

forwardness or flightiness in your manner, you could not with sincerity give such a disclaimer.'

"Well, madame!" I said, proudly.

"Don't resent my remarks. It is necessary, I again assure you, both for your sake and my own, that I should quite understand this. You have no fear, then, to look your solitary future in the face?"

"No, madame, I fear nothing at all."

"And this lonely and independent spirit does not make you feel sad and depressed?"

"I am not given to anticipating evils. My disposition is naturally cheerful, and my spirits have never yet failed me in any trial. I do not indulge in dreams, for I am not romantic, and if ever I become so it will very much astonish me. Life has been too real, too practical to leave me any leisure for the indulgence of such visions as girls generally form of their future. I try to take each day as it comes, and do my duty in it honestly, leaving all the rest to God. What He sends will be best for me, I do not doubt—better than I could for one moment choose. There, madame, I don't think there is any more to tell you concerning myself. Will you take me as I am, for I would not willingly represent myself to be other than I know myself to be?"

"Yes," she said, smiling, 'I will take you as you are—a true and right-minded woman, truth-loving, and truth-telling. Only one thing is left now—for you to give me proof that you really possess the qualifications that I require in my companion.'

"What do you consider necessary qualifications?"

"First of all, a pleasant and lively flow of conversation. With regard to this I am quite satisfied."

"She had been drawing me out then, leading me on by artful contradictions and suggestions to prove what manner of woman I was mentally, morally, and conversationally! As we were alone it did not much matter. I was able to smile at the success of her little stratagem."

"Next," continued the Marquise, 'I should like to know that you can read aloud with a tolerably clear expression and articulation, and whether you are a passable musician.'

"Try me at once, and if you can in any way make my poor acquirements available I shall be satisfied."

"She put an open book into my hands, and, indicating a certain passage, bade me read. Being fully confident of my ability to satisfy her in both of these respects, I obeyed. I had hardly reached the end of the first page when she drew the book away, assuring me that she did not need to put me to any further trial."

"And now for the music," I said, glancing round, for I saw no means of performing at hand.

"The Marquise pointed out to me an inner doorway, over which fell a velvet curtain. This I drew aside under her directions, and there was revealed a most exquisite little boudoir, with rose and white fittings, containing, amidst other treasures, a small ebony pianette. I sat down and played sundry morceaux, com-

mencing with that sweet little impromptu of Schubert in A flat, and ending with Kuhlau's Rondo Burlesco. Then I sang at her request, some of Mendelssohn's exquisite *Lieder*. She looked pleased when I had finished, and enthusiastically expressed her approbation. Finally she told me that, as she knew from my letters which Madame Argent had shown her, with regard to writing and composition she believed I should be a capital secretary, therefore she looked upon our engagement as quite settled. I thanked her, and asked to be allowed to go and see Madame Argent. She said my time would be completely at my own disposal, except during the hours she would specify when next she saw me, and she begged that I would make myself as much at home as I possibly could, and apply to Angelique if there were anything I needed that had not already been supplied to me. I thanked her, assuring her of my comfort. Then she held out her hand and dismissed me with a smile, that somehow made a glad warmth about my heart.

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"This wonderful day is almost ended, it is nearly midnight, but before going to my bed, I must just add a few words to the account of my first interview with the Marquise. In the afternoon I went to see Madame Argent, and had a long chat with her, during which she told me many things concerning the Marquise and her family, which I must keep until my next letter. After my return to the Faubourg St. Germain, and just when I was about to change my dress for the evening, Angelique appeared at my door with a box and a note.

"From Madame la Marquise," she said, gave the note into my hands, and deposited the box on the floor in my room. I tore open the note while Angelique waited. It was written in the finest, most dainty caligraphy—

*Chère Petite,*

'As you are fond of dress, and as it is incumbent upon us to have an indulgent consideration of the weaknesses of the people for whom we have a kind regard, allow me to send you a trifling evidence of the warm interest you have inspired.

'AMALIE ST. AUBIN.'

"Will mademoiselle that I uncover the box?" asked Angelique demurely.

"She whisked off the lid immediately that my consent was given, and lifted and shook out the folds of an exquisite pearl grey silk dress, trimmed with soft rich lace at throat and wrists.

"Madame la Marquise begs that you will wear it this evening, mademoiselle. She holds reception. Will mademoiselle be ready by eight o'clock?"

"When Angelique was gone, I looked at the lovely dress askance. It was far too lovely for me. How should I dare to put it on? But was it not kind of the Marquise? I am afraid she thought, from what I had said of my poverty and the hardness of my life, that my wardrobe contained nothing fit for me to appear in at one of her receptions. And she was right. The plain stone-coloured grenadine I had laid out to put on

looked shabby and old-fashioned beside the grey silk.

"With the new dress, I seemed to put on another personality. I hardly knew myself when I regarded the image reflected in the *Psyché* which stood by my toilette-table, and thought of the old shabby days at Frau Welbeck's, and of the threadbare, dusty much be-travelled little figure you were almost ashamed to claim as your sister. I went through a small performance before the glass for my own especial benefit, and was just in the act of personating some grand French dame, when Angelique's low knock disturbed me.

(To be continued.)

## GARDENING IN NOVEMBER.

GARDENING in November does not at first seem a very attractive pursuit. Townsfolk will wonder what can possibly be done in the fogs, and the damp, and the darkening days of the commencement of winter. "Surely, 'tis better," they say, "to keep warm and cosy by the fireside, than to potter about among the fallen and falling leaves, at the risk of an attack of rheumatism or influenza!" But the country-born and country-bred know that there is a different side to this gloomy picture. As the green leaves on the trees change their colour what a wealth of rich and varied hues delights the eye! There is hardly anything more beautiful, or more enjoyable, than a walk through a wood on a fine, crisp, autumnal day. Although the glory of the summer flowers may have passed away with the first frosts, yet there is one plant which admits of no rival in the month of November, and might easily hold its own, even among the more brilliant blossoms of July and August. We mean the chrysanthemum, concerning which we shall have something more to say presently. About the middle of this month we sometimes get a very short but beautiful season, called St. Martin's summer, when the summer seems to come back and wish us "farewell" once more.

But we are wandering away from our subject. As the progress of vegetation is now arrested, this is the time for pruning, transplanting, and making general alterations in the garden—operations which would be extremely injurious to the plants were the sap in active motion. If the weather be open, and there be no hard frosts, the end of October, and the beginning of November, should be one of the busiest times of the year. Now is the time to carry out all contemplated changes; and one of the chief pleasures of gardening is that of anticipation. New beds may be planned, plants shifted to more suitable positions, hardy creepers pruned and trimmed, and the ground dug in with leaf-mould and manure. And all this work must go briskly on, in order to get everything thoroughly accomplished before the frost, or heavy rains and gales foil the most earnest endeavours. All signs of decay should be at once removed. The leaves which fall should be swept up and preserved as valuable manure. All the waste of the garden should be thrown together, and suffered to rot, for the same purpose, and whatever there may be of the same kind already decayed, is the finest dressing that can be applied. Hoeing, weeding, clearing paths, digging vacant spaces that may be required for bulbs, are duties which should, at this season, on no account be neglected.

In the greenhouse, the lights should be opened for a short time every day when the sun shines. The watering of the plants should be gradually lessened, in order to give them a season of repose. A first-rate authority says:



—“Keeping plants too hot is a mistake that many amateur gardeners fall into, and it is a very injurious one, as greenhouse plants, being natives of climates only a little warmer than our own, are thrown into a state of unhealthy excitement by too much heat; and this excited state is particularly injurious to them when it occurs at a time when they ought to be in a state of complete repose.” This is advice which everyone would do well to profit by.

*Culture of the Chrysanthemum.*—The chrysanthemum was introduced into this country from China in the year 1754, but it was not until 1789 that the choicer varieties were imported to Marseilles, thence to find their way to England. To grow the plant naturally is about as simple a task as any to be found in the range of gardening. If you have no old plants of your own to commence with, procure some young plants in February or March. These should be well-established in small pots, and the point of each should be stopped (*i.e.*, the extreme tip of the shoot picked out) by the middle of March. This will induce them to throw out a number of branches. Keep them near the glass in an airy greenhouse. In about four or five weeks after the first “stopping,” all the points should be stopped again, and, after the interval of a week, shift them into pots six inches in diameter. Any nurseryman will give you the proper pots. As a rule, each shoot would be stopped when it has about three or four leaves developed upon it. They must never be shifted at the same time as they are stopped. Early in June they should be stopped for the last time, and about a fortnight afterwards they must be shifted into their blooming pots. Now begin to train the shoots as near as possible to the edge of the pot, taking great care not to break them off, and trying to get the plant into a good rounded form. There must be no more stopping, and no more shifting, and they must be carefully watered, for nothing is more injurious to chrysanthemums than to allow them to suffer from want of water. As soon as the buds are formed, clear liquid manure ought to be applied to them rather freely, for they are somewhat gross feeders, but it should be weak rather than strong, for there is danger to them if they are overfed. If you desire quality rather than quantity in your plants, all the side buds should be removed, leaving only one large bud at the end of each shoot. Pompones are grown in exactly the same manner as the large flowering varieties, excepting that the “disbudding” should be either omitted altogether, or practised very sparingly.

Now let us suppose that you have already some plants of chrysanthemums to start with, and wish to increase your stock. This you must do by taking cuttings, and we think that the best time for the amateur gardener to do so is during the month of May. The best compost for chrysanthemums consists of three parts of good loam and one part of well-rotted stable manure, with a liberal sprinkling of sharp sand. Detach the young shoots from your old plants, and put them into three-inch pots. They should be kept close until rooted and then treated as above described. For these plants of your own striking, eight-inch pots will be large enough for them to flower in, and by careful attention to air and *diet*, you will have the satisfaction of seeing handsome blooms appear of your own culture. When all the cuttings required have been taken from the old plants, they may be turned out of their pots, the deteriorated mould shaken entirely from their roots, and they may be planted out in the garden where they will generally manage to thrive without much looking after.

There is a certain monotony about a display of chrysanthemums, as there are no pure colours among them save yellow; but intermingled with foliage plants, such as palms, ferns, &c., they can be employed in a very de-

corative manner. The new Japanese variety, with their tall flower-stalks, are very useful in this way.

A selection from the following list may advantageously be made:—

Beverly—creamy white, incurved.  
Queen of England—blush, very large.  
Cassandra—white, tipped with rose.  
Lady Slade—soft pink, incurved.  
Gloria Mundi—deep yellow.  
Guernsey Nugget—primrose yellow.  
Jardin des Plantes—bright golden orange.  
Prince Alfred—rosy crimson, incurved.  
Mr. Gladstone—deep red.  
Prince of Wales—dark purple.  
St. Patrick—deep bronzy red.  
Mrs. Sharpe—rich pinkish rose.

Of the Japanese kind, Red Dragon (dark red, tipped with yellow) and Boule de Neige (large white) are excellent specimens. Of the Pompones you may select Bob (dark crimson), Mr. Astie (golden yellow), White Trevenna (beautiful white flowers), and Fanny (dark maroon red).

This is a good month to plant roses if they have had a check by frost, and if their wood is ripe. Any time from the present up to Christmas may be selected for moving old rose trees, or putting in new ones. It would also be well now to shorten all the long branches of your standard roses that have grown large and heavy, as the high winds are apt to do them considerable damage; but all *pruning* (as generally practised) must not be attempted before March. We do not believe in autumn pruning. Climbing roses must be well fastened, and the loose branches cut away. Protect your tenderer sorts, such as the Tea-scented, Bourbons, &c., by mulching the roots, and shielding the branches with some such stuff as dried fern or litter. Wicker baskets are useful for this purpose, although, perhaps, a trifle unsightly.

Crocuses, and many other smaller bulbs, like snowdrops, aconites, &c., should be planted at once, if you have not already done so. It is very effective to plant the crocus bulbs in patches of six, alternating the colours; thus you may begin with a patch of yellow, then plant one of blue, then white, and back again to yellow. The bulbs should be put into the ground at a depth of two inches, and six inches from the edge of the border, and they will give a fine display early in the spring. This method is an improvement on the old-fashioned way of planting the bulbs singly, in a row.

Hyacinths will come to perfection either in glasses, pots, or (out of doors) in beds. For glasses and pots, plant in October; for beds, in November.

*Culture in Glasses.*—As all roots shun the light with as much instinctive care as stems and leaves court it, the sort of glasses best suited for growing hyacinths in water are those of the darkest colours, such as blue and green. It matters little whether rain, river, or spring water be employed, provided that it be clean, and the softer the better. Fill the glasses sufficiently full for the bulbs nearly, but not quite, to touch the water, and put them at once in a dark cool place. As soon as the roots are seen to be growing down freely, place the glasses in a well-lighted and warm situation, such as the window of a sitting-room having a southern aspect, for without sunlight the flowers will not bloom well. Let them be kept in as equable a temperature as possible, as rapid and extreme alternations will inevitably injure them. Provide supports in good time, and if the leaves become dusty, clean them with a sponge dipped in water, but do this very carefully, so as not to injure them. The glasses should be examined every ten days, and fresh water, off which the chill has been taken, be added.

A lump of charcoal in each glass will generally prevent the water from becoming fetid.

*Culture in Pots.*—For growing hyacinths in pots, the soil should be rich and light, and in moderately moist condition. The best plan is to grow each root in a pot by itself, in pots five or six inches in diameter, and let them be well drained. Fill the pot quite full of soil, and then press the bulb down into it, neither too loosely nor too firmly, nearly covering it with the soil. When the potting is complete, the pots must be placed in a dry, cool situation, and the tops covered with some light material, as cocoa-nut fibre refuse, or equal proportions of sawdust and ashes, to the depth of four or five inches. They should remain in this state until fairly started, when they must be placed in subdued daylight, that a healthy green hue may be slowly acquired. The floor of a cool greenhouse is a very good place for them at first. As soon as the green colour is decidedly established, place the pots as near the glass as possible, and supply them with water, taking great care to protect them from frost. Pure soft water is better for hyacinths than any liquid manure. If you want the bulbs to bloom at Christmas you must pot them in September. When the flowering is over, cut off the flower stems, and keep the plants in a frame, regularly supplying them with water until the leaves die down; then lay them on their sides in a dry, sunny place, with their heads to the north, for about ten days, after which time they may be shaken out, cleaned up, and stored away. It is not a bad plan to plant the hyacinth bulbs, when they have finished flowering, out in the open border, when they will come up next spring and do well.

Hyacinths in beds like any good garden soil well drained, for they will not bear to stand in any damp place during the winter. The bulbs should be planted three inches deep and six inches apart. The hyacinth is so hardy that no protection is required, unless extremely low temperature occurs after they have begun to grow freely, when dry litter is as effectual as anything. The Roman hyacinths afford an early supply of bloom, as they can be forced into flower six weeks after they are potted, and a continuous supply can be kept going until the general collection of hyacinths are in flower. Plant the bulbs four or six in a pot; they should cost about 3s. the dozen.

Tulips stand unsurpassed as spring flowers, and no garden should be without them.

With regard to their cultivation, the directions already given for hyacinths will answer every purpose for ensuring success with these equally beautiful plants. When grown in pots, plant three in a five or six-inch pot. When grown out of doors, plant the bulbs six inches apart and three inches deep, and do this about the middle of the present month.

A very pleasing effect may be produced in spring by now planting large masses of snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodils *in the grass*, in front of shrubbery borders, or under trees. These should be planted in patches, and not too close to the house, as the tops ought not to be cut down in spring until after they are dead, which leaves them somewhat unsightly for a time. Snowdrops and crocuses may be put in by making holes with an ordinary dibber, afterwards covering the bulbs with a little loose soil. For daffodils, holes must be made with a spade, but whichever way the planting is effected, it can be done, with ordinary care, without destroying the beauty of the lawn.

And now, if you can manage to do all the work mentioned above, you will find November one of the busiest months in the gardening year.