

The Pests of the Garden.

(Read before a meeting of the Brandon Horticultural Society, 1890.)

BY THOMAS OLDHAM.

At our last monthly meeting we heard a very instructive lecture from Mr. Wedge, on the relations between plant life and animal life. Mr. H. Brown also gave us a paper on the selection of garden seeds, and how to grow them. To-night I will give a few hints on the enemies of plants generally.

When adverse weather operates injuriously on vegetation the plagues that infest garden plants usually acquire increased power in proportion to the degree of debility to which vegetation is reduced. This circumstance perfectly accords with the general law of nature, and is full of instruction as to the means of saving plants from serious injury by vermin.

The keen, dry east wind that so often jeopardizes fruit crops is usually followed by visitations of fly and maggot, and in this case the cause is beyond human power or forethought.

But neglect of watering and air-giving to pot plants can be avoided. Good cultivation not only insures fine specimens, but is often the means of preventing the plants from falling under the infestation of Aphis, Mealy Bug, and other enemies against which the gardener has to fight an unceasing battle.

It should be borne in mind that insects are among the frailest of living creatures. They perish at a touch. As they breathe through the pores of the skin, water alone—the grand promoter of life and cleanliness—is death to them; and they are still more subject to sure destruction when to the water is added an active poison, such as tobacco, or a substance that adheres to them and stops the process of breathing, such as glue, clay, sulphur, soft soap, and the preparations that are specially made to annihilate insect hosts.