

appeared, we have had, as our readers will perchance remember, a spell of unseasonably cold weather, when the potato and other crops suffered considerable damage from frost. This put a check also on the appearance of the wild flowers, and during May there was nothing remarkable to record in their calendar, though in March and April, one frequently came across some flower described in the books as being in bloom in May, June, or even July.

At last, however, the summer is really here, and among the profusion of lovely flowers, whose colours charm the eye, and whose fragrance fills the air, it is difficult to decide which first to notice. To us, it seems that some of the most beautiful and most fragrant flowers are, fortunately, among those which have a long-continued season of blossoming. The first wild rose appeared before the end of May, and the last is probably as far, or farther off. The delicious scent of the honeysuckle, which pervades the air of country lanes, especially after sundown, mingles with that of the rose, and continues much later, till August or September. Many persons who have noticed how much stronger is the scent of the honeysuckle, and other pale-coloured flowers, at night, are perhaps unaware that this peculiarity is connected with their fertilisation by moths, which are on the wing only in the twilight and hours of darkness. The pale colour of the honeysuckle and the white campion make them stand out from the foliage in the dusk, and thus appeal is made to the sense of sight in the insect, as well as to the sense of smell. The Meadow-sweet or Queen of the Meadow, is another favourite and sweet-smelling flower, which blooms for two or three months. Many country people have a feeling (or is it only a saying thoughtlessly repeated?) connected with this flower, which it is not easy to understand; they regard it with some melancholy as a warning that summer is almost ended. Yet the Meadow Sweet is already to be found adorning the river bank and other damp places, and the only possible explanation of the melancholy with which it is regarded, seems to be that it may escape notice for the first few weeks of its existence owing to the infinite variety with which it is surrounded, but later on it claims attention as one of a few survivors in the once luxuriant hedgerow.

Notes on Art.

THE STREETS AS PICTURE GALLERIES.

"*Nous tenons à la disposition des amateurs un certain nombre d'affiches de Chéret,*" is the announcement made by an enterprising firm of caterers for the public amusement in Paris who proceed to offer for ten francs, as being "very rare," the poster representing Mme. Yvette Guilbert as she appears at the *Concert des Ambassadeurs*. As a matter of fact, the bill-sticker is now often entrusted with works of great artistic merit, and the above advertisement appeared to afford a text for some useful reflections.

The art of mural advertisement is very old, and evidences of its use are to be found in Pompeii where rival agents seem to have had little regard for the rights of priority of display, for they have as ruthlessly plastered over each other's notices as modern bill-

stickers do. Leaving aside, however, the antiquarian part of the question, let us see what services may be rendered to Art by the "poster." There can be no doubt, as Mr. Morris has pointed out, that "the lack of beauty in modern life (of decoration in the best sense of the word) which in the earlier part of the century was unnoticed, is now recognized by a part of the public as an evil to be remedied if possible." This being the case, conscientious efforts have not been wanting to really serve Art by placing true pictures on our hoardings. Some of us can remember the earliest attempts in this direction: they began probably with the issue of a huge bill designed by no less an artist than the late Fred Walker, A.R.A., which represented that interesting person the "Woman in White," whose story was traced by Wilkie Collins. This was followed by some of the quaintly droll placards designed by H. S. Marks for the well-known firm of soap manufacturers; the artist drawing for us with all his strength and humour, monks at their toilette, with their faces lathered with soap. Admirable works they are, but undertaking them must have required no ordinary courage, for excellent as the result was, the artist did not escape ridicule, some ungrateful person (we fear it was Mr. Punch) calling him "Trade Marks, R.A." In this connection, a coloured design devoted to the advocacy of certain kinds of soap, will at once be remembered; we refer to the little boy blowing soap-bubbles, which is an admirable reproduction of the picture by Sir John Millais. Few know what it costs to produce by chromo-lithography such a work or how many "stones" it has to pass under before success is attained, and the coloured print is finished. What a great thing it would be, if all the blank walls and hoardings were "hung" with works, the merit of which is equal to this; but among so much that is deplorable, there are a few that are really clever and interesting. For instance, the Peter Graham-like landscape with soft mountains and cattle in the foreground, which, if we remember rightly, sets forth the merits of one variety of condensed milk. Some of the Constantinople placards, though crude in drawing, are marvels of colour printing. Again, the placard by which the play called the "Gaiety Girl" is advertised, in brilliant scarlet, is very clever, though it reminds us of the strikingly drawn but rather frisky young ladies with which M. Cheret covers the walls of Paris. He is reported to have said that the designer of illustrated advertisements needs to be a psychologist, and, in addition to well-trained artistic sense, should have a thorough knowledge of the logical and optical laws that govern his craft. His aim should be to arrest the attention. But in this country a new designer has appeared. The outline of the stout lady half hidden by a curtain, which forms the *affiche* of the Avenue Theatre, has prepared us for the school of Mr. Beardsley, the full force of whose work must be studied in the pages of *The Studio*. It may, perhaps, be best described as a glorification of the hideous, and in its latest form may be seen on the walls of many of the stations of the underground railway. We refer to the representation of a young lady in red apparently on her way to a book-stall to procure a copy of one of the series of the Pseudonym or Autonym Libraries, for the advertisement is designed to direct attention to the wares of the firm of T. Fisher Unwin, who incurs some responsibility, as the poster shows the most flagrant disregard of beauty or even graceful drawing

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