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CHILDREN AND GARDENS

BY
GERTRUDE JEKYLL

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND SIX ILLUSTRATIONS
BY THE AUTHOR



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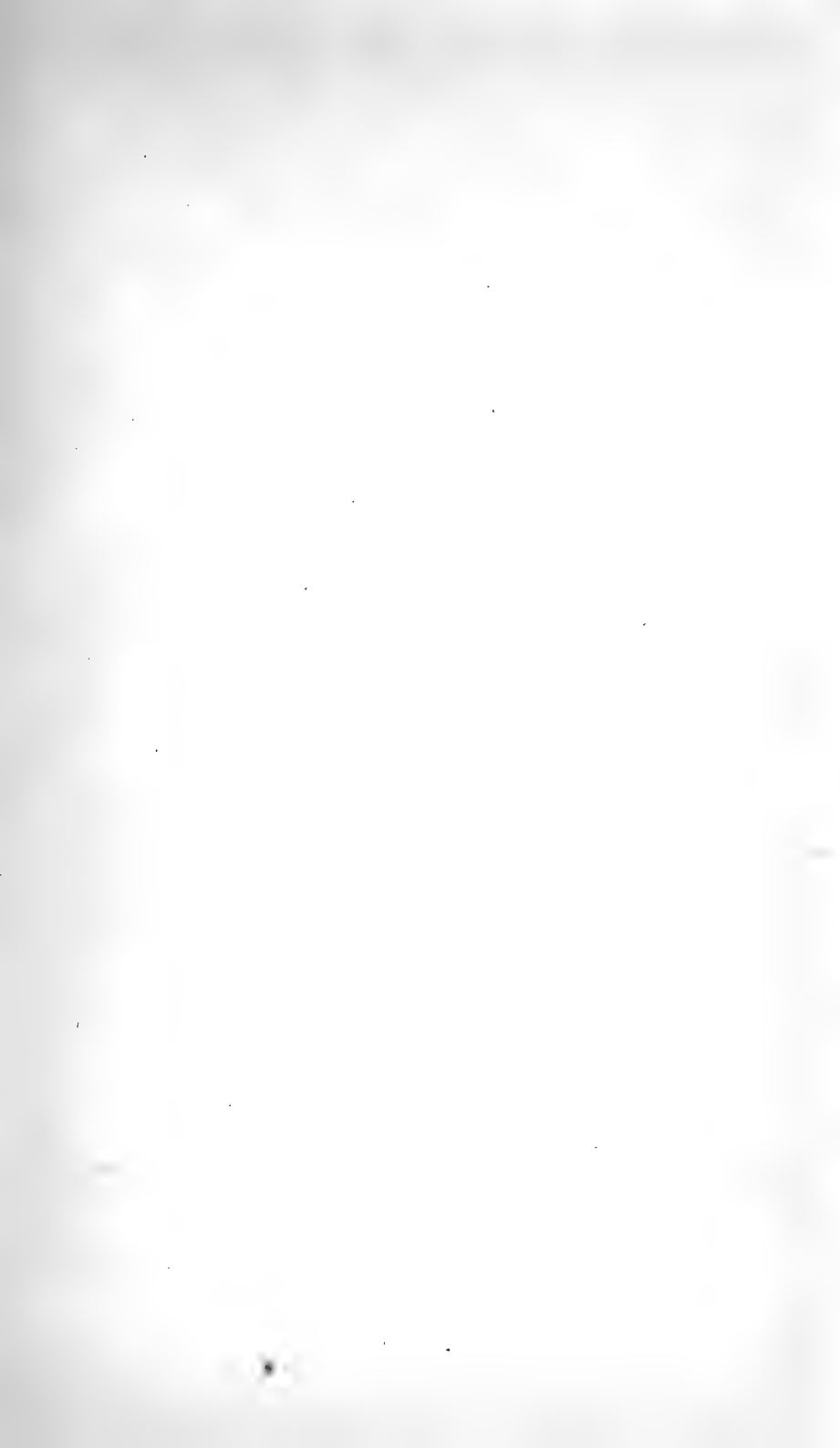
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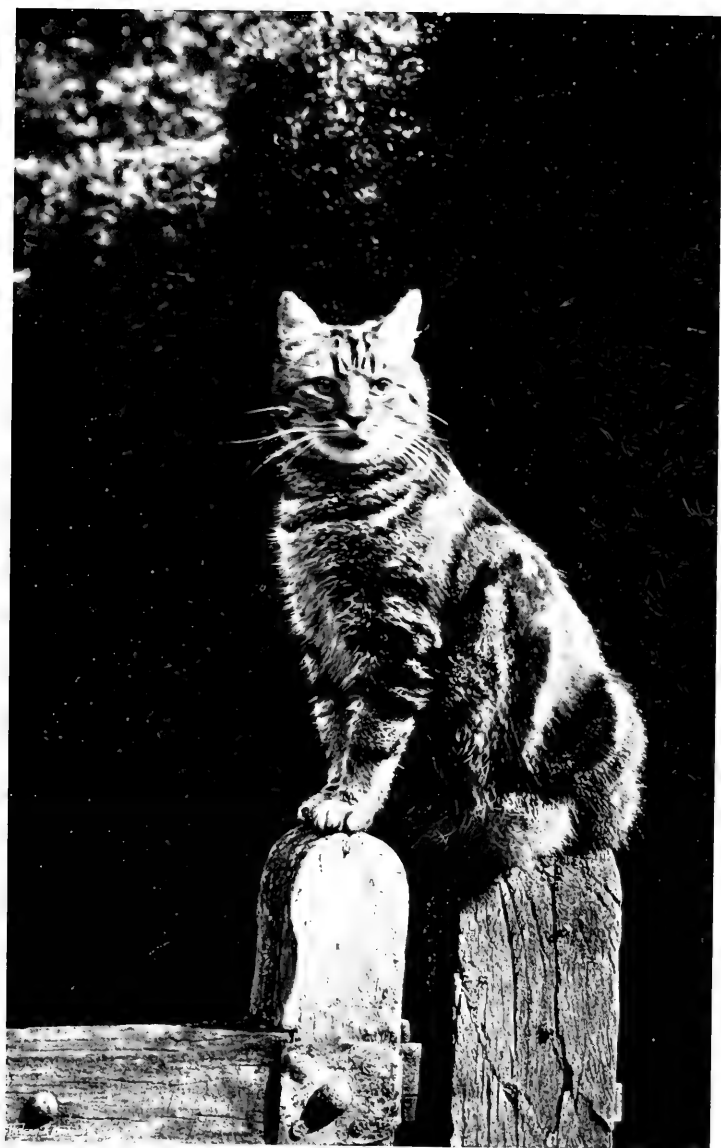
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CHILDREN AND GARDENS







TABBY.

CHILDREN AND GARDENS

CHAPTER I

MY OWN YOUNG DAYS

WELL do I remember the time when I thought there were two kinds of people in the world—children and grown-ups,—and that the world really belonged to the children. And I think it is because I have been more or less a gardener all my life that I still feel like a child in many ways, although from the number of years I have lived I ought to know that I am quite an old woman. But I can still—when no one is looking—climb over a five-barred gate or jump a ditch; but then I was always strong and active in my limbs, and in many ways more like a boy than a girl. This was no doubt because my place in the family came in the middle of four boys; two brothers older and two younger. I had no girl companions, for my only sister was seven years older, so that we were not much together. It was therefore natural that I should be more of a boy than a girl in my ideas and activities, delighting to go up trees, and to play cricket, and take wasps' nests after dark, and do dreadful deeds with gunpowder and all the boy sort of things.

But when my brothers went to school I had to find my own amusements. There was a dear old pony Toby and the dog Crim, and we three used to wander away into the woods and heaths and along all the little lanes and by-paths of our beautiful country.

Soon I came to notice the wild flowers and wanted to know about them ; but had no one to tell me till I was given a capital book that you will hear about presently ; but I had got to know them as friends long before I could find out what their names were.

The old home, not very far from where I live now, had biggish spaces of garden and shrubbery and two ponds—one a large mill-pond covering some acres ; and three streams, so that I was always watching the ways of water. Where one quick-running stream, after tumbling down in a cascade, ran into the mill-pond, was a grand place for gudgeons. We used to catch them both with a rod and with a round dip-net, and sometimes had them fried for tea. This pond had a large island near the upper end, but no bridge. In our earlier years we had no boat, but belonging to the house was a set of brewing tackle, and among its items a beer-cooler. This is a wooden thing about five feet long and three feet wide, with sides eight or ten inches high, like a large shallow box or tray. My father had this taken down on the pond for something that was to be done near the pond edge, and we children surreptitiously used it as a boat to make perilous journeys over to the island. It was very naughty indeed — it was strictly forbidden, and was really dangerous, but mercifully we came to no harm. The



THE GOOD PLACE FOR GUDGEONS.



WHERE THE BEER-COOLER WAS LAUNCHED.

island was a sort of enchanted land. It had some great Poplars growing on it, and a tangle of undergrowth. Some of this came down and dipped into the water, and here the moor-hens built and brought out their broods of lovely little round black-velvet chicks. On the fringe of the island were the grandest Lady Ferns I have ever seen, and in its depths I first found the curious plant Twayblade.

Where another of the streams, a slower one, came into the pond, was a fringe of the beautiful Water Forget-me-not. I never can forget—how could I, when it is just as keen to this day!—my delight in the pure blue of this sweet little plant, with its clean-looking bright green leaves, and its faint scent that I used to think like the small quiet smell of the little wild Pansy that you find in cornfields among the stubble.

Just above the pond was a damp meadow, called the Nunnery Meadow, where there were quantities of the bright yellow Marsh Marigolds that flower in April. I remember the rather deep ditch that ran all along in the middle length of the meadow, and the bright red colour of the mud at the bottom, and a thin film of many colours that was always on the water. I was told that it was because there was much iron in the soil. Later in the year the meadow grew quantities of the pretty Ragged Robin and Meadowsweet and Marsh Orchis.

I was born in London: we came to live in the country when I was nearly five years old. Among the clearest of my recollections of London are some of grass and flowers. We lived in Grafton Street, close

to Berkeley Square. When it was too hot to walk in the Green Park we borrowed the key at Gunter's and played in the Square garden. I remember a kind man at Gunter's, because with the key he always gave a nice goody; one of those oblong ones with pink or white sugar outside and an almond in. Later, my taste in goodies became less refined, because as soon as I came to know them, I thought that the best of all goodies were the vulgar peppermint bull's-eyes; and I think so still.

It was in the garden in Berkeley Square that I learnt to make a daisy-chain. I can still remember how difficult it was at first; how, when I had transfixed the stalk with the pin, the pin got restive and dragged the slit right out instead of stopping short of the free end of the stalk to leave the loop large enough to pass the stalk of the next Daisy through, but not large enough to let the head go through too. How well I remember the smell of the mown grass. To this day the scent of cut lawn grass is the smell of that Square garden. It was long before the days of mowing machines, and I remember seeing the man sweep up the grass that he had cut in the early morning. When short grass is cut with the scythe it is always done in the early morning, because when it is wet with dew it stands up better to the edge of the blade.

When we walked in the Green Park earlier in the year I was attracted by the Dandelions, and wanted to bring them home to the nursery. But our nurse, Marson, for some reason of her own, did not like Dandelions. She always said they were Nasty Things,

and though I looked at them longingly and sometimes picked one to smell, I don't think I ever brought them home. But Dandelion also remains with me as a London smell, and one other growing thing—the little flowering grass that botanists call *Poa annua*, of which there is a great deal in the London parks and gardens. These are quite the brightest of my London recollections. Of people, besides Marson, I remember a nursery-maid Letitia, and a tall footman called George, and the butler Poulter, and Mdlle. Bichet, my sister's French governess. I take them in the sequence in which they concerned me. There was a small room next to the entrance hall that was the schoolroom, looking to the street. Sometimes I was allowed to go in to see the carriage at the door. Sixty years ago carriages were grand things, well worth looking at. It was a yellow chariot hung high on great C-springs, and the coachman was a glorious object in silk stockings and a powdered wig, with his seat draped with the imposing hammer-cloth; for in those days a certain amount of state was observed, and servants wore full-dress liveries in the afternoon.

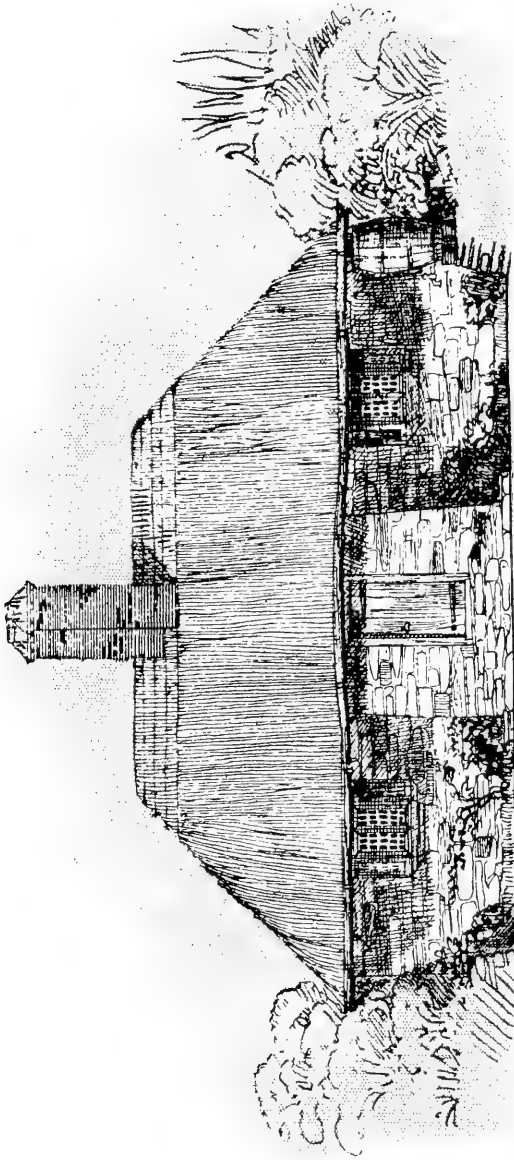
When we moved to the country the yellow chariot—always called “charrot”—went into the depths of the big coach-house, and was never used again till my sister came out, when post-horses were harnessed to it for her to be taken to balls.

The shrubberies of the old country home had been very well planted, so that from early years I was familiar with a number of the best shrubs and garden trees. There were several kinds of Magnolia, and

Ailanthus and Hickory, the pretty cut-leaved Beech and the feathery deciduous Cypress. Then there were Rhododendrons, mostly the purple *ponticum*, and the sweet *Azalea pontica*, and Kalmias and bush Andromedas and Buttercup Bush. And there were Ayrshire Roses and Cinnamon Roses and *Rosa lucida*, and the sweet Moss Roses, but hardly any herbaceous plants. These in fact were so few, that I remember with special adoration one tuft of the large blue Cornflower. This and a spreading patch of broad-leaved Saxifrage were the only interesting plants in a rather large extent of shrubbery—though there were a certain number in the borders of the kitchen garden that was some way from the house.



THE MILL POND FROM THE MILL.



THE PLAY-HOUSE.

CHAPTER II

THE CHILDREN'S GARDENS AND THE PLAY-HOUSE

THERE is so much in this chapter that must be decided by your fathers and mothers that you must ask them to read it and to give it their most kind and careful consideration ; for it is they who are to decide whether a suitable space of garden ground is to be devoted to the children's use, and in what state it is to be given over to their keeping.

It is not at all an uncommon thing to find children's gardens in some unattractive, out-of-the-way corner, or, most commonly of all, under or too near trees, whose roots invade the space and render it a place that would be difficult to make anything of, even for persons of long experience. It is neither fair nor reasonable to give a child who wishes for a garden a place that is full of difficulties. I even think it is better that the children should not have to make their gardens at all from the beginning, unless any enterprising individual specially wishes to do so.

A child will naturally answer a leading question in the obvious way. If an elder asks, in a tone meant to appeal to pride and self-respect, "Wouldn't you

like to make and plant your own garden, and do it all yourself?" the answer will probably be "Yes," but show him two spaces of garden ground, one a charming little flowery place and the other a blank, and then ask which he would rather have; can there be any doubt about the answer?

The fact is that the good planning and making of ever so simple and small a garden wants most of the qualities, the knowledge, and the technical ability that go to the making of a large one, and I think that to help children in the best way to love and value a garden is to give them a pretty one ready made. The actual planting, though it must be learnt in time, would seem to come better a little later. The daily tending of an already made garden is better to begin with; it is more interesting and inspiring, and the needs of the flowers can be seen and attended to with immediate result. It is in every way more delightful and encouraging to a child to have the lovely flowers to tend at once than to have to flounder through a mass of failure and mistake, and then to wait the best part of a year before there is anything whatever to be seen. The time will come soon enough when some plants will have to be taken up for dividing and replanting, and then this replanting will come as an interesting incident and a new bit of practical work.

Before having the care of a garden of their own the children should be taught to use their tools. There is always some vacant plot in the kitchen garden where they can practise, under careful teaching, the three most important manual operations—digging, hoeing,

and raking. If one of the elders of the family is a practical gardener, and will give some good lessons in the use of tools and the care of tools, it is much better than that the children should be left to pick it up by themselves on those occasions only when the use of the tools is wanted in their own gardens. A good straight bit of digging in clear ground for half an hour at a time will soon train the young hands and arms and backs ; so it is also with hoeing and raking. Raking wants a good deal of practice, it is quite difficult at first ; the rake wants to stick its teeth into the ground. It needs some dexterity to bring the tool back with the light level stroke that does the work, whether of levelling dug ground or of collecting stones or bits of stick and rubbish, or whatever it may be. It would be useless in a book to attempt to teach these operations, because, like all tool work, to be shown how to do it is worth volumes of description. The thing concerning it most useful to print is to advise the beginner to get into the way of using rake, hoe, and broom quite equally with both hands. It not only helps general dexterity and convenience, but it is much less tiring to work a bit with right hand up and left hand down, and then to change hands and work the other way. This does not apply to the spade, which is always used one way.

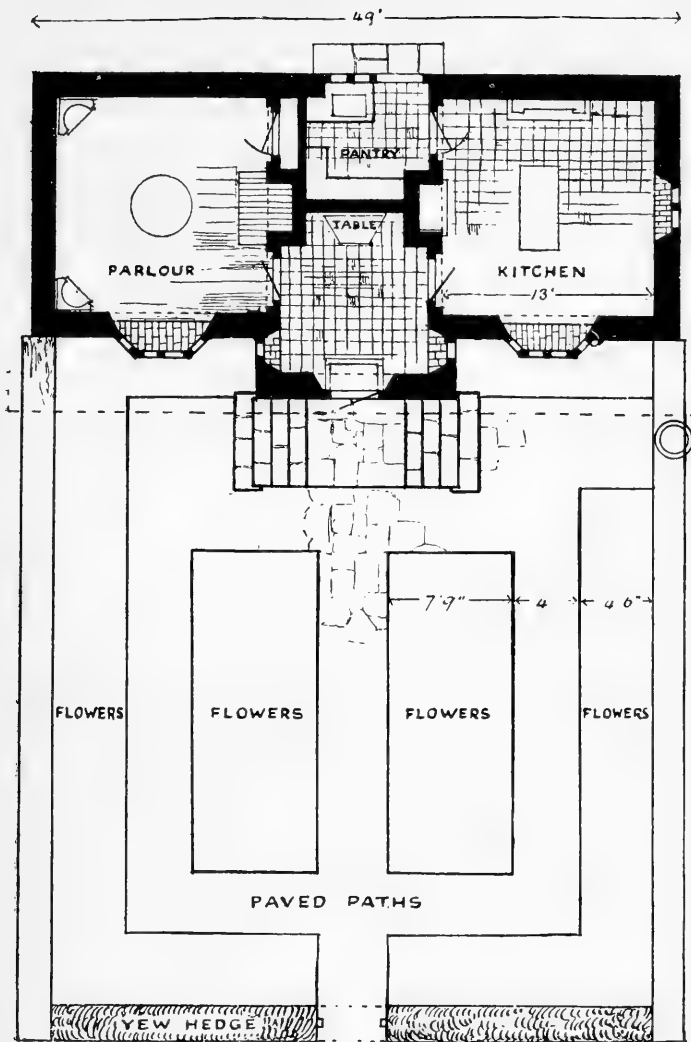
It is important that the children should be provided with proper tools. I much doubt whether good small tools can be bought ready made. What are kept in ironmongers' shops as "ladies' tools," with varnished handles and blue blades, and that are usually given to children, are wretched things,—badly shaped, badly

balanced, and generally weak where they should be strongest. The tools should be made by a clever country blacksmith, and the handles carefully adapted to the use of the little hands ; perfectly smooth but not varnished. The smallest size of the well-made steel rakes that are sold ready-made will do, but the handle will have to be replaced by a thinner, lighter one.

The necessary tools are spade, rake, hoe, a little wooden trug-basket, and a blunt weeding-knife ; a good cutting-knife, a trowel, a hand-fork, and a little barrow. There will also be wanted some raffia for tying, some hazel sticks, and a little white paint. A tiny tool-shed, with a well-lighted fixed bench, is most desirable, the tools hanging in their proper places on the wall. Tools should never be put away dirty. A little wooden implement, that any child can whittle for himself, should be kept on the bench for scraping off any earth that sticks to spade or trowel. The gardener will show you how to make it. A birch broom will also be wanted.

The late summer or early autumn is the time to begin the little gardens. The ground should be got ready not later than September, so that it will have time to settle before it is planted. Every detail should be exactly thought out beforehand, in order that, by the end of October or beginning of November, the plants may be put in their places. The children can be learning all the time. They should watch the whole operation and ask questions, and be told why everything is done.

Then, when in early spring the tips of the plants are pushing above ground and the Snowdrops are



PLAN OF A PLAY-HOUSE AND GARDEN.



THE OLD PLAY-HOUSE.

showing their little white buds, the year's work will be beginning. The experienced elder should keep a close watch on the little gardens and their owners, and, week by week, should teach and show what is to be done. Weeding will be the first thing, and the little trugs will come out and the blunt weeding-knives to save fingers, and so on throughout the year.

It will have to be considered, in cases where there are two or three children, whether it is better to have a separate garden for each, or whether they shall have one garden in common. The pleasure of individual possession is so great among children that, if they are offered their own choice, they will, in their own unthinking way, be most likely to say they would like separate gardens. But they should understand that in this way it is very difficult to make anything pretty of it, whereas in a garden all together it may be made extremely pretty. They have also to remember that now and then one of them may be ill or away on a visit, or a boy who loves his garden may be at school. In all such cases the garden with an individual owner gets neglected, while with the common ownership this does not happen, and all parts of the garden are equally attended to.

If the parents will give the children that greatest of delights, a real, well-built little house, with a kitchen and a parlour, where they can keep house and cook and receive their friends, the garden would naturally be close to it and form part of its scheme.

It must be confessed that a good play-house is a somewhat costly toy, but its value is so great, apart

from the intense interest and delight that it is to the children, that it is well worth the consideration of parents whose means allow them to provide it.

It is a little house somewhere in garden or shrubland, consisting of a kitchen and a sitting-room. If it can have an enclosed porch so much the better. In the kitchen the children make and bake little scones and cakes, and serve them at the tea that is laid in the adjoining sitting-room, and learn the elements of even more serious cookery, such as jam-making and simple ways of cooking eggs, and any advance on these beginnings that their taste or capacity may seem to ask for. The little house would be provided with all necessary fittings—a cooking-stove in the kitchen, a dresser, a cupboard, and a stout little kitchen table with a drawer. If it can have a small pantry containing a water supply and a sink, where the crockery is washed up and water drawn, and a round towel handy, it will be better than if these necessaries were in the kitchen itself.

The sitting-room would also have a fireplace, for though the little house might not be used perhaps for three winter months, yet by the time March comes, with its long bright afternoons, many would be the teas out at the play-house. The sitting-room would be appropriately fitted with two glass-fronted corner cupboards, to hold the tea things and glasses, for—who knows?—perhaps there might be an occasional luncheon party on birthdays or other great occasions. There would also be a little narrow sideboard with shelves, that would hold things both for use and ornament, and drawers for

table-cloths, spoons, and so on. A set of chairs would be ranged round the wall. These main pieces of furniture would be provided, but other niceties, even if not bought by the children themselves, should at least be made by them, so that they would make up window curtains, and hem and mark the table-cloths, dusters, and kitchen cloths.

The elders would often be invited to tea, and it would probably help matters if a specially praiseworthy culinary effort or other evidence of good housewifeliness suggested a little gift of money, to be expended on the perfecting of the play-house's equipment.

There are thousands of little girls in England, and small boys too, who would not only delight in working the play-house, but who would in after years visit it again with delight, and look back on its lessons of play-work with thankfulness, both for joyful memories and for the abiding usefulness of all that it had taught them.

The pretty lady in the picture is a German Princess. She has brought out her work to the old play-house, and is trying to think herself a child again, remembering all the happy hours she spent here a few years ago. The picture was done by my friend Miss Willmott, the greatest of living women-gardeners, and given me by her for your book.

The plan gives an idea of the accommodation required. The tiny cottage stands in a region where shrubbery gives place to woodland. In many places it might come conveniently at an angle of the kitchen garden wall, and would suggest the making of a pretty

building, such as so often adorned the angles of wall-enclosed spaces in the gardens of old. And where there are boys who would worthily use a workshop it might be combined under the same roof, but with a separate entrance.

The sense of possession is keenly enjoyed by children ; their own garden, their own little house ! They would have a pleasant pride in showing it all, pretty and useful, and well kept ; it would also be delightful to think of the many things they could make for it. These would all be sources of keen interest and enjoyment, and of encouragement for the inventiveness and ingenuity of busy little brains and fingers.

Then there would be the combined use of house and garden ; for the garden should have one little vegetable strip, perhaps behind, that would provide the tea-table with Radishes and Lettuce and Mustard and Cress, while the flower garden would give a little bunch of flowers on the tea-table and perhaps another for the window-board. It would be best if the little garden was held in common, rather than be, as is more usual, cut up into separate sections for each child ; for as a whole it could be made much prettier, and would better maintain its relation to the play-house, while all the young hands would have plenty of scope for work for the supplying of its many needs.

It is very nice to grow Mustard and Cress in the letters of one's name. You prepare a little long-shaped bed, and stretch two strings with wooden pegs at their ends about eight inches apart. Between these strings you scratch out the shallowest possible hollow, an inch

wide, in the shape of the letters. It looks more finished if you have a border all round. You can make the sowing-place for the border by laying down the handle of a rake before you take up the strings that were your guide for the height of the letters. You just press on the lying-down rake handle, and it leaves a little shallow trough, just right for sowing the seeds in. Then you barely cover the seeds with earth and wait till they come up. I advise leaving the strings while you are



MUSTARD AND CRESS.

doing the border, because you can either measure from them to the ends of the rake handle, so as to get a nice parallel line, or at least you can look at them and get it right by your eye.

For Lettuces you must watch the gardener some day when he is planting them. Then, when you want to plant them in your own garden, you must look out for a time when the ground is damp (but not soaking) after rain, or some day when there is a soft drizzle going on, and you ask the gardener for some young Lettuce plants and plant them with a dibble as you have seen him do. You will see that there are two kinds of Lettuces—Cos Lettuces, with rather smooth leaves, which stand upright, and Cabbage Lettuces, that have blobby wrinkled leaves that fold over and make low

dumpy plants. When the Cos kind are within a few days of being the right size to cut they have to be tied up to blanch, as it is called, that is, to make them white and tender.

When you have a lunch at the play-house you will want a nice salad, so I will tell you the right way to make it. Your Lettuces must be perfectly clean and quite dry. Sometimes they are clean as they grow, and do not want washing, but if they are dusty or in any way not quite clean, they must be washed in plenty of perfectly fresh water and then dried, first by swishing the whole Lettuce about in the open to get rid of most of the wet, and then by separating the leaves and putting them in a clean cloth. Then you cut or tear the leaves to pieces into your salad-bowl. You must have ready on a plate three little heaps of chopped herbs—Tarragon, Chervil, and some kind of Onion, chopped very small, or the tops of Chives; a level tea-spoonful of Tarragon, a heaped tea-spoonful of Chervil, and a not quite full spoonful of chopped Onion. Now you want oil and vinegar, pepper, salt, and pounded sugar. You measure into a table-spoon one spoonful of oil—it must be the best possible oil, not at all easy to get in England, but your home people will see to that—and you pour the oil over the Lettuce in the bowl, and turn it well over, so that every bit of leaf has a coating of oil. Then you put into the spoon a heaped salt-spoonful of sugar, a level salt-spoonful of salt, and two or three shakes of pepper; you half fill the spoon with vinegar and half with water. Then you mix this all together in the spoon, pour it over the salad, and

turn it well over so that it is all mixed. Then you put in the chopped herbs, give it another mixing, and you have a delicious French salad. Some people like the seasoning of herbs to be either Tarragon and Chervil or Onion, not both together. I like them all together.

You should have these herbs in your little kitchen garden. Tarragon is a perennial plant that comes from a warmer country, and likes the warmest place you can give it. Chervil is an annual ; to have a nice supply you should sow it two or three times a year. You will soon be able to keep your own seed, and can keep on sowing little patches here and there. It is of a nice fresh green colour, grows easily, and looks well anywhere. Chives is a kind of small onion ; it is planted in tufts. You could have a row of tufts as a bit of your kitchen-garden edging ; it is often grown like this in cottage gardens. When you want Chives for salad you just go out and cut what you want off the growing plant. I think you should have a little supply of Parsley too. You sow it where it is to be ; it also makes a good neat edging. You will want it for decorating cold dishes for lunch, and for soups, and other cookery when you learn to do it.

Now I will tell you how to make some very nice play-house soups. First the true French Julienne and then some milk soups. They want no meat—only vegetables, and they are nicest done in those capital French earthenware pots that are called "marmites" ; you can get them anywhere now. Years ago I used to make them in pipkins, which are very much the same sort of thing.

Julienne.—2 oz. butter, a small onion, 1 lettuce, 1 large carrot, 1 small turnip, 3 sprigs of parsley. Melt the butter in the bottom of the pot; slice the onion, after cutting it nearly through across and across. Put it in the butter and keep moving it about to prevent the onion catching on the bottom of the pot and burning. It should cook for ten minutes to a medium brown colour. It must not be dark brown or at all burnt. Then cut the lettuce into shreds and put it in the pot. It soon melts down, for it is a succulent or juicy thing, nearly all water. Then you add the carrot and turnip. You cut them into what are called Julienne strips, and the way to do it is this. The outer part of the carrot only is used—the nice red part. The paler yellowish inside of a full-grown carrot is tougher and more tasteless. You cut the raw carrot across into bits a little less than an inch long. Then you take one bit at a time, and with the knife held the long way of the carrot, you pare off the red part round and round till you come to the yellow core. It is as if you were cutting the outside of a cork to make it smaller. You do this with all the pieces, and then flatten them out and lay two or three one over the other, fitting them together as nicely as you can. Then you cut neat little strips, cutting through all the layers, and you have your Julienne strips. The turnip you square a little at the outside edges and slice one-eighth of an inch thick, fit the slices together again and cut once across the middle. Then turn it the other way and cut your little strips. Everything in cooking must be done very carefully, very exactly, and in perfectly clean

ways. Add your carrot and turnip strips to what is already in the pot, which will look like a sort of vegetable mash at the bottom, and then put in one and a half pint of hot water. You must now arrange your pot and fire so that it goes on cooking for quite an hour. About ten minutes before it is done you chop the parsley and put it in; if you add it earlier the flavour will be lost. Remember in using chopped parsley that the stalks are as good as the leaves; in fact they really give the best flavour, though the bits of leaf look nicest.

Bonne Femme Soup.—This is a milk soup, and is more quickly made. Begin as before with the onion and butter, but stop the cooking of the onion before it gets brown; it must not be deeper than pale yellow. Have ready half a large lettuce and an equal quantity of the broad-leaved sorrel. Remember that the sorrel has a strong acid juice that is rather unwholesome. You have to get rid of most of this by what is called blanching. Note that there is a blanching in cookery and a blanching in vegetable growing, and that they mean different things. Blanching in gardening means making the hearts of plants white by tying them up, as you do Cos Lettuces, or covering them with a bank of earth, as in the case of celery and some other salad plants. Cabbages and Cabbage Lettuces blanch their own insides themselves by folding their top leaves over. Any plants get blanched or whitened by having the light kept from them when they are in a growing state. Blanching (from the French *blanchir*), according to the true meaning of the word, ought always to mean making

white. In some cases in cooking it does mean this, as in blanching almonds, when by putting them for a minute in boiling water the brown skin is loosened and the white almond is easily taken out. I think the word as used in cooking must have come from this, only that instead of the meaning of the word being that the thing blanched is made white, it has come to mean that the thing is put for a minute or two in boiling water, for this is what blanching now means in cookery.

So to get rid of the harmful acid in the sorrel it is blanched in boiling water. Two or three minutes is enough. It is then cut into shreds, and the lettuce also, and both are added to the slightly frizzled onion, and it is all stewed together for a quarter of an hour. Then you add a pint of water and let it cook another quarter of an hour. Near the end I like to add two teaspoonfuls of white sugar and three teaspoonfuls of salt. Then you pour it into the tureen, wait a minute, and then add to it in the tureen half a pint of milk that has been slightly warmed. You cannot add the milk to the boiling soup, or it would curdle.

Potato Milk Soup.—For this I generally use some spare potatoes that have been boiled. You begin just the same way with the butter and onion, and when the onion is done enough—you should do it as much as you can without its turning colour; it should be only the very palest yellow, not the least brown—you add a very little hot water (about a wineglassful) and the potatoes, cut up into bits the size of a lump of sugar. Then add what will make up a pint of water in all, and let it cook for a quarter of an hour. Put in some

sugar and salt, as in the last recipe, pour into the tureen, let it cool the least thing, and then put in the half-pint of warmed milk as before. Some of the potato will have gone into a purée (thinnish sludge), and some of it remains in soft knobs. This is the *purée de pomme de terre* of smarter dinner-tables, but to make it all look smooth the cook passes it through a sieve. But I like it best the real French middle-class way, with the knobs of potato and shreds of onion left in.

Any of these soups, with some good cheese to come after (perhaps a cream cheese, which looks so nice laid on a vine-leaf), and the salad I have told you of, and perhaps a little fruit, is a dinner or supper fit for a king!

In colder weather it is nice to have toasted cheese. English cheddar is one of the best cheeses for toasting. You slice 4 oz. thin and put it in a shallow, flattish pan; add to it rather more than a tablespoonful of beer and a good teaspoonful of brown sugar. I don't know why brown sugar improves it, but it certainly does. You must have ready on a hot dish a nice piece of toast, cut rather thicker than ordinary toast, and the whole size of the loaf, with the crust cut off. As soon as the cheese is melted, and looks quite smooth and all alike, you pour it over the toast.

Scrambled eggs is another capital thing, and this is the best way to make it. Cooks generally spoil it and get rid of all the nice eggy taste by working it about too much in the bottom of a saucepan. You can make it in one of those nice clean round or oval French fireproof dishes with short ears, and you serve it in the

dish it is cooked in. Melt a bit of butter in the dish, big enough to cover all the bottom when it is melted, add a good pinch of salt and a dust of white pepper. Break the eggs (two or three according to the size of the dish) on to the fizzling butter; have a silver fork in your hand and break up the eggs gently. Keep on moving it about with the fork, mostly with a lifting action, because this lets the uncooked egg run on to the hot dish where you have just raised what has already cooked and thickened. Directly it has all thickened, or even a moment before, take it off the fire, because you must remember that it goes on cooking in the hot dish. If you do it like this you will know what a good thing scrambled egg can be.

For tea, nothing is better than mustard and cress sandwiches, or watercress sandwiches, or sandwiches of the little weed cress I shall tell you about in the next chapter. But when you have invited your elders, or on any other important occasion, you should have some freshly-made scones, or some little cakes.

Scones.— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. flour, 3 oz. butter, a pinch of salt, 1 dessertspoonful of baking-powder, 1 egg, 2 table-spoonfuls of milk. Mix the flour, salt and baking-powder and rub in the butter. Beat the egg and milk together and pour to the rest. Mix it lightly with the blade of a knife, roll out on a floured board, half an inch thick, and either cut it into rounds with a $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cutter (a tin thing made on purpose), or cut it into triangles. Bake 5 to 10 minutes, according to the heat of the oven. They are served split, buttered both sides and put together again.



TWO LITTLE WASHERWOMEN.



HANGING OUT DOLLIES' WASH TO DRY.

Fairy Cakes.— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. flour, 4 oz. butter, a large tea-spoonful of baking-powder, 4 oz. castor sugar, 1 egg, 4 oz. sultanas, or 2 oz. sultanas and 2 oz. currants. Mix the baking-powder with the flour and rub in the butter. Add the sugar and the dried fruit. Beat together the milk and egg and put to the rest. Mix lightly and put into shallow tins (the sort used for mince-pies) and bake in a quick oven 15 to 20 minutes.

In the play-house pantry, or better still, in summer weather somewhere near but out-of-doors, we wash the dollies' clothes. If the sun is very hot we put on our sun-bonnets, and we pin ourselves up in bath-towels so that no splash matters, and turn up our sleeves as high as they will go, and have out that nice red pan and wash all their things. Cotton, muslin and flannel; little frocks and petticoats and shimmies, and their tiny pocket-handkerchiefs, and hang them on the line to dry.

CHAPTER III

EARLY WEEDS

By the time March comes you should look out for weeds. Of course you must learn to know your weeds, just as you must learn to know your flowers, and you must know them, too, in quite a young state. Like garden flowers, weeds are either annual, biennial, or perennial. The word "annual," applied to a plant, means one whose whole lifetime is begun and finished within one year. Biennial means one that grows one year and flowers the next, like Sweetwilliam and Foxglove and Canterbury Bell. Perennials are the plants that will go on for ever if they are divided every few years. Some are the better for being divided every year. These are the ones whose roots spread out quickly, like Michaelmas Daisies and some of the Sunflowers. Any of you who have learnt a little Latin will see from the word itself what annual, biennial, and perennial mean; and will see that the words themselves describe, as I have just done, the length of the plant's lifetime. Those who have not learnt Latin must take my word for it.

We generally sow annuals in March, to flower in

middle and late summer, though most hardy annuals are stronger and better and bloom earlier if they can be sown in autumn. But there is a difficulty about autumn sowing, which means sowing in August and September, because just then gardens are filled with plants at their full growth ; and, especially in your own little gardens, I should not expect you to be able to do it. But some day, when some pretty annual has shed its seed and come up by itself—some Poppy or Love-in-a-Mist, or whatever it may be, and you had left it at weeding-time, seeing that it was not one of the familiar weed seedlings, you will see what I mean about its unusual strength. This is the way plants sow themselves.

There are three troublesome weeds, one annual, the others perennial, that show quite early in spring. They are up in February, though, if you don't want to do much gardening in February, it will not matter if you don't look out for them till March. They are a little Cress, Dock, and Dandelion ; we will take the Cress first. The little plants come up early and look neat and harmless. It is the Hairy Bitter Cress. The botanical name is *Cardamine hirsuta* — hirsuta means hairy. You think the plant is quite smooth ; but if you look at the full-grown leaf quite close you will see tiny hairs upon the surface and at the edges. When it is young it looks like this.



HAIRY BITTER CRESS.



HAIRY BITTER CRESS.

In March it comes into flower, and then is the time to look out for it, unless you have trained your eyes to see it sooner. But it shows up brightly when the little flower is out. You must not miss a single one, for this is what happens. Directly the flower is over the stem elongates; each seed-pod lengthens, and the little seeds inside swell and ripen. By this time the plant looks like this.

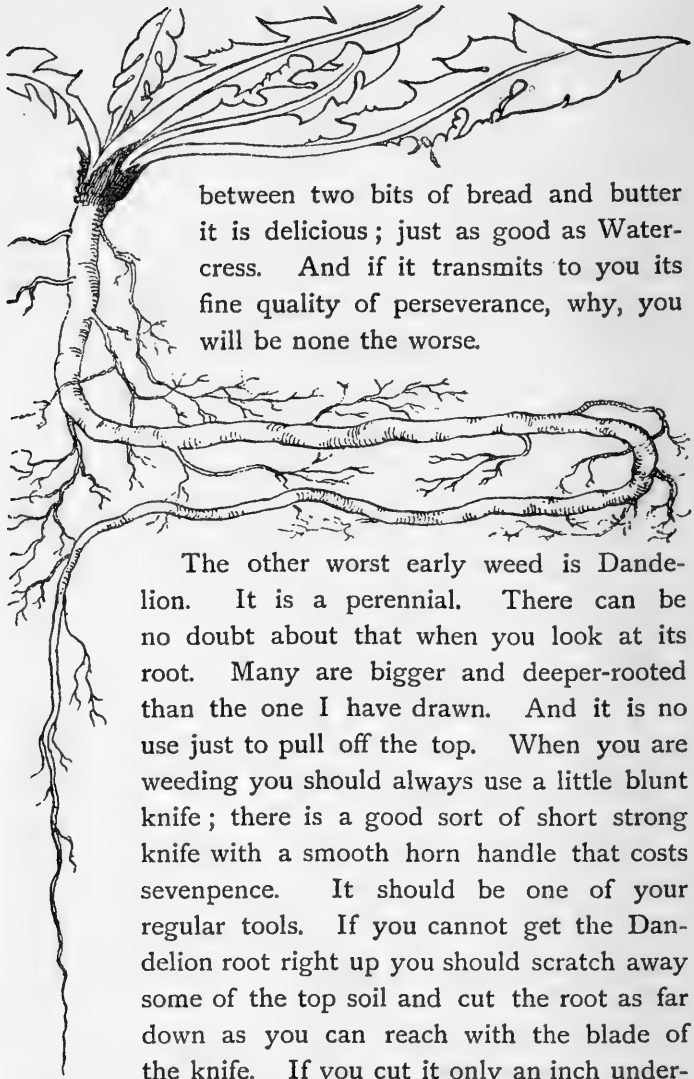
Then look out! for as soon as the seed is quite ripe, at the least touch the outer covering of the long pod curls itself up and acts like a catapult, scattering the seeds about quite a long way and filling the garden again with weed-seeds. And you must remember that this crafty little plant has a sly trick of turning a dark bronzy colour that makes it difficult to see. But if you are careful, and get hold of it when it is full-grown, but has not yet thrown up the flower-stem, you can have a glorious revenge. You know the old story of some savage tribes who kill and eat their enemies, and who believe that when they have swallowed some

doughty warrior they become imbued with his best qualities. You can do the same with *Cardamine*



HAIRY BITTER CRESS.

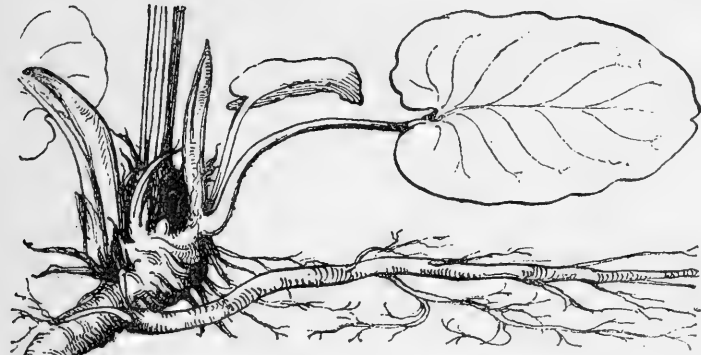
hirsuta. You pull it up and cut off the little root, and, if it is not perfectly clean you wash it, and dry it in a clean cloth, and you eat it for nursery tea. Put



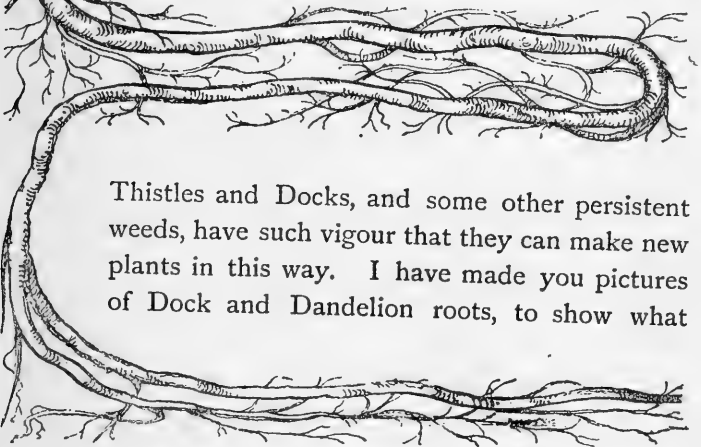
between two bits of bread and butter it is delicious ; just as good as Watercress. And if it transmits to you its fine quality of perseverance, why, you will be none the worse.

The other worst early weed is Dandelion. It is a perennial. There can be no doubt about that when you look at its root. Many are bigger and deeper-rooted than the one I have drawn. And it is no use just to pull off the top. When you are weeding you should always use a little blunt knife ; there is a good sort of short strong knife with a smooth horn handle that costs sevenpence. It should be one of your regular tools. If you cannot get the Dandelion root right up you should scratch away some of the top soil and cut the root as far down as you can reach with the blade of the knife. If you cut it only an inch underground it will make fresh crowns and be

DANDELION.



worse than ever. Notice that word "crown." Applied to a plant it means the thick growing part next above the root, the preparation for the whole of the plant that will come up above ground. It is not every perennial plant that will make new crowns when you cut the top off an inch below ground. But Dandelions and



Thistles and Docks, and some other persistent weeds, have such vigour that they can make new plants in this way. I have made you pictures of Dock and Dandelion roots, to show what

DOCK.

mighty things they are even when the leaves are only beginning.

You will see all about crowns when you come to dividing perennial plants in autumn. Among the died-down or cut-off stems of the past year you will see the little whitish points of the growth for the year to come. These are the crowns, that will grow into stem, leaves, and flowers; one or more crowns with some roots is considered a safe division or suitable new piece to plant. Of course, if a Dandelion plant should grow up among other things and escape notice you will know it at once by its flower. Then you must make sure to have it up and not let it make its pretty "puff" of seed, or you will be bothered next year with a very troublesome crop of weeds. But you must be always on the look-out for them, for even if you are as careful as possible in your own garden you cannot help the seeds sailing in from fields and hedges and road-sides; and they will sail from a long distance.

Thistle seeds sail in just in the same way. If you ever find a little seedling Thistle in your garden you must dig down and get the root out whole. If you don't get it out young you will never get it out at all.



THE GREAT PUMPKIN OR GOURD.

CHAPTER IV

SEEDS

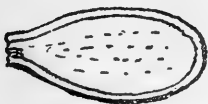
WHEN March comes we have to think about seed-sowing. From the middle to the end of the month is the time for garden annuals, though Sweet-Peas are best sown earlier, towards the end of February.

One cannot help observing what different-looking things seeds are; how endlessly they vary in shape and size. There are some so tiny that one can scarcely see them, and some, like a kitchen-garden Broad Bean, as wide as a shilling; to say nothing of great monsters like Cocoa-nuts. For all nuts are only single seeds. Think of all the different ways seeds grow: in loose papery shucks



BROAD BEAN.

like Indian Corn, in neat pods like Peas, in beautifully-shaped urns like Poppies, and in hundreds of other ways. Then think of all the different seeds of fruits. Sometimes it is a big longish seed like a Plum or Peach-stone inside a delicious pulp, or a smaller one like a Cherry-stone



GOURD SEED.

or an Orange-pip. Generally in a fruit the seed is inside, but sometimes it sticks on outside. The little yellow flecks on the outsides of Strawberries are the seeds.

Then in handling seeds one notices differences of touch and texture. There are fluffy ones like those of Anemones, and rough-coated ones like little bits of coal cinder, such as Love-in-a-Mist, and others so slippery that you can scarcely hold them, such as the shiny black seeds of Columbines.

Then just think, when the seed is ripe and ready to be sent away from the parent plant to find its place in the earth and make new plants, how the various kinds are fitted with different ways of finding a new home. Many, it is true, fall to the earth and spring up near the old plant, but others have all sorts of curious mechanical contrivances. There is a common roadside plant that grows all round the Mediterranean called the Squirting Cucumber. When the seeds are ripe and the pod falls off its stalk, a little hole is left where the stalk fitted. The inside of the fruit is all watery stuff and seeds; at the time of ripeness the wet stuff seems to be explosive, like ginger-beer that is well "up." It flies out of the hole, carrying the seeds with it and scatters them away to a distance of several yards. If any of you go to the Riviera in the winter, you would be sure to find this plant. The least touch sends the ripe seeds flying, even the vibration of the earth when any one walks near will make them go off; only take care, for you might get hit in the face. It is a greyish plant, growing close to the ground, with biggish leaves something like our roadside Burdock.

There are other seeds that are shot out with a catapult action, and there is a thing that grows in the West Indies whose seeds, if you bring them indoors, go off in the night like pistol-shots and alarm the whole house. All these are what one may call violent seeds. But most of those that we have to do with are passive and gentle, and many have delightfully graceful ways of moving about with pretty sails or wings. Look at this seed of *Clematis montana*, with a tail just like a squirrel's! And think how in the autumn one sees Thistle seed sailing away high up in the air, and think of the Dandelion puffs that you may watch sailing shorter distances close at hand. The Hawkweed seed in the picture is one of this kind.



SEED OF HAWK-
WEED.



SEED OF CLEMATIS
MONTANA.

The seeds of many trees travel quite a good way. When the first hot sunny days come in March, if you are in a wood of Scotch Firs, or, better still, somewhere at its sunny edge, you will hear the last year's cones opening with a sharp *snick*. Then look about and see if you don't see the seeds fluttering down, looking like little live things. Just catch one or two seeds as they come down and look at them, for if you do not catch them at once, and they lie on the ground for a few hours, the seed will have dropped out of its lodging in the butt of the wing, where it is only slightly held by one edge,

something in the same way as precious stones are held in the setting of a jewel, only with the purpose that they should fall out easily instead of being firmly held. You will see how like the wing is to a big fly's or



SCOTCH FIR.

beetle's wing, with one strong front edge and little veins. These seed-wings shine as they lie on the ground, for the texture is something

between the thinnest paper and the finest gauze. The seed is nearly black, but the wing is pale buff with brown ribs and veins. As it lies within the woody partitions of the cone, the wing is slightly curved. This is what makes it flutter and helps the lightest air or wind to carry it a little way away.

And don't forget to keep your noses snuffing about, for these early hot days bring out the sweet scent of the Pines, and it is a smell you will love to the end of your days.

The seeds of the Sycamore-tree flutter away on strong wings that are almost exactly like the wings of a large beetle. Acorns are solid heavy things, that just flop down under the tree they grow on, but the little wood people—squirrels, mice, and birds—carry them about. Some they let fall on the way, but the greater number they hide in all sorts of places. Many of these places they never find again, and acorns grow where they are left, often a good distance from the tree.

Before sowing you should see that your garden is quite clear of weeds. You will just be able to see the crowns of the perennial plants pushing up through the

ground. You must go all round these carefully with the hoe, hoeing quite shallow so as not to disturb any of their roots that are near the surface, and then go over the ground roughly with the rake, not for the sake of tidying and gathering up any bits of rubbish only, but also to break up any cloddiness of surface and let in the air, and to let the seeds fall into the tiny holes made by the teeth of the rake.

Always remember that you can never sow seed thin enough. The very small seeds you can prepare like this. Take a tiny pinch of seed, not half a quarter of what is in the packet, and get about a tablespoonful of fine dry earth or sand. Mix the seed with the earth and sow a very little of the mixture. You should always do this with Poppy seed, and until you become expert it is much better to do it with all seeds except fair-sized ones, that you can be sure to sow thinly. Big seed like Lupine or Sunflower can be sown quite singly, putting in one seed just where you want the plant to be. But if there are many slugs about, it is safer to sow three seeds, a couple of inches apart, instead of one; then if a hungry slug comes along he may perhaps eat one, or even two, with a good chance of the third being left. If no slug comes and all three are growing well, and have got beyond the size when the slugs like them best, which is when they are still in seed-leaf, then if there comes a nice day when the ground is damp after a shower, you can take up the two extra plants very carefully with a trowel, so as not to disturb the third, and plant them elsewhere; or, if you have no room for them, you can pull up the two worst

plants, leaving only the best. The smaller the seed the shallower it should be in the ground. All ordinary seeds may just be scattered over the ground that has been freshly scratched over with the rake. Then you pass the rake over again, and that is quite enough to cover the seed. The hoeing will have killed any weed seeds that would have been beginning to grow, so that when you see little green things coming up, you may be pretty sure that they are your flowers and not weeds. You will very soon get to know the difference, even when the tiny plants are in their first pair of seed-leaves, but meanwhile, when you see in your sown patches seedlings coming up that look all alike, you may take it that they are what you have sown. As soon as they are big enough to handle you must thin them out. How much to thin, that is to say, how near to each other the little plants may stand, is a thing that you must partly learn by experience ; but of course small plants, such as Virginian Stock, can stand much nearer than big things like Lupines. To begin with, you can teach yourself this way. Look in your seed-merchant's list. The good ones give the height to which the plant grows. Most plants spread to nearly the same measure as their height, some a great deal more ; but as a general rule you may let the seedlings stand at a distance apart equal to half their height. Therefore if you see in the seed list that the plant grows a foot high, let the seedlings stand six inches apart. But if they have been sown too thick, and in some places come up quite close together like a turf, you must pull these up altogether ; they will never make good plants,

but leave enough of those that stand so singly, that any thinning you have to do round them does not disturb the roots of those that are left.

When I was young one used often to see what I think is a very silly way of sowing annuals. A little ring, about as big as a dinner plate, was scratched in the ground, the seed was sown in this much too thick, and the seed-paper, with the name of the plant on it, was pushed into a cleft in the top of a short stick which was stuck in the middle of the ring. Bits of paper always look bad about a garden, and it is a lazy way of marking the plant. Gardens look much better if you can do without any labels, but if you must have them the nicest are bits of hazel stick cut about a foot long and pointed, with the top end shaved flat for a length of about two inches to write on. It must not be shaved too deep, because in the middle of the stick there is a little pithy hollow. Then you have a little pot of white-lead paint; you take a very little of this on the end of some other bit of stick and smear it over the shaved part. Then with a bit of rag or paper you smooth it over and rub most of it off. Then you write the name of the plant with a soft pencil in the thin coating of wet paint. I always have the paint in the bottom of a small-sized jam-pot, and have a bit of rag big enough to crumple into the top of the pot without touching the paint, so that it keeps most of the air away that would dry it up and make it unfit to use.

I can only think of one sort of seed that should be sown fairly thick, that is Mustard and Cress. This small salad is generally sown in frames, and the seed

merely scattered on the surface ; but you cannot do that out-of-doors ; the birds would have it directly, so you must just cover it up.

Of course I suppose that you not only attend to your own gardens but also watch all that is being done in the big home garden. Some day you will grow up, and perhaps have big gardens of your own, and if you have learnt to know a lot about it when you were little, it will make you fit to take charge and to say how things are to be done, and to make the garden a glory and delight to yourselves and everybody else. So at seed-sowing time you should see what the gardener is doing inside—that is to say, in frames and greenhouses—as well as out. You will find he is sowing lots of seed in pans and little shallow boxes. Some of these are half-hardy annuals ; grand things like African Marigolds and Zinnias, and Stocks and Asters. They want a warmer climate than ours for growing straight out-of-doors, so we sow them “in heat,” as gardeners say, or at any rate with the protection of a frame. This is the best chance to watch the way the little seedlings come out of the ground and to get to know them in the seed-leaf state. For most plants begin their growth with a pair of seed-leaves that are of a simple shape, quite unlike that of the leaves that are to follow. When the next pair of leaves comes we speak of the seedling as being “just out of seed-leaf,” and about a fortnight later we speak of the seedlings as being “big enough to handle” ; many of them are then “pricked off” separately. “Pricking off” means separating the little plants and planting them in rows in other boxes, where they re-



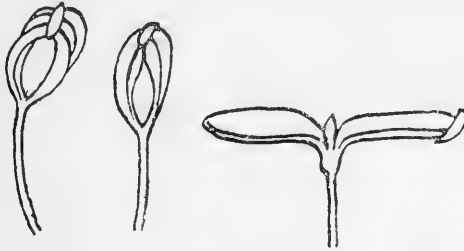
PRICKING OFF SEEDLINGS.



NEWLY SAVED SEEDS.
A CONSULTATION. "WHICH SHALL GO WHERE NEXT YEAR?"

main till they are of the right size, and the right time has come to put them in their places for the summer. The gardener will show you how to do it, and the blunt wooden tool to do it with, which you can make yourself.

To go back to the seedlings that have just come up. You see them quite conveniently if the boxes are standing on the greenhouse staging. Here and there among them you will see what an odd way some have of carrying up the coating or husk on the tips of the



CHINA ASTERS IN SEED-LEAF.

seed-leaves. I have drawn this to show you from a pan of China Asters. The pair of seed-leaves want to open flat, but sometimes they are held clipped together by the husk. The seedling will be very thankful if you will gently release them by lifting off the husk. The best way to do it is with a little flat feather, pushing the feather between the two leaves and working it upwards, very gently, or the seedling may be pulled out of the ground. The husk often sticks on the end of one seed-leaf, though it is more often thrown off altogether.

The seedlings with the little ace-of-spades shaped

leaves are *Incarvillea Delavayi*, a handsome perennial plant. When the husks hold on to this they do it in a very clever way and stick rather tight. The coating of the seed has a broad back on one side and a pointed tongue on the other, so that it rides astride of the leaf-tip with a rather firm hold.

In your own gardens it is best, when the flowers are running to seed, to cut them off directly the flower is over. You see *you* want all the flowers you can get



INCARVILLEA SEEDLINGS.

to keep your garden bright, but *the plant* wants to make its seed as soon as possible. When seed-pods are forming the plant tries to give all its strength to the seed-pods, but it is very patient, and if you go on cutting off the seed-pods it will make more flowers, in the hope that next time you will not see or will forget. But by watching carefully and cutting off every pod, it is quite wonderful how you can make a plant go on flowering.

Most likely you will find plants going to seed somewhere in the home garden. Towards the end of the summer you should look out for these to save the seed,

and then you will see the curious variety of the seed-pods, and the ways the pods have of protecting the seeds till they are ripe, and then sowing them themselves ; and you will see what odd things some of the pods are. Look at the picture of the pretty Love-in-a-Mist. The plant has two English names, Love-in-a-Mist and Devil-in-a-Bush. I always think that one name belongs to the flower and the other to the seed-pod.

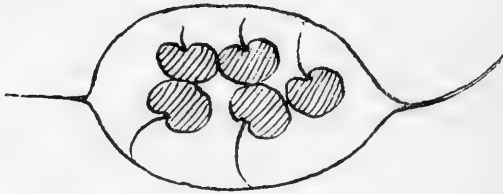
Some seed-pods, when the seed is ripe, have little holes near the top. I have drawn you a Bell-flower seed to show this ; Snapdragons have two holes, they are the eyes of the little old woman that I will tell you about ; and you must know the look of the row of holes under the crowning top of a Poppy pod. And get somebody to show you how to make a seed-paper, to keep seeds in. Most seedsmen now use the little seed pockets and gum them up, but a few still use the good old-fashioned folded seed-papers. If you can get hold of one of these you have only to unfold it to see how it is made.



SEED-POD
OF BELL-
FLOWER.

A curious seed is that of Honesty. I daresay you have seen the silvery insides of Honesty pods used as winter ornaments. If not, and you have Honesty plants going to seed, I advise you to watch them in August. I am not very fond of winter bouquets of anything that looks dry and rather artificial, but I must say I do like the silvery Honesty. It is only good if the plant dries off naturally in fine dry weather,

because if, while it is drying, it is wetted by any continuous rain, the brown seeds stain the tender tissue that you want to keep. The seed-pod is quite flat. It has two outer coats like whity-brown paper, and



SEED-POD OF HONESTY.

generally three to five seeds, some on one side and some on the other of another middle papery partition. It is this partition that is kept. It is of delicate texture, half transparent, and has the silvery-satin lustre that makes it such a pretty thing set up in a room in some handsome blue-and-white Chinese jar or Japanese bronze. I have drawn it as it looks held up to the light. I know no better practice in careful handling for young fingers than the preparing of the pods, doing it so as to get off the two outside paper covers and the seeds without injuring the middle.



SNAPDRAGON POD
DRESSED AS AN
OLD WOMAN.

It is amusing to dress up a Snapdragon seed-pod, when it is brown and dry, as an old woman. If you look at it you will see how curiously like a face it is, with large eyes and open mouth. You must break off the projecting spike so that it leaves a little



LOVE-IN-A-MIST.

turned-up snub nose. Then you get a cork and whittle away a bit at the top, and you send a pin through the pod and down into the cork. She must have a large mob cap with a frill round the face, a shawl, and a petticoat. Any one who can dress dolls can make this. If you shake her she weeps little black tears.

CHAPTER V

COWSLIP TIME

IF you live in a Cowslip country you will naturally want to make Cowslip balls. You prepare the flowers by cutting off the stalks just under the heads, and stretch a bit of very fine string by tying it to the backs of two chairs ; or you may tie the string to the back of one chair and hold the other end in your left hand. Then you take the prepared flowers one by one and make them ride astride the string, heads downwards. When there are as many on the string as you think will be enough to make the ball, you press them as close up together as they will go, bring up the two ends of the string and tie them. I cannot tell you how many heads it will take, because that depends on the size of the cowslips and the number of flowers on the heads—you must try for yourselves and find out. The ball must be tight and round, and made of flowers that are about the same length. If they are of different lengths the ball will have an uneven surface. It should be even and plump and round. The little Birds'-foot Trefoil that grows by road-sides in the summer makes very pretty little balls, and you can make them of any



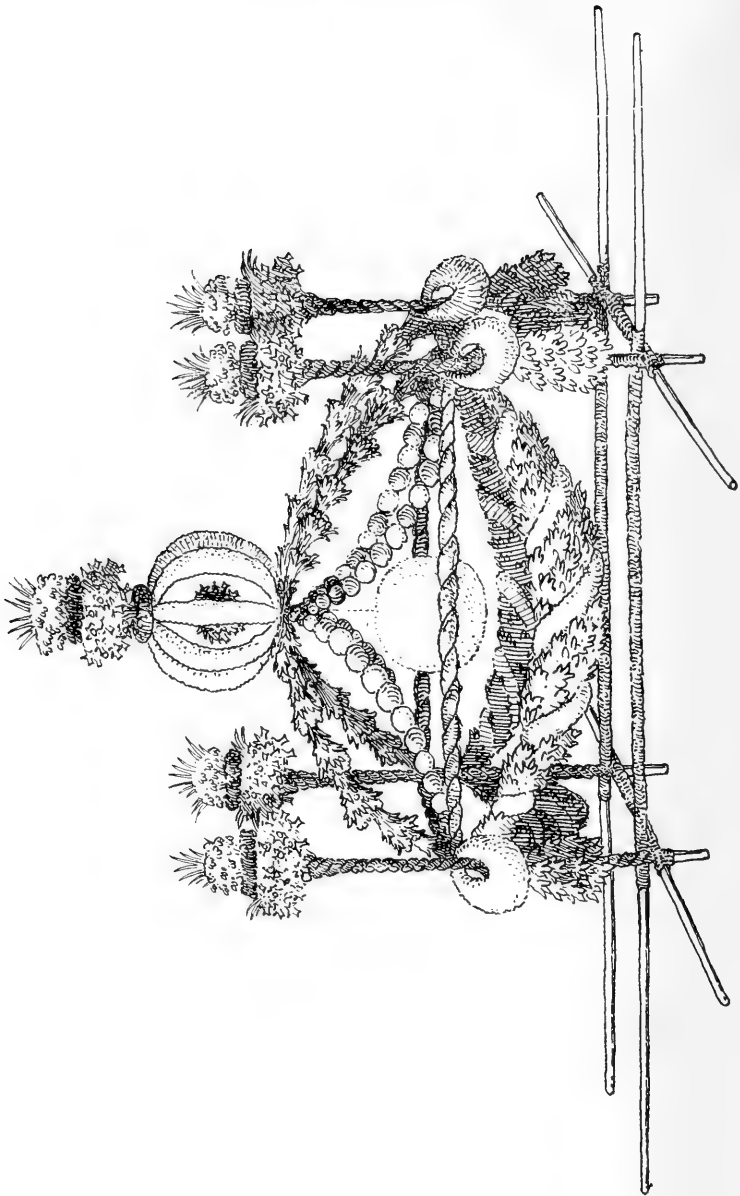
HOW A COWSLIP BALL IS MADE.



MAKING A PRIMROSE BALL.



A PRIMROSE BALL.



MAY-DAY TROPHY.

flowers that grow in the same way. Primrose balls can be made too, not only of *Polyanthus* Primroses, that grow something like Cowslips in a head of a number of flowers at the end of a stalk, but also of common Primroses, by tying six or eight flowers together with a bit of thread at the stalk end, keeping the stalks of all the flowers the same length, and then using the bunch of six or eight as you would a Cowslip. The longer the stalks are the larger the ball will be.

Once I made an immense Cowslip ball two feet in diameter. It was not at the old home, but at an intermediate home in the valley of the Thames, on a chalky soil where Cowslips abounded, and where, on a big island in the river, there grew a quantity of the summer Snowflake, like gigantic Snowdrops. The village children used to come round on May-day with bunches of flowers, but they did it in a scrappy sort of way, and we wanted to help them to do it better. So besides the bunches of flowers on peeled willow sticks, and the hoops of flowers carried by two children by passing a white willow stick through the hoop, that they made for themselves, I undertook to make a grand May-day trophy. Here is a picture of it. The framework was made of strong, light willow poles tied tightly together with iron wire. All the straight parts in the picture are these poles. Then, to support the round sort of cage at the top, two strong willow rods were bent up to a nice bow-shape, and fastened where they crossed, and also to the frame at their four ends. Then the cage itself was made of four rods bent round into

hoops, passed through each other, and firmly wired at the top and bottom, so as to make a hollow ball with eight ribs standing at equal distances apart. The next thing was to cover the straight parts of the framework with moss, all but the carrying ends, the upper horizontal rails, and the bowed supports. The moss was put plain on the carrying poles, but in a ropy pattern that was more ornamental on the four uprights. After that the heavy swags for the four sides were made of Laurel twigs, thickest in the middle. Something was put inside to puff it out—I forget what, but some sort of bushy branches. And the four big tassels that hung under the Cowslip collars at the corners were made too, and the evergreen parts of the bunch-after-bunch patterns on the bowed ribs. These had flowers added afterwards. All this was got ready quite three days before the 1st of May, and in the next two days the flowers were collected and bunched. The flowers were Cowslips, Primroses, Daffodils, Snowflake, Bluebells, and Ribes (the red flowering Currant). The four big upright bouquets were made of white Snowflake at the top, with some stiffish pale green leaves. I think these were the young leaves of some of the river flags. Next below the Snowflake came red Ribes and then Daffodils. The bouquet crowning the cage was made to match, with a red collar of Ribes just on top of the cage. The ribs of the cage were of Primroses and Cowslips alternately, showing as pale and deep yellow with a very pretty effect. A bunch of Daffodils hung inside. Then there were four ropes of balls, a Cowslip and a Primrose ball coming alternately all along the rope. These, as you

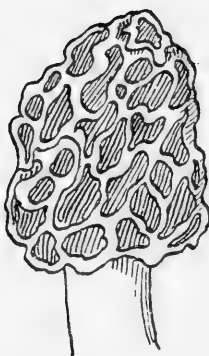
see, all started from one point under the cage, and had their ends fastened to the four inside angles of the frame. The horizontal rails of the frame were covered with Bluebells tied on so as to look rosy. Then there were ropes of Primroses—quantities of small bunches tied on to a thick string—wound round the heavy swags of evergreen.

But the glory of the whole trophy was the great Cowslip ball that hung in the middle. It was made like this. First, Cowslips with long stalks were tied in bunches, leaving a string hanging out at the ends of the stalks. The bunches were tied all the way down the stalks. Then six bunches were tied together by the strings coming out at the ends. When enough of these bunches of bunches were made ready—they were left in water all the day before—each bunch of bunches was treated as you would treat a single Cowslip head, and slung head downwards over a very strong string, the ends of which were brought together and tied, as in an ordinary Cowslip ball.

There was a lot of work in it, as you may imagine, but I had several kind helpers in the dear girls at the vicarage, for no one pair of hands could possibly have either collected or bunched the flowers, or have got them into place on the May-day morning. The whole thing was most amusing, but then it is always the greatest fun to invent and contrive and get over difficulties. The trophy was carried by twelve little schoolgirls, two to each end of the long poles, and one at each end of the shorter ones that went across. It had a great success, and brought the children quantities

of pennies in its progress round the village and its visits to neighbouring houses.

Cowslips always make me think of Morells, one of the best things to eat of the fungus tribe. Most of these come in the autumn, but Morells grow in Cowslip time—often among them—in parks or old pastures, generally near groups of Elm-trees. They look like small sponges standing up on short hollow stalks.



MORELL.

CHAPTER VI

SMELLS AND SHAPES

WHEN I was a child I was very much alone, and nearly always in my playtime found my own amusements in the garden and shrubbery. There was a large rambling shrub garden with broad turf paths; and though it must even then have been planted for many years—and in those days a well-planted shrubbery was a rare thing—yet it contained many delightful shrubs and trees, such as are the very best to this day. A part of it was in moist, peaty soil, and in this region were Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Kalmias, and Andromedas. One Andromeda I used almost to worship; it was a bush, with the flowers on a level with my head. I did not know its name then, but, to myself, used to call it the Snowdrop-tree.

I got to know every flower in the place most intimately, not only for shape and colour and marking, but also for smell. How well I knew all the different Rose smells! There were not then the hosts of lovely Roses that we have now, but each one of the kinds that were there I could distinguish with my eyes shut, and the remembrance of each individual scent has

always remained with me. In the shrubbery there was a quantity of the single American Rose called *Rosa lucida*. It has reddish stems and no prickles. The smell is very faint, but quite distinct; and there were bushes of the double Cinnamon Rose, with a sweeter kind of scent, but also not strong; and Damask Rose and Cabbage Rose, with its variety the Moss Rose, with the delicious strong scent of its sticky mossiness in addition to the Rose's own smell. I may say that my young nose became thoroughly trained to the smell of flowers.

Among all the many delicious flower-smells there was, now and then, a nearly nasty one. There was one flower-smell that I always thought odious; that of the common Barberry—the prickly shrub that makes the pretty long-shaped red berries. The flower had one attraction, because, on examining it, I had discovered the sensitiveness of the *stamens*. These are the little threads inside the flowers that carry the powdery pollen on tiny cushions called *anthers* on their ends. In this flower and some others the stamens lie back against the inside of the petals. If they are touched—the slightest tickle with the end of a blade of grass is enough—they fly together to the *pistil*, which is a little post with a knob on the top that most flowers have in some shape or other right in the middle, the root end of the pistil going right down into the throat of the flower. It is so amusing to see a flower make some quick movement, just like a live thing, that this was a great inducement to go to the Barberry bushes in spite of the smell. After a time,

when I learnt how the wind carries scents, I used to approach it cautiously from the windward side. The smell is not really very bad, but of a faint and sickly kind, but I remember years when to me it was so odious that it inspired me with a sort of fear; and when I forgot that the Barberries were near and walked into the smell without expecting it, I used to run away as hard as I could in a kind of terror.

Since I grew up I have only once met with a smell of a growing thing that gave me the same sort of feeling of intense repulsion. It is a spongy weed looking like green coral, that grows in the mud in shallow water. I used to see it in a backwater of the Thames at a later home, when I was leaning over the side of a boat looking at the curious things in the mud at the bottom. I noticed it first when fishing for mussels with a stick. The mussels lie half imbedded in the mud, with their shells a little bit open. If you feel down gently with some small stick like a twig of willow, and get the end just inside the opening, the mussel shuts up tight and you can pull it up on the stick. The mussel is no use when you have got it, so you pull out the stick gently without hurting the creature inside, and throw him back into the water. One day among the mussels I saw the curious green weed. I thought at once that it looked like a soft green coral with rather thick branches. Of course I wanted to examine it, so I scooped some up on the blade of my oar and got hold of it, and turned it over to see it in all positions, and smelt it. The smell to me was horrible, and yet, curiously enough, it was not

a really nasty smell ; it was certainly aromatic, very much like the smell of myrrh. But though I was then twenty-four I felt again that curious sense of fear that I remembered in childish days about the Barberry. The thing attracted me in an odd sort of way, for I smelt it again and again, always with a more intense dislike. Then I threw it away in disgust, but found that though I had got rid of the thing itself, the horrible smell haunted me ; for days and days I could not get rid of it ; I always seemed to be smelling it. The curious part of it, when I came to think of it, was that I could not truthfully say that the smell was really a bad one. Of course there are a few really very bad smells among growing things, evil-smelling funguses, and the Dragon Arum, and one or two other flowers, though happily bad-smelling flowers are very rare. But this myrrh-like green coral was not absolutely nasty, though to me it was horrible and even frightening. I wonder whether other people would find it the same, or whether it is a case of idiosyncrasy. Now, there is a dreadful long word, but as you will have to know what it means some day you may just as well learn now, and after all it is not a much worse word than Rhododendron, and has exactly the same number of letters. It means something that some one person feels differently from others, and in a way peculiar to himself.

Now I have told you these things only to show that one finds out a great deal about flowers and plants by smelling them, and that it is one of the most important ways of getting to know them. Then it is not flowers only but also leaves and even stems of

plants. You know the delicious smell of the leaves of Sweet Verbena and the sweet-scented Geraniums. Then there is Balm of Gilead and one of the dwarf Rhododendrons, and Bog Myrtle and Candleberry Gale and the true Myrtle. The leaves of all these shrubby things are sweetest when they are bruised.

It seems a loss when a flower has no smell, like the lovely *Kalmia*. This beautiful bush was one of the treasures of the old home shrub-garden. The beauty of the flower was always an unending delight. When June came I used to look out eagerly for the red-ribbed buds that soon opened out into the wonderful five-pointed, rose-flushed flower. Each point keeps its outer colouring of purest rose, and the whole flower is a pink-white of a clean, clear, and most charming quality. Outside there are ten little knobs or shoulders, one exactly below and one between each point. You will see how these knobs give character to the flower. When you look inside you see that they are ten little hollow caves, in which the anthers on the ends of the stamens rest, and that just above each cave is a tiny spot of crimson colour, strongest above the hollows that come under the points, and much fainter (sometimes wanting altogether) in those that come under the cuts where the edge of the flower is lowest. Then you will also see the loveliest little zigzag ring of colour close down to the throat, each upper point of the zigzag corresponding exactly with the stamens lying across



KALMIA.

it. The *Kalmia* stamens are also sensitive, and will close up to the pistil if they are touched, though they do not do it quite so readily as the Barberry. When you first look at the *Kalmia* flower you think it has a quite smooth surface, but if you look at it closely out-of-doors in the sun you will see that it has tiny whitish hairs all over the outside, and, among them and on the inside too, little glistening points like the tiniest diamonds.

Now if you will take any flower you please and look it carefully all over and turn it about, and smell it and feel it and try and find out all its little secrets; not of flower only but of leaf, bud, and stem as well, you will discover many wonderful things. This is how to make friends with plants, and very good friends you will find them to the end of your lives.

When you are looking at the leaves you should observe their shape, whether they are *entire* like the *Kalmia*, or *pinnate* like the Rose, or two or three times pinnate; this is when they branch out again and again, like the leaves of most of the *umbelliferous* plants and many of the Ferns; or whether their shape is a *trefoil* (three-leaf) like Clover, or *linear*, a long line without much width, like Pinks and grasses, or any of the many other shapes that leaves take. Then you will notice how the edge is shaped; whether it is quite smooth like the *Kalmia* leaf, and in that case whether the edge is flat or waved. The *Kalmia* is a little waved, the Sweet Bay much more waved. Then you will see whether it has some pattern on the edge. Many leaves have the edges toothed like saws,



KALMIA.



A DELPHINIUM FREAK.

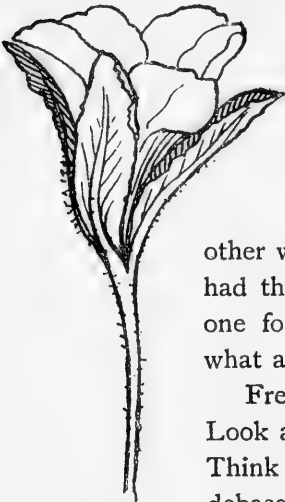
therefore the botanical word for this is *serrate*. And I daresay you know already that the name of the Dandelion is really Dent-de-Lion, because of the lion's teeth it has at the edge of the leaf. Some leaves, such as Violets, are heart-shaped, and these in botany are called *cordate*, and some kidney-shaped, and so on. Then as to surface, some leaves are polished, like Laurel, and some are quite woolly, like Stachys, and there are leaf-surfaces that represent everything in between.

Now I will not go on about details of all these different shapes and edges and surfaces, but will only say once more that the more you look at them for yourselves the more you will be amused and interested, and the better it will be for you later, when some of you will want to study botany in earnest.

When you get into the habit of watching plants and flowers closely, you will now and then come across some freak or monstrosity. Generally these flower-freaks are ugly things, like an absurd Delphinium that once grew in my garden, whose picture I have made for you, as a warning not to encourage that sort of thing. Instead of making a beautiful, tall, graceful eight-foot-long spike, the thing made a bare stalk about six feet high with an ugly bunch of crowded flowers on the top, as if the silly thing was trying to be a Rose! Foxgloves sometimes do the same. Now the whole beauty of the Foxglove is in the way the spike spires up to a graceful point, and all this is lost when the spike ends suddenly in a large, ugly cup-shaped thing like a bad Canterbury Bell,

These ugly monstrosities, which, I am sorry to say, some seedsmen sell as "desirable novelties," should never be encouraged in gardens, for we should do all we can to teach our eyes to see what is the most beautiful form and most beautiful colour that any of our garden flowers can take.

The only kind of freak-plants that I don't much mind are the Hen and Chickens Daisy, that has a whole circle of little Daisy-flowers on stalks growing out of the edge of the main Daisy, and is certainly an amusing little thing to see now and then ; and some



PRIMROSE WITH
LEAFY CALYX.

of the Primroses that grow with a leafy calyx, like the one I have drawn for you that was found in a wood by some children neighbours of mine. But this leafy thing is not half so pretty as a common Primrose. If it was the

other way about, and Primroses in general had these leafy calyxes, and then one day one found among them a true Primrose, what a beautiful thing we should think it !

Freakish forms also occur among fruits. Look at these shocking pear monstrosities. Think of the lovely shape of the pear debased into these ridiculous blobby forms, with wretched little leaves coming out of them. It is curious and interesting to see, just now and then, but one is so sorry for a poor fruit that, instead of showing its own beautiful lines takes these useless and ugly freakish shapes.

But there are many curious things that are natural to plants and are not ugly ; such as the little complete plants that come upon the fronds of one of the green-



DEFORMED PEARS.

house Ferns, and the reserves of water in the pitchers of the Pitcher-plants (*Nepenthes*), and hundreds of other wonderful things that you will see and find out if you use your eyes and brains well.

CHAPTER VII

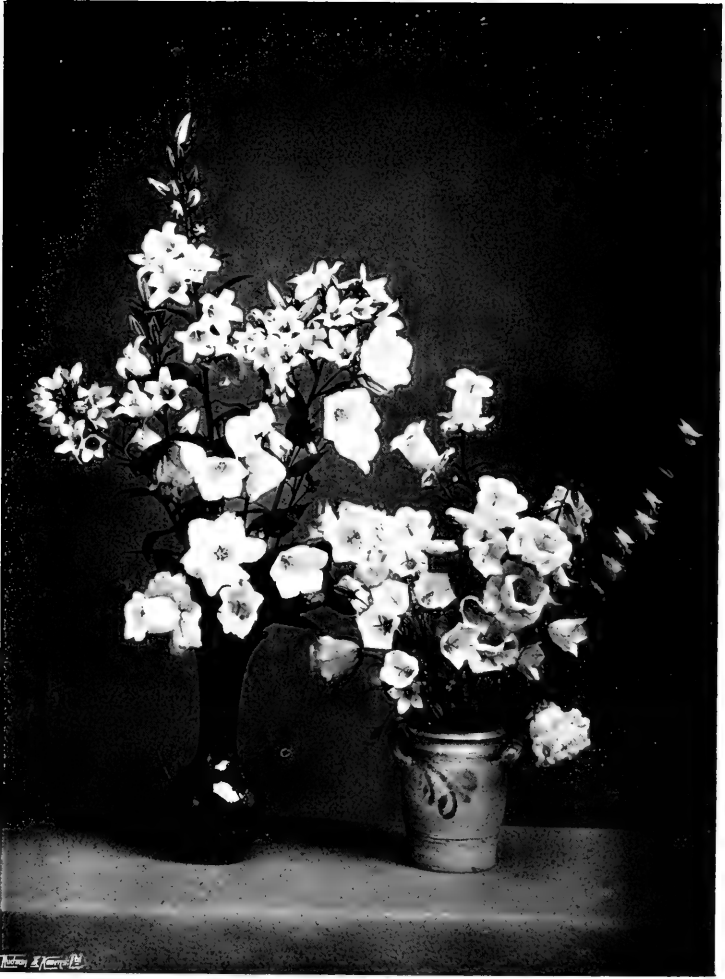
BOTANY

NOW, don't be afraid of the word "Botany." I am going to show you that it is not at all a tiresome study. Of course botany books in general are apt to be dull and dry and alarming. They frighten one by calling things names. For instance, they talk about Systems and Classes; and when you begin with Class I., *Dicotyledones*, they expect you to learn that this class has four sub-classes, namely: (1) *Thalamifloræ*, (2) *Calycifloræ*, (3) *Corollifloræ*, (4) *Monochlamydeæ*, and so on through twenty different classes; all with heaven knows how many sub-classes.

Now I don't think that is at all the way to begin, and that is not *my* botany. But I do want you to learn my botany, which is amusing, and is quite simple and easy. Botany means classification of plants; and when you know my sort of botany, then some day you will very likely want to learn botanist's botany, but I don't think it is any use to you just now. What does concern you to know is that the plants we know best, and want in our flower gardens and kitchen gardens, are, most of them, members of a few large families, and



PEA FLOWERS AND PODS.



BELL-FLOWERS.

you can know them by the family likeness of the flower.

We will begin with the Rose family. For the sake of clearness let us think of a single Rose ; a Sweetbrier or a wild Dog Rose, with its five *petals*. You will see what "petals" and all such words mean as we go on. The petals are the five coloured "rose-leaves" that fall off after the flower has been out for two or three days. Besides these, the Rose flower has an outer fringe of green leafy things, and a knobby base where it joins the stalk. The leafy bits that show between and behind the petals are called *sepals*. It is the outside of the sepals that you see when the flower is in bud ; and all the sepals together, joined to the knobby thing next the stalk, form what is called the calyx. The knobby part will swell into the fruit. In the case of the Rose, by the end of the summer it will have grown into the Rose-fruit that we call the hip ; in the case of the Apple-tree it grows into an Apple ; and when the Apple is formed you can still see the sepals making a little ornament round the sunken eye. For Apples belong to the Rose family. You may easily see this by looking at an Apple-tree in flower. In some Apples the blossom is almost exactly like a single Rose. Plums and Pears and Cherries are all relations of the Rose, and so are Medlars and Quinces. Look at a bit of May-blossom (Hawthorn), there again you have a cluster of little Roses ; Black-thorns too—they are wild Plums. And Strawberries, Raspberries, and Blackberries—all little Roses.

Some others of the Rose tribe are less like Rose-

blossoms, because the flowers are arranged in flat clusters, as in the case of Mountain Ash and White Beam, or in other shaped clusters, as in the Meadow-sweet, that is so pretty along the banks of streams and ditches in July and August. But whenever you meet with a flower with five petals, whether large or small, that is at all the shape of a Rose, with a short knobby base, you may be sure it belongs to the Rose tribe.

Then another of the great plant families is the Pea and Bean tribe. The Pea-shaped flowers make them easy to distinguish. There are the garden Sweet-Peas and the kitchen-garden Peas, and Broad Beans and Runner Beans, and the Everlasting Pea, and in fields and wild places the Clovers and Vetches. It does not matter whether the flowers are large and only two or three together, as in the Sweet-Pea, or whether they are tiny and arranged in a round head, like the Bird's-foot Trefoil, or in a crowded head two inches long, like the beautiful purple Tufted Vetch, or set all along long branches, as in the Broom ; you will see that the general shape of the flower is always the same.

Now I will not attempt to go through all the plant families, but will just show you one or two of the others that are among the most important.

There are the *Composites* or Daisy flowers, with a middle of tiny little flowers of one short kind packed close together, generally flat and yellow, but sometimes of other colours, and a little bit raised, or even quite raised up like a thimble. This part is called the disc. Then all round are the rays, which are of long shape. Think of the common Daisies of our lawns, and the

Ox-eye Daisies of the fields, and you will see that they are as I describe. There are some exceptions to this arrangement, but we need not bother about them. What concerns us now is to learn the broad distinctions.

Then there are the Bell-flowers or Campanulas, so distinct that it is impossible to mistake them; Canterbury Bells and wild Hare-bell, and all the flowers of that shape.

The *Cruciferae* or cross-shaped flowers you know by their having only four petals, as in Wallflowers, single Stocks, Arabis, and the Cresses.

The *Labiates* or lipped tribe you will soon learn to distinguish. They have mouths that you can pull open to look inside, and a hanging lower lip. *Salvias* belong to this, and Sage, and a number of other kitchen herbs, and Lavender and Rosemary.

The Figwort tribe, named from a common waterside plant, the Water Figwort, is the only other plant family you are likely to mix up with the *Labiates*, for the flowers are rather the same shape, and have mouths and lips that can be opened and shut. The Foxglove holds its mouth open, but the pretty Toad-flaxes and the Snapdragons keep theirs shut, though they are easily opened. It is amusing to see one of the small bumble-bees go into a Snapdragon flower to get the honey. He has to shove it open with his head and then works himself well inside. Then if you have got any little tool or a bit of stick in your hand, just hold it for a moment under the lip of the flower to keep it shut. Very soon he will have got all the

honey he wants, and will try to back out. When he finds he can't he gets into a regular rage, and buzzes in a very angry way. You must let go after a moment, because after all he is about his rightful business, and it is only justifiable on your part to thwart him for an instant—perhaps not at all. But it is certainly amusing to see how short his temper is.

But this is not Botany; it is Natural History, though of course the two sciences are closely allied.

There is just one more of the important families of plants that you will very soon learn to recognise. They are called the *Umbelliferæ*. You will see more of them in the hedges than in the garden, but if there is a big bog-garden at your home I daresay there will be plants of the giant Cow-parsnip, the biggest of the *umbelliferous* things. All the Parsley-Carrot-Fennel sort of plants have their flowers in umbels. The flowers in themselves are generally tiny, and mostly white and yellow. They are on a number of little stalks that all branch away from one point on the top of a larger stalk, so that sometimes they make a roundish head and sometimes a flat one, or anything between. You may always know the flower of the wild Carrot by its having in the middle of its head of white flowers one little one of a chocolate-red colour.

Now, I think this is nearly all the botany we want for the present; stop, though, we mustn't forget bulbs. When you see a plant with plain, straight, rather fleshy leaves coming up from the root, and an unbranched flower-stem coming up from the root too, you may be pretty sure that the root is a bulb. Just think of



UMBELLIFEROUS FLOWERS.



CRUCIFEROUS FLOWERS.

Hyacinths, Daffodils, and Snowdrops, and you will see what I mean.

Every now and then you have a birthday. I advise you, the next time somebody says, "What would you like for a birthday present?" that you answer: "Please I should like Johns' *Flowers of the Field*." This is not a book of garden flowers but of wild flowers; but, if I were to try and think of the three books that throughout my life have given me most pleasure and profit, this would be one of them. You can learn about garden flowers from the wild flowers you find in your daily walks, and be learning my sort of botany all the time; because, if you are observant, which is one of the ways of being happy, you will want to know all you can about the wild flowers you see; and you will soon find out how many of them are near relations to garden flowers.

When I was a child I used to bring home any wild flowers I found and look them up in Johns. Many a time I came to something puzzling, but I never gave it up till I had found my flower in the book; and the trouble it took, though it was quite a pleasant trouble, helped to fix it in my memory.

Jean and Ann, who are resting from the labours of lesson-learning by doing some quiet knitting on the lawn, tell me that during their summer holiday in Lincolnshire they found two hundred different kinds of wild flowers; among them the tall pink Soapwort (*Saponaria officinalis*); and that their mother found a white variety of the Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea Scabiosa*). It was a grand place for wild flowers, and

there was a shallow river to paddle in, and heavenly places for paddling where there was mud like thick chocolate.

I daresay you wonder why plants have got Latin names as well as English ones. It isn't only because botanists are so proud that English ones are not grand enough for them, but also because, as there are botanists of all nations, it is convenient that they shall all know the names of the plants in one language.



JEAN AND ANN.
ANN: "'FRÄID I'VE DROPPED A STITCH!"



WHITE FOXGLOVES.

CHAPTER VIII

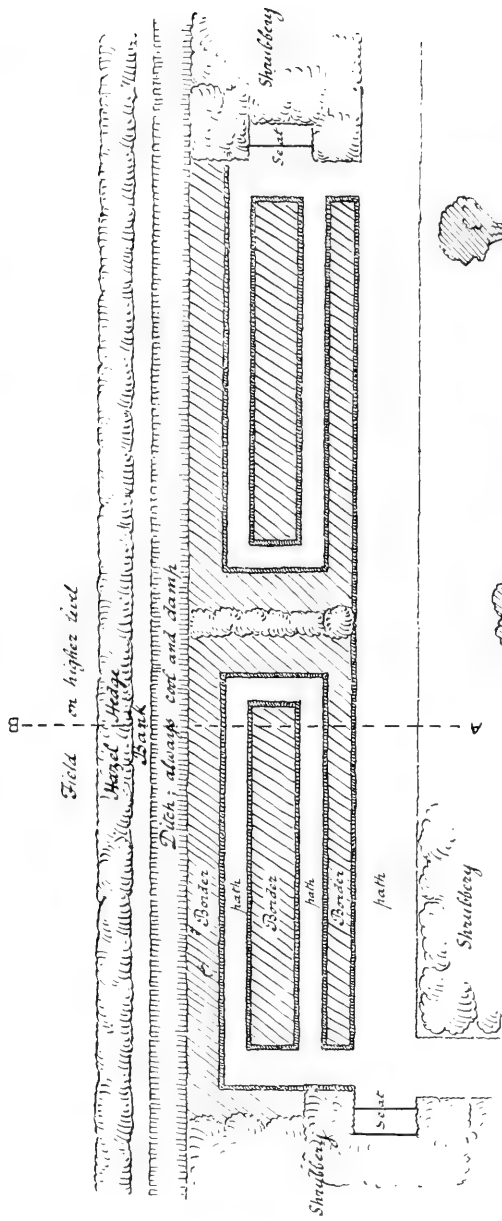
MY FIRST GARDEN

GREAT was my pride and delight when I was first given a garden of my own, to do just what I liked with. It was in a long-shaped strip of ground notched out of the far end of the shrubberies of the big home garden, between them and a rising hedge-bank. At the foot of the bank was a shallow ditch; on the farther side a wide field at a higher level that soon began to slope upwards till it met the foot of a steep wooded hill, where we used to go primrosing. Hazels grew on the top of the bank on the field-level, and the cool face of the bank was a grand place for Ferns and Foxgloves, Primroses and Columbines. This was a great gain to my garden, for big clumps of the hardy Male Fern form a delightful background for flowers, and they are in beauty the whole summer and autumn, and even far into the winter. Here is a plan of the garden, or rather of the two gardens, for mine and my sister's were together, end to end. The arrangement is very simple, but, considering the space and position, I do not think it could have been laid out better. The narrow borders had neat Box edgings. I am sure you

will understand the plan, because a plan is the same thing as a map, and you will have learnt to use a map in the schoolroom. But I will tell you something more about plans presently.

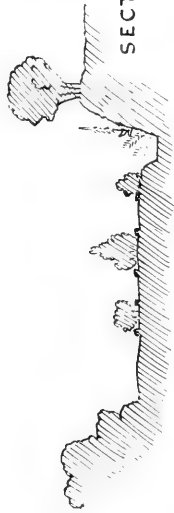
The plan shows how the little gardens lie between the shrubbery and the field. One of the shrubbery paths, or rather, one of its many grassy ways, comes in from the south just at the seat and arbour of my sister Carry's garden. Then the gravel path turns sharp to the right, passes first her garden and then mine, and goes on to farther masses of shrubbery and plantation, finally turning round and coming back towards the house, which is a good way off. The planted borders are shown by the diagonal lines that in plans are called "hatching" or "hatched lines."

In the spring we had Primroses and Forget-me-nots, yellow Alyssum, white Arabis and Aubrietia, and a few patches of the common double yellow Daffodil. This was fifty years ago, when the great numbers of beautiful sorts of Daffodils that we have now were, with but few exceptions, unknown in gardens. Another spring flower that I remember was the little purple Corydalis that comes and goes so quickly. Now that we have such quantities of beautiful kinds of flowers this old cottage-garden plant is generally forgotten, but I have always loved its modest, rather dull purple flowers, and its funny, nearly round, bright yellow bulby roots. I don't remember that we had any Tulips in our gardens, but, like many of the other bulbous plants that are so easily to be had now, they were not



PLAN

SECTION AT A-B



PLAN. MY SISTER'S GARDEN AND MINE.



MALE FERN IN THE COOL HEDGE.

so freely planted, though nice patches were often to be seen in cottage gardens.

For summer flowers we had Monkshoods—a plant I should never now put in a child's garden, because it is so poisonous. Then Lupines and Columbines, with annual Larkspurs and Pot Marigolds, and some of the delicious old garden Roses—Damask Roses and Cabbage and Moss Roses, and white Pinks. Over our arbour grew the lovely Blush Boursault, of the clearest pink and pinkish - white colouring of any Rose I know. In many gardens—especially in dry soil—it never has well-shaped flowers, but here they were fully developed, and the sweetest things that one could see. I used to wonder at its smooth red stems without any prickles. In those old days I did not even know what Rose it was ; we were content to call it the old Arbour Rose. In the shrubberies there were two other bushy Roses that I did not then know by name, but that I now know to be *Rosa lucida* and the double Cinnamon Rose ; and there were sweet Azaleas and Magnolias, and thickets of the old purple Rhododendron, and various evergreens.

The two little gardens were separated by a hedge of Sweet-Peas, and there was a bush of a white Rose that must have been Madame Plantier. We grew no late summer or autumn flowers, for we always went to the Isle of Wight for August and September, and I can remember that when we came back there were sad scenes of overgrowth and neglect, and it took a lot of cleaning up to make the little places tidy for the winter.

Later I was given another bit of ground close by.

It was more a general messing-place than a garden, though I grew some lettuces and radishes and mustard and cress, and did a great deal of work that had not much result, but was absorbingly interesting to the solitary worker. It was only a few yards behind my flower garden, and had the same hedge for its southern boundary. On the west was another hedge-bank standing up high—I should say nearly six feet—above the ground-level. It was not only high but thick; about four yards across. Hazels and biggish Oaks



HARD-HEAD.

grew in it, and there were clumps of Brambles where pheasants used to make their nests. In one part of the hedge there was a thick growth of the Black Knapweed or Hard-head that you play "Soldiers" with. It is surprisingly tough in the stem and hard in the head. There was a peaty ditch on my side, with a slight drain of water from the higher ground, but never enough to run. It was one of my delights to scramble up into the high hedge and jump down across the ditch into my garden. Just at the corner, at the

angle where the two hedges met, there was a wider place in the ditch, and I was always digging out the black peaty mud to make a place deep enough to fill my watering-pot. On the other sides, away from the hedges, there were high old Laurels, great places for



HARD-HEADS.



EDGINGS OF WHITE PINKS.

blackbirds' and thrushes' nests. On one side there was a space of about nine feet between the Laurels, and here I made my hut. I did not know anything about building then, so it was simply made of supple willow stems bent over and tied, with other sticks of willow and hazel wattled in. I had read somewhere about making walls of wattle and clay, and had found a place where there was a little clay, but it was some way from my garden and in a swampy place, difficult to get at. So after digging one or two of my little barrowfuls and making a great mess of myself, so that I was not very well received in the schoolroom afterwards, I gave it up, and my hut remained a hut of branches only—in fact a sort of skeleton arbour. The only furniture was a stool I made of some bits of board. The construction was not good, and it always wobbled when I sat on it, but I soon found out how to sit very carefully, so as to avoid a



THE SEAT.

collapse. If I had only known about putting in a bit on edge underneath, and nailing it through the top and at the ends, it would have been firm. Meanwhile, I used always to think that a grown-up wheelbarrow was a very comfortable thing to sit in when you were tired, particularly if you had got a cushion or even an old sack in it.

I said I would tell you about plans. A plan is a map of a small space on a large scale—you will see what scale means presently. The plan shows what it represents as if you were looking at it from above.

If you lie on a table on your stomach and look over the edge, and if exactly below your eyes there is a dinner-plate on the floor, you see the plate in *plan*. But when a house is to be built or a garden is to be planned on uneven ground, you must also have a *section*. I have drawn a section below the garden plan to show you what it means. It supposes a cut straight through the ground. It is very seldom that such a cut is actually made, but it is a convenient way of showing levels. You see at once by the section how the field stands higher than the garden, and you see the steeply-sloping hedge-bank with the Foxgloves and Ferns. If you look at the plan you will see a dotted line with the letters A and B at the two ends, and the title of the section says, "Section at A-B." This shows you where the section is taken. Then there is another point of view that is shown in drawings of buildings and in some ground-work. This is called the *Elevation*. It is the view of anything upright, like any side of a house when you stand and look straight at it. You do not see a thing exactly as it is drawn in the elevation, because of perspective ; neither can you see things exactly in plan ; but we need not bother about that—you will see what is meant.

So to set out anything that is to be built, or ground-work that is to be shaped, you must have Plan, Section, and Elevation. In some of the pussy pictures, as at p. 106, the kittens are shown in plan, while the picture of Pinkie at p. 104 gives two elevations. If you put a cake on the floor and look at it from above, so that you see all the top and none of the sides, you see it in

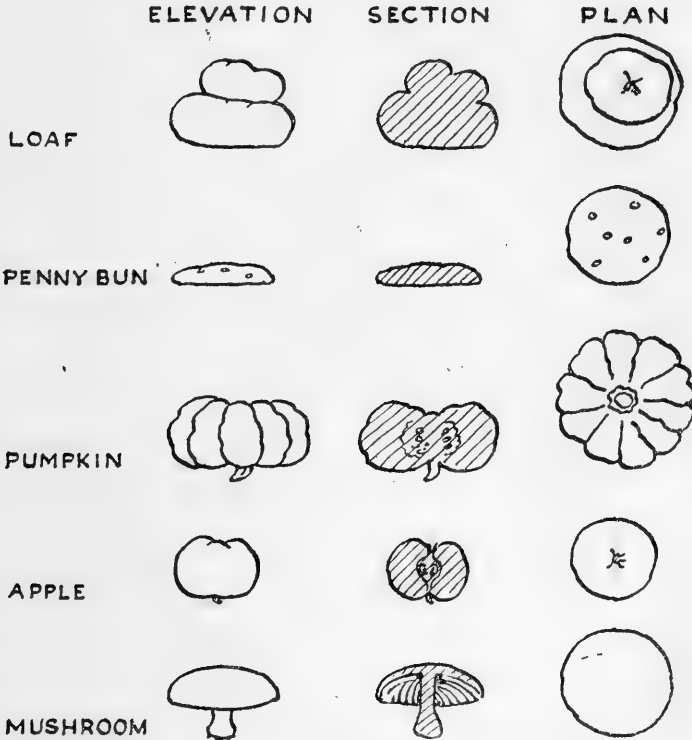


"A GROWN UP WHEELBARROW IS A GOOD PLACE TO SIT IN."



MY BEST SNAPDRAGON.

plan ; if you stand it up on anything about the level of your eye, you see it in *elevation* ; if you cut it in half, each cut surface shows a *section*. I have drawn



ELEVATION, SECTION, AND PLAN OF SOME COMMON THINGS.

a few well-known objects in elevation, section, and plan, so that I am sure you will understand.

Some day you will perhaps have big gardens of your own, and it will help you immensely to know about plans, and still more to be able to make them.

But I must just tell you something about *scale*. There is a scale on every good plan. It is to show the relation between the size of the drawing and the actual size of the ground or house. House plans are generally done on what is called an eighth scale. That means a scale of eight feet to an inch, so that every eighth of an inch on the plan means one foot in the house. You will see inches divided into eighths on a two-foot rule.

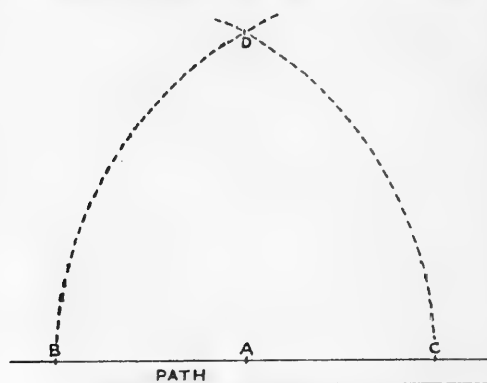
Now I am telling you all about this because it helps so much to understand the shapes of houses and gardens when you can see what it means on a plan, just as easily as you see the counties of England on a map or the printed words on a page; and further, I am telling you about it because when I was grown up I should have been so thankful if anybody had shown it me when I was small, for I had to find out all about it for myself when I was getting quite oldish, and then it is not nearly so easy to learn new things.

I daresay many of you are learning to draw—learning freehand drawing. Making plans is called mechanical drawing, because it has nothing to do with freehand or picture drawing, and is all done with instruments and appliances, not with the hand alone. If you are wise you will ask to learn just a very little mechanical drawing, with a drawing-board and a T-square and a set-square, and dividers to mark off spaces, and delightful pencil compasses, with which at odd times you can make all sorts of amusing patterns. The name mechanical drawing sounds rather dull, and yet it is full of curious and amusing things. I will just tell you one, and the simple way to do it; then

the brothers who go to school and learn Euclid will tell you the rule of it. If you want to set out what we commonly call an oval, but which is really an elliptical flower-bed, you stick two sticks upright in the ground, say eight feet apart. Then you get a piece of strong string, put it round the two sticks and tie the two ends together about a yard away from the stick nearest you when you stand just beyond the two sticks and see them in a line. Now you take another stick and hold it upright in your hand inside the string and pull it so that it tightens the string against the two sticks that stand in the ground. Then you walk round, always keeping the string tight and the stick upright, and scratch a line in the ground with the upright stick you are holding—you will find that the scratched line is a perfect ellipse. If you want to have the bed a certain length and width you must fumble about with the fixed sticks and the length of your string till you get it. This is called doing it by rule of thumb. There is another way of doing it, which is the scientific or learned way. This you must find out from the mathematical brother who understands Euclid. But the rule-of-thumb way is the most amusing—you will soon find out that the farther apart you put the sticks the narrower and smaller will be the ellipse. You can practise it at home by putting a piece of paper on a board and driving in two strong pins to represent the sticks, and using a bit of thread or stout sewing cotton in place of the string, and a pencil for the upright stick that you draw the ellipse with.

One more of these nice dodges I should like to tell

you, because in setting out ground for garden work it is the one that is oftenest wanted. That is to find a right angle. Suppose you have a bit of straight path and you have to make a path running out of it at a right angle. You must have a strong cord with a peg at one end—nothing is better than a garden-line, because it is all ready and you can wind and unwind it so conveniently; besides both the peg at the end and the



HOW TO MAKE A RIGHT ANGLE.

winder have nice points to go into the ground. First you stick the end peg into the point where the middle of the new path has to leave the old one—marked A in the diagram. Then from A you mark any length (but say about five yards) along the edge of the old path to B. Then you hold the line so that you know exactly the length from A to B, and you carry it past A to C. You mark both the points B and C with a little wooden peg. Then you pull up the end line-peg from A and drive it in at B. Then you let out the line



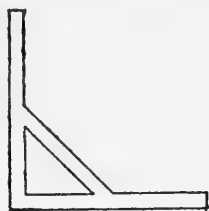
IN THE BIG WEEDING BASKET.

W. J. & F. S. 1905



"NOW WE'LL GIVE SOME TO THE BIG GARDEN BORDERS."

till it is long enough to reach from B to C, and with the peg of the winder you scratch a curving line in the direction of D, keeping the line tight and the peg upright as you scratch. Then you pull up the end line-peg from B and drive it in at C, and, keeping the cord the same length as before, you scratch another curving line in the direction of D. This point, which you mark with a wooden peg where these two lines cross each other, is an exact right angle from A. Now you have a peg at A, and another where the scratched lines cross. You go to A and stand behind it, and make that peg come in a line with the one at D, and this gives you the measuring line, so that you can stick pegs straight with these two, or set the garden line, and make as long a line as you please. This is Euclid too, and you can also practise it at home with pins and thread, and easiest of all on paper on the drawing-board, with the T-square and set-square. There is another way of doing it out of doors with a builder's square,



THE BUILDER'S SQUARE.

—a wooden thing like the letter L, with a brace across to keep it in shape ; but unless you have a very true line to put it against on one side you are apt to go wrong.

CHAPTER IX

FLOWERS FOR YOUR OWN GARDENS

I SUPPOSE your own garden is quite a little place, and if that is so you cannot have a great many different kinds of plants in it ; so I want to tell you what I think are just the best things for you to have. The very best gardener finds it difficult to keep one bit of garden full of flowers from spring to autumn, so it will be well if you can have some plants from the big garden, planted in the autumn for your spring display, and then taken up after flowering and put in a bit of reserve ground to be replanted in the autumn ; and to fill their places with good half-hardy annuals, such as dwarf African and French Marigolds, Ageratum and China Asters, with a few Verbenas, Heliotropes, or any kinds you like best of what are called bedding-plants, that you can beg from the gardener and plant in the beginning of June.

But you should have a few tufts of Daffodils, Crocuses, and Snowdrops, with Aubrietia, Cerastium, yellow Alyssum and double Arabis, and some of that pretty Forget-me-not, *Myosotis dissitiflora*. Then I should advise a few Tulips : Chrysolora (yellow), White



THE GARLAND ROSE.



SPRING FLOWERS.

FLOWERS FOR YOUR OWN GARDENS 77

Swan (white), and Cottage Maid (pink). The Aubrietia, Cerastium, and Forget-me-not are the plants that could be taken away to make room for the later things. There should be a plant of Iberis, not taken up, for, though it flowers only in spring, the fine dark foliage looks well with other plants all the year; and there must be Columbines (the large white is the best), because they are such lovely and amusing flowers, with their flights of little doves sitting all round facing each other.

There must be some tufts of white Pinks, or better still, a part of the garden might be edged with it, and part with London Pride. Here is a picture of one end of my own spring garden, but you cannot have yours quite so full of flowers in April and May, because mine is in a corner that is given entirely to spring flowers, and I do not expect it to be anything but a spring garden.

You should have, if possible, a plant or two of *Phlox divaricata*, with its masses of pretty pale bluish-lilac bloom, and one or two of the little Irises that flower in May; the prettiest is the Crimean Iris (*Iris pumila cœrulea*). If your garden has a cool corner it should have Musk, and a plant of Foam-flower (*Tiarella*).

Perennial Lupines are biggish things, and so are the Flag Irises and the old garden Peonies; but if there is space there should be a tuft of each. Then for June there should be a clump of orange Lilies and one or two white Foxgloves, and again in the cool place the beautiful blue Cranesbill (*Geranium ibericum platyphyllum*).

Among Roses you should certainly have the pompon Rose called Mignonette, the sweetest little neat bush with pale-pink flowers, and a China Rose, and one each of Damask and Cabbage Roses. I am afraid you will not have room for more ; but if there is an arbour or any sort of hedge or fence that you can grow Roses over, you could have one or two of the rambling kinds ; and if your garden should be next to a Holly or any tall-growing shrub, you could have any of these, or, best of all, a Garland Rose, and let it run up the tree and partly tumble out, so that some of its charming bloom is within nose reach. Rose arches are always pretty, but whether they will be desirable will depend on the shape of your garden, and how you approach it.

You must, of course, have some Snapdragons, begged from the gardener, who will have sown them early in March, and pricked them off in April into boxes or frames. You should learn how to do this, and when you get handy I daresay the gardener will be glad of your help. You must also ask him for some Canterbury Bells in October or November, for they are some of the very best plants in July. And you should have one tuft of the pretty white Bell-flower *Campanula persicifolia*.

From July till the autumn the brightness of your little garden will depend a good deal on the half-hardy annuals and other bedding things, that were planted out in the first days of June, to follow the spring plants that were taken up, and to fill all bare places.

There should be, if possible, one or two plants of the short-growing Michaelmas Daisies ; the prettiest



CANTERBURY BELLS



THRIFT IN A ROUGH STONE PAVEMENT.

are called *acris* and *Amellus*. I am afraid you will have no room for the big grand plants of late summer and autumn, the Delphiniums, Dahlias, Hollyhocks, Tritomas, and so on. But you will enjoy these and be learning how to use them in the bigger home garden.

You may not even have room for all the plants I have named; if not you must choose from them the ones you like best. You should, if possible, have a little hedge of Sweet-Peas—sown early in March they flower in July, and remember, with these especially, but also with all other flowers, that if you want them to go on blooming you must cut off the faded flowers before they grow into big seed-pods.

If there should be any places where you can sow seeds of annuals in March, I think the nicest are Mignonette, blue Nemophila and Phacelia (two beautiful blues), pink Hawkweed, Love-in-a-Mist, double rose Godetia and dwarf Nasturtiums.

If you have any rough stone steps or a bit of paving in front of a seat or anywhere, remember how pretty it is to have some little plant like the small Bellflower *Campanula pusilla* running along under the steps, or *Arenaria balearica* growing all over their upright fronts, if these are in shade; or how nice it is to have some pretty little thing here and there in the joints of the paving. You see Thrift growing like this in the picture—do you see Blackie on the seat?—and there is a charming little tiny thing, an annual, called *Ionopsidium acaule* that should be sown in the joints of the stones early in September to flower next year, and that will ever after sow itself again.

All the year you must be looking out for weeds and must see that you pull them up before they flower or seed. Nothing in gardening is more true than the old saying, "One year's seeding makes seven years' weeding"; and you must be watching to see if a plant wants a stick. Canterbury Bells and Columbines are sure to want sticks. When you tie a plant to a stick it is safest to give the raffia a whole turn round the



REEF-KNOT.



GRANNY.

stick before passing it round the stem of the plant, then it does not slip; and mind you tie a proper knot, not what sailors call a "granny." The right knot holds tight, but the granny has a nasty twist in it that easily pulls into a treacherous slip-knot, or pulls out at one end. I have drawn the knots before they are pulled up to show more clearly how they go. You should practise these knots, so as to be sure to get it right. The proper knot is called a reef-knot, because it is the knot always used by sailors in reefing, or tying up sails.



SNAPDRAGONS.



SMALL BELLFLOWERS IN THE STEPS.

CHAPTER X

ADVENTURES ON THE LAWN

PERHAPS you will say that the lawn is not the sort of place where you expect to meet with adventures. Well, perhaps it is not, and yet such odd and unexpected things happen on it, things that are so deliciously thrilling, that I think I am hardly using too strong a word when I say "adventures." This summer it is hedgehogs. They are such interesting, mysterious creatures. I do not know how many there are about, but hardly a day passes without my seeing or hearing one. Of course they are easy to see when they come out on the lawn, and when I say "hearing one" I don't mean that it squeaks or grunts or makes any vocal sound, but that I hear the harsh noise of its bristles as it pushes through the low-lying branches of the shrubs at the edge of the grass.

The first one I met this year was on the narrow bit of lawn between the house and the wood. He was close to the Scotch Brier hedge that runs right and left of the steps that go up from the path on the south side of the house to the grass. Last year there was only one of his kind that we knew of; he used to

come into the back-yard when it was getting dark and drink up what was left of the milk in the pussies' saucers. I thought perhaps this one would like some milk, but I am afraid I had begun to make his acquaintance badly by touching him with the tip of a stick instead of making him some complimentary speeches, for he had rolled himself up into a tight, prickly ball, and was very huffy. I left him for half an hour to see if he would recover his temper, and when I came back to do his photograph he was half unrolled. I thought this looked promising, so I got him a saucer of milk and then photographed him. But it was no good, for an hour later I went to the place and found Piggy gone and the milk untouched. Tavy came round just then and lapped it up.

But there is another one that comes to the part of the lawn where it is bigger and wider. He is much tamer, and seems to like to be talked to. The natural history books say that the hedgehog is an animal of nocturnal habits, meaning that it lies quiet and hidden in the day-time and wanders about and hunts for food at night. But this one lies out for hours in the sun on the lawn and seems to enjoy it. After I had photographed him he kept so still for quite a long time that I really began to think he must be dead, for though I looked quite close I could not see the slightest movement of the soft fur under the bristles that I thought I should see move as he breathed. I waited, watching quite quietly. Presently a blue-bottle fly came and settled on his snout; still he did not move. But the blue-bottle, fussing about his face got on to the edge



HEDGEHOG HALF UNTUCKED.



HEDGEHOG ON THE LAWN.

of one of his eyes, and then he seemed to wake up, for he jerked his head suddenly to one side. I was quite relieved, and went to the kitchen and got the cook to give me a little sliver of raw meat off an uncooked leg of mutton, and stuck it on the end of a thin stick with a sharp point and took it to him. Cautiously I approached him and slowly brought the meat close to his nose. He sniffed it, and then at once took it in his mouth and chumped it up, and seemed to enjoy it immensely. It really was quite an adventure.

Once the gardener came running to me, much excited, and said—"There's a tortoise-shell on the lawn." I thought he meant a strange tortoise-shell cat, but went to see what it was, and, behold, there was a big tortoise! How it got there I cannot think, for there are only three houses within a near walk, and none of their owners had had tortoises. It has always remained an unexplained mystery. But I like mysteries, and hope you do too.

One day I had just come off the lawn on to the narrow terrace just above it against the west side of the house. I wanted to enjoy a good look at the lovely blue *Convolvulus* called "Heavenly Blue." It was climbing over the lower part of a vine. Moving some of the vine leaves with my hand I saw something dark against the stone wall. Looking closer I saw it was a bat. There he was, fast asleep, hanging up, as bats always do, by his hind feet, that were tight into a crack between the stones. One of his wings was partly unfolded, and the little claw at the end was also clinging to the stone. I thought it too good a chance

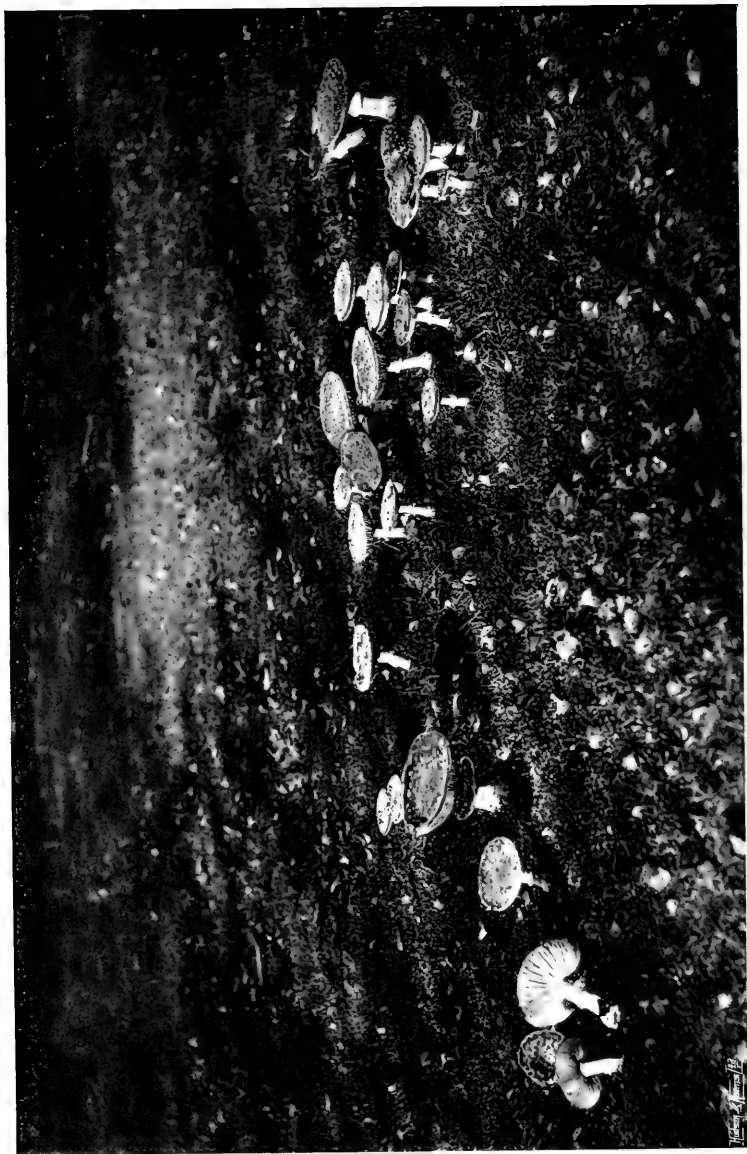
to be lost, so I ran and got the camera and then tied back some of the vine branches to get a clear view of him. I was half afraid he would wake up and be off, but he never stirred. Their way is to sleep in the daytime and to fly about in the evening, as soon as it is nearly dark.

Perhaps my lawn in itself is more interesting than lawns in general. The soil is sandy with a very little peat, and the fine grasses and little flowers that grow in it are the grasses and flowers of the wild heath-land that I have always loved. A good deal of actual heath grows among the grass, and quantities of the sweet Wild Thyme and the pretty little Mouse-ear Hawkweed and white Bedstraw, and the small Milkwort. Nearly always where this pretty little plant grows it bears flowers of three colours; each colour on a different plant. So it does here, for in one patch the flowers are light blue, in another pink, and in another white. I love the lawn just before it has to be mowed, for when this is done the cruel machine cuts off all the sweet little flowers; the only patch of Thyme that escapes grows just at the top of some steps, out of the way of the machine.

This year there was a new lawn incident—a patch of the curious Dodder. It looks like a sort of badly-made pink cobweb of no particular pattern; just pink threads crossing and tangling, and odd little stiff, tight, waxy flowers without stalks—nothing else—no leaves, only pinkish threads and flowers. It is one of those curious plants called parasites that do not grow honestly in the ground, but, like vegetable vampires, suck the



THE BAT.



SCARLET TOADSTOOLS ON THE LAWN.

blood of other plants. Dodder generally grows on Clover or Heath. Of course it is very bad for the unfortunate plant it grows on, but, all the same, as it is not a very common thing, and is so very curious, I like to see it on the lawn.

After rainy weather in August there are always a few real Mushrooms, and later, among a number of other funguses, a handsome show of the great red Toadstools that always come where there are Birch-trees. Their proper name is Fly Agaric. They are a brilliant scarlet-red on top, with little white knobs; the gills underneath are white. They are very poisonous. Close to them grow other funguses, some of them eatable, the Parasol Mushroom being very good indeed, but I won't describe this, because it is rather like some other kinds that are dangerous. But there is one capital fungus that you cannot mistake if you attend carefully to what I describe. This is the Chantarelle. It does not grow in the lawn or even in open grassy places, but there are some in the wood close by, and I had better tell you about it. It generally grows under Oaks in cool, rather hollow places, where leaf-mould has accumulated. You will see what it looks like by the picture, and it has just the



CHANTARELLE.

colour and the smell of a ripe apricot. The picture makes it look a little harder than it really is, for the texture of the gills is almost buttery. It shows one of medium size, but they are often larger, and when they are of the larger sizes the edges are more waved and stand more upright, like an umbrella blown inside out. If there is good rain towards the end of August it wakes up the Chantarelles and makes them grow, and they generally go on till about the middle of September. They are nice plain broiled, like Mushrooms, or stewed in stock and finished with a little cream. I always delight in them, not only because they are very good to eat, but because the looking for them takes one into such pretty woody places.

I must tell you about my owl. When my house was built eleven years ago I had a little opening left in one of the end gables. You know the ceilings of bedrooms do not go right up to the top of the roof. The ceiling is flat and the roof pitches up both ways to the top line, which is called the ridge,



THE OWL'S HOUSE.

so that there is a triangular space inside between the ridge and the woodwork that supports the ceiling. Owls are fond of getting into places of this sort, but though I hoped an owl would come I didn't want to have him flopping about all over inside the roof, and perhaps hooting or screaming just over our beds at night, and frightening us out of our wits; so just inside the opening I had a wooden enclosure made so that he would have a nice little room to himself. Year after



HEDGEHOG OUT FOR AN EVENING PROWL.



"IT'S A PRICKLY JOB."

year passed but no owl came. But this spring I saw a dark roundish object lying on the paving just under the opening I had provided for his entrance. I seized upon it, for I thought it meant that an owl had come at last. I broke it up and found it was what I expected. It was an owl's pellet. They hunt in the late evening and catch and eat numbers of mice, and seem to swallow them whole. Their insides, after digesting the flesh of the mice, work up the fur and bones into long-shaped balls, which the owls throw up. How I should have liked to see my owl sitting at the door of his house disgorging his pellet! This is evidently what he does, for I have found a number of them in the same place. I have never yet actually seen him myself, but the gardener saw him one light summer night flying back to his door, no doubt with a mouse, and we often hear him round about the house at night. It is one of my adventures.

Another of my adventures is stalactites. It is an adventure in three chapters.

Chapter I.—As children we used to have an old book with pictures about all sorts of wonderful natural things, icebergs and Niagaras and whirlpools and volcanoes, and the immense caves and subterranean lakes that are found in the hearts of some mountains. It was called *Wonders of Creation*, or something like that. I used to look at the pictures with a sort of dreadful pleasure, but I think nothing delighted my excited imagination so much as the picture of some vast cave where there were stalactites, the curious great stone icicles that form where water impregnated with

lime drips slowly, and where corresponding ones called stalagmites rise up from the floor of the cave to meet them.

Chapter II.—When I built my barn and stable, there was a place made at one end that I thought would do to grow Mushrooms in. It has never been used for that purpose, though it is very useful in other ways, but it is always called the Mushroom-house. It is partly underground, the walls are thick and of solid stone, and the top is solid stone too, built barrel-shaped. It is made so because I wanted to have a large open-air tank over it that would collect the rain-water from the barn. This was done, and the floor of the tank over the Mushroom-house was cemented. But when the tank is full there is an immense weight of water pressing upon the roof of the Mushroom-house, and just a very little water seems to be squeezed through the cement and stone. It does not come into the lower place, but makes a very slow drip just at the rough stone arch over the door.

Chapter III.—Little stalactites are forming, to my great delight! Look at the picture and you will see them!



STALACTITES.



THE PROPER PLACE FOR SHOES AND STOCKINGS.

CHAPTER XI

VARIOUS AMUSEMENTS

THERE can be no doubt that the proper place for our shoes and stockings is on or near a garden bench, where we kicked and grabbed them off, as the picture shows, even if we so far conformed to the ways of civilisation as to put them on at all. In fact they are generally left indoors. How happy we are nowadays, that we can be allowed the comfort of going barefoot. Do you know, when I was a child we did not even paddle when we were at the sea-side ; that delight had not been invented. We went to bathe in a horrible bathing-machine ; there was not even such a thing as a bathing-tent or hut by the shore. It is true we had wooden spades, and made moated castles, when the incoming tide first filled the moat and then melted the castle, but it was all done in shoes and stockings. But in many places we can do sand-games at home, for if there should happen to be somewhere just on the edge of the home garden that delightful thing a sand-pit, it is a place of everlasting joy when one is small, and even when one is growing fairly biggish. We dig out arched recesses to sit in, and we build castles and all sorts of

houses with the heap of loose sand at the bottom. It is a great help to have a few common roofing tiles, or half tiles, because they are so useful for making the tops of doors and windows, and the sides too. And then we get some flowers and make quite a pretty garden round the house. Of course it is grand if our father happens to be an architect, and sometimes likes to play too, and shows us how to do buildings. A large round castle is a good thing to make, with thick walls carried up as high as we can get them, and one door in the bottom. Then we put some dry grass and leaves and sticks inside, with paper under, and light it at the door hole, and have quite a fine castle on fire.

But you will find out endless ways of playing with the sand-pit. Perhaps there will be some loose stones lying about for all sorts of play-building. The pit need not be so deep as the one in my picture, where Christopher is climbing up the dizzy heights, having deposited his small brother on a safe shelf at a lower level. Do you see the row of holes in the face of the pit rather high up—they are made by the sand-martins, pretty little birds of the swallow kind that migrate, as naturalists say, meaning that the bird is in England only a part of the year. They come in March or April and are gone early in September. They make neat round holes in the sand, boring deep into it, so that the nests are nearly two feet from the entrance hole. They are what is called gregarious, meaning that a number of them make their homes near together. In digging their holes they carefully choose just the kind of sand that suits them best.



THE SAND HOUSE.



IN THE SAND PIT.



THE SAND PIT.



GATHERING FIR-CONES.

You can tell this by seeing that the nest holes are always in rows. The sand lies in what geologists call *strata*. A geologist is a man who knows all about stones and how the earth is made. A *stratum* (which is really a Latin word adopted by the English language) means a layer. Nearly all our earth is in layers or strata of one kind or another. In a sand-pit or any quarry you can generally see the strata, because either they are different in colour, or the harder ones stick out a little because the softer get dislodged or washed out by wind and rain. So you see the sand-martin looks out for a stratum that just suits him for digging—not too hard for his tender little bill, and not so soft that it would crumble away. You see they like playing in the sand-pit too, only their play is in good earnest.

Where there are sandy places there are generally Fir-trees. We look out for the fallen cones. They are well worth collecting; they are such capital things to brighten up a dull fire in the nursery or schoolroom. Even the smallest of us who are big enough to do anything can collect fir-cones. Dorothea is only six, and does it capitally. There should be a big bag or box filled with them for the fire of the play-house parlour.

Then where there are sand and Fir-trees there is pretty sure to be Bracken Fern, and we make fern-pegs for pegging down Verbenas and *Phlox Drummondii*, and for layering Carnations. The gardener is very glad to have them, and he does so much for us that it is nice to be able to do something really useful for him. It is not work for the younger but for the older children, because it has to be done with a sharp knife,

also the Fern is best cut with a fag-hook, another sharp-edged thing. The pegs are best cut in August, when the Fern stems are firm and hard. You cut the whole fronds with the fag-hook and lay them all one way in some nice shady place near, carrying the cut fronds



FERN PEGS.

very carefully so as not to break them. You have some low seat to sit on, and put it at the stalk end of the ridge of cut Fern. Then you take a frond by the thick end and cut off the side branches an inch from the stem. Each stem makes two, sometimes three good pegs. Then you cut the stem so that each peg will be three and a half to four inches long. It is not much use leaving both crooks on the peg, but when the stem is big and strong the thickest one can have the stem sliced right down, making two pegs. The pegs can be used the same year, but it is much better if they are made one year to use the next; they dry up so nice and hard. Besides, if you use them the same year you have to cut them early in July, when the Fern is not so strong, because by the middle of July you want them for use. I never advise that the growing fronds should be cut with a knife, because you are so likely to get a cut finger, not from the knife but from the outer edge of the fern stem, which has a coating almost like glass. By using a fag-hook or reaping-hook your hand is well away from where the cut is made.



*"THERE ARE TWO MORE CONES, I SUPPOSE I MUST
PICK THEM UP."*



RAKING BAKED POTATOES OUT OF THE ASHES OF THE BURN-HEAP FIRE.

I had always great delight in watching and feeding the fire at the garden burn-heap. I have the same pleasure in it now that I am old. It is such a clean, tidy, satisfactory way of getting rid of all the cart-loads of rubbish that come out of a well-kept garden, and it makes such a nice excitement, and then there is such a good smell, and one has to be up to all sorts of dodges to keep out of the smoke. What a smoke it does make if there has been rain and a good deal of the stuff is rather wet, or if there are many green weeds to burn up. Then when it is all burnt, and the great heap of ashes is left, still with a smouldering heart of red fire inside, we beg some big potatoes and put them in at the bottom—not too far in or they would be burnt, but far enough for them to be nicely roasted in about three-quarters of an hour. We time it to suit a play-house tea or supper, and they just are good with a little butter, pepper, and salt ; and it is all the more amusing because our plates get rather messed with the remains of the burn-heap ashes that stick to their outsides.

While we are about fires, I want to tell you my way of making a picnic fire. In many places there is rough ground adjoining the home garden, where it is nice to take out the tea and boil the kettle and have a sort of home picnic, and of course the same way of making the fire applies to any more distant place. I never make a great sprawling untidy blaze, that perhaps in dry weather sets fire to the bushes near, and leaves a nasty great space of black and grey ashes. When I used to make picnic fires in all sorts of beautiful

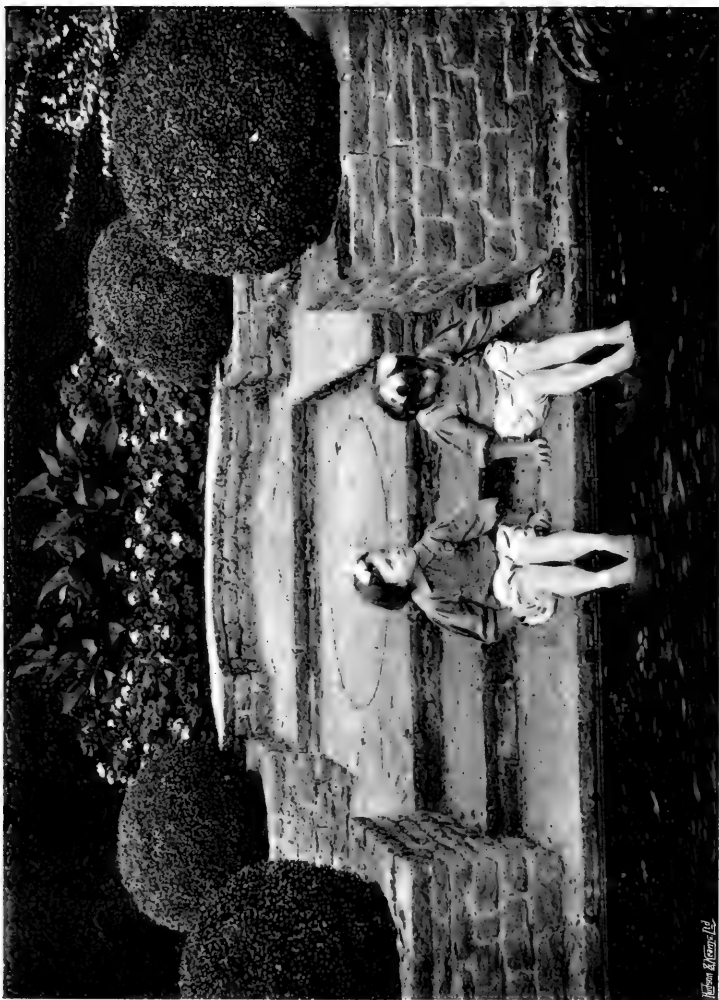
places all over the country, it was necessary to make them small and neat, for most of the places were on heath-land, where, if you are not careful, you may set fire to the whole place and do a great deal of damage. I always choose a place in uneven ground ; if possible a bit of steep bank, which should face the direction of the wind.

You hold up a handkerchief to find out which way the wind is, or if the wind is very slight burn a bit of paper, when the smoke will show you the way it blows. Even if there is hardly any wind it is comfortable to have the smoke blow away from you ; besides, it helps the draught of the fire.

I always took a spade and a pair of bellows, and made it a point of honour to have the kettle boiling within five minutes of lighting the fire. It is much better to take a bag of fuel than to depend on what you can pick up ; I always had bits of deal about six inches long and anything from a quarter to three-quarters of an inch thick. These go in the fuel-bag, with the box of matches and some bits of newspaper. My square, flat-shaped kettle I had made on purpose. The upper part is tinned iron and the bottom copper. The picture shows it ; it is nine inches long and seven wide ; the sides are two inches high. Then I have two small iron bars, square in section, fourteen inches long by three-eighths of an inch thick. Having found out the way of the wind and chosen the bit of bank facing it, I cut a neat hole in the bank with the spade, the same width as the kettle, that is seven inches, and the other way two inches longer than the length of the



THE TEA KITCHEN.



DABBLING TOES IN THE TANK.

kettle. The kettle is nine inches long, so that makes eleven inches. It is more convenient to get at if the bottom of the fire-hole is a little way up the bank, as you see in the drawings, not quite down on the lowest ground-level. Then at the height where the kettle will sit, which is barely five inches from the bottom of the fire, I cut the bank nice and level on each side of



THE TEA-KITCHEN.

In the right-hand figure the bottom of the fire is shown by a dotted line, and the side turfs are omitted for the sake of clearness.

the fire-hole for about ten inches to right and left. On this level the irons are laid, about five inches apart, and the kettle is put on. You will find you have two inches between the back of the kettle and the bank. You must see that it is all nice and level, and that the kettle sits quite firm and comfortable. Now you take the spade again and look out where you can cut two good solid turfs, twelve inches long by ten wide and three inches thick. You lay them carefully, turf side up, over the ends of the irons by the side of the kettle. Unless the bank is quite steep it is as well to put another turf across the back of the fire-hole.

All this sounds much more elaborate than it really is. When you know what to do it takes barely three minutes, and if you will get a flat-bottomed kettle, and

do it exactly as I have described, I don't think you will ever want to make a picnic fire any other way as long as you live.

When you have done with the fire you pour the spare water from the kettle on it, taking care that not a single live spark remains, you put back the turfs where they came from, and leave the place looking as much as possible as if it had never been disturbed. No *débris* or rubbish of any kind must be left lying about. Bits of paper go back into the picnic basket, and not even a chicken-bone must be left on the ground. You have the spade, and can bury everything, or you can bury things in the fireplace.

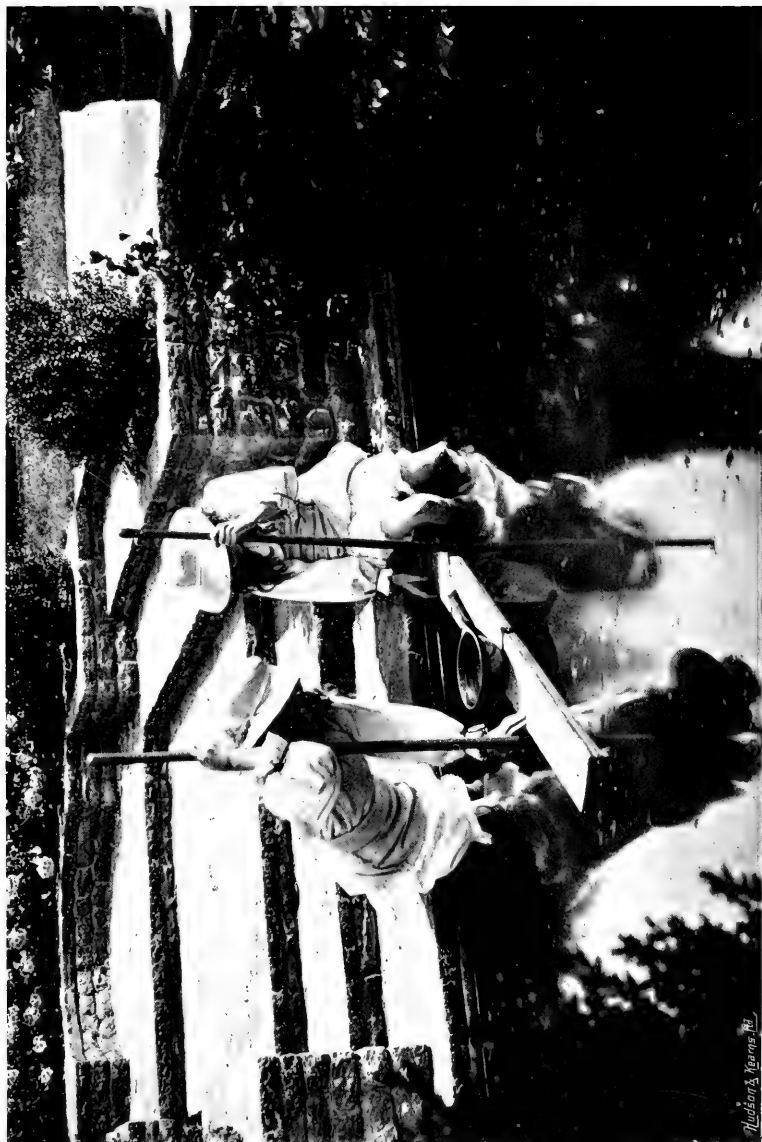
Sometimes I have built little tea-kitchens for permanent use, but with fire-bricks, in some favourite place in private ground near home, but they were always on the same pattern. Their only advantage is that you save a few minutes' time and need not take the spade, but then they are not always right for the wind.

Nothing is more delightful than any sort of playing with water. In places where there is no safe pool or stream we can get some fun out of a fountain basin or a garden tank; even if it is only sitting on the edge and dabbling our toes on hot summer days.

I used to invite Bar and Pam to what we called a tank-party (of only ourselves) whenever my stone-built tank, which is ten feet square and two feet deep, was nicely cleaned out and had had fresh water let in. A stout bit of plank floats in it, called the pussies' safety-plank, because, if a pussy slipped in and the water happened to be low, he could not get out, but he could



JUST OUT OF THE TANK.



THE ARTESIAN WELL.

Hubert A. Vignas, Jr.

get on the plank and then jump out. One day when they were in the tank—not bathing, as they did sometimes, but only paddling—I found they had borrowed a hand-bowl from my workshop close by, and having filled it with water were sailing it backwards and forwards across the tank. “Look,” they said, “this is an artesian well; it is crossing the Channel, sent by the King as a present to the President of the French Republic. You know we have just been learning all about artesian wells.” I complimented them on having so accurately grasped the idea of the nature and properties of artesian wells, and only wished I were another of their size, that I too might paddle in the tank and delight in my funny imaginings.

CHAPTER XII

PUSSIES IN THE GARDEN

MY garden would not be half the pleasure it is to me without the pussies. I hope you love them as much as I do. They are perfect garden companions. When I am out at work there is sure to be one or other of them close by, lying on my jacket or on a bench if there is one near. When it is Tabby, if there is an empty basket anywhere handy he is certain to get into it. When I take one of my baskets for flowers—of the pattern that I invented and always use—if I put it down for a moment Tabby takes possession. One day I was bringing the basket home full of Hydrangeas, and put it down to see if there were any figs ripe. I did not see what was going on behind my back, but when I turned round to take up the flowers there he was established in the basket; some of the Hydrangeas were pushed out on to the grass, and Tabby had composed himself to sleep among the rest.

Another day I was doing photographs down the garden with spare plates in a palm-leaf basket. When I wanted more plates he had made himself so comfortable that I could not bear to disturb him, so I went



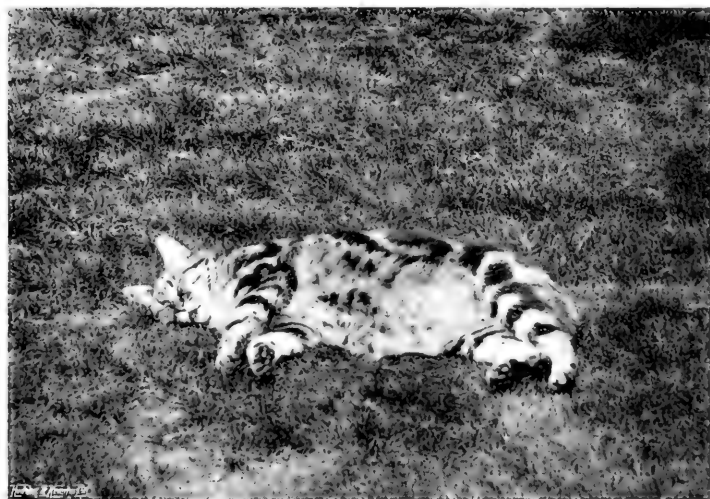
TABBY IN THE BASKET.



TABBY TAKES POSSESSION.



TABBY IN THE CERASTIUM.



TABBY.

indoors and got more plates and made his picture. When I had done one he stretched himself, gave an immense yawn, and settled himself again in a still more reposeful position.

He is particularly fond of the spring garden, where there is a patch of grass and a wooden seat, and Nut-trees and Oaks. It is sheltered and secluded, and there are banks where he can lie in the sun, and cool retreats when it is too hot, and also Yews and Hollies, under which he can always find a dry place when other parts of the ground are damp. One bank is covered with *Cerastium*; this he thinks is just suitable for his bed. I often find him there, and though it is not quite the best thing for the *Cerastium* I cannot help admiring his beautiful rich tabby coat, with its large black clouds, so well set off by the velvety grey of the little downy plant. He is an old pussy now, and when you meet him coming along a path it must be confessed that he is too fat and has lost his figure. But it only shows when he is walking, for when he is sitting, or lying comfortably curled or tucked, and especially when he is on his gate-post, looking out so proud and fine—his picture is at the beginning of the book—you would never call him a fat old cat. When he was younger I would hold the gate open, and he would jump from post to post. When I am near his favourite region and do not see him, I call to him; if he does not come at once and I walk on I am pretty sure to hear him asking where I am within a minute or two.

There is a little bit of turf between the two wings of the house that is another of his favourite haunts. I

did his picture as he lay stretched out quite flat, asleep, with his back to me, one fine summer day. When I had done I said "Tabby." He just turned straight over, presenting his tummy, and I did the second picture.

Like most cats he is devoted to the pretty plant Catmint. It is in several places in the garden. He knows where every plant is and never passes one when we are walking together without stopping to nuzzle and nibble it. If I stop to watch him, when he has had his first taste he will push himself right into the middle of the plant and sometimes lie down and roll in it to get all he can of the sweet smell.

But you should see Blackie in the Catmint. He seems to go quite crazy with delight, jumps straight up in the air and comes down flop into the middle, dances in it and twists about, and then comes out and does it all over again. He is only an old kitten as yet, and extremely agile, but the Catmint seems to inspire him with a sort of frenzy of frantic pleasure and excitement. I wish I could have photographed him, but my camera is not quick enough, and I have to be content with giving you a sketch from recollection. He had a



BLACKIE AND THE CATMINT.

pretty trick when he was quite a little fellow; I would hold out my hand about a foot from the ground,



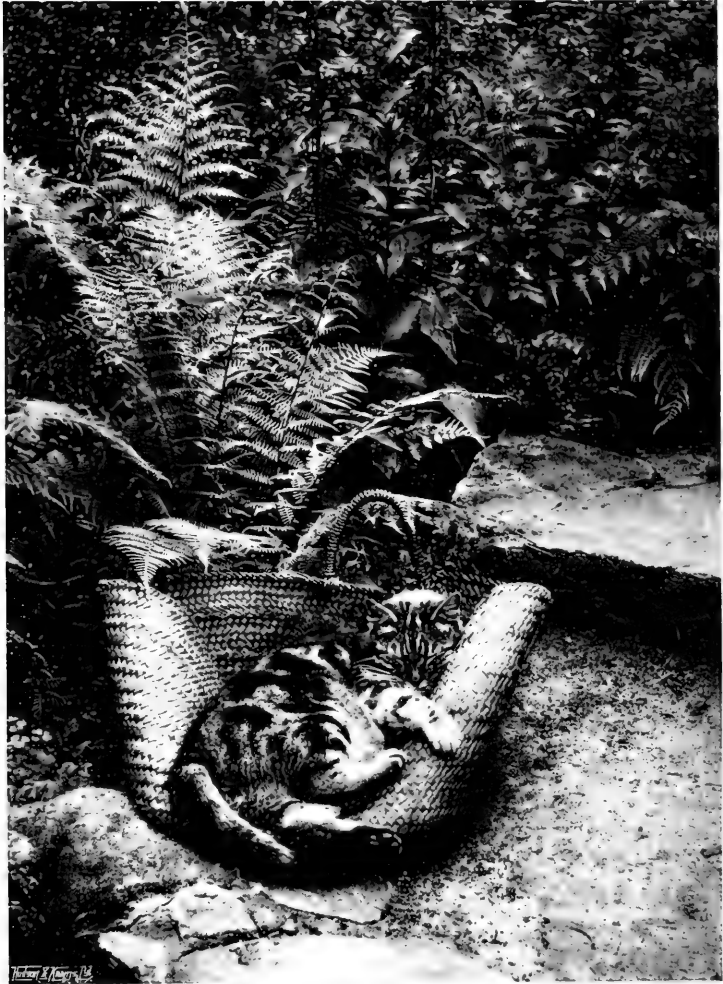
TABBY IN THE CATMINT. "THIS SMELLS VERY GOOD."



TABBY IN THE CATMINT. "I'LL SIT DOWN AND HAVE
A GOOD NIBBLE."



TABBY AND THE PHOTOGRAPH BASKET.



STILL MORE COMFORTABLE.

say "Come, Blackie," and he would jump into my hand.

Tittlebat is only too sociable both indoors and out. When I settle myself before the fire with a book or newspaper he jumps up on my lap and insists on being petted; pushes the book away with his beautiful sleek head and nuzzles his nose into my hand again and again, and only consents to be quiet when I have given him the amount of attention that he considers his due. One day I had to go to the Rectory as it was getting dark, and did not know that he was following me. The way is across the lawn and through a region of Oaks and Hollies, then through the frame yard and all the length of the kitchen garden, past some Quince-trees and out into the main road by the gardener's cottage. It is not far beyond that to the Rectory. When I came back it was quite dark. Passing the Quince-trees I heard a disturbance in one of them, and something scrambled down to the ground. I thought it was some neighbour's cock or hen gone to roost in the tree, but the thing said May-ow, and I knew my dear Tittlebat's voice. He had followed me down and got up into the Quince to wait till I came back.

He is quite the most affectionate pussy I have ever known, and nothing, except dogs or a strange cat stalking about, has ever been known to ruffle his temper. I brought him as a kitten from the Isle of Wight, where I went one autumn to a farm lodging. I had left a family of little kittens at home, and on arriving felt rather desolate at having no small pussy playmates. But the next morning, to my delight, I

saw two very shy little faces peeping out of some shrubs and garden plants that were opposite my sitting-room window, with only a narrow strip of grass between. As soon as I had finished my breakfast I went out to try and make friends, but the kittens were very wild; they had never been tamed or handled. There was a Dahlia just in front of my window at the edge of the bushes. One of its branches stuck out a little, and to this I tied a string with a bit of white paper fastened in the end, so that it swung about. Then I went in and watched. Presently the darker and more handsomely marked of the two little brothers (my future Tittlebat) came out very cautiously and examined the strange object. It moved and he made a dart at it, which made it swing still farther. He soon found out that it was a capital thing to play with. Then his brother came too, and they had a great game. Next morning at breakfast I poured a little milk into a saucer and put it on the grass near the plaything. They came to it by little cautious advances, and lapped up the milk while I stood within sight at the open window. Then I made another plaything, the same as the Dahlia one, only on a stick, like a fishing-rod, so that I could play it from the window. After a little hesitation they came to play with it. This was a grand step, because they saw me at the window all the time. Next I put the saucer of milk on the window-sill, and great was my pleasure when Tittlebat came to it. He was the bigger and stronger of the two, and always took the lead. The next thing was to have the milk on a table put close to the window



TITTLERAT.



TITTLEBAT.



TAVY.



PINKI .

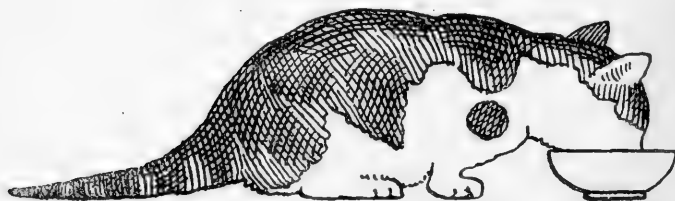
inside the room. They were attracted to it by means of the plaything, played first on the grass and then on the window-sill. They came up and on to the table. This was a great advance, and while they were lapping I just stroked them a little, very gently, taking care to bring my hand near them very slowly. A quick movement would have frightened them. Then I knew that I had got their confidence. I think this was about five days after the first offer of friendship. Then I pretended to take no notice of them, but you may be sure I was keeping a good watch out of the corner of my eye, and the next day they came up to the window and into the room of their own accord. Before my fortnight was over Tittlebat came to me as a regular thing, sitting on my lap or my shoulder and purring me his little song while I read or worked. You may imagine that when I went away I could not bear to leave him, so I begged to have him and took him home with me, where I at once gave him into the charge of Pinkie, a young pussy of my own rearing only a few months older. They took to each other at once, and very soon became quite inseparable; in fact, if they were ever apart Pinkie was miserable, and would cry most lamentably, looking about for his dear companion.

You might think from his picture that Pinkie was nearly white, but though his white tummy is very extensive all his back is tabby. The tabby comes down into the white on his sides in a way that always makes me think of geography. On the west side two large portions of the Cat-back continent, like two

Indias, jut out into the white, which is the Indian Ocean. On the east side there is only one India or South Africa, extending into the Catlantic Ocean, but on his shoulder there is a large blunt promontory, and a nearly round, almost black island, which has a very handsome effect on the ground of white fur.



PINKIE WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

TWO SIDE ELEVATIONS OF PINKIE.

Tavy is very fond of that place just at the top of the steps opposite the door of the sitting-room to the garden. He likes to sit there when he knows I am near him inside, and keeps an eye on the wood close by, where there are always some objects of interest, if not in sight at least within hearing. He is red tabby and white. He does not come with me so much in the garden as the others, but indoors he is my most



TWO LITTLE WAIFS.



DOROTHEA AND DINAH.

constant companion of all. His fur is deliciously soft and fine, and he has dainty pretty ways, quite little lady-ways, we always say. He has one odd trick that I do not remember having seen in any other cat. He puffs out his tail when he is pleased—usually a short-haired cat puffs out his tail only when he is frightened, or angry, or fighting. But Tavy makes a beautiful tail when we are playing together, and he is quite pleased with himself and with me. On the rare occasions when he walks with me in the garden—he is jealous, and will never come if any other cat is present, he makes a beautiful tail and walks in a very odd way—a sort of waddling strut; we call it Tavy's ingratiating waddle; purring hard all the time and expecting a great deal of praise and attention.

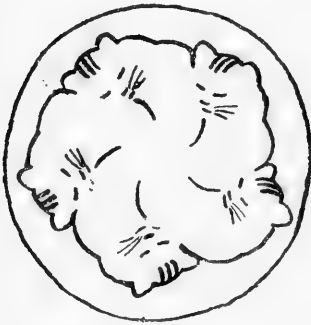
Dorothea's home is a short mile away. It is a delightful house, with beautiful wild ground and garden all round it. Pussies are much loved there. A curious thing happened. One morning two tiny long-haired kittens, one black and one red, were found on the doorstep, crying with hunger and begging to be taken in. Where they came from, or how they found their way to the house will always be a mystery, for they were baby things, almost too small to have left their mother. No other house is near, and what wonderful instinct guided the little waifs to that kind door no one will ever know. They were cold and starving and bedraggled, as if they had travelled far. They were taken in and fed and cleaned and given warm beds, and very soon became quite strong and lively. When I went there a few days later, to take

Dorothea a wreath of white roses, the little black kitten was frisking about, and Dorothea said, "Kitty



THREE KITTENS—PLAN.

has been trying to climb the Passion-tree." This was a Passion-Flower, with the lower part of the stem grown thick and woody, that grew against the house,



FIVE KITTENS—PLAN.



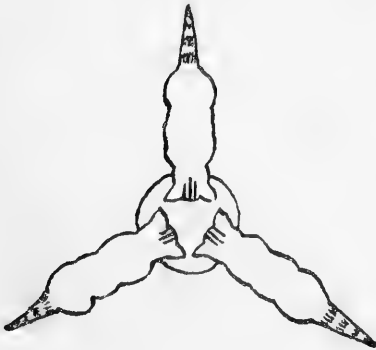
FOUR KITTENS—PLAN.

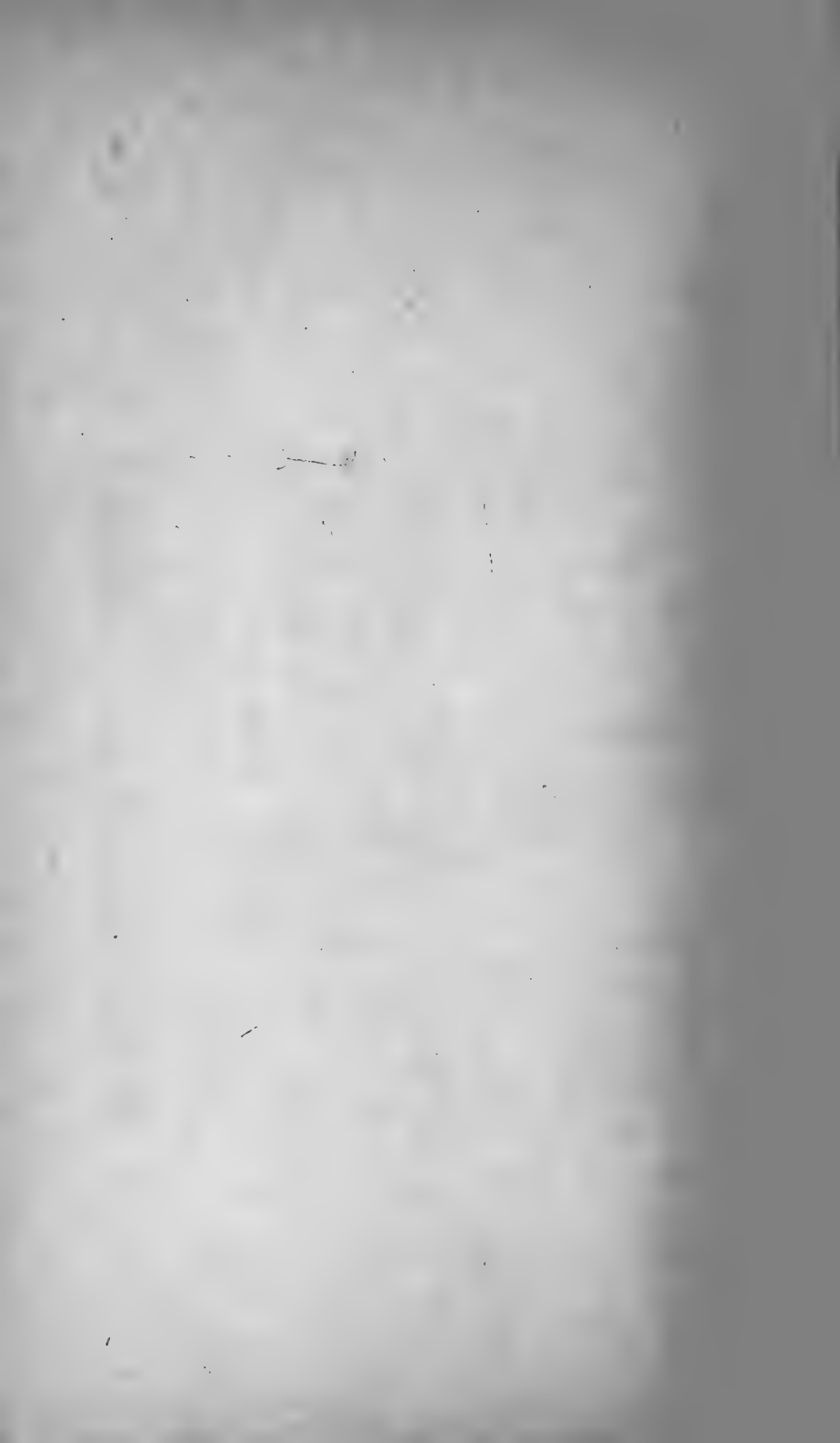
just beyond these steps of the Dutch Rose garden that you see in the picture.

I was told of a little girl who invented a beautiful

word to describe a pussy purring. She said, "Puss has got the flutter-mill going."

It is amusing to see the different patterns that kittens lying in a round basket will sometimes get into. I have seen five kittens almost symmetrically arranged like cutlets in a dish, and four with their little paws all up in the middle like a pigeon pie. It was almost impossible to believe that only four small people could have so many little toes. Three kittens at nearly equal distances round a saucer of milk make quite a pretty pattern. The architect said it was an equicateral triangle!





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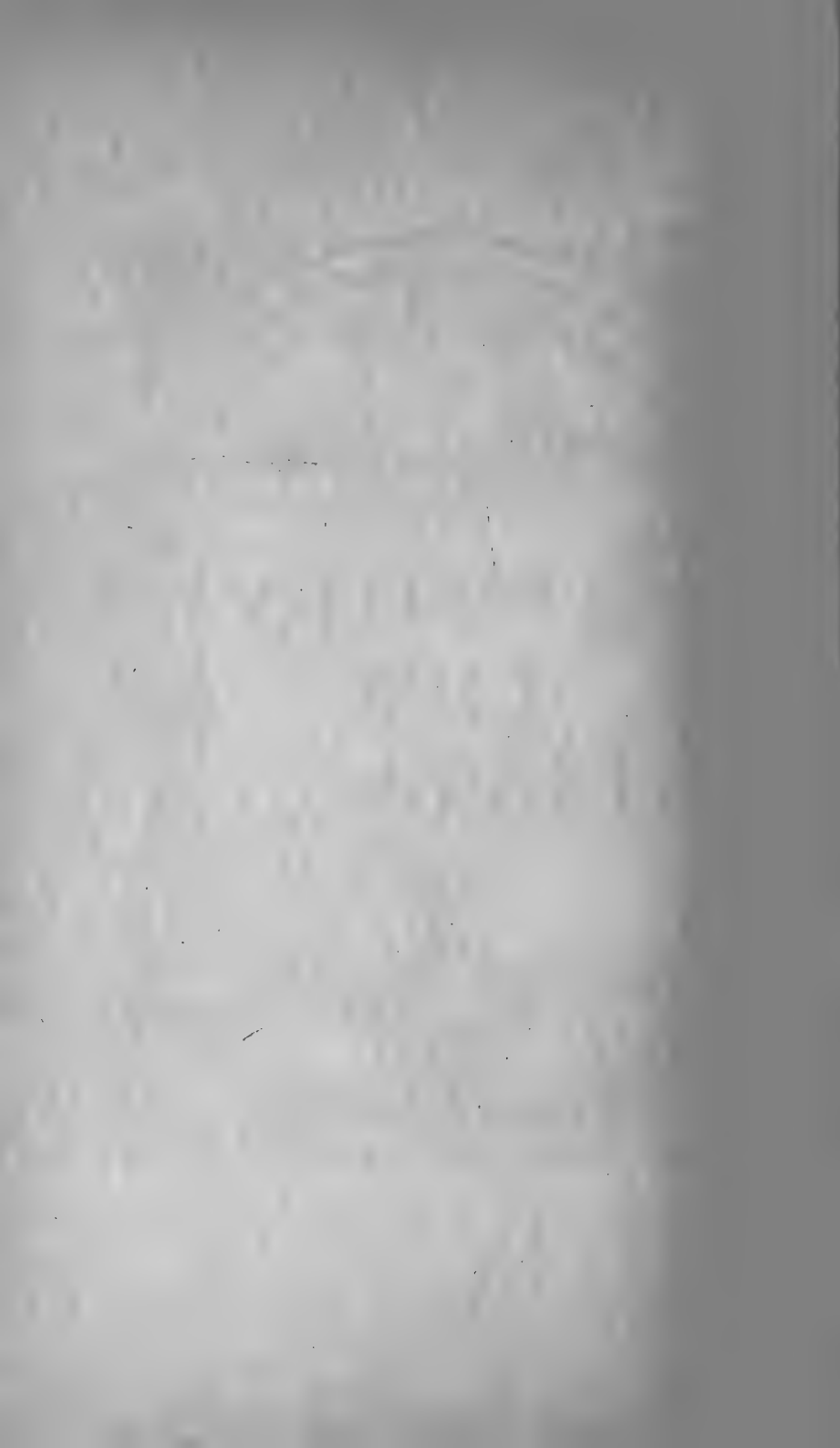
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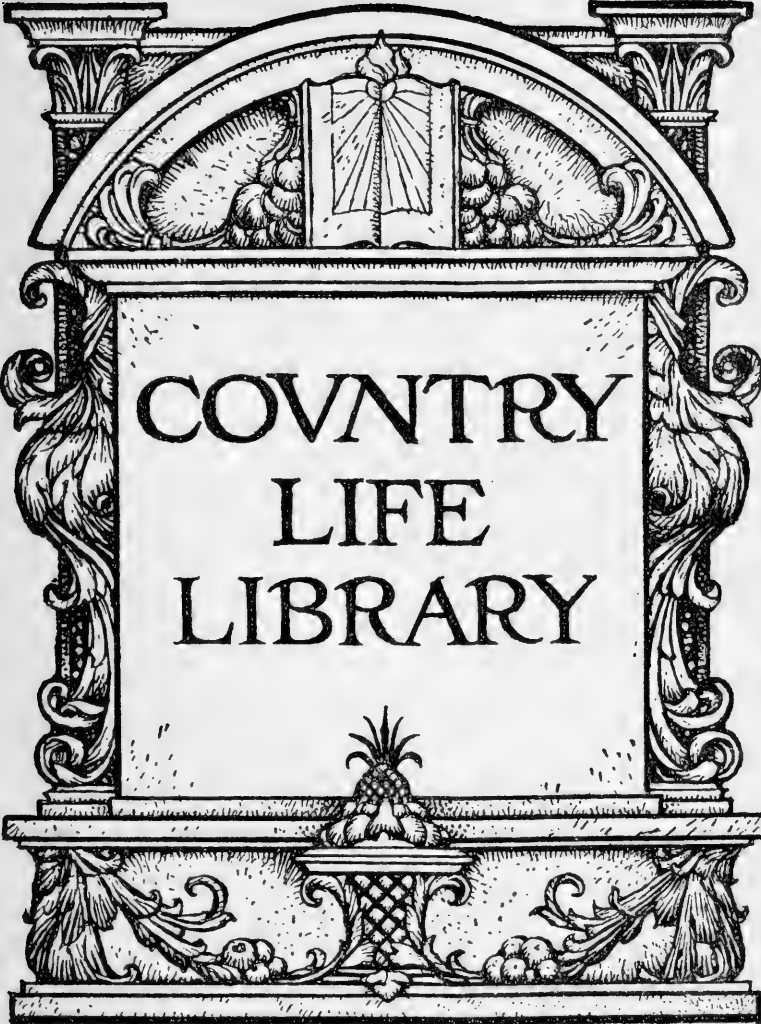
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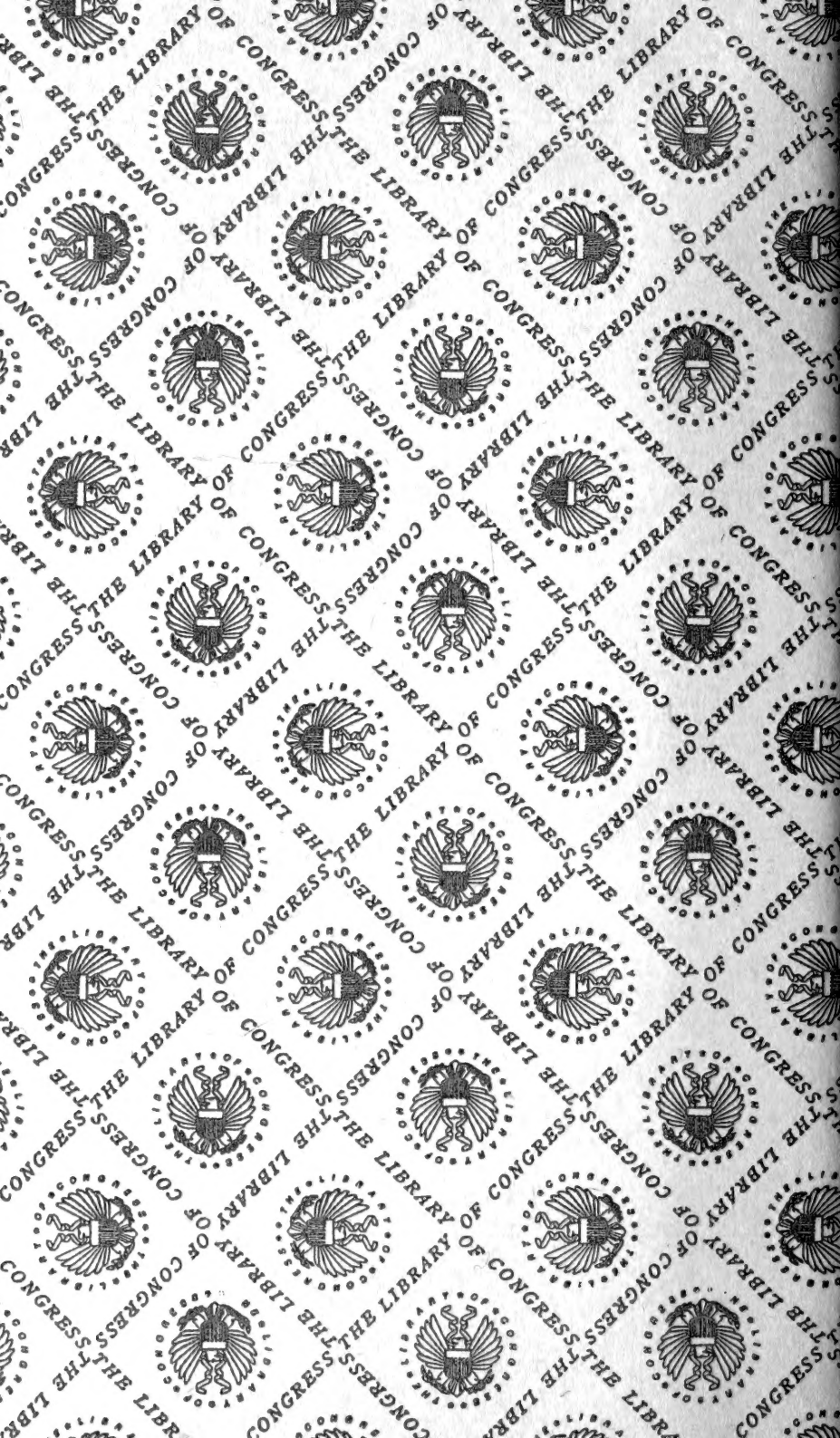
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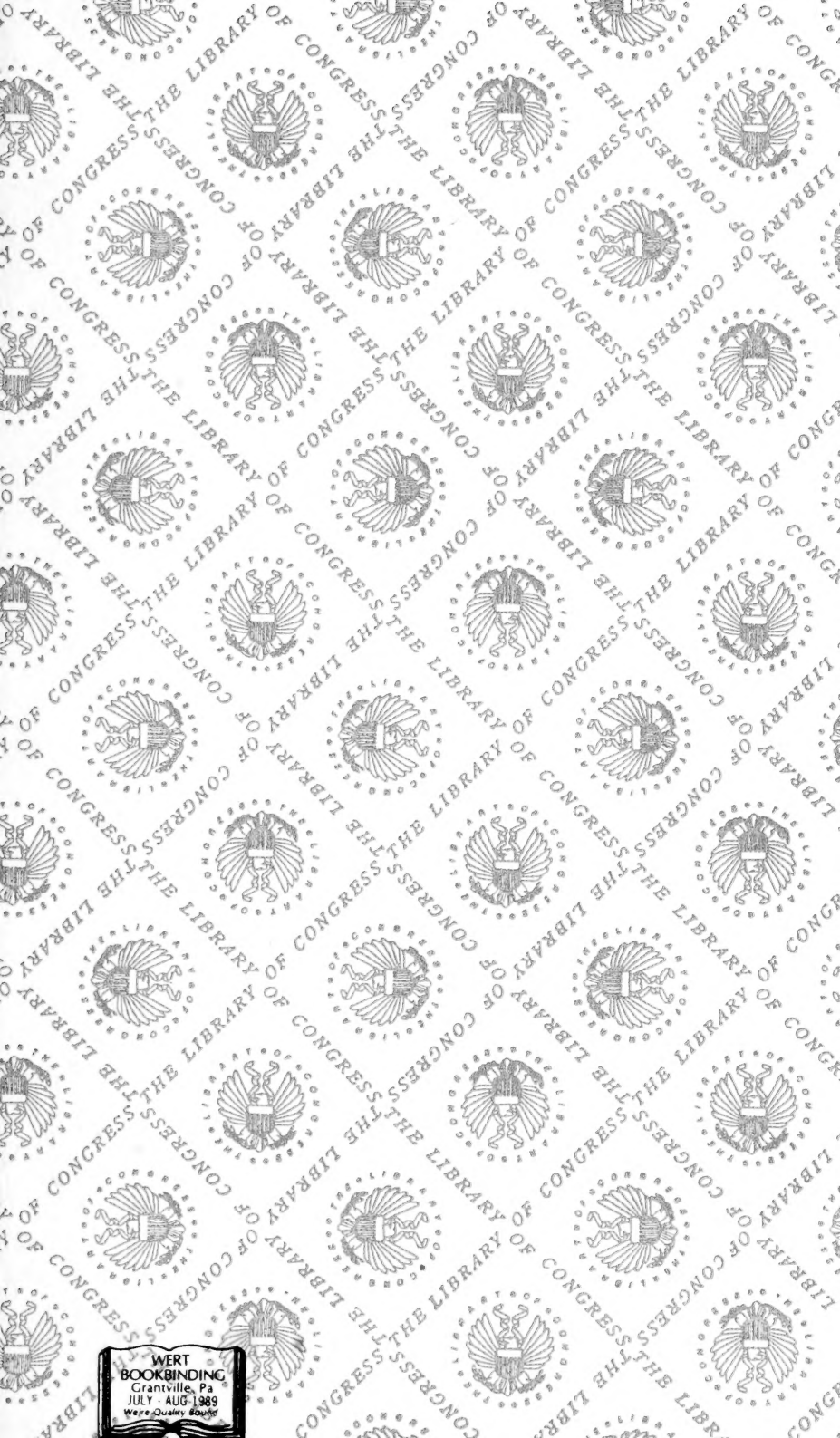
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