

GARDENING BY MYSELF

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Gardening by myself by Anna Warner

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ANNA WARNER

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BY MYSELF**

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BY
ANNA WARNER.

Nor does he govern only, or direct,
But much performs himself.

THE TASK.

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P R E F A C E.

GARDENING by oneself is so lovely, and so easy a thing, that I would fain have everybody try it. Do not mistake me: you cannot do *everything* without glass and gardeners, and that convenient helper popularly called "The Bank of England." But you can do so much, that you may well be content; and even be able to listen quietly to some one giving an unlimited order for priceless carnations, what though the thought comes to you (as it did to me):

"I had but three, my own seedlings, and a grub eat up one of them."

The thought that there are two left, will be very sweet to you, even then and there Touchwood's label is not the worst that can be put upon a plant:

"A poor thing, sir, but mine own."

But there is no need of raising poor things; and you can hardly imagine, beforehand, how much dearer such friend-flowers are, than any, even the most splendid, mere acquaintances introduced by a professed gardener.

I wish everybody had a garden, and would work in it himself,—the world would

grow sweeter-tempered at once. Why you may deal with one great florist after another, (I know, for I have dealt with a good many) and you will find nothing but courtesy and pleasant words from the beginning to the end. No urging you to take what you do not want, no clipping the measure of what you buy; but on the contrary, your insignificant little orders are rounded out with unexpected treasures. As if the florists could not bear even to think of empty gardens, while theirs were so full; or else had a sort of gentle sympathy for the people who expect to live upon fifty cents' worth of flowers for a whole year.

I think it is Mr. Biglow who solaces himself with "More last words." I know there are many I might say. There are flower names you will look for here, and not find. The fair faces of my *Campanula Lorei*, look at me reproachfully even now, from a distance; with the pink *Eucharidiums*, just unfolding their fresh colour. And there is *Viola Cornuta*, and my superb new *Gen. Jacqueminot* rose. But if I mentioned everything, when should I have done? Not till my book was altogether too big for you to buy.

SHAWNEETAH, June 28, 1872.

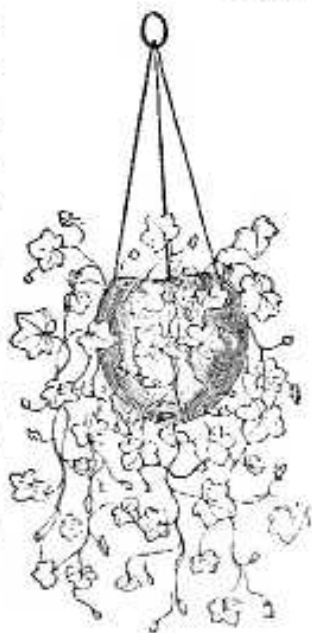
GARDENING BY MYSELF.

JANUARY.

Pines, ef you're blue, are the best friends I know,
They mope an' sigh an' sheet your feelin's so.

—Lowell.

I THINK it is not common to choose this month for a visit to Fairyland. Yet, as you never do thoroughly know people unless you have lived with them, so neither do you well appreciate Fairyland, unless you have dwelt there all the year. All parts of it indeed are not open at all times; and just now an explorer



HANGING-BASKET OF COCOA-NUT SHELL, WITH KENILWORTH IVY.

must be content to tarry for awhile at the

gates, making himself comfortable by the lodge fire. But there are fair views to be had from thence, and good reading is plenty, and abundant materials for consideration and study; and there is work enough to do, if that's all, and if you know how to do it. Oh! but it is pleasant to escape into Fairyland from the every-day cares and labours and dust, and to study the wonders God is preparing, and to think of the underground work in progress, and to use our own glad hands as agents. If they are glad and willing—that is enough; the skill will come. And to help and encourage a wee bit, and to advise just a little, I think I must tell what Fairyland is to me.

I should say, to begin, that I do not mean by this the enchanted regions of professed gardeners,—neither of those people who are blessed with that very useful, troublesome, self-willed appendage to a flower garden. My Fairyland does not spring up under glass, nor out of money, nor with “facilities.” For people having all these

I do not write,—nor for “young florists,” intending to make the business their profession. Mr. Henderson’s book may instruct *them*. *They* must begin all right, and work on by line and rule.

But the people for whom I write begin anywhere,—with the first flower or seed they happen to pick up; and then work on—anyhow! That is, not heedlessly, nor neglectfully, but as they can. Therefore not by line and rule, which is often an impossibility; but in some strange wildwood way making a path through difficulties, and reaching their Fairyland “cross lots.” Well they know what I mean, when I say that if you have not a syringe you must water plants through your fingers! Or if they do not, I can tell them and they’ll work it out.

With some people flowers are a fixed fact, a necessity; and thence follows endless pains-taking, tireless patience, and wonderful success. They are the people for whom “everything grows.”

Do you see that old brown house by the