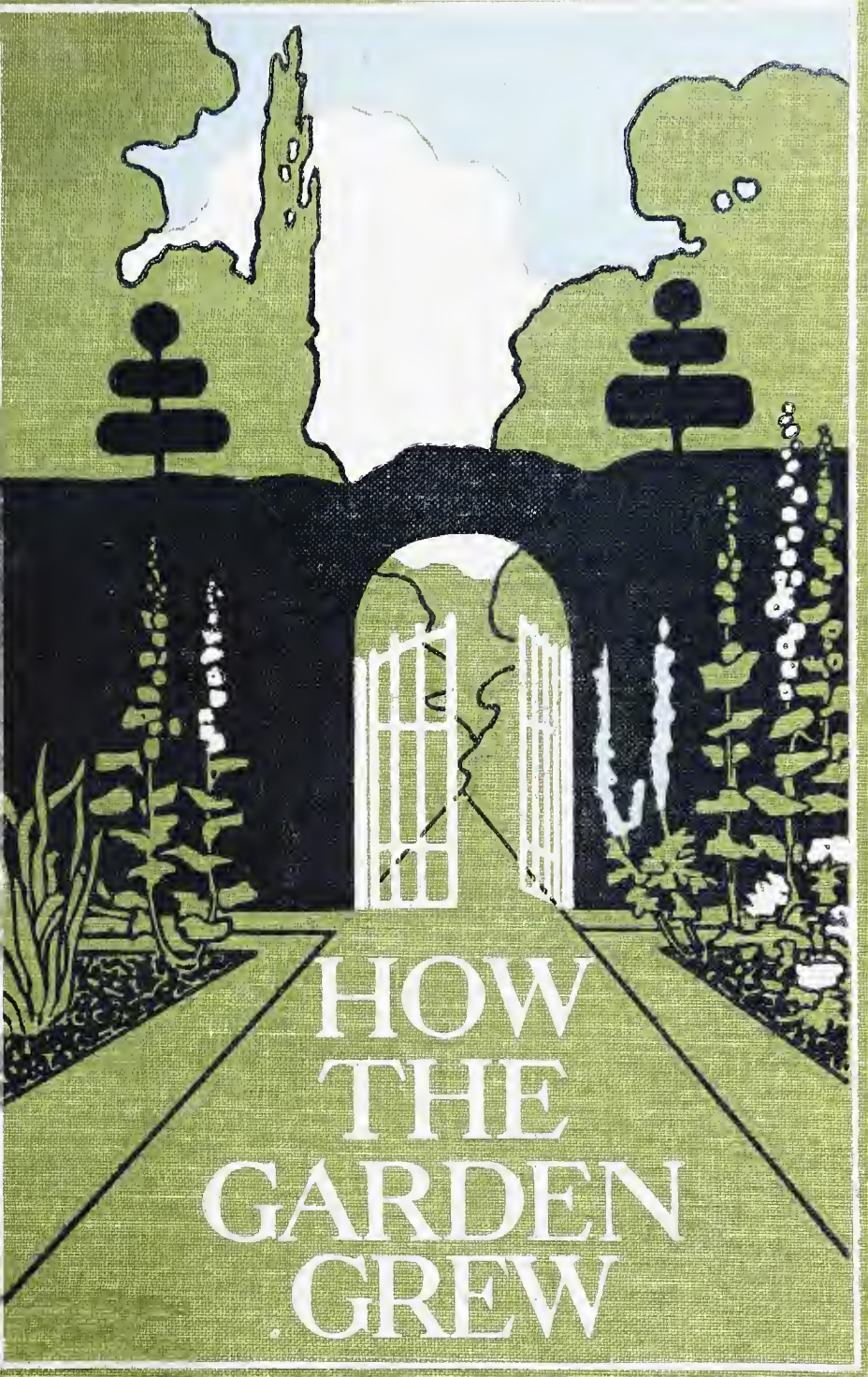
HOW
THE
GARDEN
GREW

HOW THE GARDEN GREW

WINTER

Frontispiece.

HOW THE GARDEN GREW

BY

MAUD MARYON

"Mary, Mary, quite contrairy,
How does your garden grow?"

With Four Illustrations by Gordon Browne

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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To

HIS REVERENCE

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How the Garden Grew

SEASON I

Winter

"Now is the winter of my discontent."

I HAVE not had charge of my garden very long; and I am not sure that I should have undertaken such a charge had there been anyone else to do it. But there was no one else, and it so obviously needed doing.

Of course there was the gardener—I shall have to allude to him occasionally—but just now I will only mention the fact that his greatest admirer could not have accused him of *taking care* of the garden.

Then there was his Reverence; he was by way of being in charge of everything, me included, I suppose, and of course nominally

it was so. He had the parish and the church, and the rectory and his family, and the men-servants and the maid-servants, a horse and a pony *and* the garden! He managed most things well, I will say, and the kitchen garden gave some account of itself, but in the flower garden desolation cried aloud.

I was moved one day to say I thought it disgraceful. "There are no flowers anywhere; nothing but some semi-red geraniums and some poverty-stricken calceolarias and scraggy lobelias. We have none of those nice high blue things, what do you call them? or those yellow round things with red fringes, like daisies, which are not daisies; we have no sweet-Williams even, though they are the sort of flowers that grow in every *cottage* garden!"

There was a twinkle in his Reverence's eye.

"You seem to know a good deal about flowers, Mary; I can't even follow your descriptions. I try my best with the carrots and onions. You must acknowledge you have vegetables."

"Oh, vegetables!" I cried with a tone of contempt.

"Yes, vegetables! You don't seem to despise them at dinner."

"No, but vegetables! Anyone can buy vegetables."

"Anyone can buy flowers, I suppose, if they have the money to spend."

"They can't buy the look of flowers in the garden," I argued; "that is what one wants; not a few cut things on the table."

"Well, I spend," began his Reverence, and then paused, and looked through a little drawer of his table that contained account-books.

An idea struck me. I waited eagerly for his next words.

"Let me see," continued his Reverence, running his eye down long rows of figures. "Ah! here is one of last year's bills for seeds, etc. Just on ten pounds, you see, and half of that certainly was for the flower garden. There were new rose trees."

"They are mostly dead. Griggs said it was the frost," I interpolated.

"And some azaleas, I remember."

"They don't flower."

"And bulbs."

"Oh! Griggs buried *them* with a vengeance."

"Well, anyway, five pounds at least was—"

"Was wasted, sir; that is what happened to that five pounds. Now, look here."

His Reverence looked.

"Give me that five pounds."

"That particular one?"

"Of course not. Five pounds, and I will see if I can't get some flowers into the garden. Five pounds! Why, my goodness, what a lot of things one ought to get with five pounds. Seeds are so cheap, sixpence a packet I have heard; and then one takes one's own seeds after the first year. Come, sir, five pounds down and every penny shall go on the garden."

"Dear me! but according to you five pounds is a great deal too much. I can't say that it has produced very fine results under Griggs's management; but at sixpence a packet!"

"No, sir, it is not too much really," I said gravely. "I shall have to buy a heap

of things besides seeds, I expect. But you shall see what I will do with it. I want that garden to be full of flowers."

His Reverence looked out of the study window. It was a bleak, windy day towards the end of November. A few brown, unhappy-looking leaves still hung on the trees; but most of them, released at last, danced riotously across the small grass plot in front of the old red brick house, until they found a damp resting-place beneath the shrubbery. The border in front looked unutterably dreary with one or two clumps of frost-bitten dahlias and some scrubby little chrysanthemums.

"Full of flowers!" The eye of faith was needed indeed.

"I don't mean before Christmas," I added, following his Reverence's eye. "But there are things that come out in the spring, you know, and perhaps they ought to be put in now. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes, Mary, it shall be a bargain. Here is the fiver. Don't waste it, but make the best of that garden. You had better consult old Griggs about bulbs and such-like. There

ought to be some. I don't think the few snowdrops I saw can represent all I bought."

"They never came up. I know they didn't. I believe he planted them topsy-turvy. I suppose there is a right side up to bulbs, and if so, Griggs would certainly choose the wrong. It's his nature. Can't we get rid of him, sir? Isn't there any post besides that of gardener which he might fill?"

His Reverence will not always take my words of wisdom seriously.

"What, more posts! Why, he is clerk and grave-digger and bell-ringer! Would you like me to retire in his favour?"

"*I* am speaking seriously, Father. If anything is to be made of this garden it can't be done whilst that old idiot remains here."

"I fear he must remain here. I have inherited him. His position is as firm as mine."

"Not as gardener!"

"No; but he can't live on his other earnings. No, Mary, put your best foot foremost and make something of old Griggs and the garden and the five pounds. And now take this bulb catalogue. I have not

had time to look it through, and perhaps it may not be too late to get some things in for the spring. But don't spend all the five pounds on bulbs," he shouted after me as I left the study.

And so I plunged into gardening, a very Ignoramus of the Ignorami, and what is herein set down will be written for the edification, instruction, warning and encouragement of others belonging to that somewhat large species.

* * * * *

OPENED the bright-coloured catalogue. Oh! what fascination lurks in the pages of a bulb catalogue. The thick, highly-glazed leaves turn with a rich revelation on both sides. It scarcely needs the brilliant illustrations to lift the imagination into visions of gorgeous beauty. Parterres of amazing tulips, sheets of golden daffodils, groups of graceful, nodding narcissus, the heavy, sweet scent of hyacinths comes from that glorious bloom "excellent for pot cul-

ture"; and here in more quiet letters grow the early crocus — yellow, white, blue and mixed — and snowdrops. Ah! snowdrops, coming so early, bringing the promise of all the rich glory that is to follow. And scillas, aconites, chionodoxa or "Glory of the Snow"!

What were all those lovely, to me half unheard-of names that could be had for two shillings and sixpence, three shillings or four shillings and sixpence a hundred? They bloomed in February and March, they were hardy and throve in any soil. Oh! how they throve in the pages of that catalogue.

And anemones! My mind rushed to the joys of the Riviera, revealed in occasional wooden boxes, mostly smashed, sent by friends from that land of sunshine, and whose contents, when revived, spoke of a wealth of colour forever to be associated with the name of anemone. To grow them myself, rapture! "Plant in October or November." It was still November; they must be ordered at once, "double," "mixed," "single," "fulgens"; they were "dazzling," "effective," "brilliant," and began to flower in March.

I was plunged into a happy dream of month succeeding month, bringing each with it its own glory of radiant bloom, very much after the manner of Walter Crane's picture-books. Life was going to be well worth living.

So now to make my first list and secure all this treasure for the coming beautiful flower-laden year.

I made a list; and then, mindful of the limited nature of even five pounds and all that would be required of it, I made up a long row of figures. This gave me an ugly jar.

Flowers should be given freely and graciously, not bought and sold, to everyone by everyone for the promotion of beauty and happiness upon earth. Any good Government should see to this. But present arrangements being so defective, I had to remodel my list considerably. I cheered up with the thought, however, that bulbs were not annuals, but on their own account, so I had heard, grew and multiplied quietly in the earth.

What could have become of those planted by Griggs last year? Did worms eat bulbs?

* * * * *

I WANDERED round the garden, seeing possibilities and refusing to be depressed by the sadness of sodden grass, straggling rose branches bare of beauty, heavy earth that closed in dejected plants, weeds or what not; I saw them all with new eyes and scanned them closely. Did they mean flowers? Down in their hearts could those poor draggled, tangled specimens dream of radiant blooms turned to the sun? I had not studied my garden before; there were prisoners in it. Care and attention, the right food and freedom, should bring new beauties to light. I had grumbled and growled for over two years at the hopelessness of it, and at the dearth of flowers for house decoration. Now all was to be changed; the garden was to be beautiful! I thought of that catalogue.

Griggs was digging in the kitchen garden;

not hard, not deep, still, no one could say he was unemployed. He was himself very muddy, and gave one the idea of working with all parts of his person except his brains. My former interviews with him had been short if not sweet; but there was no open quarrel.

He paused as I stood near him, wiping his spade with his hands, kicking at the clods of earth round him as though they were troublesome.

"Is that for potatoes?" I asked, wishing to show not only interest but knowledge.

He tilted his cap to one side and viewed the bare expanse of upturned earth.

"Oi 'ad taters in 'ere last; thought oi'd dig it a bit. Diggin' allays comes in 'andy."

"Oh, yes;" and then I made a fresh start. "I wanted to know about those bulbs you planted last autumn. Did they come up?"

This was evidently an awkward question.

"Bulbs! Oh, there wur a few wot the Rector give me some toime back lars year. They didn't come to much. Never knows with bulbs, you don't!"

"Oh! but bulbs ought to come up."

"Some on 'em do, some times. Don't 'old myself with them furrin koinds."

"What, not with Dutch bulbs? Why, they grow the best kind in Holland."

'Maybe they do; over there. P'haps this soil didn't soute 'em. Wot I found diggin' the beds I put in them two round beds on the lawn. They wasn't no great quantity. Most on 'em perished loike, it 'pears to me."

"Perhaps you did not put them in right," I ventured. "How deep should you plant them?"

Oh! how ignorant I was. I did not feel even sure that I knew the right side up of a bulb.

Griggs gave a hoarse chuckle.

"They don't need to go fur in; 'bout so fur," and he made a movement that might indicate an inch or a yard; "but there's lots o' contrairy things that may 'appen to bulbs same as to most things. En'mies is wot there is in gardins, all along o' the curse."

Griggs was clerk; he never forgot that post of vantage. He looked at me as he said the word "curse." I wondered if his mind had made the connection between Eve and her daughter. But to return to the bulbs. Were worms the enemies in this particular case?

I knew they buried cities and raised rocks, and were our best diggers and fertilisers, because I had once read Darwin on the subject; but were they the enemies of bulbs?

"I am going to take the garden in hand a bit," I said after a pause. "I think it needs it."

"Well, I could do wi' a bit o' elp," and he wiped more mud from his spade to his hands, and from his hands to his trousers, and then back again, until I wondered what his wife did with him when she got him home. "But I reckon a boy 'ud be more 'andy loike. There's a lot o' talk," he added, half to himself.

I remembered with a feeling of pain how our old cook and factotum had received the

news that I was taking cooking lessons in much the same spirit; but my newly-found energy was not going to be suppressed by Griggs.

"I am going to order some more bulbs," I began.

"Ah! you might do *that*. The gardin needs things puttin' into it, that's what it needs."

I looked at him sternly. "And things taken out of it too. I never knew such a place for weeds."

"No more didn't I. It's fearful bad soil for weeds; but maybe if there warn't so much room for 'em they'd get sort of crowded out."

"You have been here a good many years," I said, not without an afterthought.

"Yes; that's wot I 'ave been. I come first in ole Mr Wood's time; 'e was a 'and at roses, 'e was; somethin' loike we 'ad the place then, me an' 'im. Then Mr 'Erbert took it, that's when ole Woods, 'is father as 'twere, doied. But 'e didn't stay long; went fur a missunairy 'e did to them furrin

parts and never come back, 'e didn't neither. Then come Mr Cooper, ten years, no, 'levin, he was 'ere and never did a bit to the gardin; took no interes', no cuttin's, no seeds, no manure, no nothink. That's 'ow the weeds overmastered us."

"But at least you might have dug up the weeds."

"Allays callin' me away for some'ot, they was. The Bath chair for 'is sister as lived with 'im, allays some'ot. Talk o' gardinin'! The weeds just come."

Then his tone brightened a bit; the Bath chair had been an unpleasing retrospect.

"But if the Rector looks to spend a bit, we might get some good stuff in." A pause, and a searching look at the setting sun. "I must be going. Got a bit to see to up at my place. Can't never git round with these short days."

Griggs collected his implements and with fine independence walked off, giving me a backward nod and a "Good evenin', miss. We could do wi' a few bulbs and such loike."

I was to divide Griggs's time with his

Reverence, but Griggs seemed quite able to dispose of it himself.

* * * * *

OPENED a strong wooden box with much interest and examined the result of my first venture in bulbs. Brown paper bags full of little seeds in which were carefully packed the firm dry brown roots, big and little, round and oblong. How wonderful that these "dead bones" should be capable of springing up into the glories of sight and smell foretold by my catalogue. This withered brown ball a hyacinth! unfolding, unfolding, until green tips, broadening leaves, and at last a massive crown of flowers appear. And the magician's wand to work this transformation? Just the good old brown earth, the common rain, and the wonderful work-a-day sun.

I was soon busy in the garden depositing my various bulbs in heaps where I intended them to be buried.

I called Griggs and requested suitable tools for the work.

"I am going to plant daffodils under these trees," I said; "and I want you to take that bag of crocuses and put them in all over the grass in front. Put them anywhere and everywhere, like the daisies grow."

"What! front of the Rector's winder?"

"Yes; all over."

"'Ow many 'ave you got 'ere?"

"Three hundred; but they don't take long planting."

"'Ope not! I've got a good bit else to to do; can't fiddle faddle over them."

"Put them in the right side up. I want them to grow," I called after his retreating figure. Then I eyed my pile of bulbs.

Of course I did know the right side up of a bulb; of course everybody did; and if anyone was likely to make a mistake it was surely Griggs, so it was clearly no use asking him. Nice brown thing, why had you not given just one little green sprout as the crocuses and snowdrops had done, so that there *could* be no mistake? And

what would happen if they were planted topsy-turvy? Could they send up shoots from anywhere they chose? or would the perversity of such a position be too much for their budding vitality? I did not wish to try the experiment; my daffodils *must* make their appearance next March. I ranged them out in broad circles under one or two trees, in patches at the corner of projecting borders, and walked away to see the effect from different points; the effect, not of brown specks, but of sheets of gold that were to be.

His Reverence found me with my head on one side taking in the future from the drawing-room windows.

"You seem very busy, Mary."

"I am. You see, it is a great thing to place them where they can stay. I like permanent things. It will be lovely, won't it, to see that golden patch under the mulberry tree and another at the corner there; and then under the chestnut just a sheet of white?"

"Oh, lovely! And what kind of sheet or

wet blanket is old Griggs preparing for my eyes in front?"

"Oh, the old owl! I must run and see he is doing as I told him. You might be useful, sir, for a bit, mightn't you? and begin popping in those daffodils under that tree exactly as I have arranged them. I will be back directly."

His Reverence loved walking round with a tall spud prodding up weeds, but it was a new idea to set him to work in other ways. I left him for some time and came back with a heated face.

"Just imagine! Oh, really, sir, we can't go on with that — that — unutterable idiot! He won't do as he is told. What do you think he was doing? I told him to plant all that front piece of grass with crocuses, you know—told him as plainly as I could speak—and there he was burying my crocuses, by handfuls I think, in the border."

"Oh, well, he doesn't understand your ideas, you see, Mary; he has not seen them carried out yet."

"Oh, but he did understand, only he said

it would take longer to plant them in the grass and they would come up better in the border. 'I want that for tulips,' I said, and stood over him while he unburied all he had done. Then he said, 'Can't stand cuttin' up the grass like this; better put 'em straight 'long that shady border there, give a bit o' colour to it.' 'I want them here, in the grass,' I said. 'And how 'bout my mowing? I shall cut 'em to pieces.' That was a bright idea, he thought. 'You don't begin mowing until after the crocuses are well over; that won't hurt.' And now I have spread them all over the lawn myself and left him to put them in. He can't make any further mistake I hope."

His Reverence was laughing. Old Griggs amused him much more than he did me.

"How many have you done?" I asked, and I looked at the still unburied bulbs. "Why, sir—"

"I have done two, Mary, really; but look at this pile of plantains! Oh, these horrid things! you must clear the garden of them."

"I can't," I said sternly. "There is too much else to do. What we want is colour,

flowers everywhere. The plantains are green so they don't disturb the harmony. But you may take them up if you like."

"Colour! harmony! If you talk to old Griggs like that he will think you are mad. And, Mary, you bought *all* these bulbs? Remember there is the spring and summer to be reckoned with. How much has gone?"

"Two pounds. It ought to have been twenty. Seeds are cheaper, you know. I must do a lot with seeds, I find. But bulbs go on, that is the comfort of them. They will be there for always!"

"Well, I won't interfere. Don't bully my old Griggs." And his Reverence walked off.

I proceeded, yes, I will confess it, carefully to open up one of the bulbs he had planted. Yes, there it was, it had its point upward. Oh! I hoped he really knew. And so all the others were placed snugly in their narrow beds, and patted down with a kind of blessing. "Wake up soon and be glorious, brilliant, effective."

* * * * *

HERE were hours of deep dejection after all my planting was done. It was December, and so much ought to have been done in November, October, and even September. In fact, I ought to have begun nine months ago. And those nine months could not be caught up for another year, depressing thought! Wallflowers, polyanthus, forget-me-nots, sweet-Williams, all the dear, simple things of which I wanted masses, instead of the one or two stalky bushes that grew down a long herbaceous border, all these should have begun their career, it appeared, last February or March if I wanted them to flower next spring. I must wait. I had not set out on my gardening experience to learn patience, it is always being rubbed into one; but I warn you, O brother or sister Ignoramus! that of all stocks you will need patience the most.

My garden was now a white world. Snow buried everything: hopes and depressions were equally hidden. A fine time for castle-building, for hurrying through the seasons and imagining how many treasures ought to be,

might be, should be hidden beneath that cold, pure coverlid and warmly, snugly nestling in Mother Earth's brown bosom. What energy must be at work, what pushing, struggling, expanding of little points of life downwards, upwards, until they burst into resurrection with little green hands folded as in thanksgiving.

In the meantime I turned to books, on gardening, of course. My new "fad," as the Others called it, having announced itself in plenty of time for Christmas, my pile of gifts presented a most learned appearance. This was my first taste of that fascinating literature. His Reverence had handed over to me a brown-clad work on gardening—somewhat ancient I must say—at the beginning of my enterprise. I had scanned it critically and compared it to an ordinary cookery-book in which recipes are given, and unless you are already familiar with the art you are continually faced with difficulties. The cookery-books tell one to "make a white sauce of flour, butter and milk," but how? Wherein lies the mystery of that delicately-flavoured, creamy substance or that lumpy

kind of paste? Just so my regular handbook to gardening. For example:—

"They vary very much in habit, but should be of easy cultivation. The compost required is rich, deep and moist. Any sourness in the soil will be fatal to flowering. When planting supply liberally with manure, and occasionally mulch in dry weather."

But what did it all mean? How test the soil and the sourness which would be fatal to flourishing? The proof of the pudding would be in the eating, but how prevent any tragic consequences?

But these other books, this literature on gardening! They are generally better than the garden itself. Practical they are not, but why ask it of them? They are the seductive catalogue turned into finest art. One wanders with some sweet, madonna-like lady of smooth fair hair, mild eyes and broad-brimmed hat, or with a courtly parson of the old school, in a garden where the sun always shines. Green stretches of lawn (no plantains), trees grouped from their infancy to adorn and shade and be the neces-

sary background to masses of flowering shrubs. Through rockeries, ferneries, nut-groves, copses we wander as in a fairy dream. Borders laid out to catch the sun, sheltered by old red brick walls where fruit ripens in luscious clusters. Rose gardens, sunk gardens, water gardens lead on to copses where all wild things of beauty are met together to entrance the eye. Broad walks between herbaceous borders, containing every flower loved from the time of Eve; sheltered patches where seedlings thrive, a nursery of carefully-reared young. And in this heaven of gardening land gardeners galore flit to and fro, ever doing their master's behest, and manure and water, and time and money may be considerations but are not anxieties. I ought to have begun years ago; seven, nine, fifteen, and even twenty-five years are talked of but as yesterday. I felt out of it in every sense. My garden lay out there in the cold, grey mist; it had been neglected, it held no rippling stream, no nut-grove, it ran upward into no copse or land of pine and bracken and heather. It had a hedge one side and a sloping field

the other. The straight kitchen garden was bounded by no red brick wall, and the birds from the convenient hedges ate all the fruit, unless gooseberries and currants were so plentiful that we also were allowed a share. Griggs talked of an 'urbrageous' border. But what a border! Evening primroses, the common yellow marigold, a few clusters of golden-rod, and other weed-like flowers that persist in growing of themselves, with Griggs, five pounds a year and an Ignoramus to work it!

Oh! why had I so cheerfully undertaken such an apparently hopeless task?

But my honour was now at stake. I had said I would have flowers on five pounds a year, and I could not draw back. Let me clear away the mists that had arisen. After all, that tree down there was a pink chestnut, and beneath it lay my sheet of snowdrops and blue scillas. Before it burst into beauty they would have done their share of rejoicing the eye. At that corner, where the field sloped so prettily downwards, daffodils were hidden, and under the clump just over the fence more and more daffodils. A row of

stately limes, dismally bare now, carried the eye down to the next field. There, where it was always shady, I pictured future ferns and early wild-flowers, and maybe groups of foxgloves.

I turned again to my gardening books. I too would have a garden "to love," to "work in"; if not a "Gloucestershire garden," or a "German garden," or a "Surrey" one, still a garden. Months with me, also, should be a successive revelation of flowers; though I knew not a Latin name I would become learned in the sweet, simple, old-fashioned flowers that cottagers loved, and though I could not fit poetry on to every plant, I would have a posey for the study table right through the year.

That was my dream!

* * * * *

HE first, the very first produce of the opening year in my garden was a winter aconite. The little dead-looking roots had been planted in a sunny shrubbery border and had quickly thrust up

their golden crowns, circled with the tender green collar. Have you ever noticed how a winter aconite springs from its bed? Its ways are most original. The sturdy little stem comes up like a hoop; at one end is the root, at the other the blossom, with its green collar drooped carefully over the yellow centre. Gradually it raises itself, shakes off the loosened mould—you may help it here if you like—lays back its collar and opens its golden eye.

I picked every one I could find. It seemed sinful, but occasionally pride overcomes the most modest of us.

"There," I cried, "my garden is beginning already. Just look at them! Are they not lovely?"

"What, buttercups?" asked one of the Others.

"No, oh, ignorant one! they are not buttercups. They are winter aconite; note the difference."

"Let's look!" and the brown little fist of one of the youngest of the Others was thrust forth.

"All that fuss about those! You wait a minute!"

He ran off, returning shortly with quite a big bunch of my yellow treasures in his hand.

"Where did you get them? Jim, you bad boy! you must not pick my flowers," I exclaimed.

"*Your* flowers! and you hadn't an idea that they grew there. These are from *my* garden, and no one has given *me* a fiver to raise them with. Come, Mary, I shall cry halves. You had better square me!"

"Oh, Jim, where did you find them?" was all I could gasp.

I did square Jim, but it was in "kind," and then he showed me much winter aconite hidden away in an unfrequented shrubbery, where his quick little eyes had spied it. I thought of moving it to where it would show. Everything with me was for show in those early days; but these surprises hold their own delight, and I learnt to encourage them.

I suffered many things at the hands of the Others for spending five pounds on winter aconite when already the garden held

"such heaps"—that was their way of putting it.

I began to hope that more surprises of such sort might be in store for me. It is wonderful how one may avoid seeing what is really just under one's nose. The Others might laugh, but I doubt if they even knew winter aconite as the yellow buttercup-looking thing before that morning.

Another yellow flower tried to relieve the monotony of that dead season of the year. Struggling up the front of the house, through the virginian creeper and old Gloire de Dijon rose, were the bare branches of a yellow jasmine. From the end of December on through January and February it did its poor best to strike a note of colour in the gloom. But why was it not more successful? Judging from its performance, I had formed the meanest opinion of its capabilities, until one bright day in January my eye had been caught by a mass of yellow—I say advisedly a mass—thrown over the rickety porch of old Master Lovell's abode. Yellow jasmine! yes, there was no mistake about it,

but the bare greenish stems were covered with the brilliant little star-flowers, shining and rejoicing as in the full tide of summer. I thought of my bare straggling specimen and stopped to ask for the recipe for such blossoming. Old Lovell and old Griggs had both lived in Fairleigh all their lives, and there was an old-timed and well-ripened feud between the pair.

"A purty sight I calls that," said old Lovell, surveying his porch, "an' yourn ain't loike it, ain't it? Ah! and that's not much of a surprise to me. Ever see that old Griggs up at th' Rectory working away wi' his shears? Lor' bless you, he's a 'edging and ditching variety of gardener, that's wot I calls 'im. Clip it all, that's 'is motive, autumn and spring, one with another, an' all alike, and then you 'spects winter blooming things to pay your trouble! But they don't see it, they don't."

"Oh! it's the clipping, is it? Well, then, how do you manage yours? It is quite beautiful." I always dealt out my praise largely in return for information.

"Leaves it to Natur', I do. You wants a show? 'Ave it then and leave interfering with Natur'. She knows 'er biz'ness."

I did not feel quite convinced of this axiom; gardening seemed to be a continual assistance or interference with Nature in her most natural moods. So I said dubiously,

"Yellow jasmine should never be cut at all, then?"

"Look you 'ere, miss, at them buds all up the stem. If I cuts the stem wot becomes of them buds, eh?"

Unanswerable old Lovell! But as I looked at the thick matted trailings that covered his porch, it dawned on me that perhaps a judicious pruning out of old wood at the right season would help and not hinder the yellow show.

"Does it bloom on the new wood?" I asked with a thought most laudable in an Ignoramus.

"Blooms! why, it blooms all over. Look at it!" And having sounded the depth of old Lovell's knowledge, I left him with more words of praise.

So that was it! And my yellow jasmine

might be blooming like that if left alone, or better, if rightly handled ; and doubtless the poverty-stricken appearance of the white jasmine, the small and occasional flowers of the clematis, were due to the same cause. Here was a new and important department of my work suddenly opened up. I determined Nature should have a free hand until I could assist her properly. Until I knew the how, when and why of the clipping process, the edict should go forth to old Griggs, "Don't *touch* the shears."

On examining my own decapitated climbers I found that Griggs had indeed been hedging and ditching in the brutal way in which the keepers of our country lanes perform their task. It had often grieved my spirit to see the beautiful tangle late autumn produces in the hedges ruthlessly snipped and snapped by the old men, told off by some of the mysterious workings of the many councils under which we now groan, to do their deed of evil. That it ever recovers, that spring again clothes the hedges brilliantly, that the wild

rose riots, the wild clematis flings itself, the honeysuckle twines, all again within the space of six or eight months, is an ever-recurring miracle. But my creepers and climbers did not so recover; their hardy brethren in the hedges outstripped them. Griggs impartially clipped the face of the house in the autumn when ivy is trimmed, and, now that I noticed it, the results overpowered me with wrath. How extraordinary that people should let such things go on, should live apathetically one side of the wall when flowers were being massacred on the other; should have streamers of yellow glory within their reach in December and January, and should sit placidly by the fire when the iron jaws were at work and never shout to the destroyer, "Hold!" Well, it was no use carrying every tale of woe to his Reverence or the Others. Jim was fully informed, and being, as I have often noticed, a person of immense resource, he very shortly afterwards whispered to me that the "old guffoon" would have great difficulty in finding his shears again. If I

would obtain proper advice on the point it was a department, he thought, peculiarly suited to his abilities. I might grow giddy on a ladder, but as the navy was to be his profession he thought the opportunity one to be taken.

There was nothing to cut of the yellow jasmine; it must grow first, and then the older stems might be judiciously trimmed after its flowering time is over. A year to wait for that, to Jim's disgust, but toward the end of February we cautiously trimmed the Japanese variety of "old man's beard," called by the learned "clematis flamulata." It grew on the verandah, and one of the Others had driven Griggs off when he approached with his shears. She said he looked like murder, and whether it was right or not it should not be done. I had to give her chapter and verse for it that this variety of clematis ought to have a very mild treatment, a sort of disentanglement, and thus help it to long streamers before she would allow Jim and me and a modest pair of scissors to do

ever so little work. Jim sighed for the shears, and I had to warn him against the first evidence of the murderous spirit of old Griggs.

* * * * *

N one garden book of the most precious description I read of "hellebore." Now I am writing for Ignoramuses. Do you know what "hellebore" is? No! of course not, nor did I, but it was spoken of as forming "a complete garden full of flowers in the months of February and March," so of course I wanted it. Out-door flowers are scarce in February, but I learned as time went on that most flowers announced for an early appearance generally arrive a month late, at least it is so with me.

None of the Others, not even his Reverence, had heard of hellebore. It continued to haunt me for some time. February was near and I sighed for that "complete garden."

* * * * *

WAS encouraging my snowdrops with welcoming smiles as they pierced through the damp grass, and dreaming of hellebore, for the name attracted me strongly, when his Reverence's Young Man joined me. He has not much to do with the garden, though he often strayed into it—very often, in fact—so he ought to be mentioned. As my book is about my garden, only the people who either help or hinder there need be introduced. His Reverence's Young Man was really his curate. Our parish was not a large one, but very scattered, and a little distant hamlet with a tiny chapel necessitated a Young Man. He was a great favourite with his Reverence, who would often walk about with him, leaning on his arm, and this had caused old Master Lovell, the village wit, to call him his Young Man. Of course he had to see his Reverence occasionally, and if he did not find him in the study he generally looked for him in the garden.

"What is growing here?" he asked.

"Look!" I answered.

"Grass? It is grass, isn't it?"

"It is a comfort to find some people, and clever people withal, even more ignorant than I am. Snowdrops and scillas."

"Oh! I see, you are making progress, at least, I beg pardon, *they* are. I positively see some white."

"Now can *you* tell me what are hellebores?"

"Ask another!"

"That is worthy of Jim. You don't know?"

"But wait a bit, I have heard of them, I really have. Isn't it deadly nightshade, or something like that?"

I shook my head.

"It is worse to know wrong than not at all."

"But if you don't know, how do you know I am wrong?"

"Because they form a complete garden in February and March—there!"

"A complete garden! How wonderful. Doesn't anyone know? Doesn't Griggs?"

"I haven't asked him, of course he wouldn't know. Here he is, we will see what he says. Griggs, do you know what flower is called hellebore?"

Griggs had no spade and no mud handy; he was very much nonplussed.

"El-bore!—did you say? Whoi, el-bore? Don't seem to have 'eeurd of 'em before; not by that name leastways. You never can tell in these days; lot o' noo-fangled words they call 'em. Oi might know it right 'nuff if you could show me. Dessay it's a furriner. I must be goin'."

He wandered down the garden. There was not much I could give him to do, but I knew from my gardening books that he should be trimming trees, or marking those to come down, or cutting stakes, and lots of other useful things. I possessed no woods, or groves, or copses, however, so I gave Griggs over unreservedly to his Reverence, and he dug and banked up celery.

"Shall I write and ask my mother?" said the Young Man. "She is quite a gardener, you know; and when they divide up roots—as they do, don't they?—she would send you some, I am sure. Geraniums and fuchsias and—and lilies. They always divide them up, don't they? and throw away half."

"I don't think they throw away half, not always. But would she really? It would be awfully kind; and I might send her things when I had anything to send. Only I don't want geraniums; I can't bear them, and old Griggs has filled our one and only frame with nothing else. They seem to me a most unneeessary flower."

I spoke in my ignorance, and I learnt the use of geraniums later on.

His Reverence's Young Man never smiled when I spoke of sending things back to his mother; perhaps he did inside him, for she had a lovely garden and half a dozen gardeners, but still was chief there. I was overcome when I paid her a visit and remembered my offer; but again I spoke in my ignorance and thought it showed the right gardener's spirit, and perhaps it did.

His Reverence's Young Man grew to take the greatest interest in gardening. He was one of my first converts; but I learnt about hellebore from someone else.

* * * * *

ND now the Master must be introduced. I cannot tell what particular month he came into my garden, but I remember when I first went into his.

He had a genius for flowers. I do not know if he looked at children and animals with that light of fatherly love in his eyes, but I think it must have been there for all things that needed his care and protection. Flowers, however, were his "dream children."

His was no ideal garden, and he had never written about it. It was scarcely larger or more blessed by fate than mine, but was as perfect as could be. He knew each flower intimately; he had planted each shrub, and I never met a weed or a stone on his borders. He had but little glass, and no groves and copses and woods, or heather, or pine, or any unfair advantages in that way; but when I looked at his herbaceous border in the autumn I could not help thinking of harvest decorations. Such a wealth of colour was piled up, it hardly seemed possible it could all be

growing on the spot. From early spring to late autumn a succession of brilliant blooms reigned one after another in that border; to look upon it was indeed "seeing of the labour of one's hands and being satisfied."

And he had said, "There is no reason why you should not have it too."

I think that border sowed the first seeds of gardening love in my heart.

"But when you came here was it like this?" I asked.

"It was a pretty bad wilderness," he said with a look round.

"Oh! things take *such* a time," I groaned.

"I have been here twenty-five years. I have planted nearly everything you see, except the big trees."

"Twenty-five years! But I!—I can't begin planting things for twenty-five years hence. It is too bad of one's predecessors to leave one nothing but weeds and stones and Griggs!"

"Yes. Well, you have got to make things better for your successors. Not but what you can get results of some sort under

twenty-five years. All this"—and he waved his hand to that wonderful border—"comes, at least comes in part, with but eighteen months' careful tending."

Even eighteen months seemed to my impatient spirit too long; I wished for a fairy wand. But fairy effects have a way of vanishing like the frost pictures on the window pane.

"Well, if ever I try to make our wilderness blossom like the rose I will just grow perennial things and pop them in and have done with it."

At which the Master laughed.

"Oh, will you? I don't think I shall come to admire your garden then. Why are you so afraid of time? You are young. But I suppose that is the reason."

After I had made the plunge we talked again on this matter.

"Most of these people who write of their gardens own them. They have lived there and will live there always. But in a Rectory garden one is but a stranger and a pilgrim. Don't you feel this?"

"No. We are growing old together, and perhaps it will be given me to stay here; anyway, my garden is better than I found it. Is not that something?"

"Oh, yes," I said discontentedly.

He laughed. "Ah! the spirit will grow; you are cultivating it just as surely as you are the seeds."

"There are plenty of weeds and stones to choke all the seeds everywhere," I answered. "Old Griggs's way of weeding is to chop off the heads, dig everything in again, and for a fortnight smile blandly over his work. Then he says that it is no use weeding, 'Just look at 'em again.'"

"Old Griggs seems to afford you plenty of parables from Nature, anyhow. He is instructive in his way. But can't he be retired?"

"Alas, no! he is a fixture."

"And you the pilgrim! Well, go ahead. And now come and see what the nurseries contain; there is always to spare in the nurseries."

Many of his spare children found their way to my garden, and it grew quite a matter of course to turn to him in any dilemma. But Ignoramuses must learn, in gardens as in everything else, to work out their own salvation. So in fear and trembling, and a good deal of hope, too, I made my own experiments; for hill and dale divided the Master's garden from mine, and I doubt if even he could grasp the utter ignorance of the absolutely ignorant.

* * * * *

ICE and snow and thaw, and again thaw and ice and snow had held their sway through January and early February, and my garden slept. Another year I would have violets growing in the narrow border under the verandah, and tubs—big green tubs—of Christmas roses under its shelter. Were they expensive, I wondered? And thus I found out, by the simple process of asking at a florist, that for one shilling and sixpence

or two shillings a root I could buy — why, hellebores! But for me they will always be "Christmas roses." At present the verandah was bare, oh, so bare! It needed more roses to climb up the trellis and the newness of its two years' existence to be hidden. It held attraction for the birds, however, this cold winter time; crumbs and scraps were expected by them as regularly as breakfast and dinner by us. The pert sparrow came by dozens, of course, but out of our four robins one knew himself to be master of the ceremony. He came first, at a whistle, the signal for crumbs, and he allowed the sparrows to follow, really because he could not help himself. But should another robin come—his wife or their thin-legged son—he made for them and spent the precious moments pecking them away while the sparrows gobbled. His is not a beautiful disposition, I fear, but oh! how gladly one forgives him for the sake of his bold black eye, cheering red breast and persistent joyfulness of song. The colder weather brought other pensioners, chaffinch, bullfinch,

even hawfinch, and, of course, the thrush and blackbird; a magpie eyed the feast from afar, but the starlings waddled boldly up, not hopping as birds, but right-left, right-left like wobbling geese; and the tom-tits and blue and black-tits, came and continued to come as long as they found a cocoa-nut swinging for their benefit. None of the other birds would touch it. Next winter they shall have hellebore for their table decoration.

* * * * *

H! how lucky men are, they have so many things we women seem forever to miss.

Very thick, sensible boots that won't get wet through; no skirts to get muddy when gardening; the morning paper first, of course, because they are men and politics are for them; voting powers, too, which on occasions give them a certain very much appreciated weight; and money, even if poor, always more money than their wives and daughters.

These reflections, and I notice you may reflect on most irrelevant matter in a garden, were called forth by a boy-man who kindly took me in to dinner one evening. I soon discovered he had a little "diggings" and was going in for gardening "like anything." Yet was my soul not drawn to him. "Bulbs, oh, rather! Had a box over from Holland the other day, just a small quantity, you know. Mine isn't a large place, but five thousand or so ought to fill it up a bit; make a mass of colour, that's what I go in for. Told my man to plant 'em in all over, thick as bees. Then I had great luck. Dropped in at an auction in the City just in the nick of time, got a box-load of splendid bulbs for half-a-crown—worth a guinea at the very least—shoved them all in too. I shall have a perfect blaze, I tell you. Like you to come and look me up in April if you go in for that kind of thing."

But I hated the boy-man. Five thousand bulbs! without a second thought. And then—according to the rule that works so invariably among material goods, "to him that

hath shall be given"—this aggressive youth also buys a guinea's worth of bulbs for half-a-crown. Think what I would have given to be at that auction. But women can't "drop in" in the City.

* * * * *

OWARDS the end of February my snowdrops made their appearance. The scillas followed a little later and with less regularity. They were not quite the perfect sheet I had dreamt of, but each little bulb did its duty manfully and raised one slender stem with its bell-like head. One at every few inches over a space of some yards was not wealth; and I almost wept when some of them were sacrificed for the drawing-room. The Others said, "A garden should grow flowers for the house. Who wanted them out there in the cold, where no one would see them!" But I did, for out there in the cold they lived for weeks and in the warm room a few days faded them. I must have more and more so that we

may all be satisfied. In the Master's garden I found sixteen varieties of snowdrops, not very many of each, but he has no Others. What I longed for was quantity; and as for quality, each snowdrop holds its own, I think.

Up through the softened grass came the strong, pointed leaves of the daffodils. My mass of gold promised to be very regular, but the small crocus leaves were harder to find, and they had no sign of yellow points as yet. And the anemones! What had happened to them? I nearly dug them up to see.

Were the buds on the trees swelling? The birds were twittering busily on the branches, as though they knew their covering would not be long delayed, but the little brown knobs, so shiny and sticky on the chestnuts, appeared hardly to have gained in size since they pushed off the old leaf in the autumn. For in the time of scattering wind and falling leaf it is well to remember that it is the coming bud which loosens the hold of the old leaf. Life, and not death, which makes the seasons and the world go round.

* * * * *

WAS busy again with catalogues. "Begin things in time," preached the Master; but ah! I seem to have been born a month too late, for I never catch up time in my garden, except when there is nothing to do, and then you *can* do nothing. Nature has cried a "halt," and all the fidgeting in the world will not start the race before "time" is said. So I studied my catalogue and made my list in February.

Stocks. I need them in plenty, but I must walk warily amongst such luxuries with only three pounds to spend and so many other things to buy. Wallflowers, red and gold; but, alas! the Master has warned me these are for next year, as also many other things. The polyanthuses, that I long to see in masses like a fine Persian carpet, the pansies and violas, the forget-me-nots, even the Canterbury bells and campanulas and sweet-Williams must be thought of now, and will need the year round before coming to flowering time. Still, down they go on my list. And gaillardias, too, they look so handsome in the picture

and promise so much: "showy, beautiful, brilliant, useful for cutting" (there were those Others to think of), and they were perennials. Blessed perennials! Then larkspur or delphinium, I should say, for I did not want the annual variety. I could not wait, however, to grow those tall, beautiful spikes of bright blue, Oxford and Cambridge in colour, from seed, I must indulge in plants. Hollyhocks must also be bought ready-made, and phlox. Oh! the poverty-stricken little specimens that grew in my garden, flowers capable of such beauty. I had seen them growing in the Lake country and marvelled at their upstanding mass of brilliant heads. They were a revelation as to what the phlox family could do.

And there were all the magnificent possibility of lilies, of gladiolas and montbresias, and ixias. These must be bought. I must have them, but oh! the years before I could make a home for all. I turned to the annuals; they sounded as easy to grow as Jack's beanstalk. What a list! Antirrhinum—that is, snapdragon, but one gets used even to spell-

ing the other name—red, white and yellow; the taller kind call themselves half-hardy perennials, but I don't believe they would stand my winter, and the dwarf variety do their duty nobly for one summer. Mignonette, that was a necessity; marguerites, annual chrysanthemums sounded inviting; "continuous blooming" would suit the Others.

Convolvulus and heaps of nasturtium, canariensis and other little tropœoleum. Balsam and asters; no, though I liked the sound of balsam, still I could do without it, and I must do without something! But of sweet-peas I could not have too many, even though most of the "dukes" and "duchesses" cost a shilling a packet. I pictured hedges and hedges of sweet-peas in the garden, and bowls and bowls of blossom in the house. Sunflowers again—"golden-nigger," "æsthetic gem," "Prussian giant—" how could one help sampling such seductive names? And tagetes, the Master had said, "Get tagetes, it is a useful border." Marigolds, too, they were not a favourite of mine, but they lasted well into the autumn, and I had to think of the failing

months. Zinnias I could not resist because they are so "high art" in their colouring; and salpiglosis, the Master had a lovely group of these daintily-pencilled belles.

Then I made up my list, threepence, and sixpence, and one shilling, and one shilling and sixpence. How they mounted up. Thirty shillings in seeds! and I had to buy plants and bulbs too. But I could cut out nothing, though it had been very easy to make additions.

But now to get all these thousands of seeds sown. They could not all be sown in the open; I knew so much. Those for coming on quickly would need little wooden boxes and a place in the one frame full of bothering geraniums; and when they were bigger they would need pricking out in more wooden boxes, and could only be planted out permanently the beginning of June.

Well, what for the open? Sweet-peas—thank goodness for that!—and the wall-flowers, Canterbury bells—cup and saucer variety had taken my fancy—sweet-Williams, sunflowers, nasturtium, mignonette and for-get-me-nots, they could all be trusted

straight to Mother Earth; and I had enough of the dear brown bosom, bare of all children, down in that long desolate border. And for the boxes and pricking out and glass frame I would begin with antirrhinum, stocks, violas, tagetes, zinnia, salpiglosis, lobelias, polyanthus and columbine. That must suffice for the first year. But oh! what a lot of flowers there were to be had, and how lovely a garden might be if only—well, if only one had a real gardener, money, the sunny border, good soil, and—if they all came up!

And what flowers had I omitted? Of simple things that even an Ignoramus may have heard. There were all the poppy tribe, Iceland, Shirley, the big Orientals, Californian, though these are not poppies proper at all; verbena, the very name smelt sweet; gypsophila, a big word, but I knew the dainty, grass-like flower from London shops; penstemons, carnation, scabious, or lady's pincushions. The only way was to shut that book resolutely and go and write to Veitch.

The book said, and so did each little neat packet of seeds, "sow in pots or pans," or "sow in heat," and talked of a cool frame and compost, so, armed with this amount of knowledge, I took my seeds out to old Griggs.

"Griggs, have you any wooden boxes or pans or things in which we can sow these seeds?"

Griggs looked at me suspiciously; he did not like my energy, there was no doubt of that, but since he was a gardener he recognised that flower seeds, or such-like, ought to be in his line.

He took the packets.

"P'haps I can knock up a box or two. That frame's mostly full of janiums, though. I've a nice quantity of them saved."

"But we can't fill the garden with nothing but geraniums, you know. I want to have a great show this year; don't you? Wouldn't it be more satisfactory to you to see the garden looking nice than like a howling wilderness?"

Griggs laughed, positively.

"You've got to spend money if you wants flowers, and the old rector as was 'e never put 'is 'and in 'is pocket for no

sich thing as flowers. I dunno 'bout a 'owling wilderness. My fancy is them janiums brightens up a place wonderful."

I pushed open the lights of the long frame by which we were standing and looked at the stalky, unpromising appearance of old Griggs's favourites. There were other lean and hungry-looking plantlets there, a bit yellow about the tips.

"What are those?" I asked, pointing.

"Oh, them's marguerites, white and yellow. I got Mr Wright up at the 'All to give me them cuttings. They wanted a bit of water this morning so I give it em."

I pressed my finger on the sodden soil of the box that held the drooping cuttings. "They have had too little, and now you have given them too much," I said sternly. How could I trust my precious seeds to this old murderer? "Griggs, if you would only *love* the flowers a bit, they would grow with you."

"Bless you! they'll grow, they 'aven't took no hurt. Let's look at your seeds. Anti—rrh—well, what's this name?"

"Snapdragon."

"Oh, and violas and polyan—thus. Well, we can get 'em in. I've a box or two."

But I grabbed all my packets quickly.

"All right, get the boxes ready and I will come and sow them myself."

The boxes were filled with a light soil, mixed with sand and leaf mould. I turned it over myself to look for worms or other beasts, and very, very thinly, as I thought, I scattered the tiny seeds over the surface and gave them a good watering. Then out with some of the scraggiest of Griggs's plants and in with my precious boxes.

I felt Griggs's hands must not touch them. He had something wrong about him, for a gardener, that is to say. He always broke the trailing branch he was supposed to be nailing up; he always trod on a plant in stepping across a border; if he picked a flower he did it with about an inch of stalk and broke some other stem; no blessing flowed from his hand when he planted out the flowers.

I sowed the end of February, and in

March little tiny green heads were peeping up in most of the boxes. The violas still remained hidden. If Griggs had sown I should have said he had done it very irregularly, for the green heads came in thick patches and then again very sparingly; but I knew, of course, it must have been the seeds' own fault, since I had done it myself!

* * * * *

I WAS standing with his Reverence at the study window watching a squirrel swing himself from bough to bough, and I think we were both envying him, when my eye caught some specks of colour on the grass plot in front, that grass plot which ought to have a sun-dial in the centre and a stately bed of flowering shrubs as a background instead of laurels! What was it growing in the grass? White, yellow, purple, a touch here and there, all across, straight across, in one horrid straight line! Could it be?

"Look, Mary, there he goes! See him spring up that tree?"

"Look," I said in a tragic voice, "look at them! Do you think—can it be—are they my crocuses?"

"Where? Oh, there! Yes, I thought they looked like a rather straggly regiment this morning, marching single file. Was that your idea?"

"My idea! a straight line! Oh, how can you! That old fiend of a Griggs!" And then I rushed out to see the full extent of the horror.

It was too true. In spite of my careful scattering the old ruffian had drawn my crocus bulbs into line. I can see how he did it, striding across the grass, clutching bulbs to right and left, sticking them in under his nose, and probably sweeping up those outside his reach with the dead leaves. What a show! Many had not come up, and many had no flower, so the regiment was ragged. I could have cried.

Jim had joined me.

"Don't think much of this idea anyhow Mary."

"Don't you know how I meant it to be? Haven't you seen the Park?"

"Can't say I've given it my undivided attention lately. Shall I go and pitch into old Griggs?"

"It would be no good. I must do that."

"That isn't fair, Mary. If I'm to help you I must have some of the fun."

"Jim! It is no fun to me. You can't *murder* him, and nothing else would be any good. What shall I do with them?"

I looked at my poor little first-fruits. They did look so forlorn and battered. A crocus all alone, separated from its kind by a foot or so, has a most orphaned and cheerless appearance.

"Let's have 'em up," said Jim, the man of action.

"No, they mustn't be moved in flower, not even till their leaves die, and by that time the grass will be mowed and I sha'n't know where they are, and then it will look like this next year too."

"Oh rot!" said Jim, "something has got to be done. Can't have these stragglers

roaming across the lawn and never getting home. I know," and off he was and returned with a lot of little sticks which he proceeded to plant by the side of each crocus. "Now we will locate the gentlemen and have 'em up when their poverty-stricken show is over."

Afterwards, when Jim saw in my account that crocuses were two shillings a hundred, he said I did not value his time very highly. He thought by my face we were dealing with things of value. But anyway we moved that ragged regiment on and stationed them in clumps at the foot of trees, where they will look more comfortable.

* * * * *

ARCH should be a very busy month, and old Griggs found employment in the kitchen garden. I should have moved plants now, and arranged the neglected herbaceous border of the autumn, but, alas! all the new green things coming up were

strangers to me, and I saw quickly that in their present state Griggs was as likely to make mistakes as I. He hazarded names with a scratch of the head and a pull at the tender green shoots that made me angry.

"Them's a phlox, and them's—oi can't quite mind, it's purple like; and them's flags, but they ain't never much to look at; too old, I reckon. That's a kind of purple flower, grows it do, and that 'ere's a wall-flower." This was said with decision, and I too could recognise the poor specimen of a spring joy.

So I left well, or ill, alone until the nature of the plant should be declared, and then, if useless, out it could come later.

We prepared a long narrow bed alongside a row of cabbages, made a neat little trench some three inches deep, put in a layer of manure and mould on top, and there my first sowing of sweet-peas was placed, and carefully covered and watered and patted down. I felt like a mother who tucks her child in bed. Surely the pat did good! February, March and April were all to have

their sowing, and then the summer months should have a succession of these many-coloured fragrant joys.

In March also the other annuals found resting-places; some in square patches down the long border, some in rows that looked inviting down the side and cross paths of the kitchen domain. It was encroaching, of course, but no one used the spare edges, and it seemed kind to brighten up the cabbages and onions, all now coming up in long thread-like lines of green. I had added a few more seeds to my list, so a long row of tiny seeds that were to be blue corn-flowers, with another row in front of godetia, would provide, I hoped, a very bright sight and be so useful for cutting.

On Shirley poppies, too, I ventured. It seemed so easy just to sow a few seeds and trust to Nature to do the rest. I did not then appreciate the backache caused by the process "thinning out."

People may talk of sowing in February, but one cannot sow in either frozen ground or deep snow. Some Februarys may be

possible, but it was the beginning of March that year before I committed my seeds to Mother Earth, and even then it seemed a very unsafe proceeding. However, a lot of tiny green pin points soon appeared, and the only havoc wrought by birds, mice and rabbits—Griggs suggested every imaginable animal—was amongst the sweet-peas. These had to be protected with a network of cotton.

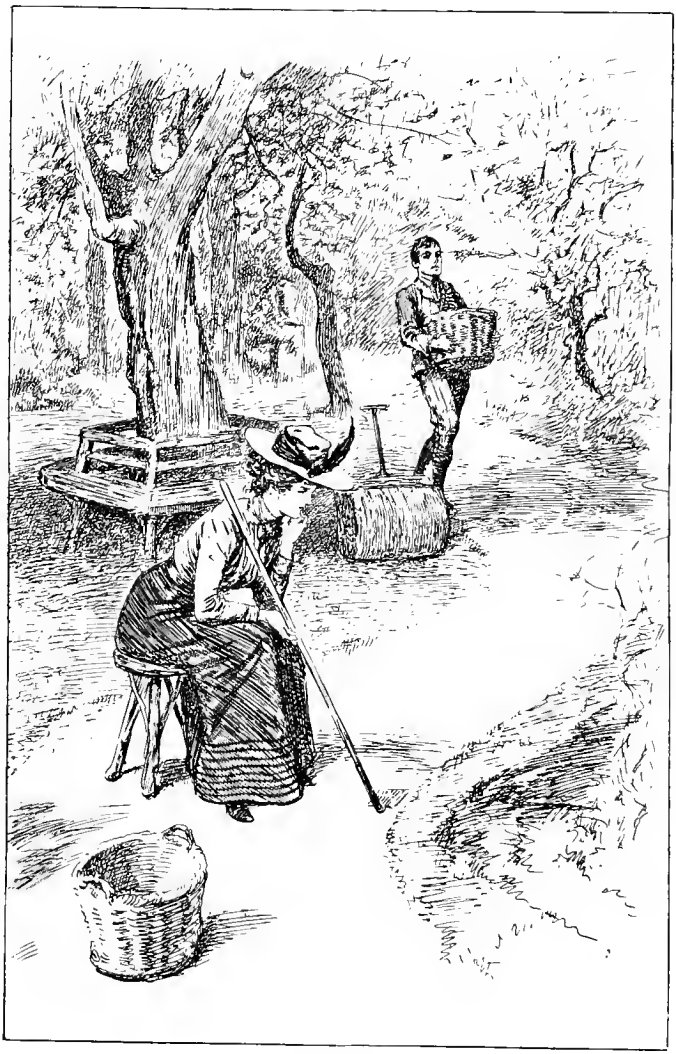
* * * * *

O the winter slipped away very gradually, for even after the first breath of spring, which comes to us from afar and thrills us as no other fragrance of air, frost, snow, rain and biting winds triumph again, and bud and sprouting green seem to shrink up and cower away. Yet we know the winter is surely passing and the first trumpet-blast of spring's procession has blown.

SEASON II

Spring

"And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."



SPRING

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SEASON II

Spring

"And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."

AFFODILS always make me glad. From the moment their strong, blue-green blades pierce the grass, they give one a feeling of strength, vigour, activity and determination to be up and doing, unmindful of wind or weather; in fact, using all for their own purpose, bending circumstances to their own development.

And when the big golden bell bursts its sheath of pale green it does it with fine independence, and then swings on its strong stem, ringing out lustily that the spring is here, the sun is shining, for the sun always seems to shine on the daffodils, they reflect his glory under all clouds, and depression flies before their sturdy assumption of "All's well with the world."

And so I felt very hopeful as I saw my circles, my clusters, my rows of daffodils, one by one, flashing up from the delicious blue-green blades. They none of them failed me, none, bless them! So plant daffodils, O friend Ignoramus! the single, the double, and any other of that dear family, the narcissus.

The birds were singing, and oh, so busy making late love, building and even nesting! The trees were bursting, the lilacs had a shimmer of green. The larches had colour almost too dim to be called green, they streaked the woods that still looked brown without looking bare; little catkins hung and danced, the blackthorn looked like forgotten snow, the grass was greener, and here and there a sweet primrose bud peeped up, whispering, "We are coming."

Down under the row of limes bordering the sloping field I found many pretty crumpled primrose leaves, and they gave me the idea to plant more and more, and to have my wild garden here, with snowdrops and cowslips, unseen things in our woods and fields. Ferns, too, of the common kind must be collected, and foxgloves, the seeds of which

must be bought and sown. For the present there were the little wild things that grow on their own account, and are so sparklingly green and spring-like that one hardly likes to rebuke them with the name of weed.

Hope was in the air. Everything is young again once a year.

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FELT obliged to begin the second division of my year in a hopeful voice, so I opened with my daffodils; but if March be taken as the first month of spring, then indeed I should not have written of that chime of golden bells. March holds February very tightly by the hand, and cannot make up her mind to hurry on with her work of opening the buds and encouraging the flowers. She blows cold winds in their faces, nips them with frosty nights, occasionally wraps them up in snow, then suddenly, repenting her of the evil, she opens up a blue sky and pours a hot sun down on them. A most untrustworthy month.

There is plenty of work to do, particularly if February has not been an open month, and for gardening purposes I really think it ought never to be so considered, and still more particularly if much has been neglected in the foregoing November. If you are an Ignoramus, and have a Griggs as gardener, the chances are much will have been neglected.

My attention was called to the subject of roses by the arrival of a rose-grower's catalogue.

Roses! I could only touch the very outer fringe of this magnificent garment, but I felt I must, positively must, have one or two of the cheaper sort of these dazzling beauties; and though they are better moved in the autumn, in early spring it is not impossible. A crimson rambler, the modest price one shilling and sixpence, tempted me to indulge in three. The deep yellow William Allen Richardson, delightful for buttonholes, which Jim assured me no garden should be without; the thought of a red Gloire de Dijon or Reine Marie Hortense was also quite overcoming. Our old yellow Gloire de Dijon was the only rose in my neglected garden that did herself proud,

and she flourished up the front of the house and festooned one of the Others' windows, from which Griggs and his shears had been summarily banished. "Cut where you like, but never dare to come here," had been uttered in a voice that made even Griggs "heed." If her red sister only equalled this "glory" that half-crown would be well expended. Then two standards needed replacing, for one could not have dead sticks down so conspicuous a row; though standards were not my idea of roses, still there they were and I must make the best of them. So off went my modest order. I had indicated the whereabouts of each rose to Griggs, but was unfortunately not present on their arrival. I think even an Ignoramus might have helped Griggs on that occasion—but more of that anon.

The Others could see but little improvement in the garden, this they let me know; they were full of ideas, and I found them as trying as some Greek heroine must have found an unsympathetic chorus. "The verandah was so bare! Was it really any use putting in that silly little twig? Would it ever come to any-

thing?" This of my new and very bare-looking crimson rambler. And then, "Why had we no violets? Surely *violets* were not an impossibility? They grew of themselves. Just look at the baskets full in the London streets. Such a bunch for a penny! But it would be nice not to have to go to London for one's bunch of violets!"

I took up the cudgels. They should see how that crimson rambler ramped, yes, I prophesied, positively ramped up the archway. They should be buried in a fragrant bower of ruby-coloured clusters, and they might cut and come again. As to violets, I was giving them my best consideration; the bed down the garden produced but a few—certainly not a pennyworth—of inferior quality, because neither violets nor anything else, save weeds, grew and flourished by the light of Nature alone. The violet roots were choked with weeds, and I must have new suckers and begin all over again; and that was not possible until the violet season was over; then I intended to beg, borrow or steal some good suckers, and buy others if I had any money.

"Mary, you speak like a book with pictures; but I hope there will be *some* result, and that the violets will be ready before they are needed for our funeral wreaths."

I entreated them to find the patience I had thoroughly lost, and hurried out to rage over the thickly weed-wedged violet plants, with here and there a feeble bloom, and to imagine myself in years to come bending over this same bed, picking one long strong stalk after another, and scarcely lessening the store by the big bunch I should carry away. Oh! a lifetime was not enough for all I should or could do in a garden.

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HERE is a row of standard roses skirting the lawn on one side, and also a round bed of rose bushes. I had not much idea if they were any good, for roses had been to a great extent spoilt the last two years by very wet weather, still I had noticed the shoots they were sending forth with great

pleasure. Anyhow *they* were growing right enough. One day, the middle of March, I found Griggs busy down the row with a large knife. What was he doing? Horror! All the long shoots were being ruthlessly sacrificed.

"Griggs, what *are* you doing?" I gasped, and afterwards I felt very glad I said nothing stronger.

Griggs paid no attention to my tone; he took the words as showing a desire for enlightenment.

"You 'as to cut 'em a bit in spring-time, you know; or p'haps you don't know, missy."

This mode of address was one of Griggs's most unpardonable sins, but I never had the strength of character to tell him not to do it.

"But do you cut off *all* the new growth?" I said, with an inner conviction that if Griggs were doing it it needs must be wrong.

"Well, you trims 'em round a bit, starts 'em growin' more ways than one, d'ye see."

"But those aren't suckers?" I said, still feebly fighting with my ignorance and incredulity.

Then Griggs laughed. He did not like me, and I suppose I ought not to wonder, but he enjoyed laughing at me when he got the chance.

"No-a, they ain't suckers; suckers come from the root, leastways, they start down there, and, bless yer! they be the ol' stock trying to have a look in as you may say. I cuts them off soon as I sees 'em, as they wastes the tree; but you *can* see suckers as 'as got the upper 'and. That rose front of the 'ouse is all sucker now. 'Twas a beautiful pink rose I mind in old Rector Wood's time."

"That is very instructive," I remarked, feeling no gratitude to Griggs for his information, as he felt no shame for the metamorphosis of the once beautiful pink rose, which was now a wild one. We had wondered how it came to be growing up with the clematis.

"And can't one cut back the suckers and let the pink rose grow again?" I added.

"'Tain't likely," was all I could get out of Griggs.

I bicycled over that very day to the Master's garden, a hot and tiring way of getting infor-

mation, but a sure one, I knew, and one to which I often had recourse in desperate moments. The Master was out, but his garden was there, and all his rose trees were clipped. So I breathed again.

I had a little good luck with violets a few weeks later.

A friend who had heard of my gardening efforts sent me several dozen runners of the "Czar," and the Master spared me some others from his frame. I was full of joy, and choosing a shady spot, saw it dug, raked, helped out with a mixture of manure and leaf-mould, planted the violets at six inches apart and liberally watered them. Shade, of course, for the modest violet, I thought, carefully selecting for their home the shelter of an overhanging chestnut. Well, well! one lives to learn, or for some such purpose, I suppose.

The thick branches of that shadowing tree kept out sun as well as rain; and, doubt it not, brother Ignoramus, violets, be they ever so modest, like the sunshine and will only pine without it. So in the autumn another move took place, and again I waited, whilst the Others

bought penny bunches and talked of funeral wreaths in the far future.

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HE long herbaceous border grew more and more interesting. A broad-leafed plant had been sending up tall stems, now it opened out and a big daisy-like blossom of yellow shone in the sun. "Leopard's bane," said old Griggs with decision, and "doronicum," said the Master, both being right, but I know not why it was considered a bane or healing, for the banes among the flowers are surely blessings. But there it was, and very grateful and comforting at this early time of year. As though conscious that a friendly eye had begun to watch over them, the scattered old plants of polyanthus, wall-flower, a group or so of tulips and some clumps of London pride brushed up this spring and cheered the eye.

I was studying the shooting green clumps, lilies here and there, golden rod, autumn daisy,

maybe a stray phlox, many, very much too many, evening primroses, seedlings of self-sown foxgloves, and wondering how to re-arrange them and make room for the better company I intended introducing, when his Reverence's Young Man came down the path laden with a big brown hamper. He looked quite excited.

"Oh, Mistress Mary, do come and examine the contents. I hope you may find welcome strangers here. I told my mother you needed anything and everything except geraniums. Was that right? So she has sent this hamper with instructions to get them in at once."

The Young Man was cutting away at string and fastenings, and rapidly strewing the path with big clumps of roots in which a careful hand had stuck a label.

I was divided between joy and reproof.

"How kind of her! But you should not have bothered her. How nice to have such big, ready-grown plants! But why did you do it?"

"Mayn't I help the garden to grow? My mother promises more in the autumn; it appears flowers like to move just before winter."

"It is kind of you. This border is such a weight on my mind. It needs so much, I think. And what a lot the hamper holds!"

"Let me do the dirty work," cried the Young Man, as I hauled out a big root. "You shall tell me where to plant them."

"The earth isn't dirty, it is beautifully, healthily clean; and don't you love its 'most excellent cordial smell'? Shall I get Griggs and a spade?"

"Oh, why bother Griggs? Won't I do as well? I know nearly as much and am twice as willing."

"Yes, but think of—"

"Don't say parish. There is only old Mrs Gunnet and she will keep. These plants demand immediate attention. My mother was most emphatic about that."

It is very difficult to have a conscience as well as a garden and to keep both in good working order. I could not think Mrs Gunnet and her rheumatism as important as my garden; moreover, I felt I was carrying out the teaching of Tolstoy in bringing man and his Mother Earth into direct contact.

"Griggs could not come anyhow, he is digging a grave," I said conclusively. "Let us do it."

So the Young Man fetched a selection of gardening implements and we both set to work, he to dig and I to instruct.

"This is delphinium," I cried joyfully, handing him a big clump, "dark blue, I want it badly." And in answer to an inquiring look, for the Young Man knew less, much less, than I did, "That is larkspur and it is a perennial, and this jolly big root means plenty of spikes."

"Spikes!" he echoed, patting the roots vigorously.

"Those tall spikes of flowers, you know, very blue. One looks so lonely all by itself."

"Ah! that is a way we all have, we poor solitary ones."

"These are penstemons. They are, well, I forget, but I know I want them. Suppose we put them further forward; they don't look like growing so tall. Gaillardias, ah! I know, they are brilliant and effective. I bought some seeds to suit the others. These

will save time. Now, a big hole; this is Tritoma. What on earth is that? I have heard. Grandis means big but Tritoma?"

We both studied the label.

"Must it have another name? Is that the rule? I told my mother the gardener was an Ignoramus. She might have written in the vulgar tongue."

"Did you mean me or Griggs?"

"Griggs, of course."

"Then you were wrong. But I remember now, I was studying its picture this morning in the catalogue. Tritoma stands for red-hot poker. It will look fine at the back."

"Well, you are getting on," said the Young Man, in tones of admiration. "But why won't they say 'poker' and have done with it?"

"I wish they would. It is very trying of them. See what a lot you are learning. This is much more improving for a son of Adam than visiting old women and babies."

"*Much!* And I like it much better, which shows it is good for me."

"Ah, I don't know about that. Still, it

does strike me as absurd to send a young man fresh from college to visit old women and babies. I can't think what you say to them."

"I say 'Did ums was ums' to the babies. But I am not quite fresh from college, you know. I talk some kind of sense to the mothers; at least, I hope so."

He was making a big hole and I was holding out a big root to fill it.

"This is galega. It is rather tall and so must go at the back. I don't mean you never talk sense, though I consider it insulting to address a baby like that. They look so preternaturally grave that Greek would suit them better. But I mean it isn't a man's work, it is a woman's."

"Galega! that means pok—no, larkspur! You see I am getting quite learned. There, it fits in beautifully."

"Press the roots firmly or they don't take hold," I observed.

"So. I always find your conversation very improving. My mother says the same things to me, I mean about old women."

I had walked down the path for another root. He went on when I came back,

"But you know the old women, and young ones too, like a visit from their clergy. The clergyman and doctor are great boons in their lives."

"Poor souls, I know they are very hard up. Even I am considered a boon, especially when I go round with puddings and things."

"Or without!" and he looked up quickly. "*I* should think so if—but"—and his voice changed—"I do understand what you mean. *This* is Adam's work, eh? Only the other is the vineyard too, and we, I—I mean, need the experience it gives me. They live at the root of things, touch life so nearly. It is something like coming in touch, actual touch, with the brown earth. Do you see what I am trying to say?"

I looked up at him from my plants, at this tall young man in a bicycling suit of semi-clerical cut, with his keen face and earnest eyes, whom we had fallen into the way of treating in almost brotherly fashion since his Reverence had adopted him as his

Young Man as well as curate. He had broken down in some Midland town from overwork and come to Fairleigh to recruit and study and fill in a convalescent time. As a rule we did not like the curates.

"I think you are right," I said, "but somehow I feel I am right too in a way. One can't be saving souls all the time—one's own or other people's—and here, as you say, is Adam's work, the brown earth."

He laughed. "And here is Eve naming the flowers! I am sure Eve kept Adam to the digging while she picked the fruit."

"How men do love that old allegory! Personally I don't think they come out of it so well that they need quote it so often. However, as it gives them all the backbone, I feel quite absolved when I ask them to use it!"

The Young Man rose up. "Ah! if Eve had had the spirit of her daughters!"

"Here is a very large phlox, please dig that hole bigger," I interrupted, and as we carefully placed it in position, down the path came his Reverence and the Master.

"Oh!" I shouted, "come and see all my new arrivals; I am going to cut you out!"

The Master examined our work over his spectacles, and looked up and down the border critically, ending his survey with an unpromising "Humph."

Something was very wrong, evidently. My hopeful spirits sank.

"Have we been doing anything very ignorant? Don't you put plants straight into the earth? Will they all die?"

The Master laughed.

"Let us hope things are not as desperate as all that. I was looking at your border. Oh, what pauper fare! and what a lot of rubbish in it. Licence has reigned here for many a long year."

"For over twenty," I exclaimed savagely. "Griggs has been here quite that time."

"It used to look very well in Mr Wood's time, but that is many years ago, and he devoted himself chiefly to his roses. It is a pity you did not do it in the autumn."

"Oh, don't, Master!" I cried dolefully.

"Nothing is more trying to my temper than to be told of all the things that ought to have been done months and years ago. I can't go back and do them!"

"No more you can. There is a great deal of sound sense in that remark, only—"

"And don't tell me to wait until the autumn again. I can't always be waiting for the other end of the year to do the things I want done now."

"Oh! then let us go forward at once," said the Master.

"What shall I do?" asked the Young Man, with as much energy as though the afternoon were just beginning. "Shall I take out the roots we have put in to begin with?"

The Master again looked up and down, and I could see he was again regretting the autumn.

"If you won't wait it must be done," he said at last. "Have this border thoroughly well turned over, two feet deep at the least, and work in some of that savoury heap I saw in your little yard. You will

find a good deal of root to cut away from those trees; they take the food from this border, but that can't be helped now. Then clear out the weeds and those terrible marigolds I see springing up everywhere, and those poppy seedlings. I think your new friends will have a better chance when that is done."

"And the plants that are to stay, may they be touched?"

"You *must* touch them, but do a piece at a time, and lift them in and out with a good ball of earth round the roots so as to disturb them as little as possible. Press them well in afterwards and water."

"Should Griggs put some of the savoury heap just round their roots?"

"No, no, let the whole border have a dressing. Later on any special plant may be mulched if it is needed."

"Mulched!" said the Young Man, turning to me. "Do you know what that is?"

I shook an ignorant head.

"Something to do with manure, I believe, but I don't know what."

"Griggs will show you," laughed the Master.

"No, he has his own vocabulary. I try the garden book words on him occasionally and he looks quite blank."

"It is giving the plants a little extra food from the surface. So it sinks gradually in or the rain carries it down with it. A gentle process and the roots are not disturbed. The other process may produce indigestion, you see."

Adam and Eve carefully replaced the unplanted roots in the hamper and gave a sigh.

"Oh, dear! All our work. You might as well have gone to see Mrs Gunnet."

"Oh, no," said Adam, "because I have learnt a great deal and can help you another time."

It was a good thing for me and the border that the Master had looked so grave over it, for his Reverence was duly impressed with the necessity of the case, and Griggs and a helpful stranger were hard at work next day and the next, and by the end of that week the border lay smooth and brown and

neat with hopeful green patches at intervals. Jim and I and the Young Man had been very busy arranging those patches, and I hoped the front plants would not grow taller than the back, but a good deal had been left to luck. The evening primroses and marigolds and weeds had disappeared, I hoped for good. Time proved that this was too hopeful a view to take of weeds.

And I will never forget the Master's parting injunction.

"Mind," with raised finger, "you ought never to take a spade near your herbaceous border, only turn it over with a little fork, for the well-established roots should not be disturbed. And good soil and sufficient water ought to be enough as a rule. To-day we have been dealing with an exceptional case, remember that!"

Oh! Master, yes. Mine is an exceptional case; but I guess there are many would-be gardeners as ignorant, and, maybe, many gardens as exceptional.

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UT to return to my hopefully-growing seeds. I fear they were being left anyway rather longer than was judicious, for one day about the beginning of April it struck me my wooden boxes were very full and the plantlets growing very leggy.

"Why is that?" I asked Griggs. I hated asking Griggs, but there was no one else to ask. After all it seemed *impossible* but that Griggs, during the forty odd years he had pretended to be a gardener, should not have gathered together some scraps of information concerning plants and their ways.

"They wants pricking out, that's why they're so spindle-shankey. 'Tain't no good asking me for more boxes, I ain't got no more; and you can't put 'em out in the open neither—leastways, they'll die if you do."

"Of course not," I said with all the knowledge I possessed in my tone. "But we must have boxes. They can be knocked up, can't they?"

"Not without wood, they can't. And just

look at all them seeds wot you've sowed. Why, they wants a sight o' boxes now."

It was a dilemma, but Jim revived my faint spirits.

There were boxes—old winecases—in the cellar, he said. Jim knew every nook and cranny of the house; he would just ferret them out; no one would miss them. Jim never asked leave, for experience had taught him that a demand occasions a curious rise in the value of an article absolutely unknown to the possessor before it was required by someone else. And Griggs knocked them together, for Jim explained we had to let the fellow try his hand occasionally.

We filled the new boxes with a little heavier diet than the baby seeds had enjoyed, good mould from under some shrubbery, and then carefully separated each stem; and carrying out Nature's law of the survival of the fittest, I placed the most promising in the new environment.

I had done one whole box, it looked so neat, the little upright shoots all about

three inches apart, when Jim and the Young Man came round.

He had been away for a few days and was quite anxious to know how my garden grew.

He had altered the old rhyme with which, of course, his Reverence and the Others were always pestering me; but I don't think his version was very original either—

> "How does the garden so contrairy
> Get on with its new Mistress Mary?"

I was seated on the corner of the one frame and the boxes were precariously placed on the edge.

The Young Man's face beamed. "I have been learning to prick out; now, let me see."

And to my horror he began to pull up my neat little plants.

"There, that's wrong, and that and that. No, that stands; but see, all these are wrong."

I gasped, "What are you doing? Do you call that pricking out? I don't."

"By Jove! you'll catch it now, my dear fellow," said Jim.

"Oh! don't you see it's all right to do that, because it shows you you have done them all wrong."

"I think you have misunderstood the idea of 'pricking out,'" I said coldly.

The Young Man was so full of information he paid no attention to my offended dignity or Jim's mirth.

"I learnt it on purpose to show you. I planted a box full at home and the gardener came round and did that to my plants. I nearly whacked him on the head."

"You're a parson," interrupted Jim, "you've got to think of that."

"I know, Jim. I managed to bottle my feelings nearly as well as Mistress Mary did just now. I know what she is feeling."

But I was still dignified.

"Now will you tell me," I began.

"Oh, it's a first-rate dodge! You see, if they are firmly put in they will stand that little pull, and if not it shows you ought to have wedged them in better."

"Why," said Jim, "I bet I could tug out any you could wedge in."

"That's the art; you must wedge right and tug just enough."

"And why," I asked again, "why this tugging and this wedging?"

"Oh, because otherwise they don't catch hold properly and make themselves at home. I didn't mean to spoil your neat box," he continued penitently. "May I help you?"

"Why, of course you must," I said, brightening up. "Look at all that has to be done. Jim, dear, fill those boxes nicely with mould, a judicious mixture of looseness and compression."

"I've other fish to fry this afternoon. If his Reverence's Young Man will do some beastly algebra for me I will stay and mess about with you; if not, he has got to do the messing."

And so Jim deserted us, and we planted and pulled at each other's boxes, and I certainly tried to get some of his out. And then the fresh difficulty faced us where to put all these new boxes, for they had to be protected from the still frosty nights, and also from any too heavy rains which

might, perchance, drown them. I wanted much more room than the one frame afforded, even could I turn out all the scraggy geraniums.

"They must be protected somehow," I said despondingly, "and we can't carry them in and out of doors, and oh! how heavy even these little boxes are. There's the verandah, but the Others will never let me crowd them out with these boxes. It is just getting sunny out there. What can we do?"

The Young Man looked round and thought, and thought, and then it came, an idea worth patenting.

"You don't want heat for them?"

"Oh, no, they ought to be hardened, you see."

"And it's only at night, or against heavy rains, that they want protecting?"

"That's all."

"Well, then, I have it!" And he had it, the germ of the brilliant idea that, with Jim's assistance and mine, and Griggs's for actual manual labour, gradually evolved

into an impromptu frame and saved us even the making of new boxes.

This was the plan of action.

We cleared a space in the little yard where the frame lived, and the manure heap in one corner, and one sunny border which held lettuce and I intended should hold my plantlets later on. We made first a bed of cinders (this for drainage), then a layer of manure (this for heat), then good mould, and all were enclosed with four strong planks, and in this protected spot we pricked out our nurslings. At night they were covered with a plank or two and some sacking, and this also protected them during any very heavy rains, until they grew strong enough to weather them. The boxes already pricked out we protected in like manner, only making no special bed for them.

It became truly a delight to see how day by day those tiny sprigs of green grew and prospered, and to watch the development of the various leaves. The pretty crinkly little round leaves of the polyanthus,

the neat spiky twig of the marigold and tagetes, the sturdy, even-growing antirrhinum with pale green stalks for white, and yellow and rich brown for the red variety, and the trim, three-cornered leaves of the nasturtium, each after its kind, very wonderful when we realise all that potentiality enclosed in a pin's point of a seed, and needing no difference of treatment to produce either zinnia or lobelia.

I made all the Others, and everyone else too, walk round my nursery and dilated on the promising appearance of my children.

"Wonderfully neat! but how tiny they all are. Do you mean to say you expect those little things to flower this year? Why, it is like asking a baby of six months old to ride a bicycle!" said one of the Others.

"But they are annuals! In comparison they are now twenty years old! Of course they will flower this year, and be old and done for by October."

"Well, you are *very* hopeful, but *I* don't expect much result *this* year."

"You will see!"

"Well, we have not seen much yet, have we?"

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THE packets containing my biennial seeds, which, of course, means such seeds as sown one year furnish plants for the next year's flowering and then go the way of all "grass," instructed me to sow in the open from March or April to June.

From what I have so far learned I would certainly advise sowing as early as possible and not taking June into consideration at all. The little plants get forward before the really hot weather begins, and usually the clouds supply sufficient water at that time; but if not, on no account must they go thirsty. I found watering a great necessity, for my ground is as porous as a sieve; a substratum of nice cool tenacious clay must be a great boon to those who happily have it. I suppose it may have some drawbacks, but my imagination is not

lively enough to suggest any. Being light and poor, I usually doctored the soil before sowing the seeds. I believe it ought not to be really necessary; but a little manure mixed with leaf mould and some earth from a convenient shrubbery or background place, and all dug well in, was approved of by the plantlets. If by any chance you can lay aside, from hedgerows, corners of field or other prigable parts, some rolls of turf and let it stand aside until it rots, it makes most helpful dressing, particularly for rose roots.

After the ground is ready make little straight trenches about one inch deep, and thinly, because they are certain anyway to be too close, scatter in your seeds. There for the present your work ends, and Mother Earth commences her never-ending miracle of death and resurrection. "Thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other grain," and "that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," when, "God giveth it a body, to every seed his own body."

Those little brown pin points, of which you hold hundreds in a pinch on your palm, each one has its "celestial" body ready to spring into life through the dark gateway of death. Surely St Paul must have had his garden as a little boy, and sown his seeds, and marvelled, even as Jim and I did, with eyes opening to the wonder of it all. A wonder that is passed over in the matter-of-course way of the daily round, but that startles one, almost as a revelation, when one's own hand holds the seed, sows it, and then watches for the result.

To say it is just "life" or the "force of nature" or "the energy that is behind all things," these are but words, the marvel remains. Irresistibly the thought arises, "With what body shall *we* come?" Not with the old earth body for sure, if my seeds are to teach me anything.

So I sowed first the forget-me-nots, as this year they must come from seed. Another year I will take the little shoots that are round the old plant and, separating them, will prick them out iu a nursery spot, and so

shall my plants for the following year be more mature, stronger, and therefore better flowering; a first year's forget-me-nots are apt to be straggling. Then the sweet-Williams, the wallflowers, red and gold, Canterbury bells, silene, the little bright pink edging that with forget-me-nots makes a border so gay in spring time, these were my first year's venture in biennials; for though some of them may be considered perennials, the best results may be hoped for from a continuously fresh store.

The big sunflower seeds I placed just where I wanted them to come up, sometimes a single one, so that the plant should have all its own way, and wear as big a head as it knew how, and others in groups of four or five.

Nasturtiums also I placed as a border to a lonely shrubbery. Some of the seeds had been got forward in the impromptu frame, but those were for my tree stumps and for creeping up the verandah. Canariensis the same; the convolvulus also were planted freely to cover up deficiencies wherever a creeping thing could grow.

It is wise to sow your perennial seeds early; they get settled in life before they are called upon to face their first winter. So in another spot, judiciously cribbed from cabbage-room—crib I had to for my nursery ground—I sowed in like fashion the perennials, those which had not already begun their career in wooden boxes and frame. There were the big Oriental poppies, red and orange, for my impatience had so far succumbed to the gardening spirit that I could bear to contemplate sowing seeds with the hope of no immediate return, Brompton stocks, penstemons, foxgloves and gaillardias; campanulas, too, short and tall, white and blue; and those already started in boxes, the polyanthus and columbines, nice sturdy little plants by now, were moved to this division a little later, when frosty nights were a thing of the past.

These for my first batch of perennials; others would surely follow with succeeding years. The thought of their permanence delighted me. Dear, nice things! they would not need sowing year by year, but would

yearly grow more and more "in favour with God and man." So I hoped, even as a mother hopes it for her children.

That long herbaceous border should one day be full of good stuff, one day blooming with a succession of flowers; but face the fact, one day is not to-morrow. The plants must grow; so, patience, patience, though mine was threadbare.

* * * * *

Y other nursery of annuals sown in early March were growing apace and the sweet peas needed sticking. It certainly spoils their appearance for a time but is very necessary. I noticed all my seedlings growing in bits of kitchen garden filched from his Reverence's province grew with greater vigour than those down my own borders.

I suspected that amongst much neglect the vegetable ground had suffered least, and so, in spite of his Reverence's outcry that I was

robbing him of at least a sack of potatoes, I continued to make little inroads on his property. And thus I was brought in contact with the fruit-trees bordering the pathways. They had been renewed, many of them, when first his Reverence came to Fairleigh. They looked healthy enough, but very few blossoms and no fruit ever accounted for their existence. I pointed this out to his Reverence, and, full of newly-acquired knowledge, asked him if he had heard of tap-roots. "Griggs planted them, so you may depend that is what is the matter with them, and in the autumn we will have them up."

"You are poaching," said his Reverence.

"You ought to be full of gratitude, but I can't take them in hand myself, I only give you some of my overflowing knowledge. And we should all like to eat our own apples and pears!"

Jim was much interested in tap-roots; he promised himself quite a good time hacking away at them in the autumn. He wondered if the barren fig-tree had a tap-root, but I could not enlighten him.

Everything was growing, we had had some good rain. I can feel for the farmers now; I know what it is to *want* rain. One of the Others said she wished we would keep quiet, all we gardeners and farmers who hankered after rain. She thought perhaps if we ceased the weather might get a little settled and the sun shine week in week out. To her mind that was far better than fields of corn or beds of even luxuriant flowers. There were sure to be *some* corn and *some* flowers anyhow, "so do let other people enjoy the sunshine in peace." Certainly if the English climate is the result of conflicting desires, it would be a good thing to have a national creed on the subject and make it obligatory.

After the rain, however, in that particular month of April, came the sun, and things grew apace.

Though not only my seeds and flowers. The enemy, who for many a long year had sown, or allowed to be sown, weeds in my garden, had his crop likewise.

"They're overmastering us agin," said Griggs, who had his friendly moments; and

sometimes, if we were working hard, quite enjoyed standing near and pretending to help us.

"It's your fault that, you know," said Jim, who minced matters with nobody. He was doubled up over the border surrounded with all kinds of implements, for Jim liked everything handy. There was a big clasp knife and a spade and rake, a trowel and little fork, and then he generally used his hands. He was now "tracking home," as he said, that evil-minded weed called, I believe, the ground-elder, and pointed out with some heat, quite excusable under the circumstances, that Griggs, who had just calmly and coolly cut off the head of the plant, had done not a "blooming bit of good."

If you should ever want a really good back-aching job, take a trowel or a little hand fork and begin a fight with those innocent-looking, many-fingered leaves growing in and out in so friendly a fashion with your flowers. You turn up the root, but its hold is still on the earth; you pull a

bit and find it belongs to that other cluster of leaves some little distance off. You attack that, very careful not to lose your underground connection, it also has sent long stringy branches in all directions. Then you pull and tear and say "Oh, bother!" and "What a brute of a weed!" Jim and I are careful not to say anything stronger, though he has been known to indulge in "hang," but I feel sure Griggs gives us the character of using "most horful languidge you never heard." Still it goes on, and quite a heap of potato-like roots will be out and yet its hold is not slackened. Finally it lands you in an iris or lily root; it is not particular, but I find it prefers a solid root, and there you get sadly mixed as to what is root and what is weed. But if the job is to be done finally, these roots must be all taken up and carefully disentangled, for all are twined together. This radical measure is best, or rather least injurious to lilies and irises, when their flowering time is over—July and August—and moving or dividing does not disturb them.

Never in all old Griggs's reign of twenty years had he tracked a ground-elder weed home; but I now know the look of those potato-like roots better than any other in my garden.

I cannot say I like doing it. Boys are more invertebrate and do not get so red in the face; and this I pointed out to Jim, suggesting a division of labour.

"You do get jolly red," said Jim, "but really, you know, I expect it's your stays."

"Jim!"

"Well, you needn't get up the steam. I only know when I was dressed up for those theatricals as a beastly, I mean, as a girl, the fellows got hold of some stays, I suppose they bagged their sister's, a precious tight pair, too! and I just tell you, in confidence, they made me absolutely sick. I had to retire looking like an unripe lemon. My! never again!"

"You squeezed too much, Jim."

"That girl must have squeezed more; and you all do, that's my private opinion."

In consideration, therefore, of the infirmities to which a rigorous convention condemns my sex, Jim said he would do the thinning out for me.

My promising annuals, designed for grand duty in the cutting line, godetias and larkspurs and chrysanthemums and Shirley poppies, were all most flourishing, but coming much too thick. They ought to have been thinned out sooner, of course, but we had been too busy, so Jim devoted his early morning hours to them, before the five minutes' rush on his bicycle which took him to the station for Gatley, where he and some other fellows were being crammed to pass the examination for the Royal Navy.

Jim's days were always filled. He never neglected cricket, nor, in its good time, football and hockey; but he was going to see me through with my garden for the first year, he said, and his help and ideas were never-failing.

On the thinning-out mornings Jim got up early; very early it seemed to me when he bounced into my room and sent a flood of

light full on my face, or placed a damp sponge there.

"Now I am going to thin, and I can't do it with any satisfaction if you are asleep. What you have to do is to think out any blooming thoughts for this blooming essay on courage. Why the blooming idiot gives us such rotten subjects I can't think. But you must jot down some headings and be ready with them when I come back."

"Jim, what a worn-out old subject. I shall go to sleep over it."

"This won't do," and Jim strode to the washing stand and plunged the sponge in water.

"Oh, don't, Jim, I am awake! There was 'the boy who stood on the burning deck,'" I shouted hurriedly.

Jim came back and stood over me.

"Open your eyes then wide, so. You see you are wasting precious time with your sluggishness."

I thought of those thickly-sown seedlings growing up so leggy, and I roused myself.

"Well, 'the boy' will do, then; he is a good old stager."

"Yes, so he mustn't be left out. All the other fellows will have him in for sure, and if I don't, 'old Joe' will think I don't know about him. They don't want any originality, these chaps; they want you just to stick on and learn what they learnt, then you see you can't put them in a corner. So just rout out good old standing dishes."

Jim turned to go.

"All right; but, Jim, remember to leave the strongest plant."

"'Survival of the fittest,' yes, I've heard that before."

"And don't forget about eight inches apart."

"I prefer six; you turn your thoughts to courage."

"Primitive instinct, difference between man and woman, one has more of the physical variety and the other of the moral," I shouted after him.

"No twaddle," said Jim, striding back. "Think of what *I* should be likely to say.

Of course we all may pick up ideas outside as we have to write the blooming thing in form, but it must sound like me, not you."

"It will, Jim, after it has been through your mill, never fear. And I think eight inches produces strongest plants."

And then Jim slid down the bannisters and I heard him whistling in the garden; but that soon ceased, for you can't whistle when you are bent double.

I must say the row looked very nice when I reviewed it after breakfast. Jim had selected with great care! but the heaps of rejected plantlets lying on the gravel path caused my motherly heart a pang. What a shocking waste! Every tiny seed had come up and ten were growing where but one could find sufficient support for full development, so out must come the nine. Nature is wasteful, and so is human nature, but we can't weed out the overcrowded families; and do the fittest there always survive? Truly it would need courage to tackle that problem.

* * * * *

LITTLE later, in May, I found an employment in which I tried to interest the Others, but it was no good. The only one I brought up to the scratch, or rather the rose tree, fled with horror when I showed her what was needed, and vowed she would rather never smell a rose again than do such disgusting work. But his Reverence took quite kindly to the job, I am glad to say, and it was a good sight in my eyes when I saw his wideawake carefully bent over the standard roses, and then a certain look of victory rose over his spectacles as he spotted the enemy. This new enemy is a very vile-looking little green grub; one variety is brown and fat, and then indeed I have felt inclined to flee myself. I suppose his mamma lands him in an invisible stage on the tender young rose leaves and he curls them round him for a cradle. Then in some mysterious way, which I heartily wish Dame Nature had never taught him, he rocks his cradle to the side of a juicy young bud, glues him-

self to it and enjoys it. Not much bud is left. So his Reverence unfolds the green cradle and carefully ejects the baby. I simply cannot do that, I pick off the leaf; but in either case the end is rapid and final.

And how prolific is that abominable butterfly! You may, in fact, you *must*, visit your rose trees daily if you would hope to see a goodly show.

At least, so it is in my garden. I can but speak from a limited experience. I have often thought others may be more blessed than I am, but you may not be one of them, friend Ignoramus.

Then there is the green fly, thickly swarming all over banksia or cluster roses, at least, more especially favouring them. Jim would have little to say to the green grub, though occasionally even he and the Young Man had their steps gently led in that direction; and seeing his Reverence's absorption, they too began and then somehow went on. A kind of fatal fascination, I suppose, "Just one more!" The Others would never give the spell a chance, but

Jim grew to take the greatest interest in green fly.

The Young Man suggested smoke for their destruction, but his cigarettes did not seem to effect much, though he blew round a bush for quite a long time while I picked the cradle leaves off another, and of course my work was the most effectual. Jim was very keen on trying this remedy too. I said the effect would be worse than his experience with the stays, at which he asked me with dignity if I supposed he was as green as all that! However, Griggs came out with an old syringe, and Jim said that was the work for him. Soapy water and a good shove, and the Young Man was simply deluged.

All Jim said was, "What a mercy it was only you. Think if it had been his Reverence! Winkie! what a shine there would have been."

I thought the young man behaved beautifully, for a man, though he did catch Jim and hold him upside down until he was gurgling.

But when the green fly got the douche very strongly given they too objected, and vacated their position.

Afterwards I obtained a recipe for a douche which had even more effectual results.

Take two ounces of quassia chips (you get them from a chemist for a very small sum) and one ounce of soft soap, and pour on them about a pint of boiling water. Leave it till cold and then add water to the amount of two gallons. With this concoction syringe your green fly, and its extreme bitterness will make them lose all fancy for your rosebuds.

* * * * *

HE lilacs were out, and the white guelder rose and the ash tree; may and syringa and laburnum were soon to follow. Truly even a poor neglected little garden has its happy moments!

I would rest some days looking around and enjoying the green so new and fresh

everywhere, and trying to shut the reformer's eye. But it was growing too strong for me; the only way to shut it was to reform. The shrubberies were terrible. Laurel was rampant everywhere. A nasty greedy thing, it cannot live and let live, for it takes the nourishment needed by its better brethren. I would have no laurel in my garden, none, but that is a dream for the future. The elder tree too has no manners, it shares this failing with its namesake weed; it shoves and pushes all more gentle growth to the wall. It must be cut back hard. And the syringas also, they need the judicious knife to prune out the old wood and so give strength to the young shoots. And so does the yellow Japanese rose, more learnedly called Kerria Japonica, which in late March and April had given but a poor little show of bloom. I guessed that its treatment had been that of the yellow jasmine. It had been clipped in the autumn on the hedging and ditching principle, and the young shoots with the promise of buds had disappeared beneath

Griggs's shears. Better for the plant to have razed it to the ground after flowering, said the Master, for the vigorous young shoots would soon have appeared; so following his instruction I this spring cut the old stems right away, leaving only the new green ones springing from the ground. I am hoping here, too, for next year.

It seems a gardener must always be living in the future, "possessing their souls in patience," and "hoping all things." Truly it is a liberal education, and I hope may prove very valuable to Jim and the Young Man—and other persons.

It has done no good to Griggs.

* * * * *

PRING slipped into summer. The sun shone longer and melted the iciness in the wind's breath; the tender green of the trees gave place to "leafy June" and the shade was grateful.

Jim found a waistcoat superfluous, and the head gardener donned a shady hat and tried to wear gloves.

Yes, the spring was gone, and even with summer's glories to come one turns a regretful glance back to the months when "Behold, He maketh all things new."

SEASON III

Summer

"Knee-deep in June."

SUMMER

Face page 127.

SEASON III

Summer

"Knee-deep in June."

AND knee-deep in work, too, for June will not give you anything for nothing if you are running a garden. I had my hands full, not only with the legitimate work of June, which is great, but May is sure to have left you in the lurch; this "getting forward" process so much preached by the Master is not seconded by May with at all a whole heart.

"March ain't never nothin' new!
Apriles altogether too
Brash fer me, and May—I jes'
'Bominate its promises.
Little hints o' sunshine and
Green around the timber-land,
A few blossoms and a few
Chip birds, and a sprout or two—
Drap asleep, and it turns in
'Fore daylight and snows agen!" *

* James Whitcomb Riley.

My poet is an American, but the complaint may be raised also in the old country; only I do not "'bominate" promises. I love them, and as I am perforce a gardener it is a good thing, for I often get nothing else.

But be the garden forward or not, how lovely a garden can be, even a neglected garden, these last weeks of May and first of June.

The chestnuts are scarcely over, the laburnum is raining gold, the may trees are like snow, a delicious reminder when the sun is doing its duty brilliantly; the roses are just breaking from the bud, and now we can congratulate ourselves on the wholesale slaughter of green grub and green fly, without, however, giving up the pursuit.

But what was the matter with those newly-planted rose trees? The crimson rambler, for one, that was to ramp up the verandah, had not ramped an inch; it had only put forth some miserable, half-starved leaves and not one bud. The Others derided it freely. William Allen Richardson looked unhappy too; the new standards seemed more contented, and the Reine

Marie Hortense, who also was destined to cover the verandah as rapidly as might be with pink Gloire de Dijon roses, had really begun her work with a will. Why then had my much-vaunted crimson rambler failed me? I had been told they disliked a wall, but not a verandah. "A worm i' the root," suggested One; but I held to certain laws of the Medes and Persians, and one was to leave the roots alone until the right time; so if my rambler wished to flourish elsewhere it must bide until the autumn; though in the front, over an old stump, and down in the kitchen garden it was the same tale, the ramblers refused to ramble.

* * * * *

UT the business of the month must not be kept waiting a day, in fact, we began the last week in May, and that was promoting the nurslings from their shelter to the open borders.

The two large round beds that were generally devoted to Griggs's semi-red geraniums and scraggy calceolarias, and which were the only regular planting-out beds the garden possessed, were now a subject of much disquieting thought to me.

They were so terribly important. By them I felt my reputation must stand or fall. They were plainly visible from everywhere. They needed to be a brilliant mass of colour from June to October; no easy problem for one lot of flowers to solve. I had set my face against Griggs's geraniums bordered with calceolarias and lobelias, the refuge of the destitute; any other refuge was to be mine, I resolved. And since it had been no silent resolve, it had perforce to be kept.

At present those beds were an eyesore, but one for which I did not feel responsible. Before I took in hand the reins of garden government, Griggs had buried there a mixture of tulips and edged them with alternate polyanthuses—the poorest of specimens—and forget-me-nots that had weathered the winter in what Griggs termed

a "spotty" way. It was certainly a suggestive phrase for those particular plants. But I had been able to join the Others in their chorus of condemnation. Now the time had arrived for a change, and the responsibility appalled me.

I had had visions of those two beds with many various inhabitants. At first the dream had been of violas, pale mauve deepening into the dark purple, but to complete that idea some tall things with a strong colour—red salvias or good red geraniums—were needed; these, planted some eighteen inches apart, would bring out the delicate background. But the dream vanished perforce. Apart from the lack of good red anything, my violas had failed me, and some few dozen little plants were all I could reckon upon. Why, I do not know; it was just this, the seeds had not come up.

So then I dreamed of all my straight little antirrhinums; they would surely make a fine glaring effect. I had red, yellow, white and a good quantity. Jim liked the

idea; red was to be the centre, and yellow and white alternate, a broad border.

Griggs took his arrangement away. The dilapidated tulips were saved, of course, and kept in a dry place stored for the autumn planting out.

On the polyanthus roots too I laid rescuing hands. They were not very good colours, but needing so much I dared not waste. The best of the lot I had noted, and now placed them down the shaded lime walk. They could grow where the primroses grew, and in spring I should welcome even their uncertain shades down amongst the bright green of the wild things. The beds were turned over well, and a little fresh soil and manure dug in; then, when neat, smooth and ready, I brought up the first detachment of small antirrhinums from the nursery for their adornment. These had grown to the height of from five to six inches, but had still a slender air. I think it would have helped their more rapid development had they been moved sooner from their first box. With seedlings, friend

Ignoramus, you cannot be *too* particular. Never let them have the slightest check; keep them watered, cared for, and as they need it give them room. They will then reward you.

All one cool afternoon Jim and I planted out. We began in the centre and made rings round with an impromptu compass formed by a stick and string. In the rounds thus made the plantlets were steadily and firmly placed, eight inches apart, though eight inches seemed a great deal of spare room.

"They will grow," I persisted; "they are small for their age, but will soon need elbow room."

"I feel I am playing with little tin soldiers, don't you?" suggested Jim; "but they are strong little beggars and will grow bigger, won't they?"

"Oh, rather! over a foot, though they are the dwarf kind, you know; but they branch out like the wicked bay tree."

"Well, there's room for it," said Jim, and then we worked on steadily until tea-time.

"What are you sprinkling that bed with

those tiny green twigs for?" asked one of the Others. "We want something a trifle cheering there, you must remember, Mary. We have to look at it all the summer."

"We don't *want* to have to regret Griggs's semi-red 'janiums," said another of the Others.

"They will be a blazing mass of colour," I answered confidently as I hurried over my tea. "Come, Jim, they must be got in."

"Remember it is for *this* summer," shouted the Other.

"And not to adorn our graves, my dear," came after us.

What had happened in my short absence? I saw with new eyes, the eyes not of the fond mother but of the critic.

"Jim!" and my whisper was awful.

"What's up? Have we done anything wrong?"

"Look at them!"

They looked absurd. They looked impossible. The bed so big and they so small, so like tiny tin soldiers, that my faith failed me. The Others would be confronted by little

green twigs all the summer and regret Griggs's *régime*. It was hopeless! they could never rise to the occasion.

"They must come up, Jim."

"Oh, rot! Let's put 'em a bit thicker; they will flower all right, you said so half-an-hour ago."

"I don't know what I said half-an-hour ago; I feel sure now that they will take months to do anything! And what shall I do meanwhile? It's the pricking out; we were behind with that, you see. They must come up and go somewhere, where it won't matter so awfully. These beds *must* be a success, even if I spend every farthing I possess on buying ready-made plants."

We took them up. Jim was impressed with my sorrow. We planted those we had disturbed in the border in front as an edging.

"It won't matter so much here, they don't strike the eye, because other things are coming here in clumps, but for those two beds!"

I had nightmares of tiny tin soldiers dressed in green who marched round and round and disappeared, and then two bare

brown beds loomed up like giant's eyes, and the Others all shouted,

"Isn't it hideous? What did you do it for? Oh, Mary, what a mess you have made of it!"

* * * * *

EXT afternoon Jim and I, his Reverence and the Young Man —who also joined the Council —calculated exactly how many plants would be required to really fill those beds with a desirable effect. I could hardly believe it, the calculation ended in two hundred for each bed. I sat down on the grass and looked and looked as though looking would make the necessary quantity appear.

"It can't be done," I moaned in the bluest despair. "I don't possess four hundred of anything; so there!"

"You might make a kind of pattern," began the Young Man.

"I hate a kaleidoscopic effect," I growled.

"You've jolly well got to have one," said Jim.

"There might be a border," suggested his Reverence.

"Really, you *may* mix some flowers," ventured the Young Man, rather fearful of having his head snapped off again.

"I have seen uncommonly pretty beds done that way. Why, in the Park this year I noticed a background of small close blue flowers, and out of them rose tall pink geraniums. The effect was excellent," said his Reverence.

"'You may see as good sights many times in tarts,'" I remarked, and they none of them knew, not even Jim, that I was quoting the learned Bacon, but thought my temper was affecting my reason.

"Get up off the damp grass," said Jim, offering violent assistance, "and come and contemplate the nursery. Great Scott! after all your bragging to collapse like this. Aren't the babies there still?"

"I have hundreds of nothing, and they are all such tiny things it would take *thousands* of them to fill these *hideous* big beds."

So rather a downeast procession wended their way round the shrubbery to the little yard with its frame and manure heap and enclosures of plantlets.

His Reverence drew out pencil and paper, and after making several very shaky rounds to represent the two beds, he began to fill in with names as suggested to him by Jim and the Young Man.

"Let us start with the biggest geraniums in the centre, a group of six we will say, as they are not very big any of them. Now then, a row next of those yellow daisies, that will fill up a good bit and look bright, too. Then we might have those stocks, all colours are they? Do famously. And then the little snapdragons, what do you call them?—anti—anti—what? snapdragon will do for me. You say they are too small! Oh, but they will grow. Red, then yellow, then white. Why, see, Mary, the round is nearly full. Then a row of the smallest geraniums, don't you think, and end up with an edging of blue lobelia. That would be fine, eh?"

Jim saw my face and burst into laughter. I was in no laughing mood.

"Good heavens, sir! Imagine such a higgledy-piggledy assembly as that—all sizes —all colours—all blooming anyhow!"

"Not at all, not at all. Now, Young Man, what do you say? Look here" And with the warmth of an inventor his Reverence read over his list and grew more in love with his colour scheme than ever.

"Yes," said the Young Man, at intervals, "yes, that fills in grandly;" and then he caught my eye, a flash of indignation, so he began to hesitate and hedge. "Only, you see, your Reverence, that for flowers, that is, for bedding out, it seems you need — you have to think—" and he looked at me but got no assistance. "Perhaps there might be too many colours, mightn't there?" he wound up feebly.

"Too many colours! Why, my dear fellow, it isn't for a funeral! Do you want all the flowers to wear black coats like you and me?"

"No, no, sir, only, you see in one bed"

"Bless the man, of course they are in

one bed! Why, where is the harm in variety? Just look here" and we went through the scheme again. "Now, come; if you don't like this, what can you suggest better, eh?"

The Young Man looked so nonplussed and uncomfortable, and his Reverence was falling deeper and deeper in love with his arrangement, I saw that I must at once take the matter in hand or it would be too late.

"I know," I said suddenly. I did not know, at least, not what I would do, only what I would not, which is sometimes a great help in the other direction.

"Well, let us hear your idea," said his Reverence, with enforced patience, looking fondly at his scheme.

"The antirrhinums are too small and the violas too few," I began.

"Well, that is not much of an idea!"

"No, but I am thinking" and so I was, for a thought had come.

Then his Reverence laughed. "Ah, well, you *think*. In the meantime I will leave you my list and go and see after old Griggs." He linked his arm in the Young Man's and

walked him off. He, looking penitently back, found no forgiveness; I had no use for the penitence of cowards.

Then I began to expound to Jim the idea that had come like a flash! like a revelation! until Jim said, "Get on, let's have the idea. I don't personally think his Reverence's scheme at all bad, you know. I just laid low because I saw what a stew you were in, but *personally* I like a bit of colour."

Then I explained to Jim what a delirium those beds would be, and Jim would have left me too had I not said he should do all the measurements for the beds as I wanted somebody with an eye! How queer men are, even in embryo. They always hang together, and it is only flattery that can overcome their prejudices.

Jim grew interested. The idea was to be all yellow. I had those marguerites of Griggs's cuttings developed now into fair-sized plants in spite of their neglected childhood, for I had seen to them since. They should grow in the centre; then should come my marigolds, which were very thriv-

ing, two kinds of them, the big, rather clumsy African, but with handsome colouring, and the smaller, neater, darker French variety, and we would finish with a good border of tagetes.

They were all bushy plants, all hardy, and would bloom steadily through the summer and autumn.

A basket of scabious—lady's pincushions—arriving from the Master while I was planting out were also worked into my scheme, and worked in well. The dark round balls of reds, browns, blues, with tiny white pin-points, did not disturb the yellow harmony. Eventually I was proud of those beds.

When first planted they did look slightly new and stalky, but they filled out daily. His Reverence only remarked, "Well, well, have it your own way; I suppose it is æsthetic! But my idea was more cheerful."

Griggs frankly said "yeller" was never his fancy. "Now, them 'janiums, that gives a bit o' colour."

And I quite forgave the Young Man his past for his present admiration was un-

bounded. He had been quite unable to think, he explained.

So that great difficulty was settled.

* * * * *

RIGGS'S geraniums turned out one or two good dark reds among the magenta hues, and these were put in the two old stumps that hitherto had been given over to mere ramping nasturtiums, and my superior seedlings of those useful flowers were encouraged to fall over the edge and ramp downwards.

An old oil cask, cut in two, burnt out and painted green—Jim and I and the Young Man enjoyed that artistic work very much—formed two capacious tubs and were filled with more geraniums, the best and pinkest, and they brightened up the shrubbery corner where the daffodils had shone.

Stocks and other geraniums—even the mauvy-tinted ones looked quite well away from all touch of red—with a border of lobelia,

were placed under the study window in a narrow bed running along the front of the house, thus helping his Reverence to realise *his* ideal. Then by degrees we arranged all the contents of my nursery, some in clumps, some in rows, down the herbaceous border, and others in the front border, the border which had looked so dismal and unpromising on that November day when I first took my garden in hand. There had been a brushing up of old inhabitants—Michaelmas daisies and chrysanthemums—but much was still left to be desired.

You cannot do everything in the first year. It is no use thinking you can.

* * * * *

NE day, at the very beginning of June, I visited the potting-shed, our one and only shed, which held a collection such as may be imagined after the reign of Griggs for twenty years. In a dark corner I came across some queer-looking roots

sprouting away in a most astoundingly lively fashion.

"Griggs, what on earth are these?" I called to that worthy.

"Them? Oh! them's daylers. Just stuck 'em there to keep dry for the winter. They oughter be out by now, they oughter."

"Oh! I should think so," and then I marvelled on the nature of dahlias.

"Is this a good place for them during the winter? Don't they want anything to eat or drink?"

"Bless yer! no, they takes their fill in the summer, but they oughter be out by now; some'ow I've come to overlook them."

That these dahlias forgave the overlooking has always been a wonder to me; perhaps they did not do so entirely. I believe more firmly than ever in the thoroughness of the edict which rules "that what a man soweth that shall he reap."

A child or a flower starved in infancy does not recover for some time, if ever, and though my dahlias kindly bloomed and did their best, once started in as good a bed as we could

give them, they ought to have been "potted up" in the beginning of May and kept from frosty nights; then at the end of May or beginning of June they should have been placed in their flowering position. So soon as frost touches them they droop, as we all well know, in their own peculiar, utterly dejected and forlorn manner. Then cut them down, dig them up, let them dry, and place them for the winter in a dry and protected cellar or outhouse, there to sleep until the spring calls them to fresh life.

* * * * *

WATCHED the long herbaceous border with an anxious eye. The poppies—those dazzling papaver—opened their large green pods and shook out blazing red and rather crinkly leaves in the sunshine. They made one hot, but happy, to look at them. For that first year in my garden I think they did their duty well, but bigger clumps will look better. Some little spiky

leaves that I had not recognised—how should I when no label accompanied them ?—turned out to be the Iceland variety. They had one or two dainty blooms made of yellow butterflies' wings, but oh, dear ! one or two ! I needed a mass. The delphiniums looked healthy and promised a spiky bloom or two ; the lupins were already in flower, nice, quite nice, when one has not much else, but the blue is too near purple. I must get some other varieties ; the white would be prettier. The big thick leaves of the hollyhocks grew well at first, and then some beast of sorts began to fancy them and they developed a moth-eaten appearance. All Griggs could say was, "You never could do nothing with 'olly'ocks in this gardin, you couldn't." My other wiseacre, old Lovell, said, "They liked a bit o' wind through 'em." His own seemed to flourish, so mine must be moved from the sheltering hedge where I had thought they would show up.

Everywhere still grew and flourished the ever-present weeds. They needed no watering, nothing to promote their vitality, they grew apace ; and I could mention other

varieties beside that champion grower, the ground-elder. There is a sticky, burry kind of rapid, straggling growth with tenacious hot-feeling leaves. Its hold on the earth is not strong, but it is brittle, and eludes its death-warrant that way; also a kind of elongated dandelion, that looks straight at you as though it had a right to be there. Then the common poppy, last year's nasturtium seeds, and the offspring of last year's sunflowers are as bad as weeds, and indeed the latter gave me as much trouble. The strong tuberous roots required a vigorous pull, and were growing everywhere, through the centre of every flower; I took at least a dozen out of one clump of golden rod, and vowed I would have every sunflower up before it had a chance of seeding. Of course all such things must come up or they exhaust the feeding capacity of the border.

It is all very fine to say "*must*," but I believe a poor soil is composed of weed seeds.

I walked down the garden with one of the Others, one who loved flowers, only in her own way. She arranged them beautifully

when everything was put ready to her hand; she loved picking one here and there and sticking it in her waist-band, or playing with its soft petals against her cheek, then, its brief duty done, it was forgotten.

I have seen people—even mothers—love children in the same way; but flowers and children need a broader love than that.

We walked down armed with scissors and with an empty basket; I had said that there *were* flowers.

"My dear girl, what on earth *have* you? when all is said and done. You show me a green bush thing and give it a name"—I had mentioned delphinium—"and it does sound aggressively knowledgeable, of course! And then another isolated and flowerless specimen and give *it* a name. But wherewithal am I to do the dinner-table to-night? Will you tell me that?"

"You have a most lovely bunch of poppies in the drawing-room, and I cut the copper-beech, which was wicked of me. Very soon you shall have roses and sweet-peas and all these seedlings; and next year

you shall have sweet-Williams and cup and saucer Canterbury bells and foxgloves and"

"*Next* year! my dear. I am wanting some flowers for *to-night.*"

"To-night! Oh, dear, let me think. Why won't the things make haste? You must have *something,* of course."

What was there? A good many things in bud, but had they been out I could not have cut them. Just the one first specimen! To cut from a plant you need such a big show, and all the tall perennials were no good anyway for the table decoration. The blue cornflowers were coming; the godetias held promising buds of pinkiness; the Shirley poppies, too, and the sweet-peas; but for to-night! Everything was for to-morrow. Down the garden we walked, hope always deferred, and beyond the garden shone a field of brilliantly deep red. I caught my breath. "Isn't it lovely? It is old Mason's saint-foin; let us take some. And see, there are white daisies in the hay there, mine aren't out yet. And with grasses, those lovely, wavy grasses! don't you think that will do?"

The table did look lovely, but small thanks to my garden, I felt; though the Other One cared not for that, and comforted me by saying that gardening had certainly developed my resources if not the flowers.

Nature's garden is at its best in June.

The wild rose and honeysuckle scent the hedges, the tall white daisies shine in the grass, the ruddy chickweed, with the setting sun behind, glows like the evening clouds; and the tall, dainty, white meadow-sweet offers itself to one's hand. Were it a garden flower we should prize it almost as we do gypsophila. But Nature does not mean her favourites to be promoted to the drawing-room. Their rustic beauty fades at once, and it seems truly unkind to cut so short their joyous sunny day.

* * * * *

HE dinner-table that had caused me so much anxiety was specially needed for an American friend of one of the Others. She greeted the pretty effect with, "My! how cunning! Do all these pretty

things grow in your garden, Mistress Mary?"

"In mine and Nature's," I added.

"You have a little rhyme about Mary and her garden, haven't you? And her lamb, too. Have you a lamb?"

"Oh, yes," said one of the Others, "she has a lamb, the new version of that rhyme, too, 'with coat as black as soot.'"

But what she meant, or why I grew hot, it passes my wisdom to say.

"Say now, do you grow nightingales in your garden, Mistress Mary? I assure you, sir," turning to his Reverence, "I have never yet compassed an introduction to that much-vaunted British institooshon, the nightingale. I am just crazy till I hear those liquid tones, the jug jug and jar jar: such vurry ugly equivalents they sound to me for thrilling notes, but the best, I conclude, our poor speech can do in imitation of that divine melody."

When our friend had quite finished—I noticed she landed herself without fear in the longest of sentences, and brought them

always with much aplomb to the neatest of conclusions, an accomplishment in which she must find the majority of her English cousins sadly deficient — his Reverence promised her the wished-for concert; and he further dilated on the beauties represented by jug jug and jar jar, until she assured him that with him for her guide she would face that dark and lonely walk of Mistress Mary's—she meant my lime trees—where doubtless she would find a blue or white lady flitting past, with a sigh, wasn't it? for some recalcitrant lover.

However, I noticed she walked off later with the Young Man, who dropped in after dinner, and she asked him all about the jug jug and jar jar with ever-increasing animation.

It certainly was very cool that night, as it can be in June even after a hot day. We looked round to send Jim for shawls, but Jim had vanished, to his work, no doubt. We strolled down the lime walk to see if the nightingales would oblige us, which I doubted, as nightingales are as careful of their throats in a cool wind as are prima donnas.

"You really mustn't talk," I heard the Young Man say.

"Land's sake! but do they want it all their own way? Though who could talk when the whole night is throbbing with beauty? Just look at that intense blue vault above us, and the calm stars shimmering down on us. Say! doesn't it make you feel just too awfully small for anything? You don't feel inclined to get up and preach now, do you? Just shut your eyes and listen; that's about all one can do."

The figures wandered up and down under the overhanging lime boughs, two and two, and presently the black and white ones ahead of us stopped. When we wandered off again somehow we had changed partners, and Mamie was arm-in-arm with her special Other One and the Young Man was walking with me.

"I had such a lot I wanted to talk to you about," he began. This sounded interesting, but he seemed unable to get further.

"About the Sunday school?" I asked gently, for we were still listening for the nightingale.

It was almost a cross "No" that he muttered as we passed Mamie and her friend.

"Oh, I know," I suggested; "it is about the garden. You haven't been helping me in my garden for weeks and weeks. What can one talk of better than a garden? I think it is the most interesting subject, and you must want to know how the nurslings are turning out, now they are started in real life."

I suppose Mamie had caught the word garden, for she began to sing in a very high thread-of-silver voice,

> "If love's gardener sweet were I,
> I would cull the stars for thy pleasure."

"Say, tall and reverend sir, can you reach a star? Look how they twinkle!"

The Young Man is so very English I half feared he would not understand how to take her, but Mamie's freedom was infectious.

"All the stars are not up there," he said, "fortunately for my arms. They are twinkling under these trees to-night."

"Why, you *are* poetical! But these lively stars of white and blue are not the kind to

cull, are they, Mistress Mary? Land's sake! but they might prove as big an undertaking as one of those fiery worlds twinkling up there. 'How I wonder what you are!' Why, *we* don't wonder, we *know*. I learnt all about them at school. But who knows what *I* am composed of?"

"'Ribbons and laces and sweet pretty faces!' is what they taught me at *my* school," said the Young Man, calmly.

"Really, the nightingale *can't* sing if we all talk so much. Do let us try and be quiet for two minutes," I said.

But Mamie was walking away laughing, and saying the nightingale would soon get used to her dulcet tones, and the Young Man stayed listening with me.

"And yet it's true," he said, "what she says; how is one ever to know about another person, particularly when that other person always turns the conversation when one begins to talk about—"

"You are getting mixed," I interrupted. "Don't you like talking about my garden?"

"Not always."

"Well, then, there's the parish."

"You only do that to annoy."

"I don't! But to please you I will talk of your last sermon."

The Young Man was very hard to please; he said he preferred to know the exact ingredients of the stars, so I stopped Mamie to ask her, but she said we were becoming prosaic; the stars were really little holes in heaven's floor that the angels made to peep through. "That's what they taught at your school, didn't they, Reverend Young Man?"

"They did. My education has greatly helped me to retain my fond delusions and pet prejudices."

"Why, what an ideal education for a clergyman!"

"Since young ladies are taught to weigh the stars and won't listen for nightingales, it does seem good to me."

"Now, don't you get rattled. Mistress Mary, you have been rubbing him up the wrong way, and, mercy me! however can a poor Yank hear your nightingale? That is a

delusion I must part with unless he condescends to commence soon."

"Well, wait, do wait quietly for one minute."

So for a brief pause there was silence; and the stir of the leaves and little rustle of unseen creeping things could be heard, and then, yes, there it was! We all raised a warning finger, but the throbbing note broke through the stillness; a little gurgle, a break, and then a longer effort.

"Oh, my! Is that it? It makes me creep all over. Oh, don't let us talk. Will it go on?"

Yes, it went on. After some tentative "jugs" and "jars" it broke into a full-throated throb, and even our fair visitor's exclamation did not scare it.

"It *is* singing to-night," said One; "really, it must be in honour of you, Mamie. It seldom sings with such vigour!"

In the centre of the sloping field grew a fine clump of trees, birch, chestnut and one or two straight pines; the nightingale had chosen this for his stage, and now again quite

distinctly rose the gurgling note, and continued, too, right through Miss Mamie's piercing whisper.

"Why! it's purfectly lovely! I guess I must take one or two back to Amurica. This grove of trees, the dense blue sky, the silence of all you dear people, and just that one divine voice throbbing with love! It makes me feel like melting. If anyone proposed to me now I should just have no strength to refuse. Don't feel nervous, most Reverend Young Man. I am really thinking of that fascinating Mr Jim. Say! has he gone to bed?"

Jim! Where was he? I saw the Young Man give a start, and a quick glance showed me we had both solved the mystery of that persistently gurgling bird. "He ought to be doing his preparation," I said in firm tones.

"Don't, Mary! how you shouted. Now he has stopped. Oh, what a pity!"

The Young Man whistled softly, and after a pause a little answering whistle came from another spot.

"What is that?" asked Mamie.

"Night-jar," suggested the Young Man.

We listened in vain for more warblings from the nightingale. He had flown for good, and they all said it was my fault.

"Did you have a good concert?" asked his Reverence, as we returned to the drawing-room.

And at the chorus of approval he laughed, and assured us the nightingale had given him a dress rehearsal, and that was why we waited so long.

Mamie declared his Reverence was the biggest dear she had met "this side," for you never could believe a word he said. He and the Young Man had both been to the same school, she reckoned.

Next morning she had a tale to tell of her own special nightingale throbbing with love just below her window, and again in the early morning hours at her door. When she laid great stress on the "throbbing with love," Jim got bashfully red. Then she maintained she heard him flutter down-stairs just as she was going to pipe her love tale too, and that always, always, she

will love her English nightingale the best of all British institooshons.

"You don't think she really knows," whispered Jim to me, "because if she does, she is going rather far, isn't she?"

* * * * *

OW lovely a garden can be by moonlight, even a poor little garden. The moon is merciful, she touches all things, even the weeds, with a soft mystery; hallows the lily and every white bloom; in her light the red and blue flowers are not faded or extinguished, but softened; distances, shadows are intenser, more suggestive than in the garish glory of the sun; soft voices, soft footsteps are needed for the moonlit garden, and one may not think of work or gardeners. The flowers are aslcep, wake them not; all but those of strong sweet scent and small blossom, like the jessamine and nicotina, which fittingly star the night garden, and these are sweeter now than ever, and thus

woo to them the little moths, those flitting, dusky, silent lovers.

The lime-tree avenue became a favourite night walk. The path that was once gravel, and by long neglect had become green in patches, was encouraged in its overgrowth, and Griggs and a scythe will turn it in time to quite a respectable grass walk, I hope. In the subdued light the feathery tall weeds gave it quite a fairy glade appearance.

I can dream in my garden by moonlight, and perhaps not always of my garden.

* * * * *

HE little perennial and biennial seeds sown in the open in April were, at the end of June, ready for thinning. They had each developed the "body" prepared for them, and nice, sturdy little "bodies" they were, but growing too close together and needing more elbow room. I do not think one ever sows seeds thinly enough, and this is not so much to be re-

gretted for economy's sake as for the sake of the tiny plants' nourishment. Here again was a great waste of plant life, though, had all been wanted, all could have been used, for they are none the worse for this shifting. Still, half a row instead of two would have been sufficient for my needs.

I selected the sturdiest, left some growing where they were, at about six inches apart, and moved the others to a new bed, also allowing them six inches; the rest were wasted, except a few, which found their way to a corner of some cottage gardens. But this is not the time when people are grateful for them; they like the well-grown plants in the autumn, which can then be placed in their spring bed.

If the weather has been very dry it is a good plan to water the plants well before beginning to divide them, which, of course, is done by loosening the ground with a little fork and carefully selecting the young root you want from the many. Water well, too, when your work is finished, and continue to watch over them unless the rain comes to bless them.

For these plantlets I chose a nursery that was not exposed all day to the sun. One has to think for them; they repay it with quicker and sturdier growth, which means better flowering capacity in the spring.

So all my wallflowers, forget-me-nots, Canterbury-bells, sweet-Williams, silene, were thus attended to, and, added to my nursery division of perennial seeds, which I now divided up in like fashion, made a grand show, or promise rather.

His Reverence was brought to admire, but he looked at the patch I had chosen and said,

"Do you know I had cauliflowers in here last year, and it is just the very spot that suits them."

"I know," I said. "I hope it will suit my children too."

But his Reverence took quite another view of the matter, and talked of "landmarks," so I fled, for I did not want to be told I must move them all again. That was impossible.

* * * * *

ND now, as the sun shone day by day both lustily and long, the great difficulty of watering arose.

This was the time in the ideal gardens told of in my precious books when the busy garden boy rolls his clanking watering-tank, unfurls the sinuous hose, and from morning to night supplies the thirsting flowers.

In the Master's garden there was no lack, and his long tubes were even emptying themselves, reckless extravagance! on the velvety lawn.

But for me, oh, lack-a-day! The ground felt like hot dust, the seedlings drooped, and the Others told me not to pray for rain as they were doing the opposite, lawn tennis being in full swing.

We had a rain-water tank, and in the stables water was laid on, but it was a far cry from the stables to the garden, especially the kitchen garden, and old Griggs was a slow mover. The watering-tank groaned its way, but only the two most important beds got their daily draught. They were

beginning to turn yellow in an encouraging fashion, but it takes some time for the eight inches apart to fill up and become the mass of colour dreamt of.

Then I disorganised the domestic economy by insisting on the contents of the household baths finding their way down to my rose bushes. At first the housemaids liked the little jaunt, but soon there were complaints of "'indering me getting on with my work, miss," and I began to inspect possibilities of converging drain-pipes and establishing receptive barrels; also I gave his Reverence small peace in those days in my desire for a further laying on of water to the kitchen garden and some yards of hose, but he said that these were big undertakings, he must think, etc., and for that hot, dry summer we got no further than thoughts.

Griggs hated me worse than ever, an unavoidable evil. We had one pitched battle, and though it did some little good, the spirit of a defeated foe is not one easy to work with.

In the dark winter evenings Griggs seeks his fireside as the light fails, or even before if it suits him. Against this I have nothing to say, but when the long days come with their need for more gardening care, I object to the early tea-time departure.

I found my precious seedlings drooping and Griggs ready to depart for his tea.

I love my own tea, so a fellow-feeling made me kind.

"But come back, Griggs, for some watering must be done."

"I can't come no more to-night, oi 'ave to see to things a bit up at 'ome."

"Griggs"— and my voice held dignified rebuke—"you are gardener *here*, and these flowers are your first duty."

"There ain't no gettin' round with all them little plants wot you've started. I did give 'em a watering two days ago!"

"Two days ago! Don't *you* want your tea every day?"

"Maybe it'll rain soon, and that'll pull 'em round. They ain't human critturs. Don't you fuss over them, miss. Oi knows

their ways. Bless you, I've been a gardener these forty years."

At this I rose.

And what had been the result? Would he care to have his gardening capacity judged by the dearth that reigned at the Rectory? Did the heavy weed crops speak well for his industry? Did the underground interlacement of that pernicious ground-elder do him credit? Did the roses, the jasmine, etc., etc. My pent-up indignation overflowed and Griggs had the full benefit.

The only impression I conveyed was that "Miss Mary was takin' on in a terrible unchristian spirit." Clerk Griggs never had a doubt of his own uttermost fulfilment of the law. In his opinion, "young ladies should play the pianny and leave gardening to them as knows." Griggs meant to go home. I felt this was a decisive moment.

"You will come back and do the necessary watering," I said, "and I shall be here to see it is done; you quite understand?"

With this I walked away, and Griggs came back. I got his Reverence to support me,

and we decided to give an extra hour's rest in the middle of the day and insist on the watering, without which all previous efforts are rendered null and void.

* * * * *

USEFUL little book, procured for the modest sum of ninepence, gave me a more intimate knowledge of the dwellers in my garden. It is a plain little book, though it reads like a fairy tale, with its stories of marriage-customs and the wind and bees and flying insects as lovers. Straightforward and interesting reading, and to those who begin to desire more knowledge of their plant life, highly to be recommended is this *Story of the Plants*, by Grant Allen. For surely if you love your flowers it will not be from your own more or less selfish point of view that you will regard them. Their aims and objects will interest you; their growth and evolution be of importance; and, to come round again to one's own advantage, what

is best for them must also be best for the garden, since flowers in their full beauty is the gardener's object, and the plants' too.

But the plants go further; they wish to end in seed. All their fine show, their sweetness and light, is with this object in view; and here I for one must come in, in heartless fashion, and thwart them. My scissors in those summer days were as much employed in cutting off dying bloom as in selecting fresh ones. Not a sweet-pea, not an antirrhinum, not a rose must hang fading on its stem. For I must lure my plants on to further flowering and prevent the feeling of "duty done" and a fine set of seeds with which they would fain wind up their summer's career. And it is a business, this chopping off of old heads. "No strength to go that way, if you please," I said to my flowers; "keep it all for blossoms and growing purposes, and I promise that your seed shall not cease from the earth, in spite of your particular thwarted efforts." When I happen to want a seed pod preserved, I mean to label it with brilliant worsted, but

my garden must have grown indeed before that good time comes.

The seedlings which, sown in the open, were now rewarding Jim's matutinal thinnings-out, were a comfort and encouragement. The intensely blue cornflowers furnished many a dinner-table, and though they did not face the wind with all the backbone desirable, I had not staked them, they formed a very good background to the less tall pinky-white godetias, and these, too, in July were a boon to those Others. They last very well in water, and, if diligently cut and not allowed to seed, they continue a fine show of bloom into the early autumn.

The Shirley poppies were pure joy. Sunlight or moonlight they were a feast for the eyes; but, *N.B.*, only those which had been properly thinned out and cared for. Some had escaped this process, and the result was invariably miserable little starved plantlets, who would have been cut as poor relations could they have been seen by their fine, stately, well-developed, gorgeously-attired sisters in a patch of ground that they beauti-

fied with every shade of pink, and salmon, and white, and rose. So dainty, too, were the bright petals, like crumpled satin, delicately gauffered at the edges; and what matter that their day was brief, as befits such delicate beauties. There were more and more to follow; green bud on bud hanging their small heads among the sage-green leaves, until the time came for them too to "come out" and reign as beauties for a space as long as a butterfly's life.

There was a chorus of praise from the Others.

"Now, why don't you grow more of those?"

"Why did you not fill the two round beds with these? They make a much finer show!"

"Are they very difficult to grow, or very expensive? Why not more?"

"Don't they last? Won't they come again? Oh, but I would make them!"

"You shall do the thinning out and watering," said Jim, grimly, while I tried, but quite in vain, to explain that permanence was the chief thing needed by the two round beds, and that my yellow design would go on.

"They aren't half so effective," the Others murmured, "but of course you will have it your own way!"

* * * * *

HE mignonette failed me; a few straggling plants and no bloom was all that packet did for me. I thought it grew as a weed everywhere, and my soil suits weeds! But I cannot master the mystery of what happens to some things below ground. The anemones never gave a sign of life. "They've rotted, that's what they've done," said Griggs, sagaciously, as he dug the spot where they had been buried and found no trace of anything. I intend to try again. Someone said damp had that effect on their roots, so next time for a more open, more sunny spot; but maybe that will prove too dry.

Those hot days of July and August! Alas and alas! how I and my flowers suffered from the "too-dry." With the

exception of my blazing yellow beds and my nurslings for next year, which, after my interview with Griggs, did receive a daily draught, my other flowers lifted withered faces to a piteously sunny sky and dwindled away into little dried-up sticks, all for the lack of water. A drop now and then is worse than useless; it only brings their eager roots hastily to the watered surface, and there the strong sun catches them and they are withered up for good and all.

The sweet-pea hedge that had been a source of delight and use, and that I had kept most diligently picked, during three days' absence converted its blossoms into seed-pods and then gave up the ghost.

I tried to pick it back to life with the destruction of pods and a good watering, but it was no good, and I had to turn my attention to the other less advanced sweet-peas and try and keep them going; the heat seemed to scorch the bloom and hurry on the pod.

The established perennials may survive

the drought; later rains may revive them, but to the poor little annuals it is good-bye for ever; and many a zinnia, stock, lobelia, and even marigold, though it is more hardy, had but a poor little starved life, and passed away with a tiny drooping head.

It was heart-breaking. Another year I must not have so large a family of these tender children. The hardy annuals which can be given straight away to Mother Earth's care fare better, and coming quicker to the flowering time are not so wasted. But those grown in boxes and transplanted claim more attention, and they could not have it; though to all water is a necessity, and they fade the sooner for its lack. The poor salpiglosis needs other soil; heavier, damper, I suppose, and some shade. I fear I must admire them in other people's gardens.

Griggs and the clanging tank on wheels was a poor substitute for the "blessed rain from heaven" that falls on all alike, while his unwilling steps could scarcely be induced to water those that lay nearest to his hand;

and I could not expect him—even I could not—to water everywhere every day.

If I had water laid on! if I had a hose! how I would use it!

"Yes, and think of my bill," said his Revcrence. I suppose this is the way they talk of the revenue in India when the poor people are starving.

Well, well, poor folk should not have more children than they can feed, so I must give my attention more especially to the deeper-rooted perennials, though even they hang limp-leaved and will reward me in the future only according to my treatment of them. It is the Law of the Universe.

Some patches of seedlings in a neighbouring garden made all my resolves to curtail expenditure in that direction fly in an instant.

These were Mother Earth's hardy babies; no boxes or transplanting were needed. It was a mass of the bright-coloured heads of the annual phlox which excited my admiration. They are more brilliant, though smaller, than their perennial sisters, and for cutting

they are quite invaluable. They last, too, through three or four months. My garden must have them.

Another yellow patch caught my fancy. (I have a theory yellow flowers are hardiest; it is the primitive colour.) This was eschscholtzia, Californian poppy in other words. These seem to me indispensable; their grey-green leaves make the prettiest decoration.

* * * * *

N the Master's garden peace and plenty reigned. The hose played all day long; the grass was a joy, green as perennial youth; the flowers nodded at him in full satisfaction, and he sat and smiled at them, "feeling good," as the Americans say.

I went home and noted the brown lawn, in which even the plantains were beginning to turn colour, and thought of my border, and "felt bad." Even the brilliant yellow of my two round beds, staring like sunflowers, full among the starving, failed to comfort me.

It is always the one lamb crying in the wilderness that pulls the true shepherd's heart away from the ninety and nine trim little sheep safe in the fold.

* * * * *

IM was very busy those days and more or less deserted me. One of the Others, a mankind from Sandhurst, divided his allegiance, and holidays and cricket absorbed him.

"One has to slack off a bit," he said, "and old Griggs can water. I'll come on again in the autumn; there will be some work with those tap-roots, you know."

But when a question arose of how much to the good my reign had proved, then Jim was with me at once. Even "Sandhurst" and the grand ideas that are a necessity of that period of development, were not allowed to be too snubbing.

"You look at those two yellow beds," said Jim. "That's one year's work, good. Next

year we will have a bit more, up to that style. You try and get up some weeds yourself and then you can talk."

And indeed those two yellow beds were a satisfaction; they grew and grew until not a spare inch was left between root and root, and they flared away gorgeously in the face of the hottest sun. I kept all dead heads cut down, for they were to go on right to the end of October.

The antirrhinums came on bravely, too; my little straight soldiers, now no longer so thin and leggy, but beginning to branch out, and carrying their stiff red, white or yellow spear of flowers bolt upright in the centre. But they were still small, and I was glad that I had secured a quicker effect with my yellow design. They performed a gay march past in that forlorn old border in the front, but more toward the end of the summer, owing really to the delay in pricking them out. His Reverence said they consoled him for the disaster of the crocuses in spring.

I bought some little plants of creeping jenny, six at threepence each, and put

them in round one of the stumps holding a group of rather mauvy-coloured creeping geraniums. They took kindly to the position, and yellow and mauve go excellently well together. Also I added three plants of gypsophila to my long border. I felt the Others would appreciate them.

I often wanted to buy ready-made flowers, and a flower shop or nursery garden became a real danger to me ; but there was the five pounds to be thought of, or rather the few shillings which remained, and oh ! the many things that were really necessities of the first order.

In August Griggs and I, friends for the moment, took cuttings of those geraniums whose colours, for some reason Griggs failed to fathom, pleased me. Of course those that I least liked offered the better cuttings, but I was inexorable and told Griggs I had other uses for that solitary frame. We "struck" the cuttings in some big pots, six in each. They grew easily, and for next year I shall only have the colours I like. Then, rather in astonishment at myself for patronising geraniums, I bought

a hundred cuttings of Henry Jacoby, a good dark red, for six shillings. I can't help coming round to the opinion that geraniums are an excellent stand-by. A dozen pink climbing geraniums were given me. My eye of faith already sees them growing up the verandah and causing even the Others to say pretty things to me. During the autumn and winter, as little cuttings they will pass their time making root in my frame. Yellow daisies and white, in wooden boxes, were to join them there; and, in order to be really forward with some things, a good supply of antirrhinum and lobelia cuttings. Naturally they will be more forward and stronger than the seedlings of February, but I have to face the question of room.

* * * * *

HERE comes a time of lull in the life of a garden when, if only the watering be seen to, it is possible for even the head gardener to take a holiday. In August what has been done is done

and cannot be altered; and what left undone must remain so. It is too late now, and the hope of "next year" is turned to eagerly, for "next year" is the only remedy left.

I had been driven to "next year" quite early in the day, for all my plants would be more established, and therefore I trusted more lavish with bloom in their second year with me. They had done their best, I doubted not, and to my eye the promise of growth at the roots began to give as much satisfaction as the few blooms sent, almost tentatively, up into their new surroundings. Ah! for the time when the blue delphinium should be a massive background for the white lilies, and these shine against a thick clump of red valerian; and then the eye should catch the brilliant yellow of the tiger-lily and feel cool in the clear purple of the Indian-pea. And then this scheme should repeat itself, diversified with the stately hollyhock and flaring sunflower, or the feathers of the spiræa, which should rival it in height. More forward in the border should

glow the warm-scented sweet-Williams and the bright-headed phlox; the pure white campanula should nod its bells, and the quaint Turk's head hold its own stiffly. Gaillardias and gladiolas, ixias and montbresias should strike a strong-coloured note, and clumps of Canterbury-bells, stocks, zinnias, penstemons, marigolds and scabious should each in turn—and some take a good long turn—bring their share of brightness; and the flowers of the past, the irises, the bleeding heart, the columbines, the bright scarlet geum, the yellow doronicum, should be marked by a patch of green that by diligent growing gave hope of more beauty for the future. In this bright future I was apt to wander and to lose sight of the rather meagre present. But that needs must be one of the consolations of a garden.

And so, hoping all things for my garden, I went to pay visits to other people's gardens.

One grand garden filled me with anything but envy. It was so terribly trim, such rows of variegated geraniums, big calceo-

larias, featherfew and lobelia. I determined never to treat any bed or border to edgings; to mass even lobelia together and only break it with taller plants, such as geraniums, of the pure good colours quite possible I found, or salvias or fuchsias. Here was line after line, pattern after pattern; surely they were the "goodly sights" Bacon had seen in tarts!

Grand beds of coleus and begonias there were, but these were beyond me, savouring too much of the greenhouse, and all the flowers in the rooms spoke of gardeners and hot-houses.

"I don't think my gardener cares much for herbaceous things," said my hostess. "What flowers *do* live out of doors? in this climate, I mean."

And I found out that a greenhouse gardener very seldom does care for herbaceous things.

But another smaller garden made me envious. How the plants grew in that blessed soil, with a little river meandering through. No difficulty about water, and

that was half the difficulty of flower cultivation overcome.

I knew at once that all I wanted for perfect contentment was one small stream and one small conservatory, then things should march; but I suppose even that highly-blessed woman had a "but" in her lot.

Gardeners are so good to one another. I long for the day when I too shall say, "Oh, I will send you some of that, wait until the autumn," and "You care for this? I can spare some." They must feel they are really doing so much good in the world.

It was a proud moment when one said, "If you have Canterbury-bells to spare, send me some; mine have failed me, they are wretched specimens, and will never do any good."

And mine were sturdy; I knew that.

Old Lovell was another of my customers. He was to have some sweet-Williams and some foxgloves, and I was to have two clumps of Turk's head in exchange, and some of the many young plants surrounding his big clump of that June joy, rosy red valerian.

From my other friends I had promises of many good things; the small perennial sunflower, soleil d'or, some nice Michaelmas daisies, the useful pink and white Japanese anemone, a yellow lupin and some of the white variety. More delphiniums, too, I accepted with thankfulness, and I felt my garden growing and growing as the kind promises flowed in.

* * * * *

O back to my own garden with eyes terribly open to its deficiencies, "a poor thing, but mine own," at least, "mine own" for a time, and certainly "mine own" to improve; therefore the deficiencies were not to appal me, though they were still the most striking feature of my garden. The yellow beds still flared, the antirrhinums still marched, and, perhaps most consoling of all, the little plants for next year, and those for always, were well and thriving. The summer had not passed in

vain as far as they were concerned. No, nor passed in vain even where it only chronicled failures, for Ignoramuses must take their share of these too, as a necessary part of their education; and how the spring and summer had opened my eyes!

The red ash berries strewed the ground; the birds saw to that, finding pleasure in breaking them off with a knowing jerk of the head and not a bit from hunger; the convolvulus, nasturtium and canariensis were flinging themselves in wild confusion; there was a kind of riot even among the flowers and weeds in the long border. A few roses, especially the good old "Gloire," were giving a little after-show, but a touch of finality had come to my garden, and when a hush passed over it, broken only by an early falling leaf, I knew autumn had come, and I scarcely paused to say good-bye to my first summer's gardening, so eager was I for all that autumn meant in the way of work for the future.

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SEASON IV

Autumn

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness."

AUTUMN

Face page 191

SEASON IV

Autumn

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness."

"  ELICIOUS autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns."

So said George Eliot, and with all due reverence for her opinion, my soul would fly in the opposite direction, seeking the spring. If the autumn led straight on to spring I could love it more, but through its stillness I hear the winter blast; its gorgeous colouring scarce hides the baring boughs; day by day death lays a withering hand on flower and tree; day by day the sun runs quicker to its golden resting-place. Have you ever noticed how great a difference there is between the sun's summer and winter march across the heavens? Note the tree behind which he

sinks in June and then again in November. A whole third of the heavens separates the two; and what does that not mean to us of lack in light and warmth? "Ah! would that the year were always May." And yet there are days, such days of perfect beauty that the year could never spare them. They come in early autumn, and it is as though a recording angel passed, so sweet, so solemn is the hush, the pause, with which Nature holds her breath and listens as she lays open her store of harvest to the "Well done" of the voiceless blessing.

And then, the blessed rest-day over, she turns about. "To work!" seems to be the order. "Away with these old flowers! No more need for pod-making; wither up the annuals, cut down the perennials, stop those busy youngsters and their growing process for a bit, shake off the leaves, they will come in useful later on, but pile them up now and let the children scuttle through them with happy feet, and have a good clear-out before you go to sleep and wake up again in the springtime—'the merry, merry springtime.'"

Away, you birds, and look out for yourselves those of you who stay; get your nests ready and your stores safely housed, my small friends of fur and feather, for my work is now to purge and to winnow, to try and to test, and woe betide the weaklings!" So the wind, Dame Nature's mighty broom-maiden, prepares her best besom, and there is soon a thorough good house-cleaning, to the great discomfort of the inhabitants.

Well, we have to put up with it; and the best plan is to do a little of the same work on one's own account, that so, being in harmony with Nature, one's temper is less sorely tried.

* * * * *

HERE is enough to be done.

I hardly consider September an autumn month, but the calendar does, so I will mention first one bit of work well worth doing. Sow a good long row of sweet-peas. Make a shallow trench and prepare it as was done in the spring, and before Nature

stops all growth above ground you will have a lusty row of little plants five to six inches high. These I should stake before the winter, as a means of protection from frost and snow ; and next year, a month earlier than most of your friends, you will have sweet-peas of a height, a size and profusion to make them all envious. And that is, of course, a consummation most devoutly to be wished.

Some people's autumn borders are things of great joy and beauty. Looking on the Master's profusion, I felt like the Queen of Sheba, for I expect she thought her own house and grounds a very poor show when she got back to Sheba. But I did not, like that celebrated queen, turn and bless him unreservedly. I felt more like—much more like—abusing Griggs.

Let me tell you what an autumn border can be like ; not in my own poor words, but as a master-hand painted a Master's garden, and, though not *my* Master's garden, the description fits.

"Against the deep green of the laurels, the rhododendron and box are sunflowers six

feet high, lit up each of them with a score of blooms, and hollyhocks, taller still, are rosetted with deep claret flowers and mulberry and strange old pink. Between them bushes of cactus dahlias literally ablaze with scarlet. In front are standard roses, only crimson and damask, and now in October bright with their second bloom. Hiding their barren stems, compact and solid, an exquisite combination of green and purple, are perennial asters—a single spike of them, with its hundreds of little stars, makes a noble decoration in a room—and humbler, if more vivid, companies of tritonia. Here and again are old clumps of phlox, of fervent carmine or white starred with pink, and, to my mind, of singular beauty, the rudbeckias in brilliant clusters of chrome yellow.

"Three times in the long border Japanese anemones, mixed white and terra cotta, mark noble periods in the great curve of colour; and at corresponding intervals, as you walk round, your eye catches the beautiful response, set further forward, of

clumps of chrysanthemums, lemon yellow and Indian red, tiny flowers, no doubt, "for chrysanthemums," but sweetly pretty in their profusion and artless growth. Is that enough? Well, then, for more. There are the snapdragons in every shade of snapdragon colour, and geums now making second displays of flower, and penstemons; and salvias shaded in butterfly-blue, and Iceland poppies, and the round lavender balls—like the spiked horrors which genial Crusaders wore at the end of chains for the thumping of Saracens and similar heathens—which the Blessed Thistle bears.

"Can you see this October garden at all?" *

Indeed, that must look something like a garden border; and after all, friend Ignoramus, it is not totally out of your reach. Even with my disadvantages some of those glories can be mine.

The sunflowers, of course, I had, and though rather roughly staked by my old enemy, yet their golden heads were there,

* *In Garden, Orchard and Spinney*, by Phil Robinson.

and by diligent decapitation they continued until I "did up" the border. The dahlias did fairly, and some of the poor little water-starved annuals picked up a little and gave patches of colour, notably the marigolds. The Michaelmas daisy — which is here called "perennial aster"—gave but little bloom; all my bushy perennial plants will be better next year. The golden rod, that old inhabitant, was fine and useful even this first September. It kept the big jar in the drawing-room going with dahlias and sunflowers, but the day came all too soon when even these gave out, and then I fell back on Dame Nature and plundered her hedgerows. Such leaves, such yellows and reds, and berries, black, red and green, never was a bunch more beautiful than that provided by the country lanes; and if only a garden would go wild in such a fashion I should leave it to itself. But that is the trouble. When once civilisation has laid her hand on flower or savage there is no going back; one must progress, the primitive conditions are lost

for ever. Unless the new ideal be lived up to, the latter state is worse than the first.

* * * * *

HAD been collecting ideas as well as had experience during the summer months, and some of the ideas were greatly augmented by a Visitor who came into the garden during the month of October. He had had varied experiences during the years, not so many either, of his pilgrimage, and after having claimed America, Australia, India as his fields of action, and ranching, mining, pearl-fishing, architecture and the stock exchange as some of his employments, I was not surprised to find he had also made a thorough study of the art of Gardening; in fact, had thought of landscape gardening as a profession.

His Reverence had said, "Get him to give you some advice; he knows all about it."

So I sought this fount of knowledge.

My garden looked indeed a poor thing seen through his eyes.

He stood taking in the general effect.

"Hump!—ha!—yes!—you ought to have all that cleared away," waving a hand towards a shrubbery which indeed looked as though it needed judicious pruning; "it is in the wrong place, and it would add considerably to the size of the lawn if it were done away with. And that path, you notice the fatal curve. Why in the name of Reason make a curve when a straight line leads quicker between two places? Curves and circles are an abomination in a garden. Don't you see it?"

"Oh, quite, but I didn't make that path."

"No, but why tolerate it? I can assure you I could not live with that silly crooked line waving itself aside like a fanciful damsel. Pah! Get that altered for one thing, and then, *don't* have it gravelled. Between grass, what can look so staring and hideous as that patch of yellow? Not that yours is very yellow, been down some time, eh? Buy some old slabs of slate,

quite easy to get. Go round to the old churches; you are sure to find some Philistine parson removing the old slate leading through the churchyard and putting down hideous, gritty gravel! You can benefit by his crass stupidity. And then—ah, yes—don't have wire fencing between the garden and that field. Prettily-laid-out field that is, too. I congratulate you on that clump of trees. Very nice! yes, very nice But that aggressive railing paling thing! Away with it! and have a sunk fence if you need anything."

"Sheep are sometimes put in that field," I said timidly, for I felt, in spite of that clump of trees, that I was responsible for a great deal of fearful ignorance.

"Oh, well, a sunk fence will keep them out. Now let us walk on a bit. Dear, dear, how those two round beds hurt one! Remind one of bulls'-eyes, don't they? You must not have round beds, have them in squares; two oblongs would fit in better there. But let me see, ah, yes, that would be better. Now look here. Take away that hedge"—he

pointed to the holly hedge dividing the lawn from the kitchen garden—"right away; make there a good border, that will give you the colour, and you can do away with those beds."

"But the kitchen garden!

"Don't you like the look of a kitchen garden? Nothing more beautiful. Border everything with flowers, and think what a vista you have from your window."

"Oh, I know. I want an opening somewhere."

"An opening! You want it *open*, not boxed in like this. The intention of hedges was to shut out the roads or one's prying neighbours. You have neither. For goodness' sake give yourself room. What is there so attractive in that prickly hedge? But if you want a division, if you must keep the vulgar vegetables in their place, why, put up a pergola?"

"Oh!" I exclaimed. Pergola somehow suggested fairy-land, or Italian lakes at the least.

"Yes, pergola. Now just see it. Beautiful green lawn. By the way, you must have this re-turfed, it is quite hopeless; good grass

leading straight down to that hedge, no pathway between," and he shuddered. "Do away with the prickly hedge, have a border of bright flowers taking its place; behind that a pergola of roses, through which you get vistas of all the good sprouting green things, and clumps of flowers, hedges of sweet-peas, banks of poppies, and everything bright and beautiful, with suggestions of gooseberry bushes and strawberry beds, and feathery carrots and waving asparagus. Now, how does that sound?"

"Delightful," I replied, sinking on a garden seat with a most doleful sigh, and looking from that picture to the one that lay before me.

"Ah, yes," following my eye, "and don't forget that path; straight, mind you, and slates. There is something about a wet slate bordered with grass that gives you sensations of coolness and repose that really consoles you for the rain. You try it! Now, I daresay I could suggest a good many more things that need doing, but I suppose you won't manage more this autumn."

"It is very kind of you," I began.

"Oh, not at all, not at all. I assure you it is a great pleasure to suggest improvements. Now here you have a little garden, nothing much about it, you may say, but at once I see what can be made of it. My mind is full of the higher vision, until really sometimes it is a shock to me to come back to real earth, as it were, and find how far it is from the ideal."

"Yes, I should think so," I murmured.

"Of course that is what is needed for landscape gardening, to which I gave special attention at one time. Flowers I have not yet taken up; but shrubs! ah, well, I think I won't begin on shrubs, for I have to catch that train."

Then we walked back to the house, and I wished I too had a train to catch that I might never, never look at my garden again.

The Others said I was very depressed for some days, but at last I resolutely faced my garden.

"You are all wrong," I said, "made wrong from the beginning, and I can't alter you, but

as you are the only one we have I must just make the best of you. One thing I can do, and that is to have down the old holly hedge and make a pergola."

So I approached the Others.

They agreed at once that we wanted vistas, and jumped at the pergola, but Jim shook his head.

"No go," said he, and said no more.

"But I am not sure about a vista of cabbages and onions," remarked a cautious One. "I don't like them in any form."

"But I should have borders of flowers everywhere," and the Visitor's picture rose in my mind. "You don't mind asparagus."

"No, if you can keep your vistas to that."

"But a pergola! Mary, that sounds a large order."

"Yes. But this is a thing that affects us all, so we must all make an effort."

"Does your effort mean £ s. d. ?"

"Something very like it."

And there was a chorus of "Oh's" and "That's all very fine! *but*—"

"Well, you are all *for* it, anyhow?" I said.

"Oh, yes, we are all *for* it."

"Then I am going to tackle his Reverence."

"There he is, then, at the bottom of the lawn, with a slaughtered bunny in his hand, so the moment should be auspicious."

But it wasn't.

I approached my subject delicately, mindful of the overwhelming sense of impossibility with which the Visitor's suggestions had filled my soul; but when it dawned on his Reverence that I wanted not only to erect a pergola but to cut down the holly hedge, it then transpired that the holly hedge was the joy of his heart and the pride of his eyes; when other things failed, and snails ate the onions, *that* hedge was always there, always green, always solid, and always a consolation.

I explained my views and he explained his, and then we both explained them together; he said I was very obstinate, and I said he was not allowing me a free hand. He said he did, and I said, "Then may I do it?" He said, "Certainly not," and I said, "Very good, then, I resign the garden." I

heard his laugh—a hearty one—as I marched with dignity back to the drawing-room.

"Well!" the Others cried, "you look as though you had had a lively time."

"I could have told you exactly what his Reverence would say and saved you the trouble of a row."

I tried to squash Jim with a look, but nothing under many hundredweights could do that. So I said coldly,

"We had no row; and little boys don't always know what their elders will say."

"Bet you I know what *he* said to you. And on the whole I agree with him. It's no use taking a bigger bite than you can chew."

"It isn't a bigger bite than—Jim, you are very vulgar! But I don't care now, I have given up the garden."

"Resigned your stewardship!" said Jim, tragically. "Anything over of the five pounds? I wouldn't retire yet, you can't have saved enough."

"Don't talk nonsense, Mary. At least, it

doesn't matter *what* you talk, you can't do it," said one of the Others.

"Can't I? we shall see," hardening my heart.

"What did his Reverence say to your resignation?"

"He—he didn't say anything."

"He laughed! I heard him," said Jim, "and he is splitting his sides telling the Young Man all about it."

"He isn't! Jim, go quick, interrupt them. I won't let them talk of m—my garden."

Jim is really a nice boy; he swaggered off with his hands in his pockets, whistling, and joined the two men. I knew he would give the conversation the turn I wished.

I began to cool down. It was easy to say I would "resign" the garden, but could I? Putting pride aside, was not my interest in all those young promising plants for the spring too deep for me now to desert them? Had I not rooted, amongst other things, too much of myself in my garden for me now lightly to withdraw?

While I pondered I strolled down the

garden, and coming up the other side ran into the group of three viewing the holly hedge from the back.

"It is one of the best holly hedges I have ever seen," his Reverence was saying. "Cut it down! Why, it would be sheer madness."

Then the Young Man, without noticing me, began,

"All the same, you do want an opening somewhere. It is quite true that fine hedge shuts you in very much."

"I like being shut in," said his Reverence; "but I might consider your idea of an opening here, an archway in the middle, particularly as the hedge is already rather thin in one place, only 'Mary, Mary, quite contrairy.'"

"You had better not abuse me, because I am listening," I put in.

"Oh, here you are. I was going to say you had resigned."

"If you had heard all *your* Visitor suggested you would have thrown up the living."

"Bumptious fellow! I should not have listened to him."

"But you told me to."

"Because I had had enough of him."

"But what he said was true. It is absolutely immoral to have that curveting path, that hideous paling, and this bisecting hedge."

"Well, Mary, I did give you credit for *some* common sense."

"It's un-common sense I am blessed with, and I am trying to educate you up to higher ideals for the garden."

But I had taken his arm.

"Then do it by degrees. The Young Man suggests a peep-hole through the hedge. Will that satisfy you?"

"Well, may I have this gravel path up and make a border here?"

"What! more borders? However will you and Griggs manage those you have already?"

"Perhaps if I have this I won't poach any more on the kitchen garden."

His Reverence looked at the gravel path critically. "I don't see that we need this path very much, but it means a lot of work to take away this gravel and bring in good

mould. It is no use having a bad border while you are about it. Who is to do it?"

"Griggs and — and help," I answered boldly, "and you shall direct."

"And you won't resign?"

"I will think better of my decision."

"And I may keep my holly hedge?"

"For the present, until I have educated you up to the pergola."

"Oh! thank you."

Then I explained fully to the Young Man the glories and delights of a pergola and vistas; and he is quite ready to help fix the iron arches, fasten overhead the wire netting, train the clambering roses, vines and clematis, and—cut down the holly hedge.

His Reverence's education will take a little time, I expect. In the meanwhile the archway made in the broad gap cut in his holly hedge will help to train his eye to the beauty of vistas.

But how the Visitor would despise my compromising soul!

It was judicious of me to give his Reverence the direction of the new border. I

heard nothing of expense, and, once started, he went ahead in thorough fashion.

The gravel was carted away, and some feet of stony earth. Then we came to a layer of good though light soil. The backs of shrubberies, a small wood at the bottom of a field, a bank in the kitchen garden were all taxed for their share of the best soil we could get, and this, finally mixed in with some old turf and manure, made a border that looked promising. There was no need to begin with a layer of broken china and sardine tins, for the drainage in my soil was more than sufficient, and this disappointed Jim, who said he was ready with a fine collection, had that substratum been necessary.

And then, my new border ready, I launched out.

It was to be partly herbaceous, partly for bulbs and annuals.

The promised plants, which began to come in, supplied me with some delphiniums and small perennial sunflowers. I moved there some of my young plants of oriental poppies, planting them near together until they

should have expanded. Then I selected my lilies. The auratum and other delightful varieties I had to leave out, but the white Madonna lily would thrive, and croceum, an orange-coloured bloom, and the soft apricot shade of an elegans promised to be hardy. These were placed in front of the delphiniums and room left for big sunflowers in the spring. Half forward the Canterbury bells, sweet-Williams and tall campanulas were placed in clumps, and in front of them, well buried, were groups of the Spanish and English irises, meant, as they succeed each other, to keep bright patches of yellow, purple and white flowering there for some time. They are not very dear—five shillings a hundred—and I now began to reckon on a new five pounds. Montbresias, too, I launched into, and left spaces for groups of gladiolas to join them in the spring. Then for early flowering I introduced my thriving young wallflowers, always in groups, not rows, and some of the dear narcissi and gorgeous tulips would, I thought, be admired before other things had a chance. To end up with, and be gay to

the verge of gaudy, I had forget-me-nots and pink silene.

Even the thought of the Visitor could not disturb my satisfaction over my new border. He had not given me his views on flowers.

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HE archway where the holly hedge was sacrificed for my vista was formed of two iron staves bent into arches and joined with wire netting of eighteen inches wide. The village blacksmith supplied the staves; they measured some fourteen feet when they arrived, but were cut and buried until the archway was at its highest point seven feet; and the wire netting was fastened on by my usual assistants. The Young Man was very neat-handed. Then we consulted as to its covering, and, had all suggestions been taken, it would have had to bear a vine on account of its foliage; a virginian creeper for the red leaves in autumn; a Gloire de Dijon since it seemed to prosper in my soil; clematis,

both montana and flamulata, and any number of the coloured varieties; a wisteria, as we had none; a pink and a white banksia; a W. A. Richardson and a crimson rambler. My arch having but two sides I was obliged to offend a good many voters, and, despite jeers as to my former failures, I decided on giving the crimson rambler another try. I chose also a white banksia and a clematis montana, with free promises of introducing other clematis and annual creepers later on, and carrying out all ideas when once I had my pergola.

* * * * *

EVEN after this supreme effort my autumn's work was only just beginning. There was the verandah with its failures to tackle.

The beginning of November I unearthed the ramblers that even still refused to ramble, and soon the cause of their stunted condition was laid bare.

"Pot bound! Whoi," said Griggs, "so they are! Curious! I don't moind 'avin' see'd 'em

look like that. Maybe I was dreffful 'urried at the toime and never paid no 'eed."

As he spoke he tore at the poor roots, confined with a web-like substance just the shape of the pot they had come in.

Anyone, absolutely *any* Ignoramus, must have seen the hopelessness of planting a rose-tree with its roots cramped like that. It was impossible for the poor plant to strike out, make itself at home, and get enough nourishment to grow on. How it had managed to live was the marvel. And they were all the same, W. A. Richardson and the other ramblers yellow and red; the standards had not come in pots, so their fate had been better.

It was soon done, and I felt that prisoners had been released. We gave them turf mould and manure mixture to strengthen them.

But it was not only the roses; all the creepers, excepting one clematis, had made but poor growth. At last the mystery was solved.

A spreading beech threw its grateful shade over half the house and grew within three yards of one end of the verandah. How far-reaching were its roots I now discovered, and

their greedy feelers taking every bit of nourishment, both deep and near the surface, my creepers fought an unequal fight for their daily bread. The condition of the roots of a poor honeysuckle reminded one of prisoners of the Bastille.

But how to circumvent the tree? how to teach it manners? For there it must stay, and so must the creepers and plants. We could cut the roots, but they would come again.

Griggs scratched his head. "It's Natur', that's wot it is, an' that ere tree 'ave been 'ere longer than any of us. So you can't do nothink."

"We must do something. Young Man, are you thinking?"

"Hard," was the answer.

"Let's build an underground wall," suggested Jim. But we all shook our heads and thought again.

"Let's sink something," said the Young Man.

"Oh! a tub, an oil tub!" I almost shouted.

"Why, yes," said the Young Man. "I was

thinking of zinc, but that sounds so airtight and stuffy."

"Wouldn't a wooden tub rot away, though? A coffin goes to pieces pretty quick," said Jim.

"Well, it will give them a better chance, and perhaps the roots will get accustomed to going round. Anyway they can be renewed," said the Young Man, cheerfully. "If no other idea is forthcoming, let us go and find some tubs."

Now, how long wooden tubs will last under ground I cannot say, but we did then and there sink four tubs beneath the gravel, and filled them with good mixture, making holes and placing stones at the bottom for drainage, and there the roots of the poor starvelings had, at least for a time, a good meal, and when growing time comes I expect the honeysuckle, the roses and the clematis to do justice to their fare.

The further end of the verandah was almost out of reach of the greedy roots, as the long white streamers of the flamulata proved.

It is a satisfaction when things grow and

flower and flourish as books and catalogues have led you to expect.

* * * * *

WO of my green tubs were now emptied of the still rampant leaves of the nasturtium and the strong-growing geraniums. It seemed a pity to cut short any vigorous life at the dying season of the year, but Jack Frost would feel no compunction, and I might as well try and live up to the Master's maxim of "getting forward"; so after refilling my tubs with as wholesome a mixture as I could, I planted in each four good roots of my old friend hellebore, and had them placed just under the verandah.

The Others at first looked askance. "Will they flower?" I bade them examine the already formed buds. For I bought my hellebore in promising condition at one shilling and sixpence each, and by moving them with a good solid lump of earth round the roots I hoped not to check their development. I bought the common kind of white Christ-

mas rose, niger, and also a pinky-purple kind, with tall graceful heads called atrorubens.

And when the robins, the snow, the sunshine and my Christmas roses all came together, my verandah realised a very pretty Christmas-card effect, and the Others said, "That is not at all bad." Then the jasmine growing under the verandah burst also into golden stars, its growth of one year having been carefully left alone, and I received as much praise as though I had done something wonderful, which is often the way of the world.

"Luck was with glory wed."

This, however, is very previous, and I must go back to the end of October.

* * * * *

DETERMINED the Others should not complain next spring of lack of colour. The sturdy little forget-me-not plants were placed all round the narrow verandah border, and bright red

tulips, I allowed myself fifty for that purpose, were buried between their roots a foot apart. That effect ought to be gay.

In the small inner border between the windows that open on to the verandah I placed the violets from their too shady bed. By taking them up with good balls of earth I hoped not to check any flowering aspirations they might have, and as this was done in October they did recover, and in November and December they kept the verandah sweet, and ought to do even better in March.

Under the study windows I planted a good mass of my red and yellow wallflowers, not only to delight the eye but to send up the fragrance that fills one with the joy of life and spring, and that his Reverence might open his windows in April and say, "Well, the garden *is* growing;" I also gave him a touching border of forget-me-nots.

Then, too, the desolate front border needed attention. It was always a trial, for it was the poorest of my poor soil, and much robbed by laurels, laburnum and may in the background. I knew I ought to re-make the

whole border, and treat it as I had treated the new one; but prudence bade me lie low and leave it for another year. I removed the old things, the clumps of seedlings, marigolds, zinnias and the gallant little antirrhinums, who had now marched their last march, also geraniums and dahlias; the latter being carefully dried and stored in an open wooden box in the potting-shed.

Griggs kindly gave it "a bit of a dig," and removed the stones that struck even him as being rather heavy for a border. I wish the worms could be taught to carry their useful work a little further and not only dig up the stones but place them in piles by the wayside.

We supplemented the poverty of the border with a little of our manure heap diet, and here I may remark that our savoury heap was composed of all kinds of material besides that derived from the stable. The grass mowings, border trimmings, leaf sweepings, also all refuse of roots and vegetables, after having formed a bonfire, were carefully added to this store. The bonfire reduces the bulk but makes valuable diet without the danger of

sowing unwelcome seeds. Though to the owners of big gardens worth writing about, and limitless gardeners and purse, my one poor means of improving the soil may seem very inadequate, still it was much better than nothing at all, and about suited to my other equipment of Griggs and ignorance and five pounds.

Griggs, who regarded me more and more as an interloper, gave grudgingly of this store. "And wot 'ull I do for *my* wegetables?" It was always "*my* wegetables" and "*your* flowers." "The Rector 'ull be at me if I let you finish hoff that 'ere 'eap. 'E thinks a lot more of 'es wegetables than you do. An 'e's right. You can *eat* wegetables. So I ain't a-going to let you have no more."

I felt reference to his Reverence just then might be injudicious, so I soothed Griggs and put up, or the border did, with pauper fare. The hardiest things were placed here. Foxgloves in clumps, and white and purple Canterbury-bells. Further forward I tried sweet-Williams and lupins. I bought some of these, both white and so-called blue, at five

shillings a dozen, rather small plants, but though my friends fulfilled their promises and sent me hampers, I had so much room, and all the long border to think of. Some of my tulip bulbs from last year came in handy, and I edged off with pink silene.

To get a border bright in May and June did not seem an impossibility to me now, but to continue the array through the summer was brain-splitting. But though looking forward and calculating is the very essence of gardening, one must also remember that one cannot get two seasons' work into one, and I tried resolutely to put the summer from my mind and reckon only with the spring, leaving February and March to tackle the further future.

I turned then to my two round beds. They had been a consolation even after our Visitor had insulted them. "*Si on n'a pas ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a.*" Theoretically I hate compromises, practically I live by them. And so I prepared two beautiful Persian carpets, nothing to do with carpet bedding, for March, April and May.

My polyanthuses just filled in those two round beds, and Jim and I took up the yellow harmony with feelings of regret.

"It was a jolly good idea," said Jim, "and you and I concocted it together, you know, Mary. But, would you believe it, his Reverence was talking the other day as though *he* had evolved the whole blooming show. I said, 'You had better let Mary hear you.'"

"Why, that is the biggest compliment the beds could have had, Jim. He would not have claimed them unless they had been a success. I hope my Persian carpets will come off as well; I am only going to give the plants six inches to expand in. They are very neat and trim, and some are forming buds already, which is foolish of them. Nip them off. But things don't grow rampantly in this soil, it is no use deceiving oneself."

"I never did," said Jim; "'excepting weeds' you should add."

Those beds had to be refreshed, and as Griggs was busy down the kitchen garden, Jim enlisted the Young Man as he left the study and made him help to wheel a

barrowful of the "heap" on to the scene of action.

"I tell him it's a healthy smell," said Jim; "fancy, he didn't want to come."

"Didn't he? Then, Jim, it is very forward of you to make him. His Reverence's Young Man ought not to be worried. He has *much* more important things to do than plant polyanthuses."

"Oh, I dare say! but I wasn't going to lug all this smelly stuff about alone, and you know *you* won't do it, and Griggs wouldn't let you have it if I had told him to do it, so who was there?"

"I am very pleased to be of any service to you, Mistress Mary, but I didn't want to intrude," said the Young Man, and there was an east wind in his voice.

"When a fellow was caught by the press-gang he didn't apologise for intruding," said Jim, scornfully.

So the Young Man chased Jim round, and after the latter had screamed "*Peccavi!*" they both came back heated and consequently

thawed, and I wondered over the boyishness of men.

I don't think I am a very good hand at digging; I let Jim feel the superiority of his sex to the full when it comes to hard manual labour, and I have to retract a great deal that I have said in less guarded moments about the masculine hands and feminine head. Jim tried to lure the Young Man into the discussion, but when the opponent lies down flat there is nothing to be done. Jim said it was sneaky, and the Young Man said, "No, feminine diplomacy," with a look that meant "that will cause a rise"; but I was giving all the little brain I had to the work in hand, and my only answer was,

"Oh, do dig that in quickly; if Griggs comes he will cart it all away for those rapacious cabbages of his."

Jim is sometimes the Young Man's mouthpiece.

"Ha, ha! you funk having it out with him."

"Perhaps Mistress Mary is merciful because she is strong," said the Young Man.

"You don't know her as I do, that's all. She is 'Mary, Mary, quite contrairy.'"

I ignored Jim and turned to the Young Man.

"And why did you need the press-gang to make you come and help this nice hard-working kind of an afternoon?"

Then the reason for the east wind became clear.

"I could hardly flatter myself you really wanted me. I have not seen you, not been in the garden, I mean, for five days."

"Oh! but whose fault is that?" I asked mildly, for the heinousness of the omission did not startle me.

The Young Man straightened up all his six foot and looked tragic.

"I offered to come last Thursday, you may remember, and I was told, most politely, that I need not trouble myself."

"Now really that is scarcely fair! I only said, I know I said how kind you were, but that you ought not to work too hard, and that, I remember I said quite a number of nice and considerate things."

"I heard through all only the 'No,'" said

the Young Man, giving a free translation of a favourite German quotation.

"You know I value your help. The garden is much indebted to you, but of course I don't like to bother people."

"That is quite a new idea," interrupted Jim, scraping his muddy little hands and then plunging them in among the roots again. "I can't say I have seen much result from it myself!"

"Don't you know it is no bother to me," continued the Young Man with fresh earnestness. "Don't you know—"

"Oh, no, really I don't. I have been working so hard these last few days, and I seem able to think of nothing but roots and bulbs and—practical things like that."

"I am sure I wish to be practical. I wish for nothing better," he exclaimed energetically.

"Then do finish that row of polyanthuses," I said, looking up with a forgiving smile.

"The first sensible word either of you have spoken for the last five minutes," remarked Jim, with decision. "The way you two palaver while *I* go steady ahead!"

But the Young Man interpreted my smile in his own way and went on cheerfully, "That's all right, then. Now, Jim, look to your laurels; these plantlets are going in with a rush!"

Weeks after, when contemplating the neat, regular little roots, my thoughts went back, as thoughts will, to the conversation attached to them, and I wondered what he meant by its being "all right." I had never felt anything was wrong. Words are such clumsy mediums, and sometimes even thoughts are too definite. There is a kind of inner consciousness, vague and mystical, full of colour and sensation, but without form or sound, and I think women develop it more strongly than men.

The Young Man has a very definite character. His energy next took the form of a large hamper of plants from his mother's garden, a godsend for that half-empty, long border.

And my conscience, growing with my garden, I suppose, found a safety-valve in ornamenting the window boxes of the Young Man's sitting-room, lately filled with Mrs

Jones's screen of geraniums, with some spare bulbs. I do think they will look rather nice, but his gratitude was quite absurd, for really Jim did most of the work.

* * * * *

I AM aware that to form a proper herbaceous border you should have a colour scheme, or rather several colour schemes, in your mind's eye from the very beginning. This is a counsel of perfection to which I humbly hope I may some day attain. I confess to being still at the stage where all flowers, all colours, and plenty of everything holds great attraction for me. But, Ignoramus as I am, I do not want disorder to reign; one must at least grasp the height and the flowering time of each plant, and strive after a succession of bloom fairly well represented over all the border and all the months. I thought therefore of my background, the tall varieties; my middle distance of less exalted growth, and my foreground of humble height.

And then I took a large sheet of paper and drew on it a long border with three divisions, and proceeded to fill in these divisions with what flowers I already had planted, and others yet to come.

Then I tried to imagine the plants in bloom, and what colours would look well next each other, and how to repeat them as the eye follows the length of the border.

In early spring, as in late autumn, yellow is the most prevalent colour; but in spring the yellow mixed with all the budding green has a most bright and young appearance. It is the sunrise, the promise of the day that is to be; whereas in autumn, with the rich tints of departing glory surrounding it, the suggestion is of "mellow fruitfulness."

The yellow doronicum in the middle distance will probably be the first to break the greenness of the herbaceous border, unless there are clumps of daffodils hidden, but I think the border may be full enough without them, and they can be massed in so many places unfit for border plants. Patches of polyanthus and even snowy London pride are

useful at that early season, and can be placed near the edge. I saw one lovely effect, but cannot myself undertake to repeat it; it would answer better in a more favoured garden. Instead of the usual box edging the whole length of the border was given to violets, and a delightful purple line as well as delicious scent was the result. It needs more care than the trim box, but the close green leaves form a very effective edging after the flowers have departed. The "bleeding heart" should follow the doronicum very quickly, it also belongs to the middle division; but the colour scheme is still mostly green, with just these occasional breaks.

Then the paper border was quickly filled with a bright procession for June and July. At the back delphiniums in numerous successive clumps and all degrees of blue; valerian, several of the strong little roots placed together to form a good show of delightful rosy red blossoms. Foxgloves should rear their effective spotted heads between, and later on lilies—Madonna's white and tiger's yellow—would take their place. Lupins were also in

this division, but a little more forward, each division naturally sub-dividing itself into tall and taller. Galega, both white and mauve, were to grow here, but hollyhocks well at the back. The sunflower also, soleil d'or, with the thought of the annual variety to follow in spring, and therefore a space to be left. The smaller kind I kept for the middle division; it is a useful, neat little bush, rigidus by name, and cost me sixpence a plant. Spiræa, a strong, herbaceous variety, should come as a kind of break to the regularity; it should grow so bushy and tall that it must be given two divisions in which to expand. The phlox must be placed at the back, also the hardy white daisy, several old plants of which had weathered Griggs's reign; also the bright and useful golden rod, and some welcome clumps of Japanese anemones. My friends dealt in larger clumps than the mercenary florist, I found. We left a good space here and there for the dahlias, and thus my background seemed fairly full.

I considered the iris roots for some time, and then determined to give the German

variety a place all to themselves. Strained political relations had nothing to do with my decision, but when not on show the knife-like leaves and twisting roots are not particularly pleasing; so, before his Reverence could forbid, I had my iris row down a side border. The kitchen garden is cut by a most convenient number of paths, and Griggs has no objection to my taking from his space.

Then for the middle division I had some of my nurslings ready. More oriental poppies, in groups of three for the present; campanulas, also in threes, but with room for each one to expand; penstemons, but these were cuttings that had been given me, and though promised a place here they were kept for their first winter in the frame and only figured on my paper border. Gaillardias, most promising plants, which even in this their first year had given me one or two of their "effective" blooms, were placed singly; my small and not very satisfactory chrysanthemums were moved forward from the background, where they had been hidden.

Michaelmas daisies also were in this division, and my Canterbury-bells and sweet-Williams, though they were not to be permanent plants, and might come out year by year when their duty was done. The doronicums were there and the bleeding heart, and old Lovell's two Turks' heads in sturdy independence, and I added a few clumps of crown imperials. Coreopsis, at five shillings a dozen, joined the show, and montbresias, those that were over from my new border, and in time gladiolas also I hoped, but I had to remember my limitations.

In front came groups of columbines and Iceland poppy, the small roots of campanula, the geum already there; and I collected from its scattered hiding-places all the Solomon's seal I could find, and grouped it behind the geums, for I noticed how well those two bore each other company. A few patches of Japanese irises I allowed myself, and again I tried the anemones. Neat labels marked the burying-places of those things that prefer to pass the winter with their heads underground.

I think that border, in spite of its many disadvantages, ought to make something of a show, not only on paper.

There are other things I hope to have in time for this my old-fashioned border. There is honesty, almost nicer in sound than in reality; and lavender must come here, or where will be the old fashion? Also the "Saracen-head thumping balls" of the purple thistle, and the blue-green sea-holly. Tritoma, called in the vulgar tongue "red poker," ought to have a place in the background. Then rocket, purple and white, is a neat, spikey little plant that should be represented, and I have no doubt that I shall be introduced to many more. If I love them at all, and if they can become at all reconciled to my soil, they shall find a home here.

Of course, with so many alterations to be made, and so many new-comers to be welcomed, I had again to break all rules and regulations belonging to a herbaceous border. Griggs and a spade, fatal things both of them, had to be tolerated, and roots disturbed, for in the spring my arrangements

had been very happy-go-lucky. Now, armed with a certain amount of information, I hoped to settle things more permanently.

But when the length and depth of that border had been worked I felt that my life's task was finished, and I never went near it for three whole days.

* * * * *

Y one and only frame presented a more cheering appearance than it had done the year before. It was a capacious frame, and possessed means for heating. This was often Griggs's one duty in the winter, and a grand excuse for not chopping wood. In the summer and autumn time an ignorant gardener can always account for himself with unnecessary lawn-mowing and diligent sweeping up of leaves that are instantly replaced by others; in the winter, unless snow provides a little gentle exercise, he is sore put to it to fill up his hours with a show of use. Thus the frame with its

stoke-hole was a boon to Griggs, and I felt that I too should be much interested in its welfare this winter. For in their winter quarters were my hundred deep red "Henry Jacobys" and sundry other geranium cuttings far removed from Griggs's former favourites. Square wooden boxes held my young penstemons, a nice lot of tiny sprigs from the bluest of the lobelias, and three varieties of antirrhinum, also cuttings of yellow daisies and white. I was trying if cuttings from the not-successful violas would make better plants than those grown from seed, so there was one box devoted to these. A few pots held hyacinth bulbs and tulips, some choice arrangements that were to astonish the Others, coming in a time of dire scarcity.

Griggs looked in with something like pride gleaming in his old eyes. He always talked of "moi frame" and what he would allow me to put there. But we had no ructions, and I must only guard against his pride overflowing in too much water.

* * * * *

NE day I took his Reverence's arm and led him round the garden. I steered him past the plantains, for he loves prodding at their stubborn roots, and I wanted his whole attention. I pointed out the present, I referred gracefully to the past, and I dilated on the future. "Now, sir, the year is nearly up, say, 'how has the garden grown?'"

"Grown! Why, you wicked girl! I believe you have prigged yet another border!"

"Oh! for those irises! Yes. I wasn't talking about that little path and that little border: they will look very nice there by-and-by. I was talking of the flowers."

And I led him away from that unlucky path and fixed him opposite my legitimate and much-developed border.

"It looks much neater, certainly. I wonder, now, have you let Griggs have any time for the vegetables lately?"

"Do you know, sir, the uninitiated might mistake you for a most cold-hearted and callous parent. If you lived up to the ideal,

you would be saying beautiful things about my industry, and the conversion of wilderness into rose, and Griggs's, well, not *his* conversion, but he has done more work this last year than for the twenty before. And you would be saying that the five pounds—"

"Ah! I thought we were coming to that. It's quite gone, I suppose?"

"Gone! Goodness me! and so has a good deal of its successor. But it is all right. I practically went the year round with that first fiver. All I am doing now is for next year, you see. I have drawn you up a statement of accounts and you will see that I even kept a little money for summer bulbs, though they can only come on next year. Which was generous of the first year to the second, you will perceive. But I wanted so many things that it was too late to buy last autumn or I did not know of them. And I have begged and borrowed as well as bought. Don't you think the garden has grown?"

"Yes, Mary, I really do; and I conclude from your having entered upon the second

five pounds that you want it, and are not going to resign the situation."

"I don't think you can do without me."

And his Reverence said, after a moment,

"I don't want to try."

The little statement of accounts that I formally laid upon the study table was as follows:

Bulbs . . .	£2	0	0
Seeds . . .	1	10	0
Odd plants . .	0	3	6
Roses . . .	0	13	6
Geranium cuttings .	0	6	0
Summer bulbs . .	0	7	0
	£5	0	0

His Reverence eyed it critically.

"How neatly it fits in. You have not been driven to arrange matters with the usual feminine etcetera."

"Because I have paid those etceteras myself."

"Really, but what were the etceteras? I thought they were always unknown quantities in ladies' accounts."

"That is one of the delusions of mankind. My etceteras were all the pennies paid for hampers coming and going, for labels, for scissors, three shillings those, without whose aid I could never have cut my way through the summer; they hold the flowers as you cut and save much backache. Then for sulphur, for quassia chips, for bast, for"

"Hold! I will never ask what a woman's etcetera means again. I see it is much the most important part of the whole account. I wish they always paid it themselves. But why did you?"

"Oh, because, because five pounds is *so* little, you can have no idea how little, to buy everything with."

"Yes, but you started away with the idea it was a great deal."

"I said I could put *some* flowers in the garden with it anyway, and so I have. Even the Others allow that."

"Well, shall we say six pounds for this next year?"

"Will you really, sir? Oh, that is good!

Now I shall go at once and order a pound's worth of peonies. There was such an enticing advertisement in this morning's *Standard*, and I have been resisting temptation, because I really had to buy herbaceous plants and a good many bulbs. They have made such a hole. But in time, you see, in time the garden will get quite full."

Yes, peonies with the delicious description of "blush rose," "deep carmine," "snowy queen" had held my thoughts for some time. That front border ought to be devoted to all varieties of flowering shrubs, and in time it should be. There was plenty of room for my peonies; so they were quickly ordered and the border made as good for them as I could manage. They like being well-treated. But when I thought of the watering next year my heart failed me. Something must be done.

That advertisement and the extra pound lured me on to further bulbs. Two hundred narcissi, mixed, and so cheap! only five shillings, were buried in the grass down the shrubbery side of the lawn. How cheer-

ing they would be in spring! A sweep of sweet nodding white and yellow.

"There is one thing you have utterly forgotten, Mary, and really no garden should be without them," said one of the Others.

"I know you are going to suggest some greenhouse nursling. Remember the frame is not a conservatory." And I hoped my bulbs were still a surprise.

"Oh, you old Solomon! And since when do lilies of the valley refuse to grow out of doors?"

"Lilies of the valley! Now, why didn't you speak sooner?"

"Is it too late? Why? You are still grubbing in things, aren't you?"

"I have shut the purse for the autumn. Honestly, I must keep the rest for the spring."

"Well, look here, don't be alarmed, we won't do it often, but I looked at your catalogue and saw they were six shillings a hundred, so 'we' give them on the condition we may pick them."

"I like you! Where don't you pick? All right, I will gratefully take the six shillings."

"A shady spot," I should have said a year ago, but no, not a bit of it, after my experiences with the violets. A narrow border near a little wall, but on which the sun did not flare continuously, and there we prepared the ground, though it seemed pretty good on its own account for a wonder; and the hundred fibrous roots were carefully spread out and covered over. I thought of young "Sandhurst." If I give him lilies of the valley for a button-hole he will think the garden is indeed growing. Though if the lilies should fail! But why should they? Griggs did not touch them.

* * * * *

IM said,

"You are a fraud, Mary, that's what you are."

My thoughts flew to suggestions given for an essay on "The Heroic Qualities" which Jim and I had discussed with much energy. But it was not that.

"No, it was pretty footling, that essay, anyway; but the other fellows did just as badly. You promised me a go at tap-roots, and even old Griggs says we can't tackle them now. He says he thinks there are probably jolly long ones, and I do think you might have thought of it in time."

"I have been so busy, Jim, and it isn't my department proper. Let us bike over and ask the Master if it is too late. Griggs doesn't really know; he generally repeats what I tell him."

"He knows enough not to do things, does Griggs. I have found that out. He is a champion skulker."

Jim was very despondent, but a good spin along the hard road, with the bright sun that late autumn sometimes sees, raised his spirits.

The Master was in his garden, and oh! how neat and brushed up and ready for its sleeping-time looked his garden. Not empty or dead, but intentionally tucked up and ready for the snowy counterpane, and protected from the biting blast.

It was late, he said, but the weather still held up; we might try taking up one at a time and replacing it so that it should not take cold.

Jim took the directions with great attention.

"I am going to boss this, Mary; you said it wasn't your department."

The way he worked and ordered about Griggs and the coachman, summoned to give his unwilling help, promised well for his future as an admiral. The whole roots of the young pear tree were dug up with the greatest care; the tap-root, there it was sure enough, and all the vitality of the tree going gaily to swell its dimensions, was cut away, and then it was raised into a well-doctored hole, with a broad slab-like stone under it to cut short any further aspirations after such a root again, and all other branch roots carefully spread out to encourage growth and general productiveness.

Jim worked himself and his men, and also the Young Man, hard; I was an

admiring onlooker until the operation was finished and the tree standing up quite firm again. Then, as Jim was bent on yet another, and refused to think it too late, I wandered down my lime-tree walk, where snowdrops were now hidden. I had collected ferns there and more primroses, and clumps of foxgloves on the sunniest side, just where they would catch the eye from the garden.

A feeling of peace was in the air; one bird dropped a note and another caught it up; not a ringing challenge of song, but a pleasant exchange of compliments. "Going strong?" "Oh, rather!" "Berries look well." "Prime!" "Good old world!" A squirrel frisked past up a tree with a look down at me, saying, "Ah! don't you wish you could do it!" and then off he went, terribly busy with his nut store. He and Griggs had had a race over the small walnuts which adorned one tree, and I think the squirrel could account for the better part. It was all right, all in order, this going to sleep time, this baring of

boughs, decaying of vegetation, this "season of mists." A little while, only a little while and the change would begin; after sleep would come the great awakening. I picked a brown bud from the chestnut tree and cut it in half with my knife. There was the promise, the great life spirit already at work. Cushioned in the centre the embryo of the spiral-shaped bloom for May was to be plainly seen. The spring was preparing right through the winter. I heard Jim's voice, cheery and ringing, "Now then, you fellows, heave away! Oh, I say, Young Man, don't scoot just yet."

Steps rustled behind me, and as he joined me we walked on under the lime trees and I tried to talk of my garden, but he did not appear responsive; and finally, when I could walk no further, for I was wedged in the swing gate that opened on to the field he blocked the opening and said,

"I don't the least want to talk of the garden."

"Well, talk of this," I said, and gave him

the chestnut twig I had broken off; "it is full of meaning."

"It is very bare and dead-looking."

"No. It is really full of life and hope. See its wonderful centre. There, I will open one to give you a parable from Nature. We need hope at this time of the year."

"I have been hoping so long," he would not be put off, "perhaps I am tired of mere hoping. I want to progress."

"Try faith then," I suggested.

His eyes held mine.

"There is one thing better than faith, you know." I suppose the wind was cold. I gave a little shiver and he placed his hand over mine.

Then I said, "I think faith ought to have its turn."

"What is faith in this instance?"

"Waiting, I should think," I answered slowly.

"But waiting with a knowledge of"

"Ah! I must teach you another parable, I see. When the seed is sown in the ground

we have to wait for it to spring up; it has to grow, to grow underground quite a long while before it comes to the light. It is not good to uncover it before it naturally springs up."

"Can I be sure the seed is there?" he asked eagerly.

"Some seeds take longer than others too, don't they?" I answered evasively. "The annuals come up quite quickly, but perennials are much slower. I prefer perennials, don't you?"

"I will wait."

"The winter is such a good time for waiting," I remarked cheerfully.

"If faith be added to hope is the next step sure?" he questioned.

"Don't you know we cannot hurry the seasons. It is no good. If you are in winter, in the faith time, why, be content."

"Yes, spring will come, I will wait," he said again, and I too knew that spring would come.

I loosened my hand gently and we walked back under the bared boughs of the lime trees,

a tangle of grass, weeds and ferns, and a rustling of brown fallen leaves at our feet. A hush as of going to sleep was in the air, and a robin from a full throat seemed to assure us that each season in its turn is good, and that spring never quite leaves the earth.

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THE END

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