

vantage the lavender grower possesses over other cultivators is that he has no need to fear the depredations of birds. Partridges and larks may build their nests in his lavender, but the scent of the flowers tempts them not at all, and but for the fact that the rabbits may bite off the straggling sprigs which interfere with their runs, the lavender has no serious enemy save the spring frosts.

"The harvesting has to be conducted with great care. The fields ripen rapidly under the summer sun, and all the reaping which is done for the callers of 'Sweet lavender, sixteen branches a penny,' has to be done while the dew is still upon the land, for to 'bunch' the sprigs when the sun has dried the ripe blooms would mean to lose millions of the scent-giving cups that would fall under the pressure of the reaper. The lavender which is destined for the distillery, and which is cut throughout the day, is laid on what are known as St. Petersburg mats, which are bound around about sixty pounds of lavender stalks, and in this way the blooms are carried to the stills. Here coppers holding as much as a ton of lavender boil the flowers, the steam which is given off being condensed, and the oil separated from the water. Stripped to the waist, the men work night and day in the heat of the barnlike buildings of two stories, with the furnaces below and the distillery above. Carefully the boiling process is watched until the time comes for securing the precious oil which makes scent for the million. But that after all is the business and the least attractive side of the calling of the grower over whose fields one is roaming. It is the growing lavender which possesses so many charms for the visitor. The air is charged with a faint scent of the flower, black bumble-bees buzz in thousands above the sprigs of blossom, and butterflies—the chalk-hill blue, the handsome sulphur-tinted yellow and many others—add to this scene of varied colors over which the reaper is passing with the swish of his sickle. Who would not envy the lavender grower, who pursues his calling amid such delightful surroundings?"

But flowers have other uses than providing luxurious scents for the fashionable. As we learn from the following quotation, the latest use of the rose is as a health giver. And, indeed, we can well imagine that the rest induced by a sojourn among such beautiful and calm surroundings as a rose garden would be well calculated to restore the wearied brain and body. In the hurry and bustle of life, amid its many sorrows, the lover of flowers finds a comfort beyond description in his garden or in the wild fields and the forest. There is, perhaps, nothing which is so conducive to peace as the contemplation of these forms of beauty. Among the many poets who have sung of the flowers, none has shown greater tenderness than Mrs. Hemans. We

wish that we had space for her poem entitled *Bring Flowers*, but a single verse must suffice to show the tone in which she wrote:

"Bring flowers to the shrine where we kneel in prayer,
They are Nature's offering, their place is there!
They speak of hope to the fainting heart,
With a voice of promise they come and part,
They sleep in dust in the wintry hours,
They break forth in glory—bring flowers, bright flowers."

Roses and Their Uses *New York Tribune*

"Since the days when the 'sweet singer of Israel' sung the praises of the rose of Sharon, the rose has been so transformed by the florist's art that the flowers seen in the rose gardens of to-day bear but small resemblance to the humble little blossom which the tourists who visit the Holy Land see growing in that vicinity. The rose, with its constantly increasing beauty, has also increased in usefulness, and the 'rose rest cure' is the latest mode of usefulness to which the flower has been put.

"The rose held a high place in the estimation of the Greeks and Romans, who originated the idea of regarding it as symbolical of silence and a reminder of the confidential nature of any information obtained when partaking of hospitality. A rose was suspended above the table, and the guests who were breaking bread under the protection of friendship understood the mute reminder of the loyalty that enjoins silence regarding any information obtained under such circumstances. From this usage grew the expression 'sub rosa,' with which many individuals precede or close any information which the hearer is not to repeat. The rose is also supposed to be emblematic of certain sentiments, the nature of these depending on the color of the blossom bestowed. The pink rose symbolizes love, the white rose youth and the yellow jealousy.

"A pretty legend ascribes to an angel's gift the extra beauty possessed by the moss rose, veiled with its mantle of green. The angel, grateful for the protection of a rose bush, asked the rose what gift it desired in return. The rose desired the angel to bestow another grace upon it, and the flower in a moment was covered with moss. Of the flower's lineage an old legend says: 'I came from nectar spilled from heaven'; and in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus sorrowed alone, the rose bloomed as it still does in fragrance and beauty.

"The Boers of the Transvaal are fond of roses, and in Pretoria the streets are bounded by rose hedges, which for all but three months of each year are fragrant and beautiful with blossoms.

All the public places display a profusion of roses of many varieties. The Burghers' Park has a beautiful collection. This flower has been chosen as the floral emblem of several States, including New York, Iowa and North Dakota, the last two mentioned having chosen the wild rose."

The following extract gives an interesting account of an increasing flower industry:

Violet Farms in Virginia.....*New York Tribune*

"The worn-out farms of Virginia, principally in Albemarle and adjacent counties, of late have been turned to good account by their owners, who have directed their attention to violet growing. The violet industry is spreading rapidly in that section, and the growers, the most successful of whom are women, employ small negro boys to carry on the work, which, while not laborious, is tedious, for the violets require constant attention. The greater part of the yield is taken by Philadelphia dealers. Although they are not 'making wealthy,' the growers are receiving substantial returns and find this new industry more profitable than ordinary farming.

"The great violet growing centre is Poughkeepsie, N. Y.," says Dr. B. F. Galloway, of the Department of Agriculture, who has had the violet hobby for years. He is the author of several books on the subject of profit in violet raising. All violets from this district find a ready market in New York City, and as the demand for them is increasing yearly a promising field is opened for the young, energetic and intelligent men and women of to-day.

"Answering a question as to why the violet has always been a popular flower, Dr. Galloway said that for four or five months in the year the public has no violets at all. It is only from the middle of October to the end of Easter time that violets are in season, and when they do arrive they are in great demand. On the contrary, roses abound all the year round. There is also a certain delicacy, a modesty, about the violet that makes it always wanted, while its perfume is another important point in its favor.

"Only two of the double varieties of violets are grown—the Maria Louise and the Lady Hume Campbell. There are many kinds of single flowers, which, while beautiful and fragrant, are not popular. This is a matter of taste, however. In Europe, especially in Paris, the single violets are in great demand. There is a growing demand for the single violet in this country, however. The old-fashioned way of growing violets, borrowed from the English twenty-five or thirty years ago, was in 'cold frames.' These were cheap, box-like arrangements put up and covered

over in winter with a glass sash. As the demand increased it was seen that this method of culture was not practical. Dealers in the cities were unable to secure the flowers at times, as the frames would be covered with two or three feet of snow, and it would be impossible for the growers to get at them. American ingenuity took a hand at this point and cellars were constructed adjacent to the beds and this difficulty was obviated. From this evolved the regular violet houses of the present time, properly heated and ventilated and so constructed that they can be reached at all times. Still a great number of violets are grown in frames, and for the beginners it is the best plan to adopt on account of its cheapness as valuable experience can thus be won at slight expense.

"Violets to be successful must be grown entirely from cuttings. Young offshoots taken early in the spring give the most satisfactory results. In some cases the old plants are allowed to remain year after year, but this is unsatisfactory, as each year's crop shows a decrease in the number and the size of the flowers. The best results are obtained by replanting every year. A start should be made every spring with young offshoots—baby plants—planted in small boxes. As soon as they make good roots they should be planted directly to where they are to stand all summer. It is at this time that they should be carefully watched. Dead leaves and runners should be taken off and the plant made to contract, each forming a bushy crown. By the middle of September, if properly treated, these plants should cover the entire ground. By the first of October they begin to blossom. At first the flowers are small, and, consequently, of little or no value, and are thrown away. By the middle of October they are sufficiently large, however, to send to market and immediately bring a good price.

"Violets generally sell for not less than a cent apiece, and when the average of a single plant is fifty flowers a season, and, with good care, a hundred, the profit can be readily seen. In the vicinity of every city violet raising could be made profitable. Any land that will grow potatoes, made rich by the addition of fertilizer, proves excellent breeding ground for violets. In starting a violet house care must be taken to see that there are proper facilities for shipping, although a person from four to six hours from the city can ship to good advantage.

"In the Virginia violet farms, after the young offshoots have been transplanted into open frames, rolling wooden screens are used on the top of the frames to regulate the amount of sunshine which shall be admitted to the plants."