

HINTS.

USEFUL AND ORNAMENTAL.

Pots for Verandahs

CAN be placed to great advantage if a low wall is made along the edge of the verandah. Leave nine inches of your verandah floor, then build this little wall eighteen inches high and nine inches wide, and let the top remain nearly flat—not quite flat—as the surface should slope outwards slightly, so that when plants are watered, the waste-water may run off without wetting the floor of the verandah. By this arrangement you can make a great show: one row of flowering plants on the ground, a second row on the 9-inch ledge of the verandah floor, and a third row on the top of the little wall. You will find this a very useful method for keeping things safe from excess of the heat, the rain, and the cold.

Colouring for Pots.

THERE are two kinds of earth very good for this purpose, native names "*Gairoo*" and "*Heermajee*." These give a rich red colour which enhances the beauty of the plant growing in the pot. Get your coolies to scrub the pots with bits of old rope or bunches of dried grass. The mali should pound the red earth, mix it with water and rub it on the pots with a rag.

One anna's worth of the coloured earth will colour fifty pots perfectly.

If your plants are valuable, and you wish to keep them as free as possible from insects, use kerosine instead of water for mixing the earth.

Verandah Steps.

COIR matting is inexpensive and better than anything I know for covering verandah steps and floors. It lasts for years, white-ants won't touch it, water does not stain it, it can be washed in water, or dust and dirt can be easily shaken from it. It can be obtained from any firbe firm in India. Old coir matting should be chopped up and used as drainage for flower-pots. (See "Flower Pots," page 19.)

Protection against Vermin.

ALL movable pots, stands, etc., should be moved, and verandahs swept, and afterwards sprinkled with a weak solution of phenyle or kerosine. The smell soon evaporates, but sufficient of its virtue will be retained by the floor, to make it an unwholesome abiding place for flies and insects, to say nothing of toads and snakes!

Avoid having rock-work or creeper-covered *jaffreys* about your verandahs and porches: the former harbours vermin, and the latter obstructs ventilation and protects mosquitos. Baskets of fern, etc., suspended by *wire*, and pots and rustic stands are quite enough to make your verandahs and porches look charming.

Protection against Frost.

IF you have delicate plants in the ground likely to suffer on frosty nights, make a simple loop of wire, pin several folds of newspapers over it, and place it over your plants. Newspapers come in very handy for sheltering flowers and plants when you can't afford glass. A railway inspector travelling on his trolley in winter, once having forgotten to take his overcoat with him, utilised some *newspapers* to protect himself from the cold cutting wind, and found them an effectual covering! So don't despise the use of them for your plants.

Baskets for Plants and Flowers.

THESE always look better with handles. Get the common bazaar rush or "coolie" baskets and make your

own handles in this way. In the rains when trees have put forth abundance of new branches, gather a number of *long* supple sprays of tamarind, jaman, dodonea, *mehndee*, or anything that will afford you long slender twigs from three to four feet long. Remove all the leaves, then plait and interlace these twigs, as regularly as possible, to form bands four or five inches wide. Begin at the thick ends and plait downwards to the thin ends, tying in neatly with little bits of fine twine any refractory twigs. When you have done two of these bands, unite them together by overlapping the thin ends and interlacing them together with the help of a little tying. This makes one handle; fasten the thick ends to your baskets *with wire*, and keep the handle at the curve you wish, by tying it across. Put away your baskets till your handles are quite dry, and then remove the twine that kept the handles in proper curve.

Rustic Supports

FOR table-decoration may be made in all sorts of forms with the same kind of twigs just mentioned, and these may be varnished, painted with colours, or gilded with gold paint.

Flower Supports in Vases.

I AM sure, when arranging long sprays of flowers in wide-mouthed vases, you have often felt exasperated when the sprays, instead of remaining where you placed them, kept falling over the edge of the vase, destroying all the artistic beauty of your arrangement.

You will find the following hint very useful where you wish to exhibit, to every advantage, just a few sprays of something specially beautiful:—Hold the sprays in your left hand, in the position in which you wish them to remain, and with your right hand, secure that pose by coiling round the stems strong, thick, white, bonnet wire. When this is done, don't cut off the end of the wire, but bend it so as to make it into a star of four or five points radiating from the little tight coil round the flower stems;

each point should be just long enough to touch the inner side of the vase, so as to wedge and keep your flowers exactly in the centre.

When you see the success of this arrangement, you will find that, by other, judicious bending of this bonnet wire, you will be able to secure for your flowers the most natural appearance you can desire.

Dry the wet wire in the sun after your flowers have faded, and use again.

Varnish for Rustic Work.

ONE quart of methylated spirit, one chittack (2 ozs.) of shellac, sold in the bazaar as *chuppra lac*. Pour off half the spirit into an empty quart bottle; pound the shellac to a fine powder, and put one ounce of it into each of your spirit bottles. Shake well, and keep in the sun for two or three days, and shake occasionally till the lac is dissolved; apply quickly with a brush. The above makes a good varnish for furniture and should be applied with pieces of flannel. (See "Baker and Cook.")

The same, made a little thinner with half a pint more of spirit, and applied with a brush, will keep *brass* flower-pots and flower-vases a nice soft, old gold colour. Applied to copper, it will prevent verdigris.

Coral Varnish

FOR rustic work may be made in the same way, using red sealing-wax instead of shellac.

Delicate Cuttings

MAY be induced to root in this way. Take a tumblerful of cotton-wool that is perfectly clean, wet it thoroughly so that it may fill only half the glass: no more water should be in the glass than the wool can absorb. Let the *stems* of your cuttings be completely shrouded in the wet cotton-wool, leaving the head and leaves uncovered; stand the

glass where it will get air and light. In a week or ten days, you will find your cuttings have thrown out roots, and may then be planted out in appropriate soil.

—“*Popular Gardener.*”

Insects on Plants

CAN be got rid of by sponging the leaves with weak tobacco water.

—“*The Gardener.*”

How to get rid of Insects

MAKE an emulsion as follows:—

Kerosine	..	2 gallons = 66 per cent.
Common soap	..	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.
Water	..	1 gallon = 33 per cent.

Heat the solution of soap and add it, boiling hot, to the kerosine. Churn the mixture by means of a force-pump and spray nozzle for five or ten minutes. This emulsion, if perfect, forms a cream upon cooling, and should adhere without oiliness to the surface of glass. *Dilute before using—one part of the emulsion with nine parts of cold water.* The above formula gives three gallons of emulsion, and makes, when diluted, 30 gallons of wash. The same substance will be of great use on hop vines, etc., and will also kill the lice on chickens. It should be sprayed about pretty thoroughly in the hennery.

—*Professor Howard, Entomologist.*

Caterpillars

DON'T like crawling through ashes, which should be sprinkled on the surface of the soil and round the stems of plants in pots.

All sorts of Insect Pests

OBJECT to the following remedy:—

Cigar ends should be chopped up and kept in a jar; take pieces of coarse brown paper, six inches wide and

ten inches long, dissolve a table-spoonful of saltpetre in a pint of water, dip your papers in the solution, dry them, and keep till wanted. To fumigate, roll one of the pieces of paper into a tube like a cigar, leaving the hollow half-an-inch in diameter, which fill with your chopped cigar ends. Twist one end and stick it into the soil, light the other, and it will burn gradually for an hour or more.

—“*Gardener’s Receipt Book.*”

Artificial Coral.

TAKE four parts of yellow resin, and one part of vermilion, and melt them together; dip twigs, cinders or stones in this mixture, and it will give them the appearance of coral, and be applicable to rock-work, grotto, or any fancy-work, as a substitute for that costly article.

—“*Gardener’s Receipt Book.*”

Dried Grasses

For bouquets should be collected towards the end of the rains, both in the hills and plains. Cut them with stalks as long as possible, and tie them up in small bunches, so as to give them plenty of scope to expand and curve naturally and gracefully. Hang up half of your number of bunches, head downwards, and the other half stick in empty quart bottles so that they may curve over. Wire some of them when quite dry, so that you may be able to bend these grasses into position when forming your bouquets.

After the rains, Indian-corn is in fine flower. Ask your mali or any servant to buy you a sheaf from a neighbouring field. “*Bhoota ka phool*” is what they call it. The scent is strong like honey, and its plume makes it a very pretty variety for dried bouquets. Stand these in bottles till they are quite dry. Can be used with poppies and corn-flowers.

The wire I have advised you to get for horticultural purposes is very good for wiring the stems of your grasses, if you wish your bouquets to be four or five feet high; this

wire may be tied to your grass with split fawn-coloured Berlin wool. Whenever you tie it, clip the ends of the wool short.

To Bronze or Colour Grass.

ARTISTS' colour-men sell packets of mineral colours in powder. Bronze green and red are very nice for colouring grasses. Pour a little of the shellac varnish into a small cup or tin, and add enough of the powder you choose, to make it just thick enough to apply to your grasses with a bristle brush; an old paint brush will do, as you won't be able to use it for any other purpose afterwards. Do this painting as quickly as you can, for the varnish evaporates very fast.

The fine seed grass you see growing everywhere in the rains, bronzed in this way and put away, is very useful for bouquets of *fresh* flowers too.

To destroy Maggots and Worms.

ROSES are attacked in the winter, and coleus, etc., in the rains, by these detestable creatures that are able to destroy an entire plant in a night. Lead chromate prepared as directed by Maxwell-Lefroy is the best remedy for all biting animals. Use $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. powder to one kerosine tinfal of water, stir well, and spray on the plants.

Labels.

CLEAN a sheet of zinc: part of the lining of an old box will do. Get your tinman to cut it into slips four inches long and one inch wide, boring a small hole at one end of them, into which insert a small piece of wire by which you may attach them to your shrubs. The following ink, recommended by Mr. W. Jones, can be made by any chemist, and is perfect for writing on zinc:—"Take one drachm of verdigris, one drachm of sal ammoniac powder, and half a drachm of lamp-black, and mix with ten drachms of water"; another ink is a solution of bichloride of plati-

num, twelve grains to an ounce. If quill pens wear out too rapidly with this, try the reed pens used by natives. For big lettering on metal, wood, pasteboard, canvas, etc., the sixpenny conical indiarubber pen is extremely useful, as with it you can write quite easily, even on a rough surface, with common ink, or the above special inks. Excellent labels can also be made by taking smooth slabs of wood of the desired size, painting them with white paint and writing with a lead pencil *before the paint is dry*.

To keep Flowers fresh in the Hot Weather

Is, as everyone knows, next to an impossibility; but as I have found the following plan most efficacious, I can recommend it. Take three yards of your wire netting, cut it into two pieces lengthways, so that you may have two pieces three yards long and eighteen inches wide. Join the two ends of one piece together, so as to form a circle. Stand it upright, so that the *cut edge* should be at the *top*, and across this top fix a piece of split bamboo, cross and re-cross it with three other pieces radiating, so that the top of your wire netting bears a sort of a bamboo wheel with eight spokes. See that each spoke is firmly fixed with wire; make use of the other piece of wire netting in the same way. You now have a pair of covers large enough to place over two wash-hand basins filled with flowers. Keep these basins on the *floor* of your bath-room, fill with water, and place in them as many flowers as they will hold; *flowers to be cut in the early morning*; put the wire covers over them, and cover up *entirely* with a sheet or several towels, which must be kept constantly wet all day. At night you will find that the damp cloths, and the shutting out of the intense glare, have kept your flowers beautifully fresh.

If you think the wire covers too tiresome to make or too expensive, you might have bamboo hencoops made, *as open as possible*, of the same dimensions—three feet in diameter and eighteen inches high. All the flower-vases taken off the breakfast table and kept under this wet coop all day will have their contents quite fresh enough

to adorn the table again at night for dinner. There is something pitifully depressing in the sight of withered flowers on a dining table.

Dried Ferns

For bouquets should be wired *before* they are dried. Choose long, perfect fronds, if they are meant for the tall bouquets for corners of rooms. Cut a piece of garden wire (already mentioned) eight or nine inches longer than your frond; this should be tied to the rib of the frond with a finer wire. As florist's wire is not to be obtained in India, an excellent substitute can be found by ripping up the *flat bonnet wire* sold at two annas a yard.

If you intend to do any artistic work with flowers, you should always keep by you a few yards of this *flat bonnet wire*, which is composed of three or four strands of fine wire covered with a cotton thread, and it is this fine cotton-covered wire, which you unrip from the flat wire, that you will find invaluable for tying-up purposes. Well, to return to your fern leaf; tie the garden wire to the rib of your fern with little bits of the fine cotton-covered wire here and there, and snip the wire ends quite short and neat. The moisture from the ferns will rust the wire, so that when your ferns are dry and ready for your bouquets, the wire will be of almost the same colour as the ferns.

The leaves of the *Grevillea robusta*, wired in this way, are a great addition to dried bouquets.

All leaves, when wired, should be put away between large sheets of newspaper and kept under heavy boxes, etc., and the papers changed occasionally.

Small, fine ferns, for other decorative purposes, may be dried between blotting-papers.

When your ferns are dry enough to make up into bouquets, arrange them with your grasses, tying them to a strong piece of bamboo long enough or short enough for the jar or vase into which you intend to put your bouquet. Thick cotton thread is good for this final tying, and after your bouquet is formed, and quite complete, damp the

tied thread ; this damping *shrinks the thread* and makes it contract, so that there is less fear of your dried stems slipping out of place.

Colours for Flower-stands.

Two colours, which form very effective backgrounds, are Etruscan pink and celadon. The latter colour, a delicate, pale blue-green tint of the all-precious jade, is a favourite with those true flower-artists, the Japanese. You may make these colours yourself in every variety of shade by mixing the following :—White and light red for Etruscan pink ; and white, Prussian blue, with a faint touch of chrome yellow, for celadon. One tin (2 pounds) of Hubbock's prepared white paint will go an immense way in painting your stands. One tube of each of the other colours, Prussian blue, light red and chrome yellow will be sufficient for several tins of Hubbock's white paint. One pint of turpentine is required for thinning your paints, cleaning your stands and washing your brushes.

Celadon.—Put into a cup a little Prussian blue, then add the smallest particle of chrome yellow (as it is very powerful) and mix, then put in the white paint little by little, until you have got the right shade of celadon.

Etruscan pink.—Put a little of your light red into a cup, and add white paint by degrees till you have got the required shade of pink, *i.e.*, like the inside of various sea-shells.

You can make a variety in these background tints by shading them, that is, by painting the lowest part in the darkest shade of colour, and adding more white as you work up towards the top of your flower-stands. This shaded background is particularly effective for any floral designs you may afterwards think of painting on your flower-stands.

These floral designs should be in monochrome, I mean in one colour, of various tints ; on celadon, paint designs in dark autumn greens only ; on Etruscan pink, let your designs be in rich brown tints.

Tea-tables

For soldiers' feasts, for school children's treats, etc., may be made to look much nicer than they generally do by a little attention to the way the flowers are arranged. It cannot possibly be a "treat" to any one to sit down to a table, the decorations of which consist of a few odd tumblers, with a mass of many-coloured flowers crammed in anyhow, with all the stems visible in dirty green or yellow water. No one would ask ladies to send down their best vases to such functions. But a vast difference could be made in the decorations of these tables if a little ingenuity were exercised with the common material always at hand, *i.e.*, white cups and saucers, white and coloured paper, etc. Two pretty suggestions are here given, which may be improved upon in many ways.

One dozen common white cups and saucers, a few sheets of white foolscap or thick white paper, flowers of one colour with foliage, or of two or three well contrasting colours. Cups to be arranged in groups of three, the saucers in groups of four, so that, for one long table, you will have seven groups. Now take your paper and cut twelve strips ten inches by eighteen inches, and treat each in the following manner: pleat, or fold in half-inch folds across the *narrow* width of the paper, so that you may have eighteen pleats in each paper. Pass this folded paper through the handle of a cup, letting the handle come exactly in the middle of it. Catch up two corners of the paper equally so that it forms a fan; the two sides of the paper that now meet in the middle of the fan should be held together by pins which won't show behind the pleats. Your cup will now have something of the appearance of a peacock with spread tail! There will be two corners of your paper resting on the tablecloth; draw these under the cup so that the weight of the cup may keep them in position. Put some water in the cup, then arrange your flowers in it. You will be able to do this very easily and effectively, as the paper will form a sort of bouquet-holder. Place these cups three together, with the handles all turned towards

the inside of the circle. The edges of the paper may be scalloped before you begin to pleat it.

Now for the saucers: fill them with wet sand, fringe them with leaves of ipomea, carrot, aristolochia, or anything that will droop over the edge, and put in the same coloured flowers as are in the cups, or if you have white flowers in the cups, put red in the saucers, or *vice versá*. Arrange the groups of four saucers diamondwise.

The paper arrangement may sound rather troublesome, but I assure you it can be done in a few minutes, and you will be quite pleased with the result of your handiwork, for the cups, with their bouquet papers, will contrast well with the low groups of saucers placed alternately all down the table, and look pretty enough for any one to sit down to table with pleasure.

Another way: take a square of the pretty poppy-red *crépe* paper sold by nearly all shops dealing in English goods, at seven annas per roll of ten feet, twenty inches wide; hold it up in the middle as you would a handkerchief, letting the four corners lie flat on the table-cloth, and place a white tea cup on each corner, letting the handles turn towards the inner side of the circle close together. Straight down the middle of the table-cloth lay a 9-inch wide strip of the red paper, which may be scalloped at the edge, or bordered with sprays of ipomea. In the centre, have one group of four cups; on either side of this, place six saucers in the red strip of paper, and finish both ends with other groups of four cups. Yellow flowers with brown leaves, or white and yellow flowers (no green leaves) make an uncommon effect. The raised point of red paper in the centre of the groups of cups may be kept erect by a small piece of bamboo underneath.

Pretty bright "Turkey red" (saloo), sold in the bazar may be used instead of paper. White tea-cups and saucers can *always* be hired *everywhere* for a trifle, and you can improve on these two simple ideas in very many ways, and make the tea-tables in your charge look inviting, without expense or risk. The nice things provided for

"Treats" and "Feasts" will look all the nicer for their floral settings.

Flowers for Hospitals

ARE always acceptable. You will have plenty of flowers in your garden to provide a dozen small bouquets for this purpose, once a week, in turns with other ladies, who could do so on other days. A clergyman, who kindly took charge of these hospital bouquets, once told me that he always felt "armed with the sweetest weapons of persuasion." Ruskin calls them the "solace of humanity"—and how much more of a solace must the sight of fresh sweet flowers be to *suffering* humanity?

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

—WORDSWORTH.

Flowers in the Hot Weather

ARE Amaryllis, Amaltas, Bignonia venusta, Bombax malabaricum, Dodonea, Hollyhock, Ixora, Kuchnar, Lagestrcemia Indica, Mehndee, Plumbago, Russellia, Oleanders, Petunia, Phlox, Quisqualis, Tecoma stans, Zephyranthes, etc., etc.

Flowers and Foliage Plants in the Rains

ARE Acalyphas, Alternanthera, Amaranthus, Antigonon leptopus (Sandwich Island creeper), Arundo donax, Balsam, Box, Caladiums, Camphire (Mehndee), Coleus, Cosmos, Cannas, Cyanotis, Duranta, Hibiscus, Inga dulcis, Ixora, Kuronda, Lilies, Lagestrcemia, Oleanders, Pilea muscosa, Plumbago, Quisqualis, Russellia, Teak, Yucca, Zinnias, etc., etc.

Cold Weather Flowers

ARE without number! Annuals of all kinds, Camphire, Cyanotis, Ferns, Honeysuckle, Hollyhocks, Roses, Mina lobata, etc., etc

Flowers in the Hills.

ALMOST all the annuals that grow on the plains will grow in the hills, besides a great many more English ones that don't grow very well on the plains,—Geraniums, Carnations, Anemones, Dahlias, Asters, Godetia, Myosotis, Narcissus, etc., etc.

Begin your garden work as soon as the cold weather lessens, some time in February, and sow your seeds from March to beginning of May.

Watch your bulbous plants and take them in hand as soon as they '*begin to move.*' Gladiolus, Iris, Amaryllis, Narcissus, etc., first, and all Liliums, later on, from May to September.

Roses.—As you are in the hills usually from April to October, you will naturally wish for as many rose blooms as can be produced during those months, so your best plan will be to give your roses fresh soil and manure in *June, before, the rains begin,* and then prune them. (See Paragraphs "Treatment of Roses" and "Rose Cuttings," etc.) At the June pruning, cut away all old, dry wood.

You will have many blooms during the rains, and if you snip off the *ends* of branches and mulch the surface of the soil round your roses in the spring at the beginning of *March,* you will, then, have some more good blooms. But remember, at this hot time of year, you must give your roses as much water as you can spare.

Chrysanthemums should be separated in the spring and pinched back if they make too rapid growth in the summer. If the suckers are not separated, your flowers will not be good. Manure the roots in September or as soon as the rains cease, and when the flower-buds being to form, snip off more than half of them. You will have more plants than you know what to do with, keep the best ones in your front garden, and plant the rest among the dahlias on your hillside along the bank from your gateway, etc., and you will have abundant blooms for cutting.

Heliotropes do splendidly in the hills, because the soil affords the natural drainage necessary for

them. Here they will grow from *cuttings*, and from seeds, which may be struck and sown at the end of February. Plant a good many in pots, and place these in raised mounds or banks, because if you have *snow*, these pots can be taken up and sheltered in-doors. Some of the stronger plants, placed against a south wall and protected with dried leaves, will survive in Himalayan hill stations, if the winter is not abnormally severe.

Some of the better kinds you raise from seeds up here you should take down to the plains, where you can't manage to produce them from seed.

Geraniums only need sheltering from heavy rain and snow. Give them powdered charcoal and chopped cocoanut fibre, and increase by cuttings. Keep your better kinds in verandahs; the commoner, hardy ones will grow on raised beds round shady trees. Rooted cuttings should be taken down to the plains, where they will thrive very well from October to March. *Begonias* will thrive in the plains all the year round, especially in rustic "trays" and hanging baskets, if kept in verandahs where they will get only the morning sun.

Flowers in Southern Stations.

THE times for seed sowing, pruning, transplanting, etc., in the south of India must naturally be somewhat different from those suitable to northern stations.

From my own observations, and from advice in the "Lawrence Asylum Press Almanack," the month of August should mark the beginning of your garden work. Sow the seeds of your annuals. Prune your roses, and plant your cuttings. This is the time to manure and freshen the soil of all rooted plants.

In September plant out your seedlings, trim your hedges, make cuttings of geraniums, carnations, etc., and sow seeds of shrubs and trees.

In October roses, fuschias, violets and all budding plants that are sending out new, vigorous shoots, may be planted out.

In November mulch your roses. If the rains are heavy, protect your delicate plants.

In December late annuals may be planted out, and fresh sowings made of phlox, petunias, etc.

Your flowers ought to be at their best in January. During the hottest time before the rains, take care of your roses, etc.

Prune common, fast-growing roses in June and July, re-pot bulbs, and make general preparations for seed sowing.

You must remember that the soils for and methods of treatment, given in this book, apply to flowers and their culture all over India, and that it is *the time for gardening operations that varies*.

Arrangement of Flowers.

PRAY remember these are mere *hints* for you to improve upon, and I give them because, especially in the hot weather and the rains, everyone does not know what floral treasures are available, and what would be the most effective method of arrangement. Let me advise your having by you, for a small and for a long table, one piece of Pongee silk a yard square, and another three yards long, both in the following colours:—pale blue, pale pink, apricot, eau-de-nil of a very light shade, and a light poppy-red (that charming red you always see in Japanese lacquer work). The colours I have mentioned can be obtained in a good kind of *satın* made at Azamgurrh, N.-W. P.: it is thirty-six inches wide, which is very nice for table use.

Economy being the order of the present day, I say nothing about your vases and flower receptacles. The incomparable beauty and effect of exquisite Royal Worcester-ware, of chased silver bowls, and of priceless old china 'goes without saying' but you and I may not possess these, so we will arrange the flowers which we *do* possess, in the most artistic way and to the greatest advantage. Pictures without frames, hung on bare white walls, do not appear to advantage, so that is why I advise the

purchase of the abovementioned silks or satins ; they are the *frames* in which your flowers will look their best on your white table-cloths.

Amaltas, another boon in the hot weather, always looks best without any foliage ; but if you would prefer some garniture, the *bronze grasses* are what will suit best. The *amaltas* arranged in waves on the red silk recommended, has an imposing Venetian effect of colouring. The only other coloured silk you can use with *amaltas* is the pale blue, in which case omit the bronzed grass and use *cyanotis*.

Amaranthus melancholicus ruber makes a very good hall decoration at the beginning of the hot weather, arranged with masses of . . . what do you think ? The white flowers of the common radish, or the yellow flowers of the humble mustard ! Your mali is sure to have plenty he is keeping for seed, and the blooms will give you elegant decorations, if you are not too fastidious.

Amaryllis.—Cut these in the morning and keep under your damp ‘coop’ if you wish to use them at night. When these lilies are in bloom, the mango trees will be putting out their new leaves. Gather some of these for the garniture of your lilies ; if you don’t use these new brown leaves, arrange them with sprays of *Arundo donax* instead. In either case, pale blue or eau-de-nil silk will suit for the ‘setting.’

Balsams can only be used for low decorations. Saucers of wet sand will keep the blossoms stuck in them quite fresh for twenty-four hours. Bright red balsams, also the coral pink ones, make a very pretty dining-table decoration framed in pale blue or apricot-coloured silk. If you have mirror plaques, a very effective way of using them is as follows :—Cut a piece of American glazed cloth one or two inches wider than your plaque all round, put a false hem to it one inch wide of some pink cambric or sateen and draw a string through the hem, tightening it just enough to turn up the edges. (The hem should be on the unvarnished side of the cloth.) When you turn up the edge, the *varnished side* must be *inside* the bag : fill with

wet sand and place on your pale-blue silk, fix an inverted saucer or soup-plate (according to the size of your bag) in the middle, and bank up the sand round the edge as high as you can. Then place your mirror plaque on the top of the sand heap and fill up the space between the silk and the plaque with dark-red or pink balsams, stuck in the wet sand. You have no idea, till you try, how very uncommon and striking these mounds of balsams are, the higher the better with the mirror plaques on the top. On the mirror plaques place your vases or bowls filled with foliage only, ferns, grasses, acalypha, amaranthus, etc., etc., all flourishing during the rains.

(The American cloth bags serve for other arrangements. They should be wiped dry after using.)

Bignonia venusta is too decided a colour for a dining-table, but a large bowl of it on your side-board and one of your long-handled wicker baskets filled with it in your drawing-room, will be very striking.

Bombax malabaricum does not admit of being cut in long sprays, so a low set of flower-stands will suit it best, even soup plates of wet sand fringed with cyanotis will do. Apricot-coloured silk harmonizes beautifully with this lovely jungle-flower. This arrangement also suits another jungle tree flower the *Butea frondosa* (native name *Dhak*), which is in flower in the hot weather.

Cyanotis lasts a long time if kept moist. It is a most useful garniture, and must always be dipped into water before using. It can be wired for many purposes—arches for dinner-tables, nests for saucers filled with flowers, bordering for rustic table decoration, such as you will find described in paragraphs "Sweet-pea" and "Verbenas," etc., etc.

Dodonea, the pale, apple-green flowers of which are in profusion in the hot weather, will afford you many refreshing combinations of tints, as it looks well with white and with pink oleanders; with white *Ixora*, and with *Tecoma stans*, all obtainable at the same time. Eau-de-nil silk should be used with dodonea and white oleanders, also

with dodonea and white ixora; dodonea mixed with pink oleanders, pink silk; and with *Tecoma stans* and dodonea use apricot silk or satin. Dodonea keeps fresh for several days. Red *Ixora* (only flowers, no leaves) looks particularly well with pale blue silk.

Hollyhocks are most useful flowers for wiring when you want a large show. Cut them *just before using*, and wire in the same way as "*Yucca gloriosa*"; arrange double pink hollyhocks with the teak blossoms, or *Gypsophila*; the lemon-coloured with *Arundo donax* and *mehndee*; the deep red hollyhocks with dark foliage. Hollyhocks sometimes appear self-sown in the rains, and last through the cold months, so you will have many varieties of effects with them. They are very effective in tall stands and baskets for hall and drawing-room decorations.

Kuchnar, white, is one of the most delightful flowers to arrange, for whatever you may combine with it, you are sure to be pleased with the result. Nestling with camphire in billows of pale blue, or eau-de-nil silk; arranged with *pilea muscosa*, or with ferns in soft pink silk; and by itself in red silk, the kuchnar is always lovely.

Lagestræmia indica,^F white, like sea-foam, you can revel in, both during the hot weather and rains. Elegant and graceful in itself, a few sprays of *Arundo donax* is all it needs, and framed in pale-blue or eau-de-nil is the most refreshing sight your eye can rest upon, in the way of a dinner-table, on a hot evening. A mass of pink *lagestræmia* in your long-handled baskets, with the new leaves of the jaman, or of *acalypha*, is splendid for drawing-room decoration.

Oleanders are a great resource in both hot weather and rains. White oleander with dodonea, and pale-blue or eau-de-nil silk for a frame, is very cool-looking for a dinner-table in the hot weather. With grasses (its own leaves are too stiff) or ferns in the rains, it is exquisite, surrounded with soft pink silk. The pink oleander with *amaranthus ruber*, coleus, also with *acalypha* foliage, is lovely, arranged with pale blue silk, or with pink silk for

the dining-table, and in large masses in tall flower stands for drawing-rooms, etc., etc.

Orchids and *Lilies*, so plentiful in the hills during the hot weather and rains, are made doubly effective by the use of mirrors, in plaques or strips. If moss is placed for bedding them, use the "American cloth" bags, in long or round forms, to guard against the wetting of table-clothes. In paragraph "Crystallised Grasses and Stands," you will find an idea that greatly enhances the effect of flowers on mirrors.

Phlox, which is in flower through the cold months and well into the hot weather, gives you charming low decorations for the dining-table. Arrange in saucers with wet sand or moss; fringe with maiden-hair fern, or with *sclaginella mutabilis*, filling the centre with red, pink or white phlox.

Plumbago, which you will have plenty of during the hot weather and rains, looks very well by itself in white china, or mixed with *gypsophila* in tall vases. A large mass of this elegant bloom, arranged in wicker-baskets painted dark green or bright red, gives a delightful touch of colour in a drawing-room, especially if, to the long handle of the green or red basket, you tie a large ribbon bow of corresponding colour.

Quisqualis, the dear *quisqualis*, is a treasure in both hot weather and rains. Gather the flowers in the morning and arrange for your breakfast-table, then remove to the protecting "coop" till dinner-time in the hot weather. This protection will not be needed in the rains. *Quisqualis*, with camphire, is a sweet combination. If wanted *specially* for evening use, gather in the morning, and keep under the "coop": by four or five o'clock in the afternoon, you will find the sweet pale pink buds all open, leave all the pale pink blossoms on the stems, but remove all the dark red ones. Mix the pale pink sprays with camphire in your vases (*no leaves*), and stick the dark red flowers in saucers, filled with wet sand and fringed with *alternanthera*. This arrangement looks sweet and uncommon, framed in pink, blue, or apricot silk. The puffs of silk

should rise well up to the edge of the saucers, which should be placed all round a large, pale pink centre, or between a series of small vases filled with the pale pink sprays. *Quisqualis* looks equally well arranged with teak blossoms, which are abundant in the rains.

For drawing-room use, long sprays of *quisqualis* need some support, and torch-like effects can be obtained by taking three or four sprays of equal length and wiring them to a piece of bamboo, taking care not to allow this bamboo support to be seen, and to let the stems lie well in water below.

Russellia juncea with white oleanders, or white zephyranthes, is a pleasing variety. *Russellia floribunda* with yellow zinnias, or with *Tecoma stans* (without any green leaves), looks charming in low masses with apricot silk for the dining-table, and with a foundation of *alternanthera* in baskets for the drawing-room during the rains.

Sandwich Island creeper, *Antigonon leptopus*, is charmingly arranged in the same way as balsams, with pale-blue silk surroundings; but in the vases put the same flowers, no foliage except the bronzed grasses.

For the drawing and other rooms this pretty pink *Antigonon* is effective in hanging baskets, its own bright green leaves allowed to remain, or removed, and cyanotis mixed instead. Masses of it on mantel-pieces, banked with cyanotis (on wet sand in long flat American cloth bags) are very showy on festive occasions:

Tecoma stans mixed with pink oleanders, no foliage whatever, gives a rich uncommon effect, set in a frame of apricot silk. A very pretty variety of arrangement in the hot weather.

Zephyranthes, if wanted for night use, should be cut in the morning when half open and the stems placed in very wet sand under the damp "coop." If used for the drawing-room, place in vases that will hold wet sand, or fill a large flat tin with wet sand and fit it into a basket, cover over the sandy surface with cyanotis or ipomea, and stick

your zephyranthes, pink or white, all over between the leaves. Very pretty and effective.

Wedding Cake Decorations.

FOR these purposes the white *duranta* is particularly well suited; its small sprays, cut away from the large stems and wired, can be fixed round the bottom of the cake in a lovely drooping fringe. Of course you will use whatever white flowers are available according to the time of year, but if *gypsophila* and *alliums* are to be had, you will find nothing so *graceful* as garniture for your larger flowers. As the cake is the special ambrosia furnished for the Hymeneal feast, everyone is anxious it should be placed in a specially and conspicuously attractive way. Let me suggest one which was greatly admired. Choose a moderate sized *round* table and make a large cushion for the top of it in this way:—Cut two circles of coarse white calico six or seven inches smaller in diameter than the top of the table. Sew the two edges of the circles together; in the centre of them cut a hole, the diameter of which must be a *little smaller* than the size of the cake; take a strip of the same kind of calico, twelve inches wide, and join it along the edge of the hole to *one* of the circles, then join the other side of the strip to the other circle. This will form a shape like a huge *air-cushion*, only air-cushions when not distended with air lie perfectly flat; but your calico cushion must stand twelve inches high in the middle, owing to the 12-inch strip of calico forming, as it were, a hollow tube in the centre. Fill your cushion with bran, sawdust, coir, or dry hemp, spread your damask table-cloth on the round table, and place your cushion in the middle; in the hole of the cushion place a round tin box, or anything firm and high enough to support the cake. On the space between the edge of the cushion and the margin of the table lay a flat fringe of ferns, cover *all* the surface of the cushion with fresh green moss, and then fix your white flowers in the moss with hair pins, which running easily into the sawdust or hemp of the cushion, will hold them in *place* securely.

The above arrangement can be varied by having your cushion made in scallops, and if fresh green velvety moss is not procurable, then throw a long piece of satin or silk over the cushion, seeing that it is long enough and wide enough to admit of its being pinched up in graceful puffs. Use silk or satin of the palest chartreuse, or apple-green tint, which will make the darker green leaves of your white flowers stand out with greater effect. Large white satin ribbon bows here and there will eke out the flowers. Avoid an all-white foundation; it is monotonous and does not display the cake as well as the moss or green silk does. (See "Crystallised Grasses," etc.)

Stains on Flower Vases.

OF glass and china, if long standing, can be removed by the use of a weak solution of hydrochloric acid, obtainable from all chemists. Don't touch this acid with your fingers, but apply it with a bit of rag tied firmly to the end of a small stick; rub the stains well, then wash your vases in lukewarm water, and dry with clean cloths. After your vases are thus perfectly free from stains, half a small lemon should always be kept on the mali's flower-tray. If this piece of lemon is rubbed daily on the stains that are naturally caused by the water and flowers, your vases will look as good as new, though used for years. When lemons are not to be had, a little vinegar will do as well.

To keep Cut Flowers Fresh.

THERE are various ways:—Putting a teaspoonful of powdered charcoal into the water of the vase in which your flowers are placed; leaving them out of doors in the dew all night; when you snip the ends of flower stems, hold the stem *under water*, and don't let the air get to the freshly cut stem. Flowers meant to be worn can be kept fresh by wrapping narrow strips of gutta-percha, or oiled silk, round the tips of the stems, so as to exclude the air. Flowers last longer if cut in the morning; if cut during the day, their vitality is weakened by rapid evaporation.

To pack Flowers for Travelling.

If they are to accompany you, the following plan will be found excellent:—Place the flowers close together in a large bowl or basin, with sufficient water to keep the stems immersed to a depth of four inches. Sink the bowl in a basket, the sides of which should rise at least six inches above the surface of the flowers. Stretch a cotton cloth over the basket, and tie firmly round the edge. If you keep this cloth moist during your journey you will find your flowers are perfectly fresh when you remove the cloth. The great thing is to keep off all dust, and let the air that reaches them through the cloth be quite damp. If the cloth is allowed to rest in contact with the flowers, all the tips of the petals will be found decayed and the colours spoiled, so for a long journey see that there is a space of six inches between the flowers and their damp covering.

If water in the bowls cannot be managed, soft cotton-wool wrapped round the ends of the stems and kept quite moist will answer nearly as well.

Cut Flowers sent as Railway Parcels.

WILL travel very well if packed as follows:—Scoop a raw potato, and place in the hole as many stems of your flowers as it will hold, and then wrap both potato and stems in wet cotton-wool. Make as many bouquets in this way as you can place upright in your box, arrange so that they can't tumble about. Stretch a thin cotton cloth over the flowers, and nail to the sides of your box, quite taut, so that if the box is turned upside down, the flowers may come in contact with the soft cloth, and not against the hard lid. This cloth should be dry, and nailed just one inch above the surface of the flowers. Choose a box deep enough to admit of four or five inches of space between the cloth and the lid of the box, which should be nailed down securely.

For a short railway journey tie your flowers in a large bouquet, wrap wet cotton-wool round the stems, put a dry handkerchief all over the bouquet, and tie the whole

upright in a basket with a cover. If the cotton-wool is thoroughly wet, the flowers will travel quite safely for twelve hours. (See "Chrysanthemums.")

For a long railway journey, say, thirty-six hours in the cold weather, take a deal-wood box about a foot deep, without a cover, nail narrow strips of deal-wood a foot long and two inches wide, one in each corner of the box, and then fasten other strips across to form a frame like that which we use on our bedsteads for supporting mosquito nets.

Spread a thick cotton cloth *inside* the box and bring the corners of the cloth over the sides of the box, and put a layer of cotton-wool over the bottom. Now tie your flowers in small bunches, wrap the stems in cotton-wool, and pack them *closely in an upright position* in the box. The bunches should be placed near each other so as to be quite compact, and the cotton-wool should be wetted profusely.

After you have placed in the box as many flowers as it will hold, draw the corners of the cloth up over the transverse strips of wood, envelope-fashion, and sew them up, so that no part is left open. Water this cloth *all over*, nail the address to the side of the box, and despatch it at once. Flowers which I have sent my friends in this way reached them delightfully fresh.

If you are in the hills, use moss instead of cotton-wool for packing geraniums, dahlias, and such flowers as your amateur friends in the plains can't very well cultivate.

To Crystallise Grasses, Stands, etc.

BREAK up into small bits half a pound of alum and put it into a pan which should be rather flat, or very deep, so as to admit of your grasses being laid, or held in it. Pour a seer, or little more, of *boiling water* on the broken alum and stir till it is dissolved. Hold your grasses in the solution, a few at a time, and keep moving them gently, so that small crystals should form. Very large crystals would form if the solution were not kept disturbed all the time your grasses were in it.

As the water cools, you will see what degree of crystallisation your grasses have attained; if not enough, take them out, put the pan on the fire, and as soon as the alum has dissolved, give your grasses another dipping.

Hang up your sprays to dry, and those you wish to have a curved or drooping form, place in empty quart bottles till dry.

You can make very pretty rustic supports for flowers by pinching wire into shapes, covering them thickly with cotton-wool and thread, and then dipping them into the solution. Suspend the shapes by a thread to a piece of stick, and shake it gently all the time till ready. These are very pretty when used for flowers in connection with mirrors.

The addition of Judson's dyes, just a few drops to the plain alum solution, will give you any colour you like in crystals.

To Frost Foliage, etc.

THE prettiest effect in frosting can be obtained by the use of powdered *Talc* (native name "*abrook*"), very cheap and easily procured in every bazar. Proceed as follows:—See that your talc is free from all dirty specks, and then pound it to a fine powder; put one teaspoonful of perfectly clean liquid gum into a teacupful of hot water, and mix it well. Have all the sprays of foliage you are going to frost brushed free from all dust, withered bits, etc., then lay them on sheets of newspapers, and with an old tooth-brush and a comb "splutter" them with the weak solution of gum; each time you dip the brush into the cup, press it against the side, so as not to take up too much liquid. When you have "spluttered" all your sprays, remove them to other clean, dry sheets of newspapers, and before the gum dries, sprinkle them all over with the powdered talc.

Let the sprays remain where they are for about a quarter of an hour, then take them up, giving each a gentle fillip with the finger to free them from the loose talc, which,

falling on dry newspapers can be gathered up and used for other sprays.

Scent Sachets

ARE not difficult to make. Snip off blossoms of honeysuckle, jasmine, violets, mignonette, etc., dust them over thickly with very dry arrowroot, fold them up in tissue paper and place the packets in envelopes. Use *fresh*, not dried flowers, separately, or mixed together.

For Christmas Decorations.

TINY bits of white cotton-wool should be stuck on the foliage here and there before the gum is "splattered" and the talc is sprinkled. In frosting "Christmas Trees" the same process on a large scale will answer, only the powdered talc should be taken up on bits of paper, and *blown* on to the tree.

Sprays of dry grass and wired fern leaves with the powdered talc *blown* on them form very pretty church decorations at Christmas. (See "Immortelles," etc.)

Caladiums.

IN pots used for in-door decoration should always be put out of doors into the open air at night and changed frequently, else the leaves will begin to droop. Cut leaves will keep fresh for a long time if there is an inch or two of sand in the water in which they are placed.

Coleus.

SPRAYS and even the leaves by themselves last a long time placed in wet sand. You will have plenty during the rains, and those which you have cut up and planted in the ground after the rains will afford you much foliage by Christmas, to use with your chrysanthemums.

Cosmos.

THE pure clean colours of this plant and its ability to last indoors when cut make it a most desirable table decoration. Use either by itself or with feathery grasses.

Gardenia.

(THE name usually given for convenience to *Taberna montana coronaria*) will provide you with exquisite flowers almost all the year round, but especially in the rains. When cut, don't sprinkle water on them, since damp stains the petals, and if you wish them to remain fresh and pure as long as possible, dry the blossoms with an old soft pocket handkerchief. If you change the water every day, snip off the ends of the stems, and cut away the faded, full-blown flowers, the clusters of buds will remain fresh and serviceable for many days, and when arranged with green grass and *Pilea muscosa*, form a most refreshing sight.

Hibiscus.

THE kind you have been advised to cultivate are best by themselves; their beauty does not require the support of other flowers. If required for decorations by lamp-light, gather them in the morning and keep under the damp coop all day.

H. Rosa Sinensis.

IN tall, pale green vases, or arranged in low baskets or stands in folds of *eau-de-nil* silk is a glorious sight.

Honeysuckle.

SPRAYS when cut for in-door use should have their stems placed in a good depth of water, so put them in rather tall vases, and if you change the water every day and snip the stems, the clusters of buds will continue to open quite to the end of the sprays, a virtue not possessed by all flowers.

Canna

FOR in-door use cut the sprays in long lengths and place in wet sand, which, if freshened up every day with

additional moisture, will keep your canna good for a long time. Your black and gold kerosine tins (mentioned elsewhere) will be very useful filled with long sprays of canna to decorate verandahs, etc. It is also effective for stage decoration.

Chrysanthemums

FLOWER in thick, close bunches, and one does not like cutting off sprays on which there are still many half-opened buds; but fortunately, cut chrysanthemums last a good while, so when you cut off the full-blown flowers, wire their short stems and wrap them in wet cotton-wool. For table decoration they look exquisite on fresh moss or mirrors. Strips of mirror five or six inches wide laid all round the edge of any of the coloured silks advised, and fringed with cut white chrysanthemums on one side and frosted foliage on the other is truly fairy-like. The inner edge of the glass, next the silk, should be tilted up a little by placing small balls of crushed paper under the silk. If yellow or red chrysanthemums are used in this way substitute the bronze coleus leaves for frosted foliage. In the angles formed at the corners of the strips of glass place clusters of chrysanthemums in small low glasses.

Chrysanthemums flower abundantly in the hills long before they appear in the plains and may be packed for travelling in the following manner:—Line your box with soft calico, place a layer of flowers on the bottom, hammer a nail about one and-a-half inch long into each side of the box just above the surface of your flowers, make frames of light strips of bamboo, or strong wire to fit the inside of your box exactly, stretch pieces of cotton cloth tightly across, and lay them in the box so as to be supported by the nails. Continue these layers of flowers on the frames till your box is full, spread a piece of calico on the top, then nail down the lid. Chrysanthemums packed this way will bear a thirty-six hours' journey in the cold weather quite safely. *All the calico used must be dry.* (See "Yucca.")

Immortelles or Everlastings

CAN be used effectively in dried bouquets. Can be bronzed with the mineral powders recommended, and are extremely useful frosted over for Christmas decorations.

Inga dulcis

RECOMMENDED for hedges, has a peculiar bloom after the rains, which makes it a desirable foliage for many purposes: borders for slips, handles for baskets, garlands for walls, etc., etc.; dip into water before using.

Jasminum syringafolium

Is most useful for Easter decorations. It should be cut overnight and kept under the damp coop; the open blossoms will have fallen off by the morning, but the buds will gradually expand and remain on their stems for a longer time than they would if they opened in the sunlight.

Jasminum officinale

SHOULD be gathered in the morning; its buds open in the evening and perfume the whole house deliciously. When cutting this flower, choose sprays with white-looking buds, which are very pretty by themselves or as a garniture for roses, etc.

Marguerites

ARE pretty enough for a hundred different kinds of arrangements, so I will suggest only one or two which I found particularly effective. Yellow marguerites with mignonette, brown leaves, and bronzed grass, nestling in pale *eau-de-nil* silk; white marguerites with poppies and corn are very nice in sheafs supported by red paper rosettes, for decorating *tea-tables* already mentioned.

Mina lobata

CHARMING by itself, looks more effective if used in combination with nasturtiums. For a dining-table, use it in

the taller stand with bronzed grasses, and nasturtiums in the lower ones. *M. lobata* will remain fresh for a week after it is cut.

Mirrors, Coloured Glass, etc.

THE prettiest adjuncts in floral decorations can be obtained at most reasonable prices in India. Mirror glass and coloured glass in all sizes can be secured in the bazaar of any large town.

Moss Baskets.

FOR these bend pieces of your *wire netting* into any shape you like, tying and fixing with wire, and then covering the whole with brown or green calico. On shapes like these you can easily *sew* on the moss, beginning at the bottom, finish at the edge of the brim, with a narrow layer of additional moss, like a small *rouleau*. Instead of saturating your moss baskets with water put them out in the dew at night, when you will find the lace-like films expand naturally. If this cannot be done, a *very* wet cloth kept on the surface of the moss all night is the next best method of freshening the baskets.

Nasturtiums

Look best without their own leaves. Almost all the shades harmonize well with apricot silk for a frame, and cyanotis as garniture. (See "*Mina lobata*.")

Pansies.

YOU will find when your pansies are in bloom there will be more of purple and mauve than of black or yellow. When painting your flower-stands in celadon tints, do up two or three small wicker-baskets in the same colour, to put your pansies in. You will find an all-mauve arrangement of flowers in these celadon-coloured baskets extremely

pretty. The Nymph in Drayton's "*Muses Elysium*" says—

"The pretty pansy then I'll tye,
Like gems some chain inehasing ;
And next to them, their near ally,
The purple violet placing."

And you might go a little further and use heliotrope too, which will be in abundant bloom at the same time as your pansies and violets. (See "Violets.")

Petunias

(WHITE) form a sweet and graceful in-door decoration. Cut rather long sprays and arrange them with *Arundo donax* and green grasses in tall stands and large baskets.

Phlox.

"THE indispensable phlox," as Firminger calls it, makes a lovely table decoration by itself. The petals are too fragile to bear being mixed with other flowers. Fill saucers with wet sand, and place all-pink, all-white or all-red phlox in them without greenery of any kind, and sink these saucers into billows of silk on your dining-table, having other flowers of the same tint in tall glasses. Have pale apple-green silk for pink phlox, pale-blue silk for red or white phlox. The foregoing is one of the prettiest changes you can have, phlox having a particularly soft and delicate effect.

Poppies

You will, of course, put with your cornflowers and wheat-ears in different vases, but if you will put only red poppies and wheat-ears (no cornflowers) in your celadon-tinted flower-stands, you will be delighted with the effect. Poppies with yellow *bhota* (Indian corn) sprays on *eau-de-nil* silk make a very uncommon and pretty table decoration. (See "Plumbago.")

Roses.

IN the arrangement of these it seems really presumptuous to offer any hints! The queen of flowers needs nothing beyond her own foliage, and sometimes, in the case of drooping roses like *Elise Sauvage*, a little garniture such as mignonette, gypsophila, camphire and ferns; *mais do not understand this*, and invariably spoil the perfect beauty of the rose by arranging with it other flowers of all sizes and shades of colour. Let me implore you to give your mali a lesson or two in treating the rose with proper feeling!

Sweet-pea

LOOK well in masses placed in large baskets and tall flower-stands kept near open doors or windows, so that air passing over them may perfume your rooms. I have advised your having plenty and to spare, as this is a flower particularly well suited for hospital bouquets. The purple sweet-pea looks best by daylight; the pink sweet-pea best by lamp-light.

If you have got ready some of the *rustic supports* recommended, sweet-pea, arranged as follows, will afford you a charming variety for table decoration:—Twigs plaited into bands four or five inches wide and gilded, and also into circles of the same width, will now come into use. For a long table lay your pale-pink silk (or pale-blue) in soft puffs down the centre; place narrow long bags of American cloth all round the edge and fill with wet sand. (Catch the edges of these bags together with long safety-pins here and there to prevent their gaping.) Now put your pink sweet-pea into the wet sand, bank them up on the outer side with the bands of gilded twigs, and on the inner side draw up the silk to the edge of the bags. If you have done any grasses with green mineral powder, you can vary the effect by using *eau-de-nil* silk and the shining green grass with pink sweet-pea.

Sumatra Box

WHICH is in lovely bloom during the rains is most useful for bridal decorations. It is sweet scented, and lasts a

long time after it is cut. Its own glossy leaves contrast well with the white blossoms and are abundant enough to afford foliage for other kinds of flowers.

Teak-Tree Blossoms

WHICH appear in the rains will give you much help as flower garniture. Tea-roses, of which you will have plenty in the rains, look lovely nestling in the fine cream-coloured network of the *teak* blossoms. *Quisqualis* also goes well with this pretty wild garniture.

Tradescantia

Is most useful for fire-places, stages, scenery, etc. Plunge the entire head of your sprays into water to wash off all dust, and then stick the stem into the wet sand with which your pots, bags, or boxes must be filled. It will keep fresh for many days in this way.

Verbenas

LIKE phlox are best arranged by themselves. In large baskets lined with tin to hold wet sand, the surface covered with *alternanthera* or moss, put your white, pink and deep red verbenas. Your long bags of American cloth will hold them beautifully to fringe the edge of your dining table silks; to border your mantlepiece, etc., either in single or mixed colours.

Violets

HAVING fragile stems are not easy to arrange in large masses, so give your mali a ball of basting cotton, and let him prepare them for your purpose by tying them up in tiny bunches, ten or twelve violets round one piece of *mignonette*, or nestling in the hollow of single violet leaves. Baskets, tin-lined, and filled with very wet sand, may hold masses of your violets done up in the tiny bunches, the longer, stronger stems of *mignonette* helping the suction and keeping them fresh for a longer time. When

heliotrope and purple pansies are added to your violets they will afford intoxicating delight.

Nothing is more suited for hospital bouquets than violets.

Yucca gloriosa

WILL, as its name implies, afford you *glorious* decorations in the rains. For large flower-stands the short sprays will have to be wired and the stems wrapped round with a little cotton-wool which will draw up moisture sufficient to keep them fresh, from the water in the vases which the stems themselves are too short to reach. *Arundo donax*, and broad blades of green grass, set off these lovely white bells beautifully, and your poppy-red silk will show them up better than any other colour.

For low decorations, use the bells separately, turning back the petals, when they will look like the eucharis lily. When you intend to use them in this way, cut the bells off the stems, and lay them on a dry towel for a couple of hours before you turn back the petals, else the crisp, fresh petals will crack under this operation. These open bells look extremely well laid on your red silk, on dishes of moss, on baskets full of alternanthera, etc., etc. If required for travelling, gently wipe the open petals with a soft handkerchief, so as to remove any surface moisture, and lay them between the calico frames advised for chrysanthemum boxes. Packed in this way they will bear a journey of twenty-four hours quite well; see that the petals are not cracked when you turn them back.

Zinnia

HAVE the virtue of remaining fresh when cut for a longer time than most flowers. As they have no foliage of their own to use with them 'as cut flowers,' arrange them with leaves of *millingtonia* (cork tree), *jaman*, *Tecoma stans*, etc. I know no flower that sets off a hall or corridor as well as the zinnia does when arranged in masses with the above foliage. Avoid the pink and magenta colours, and

use only those in shades of yellow, orange and dark red. Put some sand into the water, and if you renew the foliage every day, your zinnias will brighten your hall for many days, and prove quite a boon, because they are at their best just when you have very little of any other flowers in your garden.

