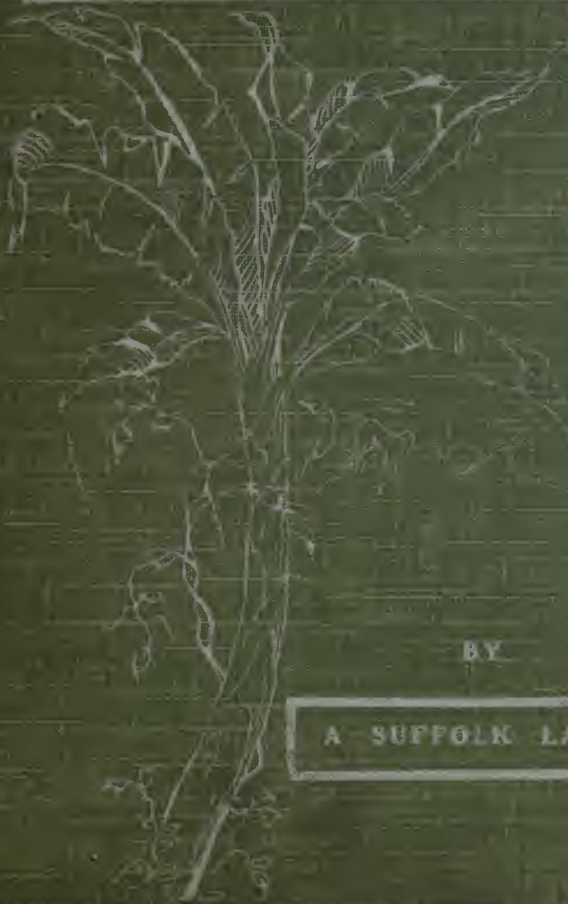


MY NEW ZEALAND  
GARDEN



BY

A SUFFOLK LADY



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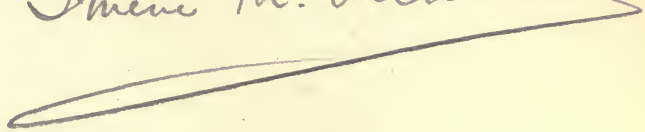


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Imene H. Anderson



MY NEW ZEALAND GARDEN







A CORNER OF THE GARDEN.

[*Frontispice.*



# MY NEW ZEALAND GARDEN

BY

A SUFFOLK LADY

'The monarch oak, the patriarch of trees,  
Rises three centuries by slow degrees.  
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays  
Supreme in state, and in three more decays.'

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

LONDON

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1905



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## CHAPTER I

I HAVE no hesitation in making the avowal that I am blest with the craze for gardening—that solid, real, satisfactory occupation pointed out to us from the very first—and having worked like a Spartan at my parcel of ground for nearly twenty years, reducing spades, wheelbarrows, and such-like lady-sized gardening paraphernalia to atoms, I am tempted to recount some of the freaks of the plants, myself, and others, especially on this nurtured and revered spot of bad subsoil—‘worse than the riddlings o’ the Creation,’ as Sir Walter Scott’s gardener has it.

To dress and keep our gardens is undoubtedly a Divine injunction not to be neglected, and it behoves us, in gratitude to the Creator, to keep our plots in order. Moreover, it is a significant fact that such gardens seem to belong to respectability, for I am sure those who have lived among the poor in England can bear testimony that, as a rule, the tidy garden folk are the best at sending their children to school, paying their rent, clean-

liness and tidiness of person ; that they are more congenial, healthy and thrifty, and that their surroundings are more satisfactory ; for their small premises are rendered wholesome in that all rubbish is turned to account, instead of being allowed to collect in heaps and stagnant pools outside their doors ; their minds become elevated by the recreation, and their neighbours' peccadilloes are neglected ; in fact, they are more healthy in mind as well as body.

The smell of Mother Earth alone is a preventive against disease, and I can remember a governess of mine having to ride behind the plough for several hours a day to inhale the odour, which, above all other remedies, contributed towards her recovery.

We ought to be as healthy here as material circumstances can make us, surrounded as we are by fresh sea-air on all sides ; but it devolves upon us so to order our ways that we may draw down upon us the promised blessing of Him Who made it, and Who alone can 'keep our foot that it shall not swell,' and 'prosper our basket and our store.'

In a land fanned by sea-breezes, with an atmosphere unpolluted by a dense population, and with the trammels of society greatly modified, all these impart a feeling of rest and freedom comparable to the exchange of a town life for a country one. I know of some broken-down systems who

have found their way here in search of health to revive permanently—a fact which speaks highly enough for our surroundings.

The wording of this little book will dispel any idea of my being a purist. I am also afraid that abruptness of style will be very apparent from start to finish. I plead guilty, too, to dishing up stale anecdotes to suit my purpose, and before rushing into the account of my garden, I must ask the reader kindly to excuse blunders in phraseology, which will be frequent, and may, perhaps, even equal in enormity the statement that 'The Captain was enabled to save his ship, his own life, and his wife—she carried a full cargo of cement.' The generic and specific names of plants may often assume the appearance of the cart before the horse. I am, however, determined to let others know the pleasure and mental profit which I have derived from gardening, and also to give a fair account of plants which flourish here, and the beautiful trees and shrubs that can be grown.

I have spared no pains in hunting up scarce things, and I feel somewhat like a retired sleuth-hound, but I am amply repaid by their beauty and growth, and the intense interest derived thereby. Owing to the habit of finding out the botanical names of all my plants, one or two chapters are fraught with them enough to make anyone but a gardener flinch.

Of hired labour I have had but little. My first gardener was not a success: his pinch of brains forbad it. Being asked one day to mow some rushes in a distant paddock, to make sure that he might attack the right spot, we added, 'where you see the white heifer.' He obeyed orders, the result of his work being a zigzag and circuitous track, for he had mowed wherever the heifer *was*, having followed her all day, mowing behind her.

However, there are gardeners to be had, from this sort up to those who can grow orchids well; but I would rather be in the struggle than be a looker-on, and so do all except the heavy work myself.

As a tonic for nerves, speaking from personal experience, I may safely say that gardening has, in my case, achieved its object. I have been enabled to squash worries and discard doctors thus far—in fact, my only dose of medicine in twenty years I used to kill weeds. Without further rigmarole, I will commence with Rock-melons, which grew larger than I have ever seen or heard of; some said that the bees had been at them straight from the Pumpkins, but as the flavour was perfect and the netting complete, I turned a deaf ear to the thrusts of these wet-blankets.

I sowed the seed in two rows, like peas across the kitchen-garden. The ground first received a





NIKAU PALM.

[To face page 5.



good dressing of paddock manure—this means free from straw, as the majority of horses spend their spare time in the open air, the more fortunate of them being clothed in winter with a rug of sail-cloth lined with felt, which will resist rain for twenty-four hours. It is not every summer that Melons will rush ahead without let or hindrance, but the summer that yielded my best crop was such as Melons love, with warm showers and no wind, and the result of this harvest was seventy fine Melons, the heaviest weighing ten pounds. I was so elated at my good success that I gave them away right and left, as three or four ripened every day. But I was not to escape a nasty knock from an ungrateful recipient, the gardening man, who said he had ‘biled it well and it woan’t no better than the t’others,’ and he gave me one of his own home-grown Pumpkins to prove how much better his was when ‘biled’; and so it was.

Had it not been for the bad subsoil, my labours would have been a comparative sinecure, but the battle against it has ended in victory for me, and I really enjoyed the fight; or, perhaps, speaking more truthfully, chiefly looking on at it, for I found Mother Subsoil too heavy to deal with, much resembling yellow soap intermixed with iron-stone. However, the happy consummation of all that labour is the utter defeat of that bad mixture; and, whereas it was only 6 inches

below the surface when I first set eyes upon it, it is now nowhere less than 2 feet, and in one part quite 5 feet, below.

Layer upon layer of thick turfs have annually been laid upon it, and in four successive winters shrubs had ditches dug all round them and rails poked under them, and so were levered up out of their water-logged holes to receive another layer of good soil beneath them. Of course, the question arises, Why not have done it all in one winter? This is easily answered. The undertaking would have been too gigantic for me, so it was gradually accomplished by the one man that nobody who keeps a horse, a cow, and a garden can do comfortably without. A certain amount of risk attended these operations, but only a few shrubs succumbed to them, though the water-logged holes and bad soil proved extremely fatal to many, the most lamented of them being a *Jacaranda mimosifolia*. I was told that these splendid trees would not flower for fifteen years, so I heartily wished to live that time to see them. Imagine my surprise and delight when I found my four-year-old, 4-foot-high specimen making for flower! It managed one beautiful panicle of bloom, and then died from want of root comforts. I know how it struggled to live, for I knew what was going on underground. I had planted it as a tiny plant, in a tiny hole to fit it, but in spite of that it grew,

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and the next year I determined to give it a better bed. Afraid to disturb its precious roots, I dug a ditch all round its former bed, and filled it with choice soil, leaving an impenetrable wall between the old bed and the new; but what with the effort of flowering and trying to pierce the wall with its roots, it gave up the ghost. But more about these beautiful trees anon.

## CHAPTER II

THE low-growing plants which in England would almost be used for carpet-bedding here grow rather higher and more straggling. I planted eight beds of *Lithospermum prostratum*, 7 feet by 5, being three-cornered in form, which in spring are eight masses of gentian blue. I started them by putting in cuttings 1 foot apart, filling in between with other small growing subjects, Aubrietias, etc., which were intended to flower whilst the *Lithospermums* were growing and spreading. This they did, and when I dragged out these stopgaps, the *Lithospermums* were quite nice little plants, and the following summer flowered well, touching each other everywhere. The only alternative to this plan of striking cuttings where they were to grow would have been to have started them in hundreds of tiny pots, which I could not have looked after properly. Although hardy enough to propagate in outdoor beds, still, some subjects would not lift when struck, especially the *Lithospermum*, which is over-particular about its long





A PET BIT OF THE GARDEN,

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wiry roots ; but perhaps in the hands of a trained gardener they might have proved themselves amenable to such treatment. There are twenty of these beds, and the other twelve contain *Saponaria ocymoides*, *Phlox subulata*, *Phlox Nelsonii*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, Echeverias, double White Violets, *Heuchera sanguinea*, Rock Arabis, Dwarf Pinks, and last, and greatest, not least, *Crassula coccinea*, the vivid effect of which was startling. Every piece grew, and as they were put in 6 inches apart, their flowers touched each other and became a platform of dazzling colour, throwing all its brother beds into the shade. These beds have no grass round them, but gravel, and—oh horror! shall I confess it at all?—red bricks to separate paths from beds ; these bricks were stood on their ends with their lower halves in the ground. Well, whatever faults may attach to such a gaudy garden, it possesses the counteracting virtue of never looking dull, dismal, or depressing. It is a glowing little fore-court garden, ever bright, ever trim and fresh. The Lithospermums never fail to give a second, though small, display of flowers, and most of the other beds, here and there, cheer up and manage a flower or two sometimes, and are scarcely all out of bloom at once, only indulging in a lull until their general blaze-up. They are all allowed to grow just over the edge, which nearly hides the bricks, and as the beds are raised

in the centre, they look full to overflowing. A path surrounds each bed, which makes weeding or replanting easy and clean work, and it is nice to be able to inspect the plants to one's heart's content without treading on earth. Mixed borders surround this pet bit of garden, and a few of the most flourishing inmates I will now recount.

Beginning with the shrubs at the back, first comes *Pomaderris elliptica*, or Kumarahou, as it is called by the natives. It grows on poor soil to the north of Auckland, and its flowers are old-gold colour. Mrs. Featon has an excellent illustration of it in her volume of New Zealand plants, where she truly remarks, 'No artist can do justice to its beautiful finish.' Its blossoms are in cymes composed of numerous delicate, tiny flowers, set in myrtle green foliage, which shows them off to perfection. *Toxophilea spectabilis* grows and flowers well, but its foliage is generally of a purplish hue, which is a drawback to its appearance, and I think its flowers are too squatly arranged round the stem for great beauty, but they look in character with its very thick leaves. *Rhododendron arboreum*, although I believe the oldest, is surely the best of the reds, for its blood-red blossoms are quite free from any rose colour, that undesirable tinge so often found in other reds. *Exocorda grandiflora* is a very welcome shrub, because of its indisputably pure white flower and its adaptability



to any soil and circumstances. The double White Peach and a clear bright red one from Japan are special treasures, with which the most fastidious could not fail to be satisfied: their perfect freshness is most charming; and the same may be said of the semi-double Japanese Cherry, with delicate pink blossoms. *Grevillea obtusifolia* is about 4 feet high, and nearly always in flower, but in spring it surpasses itself, its peculiarly shaped flowers, of an indescribable deep pink hue, possessing a satin gloss which makes it a gem.

*Romneya coulteri* grew such fine blooms that I set off to the photographer to establish the fact. The largest that I measured were  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. I don't suppose that any other white flower can vie with them. Their huge crinkled petals, surrounding that great yellow cushion, are quite sensational.

*Genista Andreana* is a beautiful thing. One is not prepared to come suddenly upon a common thing like a Broom in new colours, and when I first set eyes upon it I could scarcely believe them. Its blossoms are blotched in the centre with reddy brown as bright as a beautiful *Calceolaria*. Of course, it ranks as a valuable novelty.

*Telopea speciosissima* (Waratah), which comes from the Blue Mountains of Australia, is a most conspicuous shrub. Its flowers are almost as large and as round as cricket-balls, and are composed of

separate long-tubed florets of shaded red. My largest shrub, which is about 8 feet high, had sixty blooms on it, lately.

The Cape Waratah is more beautiful still; the flowers are smaller and more elegant, and of a vivid scarlet. I brought one from Dunedin as a large plant, but I don't think it ever recovered the wrench, although it flowered for two consecutive years.

The name the Bottle-Brush, by which the Callistemon, another Australian shrub, is commonly called, helps to describe both the pink and the red. I do not know what this shaped flower should be properly termed, but it is a most accurate pattern of a bottle-brush. The Japanese Maples are indeed treasures, but a few with variegated pink foliage seem obstinately determined to stop growing. I used to pick off all the foliage which was not correct; but they resented this treatment, so I now let them have their own way, forsaking the colours in which I bought them. I am, however, truly thankful for any foliage they choose to give me, for it is quite superb alike on the tree or in the room, lasting for an amazing time in water.

The wax-like pink flowers of *Kalmia latifolia* make it an unmistakable gem, and it flourishes in its soil of rotten turf. *Andromeda Japonica* deserves all praise; it grows to a large shrub, and,





DORYANTHUS EXCELSA, OR QUEENSLAND LILY.

like all the other gems, cannot be made enough of. *A. floribunda*, its little relative, can only rank as a footstool to it. The Queensland Lily, *Doryanthus excelsa*—so much 'excelsa' that we have to climb the step-ladder to look at it—has great blossoms of dark-red florets somewhat resembling a Turk's-head broom, handle and all, in its whole contour. It only flowers once every four years. One can forgive it for that, for its stalk is 9 inches round, and must take all its time to manufacture. Mine has increased to several off-sets which look as if they could be taken away for separate plants. *Cristia grandiflora*, with its bunches of wonderfully-shaped yellow flowers, grows quite 10 or 12 feet high, and seeds freely.

Brugmansias, both white and yellow, are cut down by our frosts, but sprout up again in the spring. The White Oleander and also Professor Martin, a good red, do splendidly. *Acacia cultriformis* is a real gem, with its light pea-green, curiously arranged foliage and flowers of deep yellow—soft little balls which nobody can help admiring. The great single Rose, *Rosa rugosa*, both white and pink, sends up suckers rather too freely, and is better on the grass, where the mowing-machine cuts them off. *Laburnum Adami* may vary in colour, but mine is a dull flesh shade, and not very attractive. Laburnums, with their inseparable friends, the Lilacs, seem quite happy

in their new country; in fact, most English things, as well as Australian, are very well satisfied here.

Among smaller subjects, the White *Watsonia* is very handsome. *Physalis alkekengi* is a great acquisition to any border. Its orange scarlet pods are as large as hen's eggs, and a truly marvellous sight. It dies down in winter, appearing again in spring. The small yellow-fruited kind, commonly called the Cape Gooseberry, makes a most delicious jam, and twice last summer I picked 20 pounds of fruit from that number of plants.

*Gerbera jaminonii* is one of my newest captures. It is a Cape Daisy, and quite a sensational flower. It is the shape of a *Pyrethrum*, with longer petals and of a light, soft scarlet or terracotta scarlet. The leaf resembles that of a Dandelion, but is much larger and thicker. Fortunately, it is of easy growth and increases very rapidly, for with careful disentanglement of its long tuberous root it can be divided every year. The flowers are on a rather stout stalk  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet long.

When I am parading the garden with friends, of course the striking and beautiful yellow flowers of *Arum Elliotiana* causes a halt, and with it sometimes the remark, 'I like the white one best.' I confess to feeling a little nettled at their coldness, although I envy the pure taste of all those who admire white flowers most. This beautiful yellow *Arum* is quite as hardy, divides as well, and in-

creases as fast as the white. They are not hybrids, and their descendants are just as large and yellow as their ancient parents.

*Fuchsia triphylla* is killed down to the ground in winter. It is simply splendid in summer, growing 2 feet high or more. I think it is one of those rather inconvenient subjects who wish to come in for the winter like *Salvia splendens*, but they fill up the greenhouse too much. *S. splendens* emerges from its winter quarters in pieces about every other spring, and each piece makes a nice plant to come in again in autumn, as they do not mind being taken up and potted. They flower for some time in the greenhouse, and the next summer make fine plants in the garden again. The pink Lily of the Valley is generally voted to be rather disappointing in colour, but everybody likes a new thing. At present it is very scarce, which, of course, enhances its floral value.

Portulacas get all the sun they can desire, and respond accordingly; but there must be something peculiar in the light of some days, for sometimes when, apparently, there is no sun, they are wide open. It is a very pleasant deviation from their rule, which, I suppose, this climate enables them to indulge in so often.

The Australian Flannel Flower is very curious, and grew well the only year that I sowed it. The petals are just like white cotton velvet tinted with

green at the tips. It has a faint but peculiar and pleasant scent, and the flowers will last quite ten days or a fortnight without water. *Linum trigynum* is a very pretty bright yellow flower, and another, with very much larger and deep orange-coloured flowers, whose specific name I am not sure of, is a perfect beauty.

We are near the end of this assemblage of plants and their accompanying merits, which I could not omit to mention. Among the rest that occupy front seats on this border is *Stokesia cyanea*, which deserves great praise. It inherits all the best points of the Aster family, to which it belongs. It is very floriferous, and continues its blooming period nearly all the summer, and well into the winter. The flowers, which are single with serrated edges, are a good blue mauve colour, and last well in water and on the plant. There are also *Nerium Fothergillii*, with its brilliant scarlet petals, sparkling with the appearance of gold-dust upon them; the glistening white one and a pink Sarnensis; a blood-red Canna, *Lilium auratum*, *Inula glandulosa*, *Adonis vernalis*, Hæmanthus, Hedychium, Brousevias, and Aquilegias, some large single blue and white, some with lemon and various mixtures of amazing beauty—all from a packet of Veitch's seed. It was indeed a surprise packet worth having.



### CHAPTER III

LIKE all true lovers of flowers, I disdain artificiality, and it positively grieves me to see sham Palms and other plants in pots. I should like to syringe them well. Paper Narcissi and many other sorts of flowers, so beautifully done that it was impossible to say which were real without touching them, made their appearance here at a flower show. Of course, they were not competing for prizes, but only on exhibition to procure orders; but it seemed all wrong. I suppose we shall next see sham garden plants warranted to stand the weather. I think, if we hark back to old times, we can see that Æstheticism robbed us of a great deal of reality when it came marching in and upsetting our balance like a modern Eve. There must have been considerable pretence when people held up a Lily and tried to delude themselves into the belief that they feasted upon it until they were almost faint, or would have had us believe it if they could. The extravagance of ideas has not abated much since that time, and I see no

sign of the end of it. I think that Art, with all her practical skill, took Æstheticism by the hand, and off they went together, and I seem to recognise one of the results achieved by the amalgamation, in pictures where some of our comely forms have ceased to be portrayed in clothes. I quite agree with an old nurse whom we once took to see some statuary, when she expressed her opinion that 'they should have just a shawl or suffen.' She had not attained to the acquired taste necessary to appreciate the sight any more than the Suffolk gamekeeper who was treated to the theatre, and only uttered between his yawns whenever the leading character appeared, 'Hinder 'ee be agin !'

Although I am such an ardent gardener, I do not like even that work overdone. Where gravel must be kept as smooth as a lake, and wheel-marks removed as soon as made, I would just as soon have the paths raked in patterns with stepping-stones to walk upon like the Japanese; nor would I like my turf of such a velvety nature that it is very treason to take a short-cut across it. The spirit of 'dress and keep our gardens' only means do not neglect them, and if we overdo the keeping of them it surely brings a reaction, of which the fashionable wild garden is the result. It belongs to a vitiated taste, just as a person who has lived too long on made dishes, appreciates a chop.

Room decorations seem to have reached a crisis, for the lavish profusion of flowers one sees is almost suggestive of waggons and haymakers for bringing and stacking them. With the advent of specimen glasses, one naturally expected some transformation to take place, perhaps to offer us an opportunity of seeing flowers arranged singly, in order that we might examine them all round. But nothing of the sort: the tiny things are so top-heavy with their lovely contents that when they tip over in a draught one wonders how they balanced up so long. The law of fitness demands that excesses shall be followed by reactions, though they may tarry long in coming; and if, before long, a new era of less extravagant wardrobes set in, the wholesomeness of it would be very apparent. If a happy medium ruled us in the matter of dress, we should be happier and healthier, for the way in which we slave to persecute our systems, to the detriment of mind as well as body, is appalling; and tight shoes and such horrors do not do justice to God's works, and therefore cannot be good. But I must reiterate that a tidy garden does do justice to God's work. I have often noticed that when people have a shrub they value they will weed round it, or cut the grass, or make a little border round it; and I am sure that shrub is rendered more attractive by its orthodox surroundings, because justice is done to God's work—in

fact, His work is magnified by us, which must be satisfactory to a well-balanced mind. The more we become acquainted with God's doings, and the more we come in contact with them, so much the more good we shall imbibe. The influence of gardening on young minds is especially valuable, bringing out a love of the real and true. The taste is implanted in us all, and should be nourished in school-life, just as much as other knowledge; and if boys were taught to plant street trees, they might learn to respect them, instead of pulling them up and laying them across the path to throw you down. And if a knowledge of plants were taught, it would add another and lasting pleasure; and plants by the wayside might receive a share of their attention, instead of gates, which do not require to be taken off their hinges and broken. Surely it is incumbent on us to teach the young to till the soil; and speaking regardless of the more important reasons, it would lead to the production of good gardeners, for whom there is an increasing demand.

What various excuses one hears for not gardening! One gentleman told me that his garden was too hard to dig. Another neighbour said his soil was quite worked out. I suggested working something in, but, plainly, digging was not his hobby. A lady told me she had gardened so hard, and was quite discouraged; and I felt by the intonation





THE BUNGALOW.

(To face p. 21.)

of her two last words it meant good-bye to garden work.

My friends tell me I work like a man—well, I played like a boy, so there is nothing surprising in that; but had I all the strength of a man, I should have done all the work myself, for wages are higher than in England, and skilled labour very scarce.

A greenhouse is almost as common an appendage to a house here as a bathroom, but they are not unmixed blessings, as they are apt to become an eyesore if they are not well looked after and blight kept down. Of course, the entire charge of them is quite beyond the pale of the handyman, be he never so handy, so it was with great trepidation that I left mine for a time. On my return, I found that the inmates had been leading the life of aquatics. Their saucers were full of water, and judging by the earth splashed about, and the holes in the soil all round the plants, the water must have descended upon them in torrents—in fact, frothed down. Their guardian said that I told him to keep them neither wet nor dry, and that he did not know what to do, so he kept them wet. His intellect did not surpass that of the maudlin man who saddled his horse with the front of the saddle towards the tail, and when expostulated with, only said, 'How do you know which way I am going?' I had a few Orchids

in the greenhouse, where *Cypripedium spectabilis* always flowered splendidly, sometimes producing twelve blooms on one plant; but *C. villosum* was not so free flowering. My treatment of *Masdevallias* and *Dendrobiums* was a marked failure. They would persist in working to the edges of their pots, as if they wanted to get out. They gave me to understand that they received neither the skilled attendance nor the moist heat befitting such high-class subjects. And so we parted company. It is almost warm enough here for the lovely *Stephanotis floribunda* to go through the winter without artificial heat, as only twice in twenty years were mine killed by frost. *Salvia splendens* is quite contented with an unheated greenhouse, as well as many other subjects which crowd the hothouse in England. *Hoya carnososa* will manage through the winter out of doors against a close-boarded paling fence, with another creeper spreading partially over it to keep off the worst of the cold. Heliotropes, when large plants, can be coaxed through some winters on a sheltered border, and their condition is sometimes quoted to indicate the severity of the winter. 'Look at your Heliotrope, that will tell you,' I have heard gardeners say. Glass structures can be too hot here in summer, so my plants are migratory, and go out under the shade of trees, or into a skeleton



shed with bushes round the sides and forming the roof, commonly called a 'bush-house,' and for summer these places afford much pleasure and occupation; but what garden enthusiast would be minus a greenhouse—if only to sow seeds in in spring and to dabble in in winter?

## CHAPTER IV

SOMETIMES I attribute my love for rake, spade, and hoe, to have proceeded from the lack of a good education, which, as compared with my own, most children received, for I was always shaky about the three R's, nor much better read than the old gardener, who could master every word in his book except the long one at the end—'Piccadilly.' And I might have been in the same dilemma as the young student who was to pass his divinity examination on the correct answer of the one question, 'Who was the first King of Israel?' He said 'Saul,' but when leaving the room he turned round and said to the examiners: 'I forgot to say, gentlemen, that he was afterwards called Paul.' Then, again, my wholesale ignorance might almost have compared with that of the youth in London who, unable to decide whether to propose to Maria or Anne, found his help in Ave Maria Lane, and settled to 'ave Maria. And my spelling—well, I suppose I had a pretty good ear for sound, but the word 'luncheon' brought

me much humiliation, for I had not mastered it when it appeared on the table, and the transformation of that memorable word into 'leonchun' was satisfactory to me for years afterwards.

What procured for me too many holidays at this epoch was the dull-green colour of 'Murray's Grammar.' I know I went white at the sight of it, and want of fresh air was often put down as the cause, and I was sent out with the delightful dismissal of 'Go and run about.' I *did* run about, and was sometimes soon at the top of the highest elm-tree, with my mouth packed with two rook's eggs, ready for their safe descent. It was rather interesting to be told by a dentist lately that my mouth was rather large inside—the rook's eggs flashed across me. Although climbing trees was admissible for me quite as much as it was for my brothers, the roof of the house was not supposed to be infested with monkeys like us. One morning, however, I suppose 'Murray' looked particularly sickening, so I escaped in good time, and to the roof I repaired without delay, to explore. It was a three-story house, and I soon gained the top by an attic window; but I had never seen the other side of the roof. It was a great expanse of large slates—not at all my idea of happiness—and steep, and I actually thought for a moment. But the grade deceived me, and wetting my fingers to prevent them from slipping, I started backwards

on my hands and knees, slowly at first, but faster and faster, like John Gilpin, and I quickly realized that there seemed nothing between me and death. However, instinct (I claim nothing more) caused me to flatten out, and by the aid of my shoe-tips and very sore fingers I not only stopped, but dragged myself up again, and experienced an exquisite sensation of escape from something terrible. One more error of judgment I must recount, which is still fresh in my memory, and ever will be. I undertook to spring a rat-trap with my fingers and to get them out in time; and oh! the two first joints of those sticky extremities! Shall I ever forget it? Will those who heard me ever forget it? I soon had a small crowd round me, and I thought I heard 'What a little fool!' among the sympathizers. Suffice it to say that I conceived the same opinion of myself, and have ever since looked upon rat-traps as blessings in disguise. The trap was ordered into the deepest part of the pond, and some of my vanity was simultaneously quenched.

I had one dear girl friend at this time who helped to retain in me some of the girlhood which I would so gladly have exchanged for boyhood, and although this bosom friend was a few years my junior, still, she was my leader in all that was best. We ran riot together when we could meet, and spent our time chiefly on the

bare backs of my mother's horses, which were quiet though groggy. Tilting at the ring, standing on their backs, and endeavouring to get on and off by the aid of a surcingle, afforded us intense happiness. We had four of this class of quadruped, so that when one pair was wanted for the carriage we could still continue our antics. I know that these meetings were considered almost too blissful by my good mother, who thought that pleasure should fill up only the very smallest crevices of life; consequently, our meetings were not so frequent as they could have been. I am quite sure that my dear mother had no idea to what lengths Satan went to fill my idle hands with mischief to stuff the gaping crevices of my time.

My brothers had a resident tutor, or even two sometimes, and it has often occurred to me that my governess might have had a very gay time had she wished, for her occupation of looking after me was rather a sinecure. I much preferred my brothers' companionship, for we were inseparable, although I was most deeply attached to, and dearly loved, one lady who was with us for some years. But I often lost sight of her, and sometimes my holidays were so long that those of Christmas joined those of midsummer. Of course, I was a harum-scarum tomboy, but my dear mother had no misgivings on that account, and

only feared the opposite extreme for me. My dolls were divested of their finery, that I might not become imbued with a passion for dress, and every care was taken that I might grow up quite natural, which I naturally did.

My mother drove out regularly, and every afternoon the carriage was at the door, and almost as regularly I was captured and placed in it. I used to hang my head over the side, and speculate which stones the wheels would go over. This gave me a straight eye, which comes in useful for gardening sometimes. After service on Sunday afternoons my brothers and their tutors took walks, and my governess and I were expected to see any sick poor at the most distant part of the village, and, curiously enough, we sometimes all met. We children thought it lucky, and our preceptors thought it well planned, I suppose. The Hovell Arms was our furthest village boundary in one direction, and we always understood that the last representative of the Hovell family was dead, so I was very interested to meet Canon Hovell of Napier lately, to disprove the fact. To think of him being connected with that little wayside inn, bearing his name and arms, brought back much of my past life, even the sound of the village church bells. Bells! Yes, I am right in applying the plural to them, for bells they just were, though perhaps the worst ever

rung. Yet there is much deep-seated beauty to remember in them ; their efficacy was more powerful in drawing young men and maidens, old men and children, into that little old church, with its mouldy tombs, to praise the name of the Lord, than many a fine peal might be now. My dear mother loved their summons, because she was so real, for it takes more than sentiment to like a peal of three bells, one of them cracked. Oh for more such mothers! and if one of the rising generation should read this, and think that they don't want mothers who admire cracked bells, I can only wish them the same spirit that was found in her. Alas! I inherit few of her virtues, but I do inherit simplicity enough to wish for nothing more advanced than the simple services set forth in these four little lines :

'Lord, how delightful 'tis to see  
A whole assembly worship Thee!  
At once *we* sing, at once *we* pray,  
In this Thy house, on this Thy day.'

The choir does nearly all the singing for us now, and we look on in a theosophistic sort of way, trying to think it instead of joining. I am amazed at my own voice if I try. This theme suggests the appropriate mention of a little chorister. The story goes, or rather the purport of it, that an angel came to a little chorister when

he was in bed, and asked him why they did not have their anthem that evening. The boy, all surprised, started up, saying that he was confident that they had their very best, and gave the angel the name of the composer. Then the angel said, 'It never came up.' I often think of those country services and their antiquated surroundings with lingering affection.

The hymn tunes were limited in number, but that was as well, as it enabled the labouring class, of whom the congregation was composed, to learn the words, for a large majority of them could not read. But it seemed to me they all joined in, and I know that none could have been in that unhappy condition of the plough-boy at St. Paul's, who said, 'As they all sang what they liked, I sang "Bob and Jo."' I used to watch the men uncover their heads when they got to the church door, and I thought how reverently they did it, and it seemed to add to the sanctity which pervaded those precincts. Some of the women would even drop a curtsy, and the men touch their hats as they entered, out of sheer reverence for the House of God, and for the sacredness of the occasion of their coming together. I know that those country folk valued their services, for, if I may so express it, they seemed religiously business-like. Some had a long way to trudge on muddy roads, but those poor little bells reminded them of the



privilege awaiting them, and many responded to their call.

My wild life ended when my darling mother died, and I was sent to live in a town, all properly, with an aunt; and ever since I have so sympathized with birds in cages that I always feel inclined to open their doors. I did my five years' penal servitude patching up my education, and then married. One of my poor dear brothers I only saw again when he came to die at our house a few years afterwards, the other also died young, and had I been a boy, I believe I should have been with them now.

It is very remarkable that we never dream of the dead *as* dead—at least, I don't, and many others say the same. I have tried to construe this into a reassuring hope of some kind, building vague castles in the air. I like to try and imagine myself where I fain would be, and in raptures saying, 'No wonder we could not dream of them as dead;' and with all mysteries cleared away, easily realizing how that they were not 'the dead to bury their dead'; and then our unalloyed happiness casting oblivion over the absent ones—misty, harmless day-dreams, I hope. The well-known typical allusion to our future state in the career of the butterfly and its three changes is very pleasant, I think. First the caterpillar walking the earth, seeking its staff of life; then in its

shroud remaining withdrawn from sight till light and beauty call it forth in its glorified state; and I wonder, if this were all so, whether we should recognise each other, or whether such recognitions would avail us anything in His presence, where He is all in all.





LILIUM GIGANTIMUM.

## CHAPTER V

I HAVE just seen Mr. Barr, the great bulb-grower, who is touring the colonies, and spared two half-hours to visit my garden, among others. He enlightened me very much on the culture of Blandfordias, which I have always found difficult to grow and flower well. Mine resent the kindness which I have bestowed upon them; and no wonder, for it appears that they only require hard, baked clay, and flourish in full exposure to Australian sun on the railway-banks there, and are a magnificent sight at all the stations. This they must indeed be, for their large golden bells will tell out their own beauty. I must fish up some of our subsoil for them, to see how they like it. That they cannot bear disturbance at the roots I have found to my cost. One which I bought as *Nobilis* does better with me than the other. Perhaps Australian light has more red in it, which, the last new theory asserts, forces plants along *nolens volens*. Mr. Barr also admired the natural way in which *Clianthus*

*dampieri* (Sturt's Pea) grew here, but as his visit was near winter, I could only furnish him with a small photograph of some branches which I cut off the previous summer. It grows flat along the ground, spreading out in all directions from the stem, and measuring about 5 feet across. Its flowers have a startling richness and perkiness which is very sensational at first sight. It grows larger in Australia and much more robustly, but it is beautiful enough for anything here. He was also much enamoured of a dwarf Pomegranate (*Punica granatum nana*), and I should like to know some fresh adjectives to describe it. Pellucid will do for one, for its blossoms possess such a clearness and delicacy of texture and colour that it is quite unique. The petals are so thin and of such a vivid scarlet that it fills one with wonderment; I stand and stare at it. Sometimes, in buying plants, one is fortunate in getting a good one of its kind and sometimes the reverse, and I think this must have been an exceptionally good one, as Mr. Barr pronounced it the best he had ever seen.

It is very delightful to meet such an authority on one's hobby, and I quite wish that a new profession would start up to establish a resident expert in every town to devote his time to visiting amateurs' gardens. It would save many great disappointments. Nobody seems sure how

big a new plant will grow, and it gets put into the wrong spot and has to be moved, sometimes unnecessarily, for fear it should not thrive in the first spot; and I know one gentleman who moved his Gerbera to death. Now, this new professional gentleman, who I suppose would be called garden doctor or expert, or something to that effect, might have saved the life of that plant, price 3s. 6d., and its owner much tribulation. I don't know what sort of fee would be forthcoming for his services, and fresh air would not fill his pocket sufficiently; but he would find the occupation a wholesome panacea for his frequent infirmities, I am sure. A lady in England told me that keeping fowls was *the* panacea for all worries. She had purchased a hundred, the incubator was on its way, and she was going to manage them all herself, and reap no end of profit. But I am afraid she must have found the panacea worse than the worries even with the 'profits' added on.

'*Chacun à son goût,*' she would say to me when I was still in England. 'What can you find to do in the garden?' It was a puzzling question, for whatever I did in that garden, there was always someone who could do it better and had plenty of time to do it in. If I raked a border, 'he who could do it better' was sure to come by, and as he passed I could hear little grunts, which, being

interpreted, were: 'That border does not require raking, and when it does it will be done.' He was a really good gardener, and we had recently bought the place with him on it, for he had been with the previous owner for eight years; but he had always been accustomed to receive all prizes at shows as perquisites, which rather hampered our doings among the flowers and fruit. We watched his superior methods of gardening for four years, and then found ourselves out here.

I must say that that man was one of the best managers possible, for, besides a large garden to look after, he had a huge conservatory and two other greenhouses, one of which was a forcing-house. Every plant was well understood and attended to by him, single-handed, for a weekly wage of fifteen shillings and no food! I often think of him with reverence.

We soon came to the conclusion that this climate, situated as we are—100 miles north of Wellington, our capital city, and about 250 south of Auckland, our largest northern city—resembles the Scilly Islands. There the vegetation looks almost sub-tropical compared to Cornwall, although only thirty miles off. I suppose the Gulf Stream manages the temperature. Our vegetation matches that of Scilly and perhaps the Channel Islands, but, of course, as New Zealand boasts of about the same dimensions as the



British Isles, we are not swept by sea spray nor wrapped in sea fogs, although we have a superabundance of the four winds that blow, and a Wellington man is supposed to be known in other parts by holding his hat on. His hat trick does not minimize the curious tradition that his particular city is subject to two prevailing or trade winds instead of one.

Hydrangeas grow very large in Scilly, and seem to enjoy the mists which envelop them so often. I saw no blue ones there, perhaps because they have nothing but pure granite to grow in; and I should avoid planting them in that, for I had rather have a blue, however small, than a pink, however large.

In Auckland nearly all are a good deep blue, growing on scoria soil. I have not yet succeeded in growing a good blue one myself, though I have tried many ways; and as iron is supposed to turn the colour of their flowers blue, I buried coils of iron wire round their roots. As this plan failed, I pulled the plants up in disgust, but left the wire in the ground, which someone will vote a nasty trick when they try to dig there. A friend of mine had a very fine plant growing in a pumice soil, which had beautiful large flowers of the palest blue.

One of the advantages of a climate like this is the large amount of fresh air that one can

enjoy, for we are seldom imprisoned by weather for long. The winters are short, and enough cannot be said in praise of our autumns, which are long, glorious stretches of fine weather, which launch us into winter in the most delightful manner possible. I almost believe that this particular part has the pick of New Zealand climate, but I may be prejudiced, for had I subdued subsoil in any other spot, I might have been equally enamoured of it.

Spring is the most windy time, when we occasionally get an equinoctial gale, which is terrific—for want of a fiercer word.

I am told that here wind does not travel more than half the pace that it does in England. If such be the case, I am surprised, and can only imagine that it must be assisted by sleight of hand tricks.

One night, to our consternation, it tore every gooseberry-bush out of the ground, and stacked them in one corner of the garden. Of course, this would not do! It was plain that both top and under shelter must be got up with all speed. So high palings soon made their appearance, whilst I sowed boxes of Blue-Gum seed. If I were only told that those trees are now 80 feet high, I could not believe it; but there they are, a fine belt, doing their duty well. I never heard of a Blue Gum being blown down. I don't think such a

thing ever happened; but I do know that in a severe gale the whole place is strewn with minced gum-leaf, about the size of a threepenny piece, which no rake can collect: a brush and comb would do it better. There may be something in the gum-leaf peculiarly adapted for mincing, for I never saw any other leaves so shattered. However, a broom gathers them sufficiently, and they are conveyed to my rubbish hole, from which I never fail to obtain twenty or thirty barrows of manure every year.

Another gale took the opportunity of visiting us after torrents of rain, which reduced the sub-soil to such a pulp that you might as well expect a spoon to stand up in a basin of treacle as trees in those water-logged holes. Down went a long row of *Pinus insignis* like ninepins; they were 12 feet high. So when the gale abated, they were restored to their upright position; but with their heads chopped off. They soon recovered from their execution, and now contribute to our top shelter.

Bad drainage, we settled, was responsible for a good deal of this. The pipes, which were tiny and a long way apart, were probably choked, and had finished acting for ever. So we put down drains here, there, and everywhere; not always proper pipes, as the cost mounted up too much, but makeshifts were substituted, such as stones,

broken brick and crockery, and boarded drains. The best of these amateur inventions was fencing-wire, twisted like a huge corkscrew, and laid in the drain in place of pipes, with a thick layer of pine-needles over them, and then filled in again. These, I am sure, have formed permanent little tunnels, acting well ever since. On wet days I often enjoy an umbrella trip to the main outlet of all these inventions, and gloat over the volumes of water pouring out.

Of course, before the subsoil was vanquished and buried to its present depth, beds had to be dug at least 3 feet by 3 for the reception of any tree or shrub, and into twenty of these beds I put twenty Scarlet-flowering Gums (*Eucalyptus ficifolia*) in a straight row down the drive. My bump of order is to blame for this and many more rows, and the poor things must feel like soldiers when we inspect them. I gave one penny for each of these seeds. They flowered in four years, and every summer they are a sight to see. They are covered with scarlet, or in some cases crimson, inflorescence arranged in cymes or large round flattish bunches, each flower composed of stamens with delicate gray anthers, and it is difficult to say which colour is the most beautiful. I believe these trees would grow 40 or 50 feet high, but mine are topped to about 15 feet to avoid damage





EUCALYPTUS FICIFOLIA (SCARLET FLOWERING GUM) IN BUD.

[To face page 41.]

by wind. The seed-vessels have to be removed for the same reason, as they are very numerous, and soon become very heavy. The flowers secrete a great quantity of honey, which the moths in the evening seem to appreciate almost more than the bees in the daytime.

## CHAPTER VI

L APAGERIAS, both the red and the white, do well here on a trellis, a little shaded from the mid-day sun. But slugs and snails find the young shoots so appetizing that I sometimes know when a shoot is nearly through the ground by a snail endeavouring to reach down through the soil to meet it. So, after removing the snail, I replace it by a slug protector, which is like a flower-pot made of perforated zinc ; and having been welcomed up in this safe and sure cage, the shoot goes on growing safely for a few weeks, when it is too long for its cage. Then I put on it a tube-shaped muslin bag, but much too long ; and I keep putting down its skirt as the shoot grows, and when it has outgrown this garment it is also safe from foes. I have had these plants for more than sixteen years, but they never attempted to seed until this year ; and I attribute the happy event to the instrumentality of the humble-bee, which has lately been imported here, and has proved himself *au fait* at the fertilization of red



clover, which baffled all other bees. Next on the trellis is *Akebia quinata*, which has monopolized 30 feet in one direction, going at breakneck speed, the young shoots clutching hold of each other and forming ropes before one can look round. It tried to gallop over the *Lapagerias* in the other direction, so the shears had to come and keep order; but its lovely real puce-coloured, sweet-scented flowers quite atoned for its aggressiveness. Its five-fingered foliage seems to suit it exactly, but I always think each flower has the foliage which suits it best—or it may be imagination. Next comes the *Gelsemium*, derived from the Italian name for *Jessamine*. It seems to like peeping out among the *Akebia*, finding shelter for its young shoots, which object to the frost. Here is a beautiful *Rose* called *Madam Pernet*, though I am not sure that it has not a third name. The colour of it is the deepest, brightest shell-pink ever seen in any shell, and the substance of its petals so shell-like that an elastic imagination may see a resemblance. It will hold out all night on a ball-dress against all competitors, and its many points of excellence have placed it as *Laureate* in our garden. It has an exceptionally good and large bed, which it shares with *Poinciana Gilliesii*, its next-door neighbour.

What a wonder this *Poinciana* is! The vernacular name which the natives have for it in *Mendoza*

is 'Mal de ojos' (bad for the eyes). I suppose by that, the pollen is poisonous, but in another sense the flowers must be good for the eyes—quite a treat: a large bunch of long red stamens, 5 inches long, coming out of the centre of yellow cups, and from ten to twenty flowers in each group. Owing to the beauty of the long falling stamens, it is called the Bird of Paradise Flower, which helps to describe its conspicuous beauty. It has fern-like foliage, which closes towards evening. I bought experience dearly here, as I lost my finest and oldest plant from the evil effects of bad soil and drainage, for it loves cultivation. Close to this is the Rose Acacia (*Robinia hispida*), which, I think, must certainly rank among the gems, with its bold but elegant foliage, like the large White Acacia, and racemes of bright, clear, deep-pink flowers like Laburnum. Mine is on its own root, and its thin stem and branches all want support. It has one drawback—that of throwing up suckers, which I now take care to cut off, thinking they injure their parent, for I lost one in the days when I thought them too precious to touch. I hail the approaching day when I shall possess one grafted on to one of its rougher relations, and I expect, if time is spared me, to grow it into a fine suckerless tree. The foliage of this also closes at night. A Japanese Clematis comes next—a new-comer which has not flowered yet,

but from the account of its feathery seeds I gather they are to surpass all seeds in beauty, as well as its own yellow flowers. Another Jap comes next, a singularly good gem—the Japanese Daphne, although I cannot vouch for the authenticity of its name, only having bought it as such; the blossom rather resembles the Lilac, only more loosely arranged and drooping, and the tube of each flower longer. Unlike our Daphne, it has no scent, but the extreme freshness of its brilliant mauve flowers and its great floriferousness brings it hosts of admirers. It is deciduous, and seems charmed with our climate.

The Pride of California (*Lathyrus splendens*) forms a sort of canopy over this in summer, and is a mass of splendour: such an intense rich crimson pea, with an extra rich dark centre, is quite out of the common. Something white has come at last on the trellis, in the form of a Japanese Plum (*Prunus sinensis floripleno*), which is so covered with bloom that it deserves another 'floripleno' at the end of its name.

*Plumbago Capensis* gets very ugly in winter, even with a veil of scrim over it, so I let it take its chance, as the old shoots shelter the young, and do not look worse than the scrim veil; and I clip it back when the ugly time is over. It is a splendid subject for a trellis here, spreading out to a great distance, and flowering better than it does

under glass in England. The colour is also richer and fresher, and the flowers larger. *Passiflora incarnata*, or 'Little Gem,' as I prefer to call it, and under which name I bought it, hangs itself in beautiful wreaths, quite a yard long, thickly studded with its red puce flowers, some open, some closed; and no one can tell those which are going to open from those which are over. A long string of them is a very fascinating sight. I am told that it is a herbaceous kind. It should rank among the many gems. *Ceanothus dentatus* is a sheet of blue, though only for a fortnight, but its bright, cheerful foliage for the rest of the year compensates for its rapid display of bloom. It wants to grow as big as a house, and would if I did not cut it to the bone every autumn. The Austrian Copper Rose is, I suppose, the most brilliant little piece of copper colour in the world—quite another little gem.

I have now got to the last treasure on the trellis, which I have saved purposely for a *bonne bouche*, for it is a good bush. I mean the *Embothrium coccineum*, which grows from Chili to the Magellan Straits. It has orange-scarlet flowers like continuous honeysuckle all down its long whip-like branches, interspersed with handsome elliptic-shaped rich green leaves. It has a dazzling, dancing, graceful look, which strikes admiration into everyone who sees it. The branches

hang down almost like a weeping willow, so I tie the branches of one tree along the trellis, to save breakage by wind. It evidently looks down at a trellis support with scorn, so I ventured to chop off its head, which was soon replaced by a dozen more shoots. Cuttings strike and seeds grow, and it has proved itself willing and obliging to all treatment, so I think it fairly entitles itself to be called 'Dux' of the garden. It derives its name, I read, from *en* (in) and *bothrium* (little pit), referring to the anthers. I hear *Jacaranda mimosifolia* calling out, 'I am Dux!' Well, if *Jacaranda* is jealous, we must make a plural, so I will try and describe all the 'Duxes.' This appellation must refer to them as being more endearing than the correct plural, and the reader must pick and choose. I confess I have a very warm corner in my heart for the *Jacaranda*. It is related to the *Tecoma*, to which one can trace the family likeness both in the shape of the flowers and the arrangement of them. Nothing can surpass the beauty of its clusters of soft, blue flowers, each one as large as a thimble. These, set in mimosa-like foliage on a tree 30 feet high, as they grow in the rather warmer climate of Auckland, are a sight that no flower-lover should miss. They can only just stand the frosts here, and require wrapping up in winter while small. I seem to have lost my white one. Perhaps it was one that was moved, and

in the middle of the operation was dropped into its new bed through awkwardness. I secretly wish these sort of garden hands with those unenlightened Boers in South Africa who won't wash, or if they do undress for that purpose are sure to find some garment they had lost for seven years.





CORDYLINE AUSTRALIS, OR CABBAGE-TREES, TWENTY YEARS OLD.



## CHAPTER VII

I HAVE always been too fond of moving shrubs and trees, and one gardener proved beyond all doubt that *Clethra arborea* had been all round the premises and back again to the spot from which it started. And during a consultation with him as to the wisdom of starting another semi-invalid on its rounds in search of health, he remarked: 'It will think there is something the matter if it don't go a little way, mum!' I seemed to hear their little chorus of 'Breakers ahead!' as the spades were coming. However, all these moves were promotion into better soil and situations, though the risk was great, and the change, I doubt not, was often worse than useless. *Clethra arborea* proved to be afflicted with red spider, and is always a disgusting sight after flowering, but recovers by the following spring, and produces many clusters of its lily-of-the-valley-like flowers, which smell so strongly of Tolu lozenges. Parallel with the happy family on the trellis I planted a row of twenty Cordylines, or Palm Lilies, commonly

called New Zealand Cabbage Trees, for the uninteresting reason that someone once boiled some and ate them as a vegetable. Some of them are 20 or 30 feet high. They look like so many sentinels, and their large, waving, palm-like tops resemble plumes. I got them all out of the Bush, with the exception of one other kind—*Dracæna Draco*, or Dragon's Blood Tree. This deserves special mention, as its famous ancestor was killed by a violent storm in Tenerife in 1867, aged three thousand years. I had an excellent excuse for putting those Palms in a row, for Wistarias are planted at the foot of most of them, and will soon form a beautiful screen, as they reach from one Palm to another. I do not allow them to embrace their giant supporters, as I am afraid that in time they would squeeze them to death like boa constrictors. So the shoots are conducted along on ropes, and as these palms branch out at the top into several heads, the Wistarias can always find a resting-place amongst them for their highest shoots.

It is extremely interesting work helping one's self to plants and trees in the Bush—so much so that the first few years of our life here found us in it pretty regularly, with lunch, spades, trowls, hatchets, saws, and baskets; and we soon captured all the native plants we wanted. Some of the Ferns are very beautiful. The *Gleichenias*

are a very distinct kind, with their ladder-like fronds set in umbrella shape. Hymenophyllums, or filmy Ferns, are very curious. Adiantums, or Maiden-hairs, are in infinite variety. The Todeas are very beautiful, especially *Todea superba*, which is commonly called Prince of Wales' Feather. *Pteris scabecoula*, or the common 'Bracken,' grows and spreads everywhere where the soil is good. All of these and many others are done full justice to, both as regards description and illustration, in 'Ferns of New Zealand,' by H. C. Field, C.E., and member of the New Zealand Institute. His illustrations are most perfect. I must mention a Fern which I have come across under the name of the 'Norfolk Island Fern' as being exceedingly pretty. It has fronds of substantial material, very finely divided.

All our friendly visits to the Bush did not constitute Bush robbery, but those who cut down large Nikau Palms, which are the slowest growing of all kinds, and use them for the decoration of ballrooms and for other festive occasions, are greatly to blame. These Palms only make about one frond every year, and when a dead one falls off, it leaves a permanent mark, which forms a ring round the stems, so the age of the trees can be approximately told by the number of rings on them; and I have counted three hundred on some victims. The argument is that there are always

more young ones coming on, but they are not plentiful enough to talk of in that frivolous way. The New Zealand Bush is gradually but surely disappearing, and young plants with it. There is one comfort, however, that those who take small plants now, and ultimately turn them out into their gardens, will so perpetuate them for their posterity that in three hundred years, if all goes well, they will enjoy some fine specimens. One has been in this garden for thirty years. Where they happen to be growing about 20 or 30 feet apart in the Bush, and their fronds reach each other and form great evergreen arches, suggestive of architectural designs, they are a sight to behold. It is hard to decide whether these Palms or Ferns are the most beautiful. The Palms are, I think, the more imposing, owing to their bold, giant dimensions, although, when one is near a Tree-fern, with its great spread of lace-like fronds, I think most people are swayed in its favour; but I rather cling to the Palm as being more unique. Without doubt they are a pair of Bush 'duxes.'

Were I not so well established on conquered subsoil, I should have enjoyed making a home in the Bush. Fancy the bliss of ready-made Tree-ferns and Nikau Palms to do what you liked with; and fancy Tropæolums and Passion-flowers on them. A *Van volximi* Passion-flower or two might cover a Nikau, hanging its long-stalked blooms

down among the fronds! What a sight! I would, of course, encourage our beautiful white native Clematis, but ugly things I would replace with the beautiful. What an inexhaustible soil and sub-soil they would revel in, formed of the fallen trees and leaves of generations! Then a Tree-fern for a summer-house, or two or three together, perhaps. You could have your own Vine and Fig-tree to sit under as well, but that would be a place of penance compared with all this. I would not be particular about the winding of the paths as long as they led to one of these wondrous sights. I would edge them with Tree-fern stems, which last so well that even pigsties are paved with them sometimes. Whenever I enter the Bush I am seized with a yearning to tidy it up — to remove old trees, which have fallen upon healthy ones, compelling them to support the old dying cripples, to the detriment of their own appearance. Then other things are being smothered or strangled by ugly, worthless Lawyers and Supplejacks. Lawyers are prickly subjects, from which it is very difficult to extricate one's self. The Supplejacks hang about the trees like ropes, and either trip you up or catch your head. But they have a use, as they furnish the world with millions of walking-sticks.

I have never been far into dense Bush, nor do I wish to, for even when picnicking on its skirts I am terribly nervous if any of my party get

beyond 'cooee' or call. My fears are put down to broken nerves, but I think they are more connected with common-sense. However, I am thankful to say that one seldom, almost never, hears of anyone being really lost in the Bush; yet, with those who are not blessed with experience, and who do not know what precautions to take, it could be so easily done.

Fern-seekers would have little or no sport in the depths of the Bush, but just inside, it is deeply carpeted with Ferns, sometimes interspersed with Antler-fern (*Lycopodium volubile*), spreading its creeping stems over 10 feet in length. I venture to say that lunch or afternoon tea cannot be enjoyed amid better surroundings, entirely free from snakes and other vile reptiles. It is difficult to believe that such hushed and untrodden solitude should be free from every loathsome, creepy, crawly creature.

Our beautiful and curious sights are not confined to the Bush, as all know; but as I seldom leave my plants, I have not much to describe here. The scenery on the Wanganui River is very good: the banks are high and steep, and thickly clothed with native evergreen, interspersed with Tree-ferns, occurring so thickly in places that one might almost describe them as growing in sheets. Now and again lovely little peeps of back scenery seem to pass by in panoramic style between the hills in

front as one glides along the water. Maoris coming down-stream in their canoes, bringing produce, are very picturesque, and give the scene a finishing touch exactly its own. The number of Quinces that they bring down is surprising. Wild Cherries, which are excellent, they also bring, but not an abundant supply. I am afraid that Maoris are not very good gardeners—at least, I have never heard of their flower-growing propensities; and when they weed they often sit down and clear as far round as they can reach, and then move on and repeat the process. They grow the Sweet Potato, which is the Yam proper, I believe, but it does not exceed an average Potato in size. Mine were smaller; they rather outwitted my gardening powers. The plants run along the ground, and it seems more like cultivating Convolvuluses, which the leaves resemble. I kept on taking off cuttings and planting them, as I was told, and I was not sure when the process should cease. We have also a mottled purple and a black Potato, but neither look very encouraging, and the flavour varies little from the type.

On some of the snow mountains is to be seen, growing to perfection, the largest and handsomest *Ranunculus* in the world (*R. Lyallii*), of which Mr. and Mrs. Featon remark in their 'Art Album of New Zealand Flora': 'The most graphic description would fail to give an adequate idea.'

It has been seen with forty blossoms, each as large as a half-crown, and of the purest white. The stem grows 2 or 3 feet high, and has several blossoms on each stem, which almost present the appearance of a bunch of Water Lilies. My plants soon became small, for their wants are too difficult to supply, requiring as they do the two extremes of heat and cold. The yellow one, *R. insignis*, went the same way. It is rather tantalizing to think of these magnificent plants blooming away in their almost inaccessible home.

In Rotorua, near Auckland, there are to be seen some sights of a very different nature, which are no less than geysers of boiling mud and boiling holes of mud, which in their spasmodic convulsions frighten tourists, and add considerably to their pleasure and excitement. Besides, the crust of earth on which one walks between and round about these sights is so thin in places that one has to step with care. It sounds too risky to be pleasant, but accidents seem very seldom to occur. I should, however, take care to secure a light-weight companion for that expedition.

About this district lives, or is supposed to live, our greatest insect curiosity. It is called the Vegetable Caterpillar. The specimens that I have seen were large, dead Caterpillars, with apparently the root of a shrub protruding from the region of the tail. This outgrowth is pronounced by



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scientific men to be really a fungus which grows nowhere but in this Caterpillar, and during its growth gradually saps its life, and finally kills it. Those which escape the spores of the fungus turn into a large brown moth. Some of the Caterpillars are 3 or 4 inches in length, and their root-like appendage as long as themselves. They are found under the soil, and those who have dug them up have told me that they are often in a semi-live state.

## CHAPTER VIII

ALTHOUGH, as I mentioned before, I maintain that gardening is in everyone's system, the love of it was not forthcoming in my own in my young days. We had always a large, rambling place, which was made more rambling by indifferent hands, for my mother preferred to give employment to men out of work in the village rather than keep a regular gardener; and I may safely say that the garden, in consequence, never looked spick and span—quite the contrary. But during my five years of incarceration in town our usual walk was up and down the Botanical Gardens; and as my good aunt was very fond of flowers, and knew the names of very many, she always imparted her knowledge of them to me, greatly relieving the up and down walk, which we performed with the regularity of sentry-go. Greenhouses were connected with these gardens, with plants for sale, so we not infrequently each bore home a pot-plant for her small drawing-room. The residue of them we used to brighten up her very tiny

garden, so shut in by high walls that very few things could be induced to flower there, unless plunged into it while they were in the very act.

My uncles used to congregate at my aunt's house, and I have seen her little drawing-room quite full of them. It was their rendezvous, where they could come and vent their grievances, which grievances were always accompanied by adjectives of a very pronounced type. I remember particularly the occasion of one visit of an uncle who was hand-in-glove with the Master of the Foxhounds. A rabbit-trap, declared to be of a suspicious nature, had been found in an adjacent wood, and by the way in which the account of the tragedy was delivered, one almost felt one's self in collusion with the gamekeepers and poachers—in fact, every human being seemed to be involved, so powerfully did he handle his subject. During the highest pitch of the excitement, towards the end of the tirade, he described the sinking of the trap in a moat, and I should say that it sank in filthy water and execrations—equal parts. Here I must give a specimen of the crude comments which I seem to have been capable of, and for which I suffered accordingly; but I do not think that I can have deserved such a fine collection of epithets as I received. An Admiral uncle, who, of course, having been well grounded at sea, knew how to administer abuse, had looked in to

tell my aunt of the reprieve of a notorious criminal, and in reply to my uncle's remark that the death sentence should have been carried out, I unfortunately chimed in: 'Perhaps a great many people deserve hanging who escape it.' I then and there understood what a worthless seventeen-year-old chit I was.

I have met all six uncles at a family dinner-party, where the manners and customs of the previous generation formed a common topic of conversation, interspersed with the names of a famous few who could contain most port! I gathered that my uncles' generation compared very favourably with the past, and for talking witty nonsense I thought no generation could compare with their own. The Vicarage was the chief seat of these family gatherings, where hospitality, wine, and conversation flowed without the least restriction. My uncle was Vicar of the same parish for about forty years, and was as well established and satisfied as the Vicar of Bray. He was kind, charitable, and liberal to an extreme, and his parochial duties seemed to flow on so silently and quietly that I sometimes wondered whether there could have been any. They were carried on in close conjunction with a farm, with which they did not appear to clash. His daily drives in a pony-gig, as that kind was then called, to the nearest market town, a distance of three miles,

spoke of the greatest regularity. His coachman and four-wheeler occasionally replaced the usual equipage, but my uncle became more faithful to the humbler conveyance after the splashboard had been removed to admit of his very lengthy legs stretching themselves out to their full limit. I also remember those wonderful extremities being clothed in haybands, wrapped round them from ankle to knee, or higher in severe weather, and he used to say they were the warmest gaiters ever invented. I saw him being prepared for his outing one day, and thought how clever the coachman was to make so many yards of neat haybands! He did so little walking, and at such a slow pace, that these gaiters remained in excellent order all day. They were rather conspicuous-looking in town, but they always looked comfortable in snowtime, and, as their wearer remarked, 'comfort was the chief thing about them.' My aunt lived to the age of ninety-three, and had not my dear mother's delicate health succumbed to disease, their eight ages would have formed a record. If ever there were six hale old uncles, free from artifice and malicious microbes, these were they.

I hope the children's glass of port, which we always found waiting for us when we came down to dessert, may have become extinct now, for use became a second nature, till wine ranked as a

necessity, and was ordered down everybody's throat for every malady—the more grievous, the more port—and one's often infirmities must have been braced up to concert-pitch, if not flooded out altogether. What prodigious wine-bills it took to souse the system to such an extent, especially as most butlers required sousing as well! I remember hearing of a large cellar where, on the departure of the soused one, every bottle was discovered to be empty, with the exception of one, which, he confessed afterwards, he had left for his master to go on upon! Butlers and cellars are chiefly imaginary here, and a full complement of servants generally consists of one; so the drawing of corks and other troubles which stimulants involve have ended in abstemiousness in our own house, and a pop is seldom heard. Solids, on the contrary, in New Zealand receive a great share of attention, and cooking is, perhaps, the most useful accomplishment, and may fall to the lot of anyone. It fell to mine, but I lacked the accomplishment, and I speak from bitter experience of myself and others when I say that the meat-pies had no holes in their tops! It is surprising to see the beautiful cookery produced by some ladies, and equally surprising to see the entire absence of all knowledge of it in others. One of our visitors offered to roast the chops! She would soon have had them hanging in a row, suspended by strings

from the chimney piece! Then she donned her apron and proceeded to ice a cake. She procured unbeaten whites of eggs, as she said sweetened to taste, and immersed the cake in them to a great depth and all round, and promised us that the next morning it would look like snow. But, alas! next morning the cake appeared to be suffering from the effects of rain. It was terribly puffed up, but no snow anywhere; it was saturated with white of egg and to spare. We grasped the situation, and quickly had it into a basin, beating it up hard; and with the addition of lemon essence it turned into an excellent pudding, the surplus white of egg being beaten up separately for the top.

Eggs were in such plenty that when one went through some of the paddocks, up rose the hens from their nests in the rushes, flying like pheasants. A tame band, however, kept guard outside the back-door, and a still worse band inside. One took the liberty of laying an egg in my daughter's doll's cradle beside the doll; others laid under the house, which gave us some trouble, as the nests could only be approximately located by the cackle, and a board in the floor had to be lifted to get at the eggs. It was not so much the value of them which necessitated the upheaval of the floors as the knowledge that several hens were using the same nest, and that through too

many stools the sitting would come to naught—though not the stench for an unlimited time. Some country houses are built on blocks of wood a foot or more from the ground, with nothing to prevent fowls and small quadrupeds from walking under as they please.

One morning, having filled half the oven with mutton, I exclaimed to myself, 'Oh that I were a cook, with this house full of eggs within and without!' and, unpacking the cookery-book with all speed, I made something that would satisfy all the out-of-door appetites, soon to return to dinner—a huge batter in a flat baking-dish. No sooner was this mixed than the conviction seized me that the potatoes ought to be well under way, and off I set to secure some. Imagine my dismay on my return. I met those awful fowls coming out of the back-door, apparently wearing lemon-coloured gloves. They had been wading about in my batter! If fowls are fed at the back-door to save trouble, or, in other words, to make cords for your own back, they will pester that spot (the back-door) from generation to generation.

Everyone, high or low, rich or poor, should plant a Lemon-tree or two, not only for the great convenience of having them always for cooking, but also for making lemon squash—that most wholesome, comforting, and efficacious beverage in influenza. The trees do very well here, and



soon bear, although those grown from pips take longer than those which are grafted.

Our sweet cookery was very successful on the whole, and if I found myself in a tight corner for variety, fruit salads were ready to fill the gap. These are a great institution here; every sort of fruit goes into them—the more sorts the better—and it is forthcoming all the year round, with the help of Oranges, Bananas, and Pine-apples from the shops. The fruit of the Japanese Persimmon has little to recommend it, for it is difficult to detect any flavour beyond a mealy ripeness. The tree, however, is an imposing sight, for its large yellow fruits hang on almost into mid-winter after the leaves have gone. Water-melons are very common, and most refreshing on hot days, tepidly reminding one of snow melting in one's mouth, with rather more flavour, which sugar greatly enhances. Vegetables are plentiful and easy to cook, and ripe Pumpkin in winter makes an excellent stopgap, especially when baked with the meat. Tomatoes make a standing dish; they ripen splendidly out of doors and last into late autumn, so they have always furnished us with sauce *ad libitum* all through the winter. With a little extra work we could have Green Peas in the winter, but only *bon-vivants* would care to go to that trouble, I fancy; for we can enjoy fresh vegetables for so many months that one would

scarcely care for them out of season. Red, white, and black Currants, make too much foliage at the expense of their fruit, although in some gardens they manage good crops. Gooseberries bear larger crops than I ever saw in England. Mine are clipped like little hedges, to allow plenty of room to walk between. They grow towards each other as much as they like, but their sides get a very severe pruning.

We must not be surprised if we suffer great deprivations among the fruit in future, for the Blackbird has just arrived to help the Thrush at it. The latter has been on this island for three or four years, and has not ceased to sing all the winter. I am glad to notice that he has brought with him his murderous accomplishment of breaking snails on stones. The Myna, an Indian bird, and a good size larger than the Blackbird, makes great havoc among the fruit, and one grudges it to him, as he gives no song in return. He is only capable of a few loud, ugly notes, and sometimes a little quiet, conversational-like sound, which seems as if, with a few lessons, he would talk. I always thought that Starlings were warranted not to touch fruit, but they do not resist the temptation here; nor have I ever seen them sitting in their right place, on the sheep's back, but this I hope the farmers may have done. The dear little Goldfinch is with us in numbers,

doing its good work among the thistles; and as you watch them, you hope that every little bird is doing as much good as harm, until you find all your new-born Peas beheaded by those horrible Sparrows, and your Crocuses and Wistaria buds picked to pieces, and away go your hopes. I have buried forty of these pests in one grave—the result of poisoned wheat; but they soon became too sly to eat it. We tried putting some in empty pens among those occupied by pure-bred fowls, but they were so cautious and clever that they would only feed in those pens which contained fowls.

## CHAPTER IX

I MUST introduce a few of our native birds with which I have actually come into contact. I suppose the Apteryx (Kiwi) ought to lead the van; for a bird that cannot fly sounds almost as uncommon as a pig that can. My acquaintance with this wingless bird is very slight, as they are only active in the night; and those I saw were shut up in a box in the daytime, quite drowsy and curled up in the darkest corner as round as a ball, looking most unbird-like. They have mottled, hair-like feathers, and long bills to drag worms out of the ground, which is their chief or only food. As they are to be seen alive at the zoos, and stuffed in the museums, most people have seen them. Our introduction to the 'Ka Ka,' so called from its cry, or, rather, his introduction to us (for we eat him), was with mixed feelings. Plucking a parrot seemed all wrong, but, according to others, it was all right; so I carefully preserved his beautiful feathers, and wondered, knowing the great age to which parrots live, how

tough he might be; but the poor little thing was no dotard, but very tender and good. Another was given us to kill and eat, but we had had enough, and so tried to tame him instead, but he got more unhappy every day, till at last we had to let him go, and I have since heard that they do not stand confinement.

The New Zealand Quail, which was very plentiful, is nearly extinct now: Bush-fires have burnt it, and dogs, cats, and rats have eaten it, but the Australian and Californian varieties have filled its place. A pair of the latter are very tame here, and every spring successfully bring out a brood of young from some corner of the garden.

The native Kingfisher is a very conspicuous-looking bird, much larger than the English species, but he is so shrug-shouldered that his figure is rather spoilt. He has some white about him, otherwise his colours are nearly correct. He always chooses a post or rail to sit upon, where he looks very ornamental; but it is a regrettable fact that from such vantage-ground he has been seen to swoop down and spike tiny chickens. He is also equal to mice and lizards. His vocal powers appear to be confined to three shrieks, or notes, in quick succession, so his personal appearance is his chief attraction. A small Owl flies about the garden towards night;

it is commonly called the 'Morepork,' owing to its distinct pronunciation of those two words. He allows one to go within a few yards of him, and perhaps he lets the cats do the same, as I sometimes find dead 'Moreporks' which seem to have died a violent death.

The tamest little bird we have is the Fantailed Fly-Catcher. A few come into the garden, but they do not show the trustfulness here which they do in the Bush, for there they hover round your dress as if they wished to settle upon it, now and again allowing themselves to do so for an instant. They use their beautiful little spread-out tails and wings in a most fascinating manner. Most of them are quite black, with here and there a gray one. Another tiny bird is the Bush Wren; this, on the contrary, has hardly any tail at all, which rather disfigures him, but he is so tiny and sweet that it quite makes up for his taillessness.

The Tui, or 'Parson Bird,' as he is irreverently called, because he has a tuft of white feathers on his throat which are supposed to resemble a clergyman's bands, is shining black and metallic blue. There is no mistaking his loud and curious song above all other songs in the Bush. Some have compared it to a laugh, a cough, and a sneeze all at once. I never heard anybody afflicted with that combination, but it would probably be devoid of anything melodious, tune-

ful, or rich; and to these merits the Tui's note is slightly entitled. Perhaps some uncertain and erratic notes of the flute might help to describe his song, but to give him his due, some people admire his liquid voice. He is very good at mimicry, which makes him a favourite cage-bird, especially as he endures prison-bars well. One or two frequent our garden in early spring, and treat us to some of their indescribable sounds.

The little 'Silver Eye' or 'Blight Bird,' so called from its very useful propensity of eating various blights, has a silvery circle round its eyes, composed of tiny white feathers which are sweetly becoming. They are always extremely busy, rapidly examining every atom of shrub and tree, and filling their tiny crops with every kind of blight. They look under twigs in a most intelligent manner, seeming to say, 'Nothing shall escape us.' I was delighted to see quite forty or fifty at work one morning, keeping very much together round a white Oleander, which looked quite alive with so many small hunters on it; and I thought what a hearty welcome they must receive from the trees. They are gray in colour, with some rich tints, especially the male.

The Australian, or 'Shining Cuckoo,' is a lovely little visitor, and comes pretty regularly every summer. I often wonder what he gains by his trip, for if he flies those thousand miles merely

to feel a few degrees cooler it scarcely seems sufficient reason to come, so probably there are other attractions. He also seems rather lost, with his strange, tame ways, which give the cats many opportunities, and his beautiful scattered feathers tell the sad tale. He has a magnificent back of blue and green, and his breast has the old familiar family markings, but more minute to suit his size. As for his song, or rather series of notes, they are nothing short of ventriloquism, for they appear to begin at a distance, and then come quite close, and all from the very same spot. On first hearing him, I could not imagine what was happening, and looked about for others closer; and it was not easy to satisfy myself that he was alone, but such was undoubtedly the case, and since then I have had many opportunities of proving it.

The Wood Hen, or 'Weka,' is a common bird about the size of a hen, but more ugly. Its legs are placed very far back, and look strong enough to carry a body double its size. It possesses some small, useless wings, and so is obliged to trust to its thick legs, which are extremely active at times. It is rather pleasant to hear them in the evening, when they begin their squeaks, which certainly resemble the noise that might proceed from a giant guinea-pig. They generally keep on all night, answering one another.



Our Wild Pigeon is a very handsome bird with coloured plumage and white breast, two or three sizes larger than the English Wood Pigeon. They are easily shot, and are very good eating, especially in autumn, when berries, which constitute their chief food, are plentiful.

## CHAPTER X

WE cannot be too thankful that the great plague scare which took possession of us here ended in nothing more serious than the indisposition of one flea on one rat, and the good result of it all is that we are left very much cleaner. Everyone's premises underwent a good scraping—in fact, the inspectors carried out their duties with such vigilance that one gentleman was deprived of all his leaf-mould for potting, it being voted a suspicious-looking heap. We are comparatively free from epidemics, and we have not many indigenous ills other than human. I want, however, to relate the bad as well as the good traits of our rising English offshoot, but when I come to put them in the scales together the advantages often outweigh the drawbacks.

Those who live here, and love country life, will agree with me that the absence of snakes is no small item in a list of blessings, for their presence would almost be the death of excursions to the Bush, ferning, etc. They seem so undesirable,





BANANA, THREE YEARS OLD.

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apart from their venom, and one can only hope that the Acclimatization Society will ever look upon it in the same light; and surely no private individual would smuggle them here and turn them lose surreptitiously. I am afraid their appearance is only a question of time, for one or two from Australia have already presented themselves. One arrived among the straw in a case of wine but in an instance of that sort they can hardly escape detection.

We have one small venomous Spider, the 'Katipo,' but as it is not in the least aggressive, and is branded on the back with a red stripe, it is easily avoided, particularly as it only inhabits drift or dry wood which has been washed up by the sea and lifted above high-water mark. One other obnoxious-looking thing that we have is a Centipede about 3 inches long; but its bark is worse than its bite, for it is quite harmless. I was interested to dig one up on its nest of eggs recently; these were about ten in number and the same size as snail's eggs, though hardly so white. The cabbage-white butterfly, wasps, and hornets, we are thus far free from, nor have I seen an earwig, which used to be such a drawback to picking a Dahlia in childhood, but bluebottles and small flies are too plentiful. Possibly bacteria are not as deleterious here as elsewhere, for a servant remarked to her mistress lately: 'I have

not seen any of them microbes about yet.' Her ignorance was bliss, and perhaps best left undisturbed than made foolishly wise by microscopes.

It is a subject of congratulation for the rising generation that periodical doses of that awful concoction rhubarb and magnesia have been superseded by more palatable medicines. Its dreaded fumes pervaded the nursery precincts far and wide by the time it was properly mixed. Then the nurse might be seen to waver as to whether she would add peppermint-water, which was supposed to make it more swallowable, but, on the other hand, increased the quantity to be got down. In fact, one's cup was full, and one had to drink it. However, the more mixture, the more yells, spuffing, and want of breath, for one's nose was squeezed several degrees harder than it should have been, but whether only in the excitement of the struggle, or to pay one out for the noise, no child could say. Unlike the man who hated the French so much that he would not grow French Beans, Rhubarb is plentiful with us. This unpleasant reminiscence of childhood brings up another to my mind—I mean the sleight-of-hand dentist—and although this chapter is supposed to deal with garden pests, I must introduce him here. This iron-hearted man convinced us that he held no cruel instrument in his hand, and only wanted to look into our mouth, when, as our

head was seized from behind, the cold forceps came down his sleeve and, in our frenzy our mischievous hands would break loose, and, were it not for the short time at their disposal, they would certainly have had something to answer for. A short space of time was allowed us to brood over the agony and gross deception practised upon us, and all was peace once more. The dentist received his fee, and we our half-crown—not because we had been good, but because it had been promised to us if we would go and have the tooth out. Such torture would almost incline one to patronize the American dentist, who, when his patient entered, remarked to his assistant, ‘Stun him, Bill!’

The curriculum of New Zealand garden ‘pleasures’ must include blight, and opinions are divided as to the worst enemy we have to contend against. The Codlin Moth plays dreadful tricks with our fruit-trees. Its *modus operandi* is to lay the egg in the blossom, so that without much further trouble it finds itself growing away in the middle of the apple, where it plays high jinks, and down falls the fruit half-size. The Physianthus, or Moth-catching Plant, acts splendidly, and lately I found four moths securely held by their tongues in one blossom, and two or three in many more, but, unfortunately, when the Codlin Moth is out and about, the Physianthus is not.

Syringing with Paris-green has to be resorted to when the trees are in blossom, and is, I believe, a sure preventive. The Leech, or a kind of slug-worm, makes its appearance very regularly on the leaves of the pear and plum. It skims off the surface of the leaf, and every one would soon be brown if its course were not impeded with a syringe and solution of hellebore and water, which at once puts an end to its pranks, making its food so bitter that it prefers to go without. In about half an hour there is a visible change for the worse in its glistening brown skin. It has the most disagreeable scent, and no bird, however bent on blight destruction, would be likely to venture his olfactory apparatus within sampling distance. I suppose the mildness of our climate rather favours obnoxious creatures, as they can pass through the winter in safety. The snails make only a thin covering for hibernating, and the worms do not trouble to go down very deep to escape the frosts.

Dumb animals are far from being satisfactory adjuncts to a garden, but my affectionate tom-cats are very fond of watching me at work, though if I am not watching them they are full of evil tricks, and their gymnastic exercises invariably take place on some forbidden spot. Nothing seems to please them better than playing, which play soon becomes a sparring match with a choice plant, such as a heath, between them. They look



at each other through it, which acts as an incentive to begin in earnest. Then comes the destructive stage when they lie down and kick, and the poor plant is shattered; only a storm in a teapot to a disinterested looker-on, but there flashes through me an unhallowed twinge, scarcely repressible, whilst the cats scamper with lightning speed. Now some of my best plants have to wear a piece of wire-netting round them. It is an eyesore, but it is better to be sure than sorry, and it keeps off any stray hare who occasionally looks round to see what tit-bits he can find.

There is some protection round almost all the garden, but one evening a hare came in through the gate who evidently was not well up in the surroundings; for, getting frightened, he made a dash to the opposite side, but finding wooden palings there, he made one final, fatal dash in another direction into some wire-netting, which checkmated him, and resulted in his breaking his neck. Animals have self-preservation implanted in them so strongly that sometimes, I hope, they appear to suffer more than they really do. A pig makes more noise when he is caught than when the knife is in such close proximity to his jugular artery that he must be aware the operation has commenced. I have seen this illustrated from the nursery windows. I am afraid I resembled the little girl who, being asked if she had enjoyed

her day in the country, said: 'It was just lovely! I saw two pigs killed and a gentleman buried.' Even this coincidence, like everything else, might have been worse, for one pig only might have been killed, and two gentlemen buried, or one pig buried and two gentlemen killed. But with all due respect for the fate of these gentlemen, they have no business here among dead animals; so I hope, without unseemly haste, I can resume the subject and refer to rats. I must record a most hideous thing that they did one night. It was not beyond the task of one cowardly rodent, so probably only one was implicated in the dastardly deed. The culprit crept sufficiently far under a hen with a brood of chickens five weeks old, to gnaw off the feet of two of them, and a lamentable sight met our eyes next morning, for those poor footless things came to their breakfast balancing themselves along upon their stumps as best they could. They plainly showed that they had passed a bad night, but they proceeded to feed with the others until they were despatched out of their misery.

I cannot bear to see animals suffer now, and I would rather walk any distance than sit behind horses which are unfit for or unequal to their work. It is a subject of inward rejoicing to me that the Bible says, 'A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast,' for it must have modified or

averted the ill-treatment of many poor creatures. As usual, the love of money is exemplified in this use, or rather abuse, of horses; for there must be gross covetousness and greed to sit with whip and reins and add to the torture that those useful, patient, hard-working, noble slaves endure at the hands of their cruel drivers. If people when hiring vehicles would, when possible, select them according to the condition of the horse, much would be done towards the amelioration of their sufferings.

Animals repay one for kindness, and unless pets are well treated I do not think that much pleasure is to be derived from them, for their many curious and intelligent ways are checked, and you never see them. Indeed, to bring out their character properly, and to gain their confidence, they should be rather spoilt. I don't think chastisement is of any use when the pet is sly and deep. Cats will watch their opportunity, and so will collie dogs, as I know to my cost; and since my acquaintance with them, it is easy to believe that, after killing sheep, they have been known to wash themselves in a pond before going home. We parted with ours for a far less heinous crime in the eyes of the world, though I pronounced it an unpardonable offence, and deserving of transportation at least. We saw in the garden, in the centre of a large mixed border, one of the biggest holes that could

have been excavated in one night without tools. It was large enough to receive a full-sized wheelbarrow, and deeper than would have been required for that purpose. All were thunderstruck at the size of the mysterious cavern, and all were mystified. Had the gardener gone mad and spent his night in scraping? The horse could not scrape, nor the cow, and I did not garden in my sleep, diving down after subsoil. Someone suggested strange dogs, but why and wherefore should they pay us a nocturnal visit, and spend it in such an undertaking? Every plant was covered for yards round with the earth which had been burrowed out, and underneath were all the shattered plants which had occupied the unfortunate spot. I could have howled. Only about half of my precious mould could be collected for refilling the hole, for earth always mysteriously disappears on such occasions. So more good soil was brought, and all made firm, and replanted as well as could be expected. It was a heart-rending plot, both mine and the dog's, and it gave us a hard morning's work to restore it to anything like decent order. But that such a calamitous event occurred only once in a lifetime no one doubted. The nine days' wonder had not expired before I stood aghast, looking at another excavation of the same size and pattern, on the same border, and only a few yards away from the last. Despair darted

through me as I darted after the collie, calling him peremptorily. He came in a Uriah Heepish sort of way, and I examined his front feet. There was nothing suspicious, they were rather clean. Perhaps he had washed his hands; however, the verdict went against him, so I undertook to watch. I did not intend to sit out all night, so I fervently hoped that the excavator's plans would be in accordance with my own wishes. And sure enough they were; for on the fourth evening, when it was getting dark, I just descried him, about twenty yards away, selecting another spot. I let him begin, and then—well, I caught *him*, and he caught *it*. The most remarkable thing about it all, next to the size of the holes, was that he should have known, as I suppose he did, where the deepest-made soil in the garden was, for he chose the only spot where it was 5 feet deep. He was a dog who never did things by halves, but by 'holes,' so we gave him away, bad character and all. He was deceitful past endurance, and I hope for all sakes that he met with the proverbially sad fate reserved for dogs with bad names. He should have been buried in the hole which he had made, with this epitaph:

'Here lies a bad doggie who lied, with aplomb of degraded  
humanity,  
And smiled with capacious sweet smiles, to cloak his mis-  
deeds with urbanity.

This grave where he lies is self-made ; 'twas an elfish design  
of the night.

That he might have done worse it is true, for he's now out  
of mind, out of sight.'

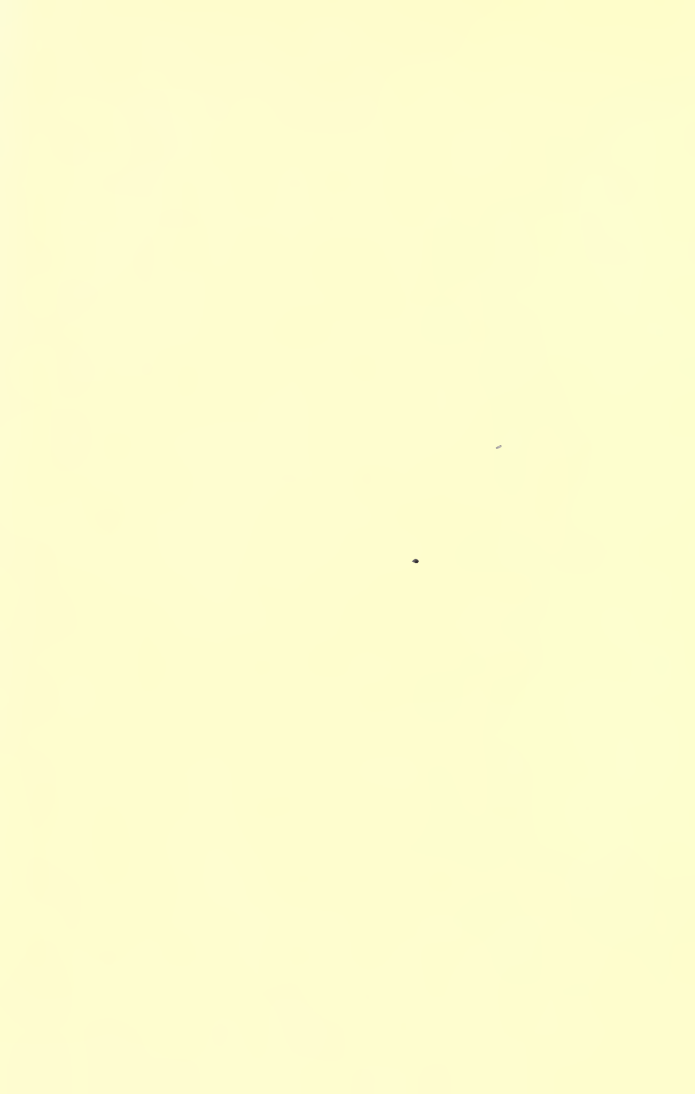
His only successor was a cocker-spaniel, whose digestion did not wait on appetite, I suppose, for whenever he received a good-sized morsel, he must needs deposit it under one of my plants, and he annihilated my most beautiful pansy by his horrid time-honoured custom. I have watched his strong nose replacing the earth over his tit-bit, and always stole it when he was out of sight, to try and teach him that his larder was not a 'safe' place in one sense. However, this only made matters worse, as he redoubled his energies to find his bone. He was well bred, and his beautiful long, silky ears took him three first prizes ; but at last somebody took him, for he would roam about the town by himself, until, I suppose, someone could resist him no longer. He had a wonderful mechanical laugh, or grin, to show his pleasure on seeing us, when he returned home after his rambles, and, on the whole, he deserved a good reference on his final departure. A large lizard was a contemporary pet with him, but he was far too much like a young crocodile, both in size and shape, to be pleasant. Snails were his favourite diet, and he had to have them all cracked for him, which was a terrible drawback. His inability to crack them

for himself I found out almost too late. He was in charge of the handy-man, who fed him conscientiously every day. My visits to this 'pet' reptile were very few and far between, in fact, I left him severely alone; but on looking into his cage one day, I beheld him in a starving condition, and I was on the verge of accusing his keeper with cruelty to animals. I felt sure that the man had not imitated the Greek philosopher, who thought that he could by degrees accustom his donkey to live without food, and just as he had nearly triumphed the donkey died; so on further investigation I saw that the roof of this hermit's den was encrusted with snails: they had crawled to the top, and he had fasted because he could or would not crack them. I commenced a slaughter of them at once, and he devoured seven or eight with great relish, and his well-filled larder lasted for some time. I was told that if he were to bite us, the only way to make him leave go would be to chop off his head. So I took the liberty of leaving his cage open one evening, and I hope he lives miles away. I had made a former attempt to set him free, but he was retrieved by the cocker-spaniel and reinstated in his den.

It is surprising what we witness when things are under our own care, and the amount of interest and knowledge we gain by common objects in the

garden. I really pity people who live in 'flats' or pensions to save themselves the trouble of house-keeping and gardening, securing to themselves absolutely nothing to do, and allowing the many interesting revelations of Nature to slide by unknown.







TREASURES FROM THE BUSH.

## CHAPTER XI

**A**MONG native trees indigenous to this island the *Metrosideros* family are the most splendid. Their crimson flowers, like the scarlet Flowering Gum of Australia, are almost entirely composed of brilliant scarlet stamens, whose colour produces a splendid effect. They flower very freely quite at the extremity of the branches, so that they almost cover the tree. They are called the Christmas-tree because they flower about that time. I have not seen the forests of *M. robusta*, mentioned by the late Professor Kirk, who says that they are too dazzling to behold when the sun shines upon them. But one or two good specimens in full flower are a sight not to be forgotten. *M. tomentosa* (Pohutukawa), which grow at the edge of the Auckland Harbour, are a truly beautiful sight. They are large trees, with their roots in the salt water; and Mr. Froude, in his book on New Zealand, says that oysters cling to their roots. I planted sixteen of them just about sixteen years ago, which now vary from

12 to 20 feet high, and flower well. They have sent out roots for some distance up their stems, so perhaps they are fishing for oysters on the drive, and will have the same sport that the White Knight had with his mouse-trap on horseback in 'Alice through the Looking-Glass.' The Rata proper (*M. robusta*) makes excellent fuel, and is used quite as much as coals, especially for cooking. *M. florida*, with its white relative (*albaflora*), are the chief climbers of the family, and top the most lofty trees in the Bush, the red giving a splendid effect in this neighbourhood, but the white is more confined to the Bay of Islands. *M. lucida* (the Southern Rata) revels in the cold of the South, where the whole sides of high mountains may be seen coated with its brilliant inflorescence. I was determined to try one specimen here, but have only its death to record. A yellow *Metrosideros* has actually been seen, according to the best authorities. How I should like to possess it! and why nurserymen do not I can't understand. The spot where it grows is well known, and though quite among the Maoris and out of the radius of catalogues, surely seeds and cuttings could be procured; and if I were a man I would stride off and try my luck this very minute. I have only just realized that there is such a great curiosity among us.

*Clematis indivisa*, clinging about on trees in the

Bush and hanging in snowy wreaths and clusters in early spring, never fails to attract the attention of all, and is in great request for the decoration of rooms; but as it often scrambles up to the height of 30 feet, it is rather beyond the grasp of the flower-seeker.

*Leptospermum scoparium*, usually called 'Manuka,' is our commonest shrub or small tree. Acres of waste ground are often covered with young plants, their myrtle-like flowers giving a very pretty effect. I had the good fortune to find a red-flowered specimen, which is very rare. Of course, I conveyed it to my garden, where, under its altered circumstances, I am glad to say, it still retains its rich colour.

*Meryta Sinclairii* is a very bold foliated small tree, and although not actually a New Zealand plant, it must not escape mention here. In Auckland, where it is very much planted, it attains to the height of 20 or 30 feet. It is said to be one of the rarest trees in the world, and, according to the late Professor Kirk, has larger leaves than any of the New Zealand flora. My plant died in an unusually hard frost when only 9 feet high. I was deeply grieved at its death, because, although they belong to an adjacent island to the north, I had just seen one of these trees flourishing and quite 20 feet high in Wellington. Alas! I had omitted to protect mine.

*Eleocarpus dentatus*, which flourishes especially well near Wellington, is so much like *Clethra arborea* that it almost takes an expert to tell the difference between them. But, judging by the specimens which I have seen, *Clethra arborea* looks the superior plant, being richer in flower and foliage. But it is curious that two plants belonging to different families and countries should be so nearly alike. They are quite twin 'duxes.'

The *Hoheria populnea* is a beautiful, small tree, fit for any garden, and it seems to do well in them all. Its pretty foliage and snow-white flowers render it a favourite native tree. Its vernacular names are 'Ribbon Wood' and 'Lace Bark,' for when the bark is pulled off and cut into strips it reminds one of insertion lace. Beautiful little ornamental baskets are made of it, and even trimmings for hats. It has yet another name of 'Thousand Jackets,' owing to the number of lace-like layers of bark.

*Corynocarpus levigata*, or Karaka, sometimes called the 'New Zealand Laurel,' makes a fine large evergreen tree 40 feet high. It has dark, shiny leaves, which contrast well with its long yellow berries. They are poisonous when raw, but the Maoris eat them after they have been soaked or steamed. I had rather a horror of the tree on first acquaintance, having been told that, even when they recovered from its deadly effects,

the poison of the berries had been known to leave disastrous results on Maori children, who, unless buried up to their necks, with their limbs in proper position, until the effects of the poison had passed off, remained distorted for life. I never actually knew an instance of any child being so poisoned by them, and probably this, like many other Maori legends, may require a little salt. Fortunately, the berries have a nasty flavour and are bitter. The trees are slow growers, and require careful transplantation.

*Olearia Forsteri* is a very pretty evergreen with peculiar soft, light-green leaves which are so wavy at the edges that they almost resemble frills. It makes a splendid hedge, as it does not want much trimming, and the foliage sets itself very prettily. It has short panicles of greenish yellow flowers, crowded with insignificant-looking little florets. Mine grow beautifully on a hot dry bank in the full sun, where they must often be dust dry at the roots. The spot is so hot that before they were large enough to shade themselves they must have had to put up with warm dust sometimes. They will grow 20 feet high, and I have seen them acting in the capacity of a hedge foliaged down to the ground. Some of the *Olearias* only grow well in the extreme south. *O. angustifolia*, which is by far the most beautiful, with large bunches of mauve, daisy-like flowers,

grows there to perfection; I saw them doing fairly well in Dunedin also, but mine dwindled away. *Clianthus puniceus* (Parrot's Beak) is the most gaudy-looking plant possible, here in its native land. Its flame-coloured flowers hang in masses, and it does well either as a standard or on a trellis. It grows to about 5 feet high in good situations. The New Zealand Laburnum (*Sophora tetraptera*, Yellow Kowhai) is a splendid deep yellow, with much larger flowers and calix than the English Laburnum. The flowers usually appear before the leaves, which is unfortunate, as they are rather massive-looking flowers and require their greenery to set them off. I have seen one specimen with the foliage well out with the flowers, which left nothing to be desired. *S. grandiflora* is the best, and is, I believe, the one that has flowers and foliage together.

*Acacia dealbata* (Shittim Wood) is another bright yellow tree, 20 feet high, and in early spring smothered with flowers, and with its delicate blue-green, feathery foliage, nothing can be prettier. I should not have allowed it to trespass among New Zealand trees, for it belongs more to tropical countries, but better to be here than left out altogether, so I let it remain.

*Cordyline indivisa*, the handsomest of all the Cabbage-tree family, seems to pine for colder regions on our mountains, where it belongs. In



hot summers mine threatens to die, but perks up again in the winter. Its soft blue-green leaves,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards long and 6 inches wide, with a broad brown stripe down the middle, surely places it at the head of all bold foliage plants. The flowers are also very ornamental and grand, hanging down in bluish racemes nearly a yard long. My plant is about 9 feet high, but I hear of them 20 feet, and very much more robust, in their proper habitat.

A curious and well-meaning Bush tree is *Pisonia Brunoniana*. The outside of its seed-pods are covered with a fatally sticky kind of bird-lime, which is very attractive to insects, but woe to that bird who tries to secure one, for surely he will remain there for ever! As many as twenty tightly-fixed small birds have been seen on one tree, and, fortunately, sparrows are among the enticed.

## CHAPTER XII

**A**MONG New Zealand coniferæ, *Dacrydium cupressinum* (the Rimu or Red Pine), in its young state, excels all the family in beauty. An irregular green fountain might roughly help to describe it. Its pendulous branches coming out from the central stem, and falling all round, from the top to the ground, have rather that effect. These branches, which are about the thickness of thin rope, are covered with scales of a brilliant green. They are always looked upon as the handsomest forest trees, and although they are very pretty almost from their cradle, about 12 feet high is the prettiest size, and I believe they are rather stationary in growth at about that age, as if trying to prolong their most beautiful stage. The wood of the Rimu is very satisfactory, and is used almost exclusively for building in this locality.

Perhaps the reader wants to know why we live chiefly in wooden houses, and there are, or were, good reasons for it. The material is plentiful, the houses are very quickly built, they are much

cheaper, and are safer in the case of a shock of earthquake, which we occasionally get. But now that plenty of bricks are being manufactured, brick is gradually supplanting wood. The rapidity with which a wooden structure is put up is astonishing. Small, prettily-finished houses can be built in two months, when once the wood has been seasoned by exposure to the air after it has been cut into boards. Some of our villas are extremely pretty, and, if sanded over, have all the effect of stone. But they are usually painted in quiet tints, and when a house gets shabby, a fresh coat of paint makes it look new again.

*Agathis Australis* (Kauri) is the largest New Zealand tree; some giants, which are over 20 feet in diameter, are supposed to be about four thousand years old. They exude that valuable and wonderful product 'Kauri gum,' which is found in the Kauri forests near Auckland, from a few inches below the surface of the ground down to several feet. The wage of the gum-digger is very low, as skilled labour is not necessary, so that it supplies work for anyone who is industriously inclined. The gum, when polished, looks exactly like amber, varying just the same in colour, and the longer it has been underground the darker it becomes. It is cut into various little ornaments, and large lumps of it are in museums. It is an indispensable ingredient in making resin. The wood

of the Kauri is exceptionally good for building in every way, and is very durable, and in Auckland little else is used for that purpose. The trees are quite confined to the North, but I brought a young one away from its proper latitude just to try. After acquiring the height of 9 or 10 feet, and nearly ripening its first cones, it succumbed to its surroundings. Too big to move, like its neighbour the Rimu, it had but 'Hobson's choice,' to die there or to come out and do it. It was very interesting through all its associations during its sojourn with us. Its leathery-looking leaves give it a curious appearance, especially the young shoots, which are completely brown.

*Lebocedrus doniana* is another beautiful tree which belongs strictly to the North, and gradually perished here.

The Podocarpus (Totara) supplies very valuable timber, ranking next to the Kauri. Posts cut from the heart of it will last in the ground for thirty years. Some of our woods will last an incredible time in the ground. There is a small thin post in the garden which weighs as much as if it were made of stone, and which has successfully resisted both nails and staples, all of which it turned: not one would enter. This wood is called the Black Maire (one of the Oleas), and is almost black in colour, and whilst I was trying to pierce it with hammer and nails I perceived a small red streak

trickling down it, and my fingers had not suffered such agony since the rat-trap adventure. I can recommend this wood as absolutely impenetrable, and everlastingly a Passive Resister.

A kind of Protea, commonly called Honey-suckle, without any good reason at all—à la Cabbage-tree—forms a bold and beautiful pattern when cut on the cross, and, cut either slanting or with the grain, it is exceedingly pretty. The Fuchsia, which really is a Fuchsia, is another which is quite as much admired by some, with its black markings on a rich yellowish ground, and there are many more, equally pretty, all of which make a tempting display in the cabinet-makers' windows.

Among exotic things worth having are the Proteas, or Cape Tulips—handsome shrubs, with large tulip-shaped flowers. *P. filifera* is a very light pink in colour, and unless it is a good one of its kind, it is more like a bad white. It does not open more than half-way, and has quite a network of stamens, etc., inside, which have the appearance of preventing the flower from opening further. There is a very grand variety, with claret-coloured blossoms, which open wide and are 8 or 9 inches across!

*Leucadendron argenteum* (Silver-tree), of South Africa, belongs to the Protea tribe, and its vernacular name describes it. Nothing can be more

effective in a shrubbery, or as a single specimen. Its leaves are quite slippery with its soft, shining down; I have seen them pressed and painted upon for book-marks. They seldom grow much more than 20 or 30 feet high, and require good soil. I, unfortunately, put mine near Pine-trees for shelter, and they died, prematurely, 6 or 8 feet high, having a poverty-stricken appearance all their lives.

*Benthamia fragifera* looks the picture of health and beauty, and is a most valuable tree. It is first laden with soft, lemon-coloured flowers, succeeded by a fine crop of ornamental fruit like huge strawberries, which remind one of the strawberry pin-cushions we used to make for bazaars, with pins to represent the seeds. Fortunately, the majority of birds find the berries too disagreeable to touch, so that they remain for a long time unmolested in their beauty.

*Banksia grandis* is a large, handsome shrub 12 feet high, although, according to Mr. Paxton, it should have stopped at 3 feet. The stiff leaves are so deeply serrated that the lobes meet the mid-rib. The leaves are 1 foot long and 3 inches wide, and are prettily arranged in rosette fashion round the great cone-shaped flowers, composed of stiff stamens, which are pale yellow.

*Paullinia imperialis* grows to a fine tree, and more rapidly than any other. One of mine made

a shoot 11 inches in circumference and 20 feet long in about eighteen months.

*Brachychiton asserifolia*, one of the Sterculias (Australian Flame-tree), is, indeed, a blaze when it flowers. It divests itself of its leaves for the occasion, in order, it is said, to make room for the flowers, with which it becomes packed. I saw one, in Auckland, long past its best, and in places there could have been no room for leaves. It was about 40 feet high. The owner told me that their best specimen was taking a rest after an overflow of inflorescence the previous summer. Mine is about 20 feet high, with dense foliage of leaves, which are rather like fig-leaves in size and shape. If these are all to come off, which seems a great undertaking, there will be no opportunity of judging how the foliage suits the flower. Whenever a good leaf is discarded now, I hope the tree is going to undress and don its smart robes, and I have long prepared for the great event by planting white flowering subjects next, to prevent clashing of colour.

*Aloe arboreum* makes a beautiful large plant here, often over 4 feet high, and as much across, with a spike of glowing red flowers coming out of every whorl of its fleshy recurved leaves. The edges are rather too prickly to dive one's hands into to capture snails, so on wet days I intercept them in their walks. I used to keep ducks for

this work, but, as many have found before, a mutual affection always exists between us, which makes it very awkward and unpleasant when killing time comes, for their deaths have been on the *tapis* ever since they were hatched. They get too heavy to go on the plants, nor do I think that it improves things to be ferreted and joggled under so often; besides, they dirty the paths, so now I take out a lantern some evenings and soon do the work of a pair of ducks. I have found my ducks with their crops taxed to their utmost with green Gooseberries before breakfast, and it made me quite envious of their iron constitutions, which are able to defy such injudicious diet; with the omission in my case of not desiring sour Gooseberries at such an hour, although we do enjoy large 'crops' of them in season and within reason. These same ducks plundered the Strawberry-beds, and devoured everything that they fancied, within their reach, although their forbidden luxuries were, of course, mixed with snails, and, to my astonishment, these even when whole and full grown were not beyond their capabilities.



### CHAPTER XIII

FLOWER-SHOWS were among the few gala days in the past. In fact, they were the only out-of-door public enjoyments that I can remember ; and they were well attended, as flower-shows should be. Here we had ices and heard one of the best bands play ; but the penalty was smart clothes. My brothers had long white trousers, which allowed of no romping, and I had a starched muslin frock, with the raw, stiff edges of the seams acting on my neck and arms like a saw. But in spite of this irritation, I can distinctly remember being spell-bound in front of pyramids of *Lapagerias* in pots, and ever since I have experienced a hankering after them more than any other flower. But my readers will endorse it when I say that we do not always get what we want, and I never had any until about seventeen years ago. Before I got them, I asked a friend if she had ever grown them. She said she sowed them every year, but added, that if I didn't look out they would run over everything ! It was a bad mistake of hers, because

when I went to buy a packet of *Lapageria* seed in our small town I found it unprocurable; however, I had a plant of both the white and red sent to me from Australia, and a pretty dance they led me, or rather we led each other, for years. They scoffed at my efforts to please them in the greenhouse, where they never should have been, so out they went into a hot, sunny spot and suffered relapse upon relapse, until the jaws of death were gaping for them. Then up they came, and into a tub of water to be washed in order that they might make a fresh start with clean roots, and that I might make sure that no evil beast was devouring them. Nothing was the matter, so, having read up their proper treatment—especially their great hatred of any disturbance at the root—I bore them off to a good rich, deep, well-drained bed, in partial shade, and they are the identical, flourishing pair of ‘daxes’ previously introduced to the reader. (This plural should have been applied to all my floral pairs, as more endearing though less correct.) Unlike the lady’s warning to beware of sowing the seed, an experienced amateur gardener told me that I should not be able to succeed in growing it at all, and though I have implicit faith in his opinion, I am glad to say that he is wrong just for once, for seedlings from my own pair of ‘daxes’ are a foot high and one year old. I picked the

pod when it looked ripe, and sowed the seed at once, and in two months up came the tiny pets. I think the lady who told me of her great success with them must have expended her skill on Scarlet Runners.

Flower-viewing parties, which the Japs have, sound very delightful, and could be made full of instruction among real garden-lovers. We could take pencils and paper and write down the names of things we liked, making notes regarding their culture. We could exchange cuttings and seeds then and there, instead of promising them and forgetting all about it. We could compare our experiences, get hints, and get rid of mistakes, and thus all learn and teach something. The difficulty of issuing invitations would be great, and might result in a large garden-party in a small garden. Perhaps, however, if the conversation were restricted to gardening it would prevent overcrowding; but who would set a watch upon our tongues? Not even the aforesaid paid garden expert would undertake it! In fact, I am afraid that the nice idea must drop, so far away from the Flowery Land.

I sowed the stone of a common Date (*Phœnix dactylifera*) ten years ago, and the plant is now nearly 5 feet high—only a little smaller than the twenty-five-year-old Nikau Palm. It has just bade farewell to its flower-pot, and thrives in

a shady flower border well away from the baneful influence of *Pinus insignis*, and there it will brave any New Zealand winter that comes.

Josephus mentions a grove of these Palms in Jericho, seven miles long, running from Bethany (House of Dates) to the top of Mount Olivet, when Palestine was the land of Palms—now a thing of the past.

A sweet little booklet has just reached us containing twelve pressed flowers from that blessed land, gathered and pressed by the Rev. Harvey B. Greene, B.D., with some information regarding and some Biblical reference to each flower. They are most beautifully done, and the colours quite fresh. It is awe-inspiring as well as delightful to look at these real flowers, actually gathered in Palestine, and to think how near our Saviour's feet must have gone to some of them, perhaps even pressed them, and how often His eyes must have rested upon them. Really lovable flowers, stimulating our best feelings and making us feel nearer to Him; what pleasure they will give to many loving souls! Flowers and trees are one of God's blessings to us. We read in Isaiah that trees in plenty and luxuriance symbolize God's blessing; the absence of them the contrary—desolation and degradation; and the degraded state of many treeless countries visibly substantiates the fact. Balaam likened the striped





A PART OF THE GARDEN.

tents of the Israelites, in their arrangement, to a 'field which the Lord had blessed,' prosperous in its full sense—characterized by success, with hopes fulfilled, thriving, flourishing—glowing with all the flowers which He made, and left to us as emblems of Himself, reflecting His perfections, as mementoes to tend and cherish and to imitate in setting forth His glory. Such treasures! They have life; we can learn of them; we can see their character coming out from the heart of the bulb; we can bring up our children by them: first the blade, then the ear, that the full corn in the ear may glorify Him. Alas! our rising generation (who should have been grounded in the faith on the true foundation) go out into the world with their heads stuffed with secular education in the State schools, many of them convinced that the Bible is an out-of-date old book, and they boast of their up-to-date, vain, new-fangled ways! A Gourd climbed up a Palm and said: 'How old are you?' 'One hundred years,' said the Palm. 'Then I have out-topped you in one single season,' said the Gourd contemptuously. Replied the Palm: 'You will do more than that in one season—you will die.'

## CHAPTER XIV

OUR Maori population, who are supposed to be of Polynesian extraction—as their dialect indicates—seem to have been established here for about five hundred years, and are a most interesting people. Hospitable and generous to a degree, honest and upright, so were they described by our first missionary, Mr. Marsden. They look it, too, with their fat, jolly faces, set off with good real teeth, the secret of which one would gladly know. It may, however, belong to back generations of unsophisticated lives, simplicity of diet, and freedom from care and worry, which their whole aspect betokens. The fat wives are not weighed down by domestic duties, if any there be, other than wearing a very good baby tied on behind. They share their husbands' tobacco, and are not too timid to frequent the hotels to quench their thirst. There is a theory that their good teeth are due to the rough and severe mastication imposed upon them in the past, and that our teeth disappear through want of something to do. We eat such



thoroughly prepared food that their services are scarcely required. This sounds to me more probable than that, as some maintain, they have imbibed from the soil or water something of a preservative nature. Possibly the natives did not over-indulge in vinegar, which in its action upon the teeth the Book of Proverbs uses as a symbol of something unpleasant and harmful — ‘as vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes.’ That they have good appetites I know, from what I have witnessed at a Maori feast, where some of the ladies were helped in buckets instead of plates, and did ample justice to the contents. Considering what a huge repast it was, the gentlemen indulged in a very moderate siesta before giving us a war-dance. Cinematographs probably show these dances now, but not the accompanying snorts and ejaculations, and the thundering of their powerful, well-timed stamping. The women go through a pretty and curious performance called the ‘poi’ dance. Its chief feature is the excellent time that they keep with their ‘pois,’ or inflated bladders, held by strings and thrown about with the utmost precision to their weird, droning notes.

One does not now see much nose-rubbing for ‘How do you do?’—at least, in the towns—but a very mechanical shake of the hands instead. Their dress is more or less European. The women often

wear elastic-side boots without stockings, and a shawl over a gaudy-coloured skirt, and they are equally fond of a really bright-coloured blanket. These articles of clothing are made in startling colours and patterns expressly to suit their taste. Occasionally some may be seen dressed quite correctly, but many old ones adhere to their native fashions. We found them rather amusing customers at a bazaar on one occasion, for they bought bright-coloured antimacassars and arranged them on each other's shoulders, and most of their purchases were put to the wrong use.

As an instance of their hospitality, I have known them to insist upon walking tourists eating their ready-prepared dinner, to which they themselves were on the verge of sitting down, and, furthermore, providing them with new blankets at night, kept especially for the accommodation of strangers, and they would feel quite hurt at any remuneration being offered them in return. It is difficult to associate such good feeling with the cannibalism of a few generations back. I privately suspect them of having eaten up the great moas, whose eggs and bones are in all museums, which bones, when fitted together, look almost as tall as a giraffe, and the eggs as big as pint jugs. I am sure they must have preferred eating those giant fowls to dining off their friends and neighbours; they seem too pleasant and gentle

folk to have been guilty of such atrocities as cannibalism. I like to think of them sitting down to a roasted moa, and having a tug-of-war with the wish-bone after dinner, with new-laid moa eggs for breakfast, boiled in hot springs, and dished up in egg-cups of hewn rock. Moas must have been grand sights, but I think their skeletons are preferable. I suppose they could have swallowed babies whole, and no one could survive a peck on the head. Moa-hunting might afford good sport, and their joints give variety to the butchers' shops; but unless their cooked flesh surpassed that of the ostrich, 'No moa, thank you,' would often be heard at table. Nothing authentic has come to light as to the date of their disappearance, although some very old Maoris occasionally declare it to have been quite recent; and since one egg has been found with the bones of a chick in it, their statement has been more credited. Those much-revered heirlooms called 'meres,' which are something like huge flat, club-shaped paper-cutters, made of greenstone, and which were used in battle, are becoming very scarce, as their owners so often have them buried with them. But only a proportion go underground, as some have been presented to celebrities by the Maoris themselves, and some find their way into museums. Many of these weapons are made of wood or bone, but those made of greenstone are very costly, as

well as difficult to purchase. The stone is extremely hard to cut, which makes small ornaments made of it very expensive, but it is very pretty when mounted.

Maoriland hedgerows are calculated to disappoint a new-comer, for they deserve no praise whatever. They are entirely lacking in Violets and Primroses, and offer only a meagre selection of wild-flowers; but such glories belong to old-established banks, of course. Many of our fences are planted with gorse, so have no further attraction when their sweet-scented flowers are over. I would like to collect in sacks all the spare flower-seeds I could beg, borrow, or steal, and scatter our hedgerows with them, and then see what happened. I suppose one in a hundred might grow, and perhaps even stand our long hot summers, when banks must be purgatories to plant-roots. But if a congenial spring favoured our sowings, it might have a very happy result. It would be a pleasant occupation for 'Arbor Day,' which was instituted for tree-planting here, with some success for the first year or two, and then dropped. Two sparrows might be killed with the one stone by mixing a little poisoned wheat with the flower-seeds. I should like to do it; but, to use my long uncle's favourite quotation, 'The good that I would, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do.' Perhaps

our imaginary garden expert would like to undertake the sprinkling of a few miles of country when work in amateurs' gardens is slack. I suppose farmers would have to be consulted before the adoption of such a scheme, as seeds might leave the hedges for fairer fields and pastures new, and then our position might resemble that of the man who is reported to have introduced weeds into the rivers. They say that he planted but one in a Cambridgeshire river, and in time it spread and seriously interfered with the boating. His name must be a target for epithets!

Then, again, our neighbours' fowls might eat the poisoned wheat, and so the stone intended to kill two birds would include three, and our neighbours might play tit for tat, for thoughtless deeds as well as good and bad, often come home to roost, and the whole transaction might engender strife and hatred to ourselves, like the example before us in the water-weed episode, which would be worse than all. I am afraid that some of our farming would shock a good bump of order, for farms cannot be dressed and kept without plenty of hands, and these take so much of the gilt off the gingerbread that some families manage their farms entirely themselves. Even gentlemen, single-handed, do their own ploughing, milking,

cooking, washing, everything, with only some help during harvest and shearing times.

I once saw a woman, quite by herself, successfully operating upon a crop with reaper and binder. Perhaps she and her husband had agreed to change places, like a couple before them—‘You shall mind the baby, and I’ll guide the plough.’ I wondered if he was getting on as well in the house with his nursing and darning as she was in the field. She seemed quite at home with the machine, and was, no doubt, able to give a good account of her day’s work; and let us hope she had not all the housework to do on her return! Her costume was quite free from anything that could catch in the machinery, and it stands to reason that prevailing fashions must be departed from for farm-work; nor can they be faithfully adhered to for gardening, especially as regards skirts in wet weather. I had an ancient friend who set a good example in the matter of dress. During her long life she came into fashion three times; and she used to say that she watched the fashions come in and go out, but she never felt inclined to change to any of them. I remember her congratulating herself on her tight sleeves, when her up-to-date friends were always upsetting things on the table with their open, hanging shapes. She had been a lady-in-waiting to Queen Charlotte,





CHAMEROOPS EXCELSA, OR FAN PALM.



and she had seen enough fashion then to last her for the rest of her life.

I really must cease singing the praises of this loyal little land—so loyal that it took my gardener off to fight the Boers suddenly, before he had milked the cow; but I must be allowed to reiterate for positively the last time that I have found from practical experience that gardening is conducive to goodness, health, and happiness. I have realized the necessity of weeds to keep us at our work, and seen the pleasure and profit that the eradication of them affords to the faintest bump of order ever detected by phrenologists, on which bump should be clearly decipherable, ‘Dress it, and keep it.’

I have scribbled enough of our doings in our adopted happy land, and although my account is as lame as a tree, I am not sorry to have spoken a word for the Embotheriums and Jacarandas and all the ‘duxes,’ if it will in the least degree help to spread their fame or implant a wish in anyone to grow them. I hope I have not boasted of garden lore, nor flaunted my colours too high, in this rambling and most imperfect account of all I love. But, above all, I hope that I have not represented the self-righteous old woman who, when told that she seemed to think only herself and the parson would be saved, said she was not so sure about the parson! I think I will go out into the

garden and contemplate the Fig-tree, which offers the best lesson of all, and say, 'Good-bye.'

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'A gardener was watching a priceless floret rare,  
But missed it, notwithstanding his vigilance and care.  
'Who plucked that flower?' he asked, displaying feelings  
ill.  
'The Master," was the answer, and the gardener was  
still.'

THE END



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