

globe. We cannot all of us, in pursuit of new daffodils or orchids, rush after these wildlings, to look for them in their native haunts, or track them in the dim recesses of the jungle; but another field is always open, if we will only look for it. At our feet it lies, and it is well worth exploration. The very best place I know of for studying weeds is one's own garden, and the next best places are other people's gardens. What with winds and wild birds, we need never fear the supply of specimens will run short.

On the whole, other people's gardens are the most entertaining on account of their variety. Country houses of friends, hotel gardens, and the houses we own for a season affords us opportunities. The weeds vary, of course, with every locality, and most gardens provide something fresh, if it be only a stowaway, that has come from afar, in moss, or litter, or packing stuff. Such errants are misleading, but they add to the excitement of the chase.

It was once my good fortune to own a garden in gravel land, near a forest. A half filled gravel-pit that had been left in it was a paradise for weeds; never to be forgotten was the way the trefoils, thinecias, and cat's ears flourished in the sunshine. Most beautiful of all were the tufts of viper's-bugloss, its fuzzy green leaves and clusters of brilliant blue flowers, dazzling between the yellow earth and sapphire sky, blue against blue. A chalk garden has many delightful weeds, and so has a garden that owns a stream or lake, all different, with differing ways and scents.

When one comes to think of it, what an unold debt of gratitude we owe the weeds of by-gone centuries. How about those that were good enough to turn into coal, and are now burning for us? A coal-box is not a usual place for the study of botany, but one might do worse than turn one over, now and again, in search of floral impres-

sions. Lignite, of course, is better; being in the transition stage, it is quite easy to pick out little stems and stalks. Two friends, one a geologist and the other a botanist, once took me for a walk, and for fear of being considered a wild romancer, I will not say how many kinds of weeds were recognized in some seams of lignite, brown and black. In fact, had everything we came to not been in a fossilized condition, we could have had an oyster feast out of the rocks, and salad to go with it.

Sometimes in gardens one comes across an unattractive outcast, commonly known as the horse-tail. At sight of this small weed an imaginative mind may take a leap backwards across past aeons, and see the horse-tails as they used to be, when, giants in the land, they lived along with the mammoths of the period, the slow-moving reptiles and the silent lizards, half fish, half bird. We must forgive this homely weed its flowerlessness and want of beauty, for the sake of the tales it dumbly tells us.



FIG. 2655. A BEAUTIFUL ARRANGEMENT OF WILD FLOWERS.