

HANDSOME NATIVE PLANTS.

The Botanic Garden, at Cambridge, always has a lesson for the quick eye in its treatment of interesting fresh varieties. A giant *Mesembryanthemum* (aciniiforme,) a small but very graceful native white Orchid, *Cypripedium candidum*, a purple *Aquilegia*, a strong plant with deep green leaves, as if reared in its own mountains, and an exquisite white *Trillium grandiflorum*, all grown in cold houses, show what may be done with our less cultivated plants. The *Trillium* especially deserves to be grown for an early house plant, and will be a grateful addition to Easter flowers.—SUSAN POWER in VICK'S MAGAZINE for June.

HORTICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

Wintering Geraniums.

A correspondent wishes to know the best way to keep geraniums in a cellar during winter. The treatment must vary according to the condition of the cellar. The practice which is frequently recommended, of hanging the plants up by the roots, exposed to the air, can succeed only in a cellar uniformly cool and but few degrees above the freezing point; and the degree of moisture in the air must be just such as to retain the natural amount in the plants, without being so dry as to shrivel them on one hand or so moist as to cause decay. The plants must be kept as nearly in a dormant state as possible by maintaining a low temperature. There are but few cellars which possess all these requisites, and this treatment is not likely to succeed in most cases.

We have adopted the following mode, which requires little care and answers well. A rather large and well lighted window is double glazed, and a stand is provided on which the plants are placed so as to receive plenty of light. When they are taken up in autumn, nearly all the tops are pruned off, but enough is left for the base of a compact form, with a small portion of the young foliage, say about one-tenth or one-twentieth of the leaves of each plant. They are then planted in moss, in a shallow box, placing the box in an inclined position or with a slope of about forty-five degrees, putting a layer of moss on the lower side, then a row of the trimmed plants and another layer of moss and row of plants till the box is filled. It is then placed in its position on the stand in front of the window. The moss may be kept sufficiently moist by showering it with a watering-pot once a month or a fortnight, as it may require, a warm and dry cellar needing more frequent watering than a damp or cool one. In a warm cellar the plants will make some growth during winter, and as the leaves increase in number they will consume more moisture than at first. If the cellar is quite cool they will remain nearly dormant and the slight moisture from the moss will preserve them from drying up. Moss is much better than damp sawdust, which in its turn is better than soil. In moss, there is no danger of their becoming water-soaked after watering, the natural supply being given off, partly in the form of vapor.

The most convenient size for the boxes is about two feet square and six or eight inches deep but they may be larger or smaller. An early growth is made the next spring by putting them in a hot-bed for a few weeks before planting in open ground. A small portion of a hot-bed will hold a large number placed compactly together.

GARDEN VEGETABLES.

We have received from Robert Manning, Secretary of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, a printed report of

the discussions of the society which took place on the 11th of December, on the various garden vegetables which have attracted recent attention among the newer and older varieties. B. P. Ware, who opened the discussion, said he was conservative on the subject of new sorts, which do not always maintain their first reputation, after the special care with which they were cultivated has declined. Among the finest squashes he named the Butman, beautiful in color, excellent in quality, a good keeper, desirable for amateurs, but not very productive. The Marblehead is like it, both better than the Hubbard, of which they are sub-varieties, and both moderately productive. The Essex was obtained by crossing the Turban and Hubbard, a remarkable sort, uniting the excellence of the Turban with the keeping quality of the Hubbard. It is a rapid grower, ripens early and may be planted as late as the first of July. President Wilder said the Essex and Hubbard would fill the season. J. J. H. Gregory said the Marblehead squash was brought from the West Indies, and he recommended raising only the best sorts, even if not the most productive. They would be worth more in the end.

Mr. Ware said that Fottler's Improved Brunswick cabbage is the best early variety, and that Mr. Fottler sold his seed for its weight in gold. It has now run some years and has gained in size and lost in earliness. In Marblehead, where the cabbage is the most important of all farm crops, it was formerly preferred to the Stonemason, but is now less reliable. The last named was introduced some forty years ago by Mr. Mason and afterwards improved by Mr. Stone. It makes solid heads of excellent quality. The American Improved Savoy is an improvement on the old Savoy, having smaller stumps and larger heads. Mr. Gregory said the Stonemason cabbage has one fault—a tendency to rot at the stump.

Tomatoes came under examination. President Wilder said he had tried all the new sorts, and had settled on the Acme and Paragon. Mr. Ware thought these two superior to all others.

As to potatoes, Mr. Ware said that, since the Early Rose was originated and sold for three dollars a pound, and a cow bought with a single tuber, we have been flooded with new varieties. Burbank was highly commended. Early Ohio is earlier than Early Rose and is of fine quality. The Bell is probably the best new sort. Among peas, several members had found the American Wonder the best early dwarf variety, and the Champion of England was the general favorite for a late one. Mr. Gregory said that the John Bull pea has very stocky leaves; pods and peas both very large, and it fills out well. Hancock's Early was the most satisfactory among the hard yellow sorts. Mr. Wilder said Breck's Excelsior is a splendid variety.

It is a source of gratification that the members of this veteran society, who are such able horticulturists, are giving attention to the improvement of the best and most delicious vegetables, and adopting the efficient and prolific mode of obtaining new varieties by crossing.

House Plants.

Those who keep ornamental plants in the windows of their living rooms during winter, frequently incur a good deal of labor in selecting the handsomest bloomers irrespective of their hardiness, or power to withstand dry air or an occasional cold snap a little below freezing. The pansy, for instance, will endure almost any degree of cold to which it would be subjected, and if florists will examine their flower beds before the ground is entirely frozen up, they will see