

living. You're meant to be looked after and be taken care of, not to go fighting. You see you're so soft-hearted and you trust in people so. Now I'm different. Mother being a widow and having no companion but me, I've seen a lot of the world. I believe I know more about it than old Miss Williams, who thinks that men are no use, and that all the women should be teachers. I shall enjoy struggling along and making my own way, and before my

mother's an old woman I mean to make her proud of me."

"She is now," said Beattie, a little wistfully. The Ravens were not demonstrative, but somehow she never felt being motherless so much as when she went to tea with Margaret.

Just at that moment a carriage drove up to the door. In it was Aunt Ella. It was an hour since the girls had left the school and close upon the luncheon-time. Margaret waited to shake hands

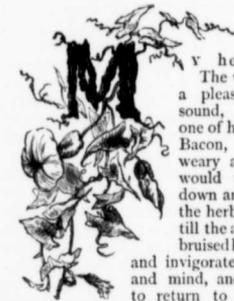
with Mrs. Swannington, but refused her invitation to go in, then she said a hurried good-bye to Beatrice, though she squeezed her hand so that it hurt, and strode away.

"Come, Beattie," said Aunt Ella, as the girl stood watching her friend's departure. And as Beattie had abandoned the hope that Margaret would turn back, she reluctantly followed her aunt indoors.

(To be continued.)

## MY HERB GARDEN.

By THE LADY GEORGINA VERNON.



Y herb garden!

The very name has a pleasant old-world sound, and reminds one of how Sir Francis Bacon, when brain-weary and exhausted, would walk up and down amongst and on the herbs in his garden till the aroma from the bruised leaves refreshed and invigorated him in body and mind, and enabled him to return to his study; it brings thoughts of the days when noble dames did not disdain to attend to their herbs, and when the gathering of them in the proper season and the distilling of various sweet waters, the making of potions and possets, and of ointments and salves compounded from the produce of their gardens, formed a large part and interest in their daily lives—besides which they knew and took care of the flavouring plants for the highly-seasoned dishes favoured by our ancestors.

Many of the plants which were formerly grown for kitchen use are now neglected and hardly known, or at least not used in any way in cookery, for instance: senevry, orris root, violet leaves, sweet briar, saloop (from which a tea was made), rue and scordium, and many others which were commonly used, but now our herbary is greatly lessened, and in some ways with advantage. Still, herbs play such an important part in domestic uses—both in cookery and medicinally—that we may well devote a little time to the consideration of the most useful, and the best way to grow them.

My ideal herb garden should lie between the flower and the kitchen gardens; a sunny strip of good loamy ground near a wall, with a part of the bed extending into the shade, as some herbs, notably mint, do not like too dry or sunny a spot. Each herb should have a special division of the garden portioned off for its culture; on one side should grow those herbs which we will consider to-day, and which are known as pot-herbs, and the herbs for medicinal uses should have another border to themselves.

Now first in order as one of the most important herbs and which is used in almost every savoury dish comes parsley.

"The common parsley" has plain, uncurled leaves, and though it has the advantage of being hardier than some of the finer sorts, it is not so tender or so delicate in flavour; but the best to grow is one of the numerous varieties of curled parsley, which are all good and very pretty for one of its great uses—namely, garnishing.

Parsley is such a useful herb that we will enter fully into the best method of its cultivation. There should be a constant

succession of crops, the first sowing taking place in February, then again in May and July; by this we ensure always having tender young plants all the year. The July sowing should be on a sunny south bed; and when cold weather comes, the young plants must be covered with hand glasses. Parsley needs frequent watering in dry weather. When the leaves get old, the plants may be cut over, and fresh leaves will spring up.

I may mention here that there is a variety of parsley known as fool's parsley, which is extremely like the plain-leaved variety, but very poisonous. Parsley is much used in soup, omelets, etc., and, indeed, it enters so largely into half the dishes which come to table that it could ill be spared.

Mint comes next in order of merit. It is easily grown, but prefers rather a moist soil, and can be propagated by cuttings or by dividing the roots. At the approach of winter the old plants should be cut down and the roots covered with soil. Mint is used green in cookery, either for mint sauce, to boil with peas, or in other ways; but it is one of those useful herbs which preserves its fragrance all through the winter when dried, and should be picked just before flowering, and hung up in a dry, cool place for winter use.

Thyme (of which there are two sorts, the common and the lemon thyme) is very useful. It loves a dry, sunny place; as the old song says:

"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows!"

And banks are its favourite position. It should be raised from seed sown in April, although it may be increased by cuttings, by bending the branches and pegging them down into the soil, when they will take root and form new plants. This sweetly aromatic plant is used in savoury omelets, and most of the preparations of pork, such as pies, sausages, etc.

Sage is a herb which is now little used, except in the well-known old-fashioned sage-and-onion stuffing for a goose, and perhaps the reason of this custom is not generally known. Sage is supposed to be an excellent tonic for the stomach and to assist digestion, and therefore is used with any extra rich or indigestible food, such as duck or goose. Sage is best grown from cuttings taken in May or June, at first placed in a frame, and then planted out; if the plants are kept well trimmed they will grow strong and bushy. The tender shoots can be picked and dried for winter use.

Sorrel is a charming little plant which is pretty enough to be grown for its own sake, with its brilliant green leaves, pink stems, and white flowers. It is better known in French than in English cookery, and veal cutlets à l'oseille and also the excellent *soupe paysanne* owe their existence to this pleasantly-acidulated

leaf. It is best grown from seed, and the leaves should be picked singly for use, taking always the larger ones.

Tarragon requires a warm dry soil. It is delicate, and it is best to cut it down at the beginning of winter and cover with a little fine garden soil; but the plants do not last in our climate more than two or three years. Tarragon is used in flavouring aspic jellies, and also a few leaves thrown into clear soup adds a delicate flavour. Tarragon vinegar is also a favourite addition to many game sauces.

Sweet marjoram is grown as an annual in England. It is only sparingly used, either to assist in the making of a "bouquet of herbs" for flavouring soups or hams, or for adding in small quantities to sauces. Like most of the before-mentioned herbs it can be picked and dried for winter use.

I suppose I must class the golden marigold amongst the kitchen herbs, although it is really more useful in the apothecary's shop than in the kitchen. The strong, highly-flavoured flowers are sometimes used in cottage cookery to give a relish to broths, but in these days of more refined cookery and technical education, I think marigolds are relegated to the background like "tansy," which formerly played such an important part in the flavouring of cakes and puddings.

Salads hardly come into my garden of herbs, but I should just like to strongly recommend more use of endive than we generally see in England, and also to remind those of us who have delighted in French salads, that the savour of them comes from the judicious mixture of delicate slices of young leeks. Let me here also add a word of advice. Salad leaves should never be washed or cut, but brought in clean and fresh from the garden, and broken up into the salad bowl with merely a simple dressing of oil and vinegar.

There are various herb vinegars which are most easily made, especially tarragon vinegar, which requires that a good handful of the leaves should be put into a quart of brown vinegar and infused for a month, and when strained is fit for use, and a most savoury addition to many gravies and sauces, especially for and with any rather strongly-flavoured birds, such as wild duck, wood pigeon, etc.

Elder vinegar, with its rare scented smell and taste, is made in the same way from the flowers of the common elder, being very careful to take only the flower and none of the green stalk. But the daintiest vinegar that I know is made from primroses (let us not breathe aloud this desecration of the idol of the Tories), but pick in the morning ere the sun has extracted the honeyed sweetness from the starchy blossoms along some hedge bank, the primrose flowers, and use them for vinegar. But I will give this receipt fully, as I think many would be glad to try it in the