

GARDENING NOTES

(By MR. J. JOYCE, Landscape Gardener, Christchurch.)

ON DIFFERENT FORMS OF VEGETATION.

The lowest forms of vegetation are the fungi, or toadstool family, mosses, liverworts, lichens, ferns, and seaweed. These are to be seen in a great variety of forms, such as mushrooms, puffballs, dry rot, mildew fermentation, and mould. Mould is about the lowest of the group. Everyone is acquainted with the appearance of mould. It is always a harbinger of decay. It never appears in anything healthy, or fresh, or on anything new. It is usually found in damp, decaying vegetation. It is also found in cheese, on the top of jars of preserve, and in old boots, which have been stored away for some time. It is a mystery as to how vegetation could take place in such unusual places as in the cracks of cheese, or old boots, but to the learned botanist and chemist it is very plain. Instead of propagating in the ordinary way of plants by seed, these increase by means of spores. Every particle of the plant is a mass of spores, which are like fine dust, and very often invisible to the naked eye. Each particle is the embryo of a new plant, and will develop its powers as soon as placed in a favorable situation for its growth. Take, for instance, a toadstool which has grown to maturity. It soon decays and dissolves into dust, which is composed of thousands of atoms. These are borne away by the winds, and deposited in every conceivable position. They are inhaled by animals, dispersed amongst trees and herbs, and, in fact, they find admittance into every exposed situation, where they remain until the opportunity offers for them to develop. It is a well-known fact that fungi will not develop except on decaying matter, and generally in damp situations. When this condition prevails the embryo expands with surprising rapidity. In dry seasons fungi make little headway. For instance, the rust in wheat is a fungus, and its growth is generally in wet seasons; also the blight on the potatoes is not so prevalent in a dry season as in a wet one. Generally speaking, fungus is to be found in all old, decaying matter and out-of-the-way damp corners, which are seldom used. The fungus called mould seems to be the most common. Though this fungus looks very offensive, yet, no doubt, it has its place in the economy of nature, which makes use of all its productions for some beneficent purpose that can not always be seen or understood by the unlearned. Scientists tell us that these fungi are so many scavengers of nature. They absorb all deleterious substances which are to be found in hidden recesses and remote corners. When they have performed their office they usually disappear, and scatter their spores to do duty in some other place. It is understood that the germs of dry rot, mould, fermentation, and other species of fungi are dispersed throughout all organic matter. Everything we eat and drink contains the germs of fungi, and to bring them into visible operation a certain amount of heat and moisture is necessary.

The lichen family is a species of plant, a step higher than the fungi. They are very numerous. Their usual form is a dry scaly crust of a grey or yellow color. They are usually found clinging to old walls and the trunks of old trees, and also on rocks and stones. They accommodate themselves to all kinds of situations, sometimes growing very luxuriantly amongst old roots of trees in the dense bush along running creeks, in grottos, on the many boulders in water courses, and at other times clinging to the tall giants of the forest. They are also found attached to the grey rocks right up in the high altitudes. They are parasites clinging to the object on which they grow, and getting nourishment from the atmosphere. They require only pure air, a little moisture, and a fair amount of sunlight. The mosses, which come next, are a stage higher than the lichen. They require a certain amount

of soil, heat, air, and moisture to perfect their growth. They are always of a bright green color. They have roots, stems, and branches. They are, it might be said, the first introduction to the higher form of plant life. Mosses propagate themselves by means of seed, which might be seen at stated times like a little forest, with round heads, growing above the surface of the moss. These are the seed stems, and the little heads at the top are the seed pods, which, when ripe, are liable to be blown about by the wind.

We now come to the different classes of ferns, which also inhabit the cool shade of the forest. They usually grow by the sides of a running stream, and under the overhanging stumps of old trees. Ferns are a very interesting class of plants; they consist of a great variety, from small little species creeping among rocks and crevices, to the stately tree-fern, with its large outspreading fronds, like a giant umbrella. One thing peculiar about ferns is that they never produce any branches; their leaves or fronds act the purpose of both. They have no flowers; whilst their seeds or spores are produced always underneath the foliage. These spores are of a brown color, and resemble ground coffee. They require a nice, cool, shady, damp position to germinate in, and to be successful with the culture of ferns they must be treated somewhat after the same manner. They require a little shade, a certain amount of moisture, and shelter from draughts and cold winds. After the ferns we come to the higher class of plants, which bear flowers, and ripen seed to perpetuate their species. This class of plants comprises all the different shrubs and trees which we cultivate for both ornament and use, such as are to be found in pleasure gardens, plantations, and forests.

WEDDING BELLS

CARTWRIGHT—McMULLIN.

A very pretty and interesting wedding took place at St. Patrick's Basilica, Oamaru, on March 1, when Mr. George Alfred Cartwright, second son of Mr. and Mrs. James Cartwright, 'Leongatha,' Oamaru, was united in the bonds of Matrimony to Miss Mary McMullin, only daughter of Mr. A. McMullin, of Awamoa, Oamaru, the ceremony being performed by the Rev. Father O'Connell, who also celebrated the Nuptial Mass. The bride, who was given away by her father, looked charming in a beautiful dress of ivory crepe-de-chine, with drapings of silk shadow lace and fish train. She wore the usual wreath and veil, and carried an ivory-bound prayer book, the gift of the bridegroom. The bride was attended by Miss Eileen Cartwright, who was prettily attired in a dress of shell pink crepe-de-chine, with a mob cap, and carried a bouquet of maiden-hair fern and pink sweet peas. The duties of best man were carried out by Mr. J. Roxburgh. The bridegroom's present to the bride was a beautiful diamond and sapphire bangle, and to the bridesmaid a moonstone necklet. The bride's present to the bridegroom was a travelling rug, and to the best man a set of silver-mounted military hair brushes. After the ceremony the guests adjourned to the residence of Mrs. T. Cartwright, Ure street, where the wedding breakfast was laid, and presided over by the Rev. Father O'Connell, who, in a very appropriate speech, proposed the toast of the newly-married couple. Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright were the recipients of many useful and costly presents which bore testimony to the high esteem in which they were held. They left for the North Island, where the honeymoon was spent.

PILES

Can be instantly relieved and quickly cured by the use of BAXTER'S PILE OINTMENT. This excellent remedy has been a boon to hundreds of sufferers all over New Zealand. Sent post free on receipt of 2/6 in stamps, or postal notes, by—

WALTER BAXTER : CHEMIST, TIMARU.

Place your next order for PICTURES, PICTURE FRAMES, and ARTISTS' MATERIALS with—

McCORMICK & PUGH, 681 Colombo Street, CHRISTCHURCH

INTSELLERS, ETC. (Tel. 973). Factory, TUAM ST. (T. C. PUGH, PROPRIETOR) ART DEALERS, PR