

## Ladies' Department.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. C. P. T., RICE LAKE, C. W.

### APRIL.

THE month of April in Canada is with us but the faint dawning of spring. It bears no resemblance to the month of rainbow showers and fitful sunshine, of the sweet violet, the cowslip, and primrose,—the April of bursting buds and bulbs.

We never feel the real homesickness now, excepting in the month of April, when our heart yearns with an indescribable restless longing for the meadows with "opening daisies powdered o'er," the green, turfy banks starred with fresh primroses, and the wooded lanes where we used to roam in our happy childhood and listen to the songs of the birds, and watch the quaint shadows of the April clouds as they passed over the landscape.

One must not feel surprised that the heart of the emigrant grows sad in the lingering Canadian spring. It takes long years to attach her to the flowerless season of an April like ours. Even March has its store of buds and blossoms, its early violets, and gay crocuses, in whose golden cups the bees make music on sunny days beneath our windows, with clumps of snow-drops and daffodils, and many flowers as fair and sweet to look upon.

The Canadian April has a season peculiarly its own—a mingling of winter and spring; she is no idler, her task is an arduous one; it is hers to loose the iron bands of winter, to absorb and evaporate the snows that have been accumulating during the previous months, to unlock the ice chain from the lakes and streams, to vivify the dormant tribes of earth, and air, and water.

There is a silent spirit stirring in the leafless woods, a swelling of buds within their wintery shades, a moving of the sap upward through the rugged trunk and branches, a laboring of roots and rootlets to push up the newly aroused energies of buds and herbaceous plants, a perfecting of buds where the embryo blossom has lain closely hidden in darkness and sleep.

The early birds begin now to return to us. The song sparrow, the robin, the blue vested jay, the hollow, sonorous drumming of the ruffed grouse is heard in the forest summoning his distant mate—a sure sign of coming spring.

The opened pools on the lakes are noisy with flocks

of wild fowls screaming and splashing in undisturbed enjoyment of the freshly opened waters.

The long days, with sometimes a soft and sunny one, acts on the surface of the snow which disappears beneath the influence of the sun and milder air in a thousand tiny rills, in mimic cascades, now falling over stones, now winding among roots, or forming little pools, following the law that greater floods obey. As the softened snow disappears in the woods, some green leaves become visible,—evergreens that have retained their freshness beneath the covering of snow—among these are the charming wintergreen, and the festoon pine. Of these plants (the wintergreens) we will give some account in our next paper.

Toward the middle and latter end of April, some flowers appear at the edge of the forest, and in sunny spots about the clearing. Among these we will only take time to name the *Hepatica* or snowflower, the *Erythronium* or dogtooth violet, (which is a lily in all respects but the name,) the *Sanguinaria* or blood-root, *Claytonia* or spring beauty, the early life-everlasting, (two kinds-), the *Crawling Ranunculus*, and small white violets in wet places. The heather moosewood is now in bloom on its leafless branches. Many other plants and shrubs, such as currant, gooseberry, and twin-honeysuckle, are showing their leaves in a partially unfolded state, ready for the first warm days of May to expand them fully. This is the month for grafting; and the hot-bed should be prepared, and the flower borders dug, if the ground is dry enough to admit of the spade; lady gardeners may now look to their rose bushes and small shrubs both in trimming and planting; but the earth is yet too cold and damp to admit of seeds being sown—they will be apt to rot and never come up.

### LETTER FROM OAK HILL.

MRS. EDITRESS:—I must tell you that I take the *FARMER*, for I think works of that sort ought to be encouraged; and I am very glad to hear that a quiet, sober-minded old lady (as I take you to be from your works, some of which I have read) has taken upon herself to conduct the female department; and I hope you will give our young folks some good advice that they may profit by. For there are many of them who would refuse to listen to home truths from fathers and mothers, who will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest what they read in a book—especially if written in a pleasant way—as dainty invalids reject plain food with disdain, while they will relish the same material if nicely seasoned, and dished up in a