

GROWING FLOWERS.

I wish to direct the attention of working farmers to the importance of cultivating flowers. I would urge more attention to flowers for the pleasure and enjoyment they will render farmers' wives and children, as well as the satisfaction they may often afford to hard working men. Few that have not paid attention to the subject, are aware of the satisfaction flowers are calculated to afford. A few years ago a farmer asked for a few grass pinks from a large bed he was passing, remarking that he liked to see flowers, but some how never got at it to raise any. And when to these pinks some fine pansies and Chinese pinks were added, his pleasure and admiration could not be doubted. It is because thousands of farmers can have this pleasure and satisfaction almost every day through the growing season, and until winter—we have had fine pansies in open weather in December—and have them easier and cheaper too, than the same amount of enjoyment can be secured in any other way—that I would urge farmers to grow flowers.

All men have great admiration for the beautiful, but it is manifested in various ways. Many appear to think it consists in fine apparel, splendid carriages and a showy turnout. Others gratify this feeling by building large and fine houses, furnished with a profusion of elegant and costly furniture, and with out-buildings to correspond. When this admiration takes the form of smooth, clean fields, heavy crops and fine stock, it is very commendable. So is also a true love of the beautiful, as distinguished from a mere passion, for display, however or wherever it may be manifested. And while a farmer will be expected to see more beauty in a fine field of grain or grass, or in a well formed domestic animal, or in fine and well arranged farm buildings; yet with all of these, his home will not be complete if not surrounded with a suitable proportion of flowers. However fine and costly a house may be made, it never looks well or seems in good taste, if not surrounded with shade trees, shrubs, and flowers. While a plain farm-house if well painted, and the grounds kept clean and ornamented with a suitable selection and variety of these things, will always be admired. Indeed, a common house thus surrounded, often produces a more pleasing effect than many of the modern mansions, with all of their ornamental verandas, bay windows, bracket and scroll work, without the addition of lawns, shade trees and flowers.

And these flowers have a great advantage over all other means to gratify the love and admiration of the beautiful, in being cheap. The cost is trifling; a few dollars worth of seeds and plants can be made to produce a more pleasing effect than hundreds invested in any other way. Besides no money can procure anything else equal to a simple flower. By art no one can improve a rose or ornament a lily. They are beyond imitation; and can only be improved by assisting nature in producing new varieties, and in making a better growth and more perfect blossom. But the

flower cannot be equalled or improved in any other way; while in endless variety of form and color, and beauty and delicacy of tints, there is nothing that can compare with the flower.

Not only a great and pleasing variety may be secured, but this variety may be kept constantly changing. In no other way can this pleasing effect be as well secured. A fine house is built for a life-time; a carriage is expected to last many years, and costly apparel cannot be very frequently renewed. But a well-managed flower garden may be constantly changing—each succeeding week displaying some new beauties. The great number of kinds, and many varieties of each kind, render it comparatively easy to constantly have something new coming into flower: while it is the watching the budding and unfolding of these new beauties that affords the most exquisite pleasure.

It is hardly necessary to urge the refining and ennobling influence of flowers, nor the great advantage of rendering home attractive. A true regard to the welfare of his family, will induce every thoughtful farmer to give some attention to these important points. It should also lead him to make all proper and reasonable arrangements to promote their pleasure and enjoyment. And even when he can see nothing attractive in flowers, the pleasure they will afford his family, the satisfaction with which they can be shown to visitors, and the admiration sure to be shown and expressed, will well pay for all trouble, nay, more, will soon lead him to take an interest in flowers also and sooner or later to find more pleasure and satisfaction in them than can be obtained for the same cost and trouble in any other way.

FOREST GIANTS

The following interesting account of the Mammoth Trees of California was given by Bishop Kingsley, in a recent lecture. Having spent three days among them, taking close observations and measurements, he says:

"Of the mammoth trees—the Sequoia Gigantæ—there are six groves. The grove in Calveras county, 250 miles east of San Francisco, was the first discovered and has been the most visited by travellers. The bishop spent three days communing with these monarchs of the forest, whose ages span multiplied centuries, and whose numbers are counted by thousands, new groves being all the while discovered. Their color is a bright cinnamon. Some of the bark and wood were shown by the lecturer. Their circumferences vary from 60 to 125 feet at the ground, and their height 300 to 450 feet. One cut of ordinary saw log length would, when split up—the wood splits easily—make over 40 cords of wood, or 80,000 shingles. The whole of such a tree would make 1,450 cords of four-foot wood. One such tree would be equal to 1,600 trees, 2 feet at the base and 100 feet high. The largest of them has fallen, but only one has been felled by man.

A HOUSE ON A STUMP.—It took five men twenty-two days to bore one of these big trees down. The top of the stump of this felled tree has been planed off smooth and a round house erected thereon. Figuring as to the number of square feet on this stump we find them to be 707. This will give the family a

Small parlor	12 by 16 ft.—192 ft.
Dining-room	10 by 16 ft.—160 ft.
Kitchen	10 by 12 ft.—120 ft.
Two bed-rooms	10 by 10 ft.—100 ft.

Total	572
This leaves 35 feet for a little	
Pantry	4 by 6 ft.—24 ft.
Two clothes-presses	4 by 11 ft.—104 ft.
And we have 28 square inches left!	

You ascend the butt end of this log by a ladder of 26 steps, which is like climbing to the top of an ordinary two or two and a half story house.

THEIR AGES.—As to the ages of these trees the Bishop said: "I obtained a piece of wood from the 'Mother of the Forest,' and counted the concentric circles in an inch. They were 28. By the process of counting all the concentric circles of a tree, it was safe to conclude that some of these old settlers were 2,500 years old, which is 1,200 to 1,500 years older than the Christian dispensation, older also than the foundations of Rome or Athens, antedating by centuries the birth of Aristotle, Pythagoras, Plato or Homer. They were venerable trees in the times of Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah and Isaiah; large enough for timber for the first temple erected to the God of heaven; older than the Psalms of David, or of any portion of the Bible, except the Pentateuch."

JOSH BILLINGS ON HENS.—Josh Billings talks learnedly as follows: "The best time to sett a hen iz when the hen iz redly. I kan't tell yu what the best breed iz, but the shanghigh iz the meanest. It costs az much to bord one az it does a saje hoss, and yu might az well try to fatt a fanninmill bi runnin oats thru it. There aint no profit in keepin a hen for his eggs, if he laze less than one a day. Hens iz very long-lived if they don't kontrakt the throat disseaze. There iz a grat meny goes to pot every year by this melarkoly disseaze. I kan't tell exactly how tew pick out a good hen; but az a general thing, the long-eared ones, I kno, are least, apt tew skratsh up a garden. Eggs packed in ekal parts ov salt and lime water will keep from 20 to 30 years if they are uot disturbed. Fresh beefstake iz good for hens. I serpose 4 or 5 pounds a day iz all that a hen would kneed at fust along. I shall be happy to advise with yu at any time on the ken question—aad tak it in eggs."

A Scotchman went to a lawyer for advice, and detailed the circumstances of the case. "Have you told me the facts precisely as they occurred?" asked the lawyer. "Oh, ay, sir," replied he; "I tho't it best to tell ye plain truth. Ye can put the lees into it yersel'."

The lap of luxury—A cat enjoying her milk.