

A span-roofed orchard-house, thirty feet long by fourteen feet wide, with a height to the ridge in the middle of eight feet, sloping down to four feet on either side, can be constructed by any carpenter for £27 10s. Smaller lean-to houses for very considerably less. One of these houses gives the fruit grower an atmosphere as nearly as possible resembling the native one of the peach, nectarine, and apricot. The glass affords abundance of light through its ample panes, and its protection gives a dry atmosphere, in which the fruit is sure to set and come to maturity; whilst the vigour of the tree is insured by wide openings or shutters in the opposite side walls, which admit a constant and abundant current of air through the house when it is thought desirable to do so. The atmosphere produced, beds are made, composed of loam and manure, on either side of the sunken central pathway, not for our orchard to grow in but upon. And here begins the singularity of this new method of culture. Any one who has grown fruit trees must be aware that their roots are great travellers: they penetrate under the garden wall, crop up in the gravel path, and penetrate into the old drains; they seek their food, in fact, as a cow does in the meadow, moving from place to place. Under such circumstances, artificial aid is of little avail, you cannot give nourishment to roots that have run you don't know where; but you can confine the roots and stall-feed them, as we do animals, with a certainty of producing the effect we desire, and this we accomplish by putting our orchards into pots.

But Pomona has still an infinity to learn. It clearly will not do to allow our fruit-trees to fling about their arms as they do in a wild state; in the orchard-house we have to economise room; there must not be an inch of useless wood. A little time since small standard trees, about four feet high, were thought to be the best form for the orchard-house, but Mr. Rivers has come to the conclusion that most light and heat is gained by training his trees perpendicularly, in the form of a small cypress—thus a stem four feet high supports a large number of short lateral branches pinched back to five or six fruit buds. This somewhat formal shape has the great advantage of allowing a large number to be congregated together, and of ripening their fruit better, inasmuch as they are not shaded with leaves as those having straggling branches. And now for the manner of feeding them. The pots in which the roots are encased may be considered the mangers of the tree; to these nutriment is given in the autumn of every year, in the shape of a top-dressing of manure, in addition to which, instead of one hole, three or four are made in the bottom of the pot, to allow the root to emerge into the rich compost of two-thirds loam, and one of manure, forming the border.

"But," says our reader, "this, after all, is but a roundabout way of making the roots seek mother earth."

It may appear so, but in reality it is a very different thing. In the first place the zone of baked clay placed round about the roots in the shape of the pot, is a good conductor of heat, which highly stimulates the tree. In the second place, the roots, although allowed to strike into the border, are within call; when the branches are pinched back in the spring, these roots also are pruned; thus the vegetation, which otherwise would be apt to run out and fill the house with useless leaves and wood, is checked at will. To provide still further nourishment to our nurslings, every two years the earth is picked out of each pot two inches all round, and six inches deep, and fresh compost is rammed into its place.

Trees, once potted and placed in the orchard-

house, the trouble attendant upon them is not very much, and does not require any special gardening qualifications. A lady might, with advantage, relieve the monotony of making holes upon cambric and sewing them up again, by this delightful occupation. In the winter and spring months protection should be given against frosts by closing the shutters. Very little water should be allowed in winter, as the trees require to hibernate, and water acts as a stimulant. About March pruning should commence, and should continue through the season until the final autumn pruning, when the orchard is once more put to sleep. All these are matters which afford infinite pleasure to all persons of healthy tastes. The trees are all brought microscopically, as it were, before us; we watch the buds perfected into the blossom, and an orchard-house of peaches in full bloom is one of the most beautiful sights in horticulture. We watch with still greater interest the ripening fruit.

An orchard-house thirty feet long and fourteen feet wide will hold, say forty perpendicularly trained peach-trees, or two rows on either side the centre pathway. These trees in the third year, and henceforth for many years (Mr. Rivers has them still luxuriantly bearing in the twelfth year), will produce two dozen fruit each, or eighty dozen altogether, and by the selection of various sorts and the retardation of the ripening, a constant succession of this fine fruit may be obtained from August to November. The trees should be placed alternately thus * * * * in the double row, so as to give them the utmost amount of light and air. By this arrangement the fruit is ripened all round, instead of simply on its surface, as often happens with wall fruit.

Apples, pears, grapes, figs and oranges, are grown in this manner with the same facility, certainty, and cheapness, as the choicer stone-fruit; and, be it remembered, these orchard-houses are designed for small gardens and for small gardeners. All that is required is a slip of ground open to the sun, just large enough to find room for the orchard-house, which should, if possible, lie south-east by north-west, in order that the full summer sun may, in the course of the day, fall upon all sides of the trees.—*Once a Week.*

DUNSTON MAGNA, A TALE OF PROCRASTINATION.

CHAPTER III.

"Let us know the worst."

Mr. Marshman having secured the services of a neighbouring clergyman for the ensuing sabbath, repaired to London the next morning to ascertain the extent of his father's loss.

On arriving at his father's place of business, he found it closed at an hour much too early if all had been right. So, without further delay, he posted off to the villa at Richmond. As he neared the spot, how the scenes of his childhood rushed fresh into his memory! Every turn was endeared to him by some local association, and this was the first time in his life that he had gone there with any feelings but those of happiness and hope. His emotions might have found vent in the lines of the poet:—

Ah! happy hills, ah! pleasing shade,

Ah! fields, beloved in vain,

Where once my careless childhood strayed,

A stranger yet to pain.

He found the place wearing its usual aspect. The servants, instead of being surprised at this painful and unexpected visit, seemed to regard it

as a portion of the calamity which had overtaken them. Without any ceremony, therefore, he sought his father's presence. He found him as downcast as might have been expected; and, what grieved him still more, without those consolations which religion alone can give in seasons of suffering. We need not dilate on the painful incidents of this melancholy interview. Suffice it to say that the losses by the ships being so slightly insured, and others which arose from the failures of firms with which he had extensive dealings, had reduced the poor old merchant to absolute and irreparable ruin. His philosophy was that of the stoic, and not that of the Christian; and there being one of the connexions of the firm, whose failure had materially contributed to sweep away what was left after the shipwrecks, who made loud and hypocritical professions of extra piety, the old man, to the horror of the son, gave vent to very powerful observations as to what he thought of religious people generally, and of this man in particular. He hated the very term "piety."

CHAPTER IV.

Clouds and Sunshine.

The Reverend Mr. Marshman returned to his home with a few of the relics of bygone prosperity—the whole of the estate, and the principal portion of the furniture and effects, had gone to meet his father's liabilities, which, however, the reverend gentleman had the happiness of seeing fully discharged; and, although reduced to the brink of ruin, the aged merchant had the unspeakable satisfaction of retiring from the commercial world with a clear and honest conscience, paying 20s. in the pound to every one of his creditors. But the weight of his misfortunes bore heavily upon him—the whole object of his life was gone, and the results of all his labours were dissipated "at one fell swoop"—they vanished away, as the morning clouds disappear before the brightly rising sun. All he had left to him in the world was a few articles of plate, the heirlooms of his family—the reminiscences of a splendour now for ever passed away,—and a few family portraits which now seemed only to remind him of those who had gone to that bourne from which no traveller returns, and to which he found himself fast hastening. He retired, with his son, to their abode in the country, with his spirits broken, his constitution shattered by the shock—a sadder, and let us hope, a wiser man. His only satisfaction was that at his death he would yet be able to do something for his dutiful and beloved son; for he had effected in early life—in the midst of his dawning prosperity—a policy of assurance on his own life for £2,000, in a first-rate office. The various bonus additions, from time to time to time declared, he had never thought of withdrawing; he always allowed them to go to the increase of the sum assured. He was now content to end his days in peace and retirement; and he spent his time chiefly in making a preparation, with the constant, earnest, and prayerful counsels of his son, with whom he went to live, for his entrance upon that futurity of which he had hitherto thought so little.

They reduced their establishment, took a smaller house, and prepared at once to meet the exigencies of their altered situation. It was a useful, practical, though painful lesson to them all on the utter uncertainty of sublunary affairs. They went, however, to the right source for consolation—they were contented, and even happy. They chiefly felt the misery of being poor in the reductions they had to make in their charities. It gave them far more pain to turn away an applicant for relief, than to deny themselves the