intended to mean is the turning of the fair precincts of an ordered garden into an unrestrained wilderness of weeds.

Nevertheless, within the boundaries of almost every country house, large or small, there is to be found some piece of rough ground beyond the pale of the garden itself, but bordering upon it—some hedgerow or ditch or trickling stream, some belt of thin coppice, or it may even be some dis-

* "The Wild Garden." By W. Robinson, F.L.S.

used hole or pit from which gravel or chalk has been dug—which a little art may convert into a very delightful bit of natural planting; though to be successful it must be well thought out.

There are numberless hardy plants of exceptional beauty when in flower which are, notwithstanding, from some character peculiar to themselves, unsuited to a position in beds or borders where orderliness is more or less essential. Take the handsome Iberian cranesbill, for example, in its best form (*Geranium platypetallum*). A single plant forms a tuft of large circumference in the course of a season or two. In spring the shapely, netted leaves are fresh and good to look upon. By and by the purple glory of the large flower heads delights every beholder; but when that has gone by, there comes a time, especially in a dry season, when the whole effect of the plant is unpleasing. It falls away from its centre, and the limp stems lop over neighbouring plants that are yet in their prime in a provoking way. It would be bad gardening, nevertheless, to cut them away before their natural time. After all, it is merely a case of wrong placing. Establish a clump of it in an odd corner—some thin hollow in a hedge-row, some angle of a rough fence—where it will interfere with nothing else, and can be left to itself. Then it will come as a glad surprise, year after year, and the sprawling of the fading stems and leaves, if noticed at all, will only call attention to the beauty of their dying autumn tints.

In wild gardening one axiom should always be kept well in mind—the planting should be essen-

IN THE WILD GARDEN, WISLEY.

tially congruous. Nature herself is our best guide, for she makes no mistakes. We do not find primroses sown broadcast on a barren and shadeless mountain side, nor sundew clustering upon a dry stone wall. The rule should be, like to like—the denizens of the wood for the woodland, mountain herbage for the rock, moisture-loving plants for the bog. Indigenous they need not be, for there is almost unlimited choice from every temperate clime. Thus, the Apennine anemone, having the same character and a habitat by nature like our own wood anemone, is perfectly in accord in the same surroundings. It never startles us to see colonies of it lifting up soft blue flowers at our feet in any English wilderness walk on an early spring day; on the contrary, its charm is unutterable. A stray field poppy in the like position would be a weed as much out of place as in a bed of roses, and would give precisely the same jarring shock of unfitness.

A delightful experience of woodland planting in the west of England comes to mind. It was early in the year, and the trees, excepting only the hollies and ilexes, were bare and leafless. A pathway led along the margin of a fine sheet of ornamental water; but the low mossy bank of the woodside which bordered it reached almost to the edge of the pool, and there the ground was carpeted with hundreds of hardy cyclamens. The rosy flush of the flowers had faded with the autumn tints, and already the long stalks were tightening their spirals to draw down the forming seed-pods into the safe custody of mother earth; but the

tufts of polished, marbled leaves, showing now and again their purple lining, were almost more beautiful than the flowers in whose room they had come. These had spread themselves as they would in every mossy hollow of the bank, or cranny amongst the knotted roots. It was a bit of wild gardening scarcely to be surpassed for autumn and winter effect, while it was entirely in accord with Nature.

Be it only a ditch, perhaps a mere drain to carry off surface water, which is too near to garden or home paddock to be tolerated as it is, why should it not be redeemed from unsightliness by a little careful planting along its bank. Put in, here and there—only be generous of space—a root stock or two of the broad-leaved Californian saxifrage (*S. peltata*), a clump of globe flowers, European or Asiatic as you will, but preferably the European, which is sulphur-coloured, not orange, or a few roots of double meadow-sweet, a lovely daughter of our wild queen of the meadows. One April day you will pass that way and tall heads of pink and white flowers like some dainty cluster of enamelled mosaic will take you unawares; they are the forerunners of the handsome shield-like leaves of the saxifrage, which makes a noble picture in any damp spot all through the summer. Later on, the pale yellow globes of the *Trollius*, or the creamy feathers of the meadow-sweet, will have transformed the ugly ditch into a beautiful bit of wild gardening.

Nothing is more lovely, again, than a tall hedge of mingled holly and oak and ivy; there is such

a one in my own garden, over and through which a single rose grows rampantly. Each summer the slender curving trails fling their great clusters of milk-white flowers across the background of the green wall, and make a picture very hard to beat in its unfettered grace.

But, it may be objected, these are mere fragments, instances of isolated patching and mending. A wild garden, to have any true significance, must mean much more than this. Probably everyone, according to opportunity and environment, has his own ideal of what a wild garden ought to be. Let us take an example from an ideal accomplished.

One of the most delightful of English gardens lies hid in the heart of picturesque Surrey. It was carved, by the brain and hand of its accomplished owner, out of some fifteen acres of wild woodland, where hollies and silver-stemmed birches, and beech trees of mighty girth are native to the soil. On a cleared space stands the house—a house which, with its commingling of almost conventual simplicity, its artistic detail, and its quintessence of modern comfort, has perhaps no match. All about it are low terraced walls, with broad steps leading to smooth green lawns and shrubbery and flowery borders—a garden where a stranger may easily wander away, and lose himself in some delicious nook, canopied with birch boughs and carpeted in springtime with primroses of rare tints of cream and gold. Or he may stray into unexpected corners set apart for special flowers of every season—carnations or pæonies or Michael-

mas daisies with their sad refrain of "farewell summer," but each so artfully grouped as to form a lovely garden picture, which imprints itself on the memory to be carried away as a possession for a lifetime. Climbing roses, in their season, tumble over low dividing walls in clustering masses of pink and white and apricot, or ramble into the inviting arms of some fostering tree. But the greatest of all the charms of that sweet garden are the green paths which open wide vistas through the wood and the heather, and verge upon the lawns. With what love and reverent feeling after the fitness and simplicity of Nature has this wild wood garden been planned and carried out. All kinds of foreign flowering shrubs—rhododendrons, cistus, kalmias, gaultherias—belonging naturally to the peaty staple of the heath land, mingle freely with the undergrowth fringing the wood, striking never a discordant note. Rare giant lilies rear their white spires beneath the strange English trees as happily as in their native glades; there are drifts of daffodils and Solomon's seal and little colonies of rare species of dog's-tooth violet, which have made themselves a home amongst the ferns and the moss. The sunshine filters through the tender silken green of the beech boughs in the glad English springtide, and flecks the heathery paths with dancing shadows. On early summer nights, when the full moon floods the long glades with silver light, we lean perhaps against the open casement, to look and listen. A nightingale trills out its love song in the stillness; a lordly pheasant, 'disturbed, wakes up, flaps his wings and crows;

while the rabbits, none too welcome, play about below and nibble the dewy herbage. Scarcely another garden in the kingdom can be found, probably, which unites so closely the charms of the wild and the studied art of the garden. For here art in Nature and Nature in art are so cunningly intertwined that design is emptied of formality and Nature robbed of her whilom rudeness. In such a wild garden he who runs may read how the lessons of the forest and the field may be laid at the very threshold of our homes.

CHAPTER IV

DRY WALLING

THE wisdom of Solomon did not overlook "the hyssop that springeth out of a wall." Nay, if it be true that the name translated hyssop applies more properly to the caper bush, it is likely enough that the beauty of the large creamy-white flowers would catch the eye of so keen a lover of plants. But hyssop in the context is the antithesis of the cedar of Lebanon, and with its pretty purple-blue flowers and tufted growth is the very type of a humble wall plant. So we may perhaps prefer to keep to the familiar reading. Wall plants have always been favourites, partly, it may be, from their rare courage in asking little, yet giving much to add to the beauty and colour and fragrance of life. There are certain plants, besides wallflower, which are always associated with a wall. Snap dragon, for example, and the little ivy-leaved toad-flax, red valerian, and, in Devon and Cornwall, the round leaves and pale spikes of pennywort. In the damp air of the west, maidenhair spleenwort also, and ceterach and little tufts of wall rue and other ferns, may be seen sometimes almost hiding stone or brick with a mantle of greenery.

But it has been reserved for modern gardening,

taking council with Nature, not indeed to divert walls from their normal province of seclusion and shelter and support, but to use them actually as planting ground. Anyone with an observant eye must have noticed how plants of most unlikely character will sometimes take root and flourish in the apparently uninviting brickwork of an old wall. We wonder how it could come about that an acorn, hidden perhaps by some jackdaw in secretive mood, should germinate and find nourishment and foothold in such unlikely quarters; yet there is the evidence of the living oak, sturdy though dwarfed, growing as it has been known to do for many a long year out of the masonry of some old church tower that we know well. We can all recall instances of the kind, of forest trees, like Scotch fir, it may be, or vigorous shrubs, like elder, taking root and in some unaccountable fashion living and thriving upon the substance of a wall, having no other visible means of subsistence, and yet, in most cases, with an air of happy thriftiness about them that seems to say that they would not exchange their sparse living aloft for the fattest pastures that might be offered them on level ground.

It was this contented cheeriness and gaiety of mien, no doubt, that originated the idea of wall gardening. Some of us may remember when, in our eagerness to follow Nature in all her methods, we tried to dislodge crumbling pieces of mortar or to break away fragments of brick or stone, replacing them with soil wherein to sow the seeds or plant the seedlings which we vainly hoped might

take root and in due time drape the bare wall with gardens of beauty. Somehow the effort did not always succeed, for bungling human fingers, with the best will in the world to aid them, have not the fairylike deftness of the puff of wind which will, in a moment, waft a seed into the very cranny that is made for it, leaving it there for rain and sunshine to work the rest of the miracle.

In Wales it is a common thing to see turfs, cut from the roadside, laid on the top of low cottage walls for the express purpose of growing flowers; and the finest clumps of rock cress and pinks, and occasionally dwarf irises, to be seen anywhere, are the result—the trailers hanging over the crest of the wall in curtain-like masses, full of flower in their season.

These, however, were but first attempts at wall gardening; and the makers of new gardens have now an added joy which was unthought of even a few years ago, for dry-walling has been devised.

What, then, is meant by dry-walling for garden purposes?

It is rough stone work prepared expressly for the accommodation of suitable plants by laying the courses of stone on beds of garden soil, filling in as well all interstices of the joints, and using mortar only where it is absolutely necessary for the strengthening of the fabric of the wall. It may be employed for dividing walls of low stature, in some sort after the rough and ready method of the stone dykes of Somersetshire and elsewhere;

but perhaps the chief use of the system is to be found in the construction of retaining walls in gardens, in the facing of terraces, or other work of a kindred nature. For all such purposes, ordinary brick or stone and mortar building has, of course, always been in fashion; but the less formal, and at the same time less costly, use of unset and roughly squared stone has only of late come extensively into garden practice. The usual device, for example, where a garden lies on a slope more or less steep, is commonly to make, wherever the outline of the ground seems to require it, a rampart of grass; but grass banks are always troublesome to mow and keep in order, besides in themselves being somewhat poor and unmeaning.

Building of any kind, rough or otherwise, is expensive work; but where stone is easily to be procured and other disabilities do not stand in the way, there is no doubt that dry-walling for the facing of terrace banks and for steps leading from level to level, and many like purposes, is one of the most delightful and effective methods under certain circumstances of dealing, not only with garden schemes on a grand scale, but also with restricted space; for it practically doubles the available planting surface, while it gives dignity to the whole plan which can scarcely be attained in any better way.

There are details in regard to dry-walling which cannot be minutely entered into here; for the object of the present volume is not so much to be technical as suggestive. The main idea, however, is simple enough, and can be set down in few words.

The foundation of any wall, retaining or otherwise, must be a foot or so below the surface, and the earth well rammed in; while mortar may be used in the first courses if considered necessary, which it is usually found to be. The blocks of stone, rough-hewn and not too regular, must be laid according to their natural stratification, and should tilt a little backwards for greater strength and in order to get the full benefit of all rainfall. The twofold purpose of dry-walling being borne well in mind, viz. that it is for planting as well as for its normal use, the layer of bedding soil should be tolerably thick and well spread between each course of stones, leaving no gaps, but, in the case of a retaining wall, running back to meet and be incorporated with the main body of earth behind it. The joints of the stones should also be fairly wide apart, and well filled in with garden soil. Mortar need only be used at the angles, or where the greatest resistance is likely to be felt. The body of earth behind the facing wall should be thoroughly well rammed, to prevent any after-mischief, such as breaking outwards under abnormal conditions of wet or frost. Steps will require consolidating by mortar at the angles and at the joints of the front edges; but it is a good plan to make these shallow, and wide enough to be fronted only with stone, and filled in with soil towards the back of each step, making thereby a little natural bed for the rooting of low-growing plants. Dwarf campanulas, or musk, or tiny Alpines, like *erinus*, when once established, never look more at home than in the cosy corners they

delight to choose for themselves in such positions and from whence they spread into little tufted colonies at will. In just such a spot in my own garden, at the foot of a retaining wall on a landing at the top of some stone steps, a little drift of winter flowering cyclamens has been established which with their delicately marbled leaves and rosy flowers make a bright little picture from January onwards.

Such, in outline, are some of the rules by which good dry-walling is regulated; but the chief exponent of the subject has written a charming and most illuminating book,* which should be in the hands of every garden-lover, as it clearly explains the whole gist of the matter, with all details which can only be lightly touched upon here.

There are manifold reasons why dry-walling should possess a fascination peculiarly its own. To begin with, it gives opportunity for something akin to wild gardening within the precincts of the garden itself, for while the method follows Nature's own informal leading, the essential conditions of the position make for a certain restraint which is in accord with garden fitness and order. The growth of wall plants, however spreading, is kept more or less within due bounds. Some Alpine plants for which the rock garden proves unsuitable may also on occasion be induced to make a home on a prepared wall of the kind described, for two reasons—the tufts of leaves, which are often woolly or hairy, like those of *ramondia* and its

* "Wall and Water Gardens." By Gertrude Jekyll.
"Country Life" Library.

allies, enjoy the shelter and dryness of the vertical position in winter; while the roots find a long run in their passage through the soil upon which the stones are bedded, together with an unfailing supply of moisture stored up in and beneath the stones themselves. The conditions are thus as nearly as we can make them like those of their native habitats; and they are less liable to succumb to the treacheries of our variable climate. Not only Alpines, but plants of warmer latitudes, and consequently of somewhat tender constitution, such as the cistuses of southern Europe and some of the New Zealand veronicas, often short-lived in the richer soil of a shrubbery border, are here safe often for a length of time. They literally set their backs to the wall, and fight against adverse conditions. Above all these advantages, the picturesque effect of a well-planted wall stands out pre-eminently. Its charm is almost indefinable, but it combines beauty and strength and homely dignity in a way which suggests many a worthy lesson.

Planting, however, is not everything; for it may be said without exaggeration that in wall gardening, beyond most other aspects of the art, "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley." Experience teaches that one plant will take kindly to the position and fit into its niche with utmost content; another, seemingly equally suitable, may be tried again and again, but coaxing is all in vain; and yet another, some tall foxglove or massive silvery-leaved mullein, which we should never have dreamed of inviting to take

up its abode there, settles itself in without saying even so much as "by your leave," and astonishes all beholders by its stalwart proportions and bold self-assertion of being the right thing in exactly the right place.

All the same, wall planting should be set about with utmost care, with due regard to aspect as well as to pictorial combinations. For a rough terrace wall with stairways leading from a lower to a higher level, which is one of the happiest features of my own garden, the main details of the planting were mapped out on a plan before ever a stone was laid. It is plain that no haphazard placing of shrubs or plants as they may chance to come to hand, can produce the good effect of ordered groups arranged in reference to colour, habit of growth, and general fitness for the position they are intended to occupy. This is, of course, an axiom in all gardening; but never more so than in the case of the wall garden. In the particular instance referred to, liberal use has been made of hydrangeas; and when these are in bloom, the eye is carried from the fine heads of soft blue flowers in the angles of the lower steps to a border on the top of a seven-foot wall where more of these invaluable autumn flowering shrubs are massed. One or two groups of yuccas planted amongst them, and coming forward to the edge of the wall, are increasing in strength and beauty year by year; and the whole forms a charming picture of lasting beauty throughout the autumn months. Permanent planting of this character is thoroughly satisfactory, and serves to atone for

any gap which may possibly occur through the temporary failure of less enduring vegetation on the face or crannies of the wall. There is no doubt that where a judicious use of dry-walling can be made it is a great enhancement both of garden interest and picturesque effect.

CHAPTER V

THE ROSE GARDEN

“THE great varietie of Roses is much to be admired, beeing more then is to bee seene in any other shrubby plant that I knowe, both for colour, forme and smell. I haue, to furnish this garden, thirty sorts at the least, euery one notably different from the other, and all fit to be heare entertained: for there are some other that being wilde and of no beautie or smell, we forbear, and leaue to their wild habitations.” So wrote John Parkinson in 1629, and it is not without curiosity that we scan the list which he has left to us. We find in it, first of all, by the specific name of *anglica*, the red and white roses of the rival Houses of Lancaster and York, those “most ancient and known Roses to our Country, whether natural or no I knowe not, but assumed by our precedent Kings of all others to bee cognisances of their dignitie.” A tradition, probably authentic, tells of the red rose of Provins having been taken as a badge during a French campaign by an English prince some three centuries or more before Parkinson wrote, so there is ample witness that these so-called English roses were amongst the earliest, not indigenous, that found their way into our British

gardens. The damask, which was the prime favourite of the time—and it may here be worthy of remark that the roses of Pæstum, probably introduced into Italy from Egypt, were of the damask breed, and may have come into England with the Romans—the Hungarian and Franckford roses, the velvet and a double yellow—this last “very tender about London”—are all mentioned, together with a few single forms, some of them still known by the old names, such as the apple and cinnamon roses, the rose without a thorn, the climbing evergreen rose, and sweetbrier. The finest, probably, of them all was the Provence or great Holland rose (*R. centifolia*), not to be confounded with that other rose of Provins, which we may see over and over again portrayed by Van Huysum and other famous Dutch painters. We call it now the cabbage rose, an unaccountable name for the sweetest rose that has ever breathed upon our English gardens; and it still lingers with us, though the Holland form, judging by the pictures, must have been a larger and fuller flower. By reason of its delicious fragrance and the irregular form of its full-petalled flowers, which have a charm of their own quite other than the shapely modern rose, no garden should be without a bush or two of this fine species, which, in its ancient form, has survived the inroads of the hybridist for so many cycles of years.

Noting the pride with which the “great variety” of roses to be found in that particular “garden of pleasant flowers” during the early part of the seventeenth century is dwelt upon in the

old chronicle, we cannot but wonder how a modern rose catalogue with its many hundreds of names would then have been regarded!

No flower, perhaps, has received more attention from the hybridist; and it would be interesting enough to retrace from their beginning all the changes in which these labours have resulted; but it will suffice to glance briefly at three distinct developments which have succeeded each other within living memory. The first was the gradual evolution of the hybrid perpetual. Before the arrival of these, roses had been mainly midsummer flowers. A short six, or at most eight, weeks in June and July, and their brief glory was past and gone, save for the ever-faithful pink and crimson China roses, which loitered, then as now, on sheltered walls or by cottage porches, till frost came to punish them for their daring. There were numberless varieties, graceful and fragrant, of these summer roses, but what wonder if we all lost our heads in a measure, and gave the old favourites the cold shoulder, in the supreme delight of welcoming the perpetuals, which were to brighten autumn as well as summer days with such glorious shades of colour. Nevertheless, there was a lack, and that a serious one, as time revealed—we missed the perfume of the summer roses; for the newcomers, with all their added charms of brilliant colour and prolonged season of bloom, were too often practically scentless. But another factor was at work. 'Tis now fifty years ago since *Gloire de Dijon*, though by no means the first of the tea-scented roses which bid for public favour, proved

so vigorous and was so novel in character that it gave a new impetus to rose growing, and became, from the garden point of view, a forerunner of the splendid race of hybrid teas. It may have been some five and twenty years later that *Maréchal Niel*, strictly a noisette, and still one of the finest of yellow roses, rewarded the efforts of a French grower. Tea roses were from the beginning highly esteemed and coveted; but at first their delicacy of constitution, which seemed inherent, bid fair to preclude any thought of their fitness for general cultivation out of doors. Of late years, however, this difficulty has been to a great extent overcome, and now hybrid perpetuals in their turn are beginning to have some ado to hold their own against the hardiest hybrids of the tea-scented race, though, in the meantime, there is ample room for both.

The third and latest development has been in the freer use of rambling roses. To this phase a further impetus has been given, in quite recent years, by the arrival from Japan, stowed away somewhere, it is said, in a seaman's kit, of a climbing rose of deeper tint than any of the old Ayrshire type—the brilliant *Crimson Rambler*—a name which was destined in an incredibly short time to become a household word. Since then a crowd of rambling roses of many sorts and shades of colour have followed close upon its wake, and have already stamped a character all their own upon the rose garden of the twentieth century.

To those who have watched the gradual unfolding of these successive changes, the effect on

English gardens in general is very noticeable. Progress is writ large indeed on rose growing, and if to some of the older generation it might seem to be advisable to put on the brake, lest in this, as in other things, we may go too fast—down-hill—it should not be taken amiss, for we have need sometimes to be reminded that, in an ordinary way, good work cannot be accomplished at lightning speed. The danger is lest “the varietie of Roses” should become too great, and so deteriorate in quality.

Surely, amongst other changes, the seasons have also changed! In an old garden, years ago, though the climate was in no way exceptional, *Gloire de Dijon* used to come in with the cuckoo. True, it grew on a sheltered wall with the broad eaves of a thatched roof overhead; but the morning of the 16th of April, when the cuckoo’s note was sure to make itself heard for the first time in the coppice, always dawned as well on two or three well-opened flowers of the “glory” with plentiful promise of buds. Rose gardens in those days, beloved as they were, generally lay apart from the rest of the garden. For this there were several reasons, the chief one being, perhaps, that the rose bushes themselves when they were out of flower gave little indication of the fulness of beauty they put on in time of roses. Rosarians, besides, were generally keen to exhibit, and the treatment necessary to grow exhibition flowers was not always conducive to garden beauty. A wise distinction is now made between garden roses and varieties to be grown for the show tent. Happily

many a rose-lover, insensible as a rock to the joys of cups and medals, can rejoice in roses as beautiful as heart could wish, even though they fall a little below the prize-winning mark.

It is no exaggeration to say that a rose garden to-day may come nearer to the ideal of perfection than ever before, because we need not confine ourselves to H. P.'s or H. T.'s or C. N.'s, or any other lettered section of the queen of flowers, but can choose as we like in any and every class according to our own or our garden's idiosyncrasy. We can plant a hedge of sweetbrier, or clothe a post with carmine pillar. We may grow a single bush, or, if we will, a group of *La France* at some corner where garden paths intersect the borders. We can plant beds on grass or gravel of *Grüss von Teplitz* or *Laurette Messimy*. We can fling one of the beautiful new ramblers, or an old Dundee no less beautiful in its way, over an arch, or wreath a pergola with a series of climbing roses of all tints from pale moonlight to the saffron and orange of sunset glow. There are roses dwarf enough to grace the lowliest rockery, or sturdy giants that will make a worn-out apple tree of considerable proportions a fountain of blossom in its season. It was not altogether that, in former years, there was a lack of roses of all these different types—though there are certainly many more, and some of them finer than those of old—but we have learned to use them better. In manifold ways, then unthought of, folk to whom a separate rose garden is a luxury beyond all reach, can now be blessed with an exceeding wealth of the fairest

of all flowers within the limits of a modest cottage plot, at the cost of little more than a good gardening paper for instruction's sake, and the personal pains and trouble which it stimulates.

And here I may set down a practical hint for the sake of those who do not grudge such personal efforts. If it should be desired to have roses on their own roots, an opportunity comes in the summer which it is well not to lose. July is one of the best months for putting in cuttings; and a sure and simple plan is as follows:—Dig out a fairly deep trench in a semi-shaded position, and place in it first a layer of good stable manure, next a layer of leaves, and finally a layer of road-grit or very sandy sharp soil, and tread all down evenly and well. Make your cuttings of about six to eight eyes each, either with a heel or with the ordinary straight cut below a bud, and insert firmly with three eyes at least below the surface. Give an occasional watering in dry weather and a very large proportion ought to strike, and the slight trouble will never be regretted, for these instructions were impressed upon me by an expert of long standing who had proved their value.

It is very remarkable when we come to think of it that the rose, which in its finer and more scented forms is of Eastern origin, should have adapted itself as kindly as it has to our variable and colder climate. It speaks volumes, also, for the skill and untiring patience of generations of cultivators, in grafting and budding, in the wise selection of seed parents, in the thousand and one details by which acclimation is accomplished. For there is little

doubt that tea roses, in particular, do flourish exceedingly in warmer latitudes than our own. In no country could they be more rampant than in those regions of Cape Colony, for example, which are blessed with summer showers as well as winter rains. Even in the higher belt of country, before reaching the dry plains of the Karroo, where rain falls only during late autumn and winter, and farms and gardens depend entirely upon irrigation for the rest of the year, tea roses are grown to such perfection as to be the envy of all British rose-lovers whose eyes are privileged to rest upon them. I recall with intense pleasure the thickets of bushes almost hidden beneath the veil of myriads of roses, suggesting the fabled groves of enchanted flowers which concealed with their tangle the sleeping beauty of the old story. But there is one drawback, the heat of midsummer quickly makes them droop and fade, and thus their charm is more fleeting than under our cool skies, so often veiled by cloud and mist even in summer. Thus, there are always compensations, and in spite of some limitations, we can scarcely complain of the possibilities we have in our own English gardens.

One phase of rose growing is very significant of the awakening of a truer sense of beauty in form. Single roses are now grown by scores where, formerly, they would have been discarded as of little worth. There are three single roses in my own garden which I would not willingly be without. The first opens its earliest buds by the end of May. Its wide rose-pink flowers, with bosses of golden "threads," poise like butterflies above the

polished triple leaves. For a month we go daily and many times a day to feast our eyes upon its wondrous beauty, until, at length, each shell-like petal has floated down, and we have to bid it a sad farewell for a whole year. It is the anemone rose, happily of hardier frame than the white *R. sinica*, from which it springs.

It is followed, in another part of the garden, by Paul's Carmine Pillar rose, the brilliance of whose fully open single flowers as it climbs over its post, and withal their soft velvet texture, passes words or pencil to depict. It should be visited in the sunshine of an early summer morning to experience a delight which is ever fresh and new while the flowers last, but, alas, they are all too fleeting.

The third is a white rose, also of marvellous grace, which curtains a tall hedge with its long wands of silver-washed foliage running up to a height of some eighteen or twenty feet into the oaks and hollies of its background, and hanging out in July countless clusters of pure white flowers. These, too, have their brightly shining knops of fine-drawn gold, and the hedge in this dainty garment of roses is a very beautiful picture.

Would that it might be possible to add something of the perpetual character to the perfect form and colour of some of these single roses. But no, most of them are too busy forming their seeds to have time to waste on producing a second crop of flowers. Perhaps it is just as well, or how would new varieties be obtained?

Rose fruits are in themselves often very decor-

ative. Parkinson was not unmindful of this fact, for in his comments on the great apple rose he says "the whole beautie of this plant consisteth more in the gracefull aspect of the red apples or fruit hanging upon the bushes then in the flowers or any other thing." The "red apples" of the Japanese *R. rugosa* are finer still, and a bush of the single white form, with its splendid wrinkled leafage, has a second season of great charm when autumn hangs it with ripe scarlet heps.

Rose gardens in their design are as various as the domains of which they form a part. It is a moot point whether roses are best planted severely alone in separate beds, or placed by a loving hand and well-trained eye amongst other flowers. Everyone must judge for himself according to individual taste and circumstance. But a picture once seen dwells in memory of a flagged pathway leading onwards to an old sundial. On each side were long oblong beds planted with low bushes crowded with roses in full heyday of glory. It was simple as it could be, and yet no arrangement could have appealed more surely to a sense of fitness, as the roses uplifted their heads in silent joy towards heaven, while they cheered the passer-by with their sweet unconscious beauty. To point the moral the legend of the sundial might well have been :—

TIME IS AND IS NOT.
LET US
EACH PASSING HOUR
SERVE GOD
AND ONE ANOTHER.

CHAPTER VI

WATER GARDENS

A NEW phase of gardening has sprung up since the introduction of the beautiful hybrids for which we are mainly indebted to M. Latour-Marliac, of water-lily fame. Not that England can boast any more now than heretofore of lakes and pools and wimpling streams, some of which grew lilies on their own account long before pink and blue and pale yellow species and hybrids hardy enough to grace such natural waters were ever dreamed of. But our hopes and wishes have, of late, been turned in the direction of water gardens, and even when householders have to depend upon pipes laid down from the main for their water supply, heaven and earth are moved to devise means whereby a tank of some kind can be constructed in the garden to do duty as a lily pool.

It is scarcely to be wondered at, perhaps, for water in itself has a powerful magnetic attraction, and water lilies are well nigh irresistible, however the element in which alone they can exist may be attained.

To set a just value on lake or spring, one must needs have lived on high ground, on the utmost reach, it may be, of bleak chalk downs, where a

'dew pond is the only make-believe for a pool, and water so superlatively precious that driblets only can be grudgingly spared for any garden purpose. In that sort of country, those only know who have put it to the proof how delicious it can be on a day in the early year, when the springs have broken under the chalk hills, to drive through a water lane in the valley, to hear the splash of the horses' feet as they daintily lift up each dripping hoof out of the purling stream, to see the lush growth of the new-sprung herbage, the earliest white violet, the shining celandine, the rathe primrose, bending down through the starting fern-crooks to the life-giving runnel which tinkles with joy as it laves their roots. Or, once more, what happiness in a water-bearing country like Wales, after a long drought ending in heavy rains, to stand on a still evening to listen to the music of a thousand rills hastening to swell the river below as it rushes down to the sea. What would we not sacrifice at such a moment if some of that quickening stream might flow through the garden that we love. Water lilies, alack! To folk in the predicament of being practically suffering from water famine it is almost an insult to utter the name. But let us look at the other side of the picture and consider the compensations. How many a time has it not been said by dwellers in the valley, "Oh that I lived on the hill!" Those copious springs, of which in passing we only see the beneficence, are apt to well up in untoward places within walls, and at times may swamp both house and garden. The river, so charming to watch as

A WATER-SIDE PATH.

it ripples and swirls over yonder at the foot of the lawn, one fine day overflows its banks and leaves irreparable mischief behind it when it returns to its accustomed channel. Early every evening, too, the dank grey mist rises out of it and scatters pains and penalties from its phantom hands. It is useless, besides, to try to grow any tender plant or shrub near the water's brink, for in winter the frost is far more severely felt here than on the hilltop a mile away, and even the laurels are browned and stricken. Or, a contingency of another kind may occur. The pond, in which we fondly hoped the pure flowers would ere long float, proves to be too much shadowed by overhanging trees. The falling autumn leaves have choked it, and the lily roots, stifled under the black mud, refuse to flower, or even to grow, in spite of being the very best sorts that could be procured. Such are some of the pros and cons of the circumstances of many a would-be water-lily grower; for water, like fire, is a good friend, but a bad master. And these pros and 'cons are not so irrelevant to the subject in hand as they might seem to be, because there is an unfortunate tendency in the British temperament to play the game of "follow my leader" at all hazards; and we are as likely as not, in the near future, to be all crying for the moon, in the shape of a water garden, regardless of that which is fitting or possible.

Given plenty of water, however, and that under right conditions, what more delightful use can be made of the opportunity than to arrange some form of water garden?

This type of gardening may be discussed under two heads—first, the use, after natural methods of lake, pool, or stream and their banks, for the grouping of water-loving plants for pictorial effect. Secondly, the artificial tank, which can range from the costly canal of the stately formal garden to the modest barrel sawn in half which in certain positions makes no bad receptacle for the smaller growing water plants, and which gives its owner every whit as much pleasure.

It is not the object of the present pages to give many gardening details. There are plenty of sources whence these can be obtained with the very latest practical advice. It is intended rather to offer suggestions and helpful ideas which may fit in with the wants and wishes of those who desire to make their gardens a source of individual recreation and delight. Therefore I am not now going to describe the method of puddling a pond or altering the course of a stream, or even of planting the roots of water lilies in baskets, and slinging them, weighted, into position in the bed of some quiet backwater or pool. All these things can be better learned from a practical man on the spot. I would rather tell of some water or water-side gardens which exist or might exist, here and there, in the fitting precincts of English country homes.

The first that comes to mind belonged to a homely garden which, except for a narrow strip on the far side, was bounded by a shallow but living brook which never ran dry. Half copse, half meadow, and only a few yards in width, this little belt of waste ground gave opportunity for

an ideal water-side garden of the natural type. It could only be called a garden in the strict sense because the plants in it were not indigenous to the spot, but had been placed there by human hands. An alder or two grew out of the shelving bank, with a clump of bright stemmed willows, golden in winter, and further in a nut bush here and there remained out of a thicket which had been cut down. In and out amongst the rough hazel stubs thousands of snowdrops pushed their way in the early spring, keeping time with the catkins swinging overhead. In March, to take the place of the snowdrops came a crowd of lent-lilies, and later on fritillaries, chequered and white, were quite at home in the damp soil, which was often enough flooded. At one time of year, in a bend of the bank, and almost in the brook itself, a stretch of marsh marigold shone, like burnished gold, in the sunlight. At another it was a colony of blue-eyed water forget-me-nots, or clusters of pale yellow globe-flowers or scented meadow-sweet, or the sword leaves and yellow flowers of iris, that caught the eye. All was simple as well could be; its charm lay in the congruity of the planting. No exotic element disturbed the sense of fitness, for nothing was there but the native plants which might seem to have come at their own sweet will. It was not quite the spot for water lilies—the flower without a peer for a water garden—though a pool might easily have been devised; but to my mind it was better as it was. The capabilities, however, of such a spot are great; but—it must happen to border on your garden.

It is not given to everyone to have the opportunity of a quiet reach on a river, or a peaceful lake-head of just the right depth and aspect for water lilies; but a pond of some sort is a very constant accompaniment of the garden of a country house. It may chance to be of the clear, bright kind that will accommodate water lilies to perfection, and then by all means they should be grown; but any and every pond will not serve. Pond water is too often apt to be green, full of stringy weed, and stagnant, and to require raking out more frequently than is at all convenient; or overhanging boughs may throw too deep a shade for the sun-loving lilies. The depth for strong growing sorts, like *M. Latour-Marliac's*, should be from two to three feet.

In gardening matters it is impossible to lay down unalterable laws, for some of the best blue and pink as well as white water lilies I have seen were growing in quarters grimy enough—the waste water tank of a Staffordshire colliery—as unlikely a place as could well be tried for flowers so pure and lovely. The element of success in that instance was found in the constant inflow of the warm water pumped up by the colliery engine.

In some large gardens, as at Wisley, water channels, in the shape of canals or pools, may be adapted or even artificially constructed, through which a current of fresh water is continually passing, but without causing any great surface agitation. Here admirable positions may be found for the broad lily pads and flowers to make beautiful pictures, as, in exquisite tints of sulphur or rose

A WATER-LILY POOL.

or pearl within their bronzed cups, they float on the dimpling surface. In the shallower water near the banks the blue American pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*) may find a place, and some of the fine single and double forms of arrow-head (*Sagittaria*), with which the rare British villarsia with small floating water-lily-like leaves and fringed yellow flowers slightly raised above them might be associated. On the banks of ornamental waters such as these many foreign plants are in good keeping; massive leafage like that of *gunnera* and the umbrella saxifrage, in contrast with the beautiful water irises of Japan (*I. lævigata*), and in some favoured positions bamboos, will give just the characteristic water-side touch. Here, too, rhododendrons and azaleas may come down almost to the water's edge, and fine effects may be made with osmunda and other large-growing ferns.

It is much more difficult to deal picturesquely with the purely artificial tank basin, for it may easily be pretentious and out of taste. In an old garden, with high walls of time-worn red brick, mellowed by the sunshine and storms of a hundred seasons and clothed with climbing roses and magnolia, one may come upon a large oblong brick tank entirely in keeping with its surroundings and perfect in its simplicity. There are green cushions of mosses and little creeping plants in the chinks of the weathered brickwork, and tall tufts of lady fern and fountains of hart's tongue have grown up around it to break the straight lines of the masonry. On all four sides steps go down to the dipping places, and there one may

stand to enjoy the water lilies lying calm and peaceful on the clear mirror of the water in all their ideal loveliness. Translate the whole picture into new red brick, and where would be the unspeakable charm? Still worse would be the effect of stucco to cover up the crude flare of the bricks, and yet how often such makeshifts are allowed! Personally, it seems to me that the ideal place for water lilies, and more especially for the new many-coloured varieties, would be in what someone calls a stone garden, *i.e.* a flagged court on a grand scale. Here there would be scope for considerable architectural design, and the rich pictorial forms of lily leaf and flower would be in perfect accord with their setting. But this is true garden luxury, and most of us have to be content with simpler things. The simpler the better in the matter of small tanks for small gardens. No one can find fault with one of square or oblong shape, or a plain circle if it be preferred; though I confess myself to a greater liking for the lines of the "four-square," with a plain flat kerb, or one that is only slightly raised above the level of the water. Trefoils or quadrifoils or other devices of the kind it seems, in most cases, best to avoid, for nothing is wanted to call attention from the lilies in a plain basin made solely in their behalf. These details, however, are necessarily matters for the exercise of individual taste.

The last resource of the gardener who would fain grow some, at least, of the many beautiful water plants, must not be left out—the barrel sawn in half. Modest as it sounds, a good deal of con-

trivance is required to keep even this primitive water garden well supplied; for water must be laid on, probably, in some artificial way. Granted that a simple reservoir can be constructed out of sight—it need be no more than a big butt, though filled from an unfailing source—a series of tubs sunk at different levels may be arranged to afford endless pleasure. Two inches or so of gravel at the bottom of each tub, which should be then half-filled with fibrous loam roughly pulled to pieces mixed with a portion of the well-seasoned remains of an old hot-bed and covered with water, will complete the preparations. In a few days, when all is well settled, the planting may be done, after which more water can be gently added to within a few inches of the brim. The idea is fully worked out in a delightful book on water gardens by Miss Jekyll, which should be in the hands of everyone who has water-garden ambition. The larger water lilies are, of course, too robust in growth for the close quarters of a tub, but there are plenty of suitable plants. Amongst them may be classed the tiny white *Nymphæa pygmæa* and its pale yellow variety, *N. Helvola*, one of M. Latour-Marliac's hybrids, the Cape water hawthorn (*Aponogeton*), so named from its sweet scent, the pickerel weed before mentioned, besides several of our British water plants, like the fringed buck bean, the water violet, the pink flowering rush and villarsia, which are so little known that few would guess them to be native plants, though they may soon cease to be so, for they are becoming scarcer with every year that passes.

Though the subject can be but inadequately touched upon here, what has been said may serve to show in how many and what varied ways English gardening has developed within comparatively recent years.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROCK GARDEN

CLINKERS, in the words of an old dictionary of 1730 or thereabouts, "are those bricks that, by having much nitre or saltpetre in them, (and lying next the fire in the clamp or kiln) by the violence of the fire run and are glazed over." How often, in the days of long ago, were these same clinkers employed, and even recommended, for the construction of rockeries, on the principle, perhaps, that there is a use for all things under the sun. Far be it from me to hint that clinkers are without a value of their own. As an aid to drainage, for example, they serve admirably, where they are out of sight; but they are taboo for the purpose of the simplest rockery, dear as they may be, even yet, to the heart of the suburban builder. Probably the early recollections of many a would-be gardener, besides the present writer, include a childish attempt, with the help of stone crops and London pride, to make a thing of beauty out of these unsightly lumps of refuse from some convenient brickfield. But, after all, we need scoff as little at such poor beginnings as at the early attempts at fine art left by prehistoric bushmen on the cliff walls of some ancient fastness of a South African

kloof. Who can foretell what fertile germ of inspiration may lie hid within such first essays? It is certain that the elemental idea of the rockery has fulfilled itself in a wonderful way in the modern rock garden.

As far as memory serves, we need not search far behind the clinker age for the earliest beginnings of the rock garden; for it is more or less the outcome of modern travel. It is true that Alpine plants were not altogether an unknown quantity to early British botanists, but they were not much meddled with by the gardeners of old time. A few saxifrages, under the folk-name of sengreene, are figured in the *Paradisus Terrestris*, with some Alpine primulas or beares-eares, another old English name which lingers still in the west country for the auricula. *Ramondia* is also classed by Parkinson, though under protest, amongst the primulas as the blew beares-eares with borage leaves; and of *soldanella* he says, "This groweth on the Alpes which are covered with snow the greatest part of the yeare, and will hardly abide transplanting." But among all the minute directions for his garden of pleasant flowers, there is no mention of rock-work as a mode of growing mountainous plants, though "a rocke or mount with a fountaine in the midst thereof" may be a part of the garden's delight, "according as every man's conceit alloweth of it and they will be at the charge."

The greatest impetus to real progress in this phase of English gardening was presumably given by Mr Robinson when the earliest edition of the

"Alpine Garden" was brought out. From that moment the cult of the diminutive gems of mountain herbage was established, and we have been trying ever since, with varying measure of success, to bring the spoils of the high Alps to the level of the plains. In one famous garden, now a good many years ago, there were in fact miniature mountains where the lower rocks and their vegetation gradually merged into snow-capped summits, simulated by the silvery growth of *antennaria* and other minute hoary-leaved plants. But without aspiring to emulate Nature in these her grandest moods, we may venture to observe and follow her methods, and to adapt where we cannot imitate.

One reason why rock-work of any kind appeals to us so strongly is not only that it affords vantage ground for the smaller and more delicate plants, many of which are supremely beautiful, but also because it brings them closer to the eye where their perfections can be enjoyed with comfort. Strictly speaking, the rock garden is associated only with the cultivation of mountain plants. In common speech, however, the word "Alpine" is most frequently used, except by the expert, to mean any plant of moderate growth which is more suited by height and habit to a raised position than for the level border; and this definition may fairly stand in relation to the ordinary English garden. Few people except the most ardent enthusiasts, like Mr Farrer, the owner of that delightful Yorkshire Alpinerie of which he gives so charming a history in "My Rock Garden," could undertake or indeed find any inspiration in the minute and

dazzling, but provokingly capricious, denizens of the highest rocks and moraines. Fortunately there are hosts of other plants of less difficulty which may be beloved of ordinary folk, with fair hope of success.

My own lines, years ago, were laid on dry chalk hills where flints were plentiful—the last kind of stone, perhaps, which would suggest itself for rock-work of any sort. For flints have a certain smooth aggressive baldness that is provokingly obtrusive and difficult to veil. Yet in the clear air of those bleak uplands, and in an unpretending little Alpine garden, consisting partly of narrow stony borders on the level and bounded by a very primitive rock-work built up of those unpromising flints, many beautiful low-growing plants, some of them genuine mountaineers, were quite content and even happy. The vigorous blue flower spikes of the Carinthian *Wulfenia*, at a time when its dislikes were less understood than now, used to excite the admiration and envy of less fortunate neighbours; and ah! how the lovely Rocky Mountain *Aquilegias*, and the Siberian *A. glandulosa*, used to thrive in that little garden, for it was possible then to obtain good seed and pure of the unmixed species of columbine, which can hardly be said now; while Himalayan primulas grew fat and flourishing in one of the shadier borders. The soil was naturally full of lime, which suited the lime-lovers like the encrusted saxifrages. The drainage in a chalk district is always perfect as far as stagnant moisture is concerned. The flints held all humidity without absorbing it, and

many a dainty little Alpine flourished in that garden which I have not since found it, in more favoured places and at lower altitudes, so easy to cultivate.

Before starting on the subject of the different types of rock garden, let me give a word of warning against "rooteries," which are only a shade less objectionable than clinkereries. A certain picturesqueness is the only advantage that can be conceded to root-work, except that of cheapness; while the continual annoyances arising from the harbourage given, by decaying wood, to destructive fungi and noxious animals, to say nothing of prospective collapse of the whole structure, are too formidable to face for a temporary convenience.

The simplest form, perhaps, of rock-work is the rock bed, where big boulders or blocks of stone of various shapes and sizes are so sunk as to appear to crop up naturally from the surface. Such a rock bed may be either on the flat or on the slope, but, in any case, the ground must be dug out to a depth of at least two feet, to make a solid foundation upon which the stones can rest without fear of being undermined by frost or superabundant rain. Into this hollow suitable soil must be thoroughly well packed after the stones are carefully placed. These arranged at irregular heights and in groups as much as possible according to nature, should give the effect of a bit of rock-strewn moor or hillside adapted to a garden. Such a rock bed with suitable planting of low-growing shrubs, like the prostrate savin (*Juniper*) or some of the dwarfer brooms, cistus or heaths on the

higher parts, and spreading drifts of aubrietias, mossy phloxes, or other creeping plants towards the edge, with here and there, to make a few suggestions, groups of taller growth—some of the hybrid columbines or anemones, perhaps, or the fine sorts of pentstemon or scarlet lobelia—would be a source of continual pleasure, and might be varied indefinitely. A crowning of some of the higher points with one or other of the yuccas—the dwarfer *Y. flaccida* seems to flower every season without fail—would in some positions of the kind be very effective. In a dry soil some of the hardy opuntias would thrive and be very distinctive.

Another simple form of rockery is the hillock or mound, which may be large or small according to the space at disposal. The height above the ground line may, in this case, rise to about four feet, while the sloping sides would allow of varied aspects, sunny and shady, to suit plants of different character. Experts insist, for this type of rockwork, on the importance of forming in the first instance a strong and stable skeleton of stonework, the blocks or slabs resting firmly each upon each, but with as many angles and spaces and pockets as possible. This done, the prepared loam, peat, and leaf mould, well amalgamated and intermixed with chips and nodules of stone, which constitutes a likely compost for most Alpines, must be filled in with the utmost care. Loose packing, with the ultimate result of settlement of soil and dangerous hollows, is fatal to the well-doing of delicate plants. Externally the stones should jut out irregularly,

to form little shelters or caves and chinks into which plants will cuddle themselves according to their nature in the most bewitching way. In early days a rockery of the hillock form was sometimes parcelled out, regardless of appearance, into little square pens surrounded by slabs of half-sunk stone. It answered admirably—for the Alpines. They settled themselves snugly into their separate compartments, and hugely enjoyed the protection of the sheets of glass with which it was quite easy to shield them from the fatal damp of our English winter when it arrived. But the effect! It suggested nothing so much as an overcrowded cemetery, and the mimic tombstones failed to carry conviction even to the least æsthetic of Alpine growers. The genus “gardener” may be roughly divided into lovers of plants and lovers of pictorial effect; and happy is he who can reconcile the opposing loves.

The sunk rock garden, with a broad pathway running through it, is a more ambitious structure, and is often built with facing blocks of sand or limestone according to natural stratification, with bays and hollows for the accommodation of plants of varied requirements. A rock garden somewhat of this character is well known to the frequenters of Kew.

Happy are they who in planning a rock garden can combine both rock and water. An open meadow with a tinkling brook running through it is as favourable a site as could well be desired, for it may be transformed, by efficient generalship and adequate material, into an ideal spot. Ideal, too,

for this practical reason among others, that only a few plants, comparatively, prefer the shade of trees, and for the class of which we are treating there is nothing more essential than free circulation of air with unimpeded light, as well as security from damp and drip. Whatever form, therefore, a rock garden may take, the site should be open and free from overhanging verdure. This general principle does not apply, of course, to a screen of trees at some little distance, to serve as a wind break.

A good rock garden, which presupposes its tons of limestone or granite, its army of excavators and builders, and its distinguished expert directing the placement of the whole, is a luxury of luxuries to the garden-lover; but between the humble rockery and the culminating grandeur of the perfect rock garden there lies every conceivable gradation, and one or other of these is at the command of most garden owners. Alas for poor mortals who never are but always to be blessed! The making of the rockery is but the beginning, not the crown of success. Almost every inexperienced amateur at the outset is apt to fall into one signal mistake. Full of fervour and impatient to see the bare skeleton clothed, he plants any and every delightful thing that appeals to his fancy or his judgment, without regard to that fateful idiosyncrasy of every plant called habit. In a year, or two at most, the rank growers have asserted themselves and taken sole possession, while the most cherished, and often the most costly, treasures of the collection are—no more. The evil, unluckily, does not end

A ROCK GARDEN.

with the first loss, for it cannot be remedied without drastic measures. The vigorous growers, in themselves, may be as desirable as could be wished—but it is a case of matter in the wrong place. Their roots have burrowed beneath the stones, coming up, it may be, on the other side and sending out offsets with the utmost persistence. And then—no amount of weeding, nothing, in fact, short of taking the whole structure to pieces, will suffice to turn out the enemy and restore the rockery to its pristine condition. This applies more particularly to the smaller forms of rock-work; but it is a danger to be guarded against in all cases. The late Rev. C. W. Wolley Dod, a past master in this phase of gardening, used to tell how, in the days of his lesser experience, heedless planting had obliged him to abandon more than one rockery to the encroachments of such aggressives, and to build others for the delicate gems of the mountain flora upon which his hopes were set. “Don’t be too anxious to see your rocks covered,” was his advice; and everyone who knows and aspires to the cultivation of true Alpines will be ready to endorse it. The principle holds good even with less exacting plants, for nothing is more exasperating than to find rampant growers coming up in the middle of some not over-robust favourite and hopelessly entangled with it. Beware, therefore, of introducing coarse growers into the rock garden, however beautiful and appropriate they may be for other positions—coarse, here, being an epithet not of reproach, but of relative interpretation.

Here let me plead the merits of seed-raising, not so much for the first furnishing as the keeping up of the rock garden; for Alpines, alas, are more or less shortlived. Many of us, too, are sorely tempted to annex for our own gardens some of the captivating campanulas and rock pinks, primulas and anemones, with which we meet on Swiss mountains, in Tyrol, or elsewhere; but even should we succeed in carefully extracting the long roots without detriment, the chances are against their reaching their destination alive, or, even so, that they will long survive the transfer. To collect seed is another matter; it will wait quite content until we can get home to sow it, and as it often happens that flowers are over, and seed is ripening, before most people can get away to the mountains, it is at least possible to secure many a precious pod and capsule. Some empty seed-pockets should form part of the equipment of every gardener-tourist. It is quite feasible, besides, to get seeds of the most desirable Alpine plants from the Jardin d'Acclimatation of Geneva. By rearing seedlings in our English climate there is more likelihood of their becoming inured to a new environment. I can speak from experience, having raised many, if not most, of the Alpines I have grown from seed, of the fascination of this plan, though it takes both time and patience. Of course, there are disappointments. Seed will not always germinate, even when most carefully harvested and sown as soon as ripe, which is a safe general rule to follow. There is, besides, many a slip between cup and lip. But with all the risks and chances

of seed-raising, it brings its own reward, and often a very rich reward.

Without attempting any of the baffling beauties of the high Alps, like Mr Farrer's blue moss (*Eritrichium nanum*), which it would be folly for anyone save a reckless optimist to take in hand without due knowledge, there are hundreds of hardy dwarf-growing shrubs and perennials from all parts of the world, not necessarily, though many of them are, mountain plants, which will both do better and look better when cultivated among stones than in the level border. Some of the brilliant small pinks, like *Dianthus alpinus*, are emphatically amongst these, as is shown by the comfortable way in which the little tufts when well placed will tuck themselves into crevices or bristle up against the face of the stones. Several of the small *Erodiums* and *Geraniums* are charming rock plants—not the tall *E. Manescavi*, which is disappointing at the best of times, nor the big purple *G. ibericum*, which is just the reverse and very lovely in its own position; but such as the tiny *E. Reichardi*, or the silvery *G. argenteum*. Most of us, too, who are garden-lovers have found out how easy it is to grow *Edelweiss*; and no Alpiner seems to be quite furnished without it. Granted that sentiment has more to do with its allurements than intrinsic beauty, the “flannelette fraud” has after all a distinguished fluffiness of its own which makes it attractive. A good many of the small spreading campanulas—the rock-loving primulas, like *P. viscosa*, the Alpine auricle, and the pretty mealy-leaved *P. marginata*—a vast number of

moosy and silvery-leaved saxifrages—the dainty little anemones of the woodland type, as well as some of the larger and finer species—are all at home in the English rock garden. *Ramondia*, too, the pretty rock mullein, which Parkinson quaintly calls the blew beares-eares with borage leaves, and its congeners, which want no sunshine, but nestle into the shadiest nooks among the stones, are not hard to accommodate. These are but a few; but besides the real Alpines there are interesting dwarf perennials which are worthy of a choicer place than the ordinary border. To name some amongst the many, there is the prophet flower (*Arnebia echiioides*), with its vanishing freckles; the honey-drop *Onosmas*; some of the *Mertensias*, including our dainty native oyster plant, which is ready enough to do without the salt sea breezes, and the gentian-blue *Polemonium confertum*, which may or may not take kindly to the quarters one can give it, or its much more easily contented cousin, the white-flowered *P. mel-litum*. All these we may know, but we never get tired of them. Some are easy, others hard to grow, but all are worth trying, for in gardening no one can foresee what special factor of soil or aspect in any particular plot of ground may make for the well-doing, or the undoing, of a plant. There is no need, however, to pin our faith always upon the old well-tried favourites for every day brings new discoveries. From China and Japan they come; from the little-explored mountains of Bosnia and Servia, or of Asia Minor; from far-off Canadian high-

lands; or who knows where? The keen lover of plants is never left without new worlds to conquer; and it is to the plant-lover chiefly that the rock garden in any of its forms especially appeals.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GARDEN OF A YEAR

THERE is an association so stablished and enduring with the very thought of a garden that a single year of tenancy seems to put an end to any idea of achievement or progress. We conclude that if there be a garden at all attached to our temporary home, we must content ourselves with making the best of what is, and leave the rest to the tender mercies of Fate. Most of us have to pass through an experience of the kind at least once in our lives, and it is just as well to make up our minds at once that it is needless to give way to this kind of despondency if we are only willing to take a little trouble. In annuals we have a whole series of the most effective flowering plants that can be desired, and the main thing that is wanted is the skill and experience that will enable us to grow and use them to the best advantage.

The day has long gone by when, on a fine spring morning, generally in April, it used to be the custom to sally forth with basket, trowel, and labels all prepared, and—annuals not having then attained to their present perfection—with a few neat little packets of *nemophila*, candytuft, mignonette, and possibly two sorts of sweet pea, one the pink

and white "painted lady" and the other the dark maroon and blue, which were sown thickly in clumps and rounds, as fancy dictated. Some of us can remember now the delight of seeing the little green cushions or rings of seedlings crowding round their labels, and the pride with which we surveyed the success, as we fondly believed, of our somewhat back-breaking efforts. Alas, our seed-sowing somehow usually ended with promise and never arrived at fulfilment; and we know why now, for since those days we have learned to do our gardening better.

Unfortunately, when a tenancy is necessarily short, it is not often left to us to choose the term of it with reference to gardening convenience; but, given a voice in the matter, from Michaelmas to Michaelmas would be as good a time as might be chosen. Of course, it is a little late in the season, and a month or six weeks earlier would be better in some respects; but it is the term, and at any rate some preparations can be set in hand at once, and the sooner the better.

The first thing to be done is to consider carefully the space in hand, and to form some definite scheme; for herein lies one main secret of success. It is not quite too late even by the end of September to gain some idea of the capabilities of the garden, what it contains and what it lacks; and we look at everything with a critical eye. There are beds on the lawn which will have to be garnished for the summer; there are borders, at present ill-supplied with occupants, which might easily be supplemented; a dilapidated archway cries

out for a prop, and with some quick-growing summer creeper might yet serve its turn for another season. An idea once gained for a colour scheme, the dreary feeling of depression passes away, and as we are in no mood to plant for our heirs, our hopes turn instinctively to annuals. There are two classes, hardy and half hardy, of annuals, and for the first of these autumn sowing, as a rule, is the best—a fact often proved by seeds falling, self-sown, as soon as they are ripe, where they quickly germinate, and far exceed in strength and fulness of flower those that are sown by hand in the following March or April. Of these Shirley poppies may be taken as a type. Others, again, though they come under the head of hardy annuals, cannot stand the winter in their early stages, and unless we have some means of giving them slight protection, these must wait till the spring. If the garden can boast of an empty greenhouse, however small, or a cucumber frame, the difficulties are infinitely lessened; for all then becomes plain sailing.

As there is no time to lose, the seeds to be sown out of doors must be the first consideration. Shirley poppies, the finest form of love-in-the-mist (*Nigella*), the various *eschsoltzias*, and blue cornflowers, are all desirable; and as none of these transplant very well, places should be settled upon and a very thin sprinkling of seed sown where they are wanted to flower. If they come up freely, they will even then have to be thinned out in the spring, to leave ample room for development—from six to twelve inches apart, according to the special

needs of each kind, being none too much. This is an axiom to be remembered in the case of almost every annual, for overcrowding is one most frequent source of failure in their cultivation. *Nemophila*, *Limnanthes Douglasii* *Erysimum* and others which flower in the early spring may also be sown in place, as they will be earlier than if they receive the check of being transplanted; but all these, with candytufts, can be sown in a nursery bed in autumn for planting out in March if, for any reason, it should be more convenient. In most cases annuals can hardly be treated too liberally as to richness of soil; but in seed beds for autumn sowing, the poorer and more gravelly the ground the better for the well-being of the seedlings during the winter, as they do not then become too soft and succulent to be able to resist frost. When seeds cannot have attention before Michaelmas, and where an unheated greenhouse is available, a good many things, like snapdragons, pot marigolds, the improved varieties of which are extremely fine, and even some of the good new strains of early flowering carnations and Japanese chrysanthemums, can be sown in boxes and pricked off before the winter; but a lamp in very severe weather might probably be necessary to keep out hard frost.

Who would have believed a few years ago that the large-flowered chrysanthemums could be grown from seed to flower within a year! It must be seed saved, however, from early flowering sorts, and of first-rate quality, to answer well. A great many of them will come single or only semi-double, which

makes them all the prettier for garden purposes. High cultivation has, alas, imparted a strain of delicacy to many of these hardy plants, even snapdragons, so that seedlings seem now to require more warmth and shelter in winter than their more robust and homely kindred used to do; but the less cosseting they get, the better. None of these, indeed, are of merely annual duration; but it is now a common practice, and a very convenient one, to treat them as though they were. There are even polyantha roses which, with no more pretention to being annuals than the last, are so precocious as to begin to bloom within three months from the date of sowing, and go on producing their apple-blossom clusters year after year.

If a gentle hot bed can be made up in readiness, a busy time will come in February, when all manner of delightful half-hardy plants can be brought on that will fill the garden with flowers in the summer. *Pentstemons*, *ricinus* for good foliage effect, *cosmos* of the early-flowering strain, the compact-growing varieties of verbena, the white and red-flowered tobaccos, and ten-week stocks, may be set down as representing a few of them. These again are not all annuals; but according to our modern methods they may be grown as such. In March another batch can be sown in boxes in a sheltered position out of doors—*salpiglossis*, the large-flowered scabious, *nasturtiums*, the charming salmon-pink *Clarkias*, *coreopsis*, mallows, lupines, and *nemesia*, which does better without artificial heat if it can be sufficiently protected from wind and weather. Sweet sultans,

which no garden should lack in summer, do not bear transplanting well, and should be sown in place.

The after-work of pricking out and eventually of planting in position entailed by the rearing of a great number of annuals or plants treated as annuals, is necessarily considerable; but there is no doubt that a garden lovely in flower and foliage and scent may be furnished entirely by this method.

No mention has been made of sweet peas, which perhaps now may be reckoned the most important of all, and they may be treated in several ways. An autumn sowing out of doors should always be made, for in the milder parts of the country at any rate, they will generally come safely through an ordinary winter with the help of a light covering of bracken. They may be sown in pots under glass, which gives them a good start for planting out in spring. Or they may be sown in the open ground in March in the usual way. By trying all these methods a succession can be kept up until the late autumn. It is better to grow them in distinct colours, and, on this head, the only complaint to be made is that there are too many sorts to choose from. Mignonette, again, can be very successfully raised in boxes, being afterwards carefully pricked out and finally transplanted in the bed it is intended to occupy. These are operations which must be carried out with some skill, as mignonette does not move easily; but neither does it come to its best when sown and left to chance in the open ground.

Certainly one surprise of modern gardening is the speed with which plants can be brought to the flowering stage. It used to be a long business, for instance, to work up a stock of bedding verbenas; and the continual process of propagating cuttings in strong heat ended at length in disaster, for this fine garden plant was in danger of being exterminated by exhaustion. M. M. Vilmorin, of Paris, and others took them in hand before it was too late, and now a sturdy race has been evolved of better habit than of old, and all we now have to do is to make sure of getting the finest of seed to obtain, under ordinarily good cultivation, the finest of plants. The same may be said of carnations. The Italian firm who first introduced Marguerite carnations laid all gardeners under great obligations. Now we have still stronger and better races which will flower in six months from the date of sowing, and are as fine in form and colour as many of the named varieties of former years. These and other plants, like pentstemons and the Japanese chrysanthemums beforementioned, not being solely of annual duration, we can either keep any exceptionally good sort, or increase it by cuttings; but it is a great boon, by giving them the treatment of annuals, to be able to enjoy them in the garden of a year. Yet it would be a pity if the perennial quality, by reason of too much insistence, were gradually to be eliminated—a contingency not altogether unprecedented in the history of evolution. The precocious abundance of flower naturally tends to diminish robustness of constitution; and it is not absolutely certain that

we do not already begin to detect this tendency in some of the so-called florist's flowers.

Colour, form, sweetness—how richly are all these given us to enjoy in the plants that fulfil the whole round of destiny in a season! This very wealth, however, strikes a note of warning. Taken by themselves as colours, the yellows are often too strong, the blues too metallic in their brilliancy, the reds crude and out of harmony with each other. How can we expect it to be otherwise with plants brought together from all points of the compass. The skill of the gardener consists as much in being able to choose out of this inexhaustible store the right materials for artistic grouping as in the cultivation of the plants themselves. We are gradually becoming more and more aware that a colour scheme is indispensable if we would attain to the most beautiful and pictorial effects. Tender shades of colour of the earlier summer months—the roses and pinks of Shirley poppies toning off to white, the pale blues of *Nigella* and *Nemophila*, the cream and citron of the less brilliant forms of nasturtium, the buff and pink and mauve of ten-week stocks—these do not clash. It is generally later in the year, when we get to the deeper tints of high summer and autumn, that the contrasts of strong harsh colours coming together into too close neighbourhood are apt, like some sharp acid, to set the teeth on edge. It is not that we undervalue rich and brilliant colouring; a garden without it would be sadly tame and wanting. Even the decried magenta—a name, for fashion's sake, tacked on, nowadays, to many a fine hue of crimson

—has a place and service of its own. But we must discriminate between the congruous and its obverse, and by far the safest plan to follow is the rather troublesome one of sketching on paper a scheme of colour-planting from which to work, instead of leaving the garden design to hap-hazard. An excellent effect can be made, for example, in a detached bed or border by using only flowers of shades of yellow deepening into brown, a combination to be found in some of the fine African and French marigolds. This precaution with regard to the mixing of colours is perhaps never more to be borne in mind than in dealing with annuals, where variety is so boundless and in which flowers predominate over leaves.

There are not many strictly annual plants that can be used with design as foliage. The annual Japanese hop should not be forgotten, for it is exceedingly elegant both in the green and variegated form, and might be used in many ways as an excellent background and foil for colour. *Cosmos*, or cosmea, as it is generally set down in the seed lists, is beautiful alike in feathery leaf and flower, and ought to be grown more than it is for the sake of greenery alone.

These are but a few of the possibilities of a garden entirely dependent for brightness and beauty on the plants of a year. If the fates decree that such a one happens, at any time, to be ours, let it be looked upon as an opportunity and inspiration rather than as a tribulation. If it is to be entrusted to a gardener, in the sense of a professional, keep watch lest a too great love of variety should warp

the sense of fitness. If it is to be the work of your own amateur hands, my advice would be—restrain your ardour and limit the extent of your labour by making a moderate selection of those that will harmonise best, and aim at broad effects rather than at dots and flecks of colour.

CHAPTER IX

SHRUBS AND SHRUBBERIES

A GREAT deal of the charm of our English landscape is due to the flowering trees and shrubs with which Nature has bountifully endowed us. The gorse and the broom gilding our commons and waste lands, the blackthorn prinked in white in lagging spring, the wild cherry and the pink-blossomed crab, the snow of hawthorn in early June, the brier rose and arching sprays of bramble, lovely in leaf and crimped flower and clustering fruit, are but a few of these that are dear to every British heart. No less do our affections cling to the common lilac—the blew pipe tree of other days—and laburnum, syringa and flowering currant, which, though not wild, are yet such old inhabitants of even cottage gardens that we have long forgotten, if ever we knew it, that once they were rare.

Most of the shrubs and flowering trees of earliest introduction were south European or Persian in their origin; but of more recent years northern India, China and Japan, America and greater Britain beyond the seas have sent us countless numbers equally fine, which are either quite hardy or are becoming gradually reconciled to the change of

SHRUBS AT WISLEY.

environment just as their forerunners have done in time past. Of ornamental shrubs now taking the lead in English gardens, rhododendrons, perhaps, may be set down as the most popular, while they are also of comparatively late arrival. The only species known in Parkinson's time apparently was the little *R. hirsutum*, the prettier of the two mountain species which are now familiarly and indiscriminately known as the Alpine rose. The common purple-flowered *R. ponticum* was introduced from Gibraltar about the middle of the eighteenth century, and the early *R. dauricum* and the yellow-flowered Siberian species, *R. chrysanthum*, towards its close; but the majority of the finer sorts have reached our shores within the last seventy-five years, and these have been multiplied to an enormous extent by hybridisation. It is a question, noble as they are as evergreen flowering shrubs, whether rhododendrons have not been too exclusively planted, taking into account the beauty and vast variety of other shrubs which are at command for every position and purpose. Azaleas, now botanically included in the genus rhododendron, have a totally distinct character, and are not planted, perhaps because most of them are deciduous, as much as the delicate shades of colour of their flowers and the scarlet of their fading leaves in the fall of the year entitle them to be. It is true that much may be urged in favour of flowering shrubs which are evergreen, since they not only add their share to the colour of spring and summer, but help as well to disguise the nakedness and to shield the garden from the blasts of winter.

We could ill spare the different kinds of evergreen *berberis* and *cotoneaster*, *laurustinus* and *pyracantha*, and others; but there is exquisite beauty as well, and not to be forgotten, in the tracery of bare branches—a beauty we are learning to estimate at its true value more and more in the winter landscape. What, for instance, is more graceful in Nature than the drooping spray of silver birch, whether it be set against the still background of a grey December sky or lightly sways, wind-tossed, in fitful March sunshine. Now, a shrubbery, from time out of mind, seems to have been coupled with evergreen shrubs, and more particularly with cherry laurel and privet, *aucuba*, *euonymus*, and the like, until the very name has become associated in our minds with a part of the garden that is dull and wanting in interest, and only to be resorted to for shelter on a day too rough for exercise farther afield. Many of these evergreen shrubs, besides, have been treated as bushes, and cut and pruned to keep them within due bounds, because the popular conception of a shrub is of a plant of low and branching growth which should reach a height of no more than six feet at utmost, whereas many shrubs so-called are by nature moderate-sized trees of some twenty to thirty feet high. The common cherry laurel is a case in point. It is true that for some positions a laurel hedge is as suitable as any, and lends itself with impunity to annual clipping; but the fine character of the cherry laurel is never realised until it is seen either singly or in a well-grown cluster of trees, with stout branching stems bearing aloft their

broad shining leaves, and laden in spring with upright spikes of creamy almond-scented flowers. The same remark applies to the Portugal laurel, which is finer still in general contour; and the growth of years will transform even rhododendrons, which may be called typical shrubs, into fair-sized trees.

So far from the shrubbery being uninteresting, it should, if well planned, be one of the most delightful parts of the pleasure grounds. Here is the place, so difficult to find elsewhere in a garden, where both evergreen and deciduous flowering trees, but neither class exclusively, can be used to the greatest advantage, not dotted in straight lines, but grouped at intervals, or planted singly, as the case may require, in relation to other trees and shrubs that are to bear them company.

There is little doubt that two factors have mainly contributed to make shrubberies as uninteresting as they too often are—first, poverty of choice in planting material, causing monotonous reiteration instead of infinite variety; secondly, overcrowding of the available space. At the root of all, however, lies lack of knowledge and intelligence on the part of the owner or designer. The usual plan when a shrubbery, extensive or otherwise, is in contemplation or in course of formation, is to write or send to a nurseryman, local if possible, giving approximate dimensions and an order, leaving the choice of shrubs entirely in the hands of the vendor, who is supposed to understand his business. So he does, probably; but no one can blame a dealer for using the opportunity thus put in his

way to get rid of as much of the well-grown but possibly quite inappropriate "stuff" which awaits such orders in his nursery grounds. Arrived on the scene of action, the next move is to fill in the appointed space thickly, in order that it may look "furnished" in the immediate present. No doubt the shrubs are put in with some idea of suitable juxtaposition; but can it be wondered at that in such a case the after-result is not what had been fondly anticipated?

How different the effect of even ten yards of shrubbery border well thought out! Such a bit of planting may be easily imagined. A group of hollies or Portugal laurel for background; perhaps for a sheltered spot a standard magnolia. To the right at a short interval, a little forward or a trifle farther back as the position may require, a Siberian crab, perhaps a medlar, or a quince. On the other hand a tamarisk, with a Judas-tree near by, or it might be a Yulan, or a double-flowering cherry. For dwarfer shrubs there might be chosen *Spiræa arguta*, with arching sprays of white in May, to be thrown into relief against the dark background; a clump of mezereon for earliest colour, while winter is scarce yet on the wane, followed later on by golden-flowered *berberis* or rosy *weigela*. If space is to be quickly filled, a tree lupin may be set to scent the summer air and light up the gloaming with its pale gleam of moonshine; a few paces beyond, the rose-tinted smoke of Venetian sumach for later effect. Interspersed between the shrubs, perhaps groups of orange or tiger lilies, which are easily satisfied, or the lovely

Madonna lily, if it will be kindly disposed. Towards the edge, low-growing things like the winter heath, always good, but never so precious as in the early year; the dainty *Daphne cneorum*, or spreading carpets of sun rose. So one might go on planning indefinitely, choosing trees for background, here flowering, there for leafage or autumn tints, but which would not cast too heavy a shade—not restricting the choice to shrubs alone if a clump of pæonies, or grand-leaved acanthus, or cluster of yuccas would lend additional charm; grouping, contrasting, planting everywhere, not so much for the effect of the moment as for time to come. How little we realise the seriousness of planting; the good, ay, and the mischief, involved in the right or wrong placing of a tree!

There is scarcely a month in the year in which some trees or shrubs may not be found at their best; so that by careful choice and thoughtful planting a shrubbery of any extent may always present features of attraction, with very little repetition along its whole length. January will generally find the witch hazels (*Hamamelis*) opening their twisted petals—shrubs which might pass unnoticed in summer, but delightful to come upon on a winter's day. Few of the winter-blooming shrubs are showy, but some are deliciously scented, like the modest Chinese honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*), evergreen in mild seasons, but flowering before the new leaves have developed. It is a pleasant quest, too, in the southern counties, on a January day, to look for the buff and brownish flowers of winter sweet (*Chimonanthus fragrans*),

a few of which picked off and placed in a shallow saucer will fill a room with fragrance. The cornelian cherry (*Cornus Mas*), which grows from ten to fifteen feet high, follows very soon with its bright little yellow clusters, which ripen later into fruit. Mezereon, when it has donned its mauve-purple garments, is charming planted in groups of six or eight well-grown bushes, and attracts the first-coming bees. The tassel bush (*Garrya eliptica*) is both evergreen and winter-flowering, and though it may not succeed in all parts of the country without the protection of a wall, is too attractive to pass over where there is a hope of its doing well. Some of the early rhododendrons are valuable, like the crimson *R. noble-anum*, the flowers of which will stand some frost without injury; and so are the smaller but free-flowering *R. dauricum* and *R. præcox*, though both are apt to be a little too venturesome, and suffer in consequence. Camellias, as is now well known, are hardier than the common cherry laurel, but require a little shelter to preserve their flowers. For all such early-flowering shrubs it is not difficult, by careful planting in a large shrubbery, to contrive sheltered bays where they would have a reasonable chance of protection from cold winds, more harmful than even frost, and which by breaking in upon the even tenour of its length would add greatly to its delights.

Japanese quinces (*Cydonia*) may be in flower any time between Christmas and May; but March should usher in the almond, after which comes a long procession of fruit blossom, double and single

—cherry, peach, and plum in endless variety—Siberian crabs, beautiful in flower and, later in autumn, fruit, the Japanese *P. malus floribunda*, and the Canadian June berry. Throughout the spring there is no lack of colour. *Spiræas*, *berberis* of many sorts, especially *B. Darwinii* and the fine hybrid *B. stenophylla*, *Ceanothus*, *Forsythia suspensa*, *Choisya ternata*, and a host of others, with laburnum, lilac, and hawthorns, scarlet and pink as well as white, bring us to the end of June. With July comes somewhat of a pause; but gum cistus, and other shrubby species of *cistus*, with good use of the dwarf sun roses (*Helianthemum*) still help to give colour and brightness, and with a “happy marriage” here and there of rambling roses with some of the more slender-growing trees at the back, the shrubbery may be as charming as at any time.

In August the dwarf North American buck-eye (*Æsculus parviflora*) is in great beauty, and some yuccas should be in flower, and feathery tamarisk, growing from six to twelve feet high, strikes a distinct note. Hydrangeas then take up the running, and are especially valuable because they do not object to overhead shade if not too dense, and (with hardy fuchsias, like *F. Riccartoni* and *Mme. Cornellisen*) will add greatly to the charms of the shrubbery in September and October, particularly in those localities where they can be induced to bear blue flowers. The pretty dwarf *Caryopteris Mastacanthus*, with lavender flowers, also fits well into an autumn scheme. Many of the shrubs which have flowered in the spring give besides

an aftermath of rich autumn tints. Beware, however, of the gorgeous but wicked poison oak (*Rhus toxicodendron*), a venomous Californian under-shrub, which has avenged itself many a time on the unwary fingers that have handled it, perhaps for the innocent purpose of harvest thanksgiving decoration. In spite of fair colours it is a deadly danger, and safer never to be admitted into any garden.

Some of the most beautiful of flowering shrubs belong to the heaths, from the tall white Mediterranean heath to the lowly winter-flowering *Erica carnea*. For these the soil would have to be more or less of sandy peat, which could be managed easily enough in such an occasional sheltered bay as has been already suggested. *Zenobia pulverulenta*, for instance, belonging to this alliance, fine though it be, is seldom met with. It is sometimes called the lily of the valley tree, from its lovely sprays of large white bells. *Andromedas*, again, and *Gaultherias*, all of which have the urn-shaped flowers of *Arbutus*, are also most desirable both in flower and foliage, and when once established take good care of themselves. *Gaultheria Shallon* may be singled out as one of the most charming amongst the better known of these heath allies, with its sprays of white waxy bells on red stems which last for weeks in perfection and are followed by purple berries if only the birds will let them ripen. The vivid green of the young shoots is in striking contrast to the deep tone of the last season's growth.

These are but a few of the fine trees of moderate

size and flowering shrubs that might be named; and though all have some special want of soil or climate or aspect, yet after all a very small amount of care will content most of them, and even this short list will suffice to show how needless it is in these days to have shrubberies dotted over with a repetition of common evergreens interspersed with an occasional *thuya* or "*retinospera*" to give some semblance of variety to the monotony of the planting which may be seen in nine gardens out of ten.

CHAPTER X

THE BULB GARDEN

IN that little world of miracles which we call a garden there is nothing more wonderful, except, perhaps, some tiny seed, than a bulb or tuber at rest. As we hold in our hand a hyacinth bulb, let us say, or a tuber of some fine scarlet anemone, a feeling of reverence, of mystery, steals into our thoughts, for we know that within that dry, useless-looking thing there lies hidden potential life and beauty of form and colour beyond all that fancy could have painted if the fact were not placed beyond doubt by common experience year by year.

To plants belonging to the great natural division to which bulbs belong we owe much of those shifting changes and colours which redeem the garden from monotony and seem to robe it in ethereal textures not of this earth.

Bulbs, indeed, are at once the delight and pride of the gardener's heart—and his despair. Foremost comes the joy. How we love the tufts of early snowdrops, the gold and purple masses of crocus in March, the paler citron of nodding daffodils, the scarlet and crimson of lordly tulips! How we feast on the exquisite grace of lilies during the brief season of their stay! But, when the colour

and freshness have faded, the troubles begin; and it is on account of these after-troubles that we are driven to say that bulbs, though they may be the cynosure of our eyes at one season, are, at another, a serious perplexity. The fading green, which takes such an inconvenient length of time to get itself decently out of the way, is the first difficulty. All would be well were it only permissible to cut off all that offends; but if this be done—a truth which everyone does not recognise—all hope of flowers for next year is at an end. Leaves and stems must, perforce, be left in all their dishevelment until the right moment comes for their removal; and the practice of plaiting the dying foliage of crocuses, for example, is but a lame device, a remedy worse than the disease. Unfortunately when all untidiness has at last disappeared, and the bulbs are safely tucked away for their long sleep, another trouble takes its place. Yawning gaps are marked with unsightly labels; or, if the label be forsworn, the exact spot is sure to be forgotten, and the continual pricking over of the surface which, in light soils especially, is so essential in retaining necessary moisture in the ground, disturbs and injures them, or some disaster occurs which leads us to rue the day when we suffered ourselves to plant bulbs in a mixed border. It is not, therefore, without deliberate thought that the bulb garden is taken as a heading for an essay on a somewhat intricate subject.

It is much easier, on occasion, to garden on paper than in real practice! A thousand contingencies come in the way and prevent gardeners, and espe-

cially amateur gardeners, from doing as they would. All that theory can do is to work out ideal plans for those who have not the leisure to do it for themselves, which may at least suggest schemes that can be modified to suit individual cases and views. A bulb garden, according to circumstances, may or may not be the reality, as well as the dream, of perfection. I know of a bed in a small cottage forecourt which through the springtime of year after year is a medley of snowdrops, crocuses, and squills, followed by chequered fritillaries and tulips. This bed remains, apparently untouched, except for a little surface dressing in the autumn; but every summer, when the bulbs go out of flower, pink annual larkspurs and love-in-the-mist, probably self-sown, take their place, and though, as we know, effects depend much upon environment, the result in that particular spot is dainty and charming, and could scarcely be bettered. On the other hand, it is not uncommon, more particularly in the garden of a specialist, to see a border which was full of interest in early spring looking for the rest of the year like a blot upon a fair page. The solution for that kind of difficulty, which is not always to be avoided, is to choose a less prominent position for the indulgence of that peculiar hobby.

It may be taken as an axiom that it is a very hard matter indeed to keep a bulb garden always in evidence and at presentable pitch, without help from other plants of a different character. Thus we find ourselves on the horns of a dilemma.

There are two ways in which these troubles may

be met, and in some degree lessened. 1. Many bulbs, when their leaves are turning yellow and the maturing process is well on its way, will bear careful moving, if lifted with a good ball of soil, to a reserve bed in the kitchen garden, where neither conspicuous labels nor bare earth will be out of place during the resting season; and this may be done not only without serious detriment, but with some advantage. For in such quarters, in an open sunny exposure, they will have a better chance of ripening well than if they were overshadowed by the summer occupants of the original position. This plan naturally involves some additional labour.

2. Where a bed or border is devoted entirely to bulbs as permanent tenants, sufficient room may be allowed between the different clumps either for annuals to be planted amongst them or for pot plants, like standard fuchsias or heliotropes, or any others that may be available, to be plunged in the vacant spaces without throwing too deep a shade over the bulbs.

It will be evident that these remarks apply more particularly to the bulbs which flower in spring, the season of all others when there are the greatest number and variety. Many of these, like *scillas*, *chionodoxas*, and some of the best of the grape hyacinths (*muscaris*), are dwarf and insignificant enough if planted singly, but give a vivid splash of colour when massed in quantity—another reason why bulbs of this kind are difficult to accommodate in the mixed border without a good deal of space and arrangement. Thus they can often be more

conveniently used in the wider area of the wild garden. This has led to snowdrops and snowflakes, or breadths of crocus, in drifts of one colour, being sometimes planted in orchards, where they take care of themselves, spreading and increasing at will and never giving more pleasure than when they take us by surprise in such semi-wild encompassment. Here, too, daffodils of the more vigorous types are quite happy. Tulips, on the contrary, are more at home on tilled land than in the grass, as they may be seen, growing wild, in the ploughed Italian oliveyards; while the bulbous irises, of the sort to which the beautiful early-flowering *I. reticulata* and its congeners belong, are too delicate to trust beyond the limits of garden borders.

Early summer ushers in a number of bulbs of very distinct character which can be planted in smaller groups, and are more suitable on this and other accounts for the ordinary border—the grey-blue North American *camassias*, the pure white St Bruno's lily of Alpine meadows, the first early gladioli of the *ramosus* and *Colvillei* breeds, which are worthy of more patronage than they receive, with many different species of iris. These last are all grouped together, in common speech, under the head of bulbs, though a large proportion of them, like the German flags, have creeping rootstocks of quite another description, and require a treatment of their own. Amongst the summer flowerers, the Spanish (*I. xiphium*) and English (*I. xiphioides*) irises, both of them bulbous rooted, are so easily grown and so decorative as to

be indispensable. Irises, in fact, of one sort or another, almost encircle the year, beginning with the Algerian *I. stylosa*, one of the most precious of open-air mid-winter flowers, followed by the delicate tints of the early Persian, the rich purple of the netted iris, and all the beautiful newer forms introduced of late years from the mountains of Asia Minor. In April come the dwarf flags, delightful for edging where broad effects are desirable. These are quickly succeeded by the German irises—the “poor man’s orchid”—in all their variety of pencilled blue and purple and golden-bronze. A host of species, not easy to class, fill in the time until the fine Japanese *I. lævigata*, which may be seen in such perfection by the water side in the wild garden at Wisley, brings the long list well into the autumn. Last of all, the wild “gladden,” often transplanted from the hedge bank into the garden, bursts its large pods and lights up some flowerless corner with its scarlet seeds.

Leaving out the red-hot poker (*Kniphofia*), some of which are very fine, and belong to the lilies though their roots are not bulbous, hybrid gladioli are the mainstay in the way of bulbs in the autumn garden. Of these there are several distinct strains, all beautiful of their kind, the oldest being the familiar *G. gandavensis*, taken in hand first by growers in Ghent, as the name implies, but since brought to great perfection by the English firm of Kelway of Langport. Next in order comes the French breed of *G. nanceianus*, which is owing to the good work of M. Lemoine of Nancy; and lastly, the magnificent race inaugurated by that

prince of gardeners, Herr Max Leichtlin, of Baden-Baden, which is best known by the name, of American origin, of *G. Childsi*. Thousands of varieties of these distinct types have been raised from seed carefully fertilised. Some are of moderate price, others would tax a long purse; but gladioli are not very hard to grow. They prefer a stiffish soil, such a staple as best suits roses and strawberries; and the corms, the term used for solid bulbs, increase fast by offsets, which are freely produced, so that no one need despair, with a little patience, of working up a good stock from a modest beginning.

I can remember well, when the early white variety of *G. Colvillei* "Bride" was still almost a novelty, buying a potful from a famous old nurseryman of his day, Wheeler of Warminster, which multiplied without any trouble in the open ground, by annual division, to many hundreds in the course of a few years. In dry soils the early gladioli succeed perfectly if thus left in the ground, but the autumn-flowering varieties do better when lifted as soon as the foliage turns yellow and stored away in a dry, warm place through the winter. The old *G. brenchleyensis*, however, seems sturdy enough, generally, to take care of itself.

There are two or three late summer and autumn-flowering bulbs which should not be overlooked. The drooping white bells of the Cape hyacinth (*Galtonia candicans*), on stems from two to three feet high, are very pretty when planted in good-sized groups, and it is one of the few bulbs which can be easily and quickly raised from seed—flower-

ing in eighteen months from the time of sowing, and afterwards giving little trouble. The gorgeous though fleeting flowers of *Tigridia pavonia* would be sorely missed from the autumn garden by anyone who is accustomed to find them there. They are not reputed hardy in all climates; but it has been found in several distinct localities in the southern counties that a few handfuls of ashes will keep the bulbs safe from frost in the open ground. The white variety with crimson spotted centre is a welcome addition to the scarlet tiger flower—blossoms only of a day, yet each morning greets the opening of new and fresh ones as long as their season lasts. *Tricyrtis hirta*, which has been given, not very appropriately, the name of the Japanese toad lily, is another charming little late-flowering plant not often met with. Its pale lilac-freckled blossoms are very suggestive of an orchid, for which it is often mistaken when grown in pots. This also has been found quite hardy on dry soils, and is so distinct and pretty as to be worthy of a position near the eye in a choice nook of the rock garden—a portion of which may sometimes be devoted to bulbs; but it flowers too late to succeed in localities where early frosts have to be reckoned with.

Lilies, the crown and glory of the bulb garden, have been left until the last. The subject is wide; books might be and have been written to illustrate their loveliness. As a rule they are native to the more temperate regions of the globe; therefore many of them are well suited for cultivation in England, and such familiar species as the white

Madonna lily, the saffron lily, and various kinds of martagon, have been inhabitants of English gardens for hundreds of years. Not long ago the saffron lily (*L. croceum*) was branded as a vulgar flower. It is doubtful whether the word is applicable to any flower; but this lily is certainly hardy and vigorous, and holds up its orange cups with dauntless mien, asking little but to be placed where its strong tone will not clash with some incongruous colour, and to be left alone. Even if vulgar be used as a synonym for "common," the epithet will hardly hold good, for the old-fashioned orange or saffron lily has almost ceased to be common, and its splendid colour would enliven many a shrubbery border with advantage.

White lilies, alack, do not thrive everywhere, and sometimes despise the best efforts of good gardeners, but may often be seen doing well against a cottage wall where they get a little shelter from overhanging eaves. Protection from cold winds and a soil that is moderately dry and not too rich or stiff is prescribed by some lily connoisseurs, yet they must not be starved; and so great an authority as the late Mr G. F. Wilson gave it as his opinion that where difficulties occur with these beautiful old-time lilies they may often be "conquered by kindness." In all cases this particular lily is worth any trouble to establish in gardens grand or gardens simple.

One of the most satisfactory of the better-known sorts, from all points of view, is the tiger lily, which gives no anxiety whatever, for it seems to thrive everywhere, and is easily multiplied by the

bulbils produced so freely in the axils of the leaves. The rich apricot tint of its spotted flowers is scarcely to be matched in any other flower; and its late blooming—from August to October—makes it doubly welcome. Martagons, on the whole, are the least esteemed among lilies; but the choicest of all the group is the white martagon. It prefers a position that is partially shaded—a characteristic of most lilies—and the tall spikes of pure white turkscap flowers are peculiarly lovely in the summer twilight, and it might be counted one of the rare gems of any garden.

L. elegans and its varieties constitute another distinct group of lilies of very dwarf habit and remarkably brilliant colouring, which ranges from pale yellow to rich crimson mahogany. This type of lily is useful for planting towards the forefront amongst shrubs, especially where the soil is of light peaty nature, and is very hardy and free-flowering.

Japan lilies, by which are usually meant the different varieties of *L. auratum* and *L. speciosum*, are well suited to the same kind of position amongst rhododendrons, but must be allowed plenty of room, as they are tall and spreading when in flower. Both species are magnificent when they become thoroughly established, and where the conditions are suitable. In many gardens they are short-lived, and have to be frequently renewed, but thousands are sent over yearly from Japan, and they can now be obtained at comparatively small cost, which makes replacement an easier matter than it used to be. The strong vanilla-like scent

of the golden lily, so overpowering in conservatories or rooms, adds to its charms as an open-air plant. *L. speciosum*, as well as *L. longiflorum*, is more often seen in pots than planted out of doors, but they are worthy of being tried in all ways and in some localities succeed extremely well in this way.

As long as lilies appear to be thriving, they had better be left undisturbed with nothing further than an annual mulching of what Sussex cottagers call good "mending." If it be necessary at any time to remove them, it must be done after flowering is over and leaves and stems are sere and yellow, but not absolutely dead and dry—a little too soon is better than too late—and replanting should be immediate. Root action in lilies has scarcely any cessation. As soon as the year's functions are accomplished, the work of the next season begins, and any interference after new growth has started is fraught with mischief. This is doubtless one reason why newly imported bulbs do not always succeed well the first year after planting. Fading stems must never be cut away as long as they show any sign of vigour.

Attention has lately been called to the importance of depending more upon home culture of lilies than has hitherto been done. The Japanese do not cultivate them for export. They get their supplies from wild bulbs growing in countless thousands in their native haunts. Thus, like the world's timber supply, which has been so recklessly drawn upon, the end must come, and that at no very far-off time, unless such ravages are repaired, in

each case, by new plantations. The bulbs of most lilies consist of scales, and these scales if they should be injured and drop off during planting, for they are very brittle, ought to be carefully gathered up, especially in the case of rare sorts, and laid upon sand, for they give an easy method of increase by soon forming small bulbils, which should be planted in boxes and grown on until they are large enough to be trusted in an outdoor nursery bed. In the same way they might be increased on a larger scale, though it would take time and probably home-grown bulbs would gain in strength and hardier constitution by acclimation. These are but a few of the beautiful lilies that might be named, but they are either still scarce, or require special modes of treatment, and therefore can hardly yet be reckoned amongst popular plants. As to the great tribe of bulbous plants, counting lilies and narcissus and iris, which for us make up its chief divisions, how would our gardens fare if instead of being, for the most part, denizens of the temperate zone, they had peopled the tropics and refused to be happy out of doors in our variable English climate?

CHAPTER XI

THE BOG GARDEN

ANOTHER outcome of the revolt against the formal gardening of the past is to be found in the interest now taken in the cultivation of marsh plants.

In all thinly peopled countries there are vast tracts of wet, water-logged land, absolutely useless in their normal condition, and even hostile to human life; where, nevertheless, many of the most singular and characteristic types of the world's flora find a congenial home. In England and Ireland they have been called bogs; in Scotland hags or mosses; in the New World swamps; on the South African continent *vleis*; but everywhere, be it bog, swamp, or vlei, it is at one season or another a garden of flowers.

Very seldom now, in our own land, can we get away from civilisation into the heart of solitude, except, it may be, in hidden recesses of Dartmoor or, northwards, in some forgotten or inaccessible corner where plough and drain pipes have not yet been or cannot be set to work; and we dare not grudge the high farming which has turned ague-stricken marsh or reeking quagmire into wholesome arable land. Yet it is delightful, on occasion, to find oneself in some lone, wild spot, far out of

ken of the busy hum of life, where beaded sundew gleams, red and glistening on a soft carpet of sphagnum moss and little trails of bog pimpernel or ivy-leaved bell flower wander in and out amongst it. Places where hoary St John's wort and pale, translucent rosettes of butter wort send up their violet flowers and spread as they list along the edge of the brown trickling water which marks out a shining network of runnels for itself through the sopping peat, and where, not without a lurking fear of untoward consequences as we step across the quaking surface of the bog, we stoop to gather the downy pink clusters of cross-leaved heath and orange spikes of asphodel, or, it may be, of the pale blue marsh gentian. It is well, while we may, to try to find all these in their own wild haunts, for soon their place will know them no more in any part of the countryside. And it is meet, besides, that the knowledge of them should be kept alive in our gardens, and not alone between the dry boards of herbarium cases.

But how?

Well, from the inherent character of things we may guess that the bog garden, to succeed, must be modelled after Nature's own pattern; it cannot be ordered according to any stiff lines of rule and compass; but anyone who has essayed the joys and perils of bog trotting, either at home or abroad, will have no difficulty in understanding exactly the quality of the spongy peaty soil which should, in some sort, though without its stagnant malaria, be reproduced if we want to grow bog plants. On a small scale—as, for example, a bog bed—it is not

very difficult to manage, if a suitable position can be found, with an unfailing supply of water which can at all times be led where it is wanted. An irregular hollow dug out on any open sunny site away from trees, and filled in with a compost mainly consisting of rough sandy peat and leaf mould, which can always be kept moist, yet not water-logged, will provide congenial quarters for many beautiful plants, from Canadian swamp lilies and mocassin flowers to some of the primroses and gentians of the Swiss mountains, which are more or less marsh lovers. People very often suppose that whereas bog plants require much moisture, therefore it is necessary to give them much shade as well—which is, in most cases, a fatal mistake. The majority of marsh plants live with their toes in the water and their heads in the sun; and this fact should always be borne in mind in choosing a site for a bog bed. Not that light shadow from groups of low-growing shrubs in or about the bed, or from tall herbaceous plants, is always hurtful. On the contrary, it may serve sometimes to preserve flowers from fading too quickly; but anything approaching to the dense shade of overhanging trees should be avoided. Another caution may be given. It is better to spread a good layer of some kind of rough rubble at the bottom of the bog bed before the compost is packed in. The natural drainage of a bog is a very different matter to that of a small area under artificial conditions; and a limited body of soil is apt to get sour and unfit to support plant life if no filterage helps to draw off surplus water. Peat can absorb a vast

amount of moisture; but it does not want more than it can hold. The surface of such a bed, if it be of tolerable breadth, need not be at one uniform level. Some plants will enjoy the gentle trickle from a hidden pipe near their roots, while others will do better on a hillock where the soil, though not dry, is less saturated with moisture. Stepping stones in the hollows, or a raised pathway winding in and out, will add greatly both to comfort and pleasure. Nothing is more tantalising than to be prevented from full sight of a new or interesting flower by inability to get near enough to it.

Naturally the choice of plants will be restricted, not only as to number, but in character, by the size of the bed. It will not do to introduce spreading bamboos or certain kinds of iris or coarse-growing willow herbs into a limited space, however much they may seem, at the moment, to suit the situation; for they would soon take entire possession, and oust the more delicate occupants. If shelter from north or east is desirable, no shrubs are more suitable, at least in the southern counties, than the so-called Ghent azaleas, which are really the descendants of two or three American species. These are perfectly hardy, and thrive in moist peaty soil, and would always give the right effect in fringing one side of the bed. Where azaleas would not answer, and for summer greenery, hardy ferns of the *osmunda* and lady-fern types, and handsome foliage plants, like *Gunnera scabra*, for large space, or *Saxifraga peltata* where a smaller plant of somewhat like character is wanted, would provide a little shade. Flowering plants suited to

the position would include the beautiful North American mocassin flower (*Cypripedium spectabile*) and other slipper worts, the scarlet cardinal flower and its pale blue cousin (*Lobelia cardinalis* and *L. syphilitica*), the huntsman's cups (*Sarracenia*), in mild positions the Madeiran *Orchis foliosa*, or some of our own hardy British species, which are scarcely less handsome. The swamp lilies, of which there are several kinds, including *L. canadense* and the leopard lily (*L. pardalinum*), may be grown, swamp lilies as they are, in the drier and more sheltered parts of the bog bed, where the young shoots can be a little protected in their early stages. These increase by their creeping rhizomes, and like nothing better, when they are doing well, than to remain undisturbed at the root with a good top dressing of manure every year. Many of the smaller evergreens, like the bear berry (*Arbutus uvi-ursi*) and the partridge berry (*Gaultheria procumbens*), both charming little creeping shrubs, are very suitable, and it might even be possible to establish the pretty Himalayan species *G. tricophylla*, which has arbutus-like flowers, followed in autumn "by sky-blue berries which look like small blue eggs resting on the ground among the minute twigs." Here, too, *Linnæa borealis* is quite likely to grow without much trouble; and even the shy Mayflower (*Epigæa repens*) might repay the kindly shade of azalea bushes with its pretty clusters of pink and white flowers.

But the most delightful of all bog gardens are of a more natural kind, and the site for these is

A WOODLAND BOG GARDEN.

only to be found in those localities where the soil is, spontaneously, of moist, peaty character. A spot of this sort may, here and there, be found in England, and more readily, perhaps, in Scotland; but in this respect Ireland is the most favoured country, where an acre or two of rough bog land in near neighbourhood to the garden itself may be easily fenced about and turned without much labour into a garden of marsh-haunting plants. Such localities are not rare in the sister island; and an Irish marsh garden described, I think, in the *Field* some few years ago, is typical of the good use to which a stretch of natural bog may be put. In this case the principal labour consisted in the cutting of numerous canals to drain off superfluous water, thus forming islands of peat; in throwing rough log bridges across them to give easy access to all parts of the ground, and in the making of raised causeways in all directions. Beyond this the soft brown peat required little working, and the choice of suitable plants was the main undertaking. In an enclosed space of some three acres there was scope for bold and noble grouping, and the natural growth of silver birch and a belt of sheltering pines and spruce firs gave just the protection and slight shade here and there that is always desirable, while they added greatly to the beauty of the scene. Here there was ample room for large plantations of hardy azaleas and kalmias, for the huge tufts of reeds and grasses which lend grandeur to appropriate breadth of space, but are so out of character in cramped surroundings. If I remember rightly, the account of this particular

bog garden was written in autumn, when the changing tints were still full of glowing colour, but flowering plants had mostly gone to rest. But in the soft Irish air vegetation is rampant, and trees and plants of many countries will flourish in that mild, moist climate which utterly fail with us, except in the warm south-west or the west coast of Scotland. Therefore it is easy to imagine how many beautiful things might be naturalised and would luxuriate in such a spot—the *Watsonias* and *wachendorfias* and *oxalises* of the South African *vlei* and *crinums* in the drier parts; the Japanese *shortias* and *galax*, with its scarlet and crimson winter foliage, the Maryland *spigelia*, *spiræas* of many sorts, the rarer American cowslips (*Dodecatheon*) and dog's-tooth violets (*Erythronium*), with the lovely Irish heath (*Menziesia polifolia*) in its various forms—to say nothing of some of the gentians and moisture-loving primroses. In fact, there is no end to the possibilities of such a grand bog garden; but there are few who can indulge in a delightful playground of the kind.

In our English countryside we are more apt to fall in with a likely willow brake, which, under certain limitations, might make a tolerable substitute. A raised causeway leading through it would be one main requisite; but as a planting ground for some of the fine but somewhat encroaching marsh or moisture-loving plants no position would be more suitable. Willows are generally stubbed by being cut over in rotation for osiers or withies; and between the stubs colonies of marsh marigold, one of the finest of our native marsh plants, are

frequently to be seen. We do not know enough as yet about the fine Italian species, the story of the "lifting" of which from the Vatican gardens Mr Farrer tells us in his "Rock Garden," to predict that it will eclipse the old one, and prove equally hardy and amenable to the conditions of an English marsh; but these "king cups," to give them an old English name, are typical of the kind of plant suitable for the rough and ready bog garden of the osier brake. The common European globe flower, native in the north and in some parts of Wales, and of which there are some fine foreign species, would be excellent for naturalising in such a spot. It should be planted in early autumn, and will thereafter, if once established, take care of itself. The strong-growing white buttercups, familiarly called "Fair Maids of France," and pretty both in the single Swiss form and in the double, as they are found in cottage gardens, love a watery situation. The beautiful feathery meadow sweets, *e.g.* the deep rose-coloured North American queen of the prairie (*Spiræa lobata*), the Japanese *S. palmata*, the pink *S. venusta*, and our own native species, *S. ulmaria*, which has some good garden varieties, would all flourish well, and serve to prolong the flower season into summer. Then there are the upright-growing yellow loose-strifes and creeping-Jenny—all of them *lysimachias*—the last of which would clothe the sides of the raised pathway with its long trails studded with yellow cups about mid-summer or later. *Mimulus luteus*, too, would quickly become colonised; and touch-me-not

(*Impatiens*), rare as a British wild flower, might also find a foothold by the path. Quite distinct from all these would be the feathered columbine (*Thalictrum*), of different species; and in the autumn the purple spikes of *Lythrum salicaria* are handsome, which is apt to be aggressive if given a place where it may not be allowed to spread freely. The same may be said of the willow herbs—the strong-growing rose-coloured “codlins and cream,” a popular name for which no reasonable explanation can be offered, and the much more desirable and elegant French willow, of which there is a pretty white variety, but which may not be admitted into a garden. Ferns of various kinds would also find a congenial home in the drier but still moist outskirts of the plantation.

Along lines such as have been indicated we may perhaps be able to work out for ourselves some possibilities of bog gardening according to the lot which has fallen in our way.

CHAPTER XII

FERNS

THERE is a fascination about ferns that few people can resist; nevertheless, time was when they had an evil reputation. Once they had been surrounded by dark shadows of mystery—strange plants, it was said, that flourished and increased yet bore neither flower nor seed visible to mortal eyes, except, indeed, it were sought by mystic rite and spell at midnight on the eve of Midsummer, alone and unaccompanied, with intent that the finder might walk invisible at will—a silly conceit that was already ridiculed in Shakespeare's time, though it had not been so very long before exposed. It was an adventurous German, one Hieronymus Bock of Hornbach, a physician of souls as well as of bodies, who first boldly essayed to explode the old superstition. At the period in which he lived the dread of hidden spirits of darkness was still so dominant that to accomplish his purpose the good man probably had to take his courage in both hands. In a "Herball" published in 1539 he tells the story. It is to be found in that illuminating book, Kerner's "History of Plants," where it is repeated thus: "All our teachers write that the fern bears neither flower nor seed; neverthe-

less, I have four times looked for the seed in the night of Midsummer Eve, and I have found early in the morning before daybreak small black seeds like poppy seeds on cloths and on the broad leaves of mullein beneath the stems in varying quantities. . . . I have used no charm or spell in this matter, but have looked for the seeds without any superstition and have found them. One year, however, I found more than another, and I have sometimes been out without success. I have not gone alone to fetch the seeds, but have taken two others with me, and have made a great fire in an unfrequented spot, and let it burn all through the night. How the thing came to pass, and what secret nature intends to reveal by it, I cannot tell. I have stated all this because all our teachers describe the fern as being without seeds." Reading between the lines, how clearly the solemnity of the occasion stands confessed, and the heartening comfort of the "great fire" in the murky woodland shades!

The so-called seeds were, doubtless, what are now written "spores"; and it was not surprising, until the microscope came to disclose it, that the riddle of the germination of ferns should have remained so long unsolved. Gerard gives figures of a good many species, and speaks of finding "jagged hart's tongue" growing in a friend's garden; but ferns were only of value in those days for their medicinal virtues, and perhaps for the making of capillaire—never as garden plants. There is no reference to them at all, as far as I can remember, in the "*Paradisus Terrestris*."

The old feeling that there was something un-

canny about ferns lingered on, nevertheless, until much nearer to our own day; and they were ranked amongst "ditch trumperie," and styled "vile unuseful weeds," and no one dreamed of seeing any beauty in them. Less than a hundred years ago, when the world was being ransacked for plants of all kinds, there were but forty foreign kinds to be found in the rich collections of other plants at Kew, while now the known species may be counted by thousands.

Ferns are most at home in warm, moist climates, those of temperate regions being considerably fewer; therefore the species that can be grown with success in the open air in England are somewhat limited in number. Whether hardy or tropical, they agree in the main in requiring a certain humidity in their surroundings, both of air and soil; but there is no rule without exception. I remember finding in Cape Colony two, if not more, small ferns, one of them a *cheilanthes* and the other probably a *pellæa*, perfectly happy, growing on the open veldt, amongst drifts of boulders as hot and dry as the burning South African sun could make them!

As a fact, ferns rejoice not only in moisture, but in light. Though, speaking generally, hot sunshine is not naturally suitable to their wants, yet in cultivation it is found that they succeed best in fairly open spots, screened, but not too much overshadowed. May it not often be noticed that the common brake fern spreads outwards in the direction of the light, away from, rather than towards, the darker recesses of the forest? It may

be taken, therefore, as a fairly constant rule that if moisture be the first requisite for ferns, shelter, more than shade, is the next thing to be provided for—draught being altogether contrary to the well-doing even of the most hardy kinds. Filmy ferns which, by natural habit, are found growing in deep shade, may be regarded as exceptions but though the two British species, the Killarney and the Tunbridge filmy ferns, grow freely in the open air in the few spots which they haunt, it is exceedingly rare to find them doing well under cultivation without artificial shelter of either a cave or glass case.

British ferns are ranged under about fourteen well-defined heads or genera; but the species and variations of these mount up to many hundreds. Some of them, such as the depauperated varieties, though exceedingly interesting to fern collectors, are not beautiful from a garden point of view.

The British ferns that are most generally suitable for outdoor culture are as follows:

Aspidiums	or Shield Ferns
Aspleniums	„ Spleenworts
Lomarias	„ Hard Ferns
Nephrodiums	„ Buckler Ferns
Osmundas	„ Royal Ferns
Polypodiums	„ Polypodies
Pteris	„ Brake Ferns
Scolopendrium	„ Hart's Tongue

There are others which do not belong to these groups, which present greater difficulties of con-

stitution, and which, though British, can be more successfully grown under special conditions. This little table may be found useful, because ferns are now commonly spoken of by their Latin rather than by their English names, and, a good many changes in these having taken place, it is just as well to be acquainted with the latest edition.

British aspidiums are represented by the prickly and soft shield ferns (*A. aculeatum* and *A. angulare*), which are very generally to be found wherever ferns naturally grow. These have sported into a vast number of beautiful variations, and have become favourite pot plants, some of which are proliferous, producing tiny plants from bulbils on the fronds, by which they can readily be increased. Shield ferns are often spreading rather than upright in habit, and, with their brown chaffy scales and crested and feathery fronds, are exceedingly handsome in some of the best forms. Being quite hardy and strong-growing as well as evergreen, they are amongst the best for outdoor ferneries. By the unlearned, shield ferns may be distinguished from buckler ferns, of which the common male fern, which they somewhat resemble, is the most familiar example, by the way in which the young fronds turn back and unfold their points from without, whereas the male fern uncurls the tips of its growing fronds from the inner surface. The holly fern (*A. lonchitis*) belongs also to the shield ferns, and is always a favourite, though not so easy to establish as some of the others.

Spleenworts (*Asplenium*) include the lady fern, of which there are more than a hundred variations,

some of the plumose sports being amongst the most elegant of hardy ferns, but they are not ever green. The "French fern" of the florists, and the pretty little maidenhair spleenwort, which grows in spreading rosettes on moist walls and banks in Devon and Cornwall and elsewhere, are also *aspleniums*, which will show how varied may be the species belonging to the self-same genus.

Hard fern (*Lomaria spicant*) is found on damp peaty soil in woods and moors, and has shining brown stalks and leathery, toothed fronds, unlike other British ferns. The spore-bearing fronds, which are long and feather-like, rise up in the centre of the tuft and give it an air of distinction.

Buckler ferns, as said above, are best known in the common male fern (*Nephrodium felix mas*) which though not so delicately graceful as the lady fern is as beautiful in its own way, and, being evergreen, is almost more useful—indeed, it is everybody's fern. Of this, too, there are many garden forms. The broad buckler fern (*N. dilatatum*) is another well-known and elegant wild fern, most worthy of cultivation; but this species dies down in winter.

The royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) is familiar to most people, and is found in boggy places in various parts of Great Britain. It is often called the flowering fern, because the spores are not borne on the back of the fruiting frond in the usual way, but on separate stems, which have some resemblance to spikes of flowers in bud. There are a few crested and forked varieties, but none are finer than the stately normal form.

The common polypody is often to be seen growing on the branches of oaks, as well as on moist banks or even on damp walls, and is green during the winter but withers up in hot dry weather. There are some beautiful sports of this fern; for example, the Welsh polypody (*P. cambrica*). Two very favourite small ferns, the oak and the beech ferns, come under the head of polypodies.

Brake fern is the only British *pteris*, and it often comes as a surprise that the ribbon ferns of our greenhouses, which are called *pteris* by every costermonger nowadays, should be so closely related to the common brake of the woodland; but the essential points are the same, for in all ferns the distinguishing feature of each group is to be found in the arrangement and position of the spore cases. In *pteris* the spores come under the rolled back edges of the fruiting fronds, whether these are ribbon-like or broken up into many small pinules or divisions.

Hart's tongues, which are, perhaps, the best-known of all British ferns, and need no description, have on the contrary slanting bars of spore cases across their fronds on the under side. Of all ferns this seems to vary most, into forked and crested and fluted forms, though none exceed in beauty the long dark-green fronds of the ordinary hart's tongue, as it may be seen growing on wet rocks or on the moist hedgerow banks of a Devonshire lane.

Under these few heads will be found most of the ferns which can be cultivated with ease in the open air. Among the more difficult may be

reckoned the true maidenhair (*Adiantum capillus veneris*) and the sea spleenwort (*Asplenium marinum*), both of which are occasionally to be met with on damp rocks or sea caves in Ireland or the extreme south-west of England, but can hardly be called hardy ferns, though they can be grown under partial shelter specially contrived.

The parsley fern (*Cryptogramme crispa*) luxuriates in stony, mountainous districts in the north, but only rarely succeeds well under garden conditions. The elegant little bladder fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) adapts itself more easily to a damp rockery and is often quite at home at the foot of a wall.

The curious little adder's tongue, which is found in great abundance in some pasture fields in the west of England, is fairly amenable, but its rarer cousin, moonwort, is not to be tamed as easily.

Of foreign ferns there are not a great number that are generally useful out of doors; but attention may be called to two or three of great beauty. The North American maidenhair (*Adiantum pedatum*) is a delicately beautiful fern, but quite hardy, thriving in moist, peaty soil. It grows abundantly in damp Canadian woods, where I have found it companying with the white Trinity flower (*Trillium grandiflorum*) and yellow dog's-tooth violets (*Erythronium americanum*) and the pretty hooded arum, which is familiarly called Jack in the pulpit. The spreading semicircular fronds of this bird's foot maidenhair crown the shining dark stems, which are about a foot high; and it should be given a place wherever it is possible by every fern-lover. Being deciduous, it is safe in winter,

but requires a sheltered nook, free from draught, in order to develop its fronds in summer.

The fine ostrich-feather fern (*Struthiopteris germanica*) is one of the flowering ferns so-called, and of very different habit from the last. It is not hard to establish, and is well suited to positions where there is ample room to show off its handsome shuttlecock-like proportions. There are a few other foreign ferns available for the outdoor fernery; but a fine lomaria (*L. chilensis*) may complete the present list. It is of somewhat stiff habit, but forms a grand contrast to other ferns, and is generally evergreen. A very severe winter may cut it to the ground, but fresh fronds come up in spring.

It is not always easy in ordinary gardens to find the right position for ferns. They may sometimes be planted, either singly or in groups, with good effect in sheltered borders associated with flowering plants; or they may find a suitable position on a low rock bed; but the fashion of lumping a number of species together on rock-work in some neglected, out-of-the-way corner of the garden is happily passing away. It is not often that a glen with a rushing stream is to be found within two minutes' walk of the garden walls; though I happen to know of just such a spot, where all kinds of ferns luxuriate in the most picturesque way on the steep rocky banks, and almost under the misty spray of a natural waterfall.

It is quite true that a fern will occasionally grow and look well where nothing else will succeed, and also that it will often take up quarters for itself which no one would suppose to be congenial

to its wants. But probably all fern-lovers will agree that the best situation will always be one which comes nearest to that which is natural to any particular species which may be in question. Shield ferns are often found growing on drier banks than suit the majority of their kindred. *Osmunda* likes a moist situation, but prefers its crowns to be above water-line. The male fern is often found growing out of a ha-ha wall; but the earth behind it is always more or less damp. The finest broad buckler ferns and lady ferns are to be sought for low down within the sheltering sides of a wet ditch. I have even heard of a fern walk which was constructed somewhat after the pattern of an adit—the horizontal entrance to a mine—with deep sides to give protection from wind.

Thus ferns may be used in many delightful ways, to fringe the water side, or planted along the verges of a coppice ride; sometimes in the bay of a shrubbery border, or in hollows or nooks amongst shelving rocks or stones, according to their stature; and sometimes it may be possible to plan a fern glade or dell. They will look well, in fact, in any position where they may seem to have taken up their abode without asking leave. But, of all plants, ferns are the least suitable for formal arrangements, and, if practicable, should be planted, far from dust and disturbing draughts, in cool, moist spots where their exquisite greenery may reach to the utmost perfection; and yet, so accommodating are they that fine specimens may often be seen growing in the unlikely quarters of a dry and dusty London area.

FERNS IN A COPPICE RIDE.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GARDEN OF HERBS

“GARDENING is of few years’ standing in England, and therefore not deeply rooted nor well understood. About fifty years ago, about which time Ingenuities began to flourish . . . this Art of Gardening began to creep into England, into Sandwich and Surrey, Fulham and other places. Some old men in Surrey, where it flourisheth very much at present, report;—That they knew the first gardeners that came into those parts to plant Cabages, Colleflowers, and to sow Turneps, Carrets, and Parsnips, to sow Raith (or early ripe) Peas, Rape, all which at that time were great rarities, we having few or none in England but what came from Holland and Flanders.” This was written in 1651, when the lost art had once more come to life; and to hap upon a passage like this, quoted with all its quaint spelling, from an old author, sets one thinking, with a grateful heart, of present-day blessings.

A chronicle of English gardening would be wanting indeed without some allusion to one of its most important aspects, the culture of vegetables; but it is with its private rather than with its public phase that we are here concerned.

The synonym for a kitchen garden in olden days was the herb garden; but this passed away, and left behind it the more prosaic name for future generations to use. True, man is by nature a "cooking animal," and much addicted to gastronomy, and there is no occasion to be ultra "nice" in our modes of speech, which is very mistaken refinement; but for all that there is a ring about the name as of that which is common and to be put out of sight, which ought not to be. For while the kitchen garden is, materially, of greater moment, if possible, to our physical well-being than the flower garden, it lacks nothing in essence of the same spiritual beauty.

A well-ordered kitchen garden is, in truth, one of the great luxuries of life. Happily it is one of those luxuries which may be shared, in some measure, by rich and poor alike. For the author of the "Garden of Epicurus" was right when he wrote, "All things out of a garden either of salads or fruits, a poor man will eat better, that has one of his own, than a rich man that has none." But I would fain add that the luxury is one not of eating merely, important as that may be and is, but also of the seeing eye. One can scarcely pass through a kitchen garden in full production without a sense of content and satisfaction in the beautiful vegetable forms to be seen in every direction, quite apart from any prospect of culinary usefulness. I do not now speak of the magnificent frosted silver leafage of globe artichoke, or the green plumes of asparagus, of the rosy down of ripening peach or bloom of purple plum, which appeal to most of

us; but of lowlier things. The wondrous beauty of the dewdrop resting in the waxen curves of red cabbage blades, the filigree network of savoy, so good to look at, the fresh grey-green of pea stems and tendrils, the fixed bayonets of sentinel leeks keeping guard, undaunted, in coldest winter, the crimson lustre of beet, the tints of feathery carrot in autumn, the exquisite grace of fennel—all these and a score of others lie in wait, in the simplest garden, to arrest the eye and waken thoughts of beauty. Did not the sculptor-artist of fair Melrose find inspiration in such wise, for some of the loveliest carving of pillar and cloister, from the crested coleworts of the kailyard? We all acknowledge the charm of these common everyday things when we notice them; but more often we forget to look, and thereby lose much joy and uplifting above the drudgery of life.

The progenitors of many of our ordinary garden vegetables are to be found to this day growing wild on our shores, or in fields and waste lands; but there are scarcely any, as has been said before in these pages, for the culinary knowledge of which we are not indebted to foreign intuition. Not only does the original cabbage grow on sea cliffs of the south and west English coast, and carrot and parsnip in fields and chalky banks, but celery and asparagus and sea kale—those choicer dainties—are simply native plants brought under cultivation, though we English had not the wit to find out their worth for ourselves.

Besides water cress and mushrooms there is only one other native English plant, a kind of perennial

spinach, known to me as being commonly used in some parts of England, notably in Lincolnshire, under the name of Mercury; and strangely enough, for it is very good, that one is rejected on the Continent. At least, I have more than once found it growing wild abroad, and have pointed it out as a good substitute for spinach; but the suggestion has always been, politely, indeed, but coldly, received. Yet one cannot help thinking that some of those worthy cloth weavers of Brabant must have made the discovery that it was fit for food, and bequeathed the knowledge to their English hosts. In the same way our field mushroom finds no favour abroad, while many kinds of fungus, especially in Italy, which we should scarcely venture to taste, are common articles of food—though it is true that they are offered for sale only after strict municipal supervision.

In spite of the quotation from the “Legacy of Husbandry” given above, there is scarcely a vegetable now grown that was not known to Parkinson, which shows what strides had been made in gardening within a short period; but his was no common garden, and he himself was much in advance of his time. It is rather a curious fact, so strong has insular prejudice always been, that many of those in common use to-day had to serve a long probation before being received into favour—potatoes, for example, and Jerusalem artichokes. Of quite late years some have admitted sorrel into their gardens, and have learned to blanch chicory for salads—*barbe de capucin* and *witloef*, as our French and Belgian neighbours call it, accord-

ing to their different modes of culture. Yet of the first, Parkinson says that it is a "herbe so common and the use so well known both for sawce and to season broths and meates for the sound as well as sick persons that I shall not need to say anie more thereof"; and of succorie and endive that both were "whited in the frame for sallets."

Some attempts have been made in modern times to introduce new vegetables. Knol-kohl, the *chourave* of the French, is one of these which was much advertised when it was first suggested as food for man as well as cattle. It is really valuable as coming, in somewhat different form, midway between cabbage and turnip, and also for its preference for dry soils and seasons, which makes it specially suitable for some localities; but it has never taken much hold of British inclinations. Celeriac, again, though familiar enough in Germany, is comparatively little grown in England, perhaps from a tiresome habit of losing its bulbous stem, and reverting to the ordinary form of celery. It is excellent, however, when well grown, and the nearest substitute we can get in our climate for *finocchio*, that Italian fennel whose swollen leaf bases make such an appetising morsel for those who do not dislike its very pronounced flavour. Some years ago another curious plant, *Stachys tuberifera*, was announced from Japan, which produces quantities of small white tubers on creeping stems. In France these are called "*crosnes*," and are fairly pleasant to the taste, though not so good as the underground artichoke; but it has never become popular. No foreign introduction, call it

fruit or vegetable as you will, of more recent times, except perhaps the banana, has been adopted by popular consent so readily as the tomato. From being a questionable delicacy occasionally to be seen on the tables of educated and travelled folk, tomatoes, after a short interval of aloofness, have come in the course of a decade or two to be food for the million.

One kind of "salleting" which was formerly in great request has probably dropped entirely out of cultivation—a certain umbelliferous plant, *Sium sisarum*, the tuberous roots of which were known as skirrets, and were "boyled, peeled and pithed and eaten cold with vinegar and oyle." Skirrets, like parsnips, have a peculiar sweetness which, it is said, recommended them as a special dainty to the Emperor Tiberius. I have sometimes looked through seed catalogues for this old-fashioned plant, but without success, as for curiosity's sake it would make a good addition to the herb garden.

Herbs, in our modern acceptation of the term, are too much neglected nowadays; and an interesting collection might be made, which would always be an attractive corner of a kitchen garden to those who like to recall old-time associations. Mint and sage and lemon thyme, with parsley, make up the chief sum of pot herbs in ordinary use. The French grow many more of these savoury things for "garniture" than we do—a good example which is always being set before us, but seldom followed.

A long list might be made of the herbs that were commonly grown in the seventeenth century

either for physic or for cookery, though the very names of many of them have now passed out of memory, and are only looked up now and then by a lover of antiquated garden lore. Who cares now to find out what costmary may be, which used to be common in every farmhouse garden? or maudeline? or asarabacca?

Rosemary and lavender ranked high in olden days in the herb garden. Of the last there were several varieties—our ordinary lavender and the white-flowered sort; the dwarf lavender, which grew in his majesty's private garden of Whitehall and was prized above the common; sticadoue, or French lavender, which "we keep with great care in our gardens"; and Santolina, different altogether, and belonging to another order, but known by the old English name of lavender cotton. Lavender was never a culinary herb; but rosemary to this day is used by French cooks as the appropriate seasoning for *poulet à la casserole*. Of true pot herbs, so to speak, there were basill and savourie and marigold, common and lemon thyme, and "that guilded or embroidered sort which will not abide our winters." Fennel and sweet cicely (*chervill*), smallage and alisanders—a comestible that was something bitter, and especially set apart for Lent—clary and tarragon, balm and hyssop, the double variety of which has "the aptnesse to be ordered as the keeper pleaseth," and so can be clipped and set to border a knot of herbs or flowers; burnet and tansy and lang de beefe, which was none other than our wild rough-leaved ox-tongue, borage and bugloss, purslane,

rampion, and chives—all these come to mind as being used in some way or other either as seasoning or salading.

The “physicall herbes to serve for the special uses of a family” were many and varied. Amongst these peppermint and horehound were conspicuous, with dill and caraway, valerian and French mallows, elecampane and chamomile, herb of grace (which was rue) and liquorice. Others there were, such as “dragons” (*Arum dracuncululus*) and monk’s rhubarb or patience—a kind of dock—some of which may possibly have been of more doubtful efficacy for the domestic medicine chest. Amongst them all the “blessed thistle” was sure to find a place, as a safe and potent antidote against plague or other appalling sickness.

Some of these quaint things, like the pretty Barnstaple balm, might well be nurtured in gardens to add old-world interest to them; but especially would I choose chamomile to grow over some edge of a pathway. It is a herb which will “perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed,” though it is not of the three—burnet, wild thyme, and water mints—of which Bacon bids us “to set whole alleys, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.”

What shall be said of the fruits, which after all are the crown and glory of the walled kitchen garden? Oh, luxury of garden luxuries! with its well-trained cherries and plums and peaches, its

espaliers of pippins and pears, its goodly rows of raspberries and currants, its gooseberries and its strawberry beds, its broad borders of homely flowers half-veiling the rest of its comfortable equipment—the kitchen garden that we have known and loved so well in the merry, happy days of unwitting childhood—what need to dwell upon its delights! Surely there is poetry enough of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow within its walls to waft the thoughts above the mere grovelling of earth into the pure atmosphere of thanksgiving for the solace and beauty and grace of the common things of life!

PART III

PART III

THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE YEAR

"A garden is a beautiful book, writ by the finger of God; every flower and every leaf is a letter. You have only to learn them—and he is a poor dunce that cannot, if he will, do that—to learn them and join them, and then to go on reading, and you will find yourself carried away from the earth to the skies by the beautiful story you are going through. You do not know what beautiful thoughts—for they are nothing short—grow out of the ground, and seem to talk to a man."

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

SPRINGTIDE

THE perfection of gardening was once happily defined as the skill which so plans its result that "it looks, not as if it had been done, but as if it had happened." To shadow, in some slight degree, what may "happen" in a garden, with right forecasting, at the different seasons of the year, is the thought which is intended to thread together these concluding pages.

The birthday of spring in England is a question everyone has to settle for himself. The authorities fix the 21st of March; but if a festival so variable must be fixed at all, the old folks' choice of Valentine's day is perhaps as seasonable as any, for

life is surely beginning to spring anew in the green things of the earth by the middle of February. Besides, it sets a reasonable date for the incoming of the rest of the seasons as they follow.

Spring spreads a carpet of tender, beautiful colouring under our feet, and thus seems to fore-show what should be our plan for the garden in the early months of the year. We do not then pine for rarity so much as plenty. The brown earth has been bare for so long, we have so diligently admired the tracery of the leafless boughs through restful weeks, that we weary now to see them clad once more in their fresh young green. After the sombre neutral tints of winter, the eyes crave for brightness and richer hues; but, as if it were better for us not to be ushered too suddenly into light and glory, pale harbingers come to lead the way into more flowery paths. It is a late season, indeed, if snowdrops are not hanging their modest heads amongst their blue-green blades by mid-February.

Now, to enjoy snowdrops to the full, as we all know, they should be naturalised. The verges of a woodland walk, an old-fashioned wilderness, an orchard where they can peep out of the grass—are ideal spots for them; but a little thought will generally suggest some vacant bank or hedge side—anywhere rather than a set border, which is the last place to choose—where they may be left in peace to take possession, and reappear, like old friends, year after year. Wherever a beginning is made, with a view to establishing them, the planting should be done not later than September, in

little groups of six or seven bulbs. I cannot tell why, but I have noticed that snowdrops dotted singly two or three inches apart do not multiply quickly by offsets, while small clumps soon grow into large ones, ready for dividing again as occasion requires.

As with snowdrops, so with many of our best spring flowers, they should be grown in masses; and it seems a good rule to follow, if the ideal place or space is not at hand, or, at any rate, a fair substitute for that ideal, to do without the special plant we covet, and to choose some other that will fill the niche we have to offer with satisfaction to itself and all concerned. After all, it will not involve much self-denial, for there are so many not less beautiful which may "happen."

No doubt we all hold with Bacon that "in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months of the year"; but that would be royal gardening indeed. Manor-house pleasaunces of the olden days had many nooks and corners fenced in with yew or hornbeam, and sometimes "my ladye's garden" was surrounded by massive walls of brick or stone and barred from ruder entrance by a closed gateway. But the bedding-out system, amongst other enormities, contrived to do away with much of the taste for that secluded charm to which, happily, we are now reverting. Not that space is to be decried, nor breadth of level lawns, with ample room for trees to grow and spread without restriction into their own beautiful and characteristic forms. But there is nothing more delightful than to wander

away from these into unsuspected retreats, and to find in each some entirely new feature. For, sad to say, even a garden may become monotonous, and lose something of its enticement, if the whole is to be seen at one glance.

Spring is, perhaps, of all the seasons, that one for which, in most gardens, it might be possible to set apart some sheltered spot where winter and spring might indeed meet and join hands. One would have it, by preference, screened by a wind-break of some kind, whether wall or belt of shrubbery and trees, on north and east; or hedged about and lighted up through the dark months with the steadfast cheer of holly, by choice—a standard being left here and there, to give winter glow of berries; but a quick-set hedge, with a sweetbrier or two hidden within it to scent the air when April showers fall, is warm, too, and cosy; or hornbeam or beech or arbor vitae—what you will.

There is scarcely a doubt that shelter is one, if not the most, important factor in the well-being of any garden, but especially in the early part of the year. Frost is an enemy, but not so unrelenting an enemy as strong wind; and this we do not always recognise as we might. The wind-swept isles of Scilly would grow little beyond their native gorse—which, by the way, is never more golden-bright than there—were it not for the network of evergreen hedges and barriers of rock which interpose to protect the plantations of daffodils and tender Australasian shrubs and South African aloes and crassulas which are the glory of the famous gardens of Tresco Abbey. As it

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is in the early months, then, that we suffer most from cutting winds, the question of shelter for a spring garden should receive fullest consideration.

It may be that our spring garden is a snug quadrangle, three sides enclosed and bounded on the fourth by a thin belt of trees. The planting of such a garden should be of the latest and the earliest, to make it at once a pleasant shelter to seek on a winter's day and a trysting place where we may wait and watch for spring. A few good shrubs should be there; perhaps, in favourable localities, a camellia or two, of the delightful semi-double kinds, like *C. reticulata* or *C. Donckelaari*, looking northwards, for they like shade and also, though quite hardy in the south, they prefer to be guarded, by low-growing shrubs in front of them, from keen winds, which do more harm to their stems and roots than to leaves and branches.

Amongst other shrubs might be named, for winter effect, the Californian tassel bush (*Garrya elliptica*), which in favourable situations will dispense with a wall, or some of the quite hardy bright-berried trees and shrubs—spindle trees (*Euonymus europæus* and *E. latifolia*), the persistent pink fruits of which open, flower-like, on bare branches in late autumn; or *Skimmia Fortunei*; or even, as a low-growing bush to break a too level surface, *Cotoneaster microphylla*, with its crimson berries. Here, "in the lew," the russet autumn buds of laurustinus would change into milk-white flowers less tardily than in more open positions, to gladden cloudy weather, for there is no shrub that responds to shelter more

readily, and it may be found in flower from December to May in different parts of the garden, according to aspect. Here, too, it would be worth while to plant the Kaffir flag (*Schizostylis coccinea*) in some quantity, for its cheerful crimson spikes will often last beyond the turn of the days in favourable seasons. At any rate, Christmas roses would cluster thick through frost-proof leaves, and the winter heaths grow rosy as January wanes.

By that time a group of the low-growing *Magnolia stellata* would be getting ready with promise of white starry flowers to come in April, and here too the Algerian iris (*I. stylosa*), forgetting its native sunshine, would deign to deck a warm corner of an English garden with its delicate pencilling of pure soft lilac.

And here, one day, when we have hardly begun to look forward to milder weather, we may come quite suddenly upon colonies of winter aconites lifting up their little frilled collars, and notice that the bees are waking up, for a few are blundering in and out, in a weak, dreamy way, amongst the first white flowers of Harbinger primroses, until, tired of finding so little spoil, they go off in despair to the fragrant winter honeysuckle, which beckons them afar to the snug haven in which it is anchored.

After that spring comes in apace. For lo! the winter is past, the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.

All down the pathways on sunny days there is a sheen of purple and gold and silver-white of wide-open crocuses. The double primroses which crowd under the shade of the rosemary bushes, a

spot just to their liking, are all bristling with buds, and March will see them unfold their dainty little rosettes of lilac and white and sulphur. Great cushions of aubrietia, brodered in purple and crimson, overflow upon the gravel pathways. The earliest daffodils, the big old-fashioned double ones, shine out like burnished metal against the greenery, but they are soon outflanked by a phalanx of the single trumpets and stars and coronets of their less plebeian kindred. In March and April the deep violet and orange of the netted iris (*I. reticulata*) comes to rejoice our hearts; and if we are iris-lovers, probably many another of the fair sisterhood will find a choice place in the spring garden; but these are not for everyone, capricious beauties that they are. If we must needs be content, however, to do without great rarities—and let me assure the enthusiastic tyro that the deprivation is not unmitigated woe—there are yet a hundred flowers, easier to grow, which may be had almost for the asking, that are no less enjoyable. Violets surely will find a home; some of the stray Czars and Princesses of Wales, and even Marie Louise and Neapolitans, which were not pounced upon for the early frames; and in some corner there must be a small carpet of the meek little Russians, which come so early, year after year, and fill the air with sweetness. But there is rivalry as to scents, for the orange and velvet-brown of wall-flowers greet us at every turn, and their fragrance, in Bacon's immortal phrase, "comes and goes, like the warbling of music." Corners may be well rounded off by a planting of the thick-leaved saxi-

frage, so handsome in its tinted winter leafage, so welcome in spring, with its curious mingling of pink flowers upheld by vivid scarlet stems.

There is plenty of space in the spring garden for many bulbs. The graceful, nodding fritillaries, native wild flowers though they be, are so prettily quaint in their chequered livery that we cannot do without them or their less frequent white and sulphur-coloured comrades. Only a few people grow the fine Cilician species, *F. aurea*, whose solid golden bells are only slightly flecked with black, and droop upon stems scarcely six inches high; but it is a very precious bulb, and quite hardy, and might well be admitted to a place in our spring garden, for we are supposing that this spring garden is devoted to the purpose, and will not have much disturbance or replanting during the rest of the year, except perhaps from the judicious introduction of a few annuals by and by.

There are a good many blue-eyed bulbs that flower about the same time in early spring—squills of various sorts and chionodoxas, with their equally if not more cumbersome English name of glory of the snow. These scillas are more difficult to place rightly than almost any other bulbs. Their shades of blue will not even agree to differ. *S. sibirica*, with its vivid metallic tone, for instance, must not be seen within speaking distance of the softer hue of *S. bifolia*. But in such a spring garden there would be room enough and to spare for little colonies of the different species at opposite poles, where they need never come into collision.

It is easy to run through the list of favourite

APENNINE ANEMONES IN GRASS.

spring flowers—alyssum and double arabis, forget-me-not and cluster primroses, with their infinite variety and gradation of colour, crown imperials, early tulips, anemones, Solomon's seal, and many more. To take the place of these a little later on room should certainly be found in a sheltered garden of the kind for groups of the choicer pæonies. There are some beautiful forms of the old-fashioned herbaceous pæony, which are quite independent of shelter, and whose place is elsewhere. It is the montan or tree pæony, that will repay a little kind protection with noblest mien of leaf and flower when the three months of spring are passing by.

Alas, it is not everywhere that a spring garden of this kind can be set apart, nor a wild garden where the lovely heralds of the year which we have been counting up can be made to happen as they will; but there is still another way. It is not seldom, even in the gardens of smaller country houses, that we find a stretch of grass lying idle beyond the lawn, or on the verge of tennis court or bowling green, which cannot be kept in the fine order required for the lawn itself. Here is the very spot to plant drifts of crocus and snow-flakes, star of Bethlehem and blue Apennine anemones, fritillaries, early daffodils, or Spanish and English blue bells—all common early bulbs, in fact, which live their brief life and soon disappear. The mowing can be left a while till no harm can be done by the scythe, and from March to May the meadow garden would give untold delight.

But all too soon spring melts away—gone whilst

we find ourselves still saying "It is coming," and we are gliding imperceptibly into summer. Before we know it we have arrived at the parting of the ways. Listen! does not the happy hum of life resound in the air, like the distant fanfare of trumpets, proclaiming the coronation of a new queen of flowers?

MIDSUMMER GLORY

APPLE blossom is letting fall its fading pink and white; lilac and the "streaming gold" of laburnum are passing by; hawthorns, with their crimson and pink and pearl a little tarnished, are beginning to set to work on more serious business. Spring has emptied her treasures on the earth. It seems peculiarly fitting that the gorgeous oriental poppies should usher in the fulness of summer when, towards the end of May, they burst into their magnificence of deep scarlet and orange. Herbaceous borders, which should be the pride of all gardens in June, are then becoming every day more rich in colour.

There are many modes for the effective arrangement of herbaceous plants. Sometimes they are grouped in beds—tall-growing delphiniums in one, Chinese pæonies by themselves in another, chimney campanulas in a third—and with plants which remain in bloom for a considerable time, and under certain conditions of unlimited space and limited requirements, such a scheme has its merits. It may be said to belong rather to the garden which is left in the hands of the professional gardener,

who has a multitude of cultural details pressing upon him at once and in various directions, rather than to that which is in the loving care and thoughts of a leisured and inspired owner. Sometimes a long length of shrubbery border skirts a drive where numberless herbaceous plants are used to utmost advantage, giving scope for the most advanced experience and good taste. But it may be a question, after all, whether the old homely plan of having a broad border of flowers on each side of the central path of a kitchen garden is not as enjoyable a way as any. It is a plan open alike to the most prince-like of gardens or to the humble farmhouse, and the very homeliness gives it a charm of its own which may be lacking to more ambitious efforts. Can any sight be more alluring than the vista of the flower-decked path framed in the gateway of a well-appointed kitchen garden?

The best plants for the hardy flower borders are known to most people nowadays—the taller larkspurs and hollyhocks and *heleniums* for background, oriental and other poppies, the beautiful varieties of Chinese pæonies, *eryngiums*, the more easily grown lilies, like the Madonna and Nankeen, the tiger and the saffron lilies, *alstroemerias*, *aquilegias*, *campanulas*, *fraxinella*, lupines, and ox-eye daisies of different sorts. It would be easy enough to fill pages with the names of fine herbaceous plants for different purposes. What is not easy is to marshal all these diversities of form and habit and varied hue into such order as will satisfy every sense—for while flowers of any kind

can hardly fail to possess some intrinsic beauty, hap-hazard planting may take much of it away.

A few brief words taken from a paper read before the Royal Horticultural Society on the subject of "The Arrangement of the Flower Border," are so full of helpful teaching in garden art that they cannot be too often recalled to mind, and I feel sure that I shall be forgiven for repeating them here.

"An essential feature in a garden of hardy flowers is a well-arranged mixed border. It is here that we can show the true summer flowers at their best, but it is here, more than anywhere else, that the 'art of many sacrifices' must be put in practice. For the main spaces plants should be chosen of bold and striking beauty, but as a border of all large plants would have a kind of monotony, certain spaces, chiefly towards the front, but also running back in many parts among groups of taller things, should be planted with those of lower growth. . . . Each kind of plant in a mixed border should stand in a bold group, and the groups, differing in size and shape, according to the aspect of the plant, should follow one another in a carefully arranged sequence of colour, keeping plants of a colour together, such as mulleins with *Oenotheras*, and *Tritoma* with Oriental poppy. In the case of the last named it is convenient to actually intergroup the two kinds, for the foliage of the Poppies dies away early and the blank space it would have left becomes covered by the later-growing leaves of the autumn-blooming *Tritoma*. Groups of red, orange, and strong yellow follow

well, and help each other by forming a rich colour harmony. Flowers of a strong blue colour, like *Delphiniums*, seem to ask for a contrast, such as that of white Lilies, or the pale yellow of *Ænothera lamarckiana* and *Verbascum phlomoides*, the best of the Mulleins."

These are general principles which it would be well for everyone who contemplates the planting of a mixed border thoroughly to grasp, and to work out for himself in their practical bearings. The "art of many sacrifices" is no mere phrase; its reality and necessity ought to be writ large upon the experience of most plant-lovers, whose perennial temptation it seems to be to include all beautiful things in border arrangements without due regard to environment.

Perhaps in the eager desire for glow and colour we are a little unmindful of the value of foliage. Yet it is wanted in the herbaceous border no less than in the conservatory or in any other part of the garden where the grouping of plants forms part of the design. A fine effect may be made here and there by rosemary or by a well-grown clump of the common Indian corn with its suggestion of warmth and sunshine, or even a plant or two of the graceful annual hemp or the fennel-like foliage of *cosmos*; while the stateliness of plantings of *yucca*, even when they do not flower, cannot be surpassed. The different species of *acanthus*, too, and especially *A. spinosissimus*, are invaluable for border greenery, while for a different sort of foliage effect the silver-grey of globe artichoke, and lavender, of *achillea*, notably *A. ægypti-*

aca, of *cerastium*, and *othonnopsis*, and others, according to habit, may serve to great advantage.

Hardy flowers have an important part to play in the later year as well as in summer, and this has always to be borne in mind at planting time; but what a wide difference, plan it as we may, between June and September! The scarlet and purple and orange of autumn are vivid, more dazzling far than most of the summer tints; nevertheless we do well to speak of midsummer glory. For it is of the freshness of youth and beauty at its floodtide, the high hope of manhood in its first flush of strength, that our thoughts are full, though we scarcely know it, as we come upon one lovely flower after another and read its parable.

That pathway in the well-remembered kitchen garden—can we not all recall some memory of the kind?—where clumps of old-fashioned pinks, none so sweet, ran over the border edge and encroached upon the gravel with their spreading cushions of white and pink; where little beds of gentianella crept close to the front, laying a green carpet between the pinks, and in June bristling with brown seed spikes to show the wealth that had been; where, in their stead, came shrubby tufts of gromwell, studded thick with its own gentian blue, and opening fair to the sunshine that it loves. Blue was rife in that summer border of the dreamland of long ago, for the tall larkspurs at the back showed many a variety of shade, from deepest Oxford to palest Cambridge colours, in their towering spires. We had not attained then to the iridescent tints of the present day! Here

MIDSUMMER IN THE GARDEN.

and there June lupines, less ambitious than the larkspurs, with delicate fingered leaves, held up spikes of amethyst; and in July the Italian alkanet—the Dropmore variety had not yet found itself—gave a brilliant revival of the favourite colour. Yet there were others beside blue flowers. As one looked along the line, groups of lovely pæonies, blush-tinted, or cream, or purely white, held up their dainty heads, and a great tree lupine which filled up a corner hard by, as evening drew slowly on seemed almost to flicker with lambent light. There were plenty of daisy flowers—*pyrethrums*, *chrysanthemums* of the moon-daisy sort, lilac *stenactis*, and white marguerites, most cheery and heartening of all, to enliven that border, and nestle up against silver-leaved cardoons and lavender. How tempting it was sometimes to pull off the spotted cones of the trailing *œnotheras*, and set free the pale primrose or filmy white of their folded petals long before the westering sun gave leave; or, in morning hours, how pretty to watch the green mantle gently fall apart to release the crumpled silk of the French poppies! For in such surroundings the heart sings as we go lightly from flower to flower, and even the old feel young as they greet the friends of many summers and learn to love some that are new.

To fill up the cup of midsummer delights come the roses. The tiny buff bouquets of the *Banksias* lead the way, where they can cling to the shelter of house or wall; and these are followed by one of the loveliest single roses of early summer, the pink-cupped *R. sinica anemone*. But these are

not strictly midsummer roses, though they linger on with us often until the longest day, that pathetic day when we realise that the flowing tide of summer glory must soon ebb, and leave us with dwindling days and darkening evenings.

But it is high summer yet, and we forget that it is passing while roses are in their heyday and we are watching and waiting for the slow-paced ramblers to enter into possession of pillar and pergola in July. Surely one of the greatest boons that has come to our gardens of late years is in the successional character and grace of the newer roses. There is scarcely a day from May to December on which we may not gather a bunch of one kind or another. And many ways of using roses are now open to us, made possible by their varied habits—from the compact low-growing edging kinds of the polyantha race to the climbers with wands of twenty feet in height, which were not brought to the same perfection in years gone by.

Summer, assuredly, is the time of fruition and keenest enjoyment in the flower garden. We are reaping now what we have sown in the past, and the harvest is rich. But, even so, there is some work to be done as we look forward. Opportunities must be seized as they come, for lose the moment and the year is lost.

Yet gather we roses while we may, for summer wanes, its flowers are fading, its glory is passing by.

AFTERMATH

THE dust of August lies thick on the full leafage, which tells already of the glare and stress of a day that has passed high noon. The exuberance has suddenly grown sedate. That short pause, that sorrowful hush—have we not all felt it?—has come when the genius of the garden stands, with shaded eyes, looking after summer as she goes to meet full-handed autumn. We miss the song of the birds as they nested; we look for the flowers to gather as in the weeks that have fled so quickly; but there are few. The merry frolic is over, the year has grown middle-aged. But, after all, there is an aftermath at hand.

In the twilight of an August evening, and more precious then than if they came in June, the ivory-white pinnacles of *yucca*, stateliest of its kind, stand out from the dusky background, phantom-like. The shortening days give occasion, which otherwise might be altogether missed, to mark the strange shimmer of white flowers in the gloaming. They seem more purely white, more spiritual. Then it is that the sheen of the white lily caps of martagon is most ethereal, and the pale stars of nicotiana take on a lustre never to be imagined by light of day when the dull flowers droop. The North American buck-eye (*Pavia macrostachya*), beautiful as are its candelabra-like spires of flowers in the full sunshine of an August day, might well be planted solely for this lovely twilight effect. And *œnothera* has also a peculiar beauty of her

own in the evening light; but her primrose tint just saves her from looking ghostly, though she, too, only makes her curtsey to the lengthening shadows.

Autumn does not give us many white flowers; rich warm colouring prevails. We have the purple of clematis and gold of sunflowers, the scarlet of salvia and lobelia and glowing salmon-reds of cactus dahlias, the orange and velvet-brown of African marigolds and *coreopsis*. Still, some paler tints remain. The pink—or, by good luck, the blue—of hydrangeas, the white Japan anemone, the varied shades of gladiolus and the lilacs and purples of meadow saffron and Michaelmas daisies—for September is very fair, though it be with the colours of the declining year, and rich with the ripening fruit.

But autumn is more than fair; it is the time to be up and doing. There is something other than beauty to be admired. The hour has struck for stern criticism of past work and for the making of new resolutions. There is no time to fold the arms and moan out regrets; mistakes have to be noted that they may be rectified, new combinations and alterations have to be thought out, removals to be planned. There is a sort of stock notion that if perennials are to be transplanted it is proper to wait to do it in November. Not so in the experience of most old gardeners. A vast number of hardy plants flower and mature their growth early, and can be removed and divided to much better advantage in September, while the earth is still warm enough to encourage root action,

so that firm foothold may be taken before ever there is fear of frost either to grip or to loosen. Many a plant meddled with in November has been done to death by good intentions. Of course, there are some so hardy that they may wait with impunity and without an anxious thought; yet even these do better with an earlier shift, when practicable, to start with.

Autumn, too, early and late, brings the interest of seed saving as well as, in many cases, of seed sowing.

There are a great many seeds which are much better left to those whose business it is to raise them in experimental seed grounds, where rigorous selection is carried on by skilled and competent hands. All seeds, for example, of florist's flowers—pansies, asters, and stocks, and the like—are of this type. We may share by purchase, and it should be ungrudgingly, in the fruits of their labours; for, as a rule, nothing is gained, and only disappointment courted, by trying to save such seeds ourselves. But, on the other hand, seeds of rare shrubs, if they ripen well in a good season, and of choice perennials or rock plants, are always valuable, and in many cases, as in gentian and anemone, the best success is only to be attained when the seeds are sown as soon as ripe. Watch should always be kept over self-sown seedlings, for fine varieties of plants have originated in this way by chance in an amateur's garden which have afterwards become established favourites. Opportunities of saving and sowing seeds of these different classes, and also of distributing

them when there are any to spare, should never be allowed to slip.

Seeding plants, too, should be well looked after. Where a very abundant crop is setting, the vigour of the shrub or plant may be overtaxed, and it is often advisable to remove half or even more of the seed pods; those that remain will ripen better and the plant will be relieved of strain. Sometimes an overabundant flowering and seed setting indicate that the vigour has already reached its limit and that the plant is making its last supreme effort. In this emergency, and especially in the case of a rare or choice plant, every means should be taken to perpetuate it. How many are the vain regrets when it is too late and the old favourite has gone beyond all hope of replacement! In all cases it is better to be prepared for untoward accident. A hard winter may come, unexpectedly, to destroy the original stock of some valued possession, be it cistus, or veronica, or any other of doubtful hardiness; and then, if we have saved seed or reared cuttings, we shall have reason to rejoice in the fruits of forethought.

Scarcely enough use is made in English gardens of the trees and shrubs which are rich in autumn colour. Now is the time to mark vacant places, or dull uninteresting spots, that might be lighted up in time to come by judicious planting. How seldom in parks or large gardens do we see grand effects made by the brilliant colouring of scarlet oak or sugar maple, the crimson of mespilus, beautiful alike in the snow of spring or in autumn leafage, the vivid tints of wild cherry or

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Keiffer pear? We may grow weary sometimes of the constant reiteration of Virginian creeper, though it is seldom that fault is found with it in the season of its crimson glory; but there are vines, for example, *Vitis Coignetiae* and the old claret vine, and many shrubs, like the dwarf Japanese maples, one or two of the barberries, some of the sumachs (though it would be wiser to leave out the beautiful but wicked poison oak), liquid amber, and others, which are more rarely used than might be, with this end in view.

Yet deck the autumn as we may, there is always the sadness of decay and death in the fall of the leaf. The symphony of the year is ending. Each musician, as he finishes his part, closes his book and puts out his light. One by one they silently pass out, until the bandmaster, intent upon his score, at length looks up and finds himself left alone.

So with the gardener. The summer is gone, the harvest is past, flowers are withered, the last leaf is fluttering down. The moment seems filled with unutterable melancholy.

But it is only for a moment, this inevitable depression; it will pass. The leaves will soon be swept up, the litter removed, and we are heartened once more. For look where we will, we are met no longer by desolation, but by tokens of the life that is to be.

WINTER'S REST

ACCORDING to the theory that St Valentine ushers

in the springtide, St Martin should unlock the gate to winter, and, on the favoured south coast, it may be so reckoned; but in many parts of the country, not so very far northwards, it is St Michael who lays a stern hand on autumn's shoulder and bids him begone.

That first sharp touch of frost, how sudden and fell and needless it seems when it comes, blackening the dahlias and scorching the heliotrope, crushing the nasturtiums under its relentless heel, dealing out devastation without mercy or pity! But it is better so. In mild localities do we not see these half-hardy things, long after their beauty is over, missing the sunshine, shivering in the dank, raw fog from which we are never altogether free in any part of our sea-girt land, yet lingering on in misery waiting for the final stroke. And we share their misery. When once the blow has fallen and they are gone, a few calm days of Indian summer, bright and warm and still, often come to cheer us. It is then that the freshness of the crimson spikes of the Kaffir flag take us by surprise, and the first yellow stars of winter jessamine shine out among the green leafless stems, and we are grateful for the pretty half-opened buds of pink China roses, and enjoy them all while we may.

Then winter begins in earnest; darkness falls early, and by four o'clock in the dim afternoon the invitation of blazing logs and the sunlight of acetylene, that modern boon of the country house, allures us away from the slumbering garden.

But there is no gloom in winter. The bare

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boughs of the trees are instinct still with beauty, even though their yellowing leaves have floated down the stream of Time. Their year's round of duty has been fulfilled, the season for recruiting has come, and it is good. The buds lie dormant, but they are not hidden; there they are, plainly getting ready to start afresh when the call of the rising sap bids them awake, and, meanwhile, we do not grudge them their well-earned rest. It is beneficent sleep, not death, that we mark in every stately limb and curve of swaying bough and close-packed bud, and we go on our way rejoicing in hope.

It is in winter that we make fast friends with the trees of the garden, and learn the idiosyncrasy of each—the sweep of horse chestnut boughs and their varnished gummy buds; the knotted branchlets and rugged boles of the oaks; the drooping spray of birches, where the witches hang their broom-heads, and the white film of their flaking bark; the grey wrinkled stems and black angled buds of the ash; the red twigs of lime. One never knows a tree until one can call it by its name in undress as well as in its familiar summer uniform. How much is lost of winter joy and interest when the eye is not trained enough to detect the difference between oak and elm, the silver birch and the birch of the coppice, the beech and the lime, the sycamore and the plane; nor the ear attuned to catch the notes of robin and wren, the first pipe of blackbird or twitter of hedge sparrow and chaffinch in the dawn of the early year!

To some temperaments winter is beyond measure

depressing. The dead calm of arrested life in the dark months contrives, too often, to hold us in its grip, even though the deciduous trees, to a watchful eye, are never wholly asleep, but full of hope. We may not realise that it is, in fact, owing to the more, and not the less, complete suspension of vital force during the resting time, that conifers and other evergreen trees and shrubs are able to hold their leaves when the others let them drop. At any rate it is forgotten as we gladly turn to the living green of pine and juniper, yew and box, and to the exotic shrubs by which our native evergreens have been so largely supplemented, and rejoice in their shelter and warmth.

Amongst them all none seems more precious and full of the joy of living than our time-honoured English holly. Health and vigour and alertness are stamped upon it at all seasons; "dead calm" cannot be thought of in its presence, and the cheery glint of its polished leaves and the red glow of its berries put new spirit into the dullest day.

This diversity of character in evergreens is a very important point, not to be lost sight of when planting. In comparison with deciduous trees there is a tendency to stern and rigid melancholy which seems to belong to most of them. We do not feel it when the slanting rays of the setting sun light up the red stems of the Scotch firs, nor when the murmur of the west wind croons softly in the spruce boughs above our heads on a warm autumn day. We may even turn away from the dazzling colours of flower borders to the cool grey-green of juniper with a sense of relief, or thankfully take

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shelter from scorching noontide sunshine under the dim shade of some solemn yew or cedar and never once think of sadness. But reverse the picture and recall how all these look under a gloomy November sky, with fog clouds hanging low and chill over the hilltops, and say whether we are not then ready to confess that one and all are more or less funereal. Exactly the same effect of gloom may be given by many evergreen shrubs and conifers when planted too close to house or windows. Rhododendrons, for instance, are chief offenders, for in hard frost they look very sorry for themselves, and communicate a sense of their misery to all who look out at them. It is well to remember, therefore, that while evergreen shrubs placed in middle distance or on the confines of a goodly stretch of smooth green lawn are delightful, the same close at hand may become intolerably oppressive. Near or far, however, holly is never sad and dreary, nor ever out of character with English scenery; and no ornament of a lawn can be more in keeping than a shapely specimen feathering to the ground.

After all, for work or rest, for recreation or for interest, the garden is what we choose to make it, and to each one it tells a different story in a language of its own. Would that every Briton, man or woman, rich or poor, might have some personal share in the delight and benefit which a garden has the power to confer on mind and body!

Surely it is not without its age-long lesson that the opening page of human history should picture primeval man and woman placed in a garden to

dress it and to keep it. Is it not the God-given ideal? and believe it or not as we may, the home in the garden remains for all time and for all humanity, whether taken in its largest or most limited sense, the truest and best realisation of earthly happiness. Light and air, sunshine and shade, trees and flowers and the fruits of the earth, are the heritage of every human being—every-day blessings which, to their own undoing, many, alas, cannot enjoy, and some seem scarcely to value.

Neither is it enough to hold these blessings in common. The plot must be our own, to have and to hold, if only for the time being, where sunshine or shower may shine or fall on us and ours, where stands the tree under whose shade our children have a right to play, where grow the flowers and the fruit tended by our own hands or under our own supervision—the home in the garden for workers and breadwinners to return to when the day's work is done, the home in the garden for the home-stayers to take pride in and to keep, for all to love and cherish and to enjoy. No more precious gift can fairy godmother lay in the cradle of earth-born child in castle or cottage than the spell of the garden to rest upon heart and hands!

.
 Let us rest here in these gathered up thoughts, which at best are but suggestions, with one final aspect of the garden that we love.

In springtide or at the zenith of midsummer glory, in the aftermath of autumn or in winter's rest, as long as life shall last and human senses remain unimpaired, it never loses its interest. One

is almost tempted to believe that a true garden-lover never grows old, or rather, perhaps, never loses touch altogether with the joy of living. Surely, amongst the many blessings of the home in the garden, this may be reckoned one of the chiefest and best—that when the cup of life is emptied of its fulness, and cares and sorrows have tinctured its dregs with bitterness, it will yet yield an anodyne which will not only soothe, but uplift the faltering spirit and cheer the waning hours.

Above a garden gate a Latin inscription is carved in stone, and the interpretation of the legend is this:

“THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD
WALKING IN THE GARDEN.”

It may be that while physical powers waste away under the burden of years, aging eyes are opened to read more clearly the divine parables of Nature, that the ears which are growing duller to earthly music are attuned to hear, above the murmur of distracting echoes of Time, a still, small voice. To every whisper of the wind that stirs the opening leaves it utters some message of loving Providence. By every floweret that raises its sweet face once more to the light of day after its winter's sleep it teaches some lesson of sure and certain hope of the new life of glad service to come.

Do we do wrong to believe that the garden, which holds within it so much that is divine, is intended to convey to our finite senses some faint foreshadowing on earth of work and rest and peace in the Paradise of God?

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