

HORTICULTURAL ECCENTRICITIES.

BY THOMAS HOOD.

Hood looks over the gate and compliments Mrs. Gardiner, a widow, who has but one idea, and that is her garden, about which she had the habit of talking in a singularly figurative style, upon the beauty of her carnations.

'Yes, I have a stronger blow than any one in the place, and as to sweetness, nobody can come nigh me.'

Accepting the polite invitation I stepped in through the little wicket, and in another moment was rapturously sniffing at her stocks, and the flower with the sanguinary name. From the walls I turned off to a rose-bush, remarking that there was a very fine show of buds.

'Yes, but I want sun to make me bust. You should have seen me last June, Sir, when I was in my full bloom. None of your wishy-washy pale sorts, (this was a fling at the white roses at the next door,) none of your Provincials, or pale pinks. There's no maiden blushes about me; I'm the regular old red cabbage.'

And she was right, for after all that hearty, glowing, fragrant rose is the best of the species; the queen of flowers, with a ruddy *em-bon-point*, reminding one of the goddesses of Reubens.

'And there's my American Creeper. Miss Sharp pretends to creep, but Lor' bless ye, afore she ever gets up to her first-floor window I shall be running all over the roof of the willa. You see I'm over the portico already.'

While this conversation was going on, a deaf bachelor neighbor, who has a garden of his own, passes by. Mrs. Gardiner hails him in a loud voice, and addresses him in her customary style.

'Well, and how are *you*, Mr. Burrel, after them east winds?'

'Very bad, very bad indeed,' replied Mr. Burrel, thinking only of his rheumatics.

'And so am I,' said Mrs. Gardiner, remembering nothing but her blight; 'I'm thinking of trying tobacco-water and a squiringe.'

'Is that good for it?' asked Mr. B., with a tone of doubt and surprise.

'So they say; but you must mix it strong, and squirt it as hard as ever you can over your affected parts.'

'What! my lower limbs?'

'Yes, and your upper ones too. Wherever you are maggoty.'

'Oh,' grunted the old gentleman, 'you mean vermin.'