

"MY OUTDOOR STUDY."

BY MARGARET SPENCER.

Wonderful and fascinating was an article written long ago by Thomas Higginson upon this subject. I wish our girls would read it. I can never forget the joy it gave me, away back in the "war times." Perhaps your gardens, like mine, have suffered and suffered from this long summer's drought. Our best and dearest blossoms have died, but the more sturdy and enduring flowers, like the geraniums, and will die in glorious colors. Our beds are banked with gold and scarlet. The tall stalks, the salmon, are in their "prime." The wide plumes of crimson coccobomb, and the silvery pappas grass divide the summer annuals from the winter ones, and nestle them in the low bed with radiance.

The only real life for our girls is out of doors; I mean all they can possibly get. To some summer has brought rest, vigor and health, by an outing in salt water, or by the purple mountains; to others, work, poverty, and ill health, but in some measure our great summer shine and bibe. Henry Ward Beecher used to say: "Money buys books and houses and food and raiment, but not of doors is the salvation, without money and without price."

"Oh, I am so tired!" sighs Mary in office, store, or sewing room, nursery or hot kitchen. All day, work, work, till the sun goes down behind the city spires. They go on crowded cars, and the busy school-girl spends the best hours of each day in the school room. This is necessary, but this is a midday blessedness of sky, of sun, and cloud, a peep at the trees, if one looks for it, a little walk in the sweet air, and a good drink for the thirsty ones. We exhaust all our mental power; use, till threshold, the nervous force of brain and hand, but one little hour or less of outdoor food will build us up quicker than bottles of tonic!

I know a large room in Washington full of girls from sixteen to twenty years old, perhaps older. They "feel" only places for their books and their out and out, from eight to five! Their long rows of windows looking toward the east and south keeps them alive. I see their eyes, their bright power, use, till threshold, the nervous force of brain and hand, but one little hour or less of outdoor food will build us up quicker than bottles of tonic!

Grammars and histories are important, but not half so necessary to a perfect soul and body as an intimate knowledge of nature. We begin with our babies in their pretty carriages—steading deep in the woods, and the best of shady trees; and let them sleep to the sweet lullabies of the rustling leaves. They learn life out of doors and "Starry Eyes" in the nursery, "sweetest saint in all the calendar," kicking and crying under the door opens, and she goes outside nursery walls! Our girls may have to do without costly saddles and dainty boots, "yellow dog study," and "lovely hats" but an outdoor study is a child's inheritance!

Mrs. Hayes, while in the White House, asked the gardener to make her path through every morning, and send to the family reception room (the red room). She arranged them herself on a large table, and gave them to callers as they said "good-bye." A member of her household told me that she said one day: "You see, dear—I have a great many working girls and women come to see me, who have no flowers, and live in close rooms. I love to walk with them through the conservatory, across the flower garden, and give them a little fragrant bunch of pink or rose. It makes them glad. I grow myself in doing it!"

We have a little man of nine, who leads his college-bred father many a brisk walk through the woods, and tells him the name of trees which his older eyes have never seen! "What makes Susie so pale?" "Oh, she lates to walk, and climb and run. She always reads." Poor child! "Booky folks" are very nice, and smart, and all that, but give me the fresh air child, the springs to the first step in the dew, the summer or winter, to chase butterflies, or throw snowballs at the unseeing father—may be!

The baby cried; the bread burned. Mother was so kind, Mary's head throbbled with the household friction. She did all she could, then slipped into the small yard or garden, or down the street a minute. The "outdoor study" was open. "Its roof and floor" were ever-changing blue and verdure, perhaps only a tree, or a spray of vine tangled over her neighbor's fence. The kind whistlers of these companions, who were out of doors, and their neighbors used to ridicule the man "who wrote whole days under an umbrella." We grow rich, for our possession can never be valued. Fresh every hour, new with every sunrise and sunset.

Dear girls, make your "study" everywhere; make it airy and spacious; clothe the best and brightest, and the quietest spot near you; if you would have beauty and grace, and spirits, and love, you must go up and down among the trees, and under the ferns, or common, or poor. It inspires you with new life, and glorifies most common things. In this study you are never disappointed, but always surprised. Suddenly, out of a wooded corner, peeps up a golden-faced pansy, blown by some summer wind and last November's blasts bid away this year's harvest of bloom! Not all the flowers of riches can make you gladder. How confidential you grow with the "first families"; they bow and smile, and invite you to come again, and you go again and again, and the fragrance of the roses and pink, and the perfume of the waxy plumes, the shabby gown, dotted with blossoms which no human hand could paint or weave.

LATE APPRECIATION.

"I have not upon a stone when I am dead. The promises which our great mothers give to women's graves—a fairly recompense—We may go to the world over in search of knowledge and wisdom and power, and come back to some lowly home to be taught God's great lessons beside this 'homestead' door of bird, or bee, or flower." "A new heaven above and a new earth beneath."

Forget me when I die! The violets above my rest will blossom just as blue, Nor mindless tears; even Nature's self selected.

At the risk of offending my friend Mrs. L., who recently came to me with a tray of sufficient table for a child to mess and be careless. I know there are a few mothers who, refined, sensitive women, who cannot afford the luxury of sufficient table for a child to mess and be careless.

It is fascinating to watch the dexterity with which a skilled florist will make up an artistic design, and to see it grow from a bare wire skeleton to a thing of grace and beauty. We give a few ideas upon the making of these designs which may be useful to our readers: For a table decoration, the foundation is an oblong wire frame some two inches high and about ten by sixteen inches in size. In the center is a circle or the reception of moss which, after being filled with sphagnum, is decorated with leaves.

This moss is found in swamps in many of the States, or can be obtained very cheaply by florists in any large town, as also, the wire frames and other materials for trimming. A very handsome design was once made by an ingenious person with no better material than pasteboard patterns, mosses from the wood, a coil of wire and a dabber of will ferns, flowers and leaves. The first circle of ferns was made by slipping the leaves to a length of about five inches, leaving a bare stem long enough to insert firmly into the foundation. The center of the circle is to be filled with pansies; the oblong outside with roscubins and sweet peas, and a border of ferns and then a border of white lilies interspersed with feathery sprays of maiden hair fern or any other lily-like leaves.

A star filled with white roscubins and a border of carnations is very beautiful, a circular center of the white with the points in red being most effective. A star of flaming gladioli is, also, remarkably attractive. Asparagus tenuissimus is fine for mixing and edging, as, also, the Evergreens, such as arbor-vitae, may be used in the absence of other leaves, but has a stiff look not so desirable as some lighter foliage. Long stemmed flowers are easily inserted in the moss, but flowers which have to be stemmed artificially. Leave

Good bread cannot be made of poor material, but I care not what brand of flour or yeast you use, or by what means you make it, if it becomes so chilled as to arrest the process of fermentation for any great length of time it will not be nice. And as many housekeepers do not have facilities for keeping it at an even temperature during the night I give a recipe that never fails to produce delicious bread—if good flour and yeast are used—and not without anxiety on the part of the cook.

At dinner time or by four o'clock in the afternoon, pare and boil four medium-sized potatoes and mash them through a colander, or a Hamman's masher and pour over them one quart of hot water. Cover closely and stand in a warm place. Soak one cake of "Yeast Foam" in a pint of warm water until soft, then drain and grate sugar and two of them. Beat well and stand in a warm place until bed time. Then stir the yeast into the mixture, and wrap in a warm place for fifteen minutes. Stand it in a warm place and in three hours it will have risen to an active foam and settled down.

In the meantime warm—but not make hot—enough flour to mix the sponge into a smooth, but not very stiff mass. If you are strong enough to knead it, knead it for an hour, and the bread will be whiter and more delicate, than it will with less manipulation—but Mrs. Ewing notwithstanding—this is a hard operation unless one is strong. The kneading is to chop the mass thoroughly with a chopping knife, after it has been mixed sufficiently stiff and smooth. After this knead again into a smooth mass, rub a tablespoonful of yeast—not melted—lard over the top and do not let it get too warm while rising.

Allow the mass to become very light before making it into loaves, and rub lard over the top of each one when setting away to raise. Do not allow the loaves to rise until they become too light, and have the oven at a high degree of heat when you put them in to bake. At the expiration of fifteen minutes lower the temperature, and bake for forty-five minutes to an hour according to the size of the loaves. When done wrap in a damp cloth, and over this a dry one, and place on the side of the loaves.

If the sponge is set at six o'clock in the morning the bread will be baked by noon and be deliciously sweet. Add a piece of butter the size of a hickory nut and a tablespoonful of sugar to a little of the sponge at the last kneading, and form into biscuits. Rub a little butter over the top before standing away to rise. The boundless freedom of this out of doors! Unrest flees away; and you wonder how you lived through the confinement of the working hours! It is greater freedom than one comprehends. The friction of small duties, the caprices of uncertain tempered households, sleep off like a soiled garment. The kind whistlers of these companions are so real, dignified, and silent, and respectful. Mother Nature comes to us from God. She widens all our theories, and narrows them, and shows a little pink and white blossoms grow down in the cabbage patch, a thousand morning-glories spring up and climb over the oldest, most tumble-down barn or fence. The yellow of the soft-petal flower, or the pale blue of the forget-me-not of the woods teach us lessons of decor, fullness love

Catarrh

HUMOROUS. A tramp spends his life going to dinner. The trouble with a crank is that he will only turn one way. It is the uneducated delegate that is ordinarily the most intelligent. The love of the man who marries for money is founded upon the rocks. It's odd that by devoting all her time to brooding a girl can get pale. A new schoolmaster in a church ought to make everything just hum. It is singular how a surgeon retains his spurlarity when he so often cuts his friends. Make friends with your creditors if you can, but never make a creditor of your friend. A great many men are like new ground—do better when they are broken up. What is monopoly? A corporation in which other fellows hold all the stock.

Man—Why don't you follow some trade? Tramp—I did so; but I never caught up with it. Cleverton—That's a beautiful suit you have on. Was it so very expensive? Travers—It cost my tailor about \$40. The Oldest Inhabitant: Tourist—"How long have you been living here, my friend?" Native—"See that big hill over there?" Tourist—"Yes." Native—"Wal, that was yere when I came yere." Soft Head—Do you think your elster would marry me? Boy—I guess so. She told mother she would rather marry anything than be an old maid. "Oh, what a precious little money bank!" exclaimed a visitor at the Jangles as she examined Freddy's birthday gift. "Yes," said Freddy, "and there's precious little money in it, too." Figs—Cloeist left his property so that his widow could not marry again. Diggs—How was that? Figs—He left it all to his son.

Warm was the look in her eyes of brown When I met her down by the sum-mer sea. To-day when I meet the maid in town, Cold is the stare that she gives to me. He—I am resolved to live no longer if you reject me. You—you—are my life. Speak! She—Well, I don't care if you take your life, then. THE PRODIGAL SON.—Sunday-school Teacher—Johnny who was a prodigal son? Johnny—Oh, that was the fellow who went away a dude, and came back a tramp. Pudley—"By Jove! What a tall fellow Jones is." Dudley—"Don't see it, old man. He's always short when I meet him."

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