

Window Flower Gardens.

THE gradual extension of the movement for fostering a love of wild flowers among the working classes, and for diffusing a charm over their too often ill-conditioned residences, is matter for congratulation. Not only in London, but in Dublin and other large towns, efforts are being made in this direction; and from a report before us, we learn that Hull is not behindhand in the good work. Nearly 4000 plants have been distributed among 724 applicants, under the superintendence of Mr. J. C. Niven, the curator of the Hull Botanic Garden, and Mr. Peak, the superintendent of the People's Park in the same town. The directions for the culture of these plants, drawn up by Mr. Niven, are so well adapted to the end in view, that we republish them here in the hope that they may serve as hints to others who are engaged in a similar task.—*Eos. Gardeners' Chronicle*

WATERING.—The first and most important point is to guard against over-watering; this remark is more especially applicable to the first month or two—as it will be readily understood that in the process of removing a plant from the ground where its roots are widely spread, and placing it in the narrow limits of a flower-pot, a certain amount of injury is unavoidable, and in order to allow the roots to recover their power of healthy action, just sufficient water must be given to keep the soil moist, not wet—and to insure this a watering once a week will be quite sufficient until about the beginning of the year—or, if the plants are in a room where there is no fire, once a fortnight may suffice. One maxim in connection with watering which ought always to be borne in mind is, when you do water, do it well and thoroughly, allowing all the surplus to escape at the bottom of the pot. It is usual to stand the pots in saucers, and as a matter of cleanliness it is advisable to do so, but never allow the surplus water to remain in those saucers for any length of time, as the air is thereby prevented from acting on the soil, and the result is that it becomes sour and rots the roots.

DECAYED BRANCHES.—Should branches decay, as some will do even under the most favourable circumstances, cut them back to a sound joint, that is, to that part of the stem where there either is or has been a leaf. This being neglected, the decay may from a single branch extend itself through the whole plant. For the same reason it is advisable to remove any decaying leaves, or those that have turned yellow—the latter, by a gentle pressure downward, will generally break off at the bottom of the leaf-stalk.

VENTILATION.—A word now about ventilation. Let the window be open as much as possible during the day, especially if there be a fire in the room, and at night, when it would be impracticable to have the window open, place the plants on the floor, where they will be coolest. Above all things avoid putting them on a high shelf for the oft-repeated reason that “they are nicely out of the way,”—such a course would lead to their being very soon out of the way altogether.

SPRING GROWTH.—As the spring advances, and the plants show signs of growth in the form of healthy young leaves, take every opportunity of setting them out of doors during the day, in a sheltered corner, where they will get a little sun, and above all things never miss an April shower, which will be all the more acceptable should it occur in March. (We are not responsible for this Irish bull.—*Ed. C. F.*) A nice genial shower will do them more good in an hour than all the artificial waterings and washings you can give.

AIR PURIFIED BY PLANTS.—There is with many persons a prejudice against having plants in a bedroom, under the erroneous impression that they poison the atmosphere. The very reverse is the case. The leaves of plants purify the air, filtering all the poisonous matter out of it, and appropriating that poisonous matter to their own growth. The same remark does not, however, apply to cut flowers. These, beautiful as they may be, do to some extent add to the impurity, and consequently ought always to be removed from a sleeping apartment at night. I mention these facts for the reason that a bedroom window is generally better adapted for the growth of plants than a kitchen window, owing to the atmosphere being less hot and dry.

EFFECTS OF FROST.—A word now as to frost—the arch-enemy of floriculture. When it is at all severe, the plants should be removed from the window-ledge, either to a warmer room, or, failing that, to the warmest and farthest-removed corner from the window. As soon as you see those beautiful crystals form on the glass, you may be sure that it will not be long before the frost makes itself felt in the inside. Should this precaution not be taken, and the soil and plants become frozen, let them thaw gradually; and the most effectual way to do this is to place them in a dark cupboard (not a warm one), and sprinkle them well overhead with cold water.

Grape Vines for Temporary Bearing.

Geo. L. Pratt, Orleans Co., N. Y., writes the *Rural New Yorker* as follows on planting out grape vines for temporary bearing:—“I would advise setting double the number of vines in the row that you intend to let remain permanently. Fruit the temporary vines the third, fourth, fifth and sixth years, and then dig them out of the way. You can thus favour the permanent vines by not fruiting them until the fourth year, and then but lightly, giving them an opportunity to get well established for a long-lived vineyard. The past season I set two and one-half acres to Iona, Isabella, Delaware, and Clinton, planting the vines ten by twelve feet apart. Between each vine I set an Isabella, at a cost of five dollars per hundred, with the intention of fruiting the latter heavily for about four seasons, then removing them and leaving the first-named vines in full possession of the ground. With my experience I am satisfied that ten feet by twelve is near enough together to have strong growing vines when they are seven years old.”

The Household.

Food Value of the Potato.

THERE is, probably, no other vegetable food, except wheaten bread, of which so much can be fairly said in its favour. Its merits, however, vary much with the kind of seed, the period of maturity, and the soil in which they are grown. That kind should be preferred which becomes mealy on boiling, and which, when well cooked, can be thoroughly crushed with the finger. The potato which is known as “waxy,” and those which remain somewhat hard when boiled, do not digest so readily as the mealy kind, but for that very reason they are said to be more satisfying. . . . It is not material in reference to nourishment whether the potato be boiled or roasted, since in both methods it should be well cooked. In point of economy and convenience, however, it has been found better to boil than to roast them; for whilst the loss in boiling upon 1lb. of potatoes scarcely exceeds half an ounce, that in the most careful roasting is 2 oz. to 3 oz. It is also more economical to cook them in their skins, and to peel them immediately before they are eaten, but this is not very convenient in many families, and the colour of the potato is not quite so agreeable as that of those which have been boiled after peeling. When they are peeled before boiling, and particularly when they are small and the operation is performed carelessly, from one-third to one-fourth of the whole weight of the potato is lost, and if there be no pig to eat the peelings the whole is wasted; whilst the weight of the peel which is removed after boiling would not amount to more than 1 oz. in the pound. When potatoes have been roasted the loss in weight from the skin and drying is more than one-fourth of the weight before cooking. An average sample of potato, after it has been peeled, contains 11 per cent. of carbon and 0.35 per cent. of nitrogen; and hence in each pound there are 770 grains of carbon and 24 grains of nitrogen, and it is greatly inferior to bread. The economy of its use depends upon its cost, so that in times when potatoes are sold at 2d and 1d per pound they are very dear food as compared with household flour, whilst they are a very cheap food when produced by the labourer at the cost of the “seed” and the rent of land. Thus, at 2d per lb., only 1024 grains of carbon and 32 grains of nitrogen will be obtained for 1d; when the cost is 1d per lb. the quantities will be reduced to 770 grains and 24 grains. When the labourer, however, can obtain 50 bushels of potatoes from a quarter of an acre of land, at a cost of about 30s for seed and rent, he will have more than 7lb. of potatoes for 1d., and the quantity of carbon and nitrogen thus obtained for that sum would be 5770 grains and 200 grains. If, however, he were to sell a large part of his crop at the market price, he could procure with the money thus obtained far more nutriment in the form of flour than would have been derived from that portion of his potatoes. The weight of potatoes which alone would supply the daily nutriment required by a man would be about 6lb. in reference to the carbon and 8lb. in reference to the nitrogen; but when a labourer in the West of Ireland lives upon this he is allowed 10 1/2 lb. daily, besides a large supply of buttermilk, and as both of these kinds of food are cheap in that locality, the proceeding is even then an economical one.—*Dr. E. Smith's Practical Dietary.*

Canadian Scouring Brick.

IN the February number of the Journal of the Board of Arts and Manufactures for Upper Canada, we find a notice of a new scouring brick of very excellent quality, manufactured by Mr. J. S. Rutherford, of Stratford, at his Bridgewater Brickworks, Kincardine, County of Huron, C.W. Samples of this brick have been sent to Paris for the coming exhibition. In reference to this home-manufactured specimen of an article which has hitherto been wholly imported from the mother country, Professor Chapman, of University College, Toronto, says:—“The sample of scouring brick prepared by Mr. Rutherford, of Kincardine, is of excellent quality. It compares very favourably with the ordinary ‘Bath brick’ of England, and is equally suitable for scouring purposes, and as a polishing material for knives, &c. Its manufacture reflects much credit on Mr. Rutherford's skill and enterprise.” Hitherto, we believe, these bricks have only been made in Bath, or Bridgewater, England, and it will be a great advantage to Canadians if the native clay, and native manufacture, can furnish an article of such utility for domestic and other purposes. We shall be glad to learn that Mr. Rutherford's enterprise, which has received such favourable notice, is being rewarded by the general adoption at home of the new material produced by him, and its extensive exportation abroad.

CLEANING TAINTED MEAT BARRELS.—Fill the barrel nearly full of well cured clover hay. Herdgrass or timothy will do in the absence of clover. Then fill the barrel part full of boiling water, and cover up and let it stand until cold, when the barrel will be found clean and sweet.—*Cor. Co. Gent.*

Poetry.

When Will the Winter Pass Away?

Softly falls the feathery snow
Over the valley and on to the hills,
Into the silent lake below,
As the delicate shower the wide air fills,
Dropping so gently without a sound,
And lying so white on the frozen ground

Pure and beautiful seems the snow,
Falling so noiselessly out of the sky,
But I long for the Winter days to go,
For the barren months to hasten by,
And bring me the Summer, fresh and green,
When the woods are hung with their leafy screen.

Close to me there will the wild bee hum
His drowsy tune in the meadow grass,
And the wandering winds will go and come,
Gently fanning my face as they pass,
Then haste, sweet Summer! my whole heart longs
For the beautiful flowers and the birds' gay songs.

Oh, glorious Queen of the halcyon year!
By vernal paths of the joyous Spring,
On rosy footsteps, my love, draw near,
Oh, haste, sweet summer! hasten and bring
The warmth that lives in the sunbeam's light,
And the dews, which drop from thy lids at night.

Oh, hasten with showers of silver rain,
Bright, flashing rain from the skies above,
To ripen the fields of bearded grain,
And teach us the lesson of God's great love!
Oh, glorious summer, Queen of the year,
On the viewless pinions of Time draw near!

With crimson and gold will the sunsets burn
Far down in the west at the close of day,
Oh, haste, sweet Summer, haste to return!
Ah, when will the Winter pass away?
My heart with a passionate yearning longs
For the beautiful flowers and the birds' gay songs.

—*Harper's Monthly.*

The Heart's Seed Field.

We all, in journeying on through earth,
Might thick with pleasures sow it—
Plant joy in many a heart of worth
That else can never know it.

Far other seed hath man too long
On every side been sowing,
Far other gifts on life's sad throng
With open hand bestowing.

How much of mingled care and strife,
The hand by friendship 'twined,
Might weed from others' life,
Were souls but less divided!

Be ours the part to soothe distress
In hearts long worn with weeping;
And thousands then our name shall bless,
No more earth's sorrow reaping.