

RANDOM NOTES.

The Easter lily is a state of aesthetic exaltation. The great fete of the year in which from time immemorial it has been given the first rank and highest favor, is close at hand. Slender and beautiful always it is now in its rarest perfection, in fairest bloom, for the Easter season.

Each year Easter in New York partakes more and more of the character of old country religious fete days. The churches are giving an increasing amount of consideration to the exercises in commemoration of the Resurrection. The ceremonial is becoming more elaborate and pictorial. Music lends its highest art to the observance and fashion pays obsequious tribute. In no way does the interest in Easter find greater and more appropriate expression than in the floral offerings, and this year the assembling of the flowers in the train of the incomparable lily will be more than ordinarily profuse and beautiful.

Taste in flowers for Easter does not vary greatly. Tradition has established certain standards that are generally adhered to. The object always is to produce rich effects without the appearance of ostentation. Cut flowers, which permit of the widest range of color and brilliancy and which have their greatest vogue in the Christmas season, are now relegated to second place, and growing plants, with their luxurious foliage and pervading fragrance are brought into extended use.

The azalia is steadily growing in popularity as an Easter flower, and this year it will be seen in wonderful variety. Every greenhouse has its favorite azalia, another flower shows the result of careful propagation. Probably the most expensive flowers that will be seen on Easter will be some rare varieties of the lovely azalias. This flower may be obtained in pots for a few dollars each, but the ruling price among the Broadway florists will be from \$10 to \$15 for perfect plants. One very rare variety of which only a few specimens are to be seen in the city, cannot be purchased for less than \$50. It is a grafted plant, showing successive growths red, white and pink blossoms.

Some very beautiful roses are seen. The Baroness Rothschild and the Mable Morrison are now in full bloom, and will be freely used in Easter offerings. Some of the dealers are showing the Christie, a fine rose, a little lighter in shade than the Baroness. Most roses are coming on, but are not very plenty. Roses may be obtained for \$2, and the fine ones can be had for from \$4 up. Perfect American Beauties will bring \$1 each. The Jack roses are particularly fine.

Violets are plentiful, and a few dealers will make a specialty of growing violets in a pot, a hundred or more plants to the pot, tied with violet ribbon. But violets do not look their best this way, the flowers generally being obscured by their leaves, and it is not probable that potted violets will be extensively used.

For some years Scotch heather has been used for Easter, and it will be, if anything, a little more prominent this season. It will be decorated with Scotch ribbon.

A novelty is the Bouganvillea, a vine grown on a trellis, with three-cornered flowers in lilac and American Beauty shades. It will be used in small pots.

Acacias are expensive, but will be used to some extent. Lilacs will be seen in great profusion. Carnations are plenty just now, but are not used a great deal as an Easter flower.

"There is scarcely anything new in flowers for Easter," said a prominent Broadway dealer, "but there will be many novelties in treatment. Pots will be tied with ribbon, and even the flowers and plants themselves will be tied with ribbon. A great many lilies will have a big green bow on the stem."

The fact that Easter comes late this year makes flowers plenty and prices

moderate. On this account it is believed that the use of flowers will be rather more extensive than usual, particularly the cheaper varieties. The principal dealers have ordered the usual quantity of the best grade flowers and an increased amount of the cheaper stock.

New York is one of the greatest consumers of flowers in the world. In New Jersey and Long Island and other nearby points in New York state there are more than two hundred establishments that maintain more or less extensive greenhouses and make daily shipments of plants and flowers to this city. These greenhouses employ from 1,200 to 1,500 men all the year round. In addition to these large growers there are innumerable farmers and others who supply the New York market with flowers. In the city there are about 250 retail dealers, with twelve or fifteen big establishments.

The Easter sales of the twelve or fifteen big concerns will probably average \$12,000 each, and the others will run close to \$1,000. It is easy enough to figure up over \$350,000 that will be spent in this city for Easter flowers.

Church decorations will be much the same as heretofore, one of the notable displays being that which will be made in Grace church.

A considerable amount of flowers available for the Easter season has been ordered for the week following Easter Sunday and will be used at weddings, of which many are in prospect.

It's coming, yes, it's here—the "sporty girl." She must be some phase of the new woman as yet unclassified, and her sphere is not exactly known. She is just now trying it on in sporting columns of the daily papers in such notices as these: "The Adelphi basket ball team was today defeated by the Savage Institute team." The notice goes on to give the technical plays and refers to the girls' "points" with professional coolness. Then there is talk of some actresses forming a base ball team for this summer. This prompts an irresistible desire to remark what a great slide Lillian Russel would make for first base. She would certainly cut a wide swath—in the ground. Secondly, if the young women are going into athletics, it seems a more suitable place for the record of their games could be found than in the same columns with a finish "go" between "Dog" Italy and "Piggy English."

W. MORTON SMITH.
New York, April 16, 1897.

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