

when the time of the singing of birds is come, as they return from their long visit to the lands of the south, how the eye lights up with gladness at the sight of the first opening flower, and the heart prizes the first heralds of returning verdure and beauty. These early flowers, what a charm they have; what pleasing thoughts they waken, touching alike the chords of memory and hope. The homestead that has none of these to feast the eye and cheer the heart, must be to its inmates the very castle of giant despair, whence hope has fled, and where memory is weaving garlands of withered leaves.

There is a goodly number of these early blossoming shrubs which can be planted about the home, some of them sufficiently hardy to endure the rigors of our colder sections, while others of them, especially those of the Almond family, can only be grown successfully in our milder districts. One of the most showy and hardy of these is the JAPAN QUINCE, *Cydonia Japonica*. It has been called by some the burning bush, for the scarlet variety when covered with its bright glowing flowers, is indeed an apt reminder of that which burned but was not consumed. It is a shrub of great beauty, putting forth its large blossoms in great profusion early in the spring, before the leaves are grown. Standing alone, or when used as a dividing garden hedge it presents a most charming appearance. When the flowers are faded, the neat, glossy green leaves are pretty, and as Autumn approaches the golden fruits shine brightly beautiful among the foliage. There is a variety which produces delicate pink flowers, or light salmon color, shading to white; but the flowers are not so profusely abundant as those of the scarlet. There is also another variety with very brilliant rosy red flowers, which are produced in great abundance, and whose fruit is larger and more showy than that of the scarlet. In striking contrast to the crimson and scarlet of the Japan Quince stands the beautiful snow white PLUM-LEAVED SPIREA, *Spirea prunifolia flore pleno*. This is the most attractive of all the Spireas; graceful in outline, abundant in flowering, every branch a bridal wreath, each flower a perfect rosette; in the purity of its whiteness; and elegance of its grace it is the acknowledged queen of the race. Nor is it beautiful only when the slender branches are wreathed throughout with white roses in miniature; all through the Summer bright glossy leaves clothe its graceful form, which change when Autumn comes on