

THE FLOWER GARDEN.

Horticultural and Landscape Gardening in England.

The first view of the British Islands, as seen from the deck of a steamship, in the English Channel, is strikingly beautiful and picturesque. The distant and green-clad hills of the county of Wicklow, Ireland, and the bold, abrupt, and in places precipitous landscape of Wales, divide one into fields by the neatly trimmed hedges, is a pleasant and enjoyable picture, coming suddenly upon one, after a ten days' voyage, during which time little or nothing is seen, but sea and sky, with an occasional spot of the ever-welcome *rhododendron*, to break into the monotonous and lazy habits one falls into in crossing the Atlantic. But on approaching Liverpool through the Mersey, there follows a sad feeling of disappointment, with this muddy, sluggish stream flowing along, as if without purpose, and confined on either side with tame and unvarying banks. One wonders that in a country with a world-wide fame for its cultivated tastes in embellishing its landscape, where gardening was taught and fostered, as one of the fine arts, as early as the sixteenth century, so little has been done to adorn and beautify the banks of the river leading to the great shipping port of the world. But this disappointment soon vanishes when leaving the outskirts of this, the centre of the shipping interest, for travel in whichever direction you may, the general appearance of the country is that of a well kept and highly cultivated garden, when compared with our own country, where fertile land is too plenty and too cheap to call for the same kind of close cropping. The total absence of the unsightly post and rail fences, and in their stead the thorn hedges, gives tone to the landscape, and adds much to the general appearance of the face of the country that grows on one the more they see of it.

Another feature, common in England, Ireland and Scotland, and one well worthy of imitation in our own country, is the tasteful manner in which many of the railroad companies keep the enclosed places on either side of the tracks. The spare ground is laid down to grass, which is mowed twice a year leaving a fine turf for hundreds of miles on a stretch. This, in connection with the depots built of stone, from handsome designs, and the walls of such buildings not unfrequently hidden from sight by the luxuriant growth of ivy, and other climbing vines, with a tastefully laid out flower garden near by—and often I have seen the name of the station, from the car window, in growing flowers of brilliant colors.

The natural advantages of the mild and moist English climate, make it comparatively easy work for the English gardener to produce and keep up a succession of fine effects. Among the most noticeable in all well kept gardens, parks, and pleasure grounds, is the exquisite, fine character of the turf. Looking in mid-summer, fresh, green, closely shaved, soft, velvety and elastic to the foot. One who has not seen a well tended English lawn, cannot conceive how much it adds to the touch of a country home. In all country places having any pretensions, the "ribbon" style of arranging flowers is quite common; and where the plants have been set with a view to the harmony of colors, this style proves a great success. Then follows the plan of massing colors. Beds cut out in graceful and artistic shapes, planted with a single variety of flower, or a bed of ornamental leaved plants. The geranium, golden feather (*Pyrethrum*), dwarf nasturtium, magnonette, lobelia, and celosia are often used for this purpose while in some of the best laid places, long beds of dark blue-leaved beets were grown for ornamental purposes, and contiguous to other plants, one could hardly imagine they would harmonize and give such richness to the whole.

Window Gardening.

There is no doubt that the mass of the English people enjoy and cultivate flowers more generally than the Americans. This fact is demonstrated in the extent that "Window Gardening" is practised in and about every village, town and city. Among the poor, as well as the rich, are to be seen structures on the window sills, kept constantly filled with flowering and ornamental leaved plants through the whole season. In the more wealthy neighborhoods these window structures are elegant in the make and finish, and in places the whole front of a house would seem ablaze with bright colors, and charming views. Through the mechanics' and laborers' quarters there would be a less gorgeous display, but even in the most wretched hovels, where the poor are compelled to live, it was quite common to see, in a back alley, on the sill of a window, four or five stories up, a single plant of geranium, or a pot of magnonette, that had been carefully tended by its owner. The de-

mand is so large for this class of plants, that they are propagated by the million, and sold at low rates when compared with our prices for the same kind and quality of plants. Puschias, strong, stocky plants, for twelve cents apiece; geraniums, balsams, calceolarias, etc., etc., at from four to six cents, or one-sixth of what they would cost here. In London, propagators from the suburbs send thousands of these flowering plants, every morning, to Covent Garden market; from here they are distributed, by men, women and boys, to all parts of the city, each of whom has his own customers, and keeps them supplied with whatever kinds they may want, not only for window decorations, but also for garden culture.

Where there was such a demand for annuals, there must be some place where the seeds were grown in great quantity. A visit to the flower farm of Dunnett and Bards, at Dabham, Essex county, soon solved this inquiry. Here I saw more than 200 acres, exclusively devoted to flower seeds; and at the time of my visit, the bulk of the past season's crop was in full blossom, presenting a display well worthy a trip across the Atlantic to see. Thus, however, is a mere skeleton of one branch of the commercial florist's business on the other side of the Atlantic.—*Cor. Home Journal*.

Button-hole Bouquets and Coat Flowers.

But few seem to understand that there is any difference between a button-hole bouquet and a coat flower; yet there is, and a very great difference too, the flower being, as the word signifies, a single bloom, whereas a bouquet means a number of flowers ar-



ranged according to taste. Many papers have appeared in different horticultural periodicals on the arrangement of cut flowers, and yet, with few exceptions, they have excluded button-hole bouquets, probably because, being small, people imagine that they must necessarily be easy to make. Just let them try, and I do not hesitate to say that they will find themselves much mistaken, as no combination of flowers requires to be put together with more taste, or to be more lightly done, than a properly made button-hole bouquet. Flowers selected for this purpose should always be good, particularly those for mounting singly, which should, in fact, be specimens of whatever kind is chosen. Ferns I always like to see in such bouquets, and also along with coat flowers, provided these are stove or greenhouse kinds; but hardly flowers I like best mounted with their own foliage alone. Nearly all flowers for bouquets of any sort should be wired; indeed, many could not be used for that purpose at all were they not mounted on wire, as, for example, the pups of white Hyacinth, mixed with a little Maiden hair, and many remarked that it was very light and elegant looking. That which took the first prize at the Royal Horticultural Society's Show at Birmingham last summer, was composed of a yellow Rose-bud, mounted with blue Forget-me-Not, a pup of Kalosonthes coccinea, and one of Bouvardia. I have seen one made of Lily of the Valley, a blush-colored Rose-bud, and the same shade of Hyacinth pups, with a little Fern worked through it, which was a very neat-looking little bouquet; another consisted of a spray of Lily of the Valley, a yellow Rose-bud, and a few pups of a rich purple Cineraria, which came out well against the deep color of the Marechal Niel bud. I could give descriptions of many others, but think that those which I have mentioned will suffice to show the best shape and style in which such bouquets should be made.—*A. H. in The Garden*.

Flowers for the Sick.

It would be selfish in us to cultivate flowers merely to adorn our own homes, or to gratify our own love of the beautiful. The flowers are generous, their fragrance is not pent up in themselves, but is wafted on every one who passes by our grounds, or enters our parlors; and we doubt not many wistful eyes admire the bright colorings and desire to hold some of them in their hands as their very own.

It is a sad thing to be sick and disabled from walking out. It is a great privation to be shut up in the house, a feeble, wasting invalid, when there is so much brightness out of doors, so much to fill the heart and eyes with joy and happiness. We that rise early and employ ourselves with daily cares and labors, can hardly sympathize with those who are unable to enjoy those privileges which we can really never appreciate until they are lost and gone beyond our recall. And in every community there are those who highly prize the "green things of the earth," and yet are not able to enjoy them, but are forced to struggle for life with pain and sickness, day and night. To such sufferers a fragrant bunch of flowers comes like a messenger of hope and comfort from the outer world—even a single rose bud or a bunch of pansies is fraught with a blessing, and such slight tokens of remembrance will brighten many a dark hour, and give a cheerful appearance to many a gloomy room. Far better than the pills and powders, sometimes, are the bright, sweet flowers of our gardens to those who are denied many comforts; and even when their illness is so severe that only the physician and nurse can enter their sick room, the lovely, fragrant flowers will remind our friends that we are mindful of their sufferings, and will do all in our power to alleviate them. Amid the dull array of phials of medicine, it is almost a blessed relief to see a few flowers, which can cheer the patient in his bitter pain; and if death is the only physician which can heal, the flowers will speak to the sufferer of brighter skies and purer airs, where no griefs nor graves are known; and sin and sorrow never enter. In the time of fruit, a luscious peach or pear, or a glowing bunch of grapes will be relished by the sick for their sake, and also for the giver's; for intense gratitude is often felt for kind remembrances, such little tokens of affection and interest.

Dear friends, let us bestow of our abundance not only upon the sick and suffering, but also upon those who are denied such blessings.—*Country Gentleman*.

Celosia, or Cockscomb.

We have already commended the Cockscomb to the readers of the *Rural Home*, not only on account of its beauty while growing, but because, if cut before frost, it will retain its color in a dry vase all winter. Plants should be started in a hot-bed, to have them in bloom during the summer, and when all danger from frost is past, should be transplanted into a rather moist soil, if possible. We had specimens growing in muck last season, the blossoms of which would have measured nearly a foot in diameter. There are several colors, as crimson, rose, yellow, violet, scarlet, and sulphur. We prefer the deeper colors although a variety adds to the effect.

We mentioned favorably last summer, a new variety which we saw growing in the grounds of James Vick. The stalk leaves and flowers are all beautiful, and would form a brilliant bed in any garden or lawn. We copy Mr. Vick's description: "*Celosia Japonica*, or *New Japan Cockscomb*.—This is an entirely new variety of Cockscomb, received from Japan last year. It is far better and more brilliant than the old variety, a single plant being an object of great beauty, while a bed containing a dozen plants is not equalled for garden display by anything we are acquainted with. The branches, from the roots to the smallest leaf-vein are scarlet or crimson, while the colors are of the brightest description imaginable." *American Rural Home*.

A famous rose tree in the island of Ceylon is eighty feet in circumference and fifteen feet high.

—FLOWERS give a cheerful, pleasant appearance to a place, and have an undoubted tendency to promote contentment and happiness, especially among young people, who can hardly be expected to have a home without flowers.