

25 Vaucluse

Well sir,
Believe me

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for this grade
Edward A. G.

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The old man
papers. I am
wonder associating
me with of

Trees for Ireland and a regard
 also to papers and magazines on
 wild and cultivated plants etc.
 Thanking you in anticipation.
 Yours sincerely
 Seán Mac Cormaca.

An chéad fhilleadh anseo First fold here

aerliur
 par avion

Do chroí do shiainne

aéogramme

Má bhíonn aon ní istigh leis an aerliur seo is leis an gnáthphost a seoláir
 If anything is enclosed this letter will be sent by ordinary mail

Aimn agus seoladh an tseolóra
 Sender's name and address

Seán Mac Cormaca,
Béiste Indre,
Droichead, Dublin 1.
EIRE.

44 Edinboro Free Library
Philadelphie Enquies,
Philadelphie,
U. S. A.

An dara fhilleadh anseo Second fold here

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Action Line

Phila
Inquirer
8/1/72

The lot behind the 5400 block of Upland Way has become a dumping ground for abandoned cars. Our complaints have brought promises, but no action. What can you do?—Concerned Homeowners, Philadelphia.

Clear lot. Action Line got Philadelphia Police Department on the job. Tow truck hauled away six abandoned cars from city-owned lot. City budgets over \$1 million a year to haul away abandoned autos; last year over 21,000 vehicles were towed from city streets. Others with similar gripes should call 231-3131.

Some time ago I read about a garden in Philadelphia where every flower was associated with Our Blessed Lady. Who can tell me more about it?—Br. Sean Mac Conmara, Dublin, Ireland.

Its creator, John Stokes, Jr., who in 1951 along with Edward McTague, created garden in which flower's religious names were associated with Virgin Mary. He's writing you now. Over 2,500 names, representing over 1,000 plants can be connected with Virgin Mary. Iris is also called Emblem of Our Lady; African Marigold is Mary's Gold and Honeysuckle, Our Lady's Fingers. Earliest Mary's Garden was during late 14th century in England; first one in U. S. was planted in 1932 at St. Joseph's Church in Woods Hole, Mass. As a result of Mr. Stokes' work there are Mary's Gardens all over the world. For more information, write: Mary's Gardens, Mrs. Bonnie Rober-son, Box 107, Hagerman, Ida., 88837.

Action Line

I understand the heirs of William Randolph Hearst found it impossible to sell his home, San Simeon. How come? — R. Pinisal, Magnolia, N. J.

High cost of living. With rising taxes and maintenance costs, even millionaires couldn't afford upkeep on \$40 million 120-acre showplace. Newspaper publisher's estate is perched atop Santa Lucia Mountains, 250 miles north of Los Angeles. It has 100 rooms (38 bedrooms), two swimming pools and movie theater. Materials to build palatial estate were imported from all over the world. In 1958 Hearst heirs gave estate to California as historical monument; it's earned more than \$7 million for state in tourist admission since it was opened to public.

My daughter grew up on the songs from Hans Christian Andersen. We've looked everywhere to find the record for her little boy without any luck. — Jack Shore, Philadelphia.

Search has ended. Decca Records, Inc., is sending you record from 1952 film Hans Christian Andersen. Young grandson will be able to hear Danny Kaye singing "Inchworm," "Thumbelina" and other hits. Movie, that was 16 years in the making, is fairy tale about Danish spinner of fairy tales. Production cost \$4 million. Record is still listed in catalog: It can be ordered through any record store.

November 6, 1972

Br. Seán Mac Connara
Caldiste Muhuire
23 Parnell Sq.
Dublin, 1, Ireland

Dear Brother:

I am writing in reply to your letter of June 25 to the Philadelphia Inquirer regarding the work of Edward A. G. McTague and myself in connection with the Flowers of Our Lady and Mary Gardens.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in communicating with you, as the letter, or rather a copy of it, was forwarded to me promptly by the Inquirer.

For the past five years or so, inquiries regarding the work of Mary's Gardens - the name we have used for the partnership carrying forward our work - have been answered by our third partner, Mrs. Bonnie Roberson, Box 107, Hagerman, Idaho 83332, U.S.A., to whom I very recently forwarded a copy of your letter, and who is writing you separately.

Edward McTague, who has been unwell for some time, has retired and has moved with his wife to 918 Washington St., Cape May, New Jersey 08204, U.S.A. I visited with him one afternoon last August, at which time we did some sight-seeing, enjoyed a leisurely meal together and spent several hours reminiscing about our more active days with Mary's Gardens.

Bonnie Roberson contacted us, as you have, through an article she read about Mary's Gardens in the late 1950's. We corresponded extensively, began an active collaboration, and then welcomed her as a full partner. Now she has been carrying on the work almost single-handed while Ed McTague has been unwell and I have been diverted by seemingly more immediate priorities . . . such as becoming the Founding Director of the ~~Wellsprings~~ Wellsprings Ecumenical Center in Philadelphia in 1965, and subsequently following up other activities in the religious and social fields which have developed from this, including the forming of another partnership, Radix Associates, which does consultation, research and program development in the human relations and communications fields and for example produced 63 1-hr discussion programs on religious and social issues for our local Philadelphia CBS television station, WCAU-TV. Bonnie Roberson visited us in Philadelphia in 1962 in connection with an exhibit Mary Garden we developed for the annual meeting of the Herb Society of America that May in Washington, D.C.. In the summer of 1968 I had the pleasure of visiting with Bonnie and her husband Ernie in Idaho.

We recall offhand two major articles on our work which appeared in Irish publications:

"Mary's Gardens", by Robert Ostermann, The Irish Ecclesiastical Record, February, 1953

"Mary-Gardening with Saint Francis", by John S. Stokes Jr., Assisi, March, 1961.

I enclose reprints of these two articles, together with reprints of "A Garden Full of Aves" and "God's Flowers" written by me: the first being an article about Bonnie Roberson's work and the second being the last general article I wrote, in 1963.

Robert Ostermann was a United States resident studying at the time (1953) in Cork, who was a fellow student there with a friend of mine from the U.S., through whom he learned of Mary's Gardens and contacted me for background information for the article.

Bonnie Roberson will, I'm sure, bring you up to date on recent activities - such as her development of Mary Gardens for the Eländ, Indoor Mary Gardens, Dish Mary Gardens, etc when she writes to you.

Although I have personally not been doing any writing on the Mary Garden idea and movement during recent years, I continue to give occasional color slide lectures - drawing on a vast library of color slides I developed over the years. I would hope to be able to travel in England and Ireland during the next year or so, and perhaps at that time would be able to meet with you and arrange for a series or tour of lectures. In the spring of 1969 I produced a 1-hr television program, "Flower Power" in which I and other panelists - including Ernesta Drinker Ballard, Executive Secretary of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and an old friend - discussed the Mary Gardens and Flowers of Our Lady and then viewed a number of slides, with the TV cameras zooming in to catch symbolical details etc.. In the Spring of 1968, at Mrs. Ballard's request, I prepared, together with Martha Eudes Gara of Philadelphia, an exhibit Mary Garden for the Philadelphia Spring Flower Show of that year. I enclose a copy of the leaflet I wrote as a handout for that occasion. This Show was visited by close to 100,000 persons.

The original Philadelphia gardens established by Ed McTague and myself in Philadelphia - at 901 S. 47th St. and 9503 Meadowbrook La., respectively - are no longer in existence, since these were in the yards of our respective residences, from which we have both moved, and the subsequent occupants did not keep up the gardens. (The Meadowbrook La. Mary Garden was dug up to make place for a swimming pool, for example.) The Mary Garden I established at 124 W. Chestnut Hill Ave., my present address, when I moved there with my family in 1956 is still well maintained, with a full complement of Flowers of Our Lady.

In the spring of 1965, at the request of my Pastor, I established a Mary Garden on the grounds of our Parish School, at 19 E. Chestnut Hill Ave, two blocks from my home. Ed McTague and I; priests, nuns, parents and children from the Parish; and representatives from the horticultural community were present for the dedication ceremonies. This garden is open to the public, and is publicized in various tour guide books for Philadelphia gardens. Our adjoining parish in Flourtown, Pa. also has a Mary Garden, which was designed by Mrs. Gara. We know of hundreds of gardens established throughout the United States and world as a result of our 50 or more articles and over 20,000 inquiries answered, and in general, every place we drive through the countryside we see shrines or statues of Our Lady with flower plantings that weren't there 22 years ago when we started our work. We trust this is a manifestation of a corresponding movement of prayer and devotion.

Thanks again for your inquiry, Brother. Let us know if we can be of further assistance.

cc: Edward McTague
Bonnie Roberson

Sincerely yours in Our Lady
John S. Stokes Jr.
for Mary's Gardens

Drogheda
Co Louth,
Ireland.
16-11-72

Dear John, many thanks for your long and interesting letter dated Nov, 6th which I received on the 14th. about a week ago I had a very nice letter from Mrs Bonnie Roberson. Both of you have been very helpful to me following my letter in the Philadelphia Inquirer. Since August I have been moved from Dublin to Drogheda which is about 30 miles further north. If you come to Ireland you can be sure of a real Irish welcome and every help to promote an interest in "Mary's Gardens". Of course I would be only too glad to help you in any way and look forward to the day when you can come. In the meantime I will let as many as possible here in Ireland know about Mary's Gardens. If you have some colour slides to spare I would be glad to have them and show same to interested groups here. As Chairman of the National Garden Association of Ireland I would like very much to get information about the Philadelphia Horticultural Society so maybe you would please get the Secretary to write to me. I am very interested in

garden design and layout and would
be grateful if you could get me
some literature on this aspect of
gardening.

Once again, sincere thanks for
writing to me etc and every best
wish to you, Ed McTague and Mrs Bon
Roberson and may Our Lady bless all

An dara filleadh anseo Second fold here

airlitir
ar avion

Mr John S. Stokes,
Mary's Gardens, 124 West
Chestnut Hill Avenue,
Philadelphia, PA. 19118,
U. S. A.

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DELIVERY

Má bhíonn aon ní istigh leis an airtir seo is leis an gnáthphost a seoltar í
If anything is enclosed this letter will be sent by ordinary mail

Ainm agus seoladh an tseoltóra
Sender's name and address

BR SEÁN MAC CONMARA,
ST JOSEPH'S, C. B. S.,
DROGHEDA,
Co LOUTH, IRELAND.

An chéad fhilleadh anseo First fold here

you do on her behalf. I will make
a Irish Mary Garden for my classroom
seeds from your garden would be
very welcome. Please write to me
as soon as possible again.
Yours gratefully,
Seán Mac Conmara. (Br)
(John Mac Namara)

*Irish Catholic, June 5th
1980.*

FLOWERS FOR MARY

The placing of flowers before Mary's image with interior devotion is an act of religious homage which has its origins in the first centuries of the Christian Church. When in 431 the Council of Ephesus defined and proclaimed as a dogma that Christ was true God and true man at birth, and therefore the Blessed Virgin, his mother, was the very Mother of God, veneration for Mary was confirmed and deepened.

Through the centuries, Christians have offered gifts and prayers to Mary, in veneration of her, or in confidence that she will receive them for Jesus.

In this sense, flowers placed before Our Lady's image are an offering to Our Lady, and through her to Jesus.

In Christian folklore there are several beautiful legends telling of flower gifts to the Infant Saviour. From old Testament times flowers have served as symbols of God's presence and of heaven.

Isaias represented the coming of the Redeemer as "a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root". In Christian tradition, martyrs wore garlands of flowers when going into the Roman arena. Lilies and roses are said to have been found in Our Lady's tomb after her Assumption. St. Dorothy, patroness of gardeners, miraculously sent a basket of heavenly flowers and fruits to her executioners.

The manuscripts of Holy Writ were illuminated with flower designs to express respect and love for the Word of God. The great medieval cathedrals were decorated with flowers in paintings and mosaics, in sculpture and stained glass. On the north side of the 13th century Chartres

By Bro. Sean MacNamara

Cathedral the huge rose window shows the Virgin and Child at the centre of a great rose. Floral designs were embroidered on priests' vestments. Flowers have been used extensively as garlands and in carpets for liturgical processions. Dante envisaged heaven as a great rose with God and the Blessed Virgin at the centre.

PATRONS OF GARDENERS

Our own St. Fiacre, patron saint of gardeners, lived in the 7th century and is always portrayed with a spade in his hands. He spent most of his life as a hermit near Meaux in France, where he grew herbs and flowers. We are told that St. Francis loved flowers for their perfection in showing forth God's beauty and splendour, and that he took care not to harm even the least wayside plant since it might bear a flower, the Rose of Sharon, a symbol of the Blessed Virgin. St. Rose of Lima abandoned the Worldly life of her city for a holy life of gardening and service to the poor.

SACRISTANS' GARDENS

In early Christian times flowers were gathered joyously for the house of God, and on the principal feasts, when the liturgy was performed with splendour, churches were regu-

larly decked with flowers and greens, and priests wore them as garlands and crowns.

By the 9th century special sacristans' gardens were established as sources for church flowers. In recognition of the importance and dignity of his work, the gardening monk, after having worked humbly throughout the year, was privileged on December 19th at Vespers to intone the Great O Antiphon of the Roman Rite: "O Root of Jesse . . . come to deliver us and tarry not".

The central circle of the monastery garden, with its fountain or pool, symbolised the "O" of the antiphon, and thus the liturgical significance of the flowers and their care.

In medieval times the gardening monks collected and cultivated in their gardens flowers with names and symbolism reflecting religious life and thoughts, and prominent among them were those named in honour of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Around this period there was a widespread desire to venerate

Mary; poets praised her, artists proclaimed her praises in sculpture, painting and stained glass; and gardeners dedicated their work to her in a special way and thus came into being the St. Mary's Garden or Mary Garden.

In a book called "Green Enchantment" by Rosetta E. Clarkson which I read recently there is some information about a Mary Garden at Melrose Abbey, Scotland around 1530. In it were Rosemary, Snowdrops, Lily-of-the-valley, Harebell, Cowslip, roses, lilies and many plants bearing white flowers.

In an illustration by an

unknown artist of the 15th century at the Frankfurt Art Gallery we see Our Lady seated in an enclosed garden which has roses, irises, hollyhocks, marigolds, daisies, lilies-of-the-valley, violets, cowslips, strawberries and also cherry and apple trees.

There are still extant German and Flemish 15th and 16th century paintings of the Madonna and Child, surrounded

by symbolical flowers, but these are modelled on the small private gardens of the period known as cortiles or paradise. In a 16th century Flemish book of Meditations, flowers such as the lily, rose, violet, columbine and myrtle are depicted, all associated with Our Lady.

Towards the end of the medieval era, with a change from a rural to a city culture, the religious use of nature fell into decline. This decline of the religious use of the things of nature found its way into churches that considered the flowers were of little religious importance. Once the spiritual things were dulled for the things of nature on which Scripture and liturgy are so largely based, participation in the liturgy itself became verbal and logical rather than direct and intuitive with a resulting decline in spiritual efficacy.

During the Renaissance period, aristocrats in Italy had pleasure gardens constructed which they had intricate topiary work, statues and ornaments with little attention to the religious sense and true dignity of gardening.

In England this new mode of gardening began when Henry VIII distributed the monastic lands among his friends.

Late in the 18th century, due mainly to the arrival of new and unique American and Asian plants, more attention was given to flowers etc. Early in the 20th century it became fashionable to replace garden plants with coloured pebbles and concrete. Yet, during all the centuries there were ordinary people who were fully aware of the religious sense and true dignity of gardening.

(To be continued)

OUR LADY'S FLOWERS

WHEN Our Lady appeared to Bernadette at Lourdes, on the rock at Massabielle where a rose-bush grew, each of her feet was adorned with a rose. Roses are also associated with her appearances at La Salette on Saturday September, 19, 1846. At the hill of Tepeyac where Juan Diego saw her on December 12, 1531, he found growing large numbers of exquisite Castilian roses, very fragrant and covered with dewdrops, and at Knock Our Lady had a golden rose on her forehead.

The Rose, queen of flowers, is an ancient and universal symbol of Mary. The prayers of the Rosary were considered a garden of roses offered to Mary, an adornment of her image, a symbol of her graces. St. Dominic, credited with the origin of the Rosary, indicated the separate prayers as tiny roses.

In its early use, the word "Rosary" referred to a rose garden and later was used to mean a garland, a wreath or a bouquet of roses. A 15th century painting by the German, Stephen Lochner, shows the Madonna and Child in a rose garden — used to symbolise the fulness of Our Lady's virtues and glories.

Pope Pius XII has said, "The liturgical development of the symbol of the rose in the cult of Mary has nothing which should astonish us, for man has instinctively chosen the most beautiful of flowers to offer to the most beautiful of creatures."

"While cultivating the rose one is naturally borne to honour the Creator and to elevate one's soul towards her who bears the beautiful title of Mystical Rose, the honour and joy of the human family."

MEDIEVAL MARY GARDENS

Mary Gardens of Medieval times have figured in woodcuts and illuminated manuscripts of that period, and from them we can get valuable information.

The contemporary writings

BY BRO. SEÁN
Mac NAMARA

of the Venerable Bede and St. Augustine contain some casual comments, and the early herbals make reference to numerous plants bearing Our Lady's name.

Flower symbolism was first brought to the Americas by Spanish explorers and missionaries, and English settlers put English names on familiar wild flowers found in North America such as Lady's Slipper, Lady's Tresses and Lady's Thumb. German Benedictines brought with them the custom of using flower symbols as a basis for meditations on Our Lady.

Research conducted by the project called "Mary's Gardens" of Philadelphia into the medieval flower symbolism of England, Germany, Flanders, France, Italy, Spain, Ireland and other countries has documented hundreds of plant-names referring to Our Lady. The following list is from this documented source:—

MADONNA LILY

Apart from the rose, the Lily (*Lilium candidum*) is another flower which beyond all others is emblematic of

the Blessed Virgin. The Madonna Lily has figured in almost every painting of the

Visitation. *Tamus communis*, sometimes called Black Bryony, bears fruits resembling seals. It has long been associated as the emblem of the Madonna, commemorating the Feast of her Nativity, a festival dating back to 695 A.D.

Maidenhair Fern with its scientific name *Adiantum capillus — veneris*, indicates that at one time it was dedicated to Venus. It was known as "Freyia's Hair" in the Scandinavian sagas. Our Lady's hair, Maria's fern and maidenhair fern are more recent in their origin.

Fragaria vesca, the wild strawberry, is considered sacred to the Virgin Mary in parts of Europe, who is said to accompany children when they go strawberry-picking on St. John's Day.

Silybum marianum, the Virgin's Thistle, Our Lady's Thistle. Lady's milk or holy thistle. Several plants whose leaves are white-spotted are said in popular legends to have derived their spots from drops of the Virgin's milk which fell on them. In France the common Polypody Fern, *Polypodium vulgare*, is called "Marie

Bregne" and is said to have sprung from the Virgin's milk. *Pulmonaria officinalis*, the common Lungwort is often called Virgin's Mary's milkdrops in England.

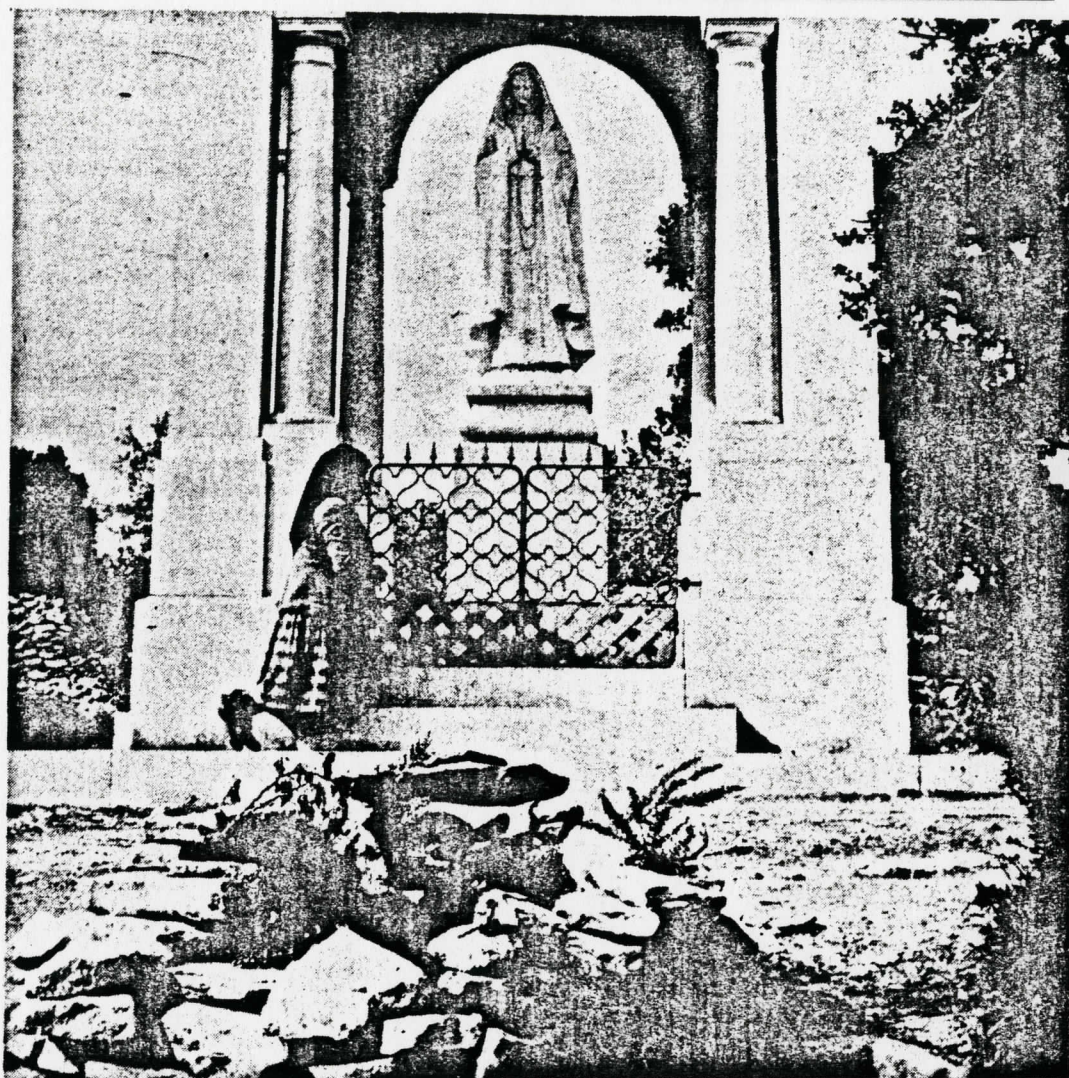
Mentha spicata, the pungent spearmint, is known in France as *Menthe de Notre Dame* and in Italy as St. Mary's herb. *Cardamine pratensis* is referred to as her smock, Lady's smock. It flowers from April to June. It is the cuckoo flower and milky maid in Devonshire Lore. *Convallaria majalis*, Lily-of-the-valley, was used to decorate the Lady chapels of the Middle Ages and often spoken of as her tears. *Pulmonaria saccharata*, this pretty

species of Lungwort, is known as Bethlehem Sage or Our Lady's Milkwort. In Cheshire it was called "Lady's milk Sile", the name sile means to soil or stain. *Aquilegia vulgaris*, the common Columbine, is called Our Lady's cushion. *Calendula officinalis* is the colourful common or Pot Marigold.

The blooms were used at her shrine for the Feast of the Annunciation or Ladytide. *Digitalis purpurea*, our familiar Foxglove, was called her thimble, her finger and her gloves.

LUS NA MAIGHDINE

Here in Ireland we have a special Irish word, Muire, for Mary. Some plants include that name, thus Common Centaury, *Centaurium erythraea*, is called Dreimire Mhuire, *Alchemilla vulgaris* Common Lady's mantle, is called Bratog Muire; *Lysimachia nemorum*, Yellow Pimpernel, is called Lus na Maighdine Muire; Hedge Mustard, *Sisymbrium officinale*, is called Fineal Mhuire. Lady's Smock is called Leine Mhuire and *Verbascum thapsus*, Common Mullein, is called Leine Mhuire and *Verbascum thapsus*, Common



Mulleim, is called Coinneall Mhuire. Galium verum, Lady's Bedstraw, became Our Lady's Bedstraw, Scandix pecten-veneris, Shepherd's Needle, a plant whose slender tapering seedpod resembles the teeth of a comb, is called Our Lady's comb.

Finally we have *Galanthus nivalis*, our common snow-drop, also called Purification Flower, Candlemas Bells, Our Lady of February, The Virgin's Flower and Fair Maid of February. It often blooms at Candlemas, February 2, the feast of the Purification.

MARY GARDENS

Outdoor and indoor Mary Gardens have become popular in America since 1932, when a Frances C. Lillie established an outdoor garden at St. Joseph's Church, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, with plants learned from some English monastery gardens and in particular those mentioned by Judith Smith

in her book, "The Mary Calendar". This garden was unique in that it contained some 50 plants whose original names recalled Our Lady.

In 1951 John Stokes and Edward McTague heard about this garden and so began the Mary Garden Movement of Philadelphia. The original Philadelphia gardens established by Edward at 9015, 47th St., and by John at 9503 Meadowbrook La., no longer exist. John moved in 1956 to 124W Chestnut Hill Ave., where he established a new Mary Garden. In the spring of 1965 he established a Mary Garden in the grounds of the parish school at 19E Chestnut Hill Ave. One in Flourtown, Pa., was designed by Mrs. Gara.

Edward McTague, whose parents came from Ireland, died on February 14, 1973.

The garden at Woods Hole is still in existence, due to a perpetual trust fund established by Mrs. Lillie before she died in 1958. In the late

became interested in the Mary Garden project of Philadelphia and since then she has played a major part in the Mary Garden Movement.

As one who was already interested in growing flowers and especially herbs, the planting of a Mary Garden was an ideal way for Mrs. Roberson to blend her love of gardening with sincere devotion to Our Lady. Her first Mary Garden was about 30ft. by 70ft., in the shape of a cross, with a surrounding rectangular border, and of course it contained a suitable statue of the Virgin and Child.

While Mrs. Roberson has helped many people to make outdoor Mary Gardens her one great desire is to introduce an indoor shrine of Our Lady, combining a symbolic garden with a statue, in every home, especially for the sick, the blind and the aged.

An indoor garden can be made in a dish, tray or other

Our Lady as the focal point and plants such as Maiden-hair and Asparagus Fern, African Violet, Mother of Thousands, Tradescantia, Fuchsia, Marigold, Alyssum, Prayer Plant, etc., around it.

Working regularly with plants of Our Lady is a means, for those who garden, of entering into the piety of medieval Christians, whose thoughts were never far from Mary. In 1952 Fr. J. J. Galvin said, "Gardens should pray, gardens should remind children of their mother. Gardens should be holy places that keep minds fresh and unsullied as Madonna Lilies. And gardens, if they are truly Mary Gardens, will naturally lead to Christ."