

Flower Culture : :

EDITED BY MRS. S. BROOKS and MRS. GOURLAY.

As I sat in our flower decked church, on this beautiful Easter day of April tenth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, amid the floral offerings brought from our homes and gardens, to deck the altars, in honor of a risen Savior, flowers seemed a fitting symbol of the glorious resurrection.

"Emblems of our own great resurrection. Emblems of the bright and better land."

But my thoughts wandered from the scene before, and went back in memory some thirty odd years ago, to The Dalles of that time as I found it. Coming up on the old steamer Idaho I brought with me a box of rose cuttings to plant in the new home, but my box of cuttings attracted the attention only of ridicule, that I should hope any of them to grow amid such uncongenial surroundings as a Dalles door yard might offer. With but two exceptions, Judge Laughlin's and Lawrence Coes' homes, no attempt at flower growing had been made.

I scarcely think any of my cuttings are the ancestors of our beautiful rose bushes of today, but any attempts to beautify and make better life's surroundings are never lost, and today we rejoice in our green lawns strewn with flowers, speaking of homes of refinement and culture. When we speak of homes, we do not mean merely the house we dwell in, but its surroundings also exert their influence. Victor Hugo says in Les Miserables "The beautiful is as useful as the useful, perhaps more so," and this is the plea I would make for all homes to be flower decked, especially for those in the country. Strange as it may seem, our cities and villages adorn their door yards, the little space of ground necessary for the spot of beauty on which the eye may rest, after being wearied with the toils of the day. No wonder the younger generation of this coast has no love for the farm where there are no loving remembrances of mother's old fashioned flower garden as associated with many New England homes, though there the soil may have been sterile, and life one round of toil, yet memory clings to those homes in a way which it never does to the wide spreading wheat fields and more fertile soil of our glorious west. Because we have forgotten one element of man's nature, "man shall not live by bread alone" was spoken by the Great Creator who had planted within every soul a love of the beautiful. The issue is made that a farmer's wife has so much to do she cannot spare time for flowers. In behalf of my sex I will say, give her the opportunity by fencing off a small space with some wire webbing that will be chicken proof, then digging the ground once for her, I will trust that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that spot will become a thing of beauty on which the tired eye may rest, and giving the true touch of home to the humblest cottage. The expense will be a mere trifle in comparison with the result.

Going back to the Easter decorations, which seem to form a kind of text for this article, I must speak of the beauty of the Oregon grape, (so called). It seems to me that is our state flower, by sole right—I should say state plant, as its leaves are even more beautiful than the flower, though the last has a rich beauty all its own, as its golden bunches nestle amid the leaves. We hear in song and story of the festoons of English holly, but our own Oregon grape, with its shade of brilliant green to deepest crimson, can fully equal and I am safe to say surpass the world famed holly in decorative effect. Its name, too, (though a misnomer, botanically, as it is not a grape, but belongs to the barberries) was given, when Oregon's domain extended from the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky Mountains, so that justly, Oregon may, without rival, claim its name sake for its very own. All hail to it as a fit representative of our beautiful state, evergreen, yet glowing with color both crimson and gold.

GERANIUMS.

The easiest house plant for an amateur is the geranium, and with the many

beautiful varieties now grown, one can have a great display of flowers from them. Where one is not provided with a window for wintering them, and yet would like them for bedding in the summer, in the fall take cuttings of the varieties desired, planting in a common soap box filled with good garden soil, not too rich; a soap box will hold eight to ten plants, which, by spring, will be right size for bedding, and give a wealth of blossom all summer. Almost every kitchen has a little window space it can spare for this purpose, and they will amply repay their room by the freshness they give. It may be necessary to remove them occasionally to warmer quarters for a few nights during extremely cold weather, but the box being comparatively light and small, a warm corner can always be found which cannot so easily be done for plants in separate pots.

WILD FLOWERS.

Our wild flowers well deserve mention. I only wish I had more time to devote to them. The little Eriogenia, or as the children call it Indian Potato, with its delicate heliotrope odor, is the first to make its appearance, coming out of the ground sometimes even in January, if we have a few warm days. Next are the Golden Stars, fitly named, as they fleck our hillsides with their paths of sunshine, then Purple Eyed Grass (the sisysinchium) with its yellow companion, the little Fritillaria, proclaim spring has really come, and from then on there is a constant succession of flowers until Jack Frost makes his appearance. Golden Erythroniums (Rock Lilies), Crow's Foot (low growing Buttercups), Larkspurs, Peonies and Lupins of all shades, varying through the blues from deepest purple to white, also pink and yellow ones while underneath all, is an infinite variety of smaller flowers, too small to attract attention of the casual passer by, yet when examined show a wonderful beauty. God's work is always perfect even when too minute for the unaided human eye.

Summer brings Painted Cup with its fiery glow, Penstemons and many other of the Labiate Family, also crowds of the Compositae headed by the sweet-scented Sun Flower. Among the shrubs comes first the Oregon Grape, Service Berry, Wild Cherry, Yellow Currant Sprig, the Ocean Spray and its near cousin with the Indian name of Shushula, bearing long successions of delicate, lilac-colored blossoms. The two last are spireas, and well deserve a place in the flower catalogues, as they are far superior to many of the shrubs sold. On our creeks are the lovely wild roses and White Clematis. These are all found in a short walk around The Dalles. The sands of Rockland are not without their contribution of beauty in the form of the Afronia with its verbina like flowers. I might mention many others, had I the time to classify, and name them. It would be well for our public schools to start Herbariums so as to preserve many of the more delicate species which are fast being trodden out of existence.

I think that it is not generally understood that a plant not standing in direct light does not require as much water as the plant near the glass. Sometimes we do not take into consideration that the less light a plant gets the less rapidly evaporation takes place, consequently the less frequently it will be necessary to water. Some amateurs always apply the same quantity daily, no matter where the plants stand, nor what the condition of the soil is. This is all wrong. I believe that more plants are killed by over-watering than in any other way. The rule of giving water only when the surface of the soil looks dry or whitish should be held in strict adherence. Plants near the glass, or in sunshine, and those in active growth, will, perhaps, require water daily, but those not so situated, and those not growing much, will require much less. Therefore, the necessity of adhering to the rule, and letting the looks of the soil govern you in this matter is one that will be only too apparent. Never

shower a plant and allow the sunshine on it while water stands on the leaves. If you do, more than likely, brown spots will appear, making the foliage look as if blistered, which, in fact, it is. A drop of water often focuses the rays of the sun upon the plant and is sure to scorch it.

PUBLIC LANDS.

Public officials, as well as many private individuals in our county, are constantly in receipt of letters asking for information regarding our land district. These letters come from all parts of the United States, and not infrequently from foreign countries, sent forth like Noah's dove to bring tidings of a new land. The writers are usually men of moderate means, who have enough money to bring their families west, and after paying to enter homesteads, to build their houses and begin settlement. The questions asked are varied, sometimes vague and diffuse, but for the most part are apparently from men who earnestly desire information about Oregon.

Several such letters lie before us, and while we have not space now, to speak at length of the wonderful wealth and resources of Eastern Oregon, we have thought that the publication of answers to some of the leading questions may interest our readers.

Eastern Oregon is nearly in the form of a parallelogram, being 275 miles long and 230 miles wide. From this large area, 8,061,500 acres form the land district known as The Dalles, comprising all of Sherman and Gilliam counties, and parts of Wasco, Crook, Morrow and Grant counties; in all about 360 townships; 349,680 acres of this vast tract is unsurveyed, being heavy timber and rough land, but 3,491,011 acres are still open to settlement.

The land in this district is broken and hilly, and principally adapted to grazing purposes. Some small valleys and undulating tablelands constitute good farming land, but the greater portion is broken, hilly and mountainous.

The Cascade range, 120 miles distant from the coast, is the western boundary, the land sloping eastward to the Hood River valley. The country is watered by the Hood, Deschutes and John Day rivers and their tributaries. Timber grows in profusion on the mountain slopes, but in general the timber in the district is only adequate to the demands of the country for fuel, building and fencing purposes. The Hood River valley is particularly adapted for fruit. Apples, pears, plums, and all small fruits grow well here, while the land lying east on the Deschutes and John Day is better suited for wheat raising, which is the great staple; oats, barley, rye and vegetables of every variety can also be grown. The Blue mountains on the east form a water shed parallel in the main with the Cascades, from which the land slopes westward to the John Day and Deschutes rivers. Large numbers of horses, sheep and cattle have been raised here, but as the country becomes more thickly settled, more attention is given to farming and fruit raising. In the southern part of the district, the leading industry is stock raising, the open land being fit only for grazing.

The following questions are taken from letters received here by the Register and Receiver of the Land Office:

- No. 1—Is there any government land open to entry in your district?
Yes—3,491,011 acres.
- No. 2—How can it be taken?
Land under timber and stone act is \$2.50 per acre; desert land \$1.25 per acre; isolated tracts subject to open bid, the minimum price being \$1.25 per acre.
- No. 4—What kind of land have you?
All kinds as described above.
- No. 5—Can you send maps, plats, diagrams, lists or circulars describing vacant land?
No; the government does not furnish such for distribution.
- No. 6—Is there any school land left?
Sections 16 and 36 in all townships belong to the state. Some sections are yet vacant, but exact location can only be determined by applying to the State Board of School Lands at Salem, Or. The state also selects tracts throughout the district in lieu of sections 16 and 36 lying within certain reserves made by the government.
- No. 7—What are the conditions of payment on School lands?

The purchase price is \$2.50 per acre, payable one-third down, one-third in one year, and the other third two years from date of application, these two payments to be secured by promissory notes at 10 per cent., which is payable semi-annually. If the interest is promptly paid, the notes may run for 10 years, or the entire price may be paid at time of making application.

No. 8—What are the fees on homestead and how can I perfect title?
\$16 for 160 acres; \$8 for 80 acres; residence upon and cultivation of land for 14 months entitles claimant to purchase at \$1.25 per acre, or not less than five years and not to exceed seven years continuous residence and cultivation, with payment of final fees, \$6 for 160 acres, \$3 for 80 acres, and testimony of claimant

and two witnesses at 22½ cts. per 100 words; this with publication fee usually amounts to about \$15.

No. 9—Does a man have to live continuously on his homestead?

The law requires a man to make it his continuous home, and particularly states that occasional visits to tracts does not constitute a residence.

No. 10—Do you advise me to come to Oregon?

Maybe. We would not advise any one to sell a good home and locate in a new country on a stranger's or even a friend's say so. Oregon in its delightful climate and productive power of its soil throws down the gauntlet to any country on the globe. Come and see for yourself.

ANNA M. LANG.

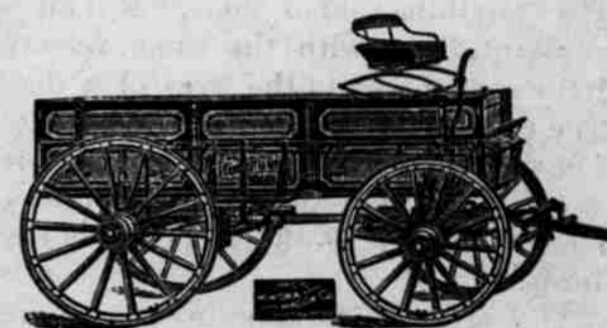
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