

PLATE II.
WREATH OF BERRIES.

NATURAL ORDER.

Native Cherry	Santalaceæ	Exocarpus cupressiformis.
White-fruited Cherry	„	E. stricta.
Austral Olives	Oleineæ	Notelæa ligustrina.
(Four varieties — pink, crimson, cream-white, and dark purple.)		
Blue Berry.....	Asphodeleæ	Dianella longifolia.
Largest Black Berry	Elæocarpeæ	Aristotelia peduncularis.
Clustered Pink Berry.....	Epacrideæ	Cyathodes Oxycedrus.

BORDER OF PAGE 7.

Red Currant.....	Rubiaceæ	Coprosma nitida.
White Currant.....	Epacrideæ	Leucopogon Gnidium.

TAIL-PIECE, PAGE 23.

Peach Berries	Epacrideæ	Lissanthe strigosa.
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THE berries of which the Wreath is composed, are from various localities in the island, but all ripen in late summer or autumn,—that is, from February to April. On the upper side is a spray of the Australian cherry, so celebrated for its anomalous character of wearing the stone outside the fruit. This is a rather distorted version of the case, inasmuch as the stone, or, more correctly speaking, the nut, is borne beyond, not surrounding the pulpy portion, termed, botanically, “the swollen peduncle,” which is rather like the British yew-berry in flavour, substance, and shape.

Colonial children pick and eat these native cherries with avidity, as children will pick and eat any wild thing not especially nauseous; but I sigh, as I see them do so, and think, “Ah! they never knew the glorious blackberry dingles I can remember!”—those paradises of English childhood.

The leaves of our cherry are merely minute scales, but the cypress-like foliage is so abundant, that it forms a dense mass; the blossom is so small, that unobservant people add another anomaly to the character of the tree, by

affirming it does not bear any. I trust the engraver of my drawing will make delicately manifest those I have portrayed. They are tiny little green stars, closely studded over the ends of the small terminal shoots.

The name *Exocarpus*, from two Greek words, signifying *outside* and *fruit*, is descriptive, and the specific title of *cupressiformis*, cypress-shaped, is well deserved by the character of the tree, although the form is much less spire-like than that of the common cypresses. We have all seen the dumpy reflection of our faces (and not considered it flattering) as given by the bowl of a spoon held crosswise. Now, imagining a tall slender cypress, so mirrored in some enchanted pool with a concave lens in it, the image would be a tolerable portrait of our handsome cherry-tree. It is too stiff to be graceful, but the rich yellow-green of the densely-massed foliage, and the very lumpishness of the shape it often assumes, are welcomed as beauties in our forests of long-armed, thinly-clothed gum-trees. The fruits, first green, change as they enlarge, passing through many gradations of amber and orange, before they attain the bright coral colour which is so beautiful. I cannot often call in Old World Poets to illustrate the newer glories of our Austral climes; but Spenser has a few lines very descriptive of my anomalous favourite, when the fruit is in its various stages of ripening:—

“Some deep empurpled as the hyacine,
Some as the rubine laughing sweetly red,
Some like fair emeralds, not yet well ripened.
And them amongst were some of burnisht gold,
Which did themselves amid the leaves enfold,
As lurking from the vew of covetous guest,
That the weak boughs, by so rich load opprest,
Did bow adowne as overburdened.”

Unfortunately, the gems which deck our fair *Cupressa* are but transient adornments; when fully ripe, they drop off so readily, that I have often tried in vain to carry a branch with all its berried honours safely home on horseback, even a short distance. The jewelled beauty will have her votaries go afoot to seek her favour.

The white-fruited species of *Exocarpus*, to the left of the red in my wreath, is much less common, and only attains the height of a small thin bush. The fruits are like clear white opals, with a purple nut at the end. I have not seen the shrub since leaving Port Sorell, until this summer, when my boys brought me some sprays, gathered on our own hills here.

Next to the white cherry are some berries of a delicate pink hue. These—the crimson ones below, the creamy-white ones on the opposite side of the circle, and the pendulous black ones above—are all species of *Notelea* (formerly *Olea*) belonging to the Olive family. They are borne by tall, rather straggling shrubs, which form thickets beside some of our mountain streams. Those I have drawn were all gathered on the banks of the Swan River, near Mr. Amos's, of Glen Heriot; and I am perfectly satisfied as to their being four quite distinct varieties; differing not only in the colour, but in the form and posture of the berries. Some are a true oval; others, especially the crimson variety, are irregularly round. They have a hard seed, like the olive, covered by a soft skin; but whilst they excel their worthier relative in delicacy of tint, I am not aware that they have any useful attributes, so far as human appetites are interested. Possibly the nuts might yield oil, but I imagine they have not been tested.

The name *Notelea* is from two Greek words: *South* and *Olive*.

The bright blue berries contain the seeds of the handsome starry flowers of the same colour in Plate 10. They are soft and spongy within, but shining on the surface, and blue as the brightest gentianella; and, borne aloft on their dark-branching stem, above the boss of long reedy leaves, have a striking and beautiful appearance. When ripe, the very act of gathering them scatters all the finest berries in a most tantalizing way.

The name *Dianella* is from Diana; though methinks the virgin huntress little recked of such a godchild! wild denizen of wildest places, to which the classic hunting-grounds of the goddess world might seem as gardens by comparison.

The three black-purple berries at the base of the wreath are the seeds of a shrub growing on Mount Wellington, whence the original spray was sent to me. The name *Aristotelia* has been given in honour of Aristotle.

The quaint little insect (*Eurymela* sp.) on one of the leaves, is in some seasons very abundant. One of my children brought several to me whilst I was drawing the berry, and I introduced one upon it; but they are generally found on the young stems of small gum-trees, where they sit in swarms, puncturing the outer bark with their strong little trunks, and sucking the sweet secretion beneath it. When one is taken off, the juice exudes from the orifice in a clear pellucid drop, which, in the course of a few hours, hardens into a white scale. The large insect, commonly known as the locust (*Cicada* sp.),

has the same habit, and the white congealed syrup, which drops in white flakes around trees frequented by them, forms the "manna" so sought after by children, as it is, indeed, a most delicate sweetmeat, with a peculiar, but delicious flavour. Sometimes our bees succeed in giving a similar taste to their virgin honeycomb; but as they do not suck manna from the trees, some other material must convey it. It is quite evident that every hive has not the recipe; perhaps only some of the queens have the secret, and like notable housewives, who have a sort of domestic patent for some dainty comestible, are jealous of imparting it even to their domestics! The blossoms of gum-trees *smell* like this delicious taste, and their honey probably partakes of the peculiar character of the bark-manna, although I am more inclined to think the flavour must be in the wax, as it is lost when honey is strained, and is only observable in the pure white honeycomb.

The pink *Cyathodes* berries are curiously compressed in shape, like small spheres flattened exceedingly at the poles, and growing closely compacted, in masses of six or seven, with spiny, spiky little ribbed leaves, spearing out between them. Their colour is peach-blossom or bluish pink. The flowers which precede them are small delicate white waxen bells, like those of a heath, nestling in clusters amidst the sharp leaves. The shrub grows four or five feet high, and frequents mountainous places. I have only found it on Mount Wellington and a high rocky ridge at Twamley.

The name *Cyathodes* is from the Greek, and signifies *cup-like*, probably in allusion to the small white bell-blossoms.

The bright red currants, crowning page 7, are the fruit of a thick spiny shrub, from one to six feet in height, and peculiarly abundant in the river scrubs near our present abode. I have seen the shrub elsewhere in the island, but not the fruit, which has been most abundant this summer, and has a pleasant flavour, not unlike the English blackberry. The berries sit close to the stems, guarded by a perfect *chevaux-de-frise* of thin, sharp spines, and are as clear and bright as rubies.

The white currant I have drawn in the same heading, is the berry of a shrub which forms large thickets on our sandy sea-shores, bearing small white blossoms, like cut velvet, or fine curled fringe, succeeded by green berries, which become white when ripe. The scanty portion which is eatable, is not unpleasant; but they are nearly all skin and seed.

The spiky shrub which borders page 9, is one of our few deciduous

plants. It frequents river-banks, and bears very singular wax-like berries, which look as if Nature had painted them in the dark, and taken a wrong colour from her palette, they are so unlike the rest of our Tasmanian living jewels, wax-white on one half, and greenish ash-colour on the other; and as they hang on their almost leafless, stiff, grey spiky stems, seem just the kind of livid, evil-looking things one might expect to grow in a witch's garden. I do not think it would ever occur, even to a child, to put one into its mouth.

The peach-like berries on page 23 are old and dear acquaintances of mine, though peach-like *only* in appearance. I have drawn them repeatedly, fancying each specimen I have found, finer than the last; and since the pages of this volume were filled, I have seen some sprays of berries larger than those here depicted. The shrub is extremely local in its distribution,—I have only seen it in three or four spots; but wherever it is found at all, it abounds; growing from one to four or five feet high, according to situation, and in clearly distinct varieties, the pale pink berries never assuming the middle shade, nor those deepening to the dark crimson-colour; but in all save hue, they are identical. The blossom is a pretty little greenish-white bell, very inconspicuous, as compared with the beautiful berries, which grow in masses, bending the frail little twigs down, like the loaded branches of apple-trees in an autumn orchard. Nothing can be more beautiful. If a clever artificial-flower maker would compose some wreaths of them, with the light sprays of feathery foliage tipped with the delicate little white bells, few floral head-dresses would be so lovely.