# CHAPTER XI

## I. WOMAN DECORATIVE IN HER GARDEN

IN your garden, if you would count as decoration, keep to white or one colour; the flowers furnish a variegated background against which your costume of colour, grey or white stands out. The great point is that your outline be one with pictorial value, from the artist's point of view. If merely strolling through your garden to admire it, keeping to the well-made paths, a fragile gown of sheer material and dainty shoes, with perishable hat or fragile sunshade, is in order. But if yours is the task to gather flowers, then wear stout linen or pretty, bright ginghams, good to the eye and easily laundered, while resisting the briars and branches.

Smocks, those loose over-all garments of soft-toned linens, reaching from neck half-way to the knees and unbelted, are ideal for garden work, and to the young and slender, add a dis-

tinct charm, for one catches the movement of the lithe form beneath.

You can be decorative in your garden in a large enveloping apron of gingham, if you are wise in choosing a colour which becomes you. One lover of flowers, who has an instinct for fitness and colour, may be seen on a Summer morning, trimming her porch-boxes in snowy white,—shoes and all,—over which she wears a big, encircling apron, extending from neck to skirt hem; deep pockets cross the entire front, convenient for clippers, scissors and twine. This apron is low-necked with shoulder straps and no sleeves. The woman in question is tall and fair, and on her soft curling hair she wears sun hats of peanut straw, the edges sewn over and over with wool to match her gingham apron, which is a solid pink, pale green or lavender.

Dark women look uncommonly well in khaki colour, and so do some blonds. Here is a shade decorative against vegetation and serviceable above all.

Garden costumes for actual work vary according to individual taste and the amount and character of the gardening indulged in.

Lady de Bathe (Mrs. Langtry) owns one of the most charming gardens in England, though not as famous as some. It is attached to Regal Lodge, her place at Newmarket. The Blue Walk is something to remember, with its walls of blue lavender flanking the blue paving stones, between the cracks of which lovely bluebells and larkspur spring up in irrelevant, poetic license.

Lady de Bathe digs and climbs and clips and gathers, therefore she wears easily laundered garments; a white linen or cotton skirt and blouse, a Chinese coat to the knees, of pink cotton crêpe and an Isle-of-Jersey sun-bonnet, a poke with curtain, to protect the neck and strings to tie it on. So while she claims never to have consciously considered being a decorative note in her own garden, her trained instinct for costuming herself appropriately and becomingly brings about the desirable decorative effect.

## II. WOMAN DECORATIVE ON THE LAWN

When on your lawn with the unbroken sweep of green under foot and the background of