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ADAM THE GARDENER.

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ADAM THE GARDENER:

Abridged from the Work of

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ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN ABSOLON.

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ADAM THE GARDENER.

CHAPTER I.

"How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful!"—THOMSON.

ADAM STOCK was the eldest son of a gentleman who, having retired from London to the southern coast of our island for the improvement of his health, had there purchased a small property, consisting of a house, a large garden, a field, and a poultry yard. He knew the value of industry, and that, to an independent and contented mind, few things are *really* necessary for comfort; he determined to cultivate his own grounds, and, as nearly as he could, to do everything for himself; he therefore bought a cow, some pigs, chickens, ducks, and geese. Mr. Stock understood the principles of gardening, and possessed great taste in the cultivation of flowers; his garden was, therefore, always beautiful to look at, and the more so because you saw it was the work of his own hands, and that even the labour was a source of pleasure to him.

Little Adam loved his father very dearly, and was fond of being near him when he was at work. When employed in the garden, Adam would always be at his side, asking him the names of the different flowers that were in blossom, with many other questions about the way of cultivating them. He shewed such delight in the amusement, that his father told him one day, if he would be a good and obedient boy, he would teach him to be a gardener; so that by the time he became a man he should be able to do everything for himself, and know how to direct others. Adam was delighted. "Well, then," said his father, "this is now the first day in the year, and to-morrow we will begin. There is at present no snow upon the ground, and the frost has given way. I will buy you a spade, and a rake, and a hoe; and then, I think, you will be set up. One thing you must promise me—that you will attend to what I tell you, and endeavour to do everything in the best way you possibly can." This you may be sure Adam promised to do.

After some pleasant conversation between the father and son upon the custom of presenting New Year's gifts at this festive season, which Mr. Stock told Adam had descended to us from the Romans, he said, "Now, Adam, you may cut some evergreens for your mamma, in honour of this New Year's day; you will find plenty of holly and laurustinus and evergreen oak, some of the arbutus, and whatever else you think pretty, only be sure you cut the branches so that they will not disfigure the trees. We may then take a walk before dinner, and gather some of the common broom, which is now in flower. Its blossoms are very lovely, looking at a

distance like drops of shining gold, set on green velvet. Perhaps Tom and Arthur would like to go with us: it is very dirty, but never mind; gardeners and countrymen must not care for dirt." So, Mr. Stock having finished his work, away they went; and the boys brought home such a quantity of broom and holly and periwinkle, mixed with grave-looking ivy, with its dark-green leaf and scarlet berries, that they looked like Jacks-in-the-Green at May-tide.

On the following morning, while they were at breakfast, the man brought into the parlour a spade, a rake, and a hoe. Adam stared at them, and his face became as red as fire with delight. They were not foolish toys, but excellent working tools. "Now," said Mr. Stock, "you *are* set up; and if you have finished your breakfast, we will go into the garden, and take our first lesson."

"The first thing we shall do," said Mr. Stock, "will be to dig up these beds under the south wall; there we shall sow our first peas, beans, radishes, onions, and mustard and cress." So Adam watched attentively how his father turned over the earth, and levelled it with the spade. Then he tried to dig himself; and, with the help of his father, he contrived to dig up one bed tolerably even. Mr. Stock then made a shallow trench with his hoe, into which he dropped a row of peas, pointing out to Adam the proper distance between each, and explaining to him that when sown at a moderate distance apart, the plant was more productive than when too thickly sown. They did the same with beans, and raked the earth over them, leaving a slight ridge over each row; first scattering a little soot over them to keep away slugs; some onions, radishes, and small salad were next sown: in each case scat-

tering the seeds thinly over the beds, and afterwards raking them in. He caused Adam to cover the new-made beds with pea-haulm from the woodhouse, using some also to protect the glasses over the young cauliflower plants; he then shewed him how to prepare a bed of turnips; all of which occupied several days, and served to initiate Adam into the art of gardening.

One morning Mr. Stock told Adam that it was high time he should take a piece of ground into his own management. "Wheel a few barrowfuls of well-rotted manure here," said he, "and trench this plot a spit deep; spread the dung evenly at the bottom of the trenches, then fill in the earth again: when this is done, sow some radish seeds on the top, and rake them in as you have seen me do." Having given these directions, Mr. Stock departed, leaving Adam at his employment.

For a short time Adam worked away manfully; but stopping shortly to rest on his spade, he said to himself, "What heavy work this trenching is! I wonder why papa wants the manure buried such a way down in the ground, and the seed scattered on the top; it can never be of any use to the radishes; so I'll dig the bed, and mix the dung with the earth, just as I did for the peas and beans." Accordingly, setting to work again, he found his digging much easier, and soon finished his job.

Mr. Stock, having also finished what he had been about, soon returned, and directed Adam how to cover the anemones with pea-haulm; to mat and earth up the auriculas and carnations, so as to protect them from rain and frost; and to plant the remaining stock of crocuses, jonquils, narcissuses,

and other bulbs, telling him to plant each of these about the depth of his hand in the ground.

This was Adam's daily employment for some time, varied by planting some trees which Mr. Stock had ordered, to fill up gaps in the shrubbery, when one morning his father said to him, "I think, Adam, we shall soon have a change of weather; the air has become colder, and we must finish up all we have in hand:" and lucky it was they did so, for on the following morning Adam beheld a scene which filled him with astonishment. All his little flowers were covered with snow; the trees, which when last seen had presented nothing to the eye but naked trunks and leafless branches, were now loaded with a foliage of snow; the slender branches of the birch, and other trees of similar habit, were rendered more pendulous by the weight of the snow they had caught in its descent; even the boughs of the sturdy oak and elm had acquired a drooping appearance by the additional weight; and the whole landscape looked as if it had been traced out in silver, presenting the appearance of an enchanted scene when compared with that of the evening before. A soft snow had been falling all night, quite imperceptible to the ear, and had wrought this change. Adam was disposed to quarrel with it after the first burst of surprise was over; but Mr. Stock soon made him comprehend that this snow would perform the same office, on a large scale, which he proposed doing for his radishes by covering them with the pea-haulm, protecting the crops from the severe frost which was now likely to set in, and Adam was soon satisfied that plenty of in-door employment remained for them. A walk in the fields, and remarks upon the birds, now driven to throw themselves on the hospitality of man, occupied the

family till night, when Mr. Stock repeated to them, according to promise, the beautiful little story of the Children in the Wood.

The following was a beautiful sunny morning; there had been a slight thaw during the night, followed by a hoar frost; and nothing could be more elegant than the appearance of the trees with the sun shining on them. The trunks and snow-covered branches which the morning before presented a soft, opaque appearance, now glittered and sparkled like pillars of glass, and the little twigs were feathered with a silvery fringe. Bella said, that the tall grass and weeds by the roadside looked like swans'-down, sprinkled with diamonds. The children had never before seen such a sight, and they were delighted. While they were eating their breakfast, and talking of what they had seen in their morning walk, their father explained to them that hoar frost was mist or dew, which froze as it fell; that hail was drops of rain, also frozen suddenly in their fall; and that snow was the water from the clouds, slightly frozen as it descended.

The frost and snow continued for some time; and the birds, tamed by the severity of the weather, became their familiar companions. The blackbird came regularly to the parlour window to be fed; and a redbreast, more social than usual, would enter the room, and take its food out of Bella's hand. At length, one evening towards the end of the month, they heard the wind rise; and, shortly after, the rain began to patter against the windows, indicating a change in the weather. On the following morning they found the snow almost gone, the air much milder, and everywhere the appearance of a perfect thaw, with its usual accompaniments,

dirty snow, broken ground, and muddy roads. "If this mild weather continues, Adam," said Mr. Stock, "we must get to work and prune the fruit trees and the vines. You are not gardener enough yet to assist me in doing so; but if you are very attentive to what I tell you, and observe how I do it, next year you shall try your skill on the currant and gooseberry trees. Now, take your knife, and scrape off the moss carefully from this espallier; and then go on to the next, until you have finished them all. We shall soon have plenty of pretty cheerful little flowers in the gardens and under the hedges; and, what with our berries, flowers, and shrubs, even the bare and wintry month of January shall be to our cheerful, happy circle, a season of pleasantness.

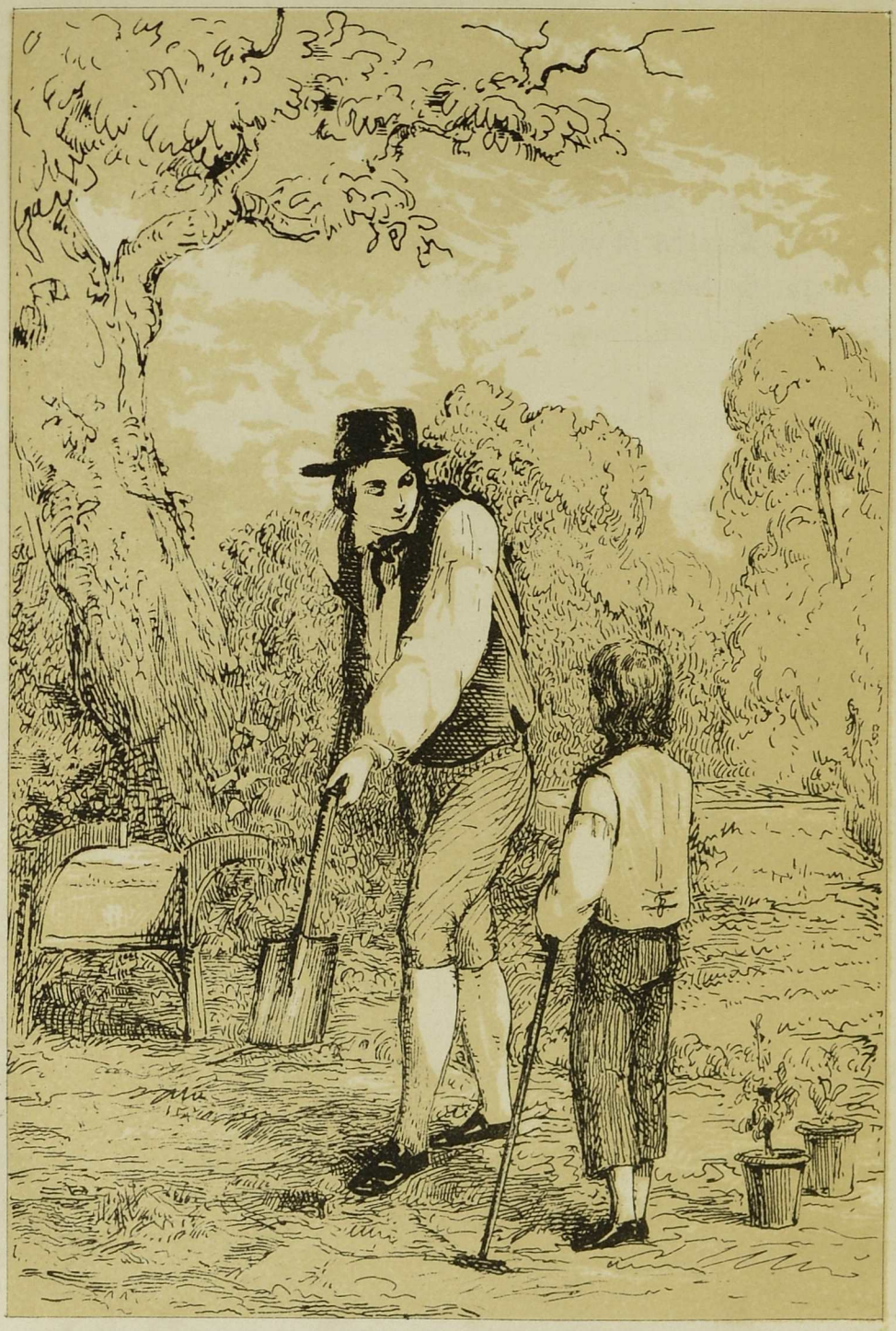
CHAPTER II.

"The frost resolves into a trickling thaw;
Spotted the mountains shine; loose sleet descends,
And floods the country round."—THOMSON.

THE month of February had now set in, and the frost appeared to be quite gone, although patches of snow still remained on the ground: the garden was soft, the wind was blustering, and the weather altogether unpleasant; but when there was work to be performed, Mr. Stock would not allow the weather to prevent him, and he brought Adam up to care as little for it as he did himself: indeed Adam felt for a time that it was being like a man to do as his father did; but he soon changed his opinion after he had got thoroughly wet

several times,—became a little peevish, and said he hated rain. "Ay, ay, Adam!" said his father; "but you do not hate fruits and flowers; and rain is necessary to their production. Without it the earth would become a barren waste; the cattle would perish for want of food, and you also from the same cause. If you could once know what it is to be in severe want of rain, you would ever afterwards consider it one of the greatest blessings, and never again be out of humour because it wetted you. Come, let us set about our work, and we shall the more enjoy the evening when we get our clothes changed." Accordingly, they persevered in digging the bed they were engaged upon; and the following day being fine, they were able to sow this with beans.

They then prepared beds for beet, parsnips, and carrots, by digging it over again, and very deep: then, with a dibble, Mr. Stock made holes a foot deep, three inches wide at top, and nine inches apart; these holes he filled with light rich mould, and in each he placed two seeds, about an inch from the top. Adam inquired why these beds were made so differently from turnip, radish, and cabbage beds; and why he put *two* seeds into one hole? "I was advised to do so, Adam," said his father, "by a very good gardener. Cannot you guess why?" Adam thought for a moment as he leaned on his spade, and looked at the newly made bed, and then cried out, "Oh yes, to be sure I can! the holes are filled with light earth straight down that the roots may find their way easily, and so grow *that* way, instead of growing out on each side. Oh, what funny, dumpty carrots I have seen! Oh! and you put in two seeds in case one should fail." "Right," said his father; "and if both should come up, the bed will be more easily



thinned than if they were sown *broad cast*, as we sow radishes. Besides, this is our main crop, and we must take every precaution against failure."

Adam was now getting very useful: he was allowed to plant out the cabbages and cauliflower plants, after being shewn the distance at which they were to be apart; to sow some lettuce seed, and some fresh mustard and cress. The cauliflower plants under glasses he was also allowed to plant out, leaving two or three plants under each to ripen early; and the second crop of celery, leeks, parsley, onions, and peas were entrusted entirely to his care.

Towards the end of the month the first crop of peas had come forward, and Adam was shewn how to earth them up with the hoe, so as to support the young plants without drawing the mould too high up. They then sticked them, Mr. Stock going over each row done by Adam, making such alterations as were necessary. All this pleased Adam very much, and every day increased his father's satisfaction with him.

The weather was now sufficiently mild and open for looking after the flower garden. They sowed sweet-peas, lupins, candy-tuft, larkspurs, stocks, mignionette, convolvulus, and other hardy annuals. Sometimes they sowed these in small rings, and sometimes in the form of a cross. Adam managed tolerably well, but his father took care to supply the seed necessary for each spot; and as he covered it over with fine mould, he stuck in each a small flat stick, painted white, on which was written the name of the seed. While they were about this job, Adam asked his father what he meant by calling those flowers *annuals*. "All flowers," his father said, "which are

obliged to be sown every year, and which produce seed in autumn, and then die, are called annuals, from the Latin word *annus*, a year; those which live only two years, are called biennials; and those which endure many years, such as pinks, carnations, wallflowers, and others, are called perennials, from the Latin word *perennis*, continual or unceasing. The sweet-pea is an annual; the everlasting pea is a perennial.

"I am now going to prune the shrubbery; in the meanwhile you may plant out those young pinks and wallflowers which have remained in the pots since last autumn, in the beds I have marked out for them. When that is done, we will collect the shrubbery cuttings for the wood-house, and then dig it all over together." This was a noble task, and occupied them some days, as they took the opportunity of securing the suckers of such shrubs as they wished to increase, planting them about a foot apart in a vacant spot of the garden for future use. Having finished this, and pruned all the fruit and wall trees, and dressed the strawberry beds, and sown a few more flower seeds, such as mignionette, lavatera, and ten-week stock, in pots and under glasses for early flowering, they looked round their garden in happy consciousness that their work was now fairly under their controul. "We are now come to the end of the month," said Mr. Stock, "and if you look round our garden, you will find many cheerful and lovely flowers in blossom. There is the aconite, the Alpine alysson, the beautiful anemone, the crocus, and the modest-looking snowdrop; the primrose, and the richly-coloured wallflower, mixing with the Persian iris, and hepatica; the long-lasting daisy, and the daffodil that seems to laugh at the cold. Then, among the flowering shrubs, we have the elegant almond tree,

the favourite of one of our sweetest poets, Spenser; our cheerful and shady friend, the laurustinus, that begins to flower when the gay colours of summer leave us, and never ceases till they return to us again; and many others I need not name. Who would think there was such a variety, when but a few weeks back the snow covered the ground, and the tender shoots were bound in by the frost? If this month has been stormy and wet, remember what I told you about rain! The inconveniences of life are never to be compared with its rational delights; and when we think of the benefits a rainy day brings us, never let us be discontented with February."

CHAPTER III.

"As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed,
And winter oft at eve resumes the breeze."

THOMSON.

THE last few days of February and the first week of March were so stormy, and attended with such floods of rain, that it was of little use attempting anything in the garden; but at length the weather having cleared, and a brisk wind sprung up, the surface of the ground was soon sufficiently dry for them to resume their work; and Adam was told that this would be a busy month with them. "In the first place," said Mr. Stock, "we must weed all the beds sown last month and the month before; and if we persevere now, we shall keep the garden clear, and benefit the plants." This was a hard task for Adam, and he soon got tired of it; but as his father

helped him, and kept steadily at it, he did not complain. When they had finished, his father shewed him how to dress the artichokes, and take off the suckers for young plants; to fork up the asparagus beds, and sow seeds for fresh beds. "And now," said his father, "we must get our main crops of carrots, parsnips, and onions in for winter use; and if you will take the barrow, and wheel in some manure from the yard, we will make a cucumber bed." This task Adam found rather an arduous one; but being anxious to have something new shewn him, he was not long about it. Having got a sufficient quantity of manure for his purpose, Mr. Stock began his bed by measuring off a square space, the exact size of the frame, driving a strong stake at each corner. He then tossed the manure well about with a fork, laying it neatly within the line he had drawn from each stake, until he had got about two feet and a half above the surface, patting it all round with his fork to give it a tidy appearance. "Now, Adam," said he, "we shall leave this for a couple of days, in order that some of the heat may go off before we put on the mould; and then we shall sow our cucumbers, and, at the same time, plunge a few pots of balsams, and other tender annuals, into it, which will give us a fine show of these beautiful plants in July and August. In the meantime, we will plant out our early potatoes. I will shew you how to cut them into quarters, so as to leave in each an eye, which will produce a shoot and a fresh plant; but we will first try some potatoes planted whole. When the seed can be afforded, this plan is the best; for our crop will not only be of better quality, but much more certain." These various matters occupied about a fortnight, during which time they might truly be said to have had

"March with many weathers;" for in one day they had wind, sunshine, snow, rain, and fierce storms of hail. And Mr. Stock had reason to congratulate himself and Adam on having covered up their tender and beautiful flowers, and screened their wall-trees from the "slanting bullets of the storm."

By-and-bye, however, other harbingers of the spring made their appearance; the lively song of the chaffinch was heard between the showers, and the thrush made the garden ring with his rich note. The rooks from a neighbouring rookery were heard all day long, evidently in a great bustle and preparation, and all nature seemed alive to the enjoyment of the scene. Mr. Stock now turned his whole attention to the flower garden. During this month, he told Adam, all the annual flower seeds must be sown; and he went round all the beds and borders, marking a circle half an inch deep with the rim of a flower pot, wherever he wished to sow seeds; and, putting one of the painted sticks in, with the name of the seed he intended to have sown written in pencil, he would then deliver to Adam the requisite quantity of seed, directing him to scatter it thinly round the circle: in some instances, where a patch was to be entirely covered, as with mignionette or candytuft, he would hollow out the whole circle, and desire him to scatter it thinly on the whole basin he had formed. The flower beds were then neatly raked and weeded, and some of the layers of the finest carnations removed into pots, for flowering on a stage.

In this manner Adam was trained up to habits of industry, which he never afterwards forgot. Along with these habits of industry, his education in other respects was not neglected: the evenings were devoted to reading amusing and instructive

books, on which both Mr. Stock and his mother would examine him, and see that he understood what he was reading. He was also taught closely to observe the habits of animals and plants, and to make himself acquainted with the names of such as he met with in his walks; but, above all, he was taught to love and be gentle to every living creature, as the surest means of becoming himself happy and contented.

It was the practice of the whole family to bring home specimens of the wild flowers they met in their walks to their mother, who was a good botanist. "This branch," she would say, "with its soft pretty tufts like velvet, is the sallow; children call it palm; and in some parts, the country people adorn their churches with it on Palm Sunday; so called, because on that day our Saviour rode into Jerusalem on an ass, when the people strewed branches of palm before him." Mr. Stock would then explain to them the uses to which it was applied. "Sallow," he would say, "makes excellent charcoal for gunpowder and for drawing with; the turners use it for making trap and cricket bats, and it makes excellent hurdles." Mary and Bella would then produce their handfuls of violets and primroses. "The violet," Mrs. Stock would say, "should have some heavenly name given to it, because it is so exquisite, both in its scent and appearance, and yet makes so little show of its excellence." The plants in bloom were now getting very numerous, but Adam felt a deep interest in the subject, and could repeat the names of most of the wild flowers he had observed in blossom during the month.

CHAPTER IV.

"At length arrayed
In all the colours of the flushing year, the garden glows."
THOMSON.

"MARCH, with its rude, rough, and boisterous winds, with the dark clouds and rain storms with beautiful gleams of sunshine, in which it delights, is now gone," said Mr. Stock, one morning; "and we shall now have the lighter gales, short and frequent showers of rain, with the warm sun, perhaps, shining all the time, which distinguishes the lovely month of April. I dare say you remember that this is called 'April fools' day:' have you ever been made a fool of, Adam, on the first of April?" "Yes," said Adam; "and I once played a boy such a trick; but when he found out that I had made an April fool of him, he gave me such a thumping!" "Then he was a natural fool as well as an April one, Adam," said Mr. Stock, "or he would have laughed at the joke." "He was much bigger and older than I," said Adam, "or he would not have dared to thump me." "I am pleased to hear you say so, Adam; never submit to a blow yourself, when you can help it; at the same time, never be a tyrant over others. Never be the first to quarrel; and do not be the last to make it up."

This conversation took place in the garden, while they were planting out some balm, mint, sage, and other sweet herbs, on a border kept for that purpose; and, this finished, they set about weeding the asparagus beds; "For," said Mr. Stock, "weeds should never be suffered to spring higher

than an inch, or they take the food required by the plants." Adam did not much like weeding, for it made his back ache. But his father soon convinced him how much happier was his lot than many thousands of his fellow-creatures. "You never worked for sixteen hours together in your life, Adam; but thousands younger than you were obliged to do so every day, until some kind-hearted gentlemen interfered, and got a law to prevent it. Think how rejoiced one of these poor sickly little creatures would be to come and take your place; or even to breathe the sweet air we are now breathing!" This rebuke made Adam very serious: he set to work in right earnest, and soon cleared the bed of weeds.

On the following day they planted out their first crop of brocoli in rows, and sowed more seed for a second crop; tied up the leaves of the most forward early cabbages, that the hearts might grow more quickly; planted out some of the sugar-loaf cabbages, red cabbages for pickling, and savoys from the seed beds: in fact, cropped all the vacant spots in the garden, except those kept for the main potato crop; weeded and thinned all the early beds; and, after walking round the garden, and examining the progress of their crops, they reached the bed of radishes sown by Adam. "Now, my boy," said Mr. Stock, "you shall enjoy some of the fruits of your labour; and, what is more, you shall see your mother and sisters enjoy them: your radishes ought now to be fit to draw; I will go and get some of my own sowing, while you pick a few bunches from these." Adam soon after followed his father, shouting with laughter, and holding up a bunch of stunted, ill-shaped, short-bodied radishes, with fibres like fingers projecting from them! "Oh, papa, look at this set

of scarecrows! Ha! ha! ha!" and he made the garden ring again with his laughter. But his attention was soon caught by the long taper roots his father was drawing, and his mirth ceased. "Why, papa," he said, "yours are not such stupid looking things,—what can make the difference?" "My dear boy, if any one else had brought me such things, I should say the ground had not been properly prepared." "How do you mean, papa?" "Why, that the manure had been mixed with the surface soil, instead of being buried spit deep. Did I forget to tell you how I wished that bed to be managed? I am sure I did not; and this ugly crop must be caused by some other circumstance."

Adam began to feel very uncomfortable; and, for a moment, the thought passed through his mind that he would say nothing about his neglect, which he now well remembered. His disposition was, however, too noble to do so. He at once said, with "flushed cheek, but unshrinking eye," "Papa, I did *not* trench that bed; you told me how to do it; but I found it hard work, and I suppose I was conceited enough to think I knew better than you, and that it could not signify, so the manure was in, how; so I only digged the bed, and mixed the dung with the earth." "You have done very wrong, Adam, and I am displeased that a little boy should suppose he knew better than his father; but you have told the truth, and therefore I forgive you. When manure is laid near the surface of the soil which is intended for *tap*-rooted plants, it gives them a tendency to throw out roots at the side to take up the rich food, which the manure is to them; but when the manure is spread at the bottom, the single *tap*-root runs straight down to find it."

Adam was ashamed of his conceit; and his father, seeing his mortification, kindly avoided saying more on the subject. But his punishment was increased when he saw how much his mother and sisters enjoyed the beautiful radishes drawn from his father's bed, and thought how he had curtailed their store by disobeying his father's instructions.

Their garden was now well cropped; and their chief employment was to watch its development, and give the plants every little aid in their power. The early cauliflowers, which had been left under the hand-glasses, were now growing beautifully. They were earthed up, and the hand-glasses raised on bricks, so as to give them room to grow. The cucumber-frames were now opened in the middle of the day to inure the plants to the open air. The hoe was kept constantly going, and a careful eye was kept on the fruit trees to remove any caterpillars which made their appearance on them. One morning, while occupied in sticking the early peas, they heard the voice of the cuckoo for the first time. This well-known and welcome voice reminded Mr. Stock of Wordsworth's beautiful and simple poem, which he repeated to Adam, recommending him to learn it:—

"O, blithe new comer! I have heard,
I hear thee, and rejoice:
O, cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

"While I am lying on the grass,
Thy loud note smites my ear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near!

"The same which in my schoolboy days
I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways;
In bush, and tree, and sky.

"And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain,
And listen till I do beget
That golden time again."

Adam thought it very pretty; all except the last part, which he did not understand. His father explained to him, that the poet meant that he could lie on the grass and listen to the bird until he fancied himself a thoughtless, careless, and merry schoolboy again, and he calls his schoolboy days the "golden time;" "And if you live to be a man, Adam," said he, "you will think so too. I used to think, when I was a little boy, how happy I should be if I were a man; and now that I am a man, I would give all I am worth, except you and your mother and sisters, to be a boy again. But I have some business in the village; go and ask your mamma and sisters if they will join us, and we will take a walk in the fields, if they can go with us." In a few minutes the whole party were ready. On the way, Mr. Stock entertained the party with anecdotes of the habits and instincts of the birds they saw. How the swallow traversed hundreds of miles to visit us, build its little house, rear its young, and again retraced its path on the approach of winter! How the wryneck, which they detected from its loud cry of "Week-week!" many times repeated, as it perched on a gate-post, would hiss at you like a nest of snakes if you approached their nest, frightening many a cowardly boy who would have robbed it, but for the

fear inspired by this sound. On their way home they also observed the redstart, with its trembling tail, darting from bough to bough, and many other interesting objects, which Mr. Stock told them they would find described in "White's Natural History of Selborne," on their return home.

The month was now nearly at its close, and Adam and his father had nearly finished work for the day, having just well watered the flower beds, when Adam was addressed by his father. "Now, Adam," said he, "this month we have a beautiful show of flowers in the garden, and I wish you to tell me the names of those that please you most." "There is the tulip, papa," said Adam; "it is no great favourite of mine, for it is stiff and formal, and has no scent, but the colours are very beautiful and gay; then there are the auriculas, polyanthuses, and stocks, and wallflowers, daffodils, daisies, jonquils, and the ranunculuses, which are very beautiful this year; the peonies, scarlet lychens, hepaticas, irises, and the modest-looking lilies of the valley, and many more which I cannot mention; but I think many of the wild flowers we saw in the hedge-rows in our walk yesterday, are quite as beautiful as any of these." "You are quite right, Adam," said his father; "and they lose some of the greatest enjoyments of life, whose appreciation of nature is confined to the artificial productions of the garden." This conversation took place while Mr. Stock was thinning the apricot trees; and Adam occupied himself in looking over the apple trees for caterpillars: their last employment in the sprightly month of April.

CHAPTER V.

"Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose."—MILTON.

BY four o'clock next morning, Mr. Stock had roused all the sleepers in his house. "Up! up!" cried he, "you slug-a-beds! The lark is awake, and the bee is stirring; all but you are ready to meet the rising sun. The flowers are all getting ready to open their dewy buds, and the morning air is breathing softly on them; and May-Day has come in after the old fashion, cheerfully and bright: so we will keep it after the old fashion. Come, up with you! we shall not begin it properly unless we see the sun rise. Adam, you lazy dog! let me catch you in bed five minutes hence, and I will give you such a cold pig as shall make you remember May morning!" Who could sleep after this? so in about a quarter of an hour the whole family were

"Brushing with hasty steps the dew away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn."

All noticed how grave everything appeared; there was such a stillness, as if the birds and beasts were waiting in fear lest the sun should not rise again. Indeed, I have often thought that the first breaking of dawn was very awful — the deep stillness, the solemn colour, and the cautious unfolding of light! There is no solemnity like the first dawning of morn:—

"Most old, and mild, and awful, and unbroken;
Which tells a tale of peace beyond whate'er was spoken."

When they had arrived at the rising ground behind the house, they looked over a beautiful tract of country, rich in verdure, with the sea beyond it: the sun was slowly rising—a sheet of living gold; while the clouds around were drawn up from it like long handfuls of wool, dyed rose colour, and the edges dipped in gold. "Who can wonder," said Mr. Stock, "that some people should worship the sun as their god, when we behold what a grand object it is, both in its rising and setting? If the sun were to rise no more, everything that has life would die, rot, and become dust. Therefore, we cannot wonder, I say, that some people look upon the sun as their god."

They now continued their walk into some pretty winding lanes, passing some cottages, the children of which were all up and out Maying. Some were making garlands, hanging them across the lane, before the door. Adam and his sisters wished to make a garland too, and set about collecting wild flowers for that purpose, putting them into their handkerchiefs as they gathered them. While thus occupied, Mr. Stock explained to them that the custom of gathering flowers and making garlands on May-Day, had been continued from the time of the Romans, who made it a religious observance. After drinking some milk at a neighbour's farm-yard, they returned to breakfast; and having despatched their meal in haste, they set about making their garland, which, with mamma's assistance, was soon suspended between the trees on the lawn. A fiddler had been engaged from a neighbouring town, and,

some young friends having been invited, they danced under the garland till dinner time, and finished the day with a game at romps and blind-man's buff; the whole party, great and small, partaking of a huge bowl of syllabub.

On the following morning, Adam and his father resumed their work in the garden, their chief employment being thinning and weeding the advancing crops; hoeing the turnip, carrot, and onion beds; and earthing up the cabbages. Adam was directed to cut off the tops of the beanstalks, to make the pods grow; and to stick all the peas that had been hoed and earthed up. While they were at work one morning hoeing the potatoes, Adam observed a large dragon-fly settle on the leaf of a cabbage, and popping his hat over it, he shouted out, "Oh! I have caught such a large horse-stinger; five of them would kill a horse." "Bless me!" said his father, "let me see this tremendous animal!" When Adam, with great caution, lifted up his hat, his father beheld that harmless and beautiful animal, the dragon-fly. Mr. Stock shewed him how harmless it was, by laying it in the palm of his hand; but finding it much bruised, he quickly put it out of its misery, and explained to Adam that it was very destructive to other insects, flying so swiftly, by means of its long gauze-like wings, that few could escape from it. "I once saw one," said he, "catch a large butterfly as it was flying, and then settle on a twig close by to eat its prey at leisure. After biting off the wings, he devoured the whole body in about a minute. The dragon-fly delights in the warmest sunshine, hiding itself under the leaves and branches of trees in gloomy weather; but I wonder to see it here, for they are usually found by the sides of ponds and rivers."

While this conversation was proceeding, they were busy watering all the young cabbage and brocoli plants. Adam was directed to give each plant a pint of water at least; for, having had little rain lately, they were in danger of dying. Having finished watering, Adam was directed to get some sticks, and some threads of old Russia matting, from the tool-house. "I will shew you," said Mr. Stock, "how to tie up the carnations and pinks, which are now beginning to shoot up for blowing. You must train the shoot neatly along the stick, and stop all the buds but the largest on each stem, then stir the earth well up round the roots." This being done, Adam was desired to roll the grass and gravel walks, while Mr. Stock was sowing some flower seeds; such as mignionette, sweet pea, pansies, lupines, lavateras, and larkspurs, for blowing in autumn.

The great business of the season had now been performed, the crops being all sown, and they had only to watch their growth, keep them free from weeds; and thin, from time to time, the various crops of fruits and vegetables; watering the strawberry beds, and other plants, daily. This scene was varied by occasional excursions into the fields and green lanes, and adding to the flowers of the garden such wild plants as they could pick up;—the lovely veronica, with its pretty blue flowers, growing two and two together, one of our most beautiful field flowers being among them. What with the fields, the garden, and the woods, this lovely month may well be called "flowery May."

CHAPTER VI.

"Now come the rosy June and blue-eyed hours,
With song of birds, and stir of leaves and wings,
And run of rills and bubble of bright springs,
And hourly burst of pretty buds to flowers;
With buzz of happy bees in violet-bowers,
And hum of many sounds, making one voice
That sweetens the smooth air with a melodious noise."

CORNELIUS WEBBE.

ADAM and his father were at their work very early every morning, for Mr. Stock knew the importance of the habit of early rising. "Early rising," he told Adam, "clears the understanding and improves the memory; almost all the greatest men who have lived were early risers, and without that they never could have become such eminent men." Acting on this principle, they were generally at work in the garden shortly after sunrise. Adam had now the management of the cucumber-frames; being instructed to water them early every morning, and to tilt the frames during the day to give the plants air. They were now occupied also in planting out the young celery plants, Mr. Stock marking out the plan by stretching a line from one end of the bed to the other, and Adam digging a trench, about a foot and a half deep and three feet apart, neatly finished on each side, in which the young plants were placed, a few inches apart from each other. The trenches being finished, Adam was told to draw up the earth to the plants every fortnight.

While at work one day, Adam was observed to stop and examine attentively a few currant trees, putting his fingers to his mouth several times; "What have you there, my boy," said Mr. Stock; "ripe currants already?" "Oh, no, papa, not yet; but something quite sticky on the leaves, and so sweet, and so shiny, that they look as if they were varnished." "I suppose you have found some honey-dew, a substance which has puzzled your ancestors, Adam; what think you of it?" "Why, papa, I have been thinking it very strange that all the currant trees have not this stuff upon them; and I have noticed that these trees, which have it on their upper sides only, are blotched and crinkled, while on the under side there are thousands of little green insects; and as I find this honey just below the insects, it must be caused by them somehow."

"You are quite correct, Adam. The honey-dew is a secretion from these insects, which are called aphides. Entomologists tell us that the ants are so fond of the honey-dew, as to take particular care of the insects for the purpose of securing it; I suppose it is so abundant this summer, that this has not yet been discovered by the little epicures. But I wish to shew you the operation of *budding* roses, which, as you are going to be absent from home for the next two months, I shall not have another opportunity of shewing you this year, so if you come with me, I will shew you how it is done." Mr. Stock proceeded accordingly to one of the beds, where he had, a few months before, planted some well-grown wild rose stocks, and which were about three feet high, with stems about two inches round;—choosing one of the most healthy of these, he selected a free growing shoot; and made a cut across it, quite through to the inner bark; then,

from the centre of this cross cut, he made another about three inches in length, in a straight line, downward, and as if making a T, but taking care not to cut deeper than the inner bark; with the point of his knife, he then carefully raised the bark all round the cut.

He then cut off, with a sharp knife, from a beautiful white rose he wanted to increase, a slice rather longer than the T he had cut in the stock, and which contained an eye with a strong bud on it. From this slice he carefully removed all the wood, then cutting a piece off the top, he made it fit exactly into the cross cut he had first made, pushing the rest of the slice smoothly under the bark of the stock. He then placed a small piece of clay, prepared for the purpose, round the whole, to exclude the air, tying it round, but not too tightly, with a worsted thread to keep everything in its place. "Now, Adam," said Mr. Stock, when he had finished, "there is a lesson for you in the science of gardening; by this process you can have half a dozen different kinds of roses on the same stem, and, by using a neat wire frame, you may train them into all manner of beautiful shapes; but, after all, the training of nature, with a little judicious pruning, and a good rich soil, is the best for roses. I fear we are too early for this bud to have fair play, but as the atmosphere has been rather moist for the last few days, our rose has a fair chance of succeeding, and I wanted you to see how it was performed. And now let me see whether you know the names of the finest flowers we have in bloom this month." "I think," said Adam, "I could repeat nearly the whole, but they are very numerous. There are sunflowers and carnations, lupins, pinks, marigolds, larkspurs, wallflowers, snapdragons,"—

and here he paused. "Well," said his father, "you will lose your holiday, if you can give no larger list than that." "Ah! papa, you must not hurry me," said Adam; and he went on repeating most of the noble list of flowers in blossom during the beautiful month of June.

On the following day, Adam departed to pay a long promised visit in a distant part of the country, and our lessons must stop until his return, a matter of less importance, seeing that weeding, watering, and otherwise trimming up the garden, constituted the routine during his absence.

CHAPTER VII.

"Ruddy September, with wide wicker maunds,
Treads his full orchard now, and at all hours
Gathers delicious sweets, where are no sours."

The first week of September had passed away before Adam returned home, and his first inquiries were about the garden. "You will find a great change there, Adam," replied his father; "but we must hear what you have got to tell us to-night, and to-morrow, after breakfast, we shall return to our labours in the garden." Accordingly the evening was one of happy enjoyment in the little circle; Adam told them all that had happened to him, and the happy and united family related in return all the little incidents that had occurred at home.

On the following morning, Mr. Stock and Adam went round the whole garden, which was found in beautiful order; for Mr. Stock had been unceasing in his exertions. The first

thing that struck Adam was the cucumber-beds, which were now entirely uncovered, and throwing out their leaves and fruit most luxuriantly. A new hot-bed had been prepared, but not so high as the last one, and Adam was delighted at the appearance it presented. The frames contained pots filled with cuttings of fuchsias, geraniums, roses, lavateras, verbenas, and a number of other flowers, besides numerous pipings of pinks and carnations; these were inserted neatly round the edges, and in the centre of each pot was sunk a smaller one, having the bottom hole stopped with clay, and then filled to the brim with water. This, his father told him, was to keep the cuttings in a moist state until they had taken root; which they had nearly all done, promising them a grand addition to their next year's store of flowers, if they were fortunate enough to save them during the winter. "So you see, Adam, I have not been idle during your absence," said Mr. Stock; "most of the beds you helped me to put in have disappeared, and I have nearly got in all our winter crops. The bed under the south wall, which is a good soil and dry, is sown with winter spinach; by-and-bye, when about an inch high, we must weed and thin it; then I have planted a good quantity of young brocoli-plants, which will be in perfection by spring; then here is a bed of onions for spring use; also carrots, radishes, and small salads; and here we have a small seed-bed of cabbage and cauliflower. Our celery is now coming forward, and will give you some employment every week in earthing up, for this must be done a little at a time. But let us to work, and shew that your holiday has not spoilt you."

So they set to work accordingly; Adam weeding and hoeing away with great perseverance. "Now, Adam," said Mr. Stock,

"as you have finished your weed-hoeing, I would have you dig yonder bed of light loamy soil, and dig it as deep, and make it as light as you can; and then plant about a hundred lettuces from the seed-bed sown in August; plant them in rows, six inches apart each way; and then see to watering the cauliflower and brocoli plants coming on for use next month."

Towards the end of the month, our gardeners turned their attention to the various flower roots and borders requiring their attention. The hyacinth and tulip beds were prepared; the anemone and ranunculus roots were planted out; auriculas shifted into pots; digging up all the flower borders, both for neatness and to destroy weed; transplanting and trimming the perennials; clipping all the box edgings and privet hedgeing about the place; rolling and weeding all the walks, until the whole garden was a picture of neatness and beauty.

One fine afternoon, at the end of the month, the whole family set off to a neighbouring wood, with sacks and satchels, upon a nutting expedition. By the time they had rambled about, and nearly filled their sacks, the sun, now shooting his almost level beams between the trunks of the trees, determined them to bend their steps homeward. On reaching the outskirts of the wood, they were struck with admiration and delight at the grandeur and beauty of the heavens. Above and around them nature appeared clothed in her richest and most vivid colours. In the centre was the golden glory of the setting sun, around it, mixed with streaks of gold, the clouds were dashed with pale green; and at a greater distance were masses of purple clouds, deeply crimsoned towards their edges, the extreme edge nearest

the sun being tinged of a bright copper colour. Above was one expanse of gold, green, purple, and crimson, while the setting rays of the sun were relieved by the dark brown masses of trees, the dull brown of the sycamore enlivened by the bright orange leaf of the elm. "After the pleasures you have had this day, Adam," said his mother, on their return home, "you cannot much regret the coming-in of autumn. It is true it tells of the decaying year; the mornings and evenings get more chilly and saddened by mists and fogs, and our merriest songsters have deserted us; yet, like the age of well-spent youth, it has its beauties, and brings with it appropriate blessings." "Yes," added Mr. Stock; "when we consider the fine showy colours of the flowers, the beautiful varieties in the foliage of the trees, the brilliancy of the sunsets, with the temperate heat of the day, and the delicious fruits that are ready to drop into our mouths, who could, with justice, feel dissatisfied with the autumn months?"

CHAPTER VIII.

"There is a fearful spirit busy now."

BARRY CORNWALL.

THE last months of autumn are always busy months in the garden. Not only have the crops of all kinds for winter use to be gathered in and properly stored, but the foresight of the gardener is called into full operation, as upon his arrangements now will depend all his early crops of the next year, as well as the timely blossoming of his flower borders. This

was carefully impressed on Adam's mind by his father, who also urged him to devote a little time every day to noting down the operations upon which they had been engaged. "All young persons," said Mr. Stock, "should devote a short time to putting down on paper the occurrences of each day and their thoughts upon them, doing this in as clear and simple language as possible. Let them once acquire this habit, and no difficulty will occur in after life to destroy it."

During the month of October they nearly finished putting in their winter crops. A bed of beans were sown, to be transplanted into rows an inch and a half apart; when about two inches above the ground, these were protected by hand-glasses when there was any appearance of frost. A few rows of early Charlton peas, to ripen in May, were sown in a south border, an inch and a half below the surface, and covered with straw, or pea-haulm, when the frosty nights set in. The lettuces, sown in August, were transplanted; a few under frames. The small cauliflowers were planted three together, so as to be covered by one hand-glass on wet and cold nights. New beds were prepared for cabbage plants, the ground being well manured, and dug one spade deep, and the plants placed two feet apart. The asparagus beds were dressed, the stalks being cut down to the ground, and the weeds in the alleys hoed away; the old beds were then covered with manure, well rotted, the alleys dug one spade deep, and the earth scattered over the beds. When this was done, a row of cabbages was planted in each alley. The flower borders were now dug up, the perennial plants neatly trimmed, or the roots divided, and the bulbs planted; the crocuses, and commoner sorts of tulips, which had been taken up when done flowering, and carefully

put away for their season of rest, were now planted about the borders in patches of threes or fours; while the tulips, of the better kind, were planted out in a bed prepared for them, and which afforded protection during the winter.

Towards the end of September, or early in October, the potatoes and carrots were dug up, and the pears and apples gathered,—the former being placed in a pit, in a dry part of the garden, having a layer of straw below and above them, and then covered with earth; the carrots were built up in layers, with some dry sand spread between each row.

The month of November has always been a subject of complaint with foreigners, and even our own countrymen, who are not blessed with robust health. The poet Cowper, a man of feeble frame, speaks of our cloudy skies, fogs, and dripping rains, as, "disposing much all hearts to sadness, and none more than mine." But the true philosopher will not forget that these mists and rains, are preparing the soil for the future growth of the seeds lying in its bosom. Mr. Stock failed not to store Adam's mind with such reflections as these, while they were still actively employed in their labours. They were now pretty forward with their winter crops, and chiefly occupied in trenching such ground as they did not intend cropping until the spring, laying it up in ridges, by which means the soil was greatly improved, the frost, the sun, and the air, contributing to mellow and prepare it for the spring crops.

For several days at the close of the month, the whole party employed themselves in collecting the fallen leaves, both in the lanes and in the neighbouring wood, these forming an excellent soil for the more delicate flowers, when thoroughly

decayed and mixed with mould. On one of these occasions Adam quite forgot the task he had undertaken of closing the hand-glasses at night; and the following morning a strong hoar-frost had covered the ground, and their young cauliflowers had been severely nipped. His father told him he must endure the disgrace of having deprived his mother and sisters of some pleasant early vegetables, owing to his neglect of duty. "This has arisen," said he, "from your having had a holiday in the wood yesterday. Remember, in future, my dear boy, always to walk once round the garden of an evening, and observe what is to be done, either in attending to plants requiring unusual care, or in carrying to the house any tools that may have been left out. Punctuality is the life of all business; and indeed I never knew any great success attend a person who was irregular in his habits. Neglect of order, like rust on steel, increases with time, till the man, or the metal, becomes a useless lump."

Winter was now fairly set in, and Adam's summary of flowers for November was a very brief one. The China rose, the Michaelmas daisy, the laurustinus, being pretty nearly all he could muster. And now came "chill December," with its vapourish and cloudy atmosphere. The leaves were collected in masses, crumpling under the feet with rustling sound; the fields were damp, and, except in the sudden frosts frequent in this month, nearly impassable; the evergreen trees, only, with the furs and the pines, remain to gratify the eye of taste. These evergreens seem like real friends, and are never found wanting; from May to December they remain our constant companions, gladdening the gloom of winter with their lively green, and subduing the glare of summer with their darker shade.

December has other associations peculiar to itself, and, especially in the country, has its own enjoyments. It is the merriest month in the year. Its grand holyday — Christmas, has survived all others; and although the custom is not kept up as in the days of our ancestors, when, according to Jonson— rare Ben Jonson—

> "The jolly wassail walks the often round
> And in their cups their cares were drowned:"

Still as Mr. Stock and his family managed it, the enjoyments of December made them almost forget the delight of their May mornings.

In all these enjoyments, however, our gardeners found plenty of employment, which served to give zest to their indoor enjoyments. They finished trenching the vacant ground, tended the hand-glasses and frames, giving them plenty of air when the days were fine, but carefully closing them on the approach of night. Their early peas and beans now began to shew themselves above ground, and when the absence of frost permitted, the earth was drawn gently round their stems. The celery was earthed up; and Adam found that, even in the dead season, there was plenty of employment for the industrious gardener. By constant exercise he had become one of the finest and cheerfullest boys possible; and by the sensible conversations of his father and mother he had acquired more useful knowledge than boys much older than himself, and who had been in excellent schools, too, could boast of; for, without knowing it himself, he was always storing up something worthy of being known; and it had this advantage,—that it was generally impressed upon

his mind by having some practical application; this rendered it easy for him to remember it: and, with these advantages, it is not surprising that, in course of time, Adam became a great traveller, and a skilful botanist, as well as a worthy, honest man.

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