

RURAL AND SUBURBAN

WALL GARDENS

Plants growing on a wall, however beautiful in themselves, are apt to look like weeds. Walls are usually built to be screens and barriers, not to be flower beds; so plants growing upon them seem to be in the wrong place, to have come there by chance, and to be signs of neglect, like plants in a garden path. There are some gardeners who take a pride in growing plants in the most unexpected places; and often the result of their ingenuity is that all their plants look like weeds. It is the same error as that which produced carpet-bedding; for a hollyhock in a wall is as much out of place as house leeks and stonecrops arranged in patterns in a bed. Doctor Johnson compared a woman preaching to a dog walking on its hind legs. "It is not done well," he said, "but you are surprised to find it done at all." So it is with plants, even when they thrive, in unexpected places. When once you have recovered from your wonder at the sight of a hollyhock growing in a wall, you would much rather see it decently displaying its charms in a border.

But there are walls and walls; and some are much better suited to gardening than others, though none perhaps are suited to the cultivation of hollyhocks. The wall which is built for a screen or a barrier and made of stones and mortar may be covered with creepers or shrubs rooted in the ground below it. But it is evidently not designed for plants to root in places where the mortar ought to be; and, if it is covered with such plants, it looks as if it were half-way to a ruin. That may be merely owing to the force of association; but association is an important element in all beauty, and flowers are grown for their beauty. It is melancholy and uncomfortable to associate gardens with ruin and decay. They are places to be enjoyed by the living and should seem to belong to them rather than to the dead. Therefore they should look well cared for; and all pains that are taken to make them look untidy are misapplied. Man should always seem to be the master of the garden and should keep a firm if gentle hand upon the caprices of nature.

But where a garden is on a slope there may be another kind of wall, built, not for a boundary or a screen, but so that the slope of the garden may be divided up into levels and steep banks. Such walls will, of course, have earth behind them, and their object is to contain that earth and at the same time to provide a more interesting substitute for the usual steep bank of grass or clipped laurels or other dull shrubs. They are, in fact, something between an ordinary wall and a rockery, with a regular arrangement of stones, but without mortar. If they are properly built they are well suited for the growth of many plants; and plants

growing upon them do not look like weeds if they are well arranged, since there is a mass of earth behind them in which we should naturally expect plants to grow, and since there is no mortar to be disturbed by their growth. Such walls, if they are of any height, should have a slight slope, so that the earth between them may not wash away, and so that the plants in the lower courses may not be too much overshadowed by those above them. There is no need for a slope where the wall is only a few feet high, as in that case it can be planted in the higher courses with trailing plants that will soon cover its whole surface. Straight low walls of this kind make an excellent boundary to a sunk garden, serving at the same time as a shelter for the plants on the ground and as a home for many plants that will not thrive so well on the level.

Whether the wall is straight or sloping, the stones should be regular in shape, if rough hewn, and should be built close together. However thin, their exposed surface should be flat, so that no projection may make a drip on the plants below them. In some cases plants already well grown may have to be planted among the stones, and this should be done, if possible, in the course of building; otherwise their roots cannot be properly spread out, and they will probably die. But, whenever possible, it is best to sow seed or to plant very small seedlings in the wall, so that the plants may be acclimated to their peculiar conditions from the first. There is many a plant that will thrive in a wall if it has never known anything else, but will die if it is transplanted from a border in which it has already made large roots. In any case it is most important to arrange the plants on some system. Indiscriminate planting in a wall looks worse even than indiscriminate planting in a border, for it suggests mere weediness at once. The plants should be arranged in masses, more long than broad, and interweaving with each other at their extremities; and there should not be too great a variety of them. Half a dozen different species well arranged and contrasted look far better on a long wall than fifty. Care should also be taken to plant projecting plants only near the base of the wall; otherwise they will overshadow and perhaps kill any plants below them; and, in any case, no plants should be used which project so much that they look insecure or get in the way of any one who walks along the base of the wall. Indeed, some experience is necessary for the choice of plants that will both look well and thrive well in a wall, and the gardener should not begin with rash experiments. The choice of plants must depend to some extent upon the aspect of the wall; and, as most wall plants like a sunny place, the aspect should be, if possible, southerly and, at any rate, not shaded by trees.

We will begin, therefore, by mentioning some plants that thrive best in full sun; and

of those the most useful of all are the rock-pinks, especially the Cheddar pink (*Dianthus caesius*) and *Dianthus plumarius*. These two species hybridize very readily; indeed, there seems to be no fixed type of *D. plumarius*, and often the hybrids have the merits of both species, being more vigorous than *D. caesius*, and more compact and brilliant than *D. plumarius*. If seed from a good mixed strain is sown, and the seedlings are planted in the upper courses of the wall when quite young, they will grow apace and soon increase by self-sown seedlings. They can be cut back if they become straggly, like all trailing rock plants, and they are the better for it. Other pinks of easy culture, such as *D. suavis*, *D. monspessulanus*, *D. deltoideus*, and *D. noeanus*, are also suitable for the wall; and *D. silvestris* will often thrive in it when it falls even in the rock garden. But the wall is not the place for *D. alpinus* or *D. neglectus*. They need more care, and *D. alpinus* needs more moisture, than it can afford. Masses of rock pinks can be interwoven with masses of *Aubrietia* or *Arenaria montana*, both of which should be either sown in the wall or planted as very small seedlings. The *Arenaria* also looks its best contrasted with *Saponaria cymoides*, a plant that needs to be cut back after flowering if it is to live for more than a year or two. Another good contrast may be made by planting a drift of *Aizoon saxifragae* close to one of *Campanula muralis*. Both small plants are inserted to begin with, adapt themselves to a wall readily and look their best in it. *Campanula pumila* will thrive in a wall, if planted when quite a small seedling; but older divided plants are less likely to thrive. When established it runs along between the courses and makes a beautiful contrast with *Sedum album*, which flowers at the same time. This *Sedum* is less rampant in a wall than elsewhere; but even there it will smother other plants if not watched carefully. Another good mixture is *Gypsophila repens* with the common thrift, *Armeria maritima*, or with the brighter-colored *A. lauchena*. The *Gypsophila* makes long roots, and should be planted as a small seedling. The beautiful little *Campanula garganica* thrives in a wall, if carefully planted, and may be contrasted with the white variety of *Erinus alpinus*, both of these must be placed where they will not be smothered by larger plants. Another good neighbor for the *Campanula* is the Alpine house look, *Semperivium arachnoides*, or the more vigorous *S. laggeri*. These should be packed in tight between the stones. If they are at all loose they get washed away and tempt sparrows to tear them to pieces. All the house leeks, of course, are good wall plants, and there are many species of them. The curious and beautiful *Antirrhinum asarina* thrives better in a wall than anywhere else; but it is never long-lived. In hot summers, however, it will often produce self-sown seedlings, and in any case it can be

easily raised from seed. Lower down on the wall can be planted the dwarf variety of *Alyssum saxatile*, which looks splendid in contrast with *Aubrietia* above it; also *Helianthemum*, the dwarfier form of *Santolina incana*, often called *Alpina*; *Iberis sempervirens* and *I. coraeifolia*; *Campanula carpatica*; and the splendid *Saxifraga longifolia*, which thrives better in a wall than anywhere, and will sometimes reproduce itself there by self-sown seedlings.

So far we have mentioned only plants of easy culture. There are many others, reputed more difficult, which will often thrive in a wall, especially from self-sown seedlings. *Ethionemas*, for instance, except in very warm gardens, will stand our winters better in a wall than in the rock garden; and of these *A. grandiflorum*, *A. coridiflorum*, and *A. pulchellum* often seed themselves freely. *A. grandiflorum*, being less prostrate than the others, should be planted lower down. *Wahlenbergia graminifolia*, again, is an excellent wall plant. It can be easily raised from seed and reproduces itself about as freely as groundsel. *Lychnis lagascae*, a beautiful little plant, will often thrive for several years in a wall if very small seedlings are planted, and will reproduce itself, but it is never a true perennial. The prostrate form of the common *Rosemary* is not hardy in most rock gardens, but in a wall it will usually survive most winters and flower. Layers of it root so readily that one or two can always be taken and kept in a frame through the winter. A fine plant of it in flower is one of the most beautiful sights of spring. Again, the exquisite *Asperula athoa* (or *suberosa*) will thrive in a wall if carefully planted near the top, where it is safe from all drip and where it has very little soil; so will the rare *Acantholimon venustum*, to say nothing of the easier *A. glumaceum*; so will *Potentilla nitida*, which flowers best where it has least soil; and so will *Campanula waldesteiniana*, and, probably, *C. zoyzii*. But in experimenting with the more difficult rock plants the gardener should choose only those which suffer more from damp than from drought. A wall is not the place for plants like *Dianthus alpinus*, or *Androsace carnea*, or any others that need top dressing and surface moisture in summer; but it will suit many of those which grow wild in the narrowest fissures of rocks, provided they are planted in chinks equally narrow. The main point with these is to give them as little soil as possible, and to protect them from any stagnant moisture. They will thrive best, of course, where the stones run back furthest into the earth behind them, and where the soil cannot wash away from them. It is useless to plant minute plants where they are not perfectly firm in the wettest weather.

A wall with a north aspect cannot be made so brilliant as one facing south; but many beautiful plants will thrive and flower well on it, if it is quite open to the light and air. *Au-*

brietia, for instance, thrives on a north wall, and so do *Campanula muralis* and *C. pumila* and *Erinus alpinus* and *Arenaria montana*, and on the upper parts, the *Aizoon saxifragae* and the house leeks. The rampant growing *Polygonum vacciniifolium* is worth trying where there is plenty of earth between the stones, and also *Waldsteinia trifoliata*; but both of these should, if possible, be planted as the wall is being built so that their roots may be well spread out. It is dangerous to disturb the *Polygonum* in the autumn. In the lower courses of the wall the mossy saxifragae and *Arenaria balearica* may be planted. The latter needs but little soil and will soon cover great spaces of stone like a moss. It should be planted in spring. If the seeds of Alpine and Iceland poppies are sown freely in the cracks, some of them are pretty sure to germinate, and when once they have flowered they will probably perpetuate themselves with self-sown seedlings. But it is well not to mix them, as they hybridize readily, and the Iceland strain soon overpowers the Alpine. The smaller *Cotoneasters*, such as *C. congesta* and *C. thymifolia*, do well and look their best in a north wall; but they should be planted as the wall is being built. They will make a good foil to the more conspicuous flowering plants. There is no reason why *Lithospermum prostratum* should not thrive on the upper part of a sloping north wall, provided a good deal of leaf mould is mixed with the soil. We have never seen it grown so, but it prospers in narrow spaces between large rocks looking either north or south. Among choicer and rarer plants, *Primula viscosa* and the beautiful garden variety called *P. nivalis* ought to do well in a deep cranny of a sloping wall; but all the Alpine primulas are apt to grow out of the soil, and it is difficult to press them back or to top-dress them on a wall. Again, *Aquilegia coerulea*, and even *A. glandulosa*, might thrive on the lower part of a sloping north wall where they had plenty of soil. Indeed, in the south of England *A. glandulosa*, if small seedlings were planted, would probably have a better chance in a north wall than anywhere else. At the foot of the wall *Tiarella cordifolia*, London pride, the Welsh poppy, *Viola cornuta*, and many of the smaller ferns would thrive and look their best. But, here again, there should not be too great a variety.

Sowing seeds in a wall is always a precarious experiment. They have the best chance if they are sown in wet weather and covered with a lump of sticky soil pressed flat. Otherwise they are likely to be blown or washed away. They should, if possible, be sown as soon as ripe, and only those seeds which germinate very easily should be chosen. But in wall gardening the gardener must trust to luck and make his own experiments. He is likely to fail often; but he may have some brilliant and unexpected successes.

Chicken Farming Humoresque

The Spector, who writes in the *Outing Magazine*, is a singularly observant individual, whose clever deductions are rendered exceedingly palatable by his sense of humor. Recently he looked upon a chicken farmer, and his description of the woes and wisdom of modern poultry raising may prove of interest to *Colonist Magazine* readers—provided they use the proper proportion of salt in assimilating the general effect of the article. Here you are:

The Spector has been staying with a cousin who, in the expressive neighborhood phrase, is "chicken-crazy." This state of mind is usually that of an early period of the pursuit, and the Spector's cousin is no exception. Yet, though he has not been at it a year, the first fine glorious flush of hope is inevitably over, and he is beginning to look realities in the face. As for his wife, she has been looking them in the face from the beginning, for, as she complains, "all her pin-money has been sunk in pin-feathers." It is, indeed, an eloquent fact that never, even in his most enthusiastic moments, will the Spector's cousin show his account-books or discuss expenses.

Since visiting in chicken circles, indeed, the Spector has ceased to wonder at the price of eggs. In the first place there is the modern housing of chickens. In the Spector's boyhood the chicken-coop was a simple affair. Any old box, turned on end and slatted, was good enough for a hen and her brood, and any old shed did for a roosting-place. The chickens roosted all over carryall, in fact; whereas today the carryall is an automobile and the chicken-coop a serious structure. For the sides and back of the up-to-date house the best-hatched boards, double, with roofing paper between, must be used. They keep the four winds of heaven from blowing too roughly upon the thoroughbred inmates, while glass or muslin screens in front regulate the temperature and ventilate the place. The roosts are almost cabinet-work, the floors of concrete, and the furniture, in the way of trap nests, water fountains, hovers, etc.—all listed in the catalogues at reprehensible prices—is palatial. "I am no chicken," remarked the cousin's wife, pensively; "but if I were, I could get the parlor furnished. It needs it badly, but Tom is not interested in the least. To be a Rhode Island Red is the only way to Tom's pocketbook." The Rhode Island Red is certainly a handsome chicken. A flock of them, crowded together in their reception-room, reminds one of a Turner sunset, and the resplendent roosters are chautauques indeed. The early Victorian method used to be to let chickens run at large,

looking for their living. The modern system is to keep them closely confined and feed them incessantly with all the delicacies of the season. "I buy beef scraps from the butcher, and chop the green bone," explained Tom, proudly. "They get that every day. Wheat, of course, they need—no, not screenings. That idea is mediaeval. Feed chickens poor-grade stuff, and you get few eggs, all authorities agree. I buy first-class wheat, corn and oats. In the morning these water fountains here are filled with hot water, first thing. That stimulates the chickens—sort of cocktail, you know. Then they have grain, well scattered in two-foot-deep straw—makes them scratch hard and gives them exercise and interest in life. In the afternoon they get a hot mash, and then later before they go to bed, they have more grain. Just now I'm trying a new breakfast-food idea—oats fried in suet, and served hot. My poultry paper says it will make them lay, and—well, you see they are a little backward. Of course there may be draughts in the houses, or the hens may not have gotten quite through their molt. To tell you the truth—in a burst of confidence—there always seems to be something—"

The cousin's wife has her own convictions. "It takes professionals," she insists, "to make chickens a success nowadays, and it's easy enough to see why. Tom can't give his whole time to it, and professionals can. You see, it's a fight against nature. The original hen, when man began with her, was a wild fowl in the jungles of Asia, and she laid only twelve eggs a year. Now she is expected to lay two hundred a year. Naturally, she doesn't do it unless science keeps egging her on, so to speak, every hour of every day. Nature would never tell her to lay a single egg in winter, and Tom here tells her to lay five eggs a week all through the cold weather. She may do it when her employer is always at hand, but Tom goes off to business and nature reasserts herself. I don't blame the hens; poor things, no matter how many eggs they lay, they never can set on them! That isn't in the scientific two-hundred-egg system. The incubator does all that, and relieves the hen from all home cares, to exploit her in the business line. There really ought to be a Hens' Union, with 'Back to the nest' for its motto. Think of those lovely, entrancing little yellow chicks—their own little chicks—and they never get one of them under their wings! And half the tiny chicks die, too—at least Tom's do."

"Oh, no—not half!" protested Tom. "After they once break the shell—" And that led on

to a tale of how, in one incubator hatch after another, half the chicks had not the strength to break the shell at the last crucial moment. "So Tom opened them the last time, according to poultry-book directions, and took the poor wet little exhausted things out and put them between two blankets. There were forty-three, and only six lived. And now the latest book says it isn't worth while ever to give first aid to chickens that way, after all, because it saves the lives of chicks too weak to break the shell, and therefore too weak to become vigorous birds. Why Tom's brain isn't addled by reading poultry books I don't know. They are his favorite works of fiction, and each one contradicts the other and is more sensational than the last."

The mature heroine, the Spector finds, does not exist in this class of farm-yard fiction. From the egg to the market the modern hen has but two years allotted to her span. As a pullet in her first winter she is cherished and admired, but after her second summer, having run her little race from debutante to dowager, she is either fatted for the table or sold off to the unwary novice who is looking for thoroughbred stock. The days of the mother hen, the comfortable, important creature surrounded by the chirping broods, are over. The Spector cannot help sighing a little over the new order of things—its luxury, its science, its calculating exploitation of Dame Parlet. And besides—what about the modern price of eggs?

PRACTICAL PALMISTRY

The wit of Mrs. Cavendish-Benettinck, the daughter of Maturin Livingstone, amused Newport during the summer. Newport laughed with special enjoyment over her reply to a fashionable palmist who said to her: "Tell me, madam, do you think I'd succeed if I went to London and opened a parlor in Old Bond street?" "Ah, my friend, as to that," Mrs. Cavendish-Benettinck replied, "you'd better look at your own palm and find out!"

JUST DISSOLVED

"So you broke your engagement with Miss Spensive?" "No, I didn't break it." "Oh, she broke it?" "No, she didn't break it." "But it is broken?" "Yes; she told me what her clothing cost and I told her what my income was, then our engagement sagged in the middle and gently dissolved."—Houston Post.

The Slate Club's "Share-Out"

England is familiar with the "slate club," or mutual aid society. The largest of these organizations in the world "shared-out" just prior to Christmas. The scene at the distribution is thus described by a London paper:

Old street, St. Luke's, was agog with excitement on Monday evening, when two men staggered with an enormously heavy bag into the Tabernacle schoolroom. Somebody whispered that their burden consisted of golden sovereigns, and joyous shouts were raised by the crowd.

Police-men looking on knew that the bag held £15,000 in golden bullion, and threw out their chests with an added sense of importance in being on duty to guard it.

"My word, it do seem a lot of money," whispered a stout lady with a shawl over her head.

This £15,000 had been saved up from the weekly sixpences of working men and women, belonging to the Old Street Sick and Provident Society, of whom the genial founder and secretary is Mr. P. Rockliff, who once a year plays the part of Father Christmas to nearly 15,000 people.

Just before six in the evening a long queue of these thrifty people stretched down the City road to the gates of the Tabernacle school room, and as soon as the doors were opened they streamed forward, quietly and orderly, to the entrance of the long, bare room furnished only with long wooden forms and a row of desks, where three cashiers sat with the money bags. Half a dozen policemen were there, but they had no strenuous work to do, for these thousands of people were much quieter than lambs. Each was provided with a card, which was equivalent to a receipt for the sovereign as soon as it was handed over, and it was amazing to see with what speed the cashiers paid over the gold. A bag containing £500 was emptied in less than a quarter of an hour.

In the crowd were hundreds of young clerks, who had come to draw out their sovereigns for the Christmas-holidays. Respectable fellows, with sweethearts in the suburbs, they were not too proud to take their turn with toilers in corduroys, and with laughing factory girls eager to make a hole in the little bit of gold which they had saved in sixpences out of their weekly wage. All these people belonged to the classes who live just above the border-land of poverty. It is not easy for any of them to save very much, for it is hard enough to make both ends meet. But they had squeezed

INVETERATE OPTIMIST

Mayor William S. Jordan, at a Democratic banquet in Jacksonville, said of optimism: "Let us cultivate optimism and hopefulness. There is nothing like it. The optimistic man can see a bright side to everything—everything."

"A missionary in a slum once laid his hand on a man's shoulder and said: "Friend, do you hear the solemn ticking of that clock? Tick-tack; tick-tack. And oh, friend, do you know what day it inexorably and relentlessly brings nearer?" "Yes—pay-day," the other, an honest, optimistic workingman, replied."—Detroit Free Press.

STICKING TO FACTS

"Children," said the teacher, while instructing the class in composition, "you should not attempt any flights of fancy, but simply be yourself, and write what is in you. Do not imitate any other person's writings, or draw inspiration from outside sources." As a result of this advice, Johnny Wise turned in the following composition: "We should not attempt any flights of fancy, but rite what is in us. In me there is my stummick, lungs, hart, liver, two apples, one piece of pie, one stick lemon candy, and my dinner."

THE COMPLETE QUESTIONER

Mother—Since our Willie has got into long trousers he is beginning to think he knows more than we do. Father—Well, if he remembers the answers to all the questions he has asked, he knows at least as much as we do.

PEER PURCHASES AN ISLAND

Lord Howard de Walden has bought the small island of Shona, in Loch Moidart, between Argyllshire and Inverness-shire. The island is part of the latter county.