

WEEKLY CALENDAR.

JUNE 18—24, 1861.			WEATHER NEAR LONDON IN 1860.									
Day of Month	Day of Week		Barometer.	Thermom.	Wind.	Rain in Inches.	Sun Rises.	Sun Sets.	Moon Rises and Sets.	Moon's Age.	Clock before Sun.	Day of Year.
				deg. F.			m. h.	m. h.	m. h.		m. s.	
15	Tu	Gladioli.	29.788—29.745	71—89	N.W.	—	44 43	17 47	39 0	30	0 45	169
19	W	Lilies.	29.760—29.577	65—51	E.	.94	44 3	18 8	47 0	11	0 20	170
20	Tu	QUEEN VICTORIA ACCESSION.	29.627—29.663	66—47	S.W.	.12	44 3	18 8	20 1	12	1 12	171
21	F	QUEEN VICTORIA PROCLAIMED.	29.830—29.650	71—48	S.W.	.19	45 3	18 8	7 2	13	1 25	172
22	S	Sun's declin. 23° 27' N.	29.961—29.906	69—50	S.W.	.64	45 3	19 8	2 0	14	1 79	173
23	Su	Sunday after Trinity.	29.928—29.874	71—49	S.W.	.08	45 3	19 8	16 3	9	1 51	174
24	M	MIDSUMMER DAY. NAT. D. B.P.	29.947—29.876	73—50	W.	.11	45 3	19 8	15 9	15	2 4	175

METEOROLOGY OF THE WEEK.—At Chiswick, from observations during the last thirty-four years, the average highest and lowest temperatures of these days are 72.5° and 49.3° respectively. The greatest heat, 93°, occurred on the 22nd in 1846; and the lowest cold, 30°, on the 20th in 1855. During the period 130 days were fine, and on 168 rain fell.

CAUSE OF THE VARIATION OF FLOWERS.



OF Deal, states, and, apparently, he is corroborated by Mr. Lightbody, that when Auriculas throw up side blooms these keep pretty true to their character; but that when they throw up a heart bloom—that is, from the axis of the plant, the flower, "no matter what may be the colour of its edging," is just as likely to come in "any other class as in the one it belongs to." This seems to be an extremely curious observation. It shows that some little light could be thrown on the laws of variation. If many acute observers who read THE JOURNAL OF HORTICULTURE would contribute their knowledge on such points, I wish "D." would have the kindness to give a few more details, such as out of so many heart blooms so many lost their character, and so many kept true; giving also the proportion in the side blooms which kept true.

As I am appealed to, I will make a few observations on this subject; but I have no doubt others could throw more light on the question. Professor Moquin-Tandon asserts, that with irregular flowers, as Snapdragons, the terminal flower in the axis of the plant is more apt to become regular, or peloric as botanists say, than the other flowers. I once found a Laburnum tree with the terminal flower on each raceme nearly regular, having lost its pinnelobed structure. With many Pelargoniums (I have one at present in my greenhouse, but I know not its name), the central flower in each truss every year comes regular, loses the two dark patches of colour on the two upper petals, and, what is very curious, loses the nectary, which may be seen in all the other flowers cohering to the flower-stalk: In the common Carrot the central floret in the umbel is dark purple and very different from the others; and I find that this central little flower is extremely variable. Are there not other cases of species which habitually have the central flower different from the others? It must, however, be confessed, that Mr. Masters, a high authority on such subjects, disputes that peloric flowers are apt to be central; but it seems to me extremely improbable that the several recorded cases should be due to chance, and all these facts seem to hang together and to indicate that in the flower nearest the axis there is a tendency to differ from the others, or to be variable, or to revert to a hypothetical regular form—that is, as I should look at it, to revert to the structure of a remote ancestor. The curious case of the Auricula apparently falls into this same group of facts.

I hope that some of your correspondents will state whether in the case of single buds sporting, as has so often occurred with Pelargoniums, it has been observed that such sports occur more frequently on one part of the plant than on another. I suppose it is not so, or it would have been noted. Having alluded to the central flower

in certain Pelargoniums which have lost the two dark patches of colour and the nectary, I would venture to ask some skilful observer to try whether this flower could be made by artificial fertilisation and by pulling off some of the adjoining flowers to yield seed. The stigma should be fertilised with pollen from, if possible, a peloric flower on another plant; and access of other pollen should, of course, be prevented. Peloric flowers have generally been found quite sterile; but Willdenow got seeds from a peloric Snapdragon, and the peculiarity was inherited; hence it is possible, though not probable, that a new strain of quite symmetrically-flowered Pelargoniums might be thus raised. Experiments are tedious and very often fail; but it would be well worth while for any man endowed with plenty of patience to collect seed from the central floret and from the other florets on the same truss of any ordinary Pelargonium, and sow them separately and see which varied most. Of course, all the flowers should be fertilised by the same pollen and subsequently protected from insects.

The same law which causes the heart bloom on an individual Auricula not to keep so true as a side bloom, might cause the seedlings of the central flower of a Pelargonium or other plant to vary more than the seedlings from the other and exterior flowers. This would be a secret worth discovering and revealing.—CHARLES DARWIN, *Doss, Bromley, Kent*

ARRANGING FLOWERS IN BOUQUETS AND CASES.

(Continued from page 195.)

Mounting and Mending.

ANOTHER useful though mechanical operation is that of mounting and mending flowers. Every one knows how often a beautiful flower-head falls from its stem, and how often we are forced to refrain from gathering one bright blossom, because on the same stalk are others not yet out which we cannot sacrifice.

The mounting prevents this difficulty, for a flower with less than half an inch of footstalk does quite as well for a bouquet as any other could do, taking it in its freshest state, either newly gathered or preserved in a dark cupboard (the cupboard must, however, be perfectly fresh and airy), and then pressing the smallest piece of well-soaked cotton wool around its stem. A little piece of wire wound upon it keeps the wool closely fastened on, and at the same time fixes the flower in its proper place. The cotton requires soaking and pressing together in the water for some time to become thoroughly saturated, unless a morsel for each flower is moistened separately. A fresh green Myrtle leaf does very nicely for rolling over the little piece of wool.

Many persons, including most of the French florists, have the habit of binding their flowers on little pieces of stick—common square bits of deal, for instance; and these are well adapted to the purpose, being so perfectly hard and light.