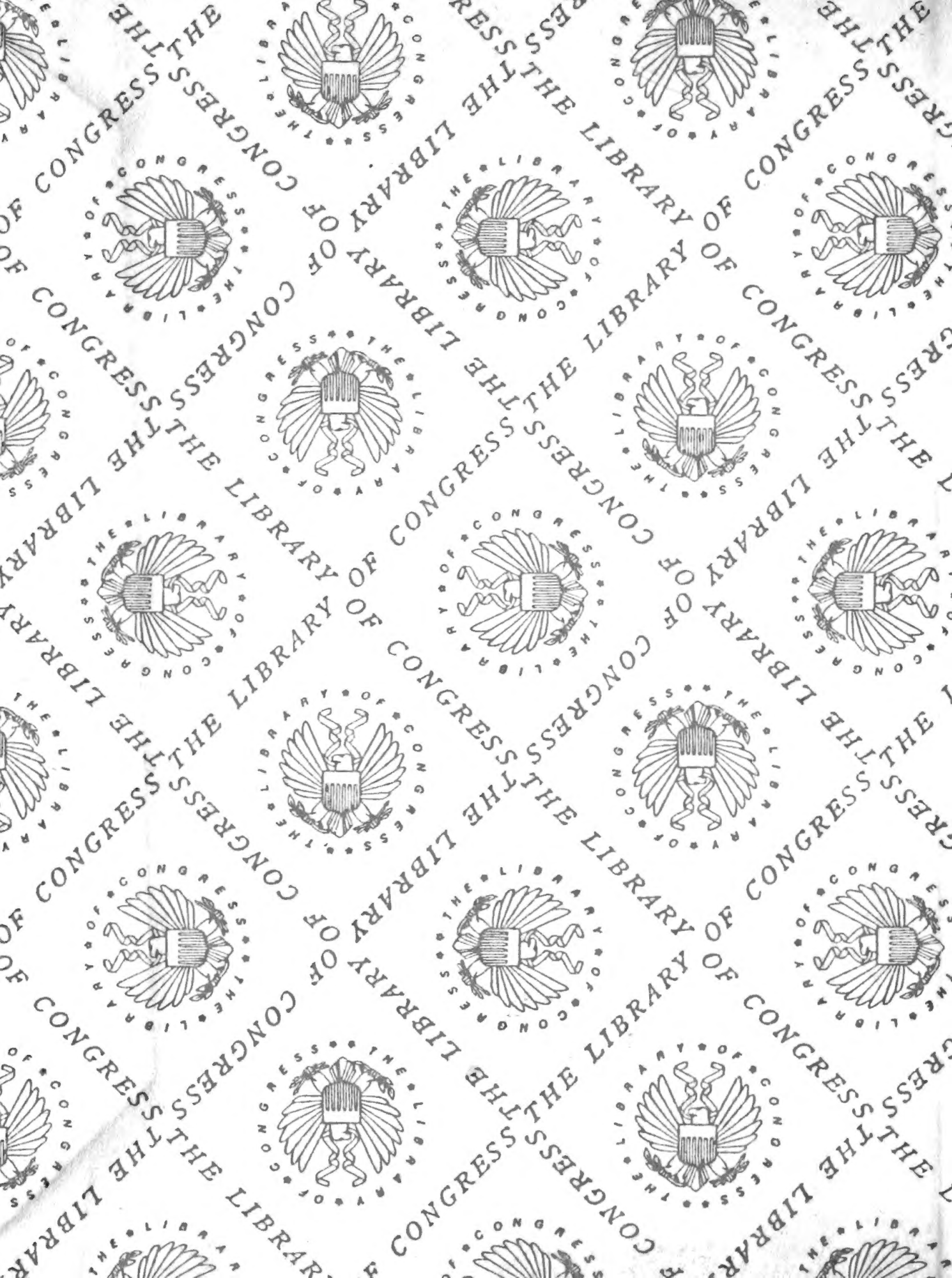
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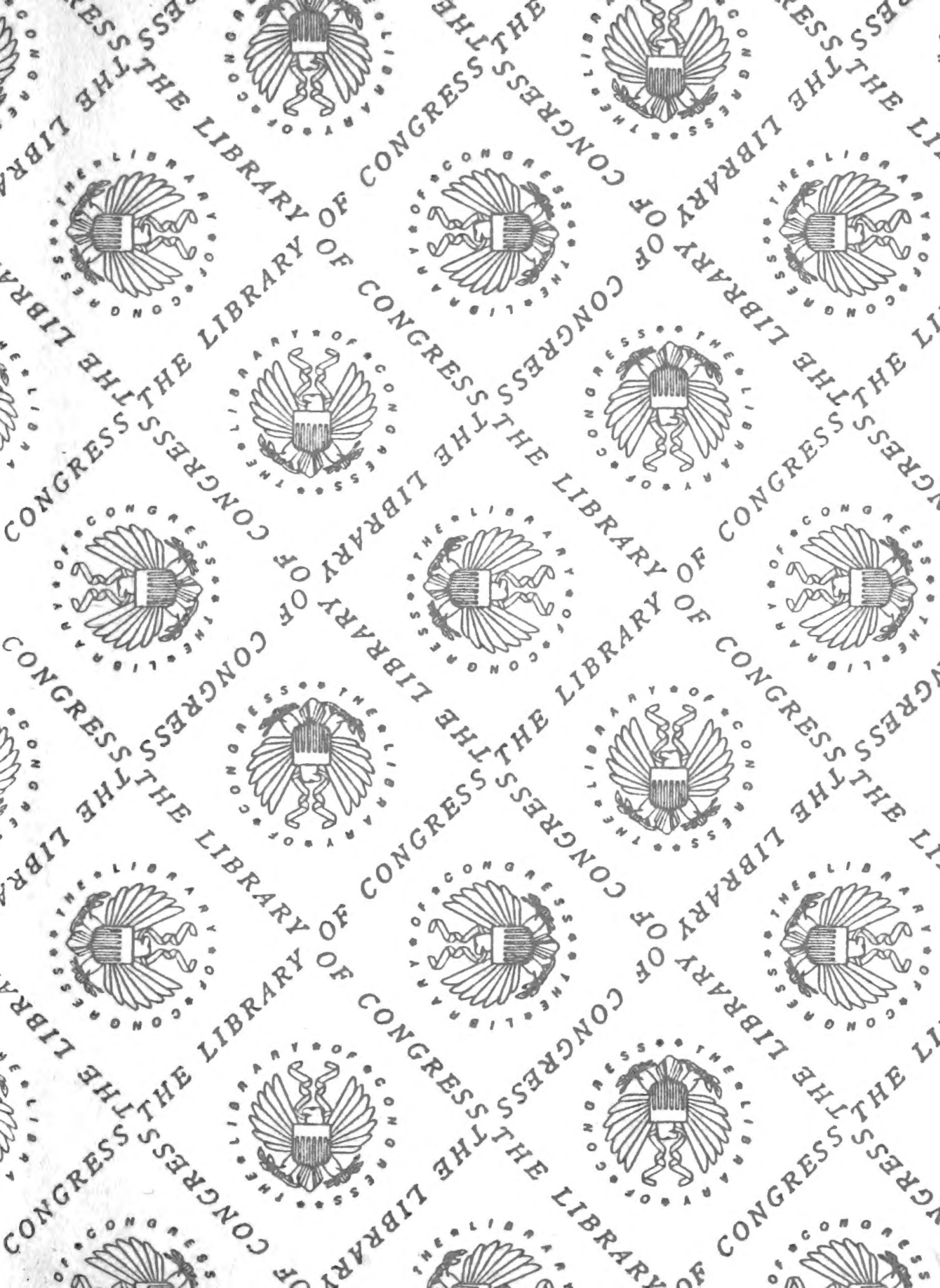
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MY GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN
& AN ORCHARD ANCESTRAL

MY GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN AND AN ORCHARD ANCESTRAL

By Mary Matthews Bray
Author of "A Romance of Barnstable"

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TO THE HOUSEHOLD
OF THE GARDEN AND ORCHARD

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MY GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN

MY GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN

MY grandmother, whose name I bear, departed from earth long before my eyes opened to its light. She died so young, indeed, that her own children remember her but dimly. No portrait of her has come down to us. It was not the day of cameras and kodaks. The photograph had not taken shape. Even its precursor, the daguerreotype, was just simmering in the brain of its inventor.

Her husband was, in the phrasing of the time, a man "well to do," and it seems strange that he should not have given permanence to the face he loved, in an oil painting, or in one

of the quaint and dainty miniatures then in vogue.

Of her especial belongings not many remain. A few articles of furniture and some bits of old china are distributed among her descendants. Her wedding ring, a heavy band of gold, was cherished by her daughter, and has been kept in that branch of the family. She did, however, leave one thing of real value, and that was her garden,— a charming one, too,— filled with old-fashioned shrubs and flowers.

This garden came early into my possession, not by legacy from her, nor by direct gift from others, nor was it ever my especial property in a pecuniary sense. My ownership was not so tangible. It was partly accidental and partly temperamental. We lived in the ancestral home; that was

the accidental part. The underlying temperamental cause was, I am sure, a love of every " green growing thing." That love dominated my childhood, and it must have been strong in her, since in her brief married life, crowded with household duties and the care of her young children, she yet found time to originate and preserve a garden large and beautiful for that period.

" A garden," says Bacon, " is the purest of all human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks."

The garden which I remember is a pleasant picture.

A sloping green lawn led down to it; a high board fence enclosed it on two sides, shutting it in from the street, and a row of tall currant bushes stood on the other side.

The fence was far above my head in those early years. I could not see over it, nor be seen from the outside, yet I could hear the sound of wheels and the voices of passersby. This gave a delightful sense of seclusion, and as I wandered about among the flowers, I thought it a veritable Eden.

The garden, which was large (it seemed very large to me then), had eight square beds, with narrow graveled paths around and between them, and two wide borders running along by the fence. The beds, raised a little above the paths, were enclosed by boards to keep the earth from falling out.

In those days a garden was not usually arranged for its effect as a whole. There was no special grouping of plants in masses, either for foliage or color. Each plant was

cherished for itself, and was put where it seemed best for it individually, or often, of course, where it was most convenient.

The shrubs and most of the taller plants were in the borders. The centre of one was occupied by a large and thrifty lilac bush (it might well have been called a tree), which reared its head high above the fence, and was flanked on each side by smaller ones. In the blossoming season, garden, house, and yard were filled and permeated with the rich fragrance. Lilacs could not have been plentiful in the town at that time, for children, and even older persons, were constantly coming to ask for them.

"Please give me a laylock," was often the form of the request. It became something of a tax upon təɥ time and patience of the household to

supply these frequent demands, and at last it seemed best to appoint certain hours for the purpose. As soon as I was considered old enough to mount a step-ladder, and to use a pair of garden scissors without injuring myself or others, the task of supplying the children devolved upon me. Wednesday and Saturday noons, on their way home from school, were their appointed hours. I remember well what an exciting experience it was to look down from that lofty perch at the eager faces of those below, and to drop the coveted flowers into their outstretched hands. I wondered how it would seem to be on the other side of the fence, looking up at those fragrant purple clusters, the only visible sign of what was within, waiting for one's own meagre share in the distribution.

In the angle made by the two sides of the fence was a tall white rosebush, which, in favorable summers, bore its white drift of blossoms to the very topmost edge of the dark protecting wall. These roses were especially beautiful in the early morning. How often have I stolen out of the house at dawn, to watch the half-opened buds unfold, each one of creamy hue, with a warm salmon-pink flush at the centre. Later in the day, full-blown and wearied by the fervent kisses of the sun, the flush faded and the creamy tint turned to snowy whiteness.

This rosebush is in existence now, still bearing similar beautiful, creamy flowers. It never fails to blossom, and its earliest buds open each year about June 20.

In a sunny part of the border were the double damask roses, rows upon

rows of them. Low and crooked and of unpromising appearance, the bushes were in themselves, but what a lavish wealth of color and fragrance they sent forth in their season! Aaron's rod, that budded and blossomed, could scarcely have appeared a greater miracle. Perfect in shape, inspiring in color, of rich yet delicate perfume, these roses were royally beautiful. It stirred one's blood to look at them.

Then there were multitudes of single roses, of the same soft yet glowing color, not less attractive in their graceful simplicity than the double ones. These bushes, like the others, were low and twisted, and both were given to home-sickness, and did not bear transplanting well. Leave them where they were, though cramped and crowded in soil sterile and grass bound, yet they would live and flourish; move

them, and they soon dwindled and died. There were also blush roses and moss roses. The blush rose had an exquisite pale pink coloring, and the buds were very beautiful, but when full blown they were seldom perfect. The moss roses were also more beautiful in the bud, as the mossy calyx was then shown to better advantage. Both these varieties were subject to blight and mildew.

We occasionally examined our rose-bushes, and picked off a few little green worms by hand, but I do not remember that we had to keep up any systematic warfare with insect pests. Now all sorts of creeping and flying things infest rose bushes; even the elm beetle does not seem averse to a dessert of rose leaves.

Miss Larcom says in one of her poems, "And roses grow wherever

men will let them." In these days they seem to grow only where men will stand by them and fight their enemies.

At one end of the border was asparagus, not grown for eating, but allowed to develop its fine and lace-like foliage. Near by were clumps of hollyhocks, stately and tall, with close-clinging blossoms of white and pink and red. Tall fox-gloves, white and purple, blue monkshood and prince's feather were not far away.

In one corner was a tangle of sweet briar, or eglantine, thorny and forbidding to the touch, yet nevertheless a delight all the year round. In spring and early summer the tender leaves, wet with the dew and the rain, sent forth spicy odors, that seemed to be the very breath of awakening life. Later it was clothed, as with a gar-

ment, by hundreds of blossoms, frail circlets of exquisite pink petals, with golden stamens at the centre. In the autumn, behold! each blossom had become a gem, a seed-vessel of ruby hue, outshining the reddest leaves in brilliancy.

Edgings of box were set along the borders. The popularity of box has waned since then, but with its compact growth, and its small, firm, shining leaves, it is still a satisfactory plant. When vigorous and well cared for, it has a clean, slightly bitter odor; "the fragrance of Eternity," Dr. Holmes calls it. "This," he says, "is one of the odors which carry us out of time into the abysses of the unbeginning past." One of the borders had also an edging of the striped or ribbon-grass — a diminutive species of bamboo — and another of moss pink, a

lowly, heathlike plant, literally covered in early spring with a mass of deep pink bloom.

In our garden, according to the custom of the time, four beds were given to herbs, useful in cooking or for simple household remedies. There was balm, soft and comfortable in aspect as in name; sage, with pretty blue-green leaves and ragged blue blossoms; thoroughwort or boneset, used for colds and as a spring tonic; wormwood, pennyroyal, and saffron, the latter always associated in my mind with measles. One bed was filled with small herbs, such as chives, mint, thyme, summer savory, and parsley; another, with something we called pot-marjoram, probably sweet marjoram. Over this bed, in the blossoming season, the bees and the butterflies hovered continually. When

a child, I was afraid of the bees at first; but I found that if I did not molest them they had no desire to disturb me, and their busy humming soon came to have a cheerful, sociable sound.

The distinctive odors of these herbs come back to me now, just as they exhaled in dewy mornings or under the noontide sun. I remember, too, the look and smell of each, when dried and tied in bunches, ready for winter use, they hung under the rafters of a dark garret.

The remaining beds were devoted to flowers. The central space in two of them was given to peonies. Some of our older neighbors called them "pinys." The peony was known to the Greeks, the Chinese, and the Japanese, and highly prized by them all. "Flowers of prosperity" is a

Japanese name for it. It is thrifty and hardy, enduring well the cold of winter in New England. Its dark green foliage is always clean and healthy, free from blight and insects. Our peonies bore blooms of white and deep rich red. The great gorgeous blossoms made a fine showing in the garden, and were especially suitable for the adornment of large rooms, halls, and churches.

In the other two beds, the place of honor was given to tulips. The enthusiasm of the Dutch for this flower had reached its climax and begun to wane more than a century before, but its fame had spread to other lands, and it has never quite lost its prestige.

Our tulips grew taller than the newer varieties, and came somewhat later. When the pointed red tip of the first leaf began to peer above the

soil I felt that spring had really come. One by one, its successors pushed their way up and slowly uncurled, and then, out of their midst, suddenly in a night, as it were, shot up slender swaying stems each crowned with a folded bud. I cannot see a bunch of tulips now, even in a florist's window, without recalling my childish rapture as the buds began to unfold. How beautiful they were, white, pink, red, yellow, sometimes striped in two colors, as pink and white, or purple and white! So brilliant is the coloring of the tulip that one thinks of it as a flower which loves the sun, but it loves only softly tempered rays; under strong sunshine it expands too quickly, then droops and shrivels.

The four corners of one bed were filled with fleur-de-lis,— flower-de-luce it was then called. With its

lance-shaped leaves, its tall stem, its curled and crape-like petals of purest white or deep blue, it is indeed a stately flower. No wonder the French love it, and emblazon it on frieze and shield, on banner and crest.

In the corners of another bed were sweet-williams, the richly colored velvet-like petals upheld by rather stiff and clumsy stalks; London-pride, similar to sweet-william, but taller, and with showy scarlet blossoms; honesty, whose chief attraction lies not in leaf or flower, but in its delicate silvery seedpods; and bluebells, "big bonnie bluebells," Canterbury bells we called them.

Aldrich has made them the subject of one of his dainty poems: —

The roses are a regal troop,
And modest folk, the daisies;

But bluebells of New England,
To you I give my praises.
To you, fair phantoms in the sun,
Whom merry Spring discovers;
With bluebirds for your laureates,
And honey bees for lovers.

One bed was bordered all round with pinks. There were single grass or snow pinks, pale in color, and of faint perfume, pure and delicate as Puritan maidens, double pinks, deeper in tint, of rich and spicy fragrance; and red pinks, the name seeming a misnomer, unless one is familiar with the leaf and blossom.

In the same bed were bachelor's buttons, called also ragged sailors, and, in some countries, corn flowers; larkspurs, with blossoms in all tints of blue and pink and purple, blending harmoniously like the colors in a

Persian rug: and columbines, lovely nodding bells of pink and blue, beloved of poets, for their airy grace.

"A wild rose or rock-loving columbine
Salve my worst wounds,"

writes Emerson.

Scattered about in the various beds were many other plants: phlox, lupine, rose-campion, catch-fly, sweet rocket, ragged robin, mullein pinks, balsams, and four-o'clocks; each name awakening pleasant recollections, not only of the flower itself, but also of some association connected with it. I knew an old lady, a neighbor, who always put her teapot on the stove when her four-o'clocks began to open.

"Now popy seede in grounde is goode to throwe," says an old writer. One bed was half filled with these gay

flowers. There were Oriental poppies, large and flame-colored, fringed white ones, and smaller ones in many shades of pink and vivid glowing reds.

"The poppy," says Ruskin, "is painted glass. It never glows so brightly as when the sun shines through it. Whenever it is seen against the light or with the light, always it is a flame, and warms the wind like a blown ruby."

In this bed, too, were mourning brides, "soft purple eyes," as someone has called them; and marigolds, of dusky yellow and herby odor, doubtless the "Mary buds" of Shakespeare.

Everywhere in bed and border was the little pansy or lady's delight, that flower of many lands and many names, favorite of the great Napoleon and of many less known men and women. These had no special nook,

but wherever they could get a foothold, there they were, with their bright little faces upturned as if in welcome. This flower must have been always dearly loved, for it has so many quaint local names, pet names as it were, such as "none so pretty," and "three faces under a hood." Even its botanical name, *Viola tricolor*, is much more agreeable to eye and ear than are most botanical names. The French *pensee*, a thought or sentiment, is charming. Its Italian name means "idle thoughts." Shakespeare calls it Cupid's flower.

Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell;
It fell upon a little Western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it, "Love in Idleness."

It is one of the blossoms that Milton places in Eve's couch:

"Flowers were the couch,
Pansies and Violets and Asphodel,
And Hyacinth, earth's freshest, softest lap."

But of all its names, none is quite so dear as "heart's ease."

"I tell thee that the pansy, freak'd with jet,
Is still the heart's ease that the poets knew."

It seems strange that the daffodil flower of the olden time as well as of the present, and the subject of such tender and delightful tributes from Herrick and Shakespeare and Wordsworth, should have been missing. I did not find it, but it may have been

there in previous seasons. Some changes must doubtless have taken place during the many years that elapsed between my grandmother's departure from her garden and my own advent therein.

In the late autumn came the chrysanthemums, not the gorgeous Japanese varieties of the present day, but modest flowers in shape and color, usually of white and golden and dull red. Very welcome they were in the chilly shortening days, and very hardy too, defying early frosts, and blooming on until the close approach of winter.

There was one plant for which we had no definite name: I have since heard it called "live forever," and, locally, frogplant, blowleaf, and pudding-bag plant. The leaves were thick, and by rubbing them gently

between the thumb and forefinger, the epidermis could be loosened from the green pulp and blown into a bag. If one blew hard enough, the bag would burst with a satisfying pop.

When my young friends came to see me on summer afternoons, we often spent hours on the lawn or in the garden, and one of our amusements was making these bags. We also made lilac chains to hang about our necks, and larkspur wreaths, which we pressed and then fastened on cards.

My only memory of the garden not wholly delightful is connected with the currant bushes. I was sometimes required to pick currants for the table or for jelly. They were too acid to suit my childish taste; consequently I could not solace myself by eating them, and I found the work irksome.

Looking back at those days now, I wonder at myself. To be picking currants in that garden, surrounded by my cherished flowers, seems only a part of it all, not less enjoyable than the rest.

Near the garden, and seeming really a part of it, since it grew over a trellised doorway opening out on the lawn, was a climbing honeysuckle, of a kind which at present seems to be dying out. Only now and then do we come across one, trained over a doorway or in a sheltered nook of some old estate. It has been discarded, doubtless, for faster growing and more hardy varieties, but none of them can equal it in the beauty and sweetness of its blossoms. These were deep pink in the bud, paling a little as they opened; turning then to pearly white, then to cream color, then to yellow,— all

stages visible in the same cluster, and the whole giving forth the most exquisite indescribable perfume; a spicy breath of the wildwood mellowed by the rich scent of a hothouse favorite.

That dear old-fashioned garden, how I loved it! I used to spend hours there considering the plants; rejoicing with the thrifty, and trying to assist those that were backward or drooping; bidding each good morning and good night, not liking to pass any one by, lest it should feel the omission. I had never read Shelley's Sensitive Plant, and knew not his Lady of the Garden, she who was a

"Power in that sweet place,
An Eve in that Eden; a ruling grace."

If I had, I might have likened myself to her, in a minor and mundane way, for had I not

"Tended the garden from morn to even,

. . . .

Sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam?"

The garden was a potent factor in most of my pleasures, and not in mine only; all the children of the family and the neighborhood shared in its benefits. How many choice nosegays have been gathered there and given to favorite friends! How many Maybaskets embellished with its treasures! How many June wreaths constructed out of its abundance!

Older persons, too, shared in its bounty. Communities were neighborly then, and scarcely a day passed that some one did not come to beg

a sprig or two of marjoram or parsley, as "seasoning"; a little sage or balm, to make tea for an invalid; a few currants to "whet up" the appetite of some ailing relative.

There were no public greenhouses in town, and if a rural bride wanted a rose for her hair or a bouquet for her hand, she sent some one to ask for it. When sorrowing friends wished to soften the grim fact of death, by laying flowers about a loved one, they also came, and no one went away empty handed.

Some years later a favorite uncle, the youngest son of my grandmother, instituted certain changes in the garden. He had the currant bushes and all the herbs removed to the vegetable garden, and the space thus gained given to flowers.

Snowball trees were then in vogue,

and a small one was set out in the centre of each bed vacated by the herbs. These grew rapidly and soon became thrifty trees, occupying far more than the space originally allotted to them. The showy white blossoms became ere long rivals of the lilac in popular affection.

"Please give me a snowball," was only a new form of an old request.

New varieties of roses were added: Scotch roses, spice roses, multifloras, Baltimore belles, beautiful indeed (all roses are beautiful), but not more so, and far less fragrant than the ones already there.

Dahlias tall and stately, with curved, quill-like petals of velvet texture and richest tints, and asters in many colors and shades were new acquisitions.

Among the smaller flowers were English daisies, fragrant violets, sweet

peas, "on tiptoe for a flight," mignonette, day lilies, white and yellow, sweet and shortlived; the blue periwinkle, sometimes called myrtle, a lowly running plant with dark glossy leaves and flowers of purest azure; the forget-me-not, that tiny blossom, doubly a favorite for itself and for its name; and amaranth of such crisp and lasting texture as to seem an artificial product rather than a natural growth.

In the border was set a snowberry, bearing waxen fruit; a syringa, of almost cloying sweetness; Japanese lilies, and a tiger lily, beloved at least of one poet, for has not Aldrich written

I like the chaliced lilies,
The heavy Eastern lilies,
The gorgeous tiger lilies,
That in our garden grow?

One of my special favorites among the new plants was the Missouri flowering currant, a shrub with small yellow blossoms, opening so early as to seem a herald of the spring, and breathing forth, especially at dawn or dusk, an elusive fragrance in which there seemed no sensuous element.

Another of my favorites was the jonquil or poet's narcissus, an exquisite flower, with an orange-yellow centre, and a circlet of pure white petals bending slightly backward toward the long, slender stem.

As the summers came and went other plants crept into the garden, annuals, biennials, those growing from bulbs, and those that had to be housed in the winter; the crocus and hyacinth, lilies-of-the-valley, convolvulus, candytuft, morning glories, geraniums of many kinds, petunias, salvias,

gladioli, coreopsis, polyanthus, heliotrope, and flowering almond. A climbing rose; a fragrant, starlike clematis; a trumpet honeysuckle, beloved of humming birds; and later a wistaria, with graceful drooping plumes, made beautiful the trellised doorway.

In process of time the fence was cut down in height, and later was replaced by one of a more open pattern; consequently, the enclosure lost something of its character as a secluded retreat. The general arrangements of the beds, borders, and paths was, however, kept, and we still called it "grandmother's garden."

But the fashion of the world changeth. Time is an iconoclast, and at length there came a day when it was decreed that the garden must go to make way for a larger expanse of lawn. The plants were removed

to a space set apart for them in a yard at the back of the house, and the beds and paths were levelled. A part of the border was allowed to remain, and the vines over the doorway were untouched, but the garden as a whole, "grandmother's garden," ceased there and then to exist.

At a period when Puritan asceticism had still a strong hold, such a garden must have had a softening and refining influence. Afterwards, and always while it lasted, it was a centre from which radiated those small interchanges and amenities that tend to make life less hard and prosaic.

And so to this grandmother, whose name I bear, yet who is, nevertheless, very much of a myth to me, I feel that I owe both gratitude and allegiance, not only for the happy days spent among her flowers, but also for the

helpful and lasting influence thus thrown about my life.

Had she lived long enough on earth for me to become acquainted with her, the garden must, I am sure, have been a bond of union between us, and such it will doubtless become should I ever meet her in the Hereafter.

AN ORCHARD ANCESTRAL

AN ORCHARD ANCESTRAL

IS there anything that affords a child such pure enjoyment as an ancestral orchard?

To be altogether delightful, it should have lapsed a little from its noontide of productiveness, yet not enough to have fallen into any pronounced decadence. It must, however, have been notable in its day; sufficiently large to give a sense of space, though not so large as to prevent a feeling of ownership and familiarity; near enough to the homestead to seem a part of it, yet far enough away for freedom and seclusion.

In such an orchard I had the good

fortune to roam at will. There I played, worked, dreamed, and thought. The house where I lived and in which I was born seemed no more a part of my home than did the orchard. In a neglected corner of it I had first met those early companions of childhood,—dandelions, buttercups, and daisies. There I had made the acquaintance of wild violets, Gill-over-the-ground, tender-tinted chicory blossoms, and asters, white, purple, and golden. In a little square bounded by four trees my young companions and I had played "puss in the corner" and "I spy."

In the low-spreading branches of an old apple tree a rustic seat had been built. To this I climbed daily, playing that it was a throne and I a princess, or a prison and I a captive, or any other fairy tale that my fancy

might invent. As some one has aptly said, "So long as there are children in the world, the golden and objectless occupation of makebelieve will go on."

In blossom time I seemed to myself to be living in a dream world. The morning flush of peach blooms, the snowy purity of cherry and pear, the rose and pearl of apple blossoms, thrilled me with joy interfused with sadness. I dimly felt what another sweet and sensitive spirit has so well expressed:

"To-day I worship in the apple boughs,
With the great congregation of the flowers,
That come up to their heights as came the tribes
Of old unto Mount Zion once a year,
A passover of perfect open praise."

Cherry time was another festal season, though in a different way. Is any other fruit so dear to childhood? The very aroma of youth seems to linger about the name. When the red cherries and the blackhearts were permeated through and through with the sweetness born of sunshine, then indeed there was feasting in the orchard. The girls, mounted on step-ladders, gathered the fruit from the lower boughs, while the boys climbed up into the trees and rifled the higher ones, dropping down now and then choice clusters to the girls below. When at last we departed, even our youthful appetites being satisfied, then to the second table, as it were, came the birds. There was always an abundance left for them and many choice, ripe ones they found on topmost twigs, that only airy winged crea-

tures like themselves could reach.

The cherry, it is generally believed, was first cultivated in an old Greek town called Cerasos. Pliny relates that the Roman general Lucullus brought it from Cerasos to Rome. A tree laden with this fruit is said to have adorned his triumphal procession. Lucullus was noted for the elaborate banquets that he gave, and this new product, alluring to the eye as well as to the taste, must have made a welcome addition. An anecdote illustrating his love of luxury has come down to us from the past. Once, when a fine supper had been proposed, he was asked who were to be his guests.

"Lucullus will sup to-night with Lucullus," was his reply.

Longfellow thus alludes to these feasts:

"Ne'er Falernian threw a richer
Light upon Lucullus's tables."

In another part of the orchard were the wild or black cherry trees, with leaves of smooth, shining green, changing in autumn into dull olive tints, then to brilliant yellow, then to tawny orange and crimson. They bore long strings of glossy black cherries with a winey flavor. These we ate in their season, but they were chiefly used in making cherry rum, considered beneficial for colds and coughs, and also as a spring tonic.

On the upland side of the orchard was a row of mulberry trees, some bearing white, others reddish-black berries. According to an ancient myth, all mulberries were white, until the tragic death of Pyramus and Thisbe under the mulberry tree, near the tomb of Ninus. Their blood

sinking to the roots of the tree gave to the berries a red color, which they — and presumably their descendants — ever after retained.

The mulberry is of Eastern origin, and from there was early introduced into England. Many allusions are made to it by old writers. Gerard describes it as "high and full of boughes." Spenser speaks of it as "the fruit that dewes the poet's braine." Another calls it the "wisest" of all the trees, for "this tree only bringeth forth his leaves after the cold frostes be past."

There is an old saying that "a mulberry tree is a patent of nobility on any lawn." This may have had its origin in the fact that as early as 1609 King James the First of England had a garden of these trees on the site where Buckingham Palace

now stands. They consequently became valued ornaments of English gardens. King James also made an effort to introduce them into Virginia soon after its settlement, with a view to silk culture. The colonists, however, preferred to raise tobacco, and doubtless they found it more profitable.

Shakespeare frequently alludes to the mulberry, and it is supposed that he planted the celebrated tree which long adorned his garden. It is said that the reverend Mr. Gastrell, who bought "New Place," cut the tree down to save himself the trouble of showing it to visitors. Various mementoes were made of the wood.

Cowper, who notwithstanding his lifelong melancholy wrote some lively lines, has these about the mulberry:

"The mulberry tree was hung with
blooming wreaths,

The mulberry tree stood centre of the dance;
The mulberry tree was hymned with dulcet strains,
And from his touch-wood trunk, the mulberry tree,
Supplied such relics as devotion holds,
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care."

About 1830 an attempt was made by the legislatures of several states to introduce silk culture into this country, and a new variety of the white mulberry was imported from China. It may have been about this time that the trees in our orchard were set out, but any hope or expectation then connected with them had evidently come to naught, for no use was made by the household either of the leaves or the abundant crop of berries that each July brought forth. The children of

the neighborhood met there occasionally for mulberry feasts, and the birds came in chattering crowds and ate their fill quite unmolested.

The fruit of the mulberry tree is, however, its least claim to distinction. During the heat of summer, the long branching limbs of these vigorous trees, clothed with leaves of soft yellowish green, offer an inviting shelter from the blinding glare of sunlight. In the waning months of autumn the foliage takes on warm golden tints, that seem to have a wondrous quality of holding and diffusing sunshine. This foliage is always clean and free from insect pests. Only silkworms appear to find in it their desired nutriment. Other worms and bugs pass it by. Is this, perhaps, an instance of Nature's law of average or balance, each species of animal life finding its

special food in some variety of plant life?

Between one of the mulberry trees and a convenient pear tree a hammock had been suspended. The staple that held up one end of it was embedded in the massive trunk of the mulberry; the other pierced the slender stem of the pear. Swing as violently as one might, not a tremor swayed the huge bulk of the former, not a leaf stirred the faster. The pear tree, on the contrary, shook and trembled with each movement; its topmost boughs drooped and bent, and its leaves lost their hold and fluttered downward. Yet what a brave little tree it was! Wounded almost to its vital sap-bearing centre by the iron spike, overtopped and partially deprived of sunshine by its more vigorous neighbor, it yet strove to bear

fruit. Each spring it put forth lovely white blossoms. All through the summer, though weakened and pulled about by the weight of its unnatural burden—the hammock—it did its best to nourish the little green balls that had replaced the blossoms. When autumn came these prematurely fell, smitten by decay ere the season of maturity had come. Each year the same process went on. The tree's mission was to bear fruit—pears. This was ingrained in its very nature. No matter what unfavorable environment had fallen to its lot, it must still strive to fulfil its mission. Even as a child I had a vague sense of this, though I could not have put it into words. My sympathy took a more practical and self-denying form. I swung very gently out of consideration for the tree, and

if my young friends seemed bent on more vigorous motion, I enticed them away to some new pleasure.

The grape arbor was another favorite haunt. The word grape is said to come from *grappe*, an old French word meaning bunch or cluster. The latter word recalls Eshcol, which signifies cluster.

"The place was called the brook — or valley — Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence."

But grape might come more naturally, one would think, from the Italian *grappo* — a grappling or clutching — so persistently do the vines send out clinging tendrils, and such firm hold do they take of anything that seems to offer the least support.

The beginnings of the vine — meaning usually the grapevine — appear

to go back into the unrecorded past. It is related that "grape kernels," or seeds, have been found in mummy cases of the eleventh Egyptian dynasty, that is, some two thousand years before Christ. The vine is one of the plants frequently mentioned in the Bible. Figurative allusions to it abound. Palestine was a land of vines. Grapes were largely cultivated and the vintage was a time of rejoicing.

"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his figtree and none shall make them afraid." There the vine is evidently an emblem of peace.

Israel was a vine brought out of Egypt. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt. Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it."

The languishing of the vine was

apparently used to indicate desolation. "For the fields of Heshbon languish. and the vine of Sibmah; the lords, of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof. . . And in the vineyards there shall be no singing; the treaders shall tread out no wine in the presses."

This imagery of the Bible reaches its culmination in the saying of Jesus, "I am the true Vine."

Over the arbor in our orchard grew two varieties of grapes, one the well-known Isabella, the other a light-colored, almost white grape, for which the family had no special name. On trellises near by grew a Concord and a Catawba. Adventurous waving tendrils from these had reached out towards a convenient apple tree, and grasping slender twigs here and there, had so overrun the tree that it had

become a bowerlike adjunct to the arbor.

When on some morning in May or early June I woke to find in the air about me an indefinable haunting fragrance, I knew that the grape-vines were putting forth their blossoms. Straightway I hastened to the arbor that I might the more fully steep myself — body and spirit — in the delicate elusive perfume. This wondrous quality of the unobtrusive blossoms has not escaped notice. Long ago, Bacon wrote:

"Among the most sweet-scented flowers, next to muskroses and strawberry leaves dying, are the flowers of the vine; it is a little dust which grows among the cluster in the first coming forth."

From that time on, through all the months, until the heavy purpling

clusters had ripened and been gathered in, no day passed that I did not seek its shelter. There I took my schoolbooks to study my lessons. There I beguiled the monotony of sewing, by listening to the birds or watching the glancing play of sunbeams as they flickered in and out amid the thick green leaves. There with my companions we planned merrymakings, or discussed in a jocular or half-serious fashion phases of the many problems that present themselves to young minds.

In one part of the orchard were the small fruits. Much use was made of these, and the children of the family were pressed into service in picking them. So far as the strawberries and blackberries were concerned, we found it fairly enjoyable, since we could eat as many as we

desired. The currants, too, were easy to pick, but the demand for them seemed limitless, since over and above the daily needs, supplies of jelly and wine were to be made for winter use. The gooseberry gathering was more irksome, because of the little prickly thorns which seemed to be trying to guard the berries from marauding hands. Yet even this had its alleviation. In all the English novels which I had ever read, gooseberry tarts seemed to be a favorite table delicacy. The heroes and heroines ate them with relish, as well as the minor personages. This gave a foreign and aristocratic aspect to the unpretentious green fruit.

Over a low wall near by grew a barberry bush, probably transplanted from the fields. Its racemes of yellow blossoms in the spring, its scarlet

berries, and the varied colors of its maturing leaves in the autumn, rendered it an attractive shrub. A half century or more ago, barberries, stewed with sugar or molasses, were used as a sauce to be eaten with meat; "shoe-peg sauce," some irreverent person called it, and not inappropriately either. When combined with sweet apples they became more palatable.

A mildew, it is said, sometimes attacks the barberry, which in another form becomes the rust of wheat. Massachusetts once made a law requiring farmers who raised wheat to cut down all barberry bushes near their fields.

In this part of the orchard were the beds of herbs. These also were gathered, dried, and kept for use when needed. Some of them were valued for their medicinal qualities. Sage

was a notable example of this, the very name coming from the Latin salvus, meaning safe, sound. "No man needs to doubt of the wholesomeness of sage," says an old writer. "It is good for the head and the brain. It quickens the senses and the memory." Sage tea was often used as a beverage, in place of oolong or hyson. Wormwood also was considered to have tonic and stimulating qualities. "As bitter as wormwood" was an old saying. Perhaps its bitterness had something to do with its supposed curative property. In the days before homeopathy and the eclectic systems had come to the front with their modifying influence, most drugs were very ill-tasting compounds. The name wormwood comes apparently from two Anglo-Saxon words — *werian*, to protect, and *mōd*, mind;

literally, therefore, "mind preserver." The plant belongs, however, to the genus Artemisia from Artemis, the Greek name of Diana. Southern wood is a name for wormwood at the South. It is supposed to be a corruption of an old English word — Suthe-wort,—soothing wort,—a name given probably because it was thought to have a soporific effect. Tarragon is an aromatic species of Artemisia, used in vinegar and pickles, also largely in France in the shape of absinthe.

Summer savory, sweet marjoram, chives, thyme, and mint were chiefly used for seasoning. Bees were continually hovering over these beds. They seem to find the inconspicuous blossoms of herbs, and the smaller fruits, as currants and gooseberries, more attractive than the gayer flowers

of the garden. These little creatures long ago earned a reputation for prudence and wisdom. Doubtless there *is* more honey-making material in such plants as mankind has thought worth cultivating for his own nutriment or delectation. Bees are especially fond of sweet marjoram and thyme. Spenser speaks of the " bees alluring tyme." An old writer says, " Mount Hymettus in Greece and Hybla in Sicily were so famous for Bees and Honi, because there grew such store of Tyme."

Mrs. Browning in " Wine of Cyprus," mentions these bees:

"And the brown bees of Hymettus
Make their honey not so sweet."

In this vicinity was also a rhubarb bed. The plant is supposed to have been first found on the banks of the river Volga, in Russia, and the name

was apparently compounded of *Rha* an old name of the river, and *barbarus* — foreign. The plant must have been very crude in those early days, but it has been greatly improved by cultivation. Coming as it does in the early spring, when one is longing for something fresh, it whets the jaded appetite into renewed keenness. The long, thick, succulent, pinkish-green leaf stalks make most satisfying tarts, pies, and sauce. It is easily grown too, yet I made many a morning trip through the dew-laden grass to cut a few stalks for some unthrifty neighbor, who " didn't know what to make a pie of," or who " felt the need of a little something sour."

Most of the fruit trees in the orchard were of the well-known older varieties, having been selected and planted in the days of a preceding

generation. They were still in fine bearing condition, however, therefore but few later ones had been added.

Of course there were pear, plum, and peach trees. Of the pears there were the Bartlett and Duchess, slender and tall; the more stately Clapp's favorite; the seckel and buffum; the iron-clad vicar, and some others of names unknown. One was a large tree with spreading branches, thickly clothed with leaves. It bore russet-brown pears, of medium size, very sweet, with a nutty flavor, delicious as a dessert fruit, and also when baked. This tree bore abundantly, but the fruit had to be carefully guarded against the depredations of chipmunks and gray squirrels. Not that they cared for the fruit itself, the seeds were what they wanted. Before the pears were ripe enough to gather

they would be found lying on the ground, gnawed into halves, with every seed extracted. Some quality these must have had which made them a specially desirable food for the little semi-wild creatures.

There were peaches both yellow and white. Most of them had grown into shrubs or small trees, after the American fashion. One was trained upon a wall, as is common in England and middle Europe. The first peaches known to the Greeks came from Persia, but far back in a remoter past they were cultivated in China, that ancient land to which the beginnings of so many apparently modern things may be traced. The peach is a short-lived tree. Thirty years is said to be its limit, even under the most favorable circumstances. From seven or eight to ten years is its

average life. Many of the trees in the orchard had lived longer than that, however, and where one had died, another like unto it had sprung up near by, notwithstanding the fact that the peach does not commonly " reproduce true to seed."

In the cool mornings of early autumn I liked to gather the purple plums, the juicy yellow pears, and the ripe velvety peaches that had fallen in the night or were ready to drop at a touch. I liked also to linger and slowly eat them, trying one and then another. Fruit eaten under the trees upon which it has grown seems to have a peculiar delicacy and richness of flavor. Is it because one gets it in its first freshness, or is it that some portion of the life or spiritual quality of the tree — which must later escape — is still inhering there? It

may indeed be due only to the vivifying power of imagination, yet Thoreau has said, "There is about all natural products a certain volatile and ethereal quality which represents their highest value, and which cannot be vulgarized or bought or sold."

There were many apple trees in the orchard, and of several varieties. The apple seems to have been always closely connected with the history of the human race. According to geologists, the order of the Rosacea, which includes the apple and similar fruits, was introduced upon the earth only a short time before the appearance of man. The term apple, traced to its root in various languages, signifies fruit in general. Therefore it was probably not always limited to the fruit now known by that name. Sir John Mandeville in describing the

Cedar of Lebanon, says, "And upon the hills growen trees of Cedre, and they bearen large apples." The old Anglo-Saxon name for the blackberry was "bramble apple," and we still speak of the pineapple.

Something known by that name is, however, frequently mentioned in the earliest writings. "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood," says Solomon, and again, "Stay me with flagons and comfort me with apples." In the mythologies of Greece and Rome, the apple plays many parts. The golden apples of the Hesperides, and the apples that Hippomenes threw down in his race with Atlanta are among them.

According to Homer, the apple was one of the fruits that Tantalus could not pluck. "Tall trees laden with fruit — pears, pomegranates, apples,

and figs, stooped their heads to him," but when he tried to grasp them, "winds whirled them out of his reach."

Ulysses saw in the wonderful garden of Alcinous, lofty trees — "pear and pomegranate, apple, fig, and olive, all bearing beautiful fruit."

It is a "far cry" from the age of fantastic myths to the prosaic realities of the nineteenth century, yet Mr. Alcott, of Concord, had among his many theories one concerning the beneficial and curative qualities of the apple so extreme that it might almost be termed a modern rendering of some old fable. He stoutly maintained that any one who should live largely on apples would not only have physical health, but would be able to rise to higher levels of intellectual and moral attainment. He insisted, moreover, that such a diet would give

one a fine voice for speaking and singing.

One cannot but wonder if the germ of this theory may not have arisen out of some fabulous tale, like that of Iduna, the Scandinavian goddess, who kept certain apples in a box, and when any of the gods felt old age approaching, they had only to taste one of them to become young and strong again. Or that of the singing apple, perhaps, which had such "power of persuasion," that even the smell of it would enable one to become a poet, a philosopher, or whatever one might desire. The apples which Alcott recommended, however, were not possessed of any magical qualities. They were real apples, products of earth, air, and sunshine.

It is believed that all the cultivated apples in the world have come from

the common wild apple and the crab-apple. Crab seems to be a term formerly applied to all small apples, though sometimes the Pyrus-baccata, a small, long-stemmed variety is meant.

The crabapple tree in our orchard bore fruit scarcely larger than good-sized cherries, nevertheless a delicious jelly was made from them of a delicate red color. Both in the blossoming season, and later on when laden with blushing fruit, the tree looked more like an ornamental shrub for the lawn than like a useful orchard tree. One might easily fancy it a native of Japan, since all things in that wonderful country, from the people down, seem to be elaborately wrought and finished, yet on a Lilliputian scale.

Crabapples were held in greater

esteem a century or more ago than now. In England they were roasted and served with little dishes of caraway seeds. When roasted and served with hot ale they were a favorite Christmas dish. It is said that in certain sections these customs are still observed.

Among the trees bearing early apples was one small in size, but most productive. The apples ripened in late July or early August. They were very white and mellow, and neither sweet nor sour. The addition of sugar seemed to bring out the flavor, so that they were much in demand for sauce and tarts. The skin was a pale lemon color. They dropped from the boughs at a touch or a breath of wind, and they had no "keeping qualities," consequently basketfuls were distributed daily among the neighbors.

This tree was comparatively modern, and was supposed to belong to the family of transparent apples of Russian origin.

A little later came the well-known porters. These also were yellow-skinned, flecked with crimson on one side. They were pleasant to the taste, and very useful as a cooking apple.

One tree — the pride of the orchard — had low-drooping branches, like a bower. This also was a comparatively recent addition, though no one seemed to be quite sure of its name or pedigree. It was supposed to be some seedling of the *fameuse* (famous), a Canadian apple which has made a name for itself. It may have been the "*fameuse sucree*," or the "McIntosh Red," well entitled to be called, as it has been, a glorified

"*fameuse rouge.*" This tree was a most generous giver, and the apples were of remarkable quality and flavor. They were large and fair, the pulp pure white, faintly tinged with pink, just under the skin, which was thin and of a deep beautiful crimson. Such apples as these might easily persuade one to some measure of credence in Mr. Alcott's theories. They were indeed ambrosial food, fit for gods and men.

Among the latter varieties were the baldwin, greening, winter sweet, golden pippin, and russet or russeting. A baldwin tree in October is a thing of beauty. The apples gleam ruddily amid the green leaves, and weigh the branches down almost to the ground with their abundance. They are large, smooth, mellow, yet firm of texture, and are justly popu-

lar. Greenings and winter sweets are both valuable varieties for winter use. The greenings become mellow as the season advances, and they have remarkable "keeping quality." Winter sweets or sweetings, baked or roasted, and eaten with sugar or cream, make a dish scarcely inferior to the far-famed excellence of strawberries in cream. The golden pippins with their ruddy bloom are very attractive on the tree, and they may be used in many ways for the table. The brown russets, formerly called "leather-coats," come to the front in the late winter or early spring, when other apples and most vegetables have become limp and tasteless.

In one corner of the orchard was an old tree which I regarded with interest, though it was considered of little value by the household. It

stood so near a small building, used for the storing of fruit, that it had little space to extend its branches in that direction. To offset this, it put its force into long arms stretching the other way. It bore abundantly, but, perhaps from a lack of judicious thinning out, the fruit was of inferior quality. The flavor was a peculiar spicy blending of sweet and sour. Whatever distinctive name the tree might have borne in the past had long fallen away from it, so I gave it a name of my own, the "spice-apple tree." I knew that there were many better varieties in the orchard, of finer texture and richer flavor, but in these I found a hint of something good that might be better; a possibility of improvement under favorable conditions. My feeling about this tree was not unlike that which

Thoreau has expressed about the wild apple shrubs which he came across in his long rambles.

"Every wild apple shrub," he writes, "excites our expectation, somewhat as every wild child. It is perhaps a prince in disguise."

Was the spice-apple tree such a prince? If he were, he had no choice but to remain in disguise, for there was no one to help him find or gain his throne. Burbank of California fame was too far away. Moreover, the wonderful results that he has since brought about were then undreamed of, except, perhaps, by himself.

One wild and gusty night in late autumn, this tree, handicapped by its unevenly weighted branches, succumbed to a sudden blast. The trunk snapped near the ground and fell over with its under limbs resting

there. The injury was too severe to admit of propping up, and it was left to lie where it fell. By and by the snow came, softly falling, hiding the rent and ragged edges and shielding them from the bitter cold. Thus it remained all through the winter, the prostrate trunk clinging only by a few fibres to the roots below. When spring came with its warm rains, each tiny twig began to put forth tender shoots. A little later, every branch was covered with a wealth of pink and white blossoms. Later still came the apples, smaller than before yet retaining much the same appearance and flavor.

This tree called forth blended pity and admiration. What energy it showed! What persistent devotion to the purpose of its being! Was all nature like that? All nature —

vegetable and animal? Did one life common to both throb through every plant, every creature? Youth is very shy in the expression of inmost feeling, and I kept all such questioning for the most part to myself. It seemed scarcely a subject for conversation, and I was not sure that my friends would comprehend.

Here and there in the orchard were quince trees, somewhat gnarled and venerable in appearance, since the quince is comparatively short-lived and takes on an appearance of age earlier than most trees. They were still bearing beautiful golden quinces, however, out of which fine jellies were made of a glowing translucent red color; also a very rich preserve, more highly valued, perhaps, in the past than at present.

It has been thought by some com-

mentators that the "Tappuah" of the Scriptures, usually translated apple, was a quince. By the Greeks and Romans the quince was regarded as a fruit sacred to Venus. She is often represented as holding one in her right hand. This is supposed to be the golden apple, or quince, marked "For the Fairest," which Eris or Discord threw among the guests at the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, and which was awarded to Venus by Paris. The quince therefore was considered a symbol of love. A slightly rough and acid symbol, it seems, as one recalls its puckery quality when eaten raw, but it may not be so unsuitable, after all, for is not Love ofttimes,

"A prick, a sting, a pang?"

To dream of quinces was considered

a sign of successful wooing. To send them as a gift was a token of love, also to eat them together. To eat them uncooked, in our latitude, is to set one's teeth on edge, but it is said that in hot countries they become milder in flavor and lose their woolly skin.

There is a poetic beauty and charm about an orchard in the spring, especially in blossom time, that it has only at that season. But there is another beauty, an autumnal charm, scarcely less distinctive. It is the beauty and charm of accomplishment, of productiveness, of "mellow fruitfulness." The gathering in of harvests, and of fruit harvests in particular, is a picturesque and exhilaraing sight. The golden sunshine of the calm October days, the bright colors of the fruit and the varied

tints of the ripening foliage, the ladders leaning against tree trunks, with men mounted upon them, the horses or oxen harnessed to carts, standing patiently near by, waiting for an order to carry away the boxes and barrels as they are filled,— all these make up a picture enlivening, because it is a phase of life, yet also with an element of sadness. Instinctively we attribute to the trees sensations similar to our own. Do they exult in the completion of the season's work? Are they glad that it is over? Are they willing to give up its product for the benefit of mankind? Or are they also conscious — however dimly — of the reaction that often follows upon human effort? Is there a sense of loneliness as the loaded wains move slowly out of the orchard, whither they cannot follow? Who

can say? Trees and plants have been supposed until recently to exist solely for the need or pleasure of man. We are now beginning to realize what a complex life they have of their own. Maeterlinck writes:

"Though there be plants that are awkward and unlucky, there is none wholly devoid of wisdom and ingenuity. All exert themselves to accomplish their work. The genius of the earth acts in the vital struggle exactly as a man would act. It gropes, it hesitates, it corrects itself. It fights like ourselves against the heavy and obscure mass of its being."

The years flew swiftly by. The boys and girls who had played in the orchard grew gradually out of boyhood and girlhood into young manhood and young womanhood. But they did not outgrow the orchard, nor

forget it. They came back to it whenever they could, and to a casual observer it seemed to suffer little change. Nevertheless, the imprint of Time's finger was visible here and there. One of the greening apple trees, condemned as a cumberer of the ground, was missing. The prostrate spice-apple tree had been taken away without ever coming into its kingdom. The winter sweetings seemed to be a little more gnarly and worm eaten than of old. The bower-like tree, the pride of the orchard, was gradually decaying. It had been too ambitious, too generous, and had become weakened by overbearing. Then, in its exhausted state, an insidious foe — a borer — had seized upon it and was slowly sapping its life. It still bore apples of the same delicious flavor and beautiful color,

but they were smaller and less plentiful. The slender pear tree supported its end of the hammock as in the past, but it bore no fruit and seldom any blossoms. It had yielded at last to the force of adverse environment. The grape vines, like Iduna's apples, seemed to be endowed with indestructible vitality, and the arbor was as ever a chosen retreat.

Other years fled by, on even swifter wings — or so it seemed. Some of the boys and girls were fathers and mothers now, and a new generation of children sought the orchard to play, to dream, to think. It was just as dear a place to them, doubtless, as it had been to those before them; just as suitable either for merrymakings or reveries as in the days gone by. Viewed simply as an orchard, however, it had fallen somewhat from its

first estate. There were vacant spots that had once been filled, and longer stretches of grass between the trees. Of the older trees, one only remained, a winter sweeting which reared its stately trunk high in the air. Every spring it wore — palm-like — a crown of leaves and beautiful pink blossoms; but its fruit was left ungathered on the ground. The wild cherry trees had been cut down; they were too hospitable to the caterpillar tribe. The tree of the ambrosial apples — the orchard's pride — had vanished and no successor had come to reign in its stead. Some of the smaller fruits, as currants and gooseberries, had succumbed to insect enemies, while the raspberries had broken bounds and encroached upon their domain. Most of the herbs were gone. It had been found easier to

buy them in neat little packages from the druggist or the grocer than to raise them.

But enough remained to render the orchard useful and attractive. Most of the apple trees were still vigorous and in fine bearing condition, as were also the pear trees. The quince and peach trees had somehow managed to reproduce themselves, for young trees were growing near the older ones. The rhubarb bed had been reinforced by plants of an even finer variety. The arbor, which after years of service had lost its strength and symmetry in the viselike grasp of entangling vines, had been taken down and replaced by one less ornamental, but more convenient for grape gathering, and more durable.

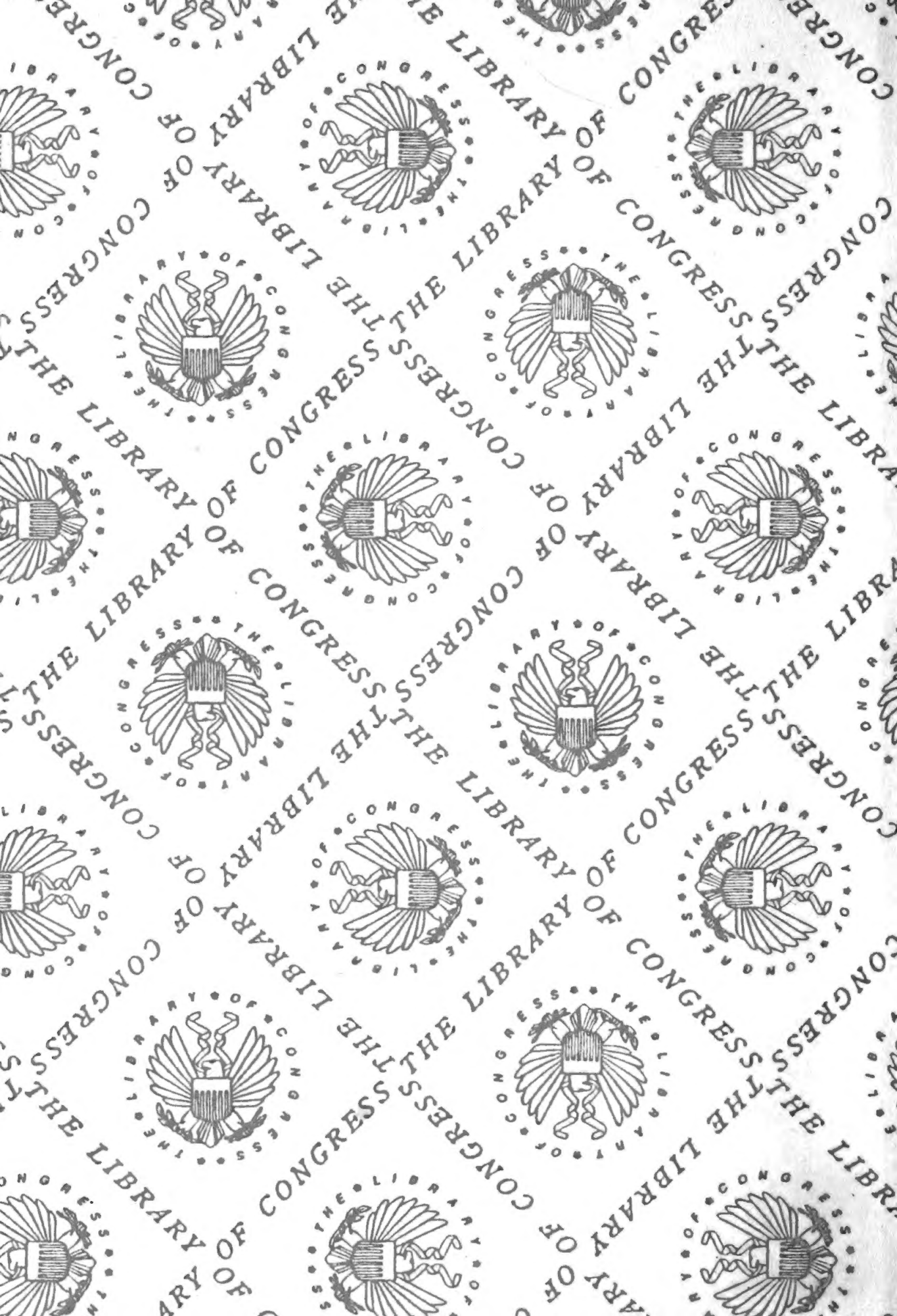
There had been also a few additions. In a part of the orchard bordering on

the roadside two young elms had been set out some years before. These had grown into lofty and vigorous trees. Within their leafy coverts many birds built their nests, and the mornings and the evenings were made cheerful with their singing. On another side a row of sugar maples had been planted. One only had lived, but that had developed into a tree of unusual beauty, symmetrical in its proportions, abounding in foliage — a glory of green in summer, a golden glory in the autumn. In a sheltered corner some sycamore maples had sprung up, doubtless from seeds dropped by a bird or wafted thither by the wind. Here and there clover and wild flowers had crept in amid the grass.

None of these changes enhanced in any way the material value of the

orchard, but they did, perhaps, add to its picturesqueness. Each passing year, moreover, has invested it with new associations. If these seem to some of us less delightful, less inspiring than those of earlier years, we must look for the cause, not in the orchard, but in ourselves. Associations, unlike most other things, appear to gain in vivid and tender interest the older they become.

This Ancestral Orchard, therefore, known and loved of four generations, is a visible link connecting the past and the present — those who loved it long ago with those who love it now. It is a natural tie, but it is more than that, for it is deeply infused with a spiritual quality. An earthly orchard, useful and beautiful it seems, yet is it not also a type of something that we all hope to find again in the Realm of the Spirit?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