

OUR OUTCAST GARDEN FOLK

"After all, nothing prospers like weeds, all the world over;
Nought makes them rue, neither cold nor heat nor
drought dismays them ever."

ON a bright day in spring, while wandering round one's garden, it is impossible not to give a thought sometimes to the poor outcasts who would like to live in it, but who, for the most part, are destined to a very different fate—the burn-heap of the weeds. It may be that there are not so very many of them about, for the weather may have been dry and the season late, but they are only biding their time: the first warm shower will find them pushful as ever, and there will be plenty of enemies to challenge them at the gate.

Scores of very particular people there are, who simply cannot pass a dandelion without rooting it up, or a daisy (especially in the lawn) without longing for a fork. Nettles of all sorts, even the pretty white and

yellow ones, as also do thistles, vetches, and spurge, all of which are very fond of intruding into gardens; they are known to be troublesome, and have bad characters.

The measure of morality, as applied to plants, seems to vary as much as it does with reference to the human family. The pariah of one place becomes the pet of another. Like the question of how many wives it is expedient for a man to have at a time, much depends on latitude and longitude. In different parts of the country, in the same week I have heard the same plant—the grape-hyacinth—spoken of as "that pernicious weed," and "the precious little blue flower that lives in rockeries." When and where make all the difference: it is possible to have too much even of a good thing, and numbers of pretty common flowers, by making themselves too cheap, earn the opprobrious and scarcely-deserved epithet of "weeds." Marigolds are flagrant offenders: gay in color, and gifted with a pleasant bitter-sweetness, at times they are a plague, and I have myself suffered many things of my favorite oxalis. Only last year, it threatened to swamp us in clover, wanting to carpet the rose beds, and make an emerald setting for the geraniums. We rooted it up, scattered it, and dried it in the sun. In vain: it always turned up a short time after, smiling, and apparently unconscious of any cheek.

To many people weeds have a peculiar fascination. Their very wildness appeals to an instinct of human nature; that is by no means unaccountable, but one has to dive below the surface to understand it. The same Bohemian spark it is that makes us enjoy uncomfortable picnicing and the trials of life in camp; that lends a charm to every kind of sport and sends the Englishman hunting for wild things all over the



FIG. 2653. AN ARRANGEMENT OF OX-EYE DAISIES,
WILD PARSLEY AND FERNS.