

GARDENING NOTES

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

WORK FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL.

The Kitchen Garden.—Every advantage should be taken of the present weather and soil conditions to keep the growth of weeds in check; this is work that cannot well be done when the soil is wet and cloggy, as it will become with the approach of the rainy season. Dig manure into all vacant plots as opportunity offers, to enable the soil to fully benefit when the winter rains set in. Collect all garden refuse, dead leaves, etc., for the manure heap. Keep planting, if required, vegetables of the cabbage variety—kale, savoy, etc.—to supply the needs later on when garden products are scanty. As the cabbage fly is a great pest to this class of vegetable, syringing with a decoction of quassia chips will be found to be a good preventative. This is prepared by soaking overnight a handful of the chips in a gallon of water, and using next morning. If a considerable quantity is needed, the chips may be boiled with soft soap; 1lb of chips is sufficient for 10 gallons of water. Quassia chips are supplied by seedsmen.

The Flower Garden.—Now is a good time to put in cuttings of most bedding plants. Geraniums will strike freely if placed in sandy soil with a layer of sand on top, planted in a sunny situation, and given a sprinkling of water for a start. Verbenas require sandy soil; plant the young wood and keep shaded from the sun. Heliotrope needs much the same treatment, and they must be protected from the sun. They should be planted in a greenhouse or frame and shaded; a sheet of newspaper answers the latter purpose. With regard to fuschias, the young wood which has not flowered is the best to plant, following the same treatment as applied to the above-mentioned plants. All show and fancy pelargoniums should be cut back, and after a while repotted fairly firm, pressing the soil from around the sides of the pot. Plant all sorts of bulbs, and sow sweet peas to bloom early the next season. Lilies, especially the large white lily, which require to be lifted must be immediately replanted. Chrysanthemums in pots require constant attention; liquid manure should be applied once a week to fertilise the exhausted soil. When showing flower, some of the buds should be thinned off to give the remaining ones a chance to expand. If attacked by mildew, dust with sulphur. Geraniums which need lifting out of the garden must be cut back, repotted, or stored in boxes for the winter.

The Fruit Garden.—Picking and storing fruit will just now be the main occupation in the fruit garden. All fruit intended for keeping requires to be carefully hand-picked. When ripe, it will come off the branch easily, and the stem should come off attached to the fruit. Late fruit may, with advantage, be allowed to remain on the trees as long as possible. Store fruit in a cool, airy room, and carefully inspect to prevent any that may be decaying from damaging the stock.

COLLECT OLD STAMPS.

The Rev. Charles Schoonjans, S.J., Collège Saint-Servais, Liège (Belgium), writes to us expressing thanks to all co-operators in the matter of collecting old postage stamps. He desires to call attention to foreign postage rates. In response to his appeal he has received quite a number of old stamps. The money derived from the sale of these goes directly or indirectly to good works—orphans, asylums, or to the missionaries in foreign countries.

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SONIA—THE WOMAN.

(By CUCHULAIN.)

Two books of the hour are *Sonia* and *Sonia Married*, both works of the able novelist Stephen Mackenna. *Sonia* portrays the artificial upbringing of the girl; *Sonia Married* tells the result. From a man's point of view, the books are first-rate modern novels; from a woman's point of view they are intensely disappointing. Why is this so? Men are interested in the politics, women in the narrative of the books. Women feel that it is unfair for any novelist—especially one of ability—to hold up to the public gaze such a type of womanhood as *Sonia* represents. Perhaps it is hardly correct to say she is a type. Is she not rather a unique specimen? Most certainly there exists in New Zealand no such class of girl as *Sonia*. Of course, it must be admitted that there is a vast difference between the colonial and the Home girl. What we have seen in the form of recent imports makes us inclined to agree with Pope concerning the women of his land:—

"Nothing so true as what you once let fall—
Most women have no character at all—
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair."

The Home girl is polite—and designing; the colonial girl is blunt—and honest. Girls of the *Sonia* type—intended, we can but suppose, to be the author's representation of the English society girl—seem to be strangely lacking in that invaluable asset, common sense. Not so the colonial girl. You will find that every girl in New Zealand has underneath the crepe de Chine frills a stratum of good, practical common sense. No doubt this is a gift bequeathed to her by her pioneer parents or grandparents.

To return to *Sonia*. It is to be hoped that neither of Stephen Mackenna's books becomes a classic, for would it not be grossly unfair were *Sonia* to be handed down to future generations as the woman of the great war period, the days, the years when so many hundreds of women did work almost as brave and noble as that of the poor suffering soldier in the trenches? *Sonia* is a true daughter of Eve: most women, let us hope, are daughters of Mary. Therefore, like her notorious great-grandmother, *Sonia* is the cause of endless masculine consternation. *Qui se ressemble s'assemble*. Curiously enough *Sonia* herself knows and says that all women detest her. But the men! They fall over one another in their eagerness to attend her. Even one of the few men who dislike her, in order to soothe her, philanthropically kisses her. She is very pretty.

Qui se ressemble s'assemble. The author brings most of his men to the level of this foolish, capricious, fickle, cruel girl. True, she does war-work when all else fails her, but why? Simply to please herself. Were Stephen Mackenna to write a third volume, he would either have to describe O'Rane's utter estrangement from his shallow wife, or else put a halo round his head. O'Rane has the soul of a giant poet; *Sonia*, that of a tinselled doll. It is a most pitiful thing to see a good man tolerating his wife, and in such an uneven marriage as that of David and *Sonia* nothing but toleration could keep the scales steady. There are, it would seem, three kinds of love: first, sensual love; secondly, love of the soul; lastly, for the much-favored few, complete love, love of body and soul. How could a grand soul like David O'Rane's be satisfied with the poor, miserable soul of his wife, *Sonia*?

N.Z. CATHOLIC FEDERATION.

A meeting of the Dominion Executive of the Catholic Federation was held at the Federation Chambers, Wellington, on Saturday, March 20, the Very Rev. Father O'Connell, S.M., presiding. His Grace Archbishop O'Shea was present, also the following members: Major Halpin (Wellington), Mr. F. J. Doolan (Christchurch), Mr. W. F. Johnson (Dunedin), and Mr. P. D. Hoskins (treasurer).

It was resolved to hold the annual meeting of the Dominion Council at Auckland on Wednesday, August 25. His Grace the Archbishop announced that he had appointed the Very Rev. Dean McKenna to be his representative upon the executive.

The dissemination of Catholic literature came up for discussion, and it was decided to circularise all diocesan councils regarding this matter, asking that parish committees be requested to co-operate with the St. Vincent de Paul societies.

Several applications for the office of general secretary were received, and after consideration Mr. J. A. Carmine, formerly of Westport, was appointed to the position.

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