

The Little Winter Greenhouse

Valuable Hints Concerning the Making and Managing of an Inexpensive Place

By ELLA BAINES

At sight of the first snow we sighed to think of the dead time of monotonous whiteness and bare branches, and we said, "We must fold our hands and wait for the spring." But the flowers seemed to answer, "No, we will come; if you build us a tiny house of glass and give us a little warmth, a little care and much tenderness, we will make your winter wilderness to blossom like a rose, for love begets love." The promise seemed too good to be true.

Everyone is a flower lover at heart, even if he has not discovered the fact. Put some blooms in a window and watch the effect upon people passing in the street. It is worth doing. The weary faces, lifted to the flowers, change their expression and break into smiles. This being the case, why should not many people respond to the appeal of the flowers—build us a tiny house? Some will answer, "It is out of the question; the expense is too great."

Now in this talk one wants to prove that it is *not* out of the question and that the expense is *not* too great for a large number of people. The greenhouse need only be very small to give an immense amount of pleasure.

THOSE who have a side verandah can easily turn it into a winter greenhouse in a manner that will not hinder their using it again as a verandah in the summer. The only permanent parts of the structure will be the glazed roof, the pillars which support it, and the frames into which the side windows will be fitted. The latter can be taken out in the summer, the flower stands can be placed in the garden, hanging baskets in the empty window spaces, and the verandah has come again into being. The wooden floor must be covered with a sheet of galvanized iron, soldered at all points, to prevent leakage underneath; the windows and roof must be double. If the dwelling house be heated by hot water or steam, an extension can be made at small cost from the furnace and coils or a radiator introduced.

The writer has had practical experience of a small structure such as this—a *very* small one, only ten feet long by seven wide—and has found it answer splendidly even under great disadvantages such as a north-east aspect and the shadows cast by the walls of "next door." It may be mentioned that the whole cost of this little flower house, including double windows, benches, radiator, extension pipe, and galvanized floor was two hundred dollars, and we feel that the sum with cent per cent. interest, has been repaid by the amount of pleasure which it has given to ourselves and others.

HAVING planned our house we will consider the kind of plants to grow in it. Plants for indoor cultivation may be divided into three classes: stove, intermediate and greenhouse, or coolhouse. With the two first classes we shall have nothing to do, as they require too much heat to maintain in the extreme cold without an amount of attention and night stoking that would be impossible for the ama-

teur. Mid-winter in Canada is a difficulty which must make the main consideration the choice of plants, and the little house that feels warm and snug in December will in January change its character. That mysteriously permeative power of zero weather will make itself felt, and when the radiator is too hot for the hand, the thermometer will sink to 48 deg.-50 deg. despite all effort, despite the necessary double glass and even a curtain, added for further protection against the north wind.

Plants, then, requiring the minimum degree of heat, *i.e.*, 45 deg.-50 deg. at night and 50 deg.-56 or 60 deg. by day should be chosen. These include, among bulbs, Hyacinths, Narcissus of many kinds, Clusiana or Carpathian Tulips, Lachenalias and Speciosum lilies, Primulas of all sorts, Forget-me-nots, Cinerarias, Genistas, Canterbury Bells (especially *Campanula pyramidalis*), fibrous Begonias, Cyclamen, Musk and winter-blooming Sweet Peas. One or two plants of "Ponderosa lemon" with giant waxy blossoms and golden fruit will bring with them a touch of the tropics. Camellias, especially *C. japonica*, will do well, and so will the little fragrant, fluffy flowers of *Acacia armata*. I have purposely left out some coolhouse plants that are especially sun-loving and therefore difficult to grow, such as freesias, or mixed company, Violets, Carnations and Roses. Managed carefully, the plants we have mentioned will bloom in succession from December to April. In December will come the Paper White Narcissus and the Camellias, the last-mentioned depending for success upon careful shading, outdoors in the summer with liberal supplies of water and overhead syringing. If exposed to heat, every bud will fall before opening. Paper White Narcissus, if potted up in September, will show their pure faces and send out their fragrance by the beginning of November.

JANUARY brings the Daffodils' first blooms, some earlier than others, according to their kind. In February, Hyacinths in a wonderful array of violet, dark and light blue, nankeen yellow and rose will bring a blaze of colour to the house. In March, the Forget-me-nots will flower. I do not think these greenhouse ones are well known. Sown in June and brought on slowly in the shade they will reward the sower in the month of March. Old Azalea plants, carefully guarded from summer sun, given plenty of water and repotted in peat in autumn, will flower two years after their unnatural forcing by the florists. Mine have been so treated and are masses of buds now. The Primulas are very useful, pretty and faithful. They begin to flower in November and go on through the winter, building themselves up into fresh whorls of flowers, each rising out of the last. Something like the pagodas of their "ain cuntry," the *Obconica* Primulas are very fine, and "Kewensis" brings a welcome change from the prevailing mauves to bright yellow.

Having brought the house to March we will leave it. If time can be spared from the outdoor seed sowing of April and if plenty of light finds its way to the house, a few plants of *Schizanthus*, with its butterfly flowers of many hues, some *Calceolarias* and *Star Primulas* will make a fine show.

TO ensure success, a few points of management must be kept in mind: 1. Do not allow the temperature to exceed the given limit. Decrease furnace heat when the sunshine is warm. 2. Keep the plants cool at night; they are tired, their vitality is low, they want rest and coolness, so the temperature must be decreased by taking off the heat altogether for an hour or two in the evening and only allowing a small amount, when it is turned on later, unless the weather is very cold. 3. Let in plenty of air. Ventilation should be overhead and, if possible, just above the radiator. Air can be given in small quantities and for a short time, even on cold days. 4. Moisture is another necessity, though plants must be watered only when they require it. Syringe the house twice a week and keep a tin of water on the radiator. A dry air spells "red spider."

The winter greenhouse works wonders, and in it wonders are worked. Winter days are no longer dreary. Out of the greenhouse store the house windows are filled with bloom and good cheer is brought to a number of people in whose heart at the sight of these bright things "hope blossoms again." Upon its shelves a supply can be kept for the sick and the sad. To work in it and for it gives a scope for healthy activity—mental and bodily.

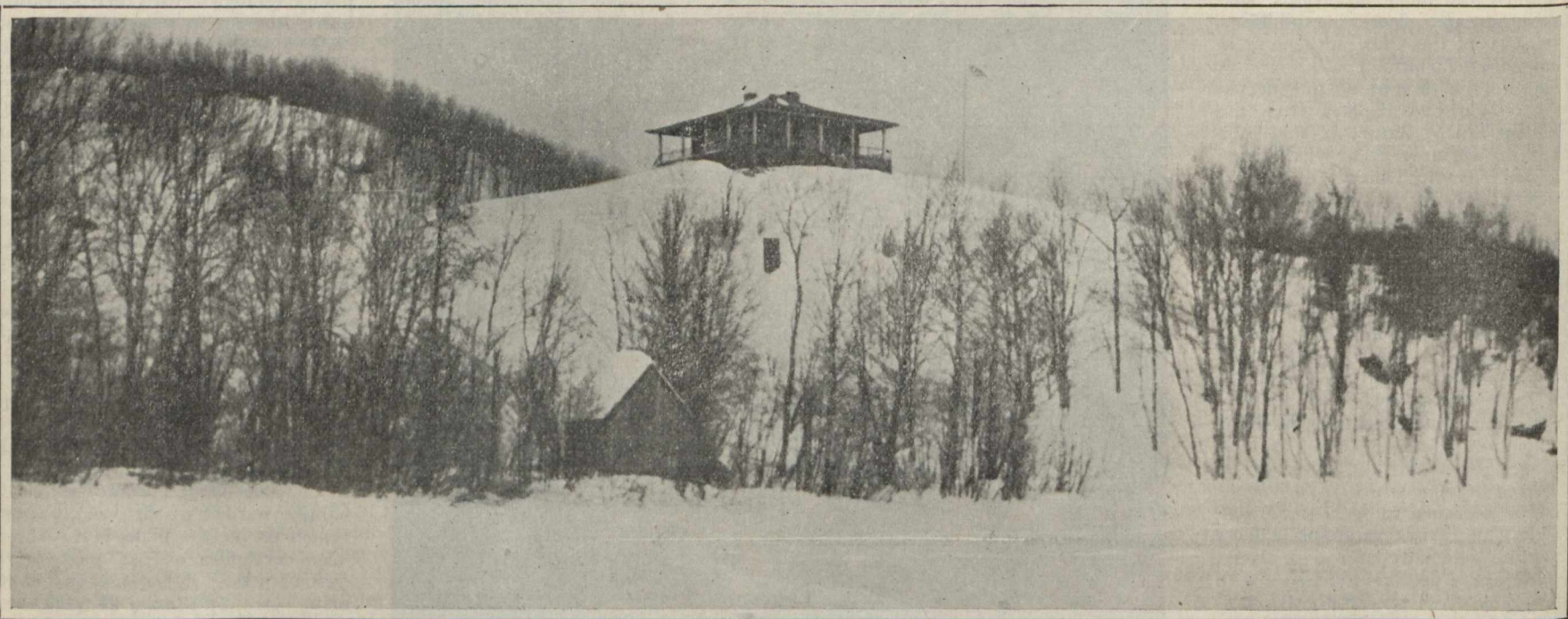
British and Canadian Workmen

To the Editor, THE CANADIAN COURIER:

Dear Sir,—In your issue of March 30, Mr. James Smith, of Montreal, takes exception to some of the statements made in my article on "British and Canadian Workmen," which appeared in the *COURIER* of March 16th. As his letter will give the impression that my information was inaccurate, will you permit me to make an explanation?

The article was not written as the result of personal investigation. No journalist, unless heavily subsidized, could attempt such a thing. It was compiled from material contained in a voluminous blue book, prepared by the British Board of Trade and duly presented to both Houses of Parliament, entitled "Report of an Enquiry into Working Class Rents, Housing and Retail Prices. . . . in the Principal Industrial Towns of the United Kingdom" (1908). I hardly think that a writer could quote a better authority.

So far as the Canadian figures are concerned, they were specially compiled for me at the City Hall in Hamilton. All the facts contained in my article were derived from these two sources, which, I take it, are much more reliable than the personal opinion of any individual. W. A. CRAICK.
Toronto, March 30th.



Nordcrag, the Country Home at Valmorin, P.Q., of Mr. Brenton A. Macnab, Managing Editor of The Montreal Star. Here in the Depth of Winter Health-giving Hours are Spent, as Refreshing to Mind and Body as the Summer Days. This is Reminiscent of the Famous Resorts in the Alps of Switzerland Where Sports and Fashionable Life Generally are Active During the Winter Season.