

THE LADIES.

THE VACANT SEAT.

Ye gather round the dear old hearth, this pleasant Christmas eve,
Awhile, as e'er times gone by, earth's worldliness to leave,
That once again in love and truth united ye might stand,
A group of kindred spirits, and a happy household band.

Ye enter one by one, and take each old accustomed place,
And now once more I look upon each loved familiar face—
But why thus downcast is each eye, and measured too each tread,
And sad and faltering your tones! Meet ye in grief or dread?

Mother, kind mother, you are here; I welcome that fond gaze;
Father and brothers, side by side, as in the olden days;
Sisters, sweet sisters, gladly now your graceful steps I greet—
But stay—ah! can it be? *It is—there is a vacant seat!*

A vacant seat! I miss a voice—an eye so blue and meek—
I miss a youthful, fairy form—I miss a glowing cheek;
And *she*—the gayest of you all—ye surely must be lone!
Sweet sisters speak, and tell me whither hath that bright one gone?

Her place is vacant, sad and low now came that answering strain,
Her place is vacant, list we e'er for those sweet tones in vain,
And vainly watch we for the sound of those light tripping feet,
And for the glance of that soft eye our own was wont to meet.

Death has been here—his summons came to her, the dearest, best,
That she should flee far, far away, and be for aye at rest:
We saw her blooming cheek grow pale and paler, day by day,
Till in her early loveliness, from earth she passed away.

We deck'd for her the grave, and then, for her, the lov'd of years,
We softly sang a requiem, and wept the mourner's tears,
Then gently laid her deep within a quiet moss-grown bed,
Where she calmly, sweetly slumbers with the still, the silent dead.

So gather we a mournful group, around the hearth to-night,
Sadness in hearts, that e'er upon this eve thrill'd with delight;
Yet, though a star has fallen from out our heaven of love,
An angel bright awaits us in the glorious land above.

GARDENING.

As the season for gardening has come, we have given in this number a few pieces of information on the subject. The mode of preparing the soil for garden purposes generally, most people know well enough. We have extracted the two following paragraphs from a work which we were surprised to learn from a distinguished American farmer is regarded by them as the best authority they have on gardening, viz.: "Cobbett's American Gardener." We insert them here because the farmers' wives and daughters in this country must attend to the garden, or it will be neglected:—

THE CUCUMBER.

To give minute rules for the propagation and cultivation of this plant, in a country like this, would be waste of time. However, if you wish to have them a *month earlier* than the natural ground will bring them, do this. Make a hole, and put into it a little hot dung; let the hole be under a warm fence. Put six inches deep of fine rich earth on the dung. Sow a parcel of seeds in this earth; and cover at night with a bit of carpet, or sail cloth, having first fixed some hoops over this little bed.—Before the plants show the *rough leaf*, plant two into a little flower pot,* and fill as many pots in this way as you please.—Have a larger bed ready to put the pots into, and covered with earth so that the pots may be plunged in the earth up to their tops. Cover this bed like the last.—When the plants have got two rough leaves out, they will begin to make a *shoot* in the middle. Pinch that short off.—Let them stand in this bed, till your cucumbers *sown in the natural ground come up*; then make some little holes in good rich land, and taking a pot at a time, turn out the *ball* and fix it in the hole. These plants will bear a *month sooner* than those sown in the natural ground; and a *square yard* will contain 36 pots, and will of course, furnish plants for 36 hills of cucumbers, which, if well managed, will keep on bearing till September.—Those who have *hot-bed frames* or *hand-lights*, will do this matter very easily.—The cucumber plant is very tender and juicy; and, therefore, when the seedlings are put into the pots, they should be *watered*, and *shaded* for a day or two; when the balls are turned into the ground; they should be *watered*, and *shaded* with a bough for one day. That will be enough. I have one observation to make upon the cultivation of cucumbers, melons of all sorts, and that of all the pumpkins and squash tribe; and that is, that

* Where turnips are at hand, the *scooped-out rind* will answer for this purpose far better than "pots." In turning out "the ball" as Cobbett directs, you need not disturb the roots of the plant, for by cutting away the bottom of the turnip, the remainder, plant and all may be deposited in the new bed.—Ed. Ac.

it is a great error to sow them *too thick*. One plant in a hill is enough; and I would put *two into a pot*, merely as a bar against accident. One will bring more weight of fruit than two (if standing near each other,) two more than three, and so on, till you come to fifty in a square foot; and then you will have no fruit at all! Let any one make the experiment, and he will find this observation mathematically true. When cucumbers are left eight or ten plants in a hill, they never shoot *strongly*. Their vines are poor and weak, the leaves become yellow, and, if they bear at all, it is poor tasteless fruit that they produce. Their bearing is over in a few weeks. Whereas, a single plant, in the same space, will send its fine green vines all around it to a great distance, and, if no fruit be left to *ripen*, will keep bearing till the white frosts come in the fall.

The roots of a cucumber will go ten feet, in fine earth, in every direction. Judge, then, how ten plants, standing close to one another, must produce mutual starvation!—If you save a cucumber for seed, let it be the *first* fine fruit that appears on the plant. The plant will cease to bear much after this fruit becomes *yellowish*.—I have said enough, under the head of *Saving Seeds*, (Paragraphs, 139 to 145) to make you take care, that nothing of the melon, pumpkin or squash kind grow near a seed-bearing cucumber plant; and that all cucumbers of a different sort from that bearing the seed be kept at a great distance.—There are many sorts of cucumbers: the *Long Prickly*, the *Short Prickly*, the *Cluster*, and many others; but, the propagation and cultivation of all the sorts are the same.

MELON.

There are, all the world knows, two distinct tribes: the *Musk*, and the *Water*. Of the former the sorts are endless, and, indeed, of the latter also. Some of both tribes are *globular* and others *oblong*; and, in both tribes there are different colours, as well with regard to flesh as to rind.—In this fine country, where they all come to perfection in the natural ground, no distinction is made as to *earliness* or *lateness* in sorts; and, in other respects, some like one sort best and some another. Amongst the Musk melons, the *Citron* is, according to my taste, the finest by far; and the finest Water melons that I have ever tasted were raised that came out of melons grown in Georgia.—As to the manner of propagating, cultivating, and sowing the seed of melons, see *Cucumber*, and only observe, that all that is there said applies to melons as well as to cucumbers. To have melons a *month earlier* than the natural ground sowings will produce them is an object of much greater importance than to have cucumbers so much earlier; and, to accomplish that object, you have only to use the same means, in every respect, that I have described for the getting of early cucumbers. The soil should be *rich* for melons; but it ought not to be *freshly dunged*; for that is apt to *rot* the plants, especially in a wet year. They like a light and rather sandy soil, and, any where near the sea, wood ashes, or sopers' ashes, is, probably, the best manner, and especially in dry-bottomed land; for ashes *attract* and *retain* the moisture of the atmosphere. It is a great mistake to suppose, that ashes are of a *burning* quality. They always produce the most and best effect in *dry bottomed* land.—Melons should be *cultivated* well. You should leave but *one plant in a hill*; and should till the ground between the plants, while they are growing, until it be covered by the vines. If the plants stand too close, the vines will be weak, and fruit small, thick-rinded, and poor as to flavour.

VEGETABLES.—*Asparagus beds* should be dressed as soon as the ground is thawed, by forking in the manure spread over them last fall. This loosens and enriches the beds. When this is done, they should be carefully raked off.

EARLY PEAS, LETTUCE, &c., may be sowed as early as the ground is open, in a warm border. Raise cabbage, cauliflower, celery, tomato, cucumber and melon plants in hot-beds, for transplanting.

THE WASTED FLOWERS.—On the velvet banks of the rivulet sat a rosy child. Her 'paw was filled with flowers, and a garland of rosebuds was twined round her neck. Her face was as radiant as the sunshine that fell upon it; and her voice was as clear as that of the birds which warbled at her side. The little stream went *glinging*, and with every gush of its music the child lifted up the flowers in its dimpled hand, and, with a merry laugh, threw it into its surface. In her glee, she forgot that her treasures were growing less, and with the swift motion of childhood, she flung them into the sparkling tide, until every bud and blossom had disappeared. Then seeing her loss, she sprang upon her feet, and bursting into tears, called aloud to the stream, 'bring back my flowers!' But the stream danced along regardless of her tears, and as it bore the blooming burden away, her words came back in a taunting echo along its reedy margin. And, long after, amid the wailing of the breeze, and the fitful bursts of childish grief, was heard the child's cry of 'bring back my flowers!' Merry maiden! who art idly wasting the precious moments so bountifully bestowed upon thee, see in the thoughtless impulsive child, an emblem of thyself. Each moment is a perfumed flower. Let its fragrance be dispensed in blessings on all around thee, and ascend as sweet incense to its beneficent giver. Else, when thou has sent them receding on the swift water of time, thou wilt cry in tones more sorrowful than those of the child, 'bring back my flowers!' and the only answer will be an echo from the showy past, 'bring back my flowers!'