

## WOMAN'S KINGDOM.

## Flowers in the Home

There is a pretty Arabia legend to the effect that when God, contemplating the finished creation of our earth, "saw that it was very good," He smiled, and immediately its whole surface burst into flowers.

The lovely blossoms do, indeed, seem tokens of His favor. Capable of no practical use, they appeal to man as an immortal who has other needs than material ones. They adapt themselves to his every mood, they speak the universal language, and to them are committed the messages that his own speech is too gross to express.

There is an increasing fondness shown by persons of taste and refinement for surrounding themselves with flowers and growing plants in the home. No dining-table is complete in these days without its centre-piece of ferns or flowers, while palms and foliage plants are almost as necessary to the furnishing of a modern drawing room as are its tables and chairs.

Among graceful, womanly accomplishments this deft arrangement has its place, and the art is so easily acquired that any one, with a few suggestions may master its essentials. In filling vases, the mistake is often made of crowding the blossoms. Each should have room to assert its own individuality, and several kinds should never be placed in the same vase. One or two varieties alone make the best effect—it takes an artist to know how to use more. When possible every flower should be surrounded by its own foliage. The skill to arrange the material at hand in a pleasing manner is often dependent on what is called "an eye for color." Yellow flowers look best in a bowl of old blue china, red or blue blossoms in yellow ware; clear white glass has the advantage of allowing the leaves to be seen, and the popular yellow-green glass suggests foliage by its color and harmonizes all tints.

Some flowers seem to appeal to admiration, some to love. The chrysanthemum, which has been wittily called "a professional beauty," is effective at a distance as are also nearly all red and yellow flowers, lighting up some dim corners, "making sunshine in a shady place," but the roses, violets, pansies, and lilies of the valley we want to have near us, where their sweetness may mingle with our thoughts. The "whirligig of time" has brought the old fashioned flowers into favor again, and sweet-peas and marigolds are once more given places of honor in fashionable scenes, like King Cophetua's fair beggar maid.

The arrangement of cut-flowers for the table may be greatly simplified by the use of a wire cage made to fit over the jardiniere or other receptacle in use. The shape should be somewhat rounded, like an inverted soup plate or shallow bowl, and the meshes about an inch in diameter. Any tinsmith will make one at a cost of a few cents.

No difficulty will be experienced in making a most effective centre-piece if the general shape and size be first determined by using nothing but leaves: the foliage of the rose geranium lends itself best to such an arrangement, and with this background of green and with the aid of the wire meshes beneath, the flowers may be introduced with no uncertainty as to their manner of holding themselves, and the assurance that every blossom will be seen to the best advantage.

Some slender, feathery flower like the dentzia, white lilac, or lily-of-the-valley, or hot house daisy, standing above the other blossoms, gives an added lightness and grace; and where it is undesirable to introduce white flowers, mignonette or some delicate fern will give the same effect.

A little practice will soon enable one to be quite independent of the florists

services. For the breakfast-table in summer, a bowl of "the dear common flowers"—buttercups, bright as sunshine, plump lilacs, purple and white, or field daisies with red clover give a touch of pastoral simplicity that seems in accord with the freshness of morning. For decorative effects nothing is prettier than large branches of flowering shrubs—great, generous masses of bloom.

In Switzerland they gather apple and cherry boughs in early December, and keep them in water in a warm room—the kitchen is best. By Christmas the dry twigs are covered with blossoms like Tannhauser's fabled staff.

In the cultivation of flowers the Japanese lead the world. They twist chrysanthemums so as to resemble men, bridges, boats, and castles, and group them to portray historical or mythological scenes. They will force one plant to produce five or six kinds of chrysanthemums of various colors and sizes, and sometimes as many as six hundred of the same variety.—Mrs. Burton Kingsland in *Godey's*.

## Fashion Notes.

Black, formerly so popular, is very little worn, grays, browns and blues having entirely superseded it.

The new weaves of alpaca make capital gowns. They are so easily brushed and made "fit" after a long day's journey, and have sufficient warmth to equal the light-weight serge flannel.

Blue is frequently trimmed with pink in Pompadour style, a notion lately revived. Pale lilac is trimmed with bright yellow and orange is trimmed with green.

Accordion plaiting is used for blouses and sleeves where soft, thin material is employed. Pale colors are trimmed with fine blond lace and black insertion, and many have jet addition.

A new idea in belts is to wear the belt loose, so that it droops to one side, as do the sailors'. It is claimed for this notion that effect is prettier than the tight belt. The most becoming belt is a thick heavy leather. Such a belt worn loose is far prettier than the flimsy ribbon belt pulled so tightly that the threads stretch and the filagree buckle is strained out of line.

A novelty in lace is made with a ground of three different materials—guipure net and gauze. Another variety is in two shades of color, cream and butter or cream and coffee.

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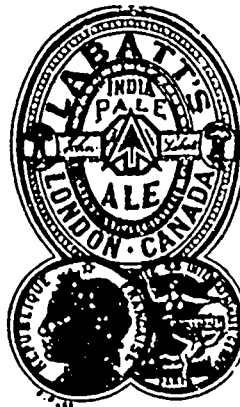
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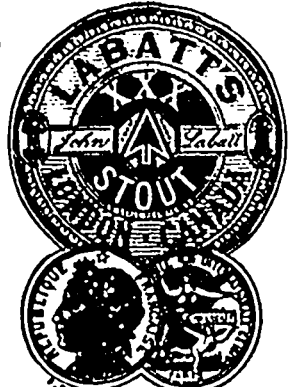


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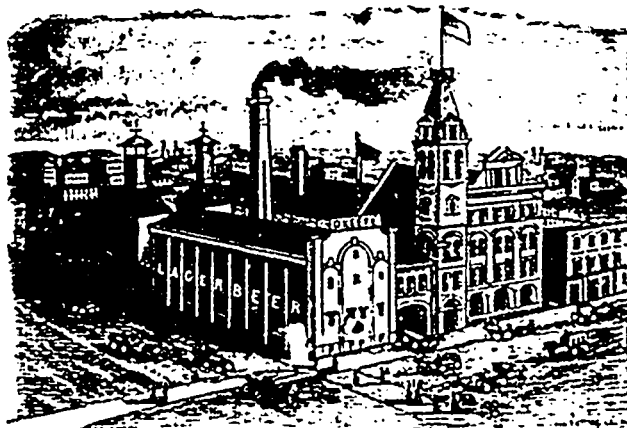
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