M. D. WELLCOME

TALKS ABOUT FLOWERS

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Содержание

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PREFACE

To all Flower Lovers who may read these pages, we come with kindly greetings. To you we dedicate our Work.

Encouraged by the many testimonials of favor with which our Flower Sketches have been received, which have appeared in the *Boston Journal*, *Portland Transcript*, and the leading Floricultural journals, we were induced to prepare this volume, intending it to be made up chiefly of those articles revised and enlarged for this purpose; but after entering upon this work, we found so little that was adapted for use, nearly every page has been written while the sheets were passing through the press.

Before we were aware, the printed matter had exceeded our proposed limits, and we were obliged to enlarge the work by additional pages, and even then omit our chapter of "Floricultural Notes," for we wished to put the book at a low price, that it might reach the masses. As it is, we are sure that we have given you a great amount of valuable information, and just such as amateurs need, respecting the habits and requirements of those flowers which are best adapted for general cultivation, and in a form specially new and attractive, combining the *history* and *literature*

of flowers, with description and mode of culture.

It may be deemed strange that we should omit from a work of this character a "Talk" about the Queen of Flowers, but the subject was so full that we thought best to devote the space to other varieties and refer our readers to our recently published "Essay on Roses,"—advertised in another part of this work—in which they will find the subject fully treated.

We would here acknowledge our obligation to Mr. James Vick for the beautiful Bouquet of Flowers which constitutes our Frontispiece.

Mrs. M. D. Wellcome.

Yarmouth, Me., June 9, 1881.

Introduction

"Thank God for the beautiful flowers,
That blossom so sweetly and fair;
They garnish this strange life of ours,
And brighten our paths everywhere."

Dexter Smith.

I HAVE been thinking for some time of writing a few articles about flowers, not for the entertainment nor instruction of those who have extensive gardens artistically laid out, and fine conservatories with skilled gardeners to care for the rare and costly plants, but for those, who, like myself, have only a few beds filled with flowers, cared for by one's own self.

Every year there is a marked advance in the floricultural kingdom. Books and periodicals devoted to flower culture are on the increase; florists are enlarging their domain; catalogues are scattered broadcast, and as free as autumn leaves, some of them beautiful with their colored plates, handsome enough to frame. Very many of the literary, religious, and political journals of the day have their floral department, in which the ladies gossip of their experience and exchange opinions, and we doubt if any column is read with greater interest.

What recreation for the mind and body more pure, refining, healthful, than that of the cultivation of flowers? How they reveal

the Father's love, and wisdom, and power! How perfect his work! Very fully have I realized this, as I have examined bud, blossom, and leaf under the microscope. Its magnifying power when applied to man's work, reveals coarseness and imperfection, but in God's work only reveals new beauties, and greater perfectness. The tiny flower, the details of which cannot be perceived by the eye unaided, when magnified, surprises us with its loveliness. We wonder and adore that Being whose hand created its perfect form and arranged its tints with so much harmony. The study of flowers with the microscope is one of never failing delight, and one needs not the costly instrument to enjoy this study. The round open glass, the size of a half dollar, and costing the same, serves every needful purpose.

Not only have I enjoyed the examination of flowers, but also of insect life, specially of those terrible pests to our rosebushes and some other plants—the *aphides*. I have closely watched their development, from the tiny egg to the portly insect, so filled with the juice of the leaf, that like it, he is green all over. First I observe a little speck of red in the egg—then it has slight motion —next it runs about, and the spot is a little larger, sometimes it is black. Sometimes the baby aphis is all red. Now and then I find a different sort mixed up with them; the body is much larger and transparent white. Some have wings. Skeletons, or more properly, cast-off skins, are often seen, but with the closest observation I have never been able to trace these to their source. Once, I was sure that a fellow was divesting himself of his

overcoat, and I watched him till my eyes ached too badly for further investigation.

These insects are the cows of a certain species of ant, and I am sure they are quite welcome to all I have, provided they will have their yard on other premises, though I would like to detain them long enough to see the milking process. Some have seen it and written about it, so, strange as it seems, it is no fiction.

In this series of articles which I have entitled "Talks About Flowers," I shall, in a very informal manner, talk to you about just those matters pertaining to the flower garden, in which beginners and amateurs are interested; to this class I belong; I am not a skilled florist, my experience is limited; I am only a student in the lower classes of floriculture, but I dearly love my lessons. I am acquiring knowledge both from books and personal observation, and I shall enjoy imparting to those not so favored with time and resources the results of this study, believing it will be duly appreciated by my readers, and their interest in the cultivation of flowers be thereby increased. I shall talk to you about the sowing of seeds, the arrangement of your garden, the plants with which to stock it, treating of them historically and descriptively, with mode of culture. I shall talk to you about the most desirable bulbs, about climbing plants, hanging pots, and the window garden, and shall seek to meet in all these the wishes of many inquirers.

A Talk to Farmers' Wives

"Not useless are ye flowers, though made for pleasure,
Blooming in field and wood by day and night;
From every source your presence bids me treasure
Harmless delight."

"ONCE more I take my pen in hand," as the old time epistle was wont to begin. While a "Young Farmer" discourseth of matters pertaining to the farm, I propose to talk to farmers' wives and daughters of matters relating to the flower garden. This article is specially dedicated to them, and not to them as a whole, but to that class among them who take no periodical devoted to flower culture, and find no time even to study the various catalogues scattered broadcast, as sure precursors of spring as are the falling leaves of autumn. Therefore you who have your floral papers, your bay windows filled with plants, or your fine conservatories, whether a farmer's wife or not, this is not written for you, and you need not read any further.

There are many farmers' wives who give little attention to the cultivation of flowers. Busy lives the most of them lead, and their indoor work shuts them off largely from the enjoyment of those beauties nature has so lavishly spread around them. It is a pity that any of them should say, "I have no time to waste over flowers;

they bring neither food nor clothing."

Call that wasted time when tired, nervous, fretful perhaps, you leave the heated rooms and run out to see if the seeds you sowed last week have come up, or how the seedlings you set out are thriving? To look at that opening rosebud, pick off the withered leaves from the geranium, stir the earth a bit around that heliotrope, and linger over the dear little pansies as their bright faces are up-turned to greet you and cheer you with their diversified beauty? Gather a few; they will bloom all the more because of it. There, now, don't you feel nicely rested? The feeling of fretfulness is all gone. Refreshed in body and mind, you resume your housework, and accomplish it much more effectively than if you had kept right on, so tired and all out of sorts. Better far these moments of out-door recreation than blue pill or bitters. All this is anticipatory of the "good time coming" to you this summer. That kind husband of yours when he goes to the store to buy his garden seeds, or order them from abroad, is going to include an equal number of flower seeds. He would have done it long ago but he did not think anything about it. But you are going to give him a hint this spring. You can tell him that in the general seed box there is one corner where are certain dainty little packages labeled Candytuft—purple, carmine, white or mixed; Mignonnette, Aster, Balsam, Pink, Petunia, Sweet Peas, etc., etc., and you tell him that those Sweet Peas bloom the most fragrant blossoms for five months, while his "Extra Early," whether "Blue Peter" or "Blue Tom Thumb," last only a little

while. So as he goes on his way he will think to himself, "Wife works hard; she makes capital butter and keeps the house real tidy, and I guess I must indulge her." When he returns home he gives you those little packages, in each tiny brown seed of which there lies hidden a beautiful life—a life that shall, by loving care, develop "the red, white and blue" in settings of emerald, the influence of which shall be felt by the entire household, and bring forth a fruitage of brightness, gladness and love.

It may be that you live remote from the village store, or perhaps there may not be kept there a good, reliable assortment of flower seeds, so I will tell you what to do in that case, for I wish to be helpful every step of the way. You must send to some good florist for what you want, enclosing stamps, if for an amount less than one dollar. You have your seeds now, and some of them need to be started in the house in order to secure early flowers, Asters, Petunias, Pinks, Pansies, Snapdragon and Sweet Peas. Sift your earth through a coarse sieve. A little sharp sand is good to mix with it. Shallow boxes are best, except for the peas. I use cigar boxes. Dampen the earth, then sow thickly in rows, cover lightly with more soil, dampen again, label, cover with paper so that the moisture may not evaporate rapidly, and place in a sunny window. Daily sprinkle through a fine rose pot, or with your fingers lightly if you have none. However good your seeds may be, they will not grow if kept dry, and will rot if kept too wet. The seedlings must be nursed with care, not too much sun while tender. I do not thin out mine till I transplant to the

border, but many do, potting them singly. Peas can be set out earliest of any. Sunny days in May often tempt one to bed out their tender plants, and sow seed in open ground; then come cold nights, when the fragile seedlings need a hot soapstone to their feet. It is best to wait till warm weather is fully established, and then choose a cloudy day for the work. Protect from the sun's rays till the plants are established in their new quarters. Now, all this looks like much work and care, I know, but it is only a little work, a little care each day, and it is a work that will be a restful change, and bring you better health and better feelings, and when you gather the lovely flowers from the seeds you have sown and cultured, you will not say: "My time was all misspent."

A Talk About "The Wild Garden"

The lengthened days have come,
The busiest of the year—

WHEN the annual house cleaning treads heavily on the toes of spring gardening, and one feels tempted to crowd the work of two days into one, though sufficient for the present is the work thereof. The bright warm days draw one forth to spend "an hour or two" they say, and they mean it too—with shovel or spade in hand to prepare the flower beds, but the air is so refreshing, and there is so much to be done, that they keep on "a little while longer," "just a few minutes more," till Sol pours his burning rays down upon them with the unmistakable assurance that it is near the hour of noon.

These are the days that try men's souls, and women's, too; days when one wishes with Dudley Warner for a "cast iron back," but would fain add the improvement of rubber hinges; days when the inquiry is often provoked, "Will it pay?"

As we change the numerous boxes of seedlings from one position to another, that they may catch the sunbeams, "Will it pay?" As we take them out of doors these warm days, and bring them all back again at night, lest the air prove too harsh for the tender things, "Will it pay?"

Yes, we know from past experience that it will pay even a hundred fold for all our care when the restful days shall come, and we watch with hopeful hearts each bud of promise as it grows, and gather our hands full of lovely flowers, the fruitage of our seed sowing and unceasing care.

Have been bedding out to-day my old stocky geraniums, after cutting off all the dead and unsightly branches. These were just packed into large boxes in the autumn—as closely as possible—dirt then thrown in to fill up the spaces, and they were put into the cellar and severely let alone till the weather admitted of their being taken out of doors.

Many throw away their geraniums, if the stalks decay by being frost-bitten or for some other cause, when often the roots are alive, and with proper care will sprout again. I had a few in my window box that were touched by frost one intense cold night in December, and died down to the roots. To my surprise, they sprouted in March, for I did not suppose they would be seemingly lifeless so long in a sunny window.

Some of my neighbors hang up their large geraniums by the roots in the cellar, and thus keep them throughout the winter nicely, but I have never been successful with this method.

My house plants are nearly all re-potted, ready to be plunged into the ground the first of June. I put in a bit of potsherd to keep the roots from going astray, then small pieces of coal for drainage, then fill with mellow sifted soil, enriched with well-rotted manure. I found it so much better last year to bed out in

pots that I shall practice it more fully this summer. When the time comes in the autumn for taking them in doors, the work can be done in half the time.

My seedlings will be six weeks or more in advance than those sown in the open border. My sweet peas must go out very soon or I shall have to give them a support, they are so tall.

Now I am going to tell you about another sort of a garden—"a spick-span new" sort—and I know you will be pleased to hear about it, and I think you will want to have one of your own.

THE WILD GARDEN

Mr. B. K. Bliss, of New York, in a note, said: "We have put into your box a packet of flower seeds for the wild garden, which we think will interest you. We also send you the initial number of our new paper, "*The American Garden*." In this journal I find a very interesting article on "The Wild Garden," how to make it, and a description of one at the country residence of Mr. M. S. Beach, near Peekskill, from his own pen. We will quote a part of it. He says: "We plowed a strip about six feet wide all around a five-acre field, close to the fence. On this plowed ground, the seed, previously well mixed, was thrown just as it happened to come. The surface having afterwards been well smoothed over, we waited the result. This proved satisfactory. We had a wild garden indeed. The plants came up as thickly as they could grow, and flourished and blossomed as freely as though they had enjoyed all the care usually given to hot-house exotics.

"Sweet Alyssum, Mignonnette, the pretty blue Nemophila and bright colored Phlox Drummondii seemed to cover the ground. Morning Glories of every shade and delicate Cypress vines tried to cover the fences and run up every tree. Quaint little yellow and green Gourds appeared in the most unexpected places, and the whole bed seemed to be ablaze with the orange and yellow of the Eschscholtzia, Marigolds, Calendula Officinalis and Zinnias. One of the chief charms of this wild flower bed was the variety

and change—not from season to season, but from day to day. Every morning would find some new, unexpected, and previously forgotten flower in bloom."

The packet of Flower Seeds for the "Wild Garden" consists of more than a hundred varieties, sufficient for a square rod of ground. There must needs be a peculiar charm in the "Wild Garden." When one wearies of the monotonous ribbon beds and geometrical designs so long in fashion, they can turn to the spot where flowers run riot at their own sweet will, and give daily surprises because sown broadcast without any regard to their names and location. Multitudes there are, who, with abundance of land at their command, can have one on a large scale, others can have, but a small spot. There are many who have ground specially adapted by its wildness for the blending of the cultivated flowers with those which grow in their native dells or woods. Wild shrubs, wild flowers, wild climbers, can be transplanted to situations quite like their own. There can be ferneries and rockeries, beds of violets and wild evergreens, and combined with careless grace, such tropical plants and brilliant annuals as would give the most pleasing effect and afford a beauty wholly unique.

Make Home Beautiful

Make your home beautiful—bring to it flowers;

Plant them around you to bud and to bloom;
Let them give light to your loneliest hours—
Let them bring light to enliven your gloom;
If you can do so, O make it an Eden
Of beauty and gladness almost divine;
'Twill teach you to long for that home you are needing,
The earth robed in beauty beyond this dark clime.

A Talk About Stocking the Garden

"The flowers we love?—They are those we gathered
Years ago, when we played at home!
Flowers by the door stone, dropped and scattered
Here and there as a child would roam."

"HOW shall I stock my garden?" is a question often asked by amateurs. That depends very much on the size, location and soil of the ground to be furnished. If the site is elaborate, and the beds to be geometrically laid out, much skill, artistic taste and generous expenditure is needful to produce a fine effect. If the flower beds are cut in the lawn a different classification and arrangement of plants will be needful. If they consist of long beds bordering a walk, or one bed only, beneath the front window, there needs to be a grouping of flowers adapted to the situation. None but the "wild garden" ought to be stocked hap-hazard style. Arrange always so that there shall be a succession of flowers during the entire season, for if you devote a space for those of brief duration, you will by and by have a barren spot by no means pleasing. The most exposed situations ought, of course, to be arranged with special reference to the best possible effects or continuity of bloom and harmony of colors. Don't mix in all sorts of colors and sizes of plants in any bed. Masses of distinctive

colors always have a fine effect. Where there are varieties that have more show of flowers than of leaves, it is well to intersperse plants whose beauty lies more in their foliage than in blossoms.

The beautiful Coleuses, Achyranthes and Alternanthera, with their richly colored leaves, and Pyrethrums with their vivid green lancelated foliage, are very effective for this purpose. Cannas are very fine among tall, free blooming plants, particularly for centers. Care ought always to be had in selections, so that a tall and coarse plant shall never have for its surroundings the low and delicate growers. Imagine the effect of a gorgeous California Sunflower or a towering Hollyhock in the midst of a bed of Pansies, or Tea Roses, or a Dahlia in a bed of Verbenas! Have your large stocky plants in a bed by themselves, unless it be as a background border for the more delicate flowers. A long bed running beside a fence, or one beneath the windows of a dwelling-house, can have, with good effect, a dense background of shrubs or Pompone Dahlias, or even the taller Dahlias, if relieved by a fence. Where there is a large bed directly beneath the front windows, a good arrangement is to have, first, trailing vines that shall cover far up the sides of the dwelling. For this, the Ipomœas are very appropriate; of these there are numerous varieties. *I. Bona Nox*, with its large fragrant blossoms, which however, expand in the evening; Mexicana *Grandiflora Alba*, immense flowers of white, long tube, a native of Mexico; grows to the height of ten feet. *I. Hederacea Superba* is bright blue, with white margin, Ivy-like foliage, and *I. Fol Mormoratis*, a new

Japanese variety, with foliage beautifully mottled and marbled with white; *Coccinea*, or "Star" Ipomea bears a great profusion of small flowers, scarlet striped with white. With any of these, vines of the Canary Bird Flower intermingled, would have a superb effect; the light green, deeply lacinated leaves and bright, yellow fringed flowers, proving a marked contrast to the foliage and blossoms of the Ipomea. It is a very rapid grower, and will climb and branch out ten feet or more. In front of these climbers, or whatever others may be preferred, a row of Sweet Peas, quite thickly set, can be trained so as to fully cover the vines below the flowering branches, and to conceal the unsightliness of these low down, a row of Pyrethrums or some dwarf compact plants would be attractive. Then a walk, if the bed is sufficiently wide. The plants on the opposite side can be arranged so as to have those of medium height next to the path, and low bedding ones for the foreground. Verbenas are very fine for this, and so is the Double Portulaca. For an edging, many things are appropriate; whether one desires merely a low green, or a border of dwarf blooming plants. For the latter, we know of nothing prettier than the new dwarf Candytuft, Tom Thumb. Its habit is low and bushy, and its clusters of white blossoms continue a very long time.

Mr. Vick has for several years recommended Thrift as the best edging plant for northern climates. It is easily propagated from cuttings; every piece will make a plant, if taken in the fall or spring, and is perfectly hardy. It bears tiny clusters of pink flowers, and the foliage is fine for floral work.

In arranging your garden stock study the adaptions of your plants to certain positions. Some require for their best development, a great deal of sunshine, others require somewhat sheltered positions. Portulacas revel in dry and sunny spots, laughing at drought, while Pansies love a cool and moist situation, therefore to bed them in a sandy soil, and a position where they would be exposed to the intense sunshine of mid-day, and the Portulaca in the sheltered, moist situation would be a great mistake.

Coleuses ought not to be set in a very open sunny place, but with plants that will serve as a protection somewhat, or they will lose their vivid markings. We observed this first with C. Shah; when exposed to a strong light, the rich, velvety maroon changed to a dull color hue, but when partially shaded it was of a very deep, rich color. The next summer we had the beautiful Pictus, and its leaves looked as though they were indeed painted with yellow, brown and green, but exposed for a time to the direct sunshine nearly all day, it changed to a dark green, with brown markings, and, robbed of its gold, it possessed no special beauty. We speak only of our own experience, which has not been limited by any means to these two varieties. We have had a few that would retain their distinctive markings well, even in quite an exposed situation.

In the arrangement of your garden, have it adapted to its surroundings. The broad leaved Palms, the Tropical Caladiums, the stately Cannas, the Cape Jessamine and Crape Myrtle are in

perfect harmony with the well kept lawn and stately mansion, but quite out of place in the simple border of a vegetable garden, or rough grass-plot belonging to a low, plain cottage.

I will tell you of a bit of a garden furnished in harmony with its surroundings. It was rudely dug and roughly finished by two very small hands. It was a very wee bed, indeed. It was fenced on the west side by a rough board shed; on the north by an old stump; the other side and end had no protection. Without any method of arrangement, or reference to artistic effects, here was massed the following assortment: Monks Hood, Bachelors Buttons, Butter and Eggs, Star of Bethlehem, Poppies and Marigolds; these last more odorous than fragrant. Old fashioned flowers truly. But they harmonized with their surroundings, and the little pale faced child thought them very beautiful.

It is not essential to harmony however, that the flower bed be rudely prepared, though the cot be lowly and its surroundings rough; the garden, however small, can be neatly prepared, provided there are stronger and older hands than those of the little maid referred to, and there may be a display of taste in the arrangement of the most common flowers, in our day at least, where beautiful varieties are within reach of all. But it was not so fifty years ago; boxes of flower seeds were not to be found in the shops; catalogues were not scattered broadcast like autumn leaves and as free; "a greenhouse at your door," was not then, as now, a verity. School girls exchanged their limited floral treasures, and now and then a slip could be begged from

the fortunate possessor of a few house plants. But if greenhouse flowers were rare, there were thousands in the meadows, on the hills, in the woods; the sweet May flowers, unknown then to the little maiden as the Trailing Arbutus, the Anemone, Hepatica, Columbine, Violets of different hues, Wild Roses, Gay Lilies, and late in autumn, the lovely fringed Gentian:

> "Each chalice molded in divinest grace,
> Each brimmed with pure, intense and perfect blue."

What could be more lovely among the garnered treasures of the greenhouse? But our talk is a long one, and we will defer to another what we have further to say on this subject.

The Phlox Drummondii

"Flowers for gladness and flowers for sorrow,
Shadowing forth what we fail to tell;
Mystic symbols of tender meanings,
Such as the heart interprets well."

THIS is one of the most desirable of our annuals, coming into bloom early in the season and continuing in flower till frost. They are very effective in massed colors, and make fine ribbon beds. Contrasting shades should be selected. A writer in the *Garden* says that the following are very desirable for this purpose: "Phlox Lothair, salmon shaded with violet; Mons Henrique, brilliant reddish crimson; Venus, pure white; Mons Goldenschugh, rosy violet; Spenceri, dark rosy lilac. An excellent front edging for this ribbon bed is the variegated Periwinkle. In order to grow them thoroughly well, and so to insure a lengthened period of blooming, the ground should be deeply trenched and well enriched with good manure from the farm yard, and not more than six heads of bloom should be allowed to each plant. Thus treated, when planted in long lines, it is difficult to convey an impression of these and similar varieties."

There are many beautiful varieties of color; deep blood purple, brilliant scarlet, large blue with white eye, not truly a blue, but

the nearest approach to it of any; Leopoldii, splendid deep pink, with white eye; Carmine Queen and Violet with a large white eye; Vick's *New Double White*, the only one that is reliable, from seed, to produce double flowers. Then there are the buffs and the stripes, crimson striped with white, and rose and purple. Mr. Vick, who makes a specialty of the Drummondii Phlox, they being a favorite with him, devotes acres to their cultivation, and who has been experimenting with them for several years, has produced several new sorts that are very fine; one of them is deep red with a fringed edge. There have been very marked improvements since this plant was first discovered in Texas by Mr. Drummond, a botanical collector sent out by the Glasgow Botanical Society, and it was one of the last, if not the very last, sent to Europe by him. He soon after went to Cuba, where he died of a fever in the prime of life. Sir N. J. Hooker named the plant after its discoverer as a memento. When first discovered it was very inferior to the flowers seen in our gardens, as is very apparent from an engraving of it taken from a drawing in Mr. Vick's possession, which was made in 1838, three years after its discovery. It is given in *Vick's Magazine* for September, 1880, with the items we have cited. The word Phlox signifies flame, and is supposed to have been applied in allusion to the flame-like form of the bud.

A lady who had excellent success with her seedlings, started early in a box, and bedded out one cloudy day in May, says: "I was surprised to find flowers on the plants when so young and small.

I don't believe they had been transplanted five days before half of them had flowers, and soon the rest followed, and for more than two months my bed has been glorious—a mass of bright colors more beautiful than any carpet or dress pattern ever made. It is near the middle of September, and if the frost will only keep away, it looks as though they would keep on flowering for years. Tell everybody to have a Phlox bed and how to do it. It is the cheapest pleasure possible."

CARRIE, in Vick's Magazine.

VERBENAS

This we must have, for it is one of the most beautiful annuals cultivated. So varied its hues! So abundant its blooms! Not a brief season of flowering, and then naught but leaves, which are, not of themselves attractive, but an increase of blossoms from June till October, and it requires quite a severe frost to mar their beauty. They have the best effect massing each color by itself, and beds of a circular form cut in the lawn and filled with Verbenas, have a superb effect. Seedlings are much the best for bedding out, they are so much stronger and more bushy. Those plants offered for sale in pots, having one tall slender stem, crowned with a cluster of flowers, are almost worthless for the garden. True, if you get a healthy one, by layering and pegging down, you can sometimes get good plants, but you had better purchase seedlings by the dozen as they are offered in boxes and baskets, or order them of the florist by mail or express, and you will have plants that will grow compact, bloom early and profusely, with far better foliage than the puny straggling ones rooted from cuttings. One objection to purchasing seedlings by the clump is, I am well aware, the fact that they are not labeled as to color, and everybody wants to know that they will have at least one scarlet, one white, purple, and so on, and unless the color is peeping through the bud, one must buy with the risk of not knowing the desired color. This is the true state of the case so far as my own observation extends.

But it need not be so, and we presume it is not so everywhere. Seedlings can be raised of course with each of the leading colors separate, and those in greatest demand in large quantities to meet the wants of the general public, while the fancy sorts can be of mixed varieties. Those who raise their own seedlings, usually buy a paper of mixed sorts, so in that case they are no better off than those who purchase seedlings of the florist, and as their facilities are far greater for raising early plants, it seems preferable as a general thing, to buy of them, for these reasons. In order to have good sizable plants for bedding out in May and June that will bloom in August, seed must be sown the first of March, at the latest, for it takes weeks for the little dry sticks to germinate, and then they are such slow growers, unless under the most favorable circumstances, they do not become strong vigorous plants by the time you want to bed them out. Few can care for them properly while their sunny windows are full of choice house plants, so that as a rule, we should deem it preferable to wait until May, and then purchase the large budded seedlings, which so quickly unfold their beautiful flowers to brighten the garden, when it is almost barren of bloom. They do not cost usually more than sixty cents per dozen, and one is saved from so much care.

However, for the benefit of those who prefer to sow their own seed, we will give directions for the best method. First, be sure that the seed is new. Don't sow old seed for it will not germinate. If you have no hot bed, make one in a box or pan by putting in a layer of quite fresh horse manure for bottom heat; over

this a layer of coarse sand; then fill the box with finely sifted soil, mixed with at least one-third fine sand. Make it smooth; then in little rows drop the seeds, not very sparsely, for all may not germinate, and if too thick when they come up they can be thinned out. Press the seed down with a bit of flat board, sift a little soil over them and then dampen by light spraying with tepid water; a brush dipped in water makes a gentle sprayer. Cover with paper, glass, or what is better, a bit of soft flannel wrung out of water laid on the surface, as it keeps the soil damp without sprinkling, by being wet as it dries. The soil must be kept moist, not soaking wet, for however helpful to germination a previous soaking may be, when sown the seed must not be drenched, and the same rules are equally applicable to the seedlings, for in either case rot would surely follow. It is just here where the special care is requisite to insure success. After the plants have come up, the flannel or paper must be removed and the seedlings given sunshine and air, though it is well to have a glass over the top of the box for a week or more, as more moisture is thereby secured; but there ought to be an aperture for the admission of air. When two or more leaves are developed, it is well to prick them out into other boxes or pots, if they are too thick for free growth; not all, a part can remain undisturbed. They should be gradually hardened as a preparation for out-door life, by being placed in cool situations. While heat is essential to start the seed into growth, it is not beneficial to the plants, and those who have a cold frame had better remove the plants to it as soon as the

temperature will admit.

In bedding out, an open situation is preferable. The ground should be well dug and enriched, with well-decomposed manure, and if the soil is heavy a liberal mixture of sand. A situation where the morning sun will not strike them before the dew is off in the morning is best, as this is one cause of the mildew or rust which so frequently saps the vitality of the leaves. In order to promote their spreading, it is a good plan to fasten down some of the branches when sufficiently flexible to the ground, and for this, nothing is more convenient than hair-pins. All the seed vessels should be pricked off in order to secure the best results, as much of the strength of the plant goes to them if allowed to remain. One can afford to be very liberal in gathering the flowers, for the more liberally they are picked off, the more rapidly buds form and develop. As it was with one of Bunyan's characters:

> "There was a man (though some did count him mad),
> The more he cast away, the more he had."

The wise man says: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth."

A florist says that "to grow Verbenas successfully, plant them in beds cut in the turf. Chop the turf well and thoroughly mix with it a good share of well-decomposed stable manure; never, on any account plant them in old and worn-out garden soil as they will most assuredly fail. Give them a change of soil each season,

as they do not thrive well two years in the same bed."

As a house plant the Verbena is not a success. It is most always sickly, and infested with red spiders. They cannot be kept over winter in a cellar; it is growth or death.

Verbenas were first introduced into Europe about fifty years ago from South America, and a few years later into this country. They have been greatly improved, and the varieties are very numerous. Many are fragrant. The only hardy sort is Montana, a native of Colorado. It is a profuse bloomer, color, a bright rose. There are the German Hybrids, the Italian stripes, and the Drummondii from Texas. Every year brings its novelties, as with other flowers. Mr. C. E. Allen, who makes a specialty of seedling Verbenas, is sending out several fine ones this season; Silver Queen, Florence, Emma, Carroll, Ralph and Variegata are very attractive according to the descriptions.

PETUNIAS

Few things in the garden will make more show throughout the entire season, even after quite severe frosts, than a bed of Petunias from a paper of seed marked "Choicest Mixed from Show Flowers." They will produce such a profusion of flowers, charming one from day to day with their variations of markings, and of color. Some retain their distinctive characteristics, while with others they are changeful as the Kaleidoscope. Stripes, blotches, sprays, white throats, green edges, they are just lovely. Then there are the double sorts; purple with white spots, white with purple; rose color, white, purplish-crimson margined with white; lilac veined with purple; white with stripes of purple in the center of each petal, some exquisitely fringed; large and full as a rose, and some almost as sweet.

In nothing, perhaps, has there been such a wonderful improvement by culture and hybridising as the Petunia. Mr. Vick tells us how that half a century ago, he saw for the first time, a Petunia. It was a novelty—a strange flower from a flowery land, South America, and it was carefully treated in green-houses. The flower was white and small, and looked somewhat as if made of paper—such a flower as would now be destroyed if by chance seen growing accidentally in our gardens. The novelty soon subsided, and although it was ascertained that it could be grown in gardens, it did not possess sufficient merit to gain popular

favor. A little later, however, about 1831, to the astonishment of the floral world, it was announced that a new Petunia, of a purple color, had been discovered in Buenos Ayres. It was first flowered and seeded in the Botanic Gardens of Glasgow, and thence seed was sent all over Europe and to America, where it soon became a great favorite. About thirty years ago a double Petunia was grown and propagated by cuttings. It was only semi-double and white, but it was the commencement of a new era in Petunia culture. Truly wonderful have been the advances in development of this beautiful flower.

The Petunia is divided into three distinct classes, the Grandiflora, Small Flowered and Double.

The Grandiflora varieties have a strong succulent growth, the flowers are not so numerous as some others, but are very large and double, frequently measuring three inches in diameter, and some kinds are exquisitely marked with various shades of violet, purple, maroon and scarlet upon white ground; some striped, others bordered, some marbled, some deeply fringed. The double Petunia gives no seed, and it is only by fertilizing single flowers with the pollen of the double that seed can be obtained. But Petunias of all kinds are easily multiplied by cuttings.

The Small Flowered class are those that make our gardens so attractive with their varied hues and markings. Some of the new hybrids are of wonderful beauty. Last year gave two of the Double and Fringed sort that have been frequently noted as gems of the first water.

Mrs. Edward Roby, color, a glowing crimson-maroon, edged with pure white, very double and deeply fringed. Model of Perfection, deep maroon, heavily edged with white, and deeply fringed. These were priced last year in a Western catalogue at $1.50 each; this year they are priced at 30 cents. So one gains by waiting a year for high-priced novelties.

New Double Fringed Petunia for 1881, is President Garfield, which originated with Mr. C. E. Allen, and is thus described in his catalogue: "Color, light purple veined with deep purple magenta, edged with a broad band of an exquisite shade of green. Very novel in its appearance and a new color in double petunias; flower very large and deeply fringed. Plants strong and vigorous; one of the finest sorts ever offered." For a Petunia so unique as this, with its broad band of green, and now offered for the first time; its price, 75 cents, is low.

Pansies

"Open your eyes, my Pansies sweet,
Open your eyes for me,
Driving away with face so true,
The chilling wind and wintry hue,
That lingers so drearily.

"Open your eyes, my Pansies sweet,
Open your eyes for me.

Where did you get that purple hue?
Did a cloudlet smile as you came through?
Did a little sunbeam bold
Kiss on your lips that tint of gold?
Tell me the mystery.

"In your eyes a story I read—
A story of constancy.
After the storms and winter's wind,
Softly you come with influence kind;
Then as I bend with listening ear,
Your cheerful voice I plainly hear,
Preaching a sermon to me.

"So, whisper to me, my Pansies sweet—
Tell me in rustlings low,
Of that beautiful land where fadeless flowers
Brightly bloom in immortal bowers,
And no blighting wind doth blow.

"Tell of the care that is over all—
That gives you your garments gay;
Whose loving hand clothes the floweret small
That grows in the field, or by the garden wall,
Whose life is only a day.

"Yes, tell of the love, my Pansies sweet,
Of the love that knows no end;
That through earth's winter safely keeps

Watch over his children, and never sleeps;
The love that paints the violet blue,
And quenches your thirst with drops of dew,
The weary heart's faithful friend."

A Talk About Pansies

"Pray you love, remember,
There's Pansies—that's for thought."

Shakespeare.

I FIND my Pansies are coming up finely. My bed of Pansies last year from "choicest mixed seed" sown in April, began to bloom in June, and afforded me so much pleasure with their varied beauty, that I resolved this year to have a great many of them. I see, now that the snow has melted from the bed, that the plants have wintered well. I had all of the colors shown in the chromo plate of my catalogue, excepting *Emperor William*, dark blue. I think that somebody else must have got him, for my packet of seed was divided and sub-divided. *King of the Blacks* was rightly named, a mere dot of yellow in the center, and *Pure White* was in striking contrast, while *Pure Yellow* was golden, and *Odier* was splendid with its dark center banded with yellow and scarlet. Then there was copper-colored and striped, and such rich purples with a dot of yellow. How lovely they were! They were not very large at first, but in August after a rain, I had superb specimens. They were bedded beneath a fruit tree, where they were sheltered from the noonday glare. They thrive best in a moist, partially shaded situation. The blossoms ought to be

picked as they fade, for if left to seed the strength is taken from the plants and the blossoms are smaller.

This season I have sown musical Pansies. "Musical Pansies! what are they? What sort of music do they make? Will it be of the Brass Band order, or that of the hand-organ style?"

No, no! Not that coarse, harsh, loud sort at all. If you could hear their low, sweet notes, you would be enraptured. But this cannot be. I call them musical, because named for the great composers, Mozart, Handel, Schiller, Goethe, Beethoven, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. They are the "New German Pansies," of which types are given in oil colors, in the catalogue of B. F. Bliss & Sons, and represent the most beautiful strains I have ever seen. They are no fancy sketch, but drawn as true to life in color and size as it was possible to make them, if we will accept the testimony of Dr. Thurber in the *American Agriculturist*. He says, that "no doubt many who have seen the colored plate published by Messrs. B. F. Bliss & Sons, have supposed that the artist had exercised his imagination both as to size and the strange combinations of colors. So far from this being the case, the flowers are, if anything, rather below the real size, and as to colors, it would be impossible to conceive of any artificial colors more brilliant, or more strongly contrasted, than they are in flowers, produced by this remarkable strain of seeds."

In my childhood I knew nothing of the Pansy. The little Heartsease or Ladies' Delight, as it was then called, was alone cultivated. Mr. Vick tells us how it grew to be the fine flower

now so highly prized. About sixty years ago, a very young English lady living on the banks of the Thames, had a little flower garden of her own, and one bed she filled with Pansies, selecting from her father's grounds the finest she could obtain. The gardener, seeing her interest and success, became ambitious to try his hand, and grew plants from the finest specimens. These attracted the attention of professional florists, and speedily the Pansy became a popular flower. Every country gives it a pet name—Heartsease, Fringed Violet, Trinity Flower, Butterfly flower, and Johnny-jump-up, while the French call it *Pensée*, from which our name of Pansy is probably derived. It means to remember or keep in mind. A floral work published in 1732, illustrates it with a colored plate, which shows it to have been then small like the Ladies' Delight.

MODE OF CULTURE

For summer blooming plants sow seed in the house, in March or April. Cigar boxes are very suitable for seed sowing. Put in a layer of coarse sand for drainage, then one of horse manure for bottom heat. Fill with rich, mellow earth sifted and mixed with one-third silver sand, or finely pulverized leaf mold. Have it moist but not drenched. With a narrow strip of board, make tiny furrows about one and a half inches apart, and in these carefully drop the seed one by one an inch distant. Cover slightly, and press the soil firmly, then lay a piece of old soft flannel folded once or twice, and wrung lightly out of warm water, carefully over the soil, which will keep it damp. Cover with glass, and keep in a warm place. In a few days see if the covering is dry, if so damp it again, and watch for the seedlings. When they appear, remove the flannel, but still keep on the glass, not, however, so close as to exclude all air. Gradually inure them to the sunlight, and as soon as they have made four or five leaves, it is best to transplant every other one, so that they may have room to grow. Great care is needful with tender seedlings to keep them from damping off. If too wet, they will do this, or if kept too shady. Good judgment is essential for success. As the weather becomes warm, expose them at first an hour or two, to the outdoor air, and thus prepare them for early bedding out. Being hardy plants, living out of doors during the winter, with slight protection at the North,

they will bear transplanting sooner than many other seedlings. A rich moist soil, and somewhat cool and shaded situation, are best adapted for their growth. For winter flowers, sow seed the last of August, or first of September, in a frame or boxes kept in a shady place.

ASTERS

These must be included among the essential annuals for the garden. They are one of the chief attractions of the border in the autumn, when many flowers have passed their prime. This plant, like the Petunia, has in skillful hands and by hybridization, developed from a very inferior flower to one of great beauty and numerous classes, which embrace a great many varieties. They are represented by *Dwarfs* and by *Giants*, ranging intermediately from five or six inches in height to two feet. *Dwarf Bouquet* presents a mass of flowers with scarcely a leaf, while *Tall Chrysanthemum* grows to the height of two feet, and the *New Victoria*, *Giant Emperor*, *Truffant's Perfection* and the *New Washington* bear immense flowers of great beauty. The last named bears the largest flowers of any variety; sometimes they measure more than five inches across. The *New Rose* is of a strong habit, and the petals of its large blossoms are finely imbricated. *Truffant's Fiery Scarlet* and *Dwarf Fiery Scarlet*, are a novelty in color among Asters. *Goliath* is of a bushy form, and its flowers are very large. Fine colors. *Victoria* is a dwarf; snow-white, very double. The *Crown Asters* have white centers surrounded with various bright colors, and are very pretty. The *Quilled Asters* are quite distinct in character, the petals consisting of tubes or quills with outer blossom petals slightly reflexed. *Newest Shakespeare* and *Diamond* and *Meteor* are novelties of

recent introduction, and come in numerous colors. We grew them last year and deem them admirable.

The native country of this plant is China, hence it has been called frequently China Aster. It had originally only a few rows of petals and a large disk. It was first discovered about a century and a half ago, by a missionary, and sent to Europe. It was first cultivated in France, and the French florists have done the most toward perfecting the flat-petaled Aster, and this style of flower is known as the French Aster. On the other hand the Germans have sought to produce fine flowers with tubular petals, and the quilled are therefore called German Asters. Within a few years, however, the Germans have rivaled the French in originating superior varieties of the flat-petaled style.

When first cultivated in France it was called *Reine Marguerite*, meaning Queen Daisy; afterward in England it was called *China Aster*, which means China Star.

Asters require a rich, deep soil. Twelve inches apart is a very good distance for the large varieties, the dwarf can be set about six inches, or even less will do. The tall kinds need to be staked, or they are liable to be blown down, or prostrated by heavy rains. Do not tie one string around the entire plant, but use several, and confine a few branches with each, so that, while having sufficient support, they may retain their natural position.

BALSAMS

Have been sowing my Balsams to-day in a box, so as to have nice seedlings to bed out in six weeks from now. My Balsams last year were superior to any I had seen, but Mr. J. L. Childs, who rather prides himself on his plants, has sent me several packages for trial. He says: "My stock of Balsams is undoubtedly the finest in the world; all who saw them flowering the past season were astonished at their size and magnificence. The new variety (Child's Camellia Flowered Perfection), is indeed a great acquisition; its flowers are of gigantic size, and so double and perfect that they resemble small Camellias; it is also a very free bloomer. I have counted five and six hundred perfect flowers upon a plant at the same time." That is a wonderful yield, truly; I cannot expect so many, but half that number would satisfy me. The Camellia Flowered Perfection comes in nine colors; pink, scarlet, striped white and purple, mottled, white and delicate pink, magenta spotted with white, crimson spotted with white, purple spotted with white, pure white, and rose-flowered perfection, lavender color, buds when half open, resemble a rosebud.

I shall sow some of the seeds in June, for autumn blooming, and shall try more fully than last year the pruning method. This is done by removing all of the branches, and then the main stock will grow two or three feet in height, and be a perfect

wreath of blossoms. Another method is to remove the leader and let two or three branches remain. The flowers are larger, and the plant handsomer than when allowed to grow at its own sweet will. They do best in a light, rich soil, and a liberal supply of liquid manure will greatly advance their growth. A writer in the *Gardener's Chronicle* says: "Considering the very effective display that these plants make when associated with stately foliage plants in sub-tropical beds, I think they are worthy of more extended cultivation. There are few plants better adapted for the above purpose than the Balsam, being easily raised from seed, and as is well known, they are rapid growers if they are planted in a rich soil. Several samples of these plants with us are now three feet through and over two feet high, and they work admirably with such things as Castor Oils, Cannas, and the beautifully striped Japonica. The plants referred to were planted out early in June, and I am so pleased with their behaviour in the sub-tropical garden, that I intend to grow them largely another year."

I know of no reason why the Balsam might not with good cultivation thrive as well here as in England. Let us try our "level best," and see what we can do.

A Talk About Geraniums

MY interest in this class of plants was specially awakened four years ago by the successful cultivation of a dozen or more new varieties which I was induced to send for by the reception of the catalogue of the "Innisfallen Green houses," containing a more attractive list of geraniums, and at lower prices than I had ever seen. I secured a Club by a little effort, and thus obtained so many fine extras, that it was a very agreeable surprise. I have since learned that very many others have had a similar surprise.

The next spring I had a much larger assortment, and last year the greatest variety I ever saw. I am sure that I had sixty kinds in bloom at once. Although very small plants, as they always are when many are ordered by mail, they throve wonderfully, and with one exception, were all in flower in a few weeks, and kept on blooming till after removal in the autumn.

My method of treatment is the following: On opening the boxes I find them packed in damp moss, many closely tied together. I take off the oiled paper, loosen the moss packed around them, and put them in a shallow pan, in which is sufficient tepid water to cover the roots. After an hour or two I set them in three and four inch pots, first putting a bit of crock over the hole in the bottom of the pot, so as to keep the roots from going astray, then some of the coarse siftings of soil, or small bits of coal for drainage. As geraniums are not at all fastidious about

soil, I take whatever is available, mix a small quantity of sand with it to make it friable, enriching with old manure. I nearly fill the pot, and then make a hole in the center, set in the plant, press the earth firmly around it, fill to the top and press down again, water, and set the pot in a cool and shady place for several days, then bring to the light for a few hours, gradually accustoming them to the sunshine, until they become fully established in their new quarters. When the weather is sufficiently warm, I plunge the pots in the border for the summer, covering the pots entirely. I choose a cloudy day if possible; if otherwise, I do the work late in the afternoon, so that the intense sunshine may not at the first beat upon them. I prefer massing these new plants by themselves, as the effect is more pleasing than when intermixed with other kinds. The geranium bed is the most attractive one of my garden. It is always full of bloom, and the varied hues commingled are very attractive. I remove all decayed leaves, and the trusses as soon as the flowers have faded. Frequently there will be a few decayed pips marring the beauty of a fine truss, and these I carefully remove. All of my large stock geraniums which have been wintered two years, I set by themselves, and they furnish an abundance of flowers for bouquets, and cuttings for new plants. Where one has a plenty of garden room, they need not mind having several choice geraniums of a kind. Slips will root well during the summer months, if set in the earth near the parent stock, where they are shaded from the direct rays of the sun. Care must be had to set the cuttings well down in the soil, and firm the

earth compactly around them. In this way one can obtain with little care nice plants for the winter window garden, which will be more shapely than those which have become very branchy. Geraniums are ill growing plants unless pruned and trained with skill. But they are so easily cultured, adapting themselves to most any situation whether of shade or sunshine, are so hardy, and bloom so freely, that we can but admire them though they yield no fragrant flowers. There are many varieties of scented leaved geraniums, and these mixed with the odorless blossoms are almost an equivalent. Then the beautiful "Golden Bronzed Zoned" geraniums, and the "Silver Margined" and "Tricolored," are so beautiful in foliage, while *Happy Thought*, with its creamy yellow leaf margined with green; *Distinction*, with deep green leaves zoned with black; Mrs. Pollock with bronze red zone belted with bright crimson margined with golden yellow, are exceedingly ornamental. Beside these there are many perhaps equally attractive, not often named in the general collection. *Freak of Nature*, first sent out last year, is an improvement on Happy Thought the center of pure white narrowly margined with light green; flowers light scarlet; habit very dwarf and spreading. It originated with Mr. Gray of England, and was awarded three first class certificates.

Of the numerous classes into which geraniums are divided, few only are given usually by florists. There are the Ornamental Foliage of which we have cited a few examples, and the Golden Tricolors, Silver Tricolors, Golden Bronze, Nosegay and

Lilliputian Zonale; Double and single Geraniums.

We will specify a few varieties worthy of special note, as we can testify by personal observation. Bishop Wood, Madam Baltet, C. H. Wagner, Madam Thibaut, Victor Hugo, Jean Dolfus, Cassimer Perier, John Fennely, Naomi and Rose d'Amour, all double sorts. Of the single, Dr. John Denny possesses a rare beauty, and is thus described by an English writer: "Dr. John Denny, raised by J. Sisley, has quite set at rest the probability of a blue or a purple, which is a positive fact, and great honor is due to its distinguished raiser. It also possesses another novel and distinct feature. The base of the two top petals is of a bright crimson tinted with orange, which gives it a most striking appearance; this, together with its immense sized trusses, free growth and shape of blooms, renders it one of the best for pot or house decoration, and is of great acquisition." Jean Dolfus belongs to this purple magenta class, a double geranium, very beautiful. Also Zuleika, which has larger pips and trusses. It is a little more striking in color than John Denny, but both are just as lovely as a geranium can possibly be. When Jealousy was sent out, there was much ado over it because it was the nearest approach toward a yellow Zonal, but it was eclipsed pretty soon by Guinea, which was an advance by a shade or two. We had the two in proximity last summer, and though but little difference, it was sufficiently marked to enable us to decide that Guinea for color, size and form, was preferable. We just get settled down on that, when we are startled by the announcement of

another novelty, "New Guinea" by name, "a great improvement on Guinea, being two shades brighter." Well, well! we must have that, too, and see if in other respects as well as color, it is worthy to eclipse our favorite.

Henry Cannell—this is a new geranium, originating with Mr. John Thorp of Queens, New York, who makes a specialty of seedling geraniums, and has sent out from his grounds many of great value, one of them Happy Thought, so widely known. We have not tested H. Cannell, ours was sent from Innisfallen during the winter, and has not yet bloomed, but we are sure that it would never have received the name of the most distinguished florist in England, if it were not a superior variety.

New Life originated with Mr. H. Cannell of Swanley England, in our Centennial year, and he sent out the first thousand by subscription only, at £1 each—not one sold till the thousand were engaged! When introduced the following year to this country, stock plants were sold for $5.00 each. Now you can purchase it at prices ranging from ten cents to thirty. It is unique in color, being splashed, striped, and flecked with salmon and white on an intense scarlet ground. It is sometimes freakish, having pips with some petals salmon, others partly white and partly scarlet, others pure scarlet. But this very freak is charming, for with beautifully striped trusses there will be others thus sportive. Its habit is dwarf, compact, and its dark leaves zoned with black are very handsome. It cannot be surpassed as a free bloomer. Mr. Cannell, when sending it out, expressed the wish that the day might

come when there would not be a cottage in the land where New Life was not found. John Fennely, salmon striped with white, and Fairy, flaked and striped with crimson on a bluish white ground, are very pretty. Dazzle, Harry King, Richard Dean, and Jean Sisley are scarlet with white eye. Of several single white geraniums in my garden, I gave decided preference to Madame Quinet.

There is a great difference in the duration of the flowers. Victor Hugo, a splendid geranium, retains its beautiful trusses full five weeks. Bishop Wood is also admirable in this respect, and Jenny Dolfus and Naomi we believe cannot be surpassed.

Of the Sweet Scented Geraniums, we have none equal to the hybrid, Mrs. Taylor, for beauty of foliage and of flower. It is a fine grower, and for green to mix with flowers it is admirable. Dr. Livingstone, a more recent novelty, is very handsome and fragrant. Rose and Lemon scented are delicious. Lady Plymouth is a variegated rose; leaves bronzy green, fringed with creamy white, sometimes assuming a pink tinge; very ornamental. London Blue is a very rare variety of scented geranium, of heavy creeping growth, with large crimped or curled leaves covered thickly with fine spines or hairs. Seldom blooms.

We have specified a goodly number, yet but a few from the many, and we can assure you that if you have a large bed of geraniums you will greatly admire them, and feel satisfied that you have the most effective bedding plants, requiring the least care, and for the smallest outlay, that you could possibly obtain.

In California they grow without culture to an enormous size. From an editor's notes we cite the following:

"A little slip of geranium planted out in the spring, had grown in the summer to 150 branches, its stalk at its base four inches thick, and bearing over a thousand blooms! I saw a fence fifteen feet high, sixty-five feet long, covered with geranium vines that had clambered up one side, and then dropped down the other, filling both sides with a blanket of scarlet blossoms. It grows like weeds, and needs no care."

Geraniums are so hardy that one can leave them to the last in removing from the border in autumn. Frosts that kill Dahlia tops, and many other plants, do not harm geraniums. Some of mine, for lack of time to remove, are exposed till late without harm. The roots have great vitality, and when the stalk has frozen and rotted to the ground, a new growth will start forth, sometimes in a few weeks, and sometimes not for three months. I have had this proved by plants in my window boxes. So one need not be in a hurry to pull up the frozen geraniums. My large stocky plants I pack in dry goods boxes, filling in earth around the roots, and put them in the cellar where they have little light. The pot plants, also, are mostly put away so as to give all the available room to the cuttings rooted in the summer, and the rare and tender plants that will not live in a cellar. These cuttings make fine plants for bedding out in May or June.

In the spring the large geraniums are brought up to the open air and trimmed of their dead leaves, pruned of dead branches,

and put in a large bed with the Hybrid Perpetual Roses.

A Talk About Begonias

MY first Begonia was a Rex. It thrived for several years, and then to my regret died, for it was quite a favorite with me. Its large leaves with broad silvery belt and red dots, were very handsome. This species thrive best in a Wardian case and are of rare beauty and size, grown under such circumstances. A cool, moist atmosphere is the best for them; they burn and shrivel exposed to the intense sunlight. They are easily multiplied from the leaves. Cut the leaf so that a small portion of the stem will remain, insert this in a pan of damp sand, laying the leaf out flat upon the sand, upper side uppermost. It can be retained in place by bits of stone or small pegs. Cuts must then be made in a number of places so as to sever the veins, thus checking the flow of sap. A callus then forms at the base of each piece of vein where severed, and just above it, a bud starts out, and thus a new plant is formed. It is essential for success, that there should be bottom heat, and that the air should be moist. A bell glass is the best to put over the leaf, and if there is danger that the air become too moist, the glass can be tilted up to allow of an escape. The leaves best adapted for propagation are those neither very young nor very old, but healthy and vigorous; yet that this is not absolutely essential is shown by the experience of a lady who had excellent success with a leaf that was some what decayed around the edges, and for that reason was cut off and thrown away. Remembering

afterward that the plant was sometimes grown from pieces of a leaf, she hunted it up, trimmed off the decayed portion, and planted it at the foot of a tree, about half under ground, and pressed the soil firmly around it. A few months afterward she had a nice little plant from it, with its beautiful leaves unfolding finely.

There are many varieties of the Rex family; some have brilliant colors in their leaves, others are thickly covered with short hairs. These are more difficult to manage, and require great care to preserve from dust, as like all rough leaved plants, they do not enjoy spraying, as do smooth leaved ones. It is well to set them out in a mild shower occasionally. Tepid water is the best for watering.

BEGONIAS, NOT REX

This class are the most generally cultivated, and they embrace a great many varieties, which are specially distinguishable by the diversity of their leaves. Most of them are one-sided, that is, they are larger on one side of the mid-rib than on the other. Some have fern-like foliage, others lobated. Some have large palmate leaves, others are spotted and laced with white. As a class they are very beautiful for their foliage, but when to this attraction is added beauty of flowers, it will be seen at once that they are eminently deserving of the prominent position now given them both in the open border and the window garden.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.