

## Horticulture.

### Garden Culture of Native Wild Flowers.

Our attention was arrested the other day by a wagon-load of Moccasin plants exposed for sale in the streets. To those who were unfamiliar with these most lovely natives of our woods it must have caused no small surprise to see so much beauty and delicacy of form and colour in a wild flower; indeed, we could hardly persuade some that they were not hot-house plants. But in truth, and the lover of nature knows it well, there are numbers of our native plants that far exceed in grace and elegance their much prized sisters of the garden. In Floriculture, as alas! in everything, fashion reigns supreme; and here, as everywhere, her mandates are not always those of common sense or of good taste. Every herb and tree is in its own way beautiful, but there are degrees and varieties of beauty, and the meed of popular favor is not invariably given to the most beautiful. The changes which artificial treatment produces in flowers are besides not always improvements. The doubling, for instance, of daffodils, violets, and tulips, is, to our mind, a questionable gain in the mere mass of colour at the sacrifice of beauty and elegance of form. Perhaps our taste is peculiar, but we venture to think the garden Balsams unworthy of comparison with their rustic cousin, the yellow Touch-me-not. We confess to a very qualified admiration of Petunias, China Asters, and some other staple favorites, and are quite unable to discover the principle on which, while Hollyhocks are excluded as vulgar, the most assiduous attention of the gardener and the most honorable place in the flower show are awarded to the Dahlia. Why should a certain class of garden flowers monopolize our regard, and be considered by some as almost alone worthy the name of flower, whilst others, native to our soil and equally lovely, are passed by or perhaps looked upon merely as weeds? Is a plant less beautiful because it grows spontaneously in our woods? Must it be far-fetched and foreign before we condescend to prize or admire it? The Hepatica and the Dog-tooth Violet, so common here, are assiduously cultivated in English gardens, and some of our more beautiful native species bring high prices in the market there; as an example, we may mention that a number of Moccasin plants sent out from this country were sold in England for twelve shillings apiece, and specimens of our Pitcher-plant for as much as a guinea each. Are these unworthy of culture here? We have seen and often admired cottage gardens that owed all their attraction to a tasteful arrangement of Ferns and native wild flowers.

Comparatively few of our farmers, we are sorry to say, have any portion of their land devoted to mere ornamental purposes; many have given up even the pretence of a flower garden, whilst the attempts of others

have resulted in failure. Some have no love for such foolish trifles, and some have no time to spare for this object. With the first we can hardly reason, and can only hope that their children may be better taught. To the other class we would suggest that perhaps they have attempted too much. They have begun, it may be, on too large a scale, and have been really unable to devote sufficient time for keeping so much ground in good order. But if they would curtail their ambition somewhat, they might perhaps succeed better.

Suppose, now, a plot of ground of moderate size



has been set aside and prepared for a flower garden, what, it may be asked, shall be planted? We would strongly urge the farmer, who has such peculiar facilities for the innovation, to try at least the effect of substituting for those plants which he can only procure for money, or at least of adding to them, a few of our native wild flowers. There are some common cultivated flowers that have for centuries been deservedly universal favorites. First among these is the Rose. This queen of flowers affords an instance where native beauty has been enhanced by cultivation. The wild roses of our land, charming as they are, would be preferred by few to that glory of our

gardens, a perfect double rose. The same advantage of cultivation must be conceded in the case of Pansies and many other triumphs of the horticulturist. But, as we have already remarked, there are not a few cultivated flowers decidedly inferior to the wild species of the same genus. The wild Columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) is a much more graceful flower than the Columbine of the garden, and many other similar instances could be adduced.

It is often said that wild flowers will not grow in gardens, or at least will not thrive. They may grow, we are told, for one season, but after that they will die away. This result arises, no doubt, from inattention to the natural condition of the plants in question. If a plant is taken from the recesses of a deep swamp, and placed in the light and dry soil of a garden, exposed to the full glare of the sun, we can expect no other result than a speedy death. But where proper attention is paid to the natural habit of the plant, and pains taken to supply conditions of soil and shade and moisture similar to those by which the transplanted flower was surrounded in a state of nature, success will generally reward our care. When the Victoria Regina was first introduced into England, the hopes entertained of its flowering were repeatedly disappointed; numerous experiments were tried, until by a careful study of the habits of the plant in its natural state Sir Joseph Paxton was enabled to follow these so closely as to obtain complete success. Sir Joseph aimed carefully to reproduce the natural conditions even in such minute particulars as the slight undulation or rippling of the water which takes place in the native rivers of this magnificent and royal water lily. Such refinements as these are, of course, impossible to the ordinary horticulturist, nor are they necessary. All that is required in most cases are the conditions already specified, namely, to place the plant in a soil as nearly resembling that from which it was taken as possible, and in a similar situation as respects light and shade, and the degree of moisture usually present.

Among our native flowers suitable for cultivation may be mentioned one of the commonest, earliest, and handsomest of Canadian spring flowers, the Trillium of the woods. These will thrive well in a garden. Many species of Violet will also repay cultivation, although our native species are destitute of the delightful perfume of the English Violet (*Viola Odorata*). Some of our indigenous Orchids are especially handsome. Of these the Moccasin plant, of which we give an illustration, is perhaps the most superb, and would be justly prized in any conservatory. This species is the showy Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium spectabile*). Less brilliant in colouring, but, if possible, even more elegant in form, is the common yellow Lady's Slipper (*C. pubescens*). These would form the most lovely additions to a garden that can be imagined, and we have known them thrive in such a situation. Our wild Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) flourishes very well, and equals in beauty any of the cultivated varieties;