GARDENING NOTES

(By MR. J. JOYCE, Landscape Gardener, Christchurch.)

VARIEGATED PLANTS.

Nature's laws have decreed that trees and plants of every description should be clothed with a garment of green. As we wander in the dense forest, every tree we gaze on has a canopy of green foliage. Most of the trees and plants which we admire in our gardens and shrubberies are also clothed in green. But though all those trees and plants have a green dress, yet they vary in their depth of color. Some are a dark green, others light, and in fact all the different shades of green are to be found in the different varieties of trees and plants. Generally speaking Nature's color is green, with a few exceptions. Here and there we see some New Zealand plants with whitish foliage, such as the olearia, senecio, and a few others. But occasionally we find an intruder into the vegetable kingdom in the form of a variegated tree or shrub, and naturally we want to know how the change has taken place, and how the law of Nature has been violated by the introduction of a foreign individual into the family. This is how it has come about. Now, there is a great number of variegated trees and plants in our flower gardens and pleasure grounds. They have all come by chance in the form of sports. This sport is a variegated shoot which comes out by chance from a green parent plant. To put it more plainly: a tree with green foliage throws out a variegated shoot from one of its branches. It is a phenomenon that no one seems to be able to explain. To propagate this variegated shoot, and convert it into an independent plant, it is taken and planted as a cutting, or grafted on to another young plant of the same green variety, and thus a new plant is introduced. This is how all our variegated plants have been established. Variegated plants are always inclined to revert back to the parent color. Sometimes a green shoot starts from the variegated one. This, if not interfered with, will outgrow the parent, so that the variegated tree must be carefully watched, and all green shoots pruned off. This is how we have got our variegated trees, shrubs, and other garden plants, such as the variegated holly, the silver and golden Irish and English yews, the golden and silver euonymus (or Japanese laurel), the silver and golden box-tree, the different geraniums, and others too numerous to mention. All those plants have been propagated and perpetuated by the observant gardener, for the beauty and embellishment of our flower gardens and shrubberies.

To illustrate the mode of procedure I will describe my method of raising a new plant—a variegated cocksfoot grass, for which, as a new and rare plant, I received a first-class certificate from the Christchurch Horticultural Society. On going through a paddock one day, I observed a tuft of cocksfoot grass, in which was a very tiny shoot with a light tinge of variegation in it. It was not much to look at, and hundreds would pass by without taking the slightest notice, but I thought there was something to be got from it, so I carefully dug up the clump, potted it, and allowed it to come to seed. The seed pods were slightly tinged with variegation, so I saved the seed very carefully, and, when the time came on for sowing it, I put it in a flower pot. I suppose I had about fifty seeds, and out of those, every plant except one was green. I discarded all the green ones, and carefully cultivated the variegated specimen. With care and attention it became a very large plant, and was a really beautiful specimen, with alternate stripes of white and green. It grew to a length of fully eighteen inches, and developed all round the pot. It was very graceful, and was much admired at the time. The mode of propagation was by separation of the clump, with a little root attached to each part. This will give an idea how new plants are raised and introduced into our gardens. I also saved seed from this plant, in the hope of raising some more specimens, and perhaps a new variety. But my labor was in vain; all the seeds came up, but were too delicate. All the leaves of the seedlings were white, without a tinge of green, but they very soon perished. It is a well-known fact that no plant will grow unless it has a certain amount of green interspersed through the foliage. This green coloring is called clorifel, and any plant devoid of this is doomed to extinction. All variegated trees and plants must have a certain quantity of green foliage, otherwise they will not live. It is also a well-known fact that variegated trees and plants cannot be perpetuated by seed, as the young seedlings always come up with their leaves all white, and consequently the young plants very soon die off. All variegated plants are propagated by layers, grafting, budding, cuttings, or separation of the roots. In a word, variegated plants are not natural growths, they are a freak of nature.

WEDDING BELLS

BERNARD—GOODWIN.

A very pretty wedding was celebrated at St. Patrick's Church, Kumara, recently, with a Nuptial Mass celebrated by the Rev. Father Creed. The contracting parties were Mr. J. Bernard and Miss May Goodwin, both of Stafford. The bride was given away by her step-father, Mr. P. Arnerich, and looked exceedingly handsome in a beautiful blue silk dress, trimmed with lace and insertion, and wore a lovely wreath and veil, the gift of her mother, which was artistically worked by her aunt in the Hokitika Convent. She also carried a beautiful bouquet. The bride was attended by Miss Kate Murtha as bridesmaid, who was becomingly attired in a handsome creme silk dress, with overskirt trimmed with lace and insertion. She wore a hat to match, trimmed with pale blue silk ribbon and ostrich plumes, and carried a handsome bouquet. The bridegroom's brother (Mr. Wm. Bernard) filled the role of best man, and Mr. Wm. Cunningham, of Arahura, acted as groomsman. The bridegroom's present to the bride was a handsome gold necklet, and to the bridesmaid a handsome gold brooch. After the ceremony an adjournment was made to the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Murtha, Main street, Kumara, where the popular host and hostess had prepared the wedding breakfast. The Rev. Father Creed presided, and proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom, also that of the bride and bridegroom's parents and the host and hostess, which was responded to by Mr. Wm. Bernard. At intervals songs were given by the visitors. In the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Bernard motored to Greymouth, and were accompanied by their relatives and friends to Kumara Junction, proceeding overland to Christchurch, and thence to Gisborne, their future home, leaving behind many friends who join in wishing them a prosperous and happy wedded life. The bride's travelling dress was a stylish tailor-made costume with hat to match. The presents received were numerous and costly.

The Victorian oat harvest only yielded 1,608,419 bushels as compared with 8,890,321 bushels the previous season.

It is estimated that it requires 17lb of scoured wool to fully equip one soldier for active service. The resultant of the raw material is 15lb of cloth, from which is cut and made up one tunic, undershirt, pants, overcoat, putties, socks, and one blanket. Thus one bale of wool equips ten soldiers, and 100,000 bales 1,000,000 men engaged in war during the colder parts of the year.