fruit is objectionable to pickers it has been restricted. Strawberries are set out each spring, and the crop, except that used by the family, is sold. After the last picking the bed is turned under and sown to turnips. A half-acre asparagus bed has proved easy to care for and immensely profitable. A money-making early spring crop is rhubarb, this patch having been built up from two dozen to 250 plants.

The horse, of course, is indispensable to the farm, being used both for cultivating and marketing the crops, besides the innumerable other tasks assigned him. A cow is not a necessity, but the one on this farm not only supplies the family with butter, cream, milk and cottage cheese, but several of the neighbors as well. Two or three pigs are also raised each year, which supply the family smoked meats and lard.

A part of the plan adopted by the Muellers after their first disastrous season was to make the setting out of fruit, improvements, and paying off the indebtedness keep pace with each other, thus resulting in the place being entirely set out to fruit, fully improved and paid for at the same time. This made the work of improvement practically a one-man task, although help has been called occasionally for the extra heavy jobs.

From a place practically without improvements it now has an ice-house, an artesian well; the cellar has been enlarged for the caring of root crops; the yard has been piped for lawn-sprinkling purposes; a gasoline engine and pumping outfit do the sprinkling and furnish power for washing machine, grinder, etc.; concrete sidewalks, steps and approaches have been made and a cement cistern, with filtering wall and cement slab, besides many other minor improvements.

“The credit belongs to Mrs. Mueller and my three daughters,” insists Mr. Mueller. “Without their help the proposition would be impossible, as so much help would have to be called in that the profits would be considerably reduced. In the spring they have the sprayer ready when I return from my print-shop duties, in fruit-picking time the girls pick the berries and crate them, after which I load them for market, my wife marketing them next day, leaving home between four and four-thirty and returning at seven. Small fruits command good prices and the demand is great, buyers often making an offer for the entire load some distance from the market.”

Unless the fruit ripens too fast the plan on this farm is to pick every other day, the alternate days being employed in weeding the vegetable patches. The main plowing job is hired done in the spring, the dragging, planting and cultivating being done by the one-man plan. By keeping the cultivator going the weed problem is in a great measure solved, thus doing away with two of the most trying tasks—weeding and hoeing.

Poultry and beekeeping are taken up on only a small scale at this farm; not because they are not profitable, but because, as the owner says, “It is possible to have too many irons in the fire.”

The farm’s success is a good lesson in system—system for the whole family. Aside from the first season, the place has paid a profit each year and will soon reward its owners exactly as their system was planned—it will be paid for, set out to fruit and fully improved. And then—but not until then—Father Time can fill Geo. Mueller’s place at the print shop.

IN THE WILD GARDENS OF CALIFORNIA: BY MRS. A. S. HARDY

“A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Perned grot,—
The sweetest school of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not.—
Not God in gardens! When the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign,
’Tis very sure God walks in mine.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN.

CALIFORNIA is literally a land of bells. Mission chimes still ring from some of her crumbling arches, but every spring all along the paths trod by the faithful padres, Nature renews her arches and hangs new bells. In California it is always spring somewhere, and after the rains have done with their gospeling and the flower choirs on low meadows and plains have sung their “Gloria,” we may follow them to arroyos and canions and up mountain stairs to where California keeps her heart of youth.

California’s wild gardens are unlike gardens anywhere else on earth. Cut off from the rest of the world by mountain walls and a stretch of sea, this land has been a favored place for Nature’s miracle
working. She has moved her floral colonies here and there suiting their grace of line and color to backgrounds of mountains and of sea. The great glittering Sierras, standing with their feet among flowers, upbear gardens of great beauty upon their sun-warmed granite ledges in the very zone of snow.

The broken ranges of the Coast Mountains are walls around shy "cloister-loving flowers," and rocky fortresses on steep ravines protect tribes of delicate wildings. As we take the pains to follow into canions and hidden gardens, more lavish grows sweet Nature and billows her blossoms about our waists, and of no flowers is she more prodigal than of lilies. These are of every size and shape and color. Some grow singly, others in chimes of as many as fifty bells, some are hidden under leaves, while others swing on tall green steeples. Not lilies alone, but so many other flowers have chosen the pattern of bells that one is led to wonder if from the beginning California was not set apart to be a land of bells.

None of all the lilies is fairer than the ruby queen, or chaparral lily. We find it among the high rocks of the Coast Range, and her throne is canopied by live oaks and redwoods of a thousand years. These lilies bloom pure white, their petals studded with gems of amethyst; then Nature waves her wand again and the blossoms change to pink and afterward to a kind of ruby purple.

Their fragrance is said to surpass that of every other lily in the world, and often by the perfume their hiding places are revealed and by the leash of fragrance many a mountain climber has been led up almost inaccessible ledges to pay his homage to this queen.

A royal sister is the hunted Shasta lily, for centuries unnumbered, sought after for the bulb, coveted food of Indians, bears and smaller wood folk. Only among the boulders and in the thickest of thorny tangles does this lily find safety.

There is a legend telling how this snowy lily came to dwell upon the earth. Once, 'tis said, a maiden whose heart was as white as the snows of Shasta, was discovered alone in the forest by a chieftain coarse and cruel. He seized her, resolved to carry her to his lodge. He bore her through the pines, but when his lodge was reached her guardian spirit tore her from his arms, and the earth thrilled.
at the touch of her feet, sent up lilies as white as the soul of the maiden and with a fragrance as sweet as her breath. These lilies are not confined to Mount Shasta alone, but blossom in the Yosemite as purely white and with as sweet fragrance as upon the mount of snow where the maiden’s feet are said to have thrilled the sentient earth.

Think of our wealth when we may have the beautiful mariposas by the armful. Calochortus is the name science bestows upon these lilies, which are as royal as the taller queens at whose feet they are content to dwell; but calochortus means a “garden of beautiful grasses,” and since their grasslike leaves wither before the flowers open, the name seems less fitting than the one which the old Spaniards gave—namely the lily from their hearts. They saw the flower with its “petal wings of broidered gossamer” attilt on its thread of a stem, and delighted, they cried, mariposa!—the butterfly!

Wheresoe’er we wander, still we see these lily tulips in our dreams, white and lavender, and pink and purple, dashed with claret and yellow, their petals occluded like the “eye” of a peacock’s plume, or marked and shaded as if Nature had used a butterfly’s wing for her pattern.

In an old Eastern garden, hung thick with memories, a clump of tiger lilies gleams. I see the fire-gold of their dappled chalices three thousand miles away and through the haze of forty years. But here in California one might deem the souls of all the tiger lilies that ever lived and died have bloomed again in this paradise of flowers. Whole canons are ablaze with their glory, and as the wind sways their emerald stalks, gracefully they bend and bow. Are they camps of Indian beauties? Or are they lilies of memory saluting us down the years?

Lovers of the wild gardens of California will never forget the little fritillaria of many colors, and especially those bronzy brown bells which the people call “mission bells,” and never the bells of old San Gabriel called better than they to prayer and praise.

As spring slips into summer the wild gardens of California are lit with “fairy lanterns” without number. Calochortus albus, science calls these lily globes of pearly satin sheen, each lantern filled with multitudinous rays of finest gossamer.

This lily John Muir calls “the very loveliest of all the lily family, a spotless soul, a plant saint that everyone must love—and so be made better.” And as if this were not praise enough, he adds, “With this plant the whole world would be rich though no other existed.”

Go to these mountains and meadows whenever we will, God is always there, looking over His gardens. He plants and tends the shy little blossoms as carefully as He does the tall ceanothus bushes.