

My Garden Dreams

Ernest P. Fewster

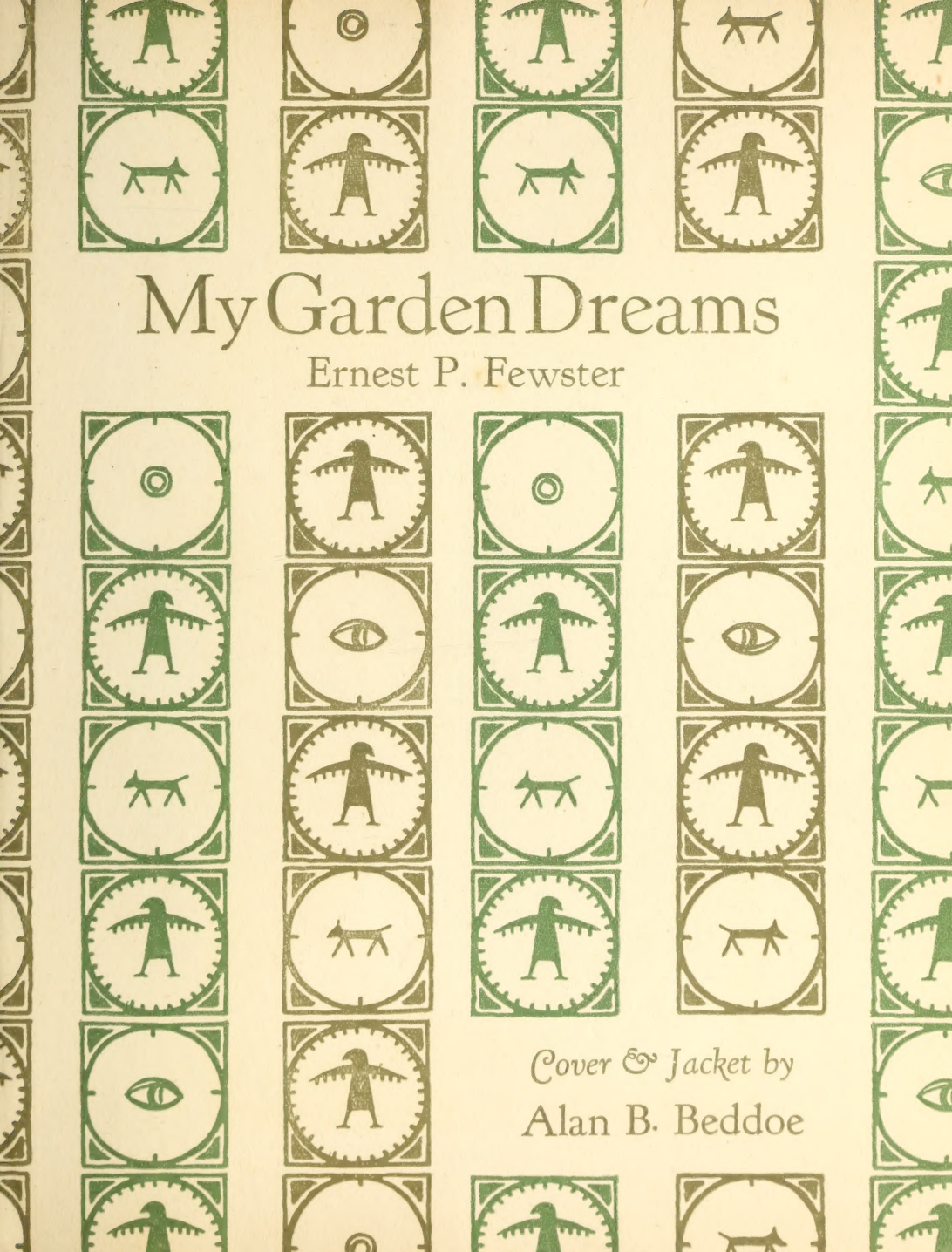




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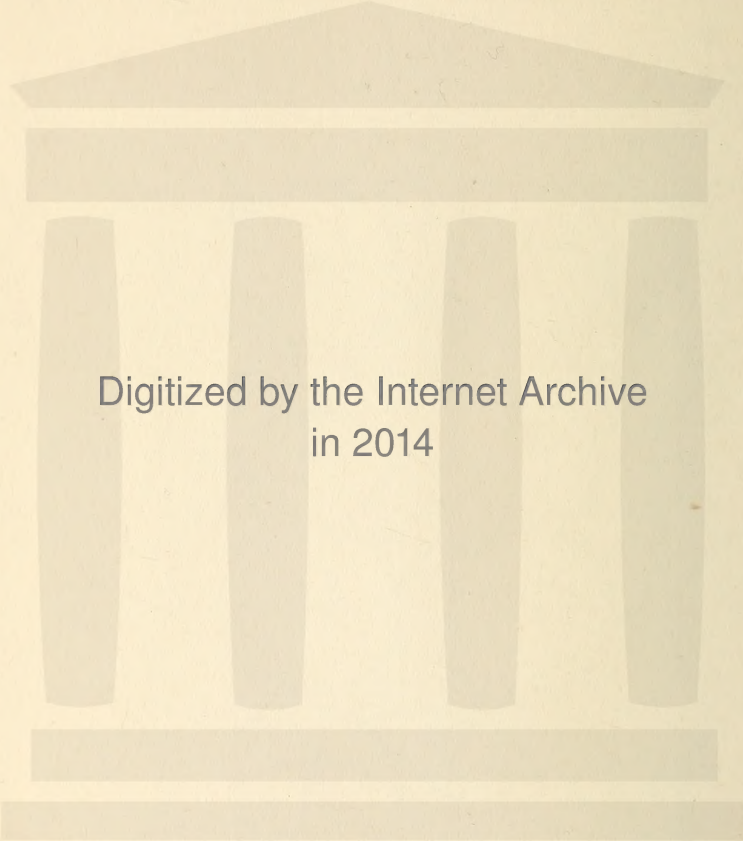
HER·BOOK



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Ernest P. Fewster

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MY GARDEN
DREAMS

The Thunder Bird



A Mark of Canadian Quality

My
GARDEN DREAMS

BY
ERNEST P. FEWSTER



MARGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
ERNEST W. HARROLD



1926

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SNOWDROPS

CONTENTS

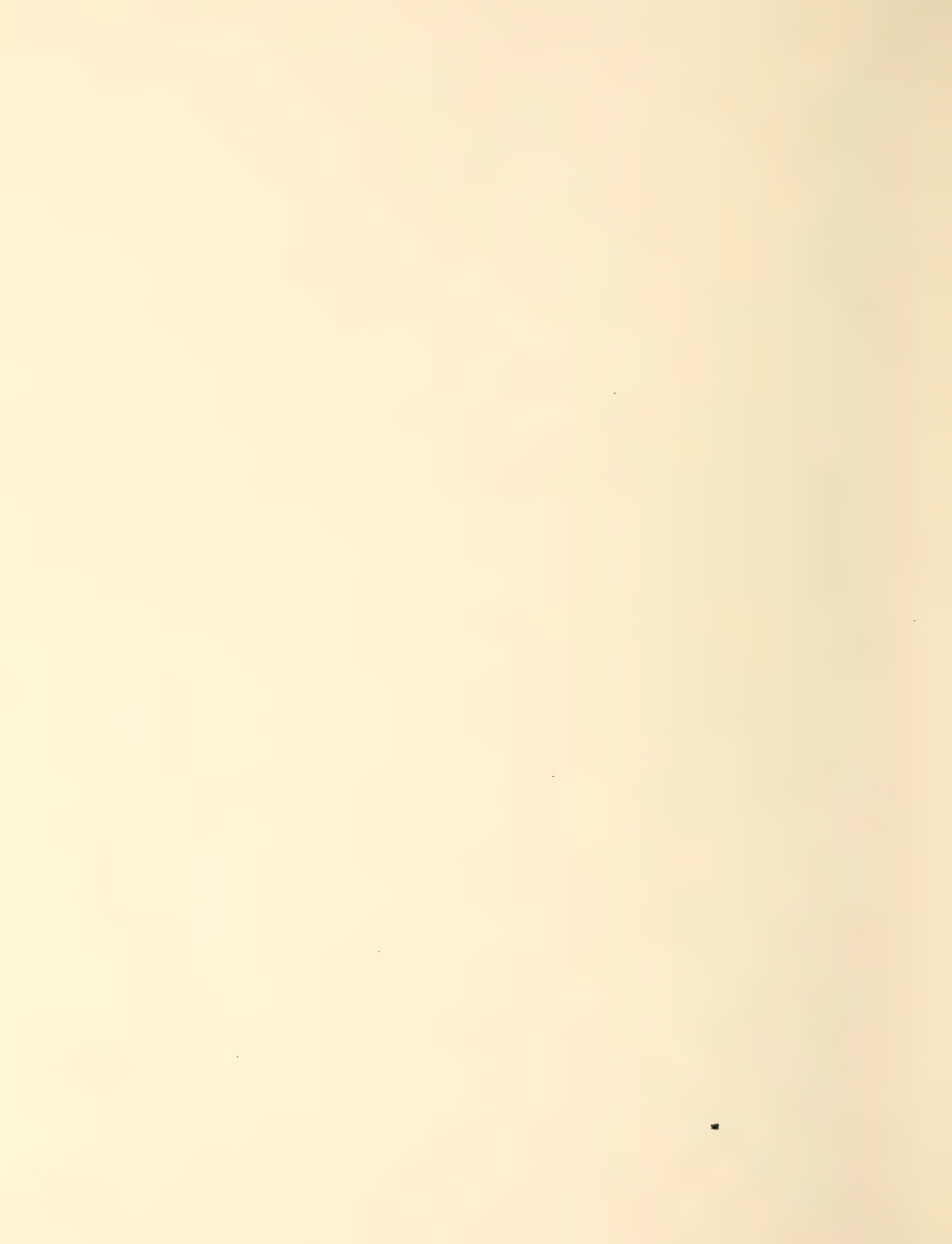


CHAPTER I	MY LILACS.....	1
II	MY ROSES.....	17
III	MY HYACINTHS.....	33
IV	MY ERYSIMUM.....	45
V	MY LILIES.....	57
VI	MY CANTERBURY BELLS.....	73
VII	MY FOXGLOVE.....	89
VIII	MY NASTURTIUMS.....	105
IX	MY PHLOX.....	117
X	MY ASTERS.....	131
XI	MY GOLDEN-ROD.....	149
XII	MY DAHLIAS.....	163



CHAPTER I
MY LILACS





CHAPTER I.

Clean spikes of green
Thrusting aside the mould;
Shy, fluffy buds
Op'ning cups of gold,
A sense of waiting—
Expectancy—
Of eager wings,
While from the heart of things,
Stringing the Dawn with golden chords
A Red-bird sings!

—*Spring.*

MY GARDEN is a place to dream in, perhaps even more than to work in. This is especially true early in the morning or late in the evening; as it is between these times that I work, weeding, hoeing, raking, tying a refractory branch, picking a posy for the house, or for my neighbour, chatting with some friend over the fence, comparing roses, learning the lore of gardening a bit at a time, a hint from one on cabbages, or a recipe from another for making pansies produce blooms "as big as the palm of your

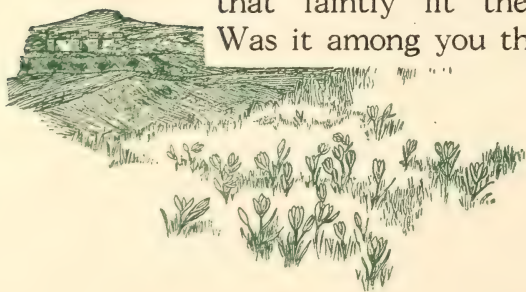


hand," the best way to grow cucumbers and so on.

Between whiles I dig a bed or trim the too luxuriant growth of some plant that is determined in spite of my protest to have more than its fair share of garden room.

There is the Lilac, for instance, sending up impertinent shoots right in the edge of the bed, regardless of the fact that I have kept that particular spot for a clump of my little Chaldeans, the Crocus—the yellow ones—the white are growing near the Crimson May.

Little happy-faced Chaldeans, I wonder do you recollect those ancient plains? Are you a link between ourselves and a long-lost civilization, of cities blown about the desert dust ere Babylon was thought of, or Bagdad raised its proud towers above the musky camel-tracks? Do you remember how the midnight constellations glittered above the plains of Shinar and how the Shepherd Kings would gather in whispering groups outside their camel-hair tents, with their backs to the flaring watch-fires, and con the stars that faintly lit their shimmering flocks? Was it among you that some great observer



of a forgotten race, some priest-philosopher, drove the first Gnomon and measured the sun shadow, so planting the tiny seed which should some day grow into that heaven-searching thing we call the Science of Astronomy? Did you see all this, and if so what do you think of us who have seen so little? What do you think of all the hurry and dust and bustle of our noisy century, or of men themselves who grow as grass blades on the plains of God's memory that sweep away and away beyond our ken into the Infinite?

There are some snowdrops near the crocus, the little Heralds of Spring—Syrian those, for since Europe cannot supply the market, our gardeners have to send far for their supplies. And yet I still think of snowdrops as citizens of North-west Europe, especially England. They were young with that wonderful land and are now grown old with her. Her memoried Dawns and her Gloamings are theirs, too. They saw Cæsar's legions rise, grow thunderous and pass and die away down the shadowy vista of Time—aye, before that, they knew much, for history was theirs a thousand years before the wings of the



Roman Eagles clouded the land. Under the great Oak where they grew, they saw the Druids in their secret rites. The sun-girdled high-priest clad in white vestments stood above their clumps to cut the sacred Mistletoe, "The Allheal," with the knife made of hammered gold and consecrated for that one purpose. Mayhap the feet of the Priest of priests passed close to them as he whispered to his successor the great thoughts, the noble truths and the dread powers that would be his to give and wield in the near future; or perhaps they heard him read the slabs graven in Greek letters, telling the wonder of the immortality of the soul and that greatest secret of all, the Truth which in their most holy initiation smote on the mind like thunder—"there is One God only, Hesus! all other gods are of Him, worship ye Him!" Perhaps they saw the noble form of Abaris as he paced the woods with lofty brow furrowed with deep thoughts, now stooping to pick one of the slender white blooms to ponder over its beauty, or on some morning of Spring sunshine they may have seen him hastening to meet that Being beautiful and fair, with shining countenance and god-like



form, whose lips spoke music, who brought to Abaris, his faithful priest, the secret sound, that one great Tone unwoven from the Three Creative Words, which should cling about Abaris like to a halo or at his will carry him where'er he wished with arrowy swiftness. So the Sage at Samos gained his favourite pupil, who came and went "borne on Apollo's Arrow," as the ancient legends state his fellow-students called the Light; but Abaris laughingly would reply—"Apollo to you Greeks, but in our British groves, where grow the clumps of snowdrops, we face the Sun at rising, noon and night and name him 'Belenus'."

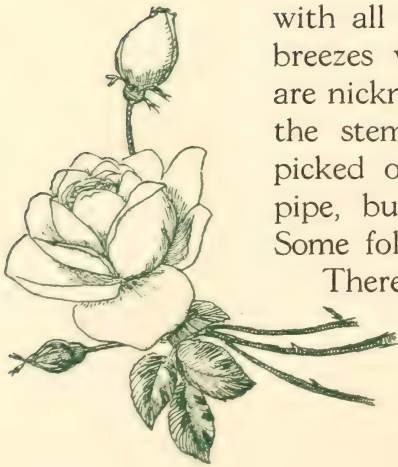
Snowdrops dislike moving. They love their old home. Put them in a light soil, with good drainage, with plenty of leaves scattered over them in the winter for leaf mould and they will greet you year after year, when you least look for them. They are the surprise flowers of the garden, for they rarely say, "We are coming" as so many flowers do, but "Good Morning, you see we are here." And you need not apologize for the weather either, they are hardy blossoms and will stand a lot of snow and frost. Only



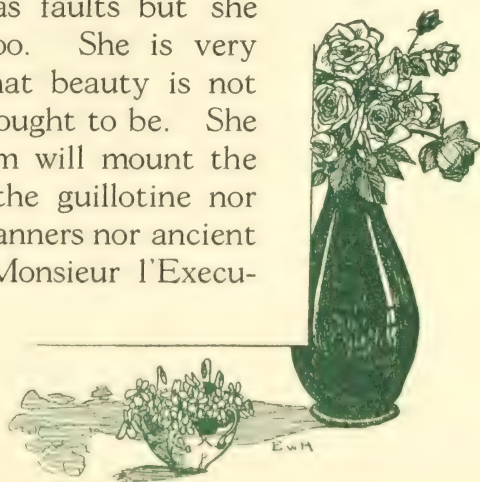
two things you must not try to do with them; they will not be forced, nor will their bulbs live very long out of the ground. Plant them as soon as you can, or they will dry out and die. You may punch holes in your lawn and drop the bulbs in them, or far better plant them in clumps in your woods or among the shrubs of your garden and be certain of their blooming. They are contented flowers, and will do well almost anywhere. You may grow them in cold frames, but be careful of heat.

Now to return to my Lilacs. I must grub those shoots out. They would not blossom for four or five years anyway, and the old bush will be loaded with bloom in the Spring. I love Lilacs whose great plumes are Spring's triumph, and whose perfume is so subtle and bewildering! For the Lilacs, in common with all the family of Syringas, drench the breezes with their clean fragrance. Lilacs are nicknamed "Pipetrees" by some, because the stem is filled with pith which can be picked out, leaving the hollow wood as a pipe, but I'll stick to the name of Lilac. Some folks would call an angel "Feathers."

There was a heavy dew in my garden



this morning and every plant had a sheen upon it like faint gossamer of moonlight. The Nasturtiums wore pearls of it on their leaves and tiny globes dotted their petals. But My Lady Rose looks much annoyed. She is such a disdainful beauty and dislikes a wet gown. My Lady Rose is very proud. She does not believe in "Love in a cottage" unless she plays it in a very quaint and pretty cottage. She is a noontide flower—for her the hot mid-day sun. Her haughty beauty courts high lights and stately palaces. She doesn't love children very much—except the Wild Rose—but gallant gentlemen and proud ladies. She favours the courtly dance and rooms graced with marble statuary, but not the kitchen, *bon ciel, non!* There is French blood, blue and aristocratic, in My Lady Rose, and like those old aristocrats of the French Revolution, she has faults but she has a thousand virtues too. She is very beautiful. I am aware that beauty is not considered a virtue, but it ought to be. She is no coward. Ah, Madam will mount the steps of the platform to the guillotine nor abate one jot of gracious manners nor ancient courtesy. "I pray you, Monsieur l'Execu-



tioner, soil not my hair and I thank you." The delicate fingers arrange the shining plait more firmly in its place, the graceful form kneels, the keen-edged knife flashes down its groove——. O yes, I forgot, this rose that I am looking at is a Gloire de Dijon from Old France.

Here is my Violet Bed. But a few weeks ago it was full of little blue eyes, all watching to see if I could really go by without loving them. Little rogues, they knew that I would stop. I had to. I may pass by a Lily or a Rose, but not a Violet. No one ever goes by a Violet without a glance of love. The king will wear them in his buttonhole; the little ragged child gazes with flower-hungry eyes at the azure bunches on the hawker's tray. The maid had a bunch of Violets in a broken cup set on the kitchen window-sill to look at while she washed the dishes and peeled potatoes. The Violets were just as happy there as those in the drawing-room. But fancy My Lady Rose standing in a broken cup on the kitchen window-sill! She would wither at the thought of it.

Little Miss Violet is the parish visitor. She is welcomed in the home of poverty and



dirt. The ragged urchins will run to their unkempt mothers with Miss Violet and at the smile in her blue eyes the slatternly face grows soft and womanly and one glimpses for a moment a vision of the woman who might have been.

My Lord of the big house on the hill is irritable to-day, for yesterday he and his Lady were unfortunate at cards, and now they sit in the morning room making a pretence of breakfasting. A great bowl of hot-house Roses occupies the centre of the table over which they snarl at each other. My Lady is from the North, My Lord from the South. Robert the butler has attended to their wants and retired with dignified haste. He is a fair-weather servant, and dislikes stormy mornings, moreover he has no desire to play innocent bystander or become mixed up in international difficulties. There is a discreet knock at the door and James the footman appears. "My Lady, the gardener has sent to you and My Lord some Violets with his respects. He says they are the first to bloom out of doors in the South garden."

My Lady buries her dainty nose in the fragrant blooms and a softer light comes into



her face. My Lord toys with his a moment and then furtively smells them. The harassed look fades from his eyes. "Do you remember, Margaret, the little glen on your father's farm?"

"Yes, it was at the foot of the hill, our favorite walk before we were married, wasn't it?"

"Yes," he replies musingly. "The Violets that grew there were as blue as these and reminded me of your eyes."

My Lord is trying to fix the Violets in his buttonhole. My Lady sees and, rising, gently assists the clumsy attempt. My Lord watches the slender white fingers and stooping suddenly kisses the bonny face.

"Put yours in your hair, Sweetheart," he whispers, "they just match your eyes, and we'll forget yesterday. Get your coat and we will go for a ramble through the woods."

But we can't go with them because it is rude to watch lovers, besides it is twilight in my garden and the smell of the dew comes sweet off the Thyme. I like my Thyme scattered irregularly so that when I am pottering about, its sweet scent salutes me in unexpected places. And if near to it you



can catch the pleasant tang of the Southernwood or the fragrant breath of the Lavender and Rosemary, my legend is complete and I should not feel surprised if some "Knight in armour clad" suddenly rode into view, stopped at the garden gate and squaring himself between the two big yews, dropped the point of his pennoned lance in courtly salutation with, "Sire, an ye know, will ye tell me if Dame Margery liveth hereabouts?"

And I should answer, "Yea, Sir Knight. She dwelleth here. I perceive thou hast travelled far and sith it be near dark and roads be lonesome and infested with rogues, I bid ye welcome to bed and board and thy horse. Moreover there be things of dree in yon dark woods by night.

"Wench, tell thy Mistress, with my respects, that the Knight of the Blue Shield will housen with us till morn. Dismount thee, noble Sir, and my pages shall discover thee of thy harness.

"What ho, Varlet, take Sir Knight of the Blue Shield, his horse, and housen him and look that he be well fed against his master's need. Page Malcolm, haste thee to the Steward and bid him that he prepare



good flesh and wheaten bread, place a Knight's platter on my right hand and have all things ready an hour ere set of sun. Haste thee! If ye tarry by the way the health of thy body shall suffer."

Ah, Lavender and Thyme, Rosemary and Southern-wood, how you have wooed me out of myself! This, my garden and my home, is no castle—but was that a shadow bending above the Lavender—it looked much like some Grand Dame with pointed bodice and powdered hair half hidden by a floating veil? But is has vanished like the years it resurrected from.

The sun has set now and the chirr of crickets or the burr of a cockchafer on amours bound is all one hears. A white moon looks down and a misty arc of light moves before me as I cross the dewy lawn. A bat flits noiseless as a thought in and out among the trees and as silently an owl appears out of the nights and perches ghost-like on a high post that was erected to carry a clothes-line, but has outlived its use, so that it is now on friendly terms with a climbing Rose and a cloudlike mass of Honeysuckle, the one



flower that rivals the Lilac in its power to scent the breeze.

The Honeysuckle has an obtrusive fragrance. You may be aware of the Lilac some time before you become fully conscious of it, but the moment some errant flaw of the wind carries the Honeysuckle sweet to your nose, you stop instantly—"How delightful," you exclaim, "Where is it? It smells like—O, I know, of course, it's Honeysuckle."

Many and many a bunch of those flowers have I gathered when a child, pulling their trumpets off to suck the honey from them, a little robber raiding the insects' cupboards.

Children love Honeysuckle, nor can the rich man's greenhouse shew anything finer than a child's posy of Honeysuckle and wild Roses. Try one for yourself and see. Why, their very names are a posy, especially the old-fashioned names of Woodbine and Eglantine.



CHAPTER II
MY ROSES



CHAPTER II.

The morning's dewy light doth fall
About my garden roses;
The birds sing clearly as the night
Her starry gateway closes.

The wallflower's ruddy gold doth greet
The secret of the day;
The little solemn pansies blush
In manifold array.

—*My Garden.*

MORNING is always a glad time in my garden, whether it is bright with sunshine and all the flowers glisten with dew, or whether it rains and the flowers greet the day with wet but happy petals. One can't do a great deal in the garden on a rainy day, but there is an exquisite pleasure in listening to the pebbling of the rain upon the leaves, the pat, pat of water dripping from the branches and you can hear, if you are very still, the sigh of enjoyment and content rising from every bush and plant. Sometimes, of course, I think that nature overdoes it a



trifle. It is rain I enjoy, not a deluge. I know it spots my Roses and Sweet Peas and in the early Spring it is apt to splash my Daffodils; but look at the glory of bloom that will open in the sunny days that follow! This morning it was raining, not heavily but just enough to make flesh as well as vegetable feel cool and pleasant. All my little Pansies had their faces washed and they look like a group of children at a party. It seems a pity that we did not stick to the good old Anglo-Saxon name for these little flowers. "Heartsease" is a pretty name with a pretty meaning leaving nothing to be desired, while our corrupt French name stands for naught save our ignorance and incorrectness. However, I suppose we'll go on changing our good old names for badly pronounced foreign ones so long as we tolerate sycophancy and gingerbread aristocracy! But there, I mustn't scold, even if it does rain. The flower can't help what we call it, though I am sure it feels sorry, for I believe that it likes to be our Heartsease, else why does it turn its sweetly grave face so persistently towards us and bloom well nigh Summer and Winter?

The rain has ceased and a bird dropping



to a spray overhead showers me with liquid silver. It's a Robin and has just flown away with a green worm in its beak. Robins are useful birds. They eat worms, though I caught one eating my cherries yesterday, a proof that we humans are not alone in our lapses from virtue. Robins that prefer cherries—that is, my cherries not necessarily my neighbour's—to worms, ought to be excluded as undesirable citizens. Yesterday's Robin was particularly strong in bad qualities. Besides, it was a very fine cherry, and I wanted it myself. Two or three days ago I watched a pair of Robins feeding their nestlings. I don't know which was the most astounding thing, the unselfish perseverance of the parent birds or the voracious appetites of their babies. I timed the former—one caterpillar, worm or other insect on an average of every twenty minutes. They were busy when I first entered the garden in the morning and still at it at sunset. Each of the parents must have carried thirty or forty beakloads of food to their young during the day. How those little animated stomachs tucked away such a quantity of food was a puzzle, but they did it and what is more their absurdly gaping



beaks were as wide open at sunset as at sunrise. I have come to the conclusion that the best insecticides have wings and don't advertise.

I see my *Nemophila* is flattened out. I know it wasn't the rain that did it. It must have been Snuggles. Snuggles is the cat. He is a good deal of a rascal and is fond of bird music—before it leaves the bird. He is also fond of rolling in my *Nemophila*. I wouldn't have minded it quite so much if it had belonged to some one else. Snuggles is an ingrate. I give him milk, I let him lie on our best cushion, I open and shut the door a dozen times a day in response to his "Meow", and in payment for bed and board and trouble he rolls on my *Nemophila*. I think it is a case of black ingratitude.

My little *Nemophila* are not quite flowers—they are bits of sky, that is the blue ones are—I have no spotted ones this year. They are a capital little flower for cutting for saucer bouquets, because they last so long in water and will open new buds for days after they are cut, if they are looked after and given clean water and clear sunshine. They haven't



much character yet—they are too young, just baby flowers, all blue eyes and helplessness.

They are splendid for planting in small window-boxes—the first seeds as early as possible, the next in June to ensure succession of blooms. Their clean fresh blue is always restful to the eye and there is a sense of merriment in their happy blossoms.

Now I have shaken them up a little and restored their appearance and I will drive a few pegs among them into the soil leaving them sticking up about an inch. The foliage will cover them from sight and should Sir Snuggles try to use the *Nemophila* as a feather bed again he will meet a discouraging surprise.

California poppies make a brave show the first part of the Summer, but after awhile, say about the first week of August, they are rather a sorry-looking crew, all legs and arms, dirty at that, ragged and unkempt. Then is the time to pull them up. It will give the perennials a chance to grow a new crop of leaves and set their houses in order for winter. Don't make a mistake and root up the Evening-scented Stocks. They look like half-



dried stems with a few dead petals stuck to them when the sun is riding the noontide skies, but in the twilight and well into the night those dried stems come to life and star themselves with pink blossoms whose fragrance steals softly all about the garden.

My neighbour is looking over the fence. He is said to be a crank, but I find him very interesting. He has rather a red face and I shouldn't be surprised if he were a consistent opponent of total abstinence. He is fond of flowers, yet has a curious way of talking about them which in many would be stilted, but from him I rather like it. It is refreshing. He is a Scotsman, but speaks good English with just enough of the tongue to sound quaint. He claims that he is city bred and knows nothing about flowers. His sentences are staccato and are not necessarily related. He says: "I am fond of flowers. Have ye heard the latest news about the war? Never grew a flower in me life. Kitchener is a good man for the job. Sweet Peas are a delightful flower. The Rose is my favourite. Germany has made a false move. I think Socialism will prove to be the only way out of the present muddle, what with the labour prob-



lem and one thing with another. Never dug a bit of ground in me life."

My neighbour has gone down town. He was wearing a large bunch of red Sweet Peas; this is rather unkind to his nose, between which and the Sweet Peas there is active rivalry.

I turn my attention once again to my garden. I find I have neglected my Wallflowers shamefully, those fragrant forerunners of Summer—yes, of Spring and Autumn too, for some of my bushes have been struggling into bloom since December and there are still a few rags of bloom full of woe and loneliness on some of the plants. I trimmed the seeding branches from the plants in two beds, but quite forgot the bed in the back where I grow them for cutting, with the result that the plants seem to have disappeared into their own seedpods. Wallflowers are scented like the memory of an old love—or sweet maids from the country with velvet-petaled cheeks and wistful eyes! Every garden should have some roots of it.

These are the flowers that mantle old ruins with beauty—all that is left of Lord and Lady, Seneschal and Page.



My Lord in armour, clad with silken cap on his head, with mace and helmet at his saddlebow goes grimly to the war and his Esquire falls in behind, bearing shield and lance, leading a spare charger. The men-at-arms with halbert or bill follow them guarding a dozen clumsy two-wheeled carts.

My Lady kisses the stirrup-cup, ties a silken ribbon around her lord's neck upon which is threaden her token, a heavy gold ring. The Lady Winnifred, scarcely in her teens, comes up on her palfrey with jingling of silver bells set in the bridle reins. She has been for a morning canter round the castle close. Now catching her velvet kirtle between her thumb and finger she trips to the side of the impatient war-horse, holding up a saucy face to be kissed. Marry, 'tis an wholesome face and loved by the whole countryside. She is not tall enough and porter of the gate, a grizzled old soldier, too stiff to follow My Lord afield, lifts her up in his gnarled hands. Little Lady Gwendoline is too young to understand and from the safe sconce of Dame Barbara's arms, she looks on round-eyed at the brave array. And now it cometh that it is her turn to bid adieu to



the grey martial figure who calls her "Daughter" and who fills her wee heart with a mixture of awe and love. The little flower-lips pout, the small fat arms go for a moment round the armour-cased neck and shrink fearfully from its hardness. But she won her kiss and her chubby fist is holding up a sprig of Wallflower gathered from the bush growing beneath the buttery window. My Lord sticks the sprig crossways in his cap, which he doffs to My Lady as he rides away.

I was told the legend of the foe that came in the night, as I looked at battered ruins, silent many a hundred year of dainty feet and children's laughter and dark of My Lady's stately grace. In the church at the foot of the hill are marble tombs, with one large carving for My Lady and two small ones for her children. They also say that under the hot Saracen skies among many others there is an unmarked grave whose occupant should sleep beside his Lady. An ancient city standing upon three hills raises its white walls nearby and though it sends no message across the years, yet in scent of the Wallflowers comes to me as in a dream—



the grace of by-gone days—the fragrance of an old love.

Now here is the clump of leafage that belongs to my old fat dutchmen, the early Tulips. They remind me of pictures in the funny papers of Dutchmen themselves in their baggy trousers, fat and important but withal good-natured. Mynheer Van Tromp, and a score of others all fat and jolly, their stems too short for the size of their bloom—but how gay they are! I always thought that Dutch people were happy in a self-complacent, well-fed sort of way, but I did not think that they could be so gayly happy as this; and their colours! Why they rival the Summer sunset. I rather think that there is a warmer current in their clean Dutch blood. I know the Dutch used to be great sailors and fond of the far-away seas and I don't blame them a bit if some of those brilliant-coloured outland maids did throw sweet chains about their hearts. Nor do I wonder at their madness for the flowers, how Van Tromp, Van Huyten and a thousand others seeing the richness and riot of the Tulip's colour and not knowing that they were scattered through the wilds of Asia from the Mediterranean to



far Japan, paid fabulous sums for a single bulb. After all, men have gone mad and paid more for far less. They pay more for a diamond to adorn their women, a lovely stone to be sure, but its beauty is only for one poor creature. A Tulip is different, for with only ordinary care in a few years one bulb will produce enough to plant a country and every garden will have a flame of colour, a conflagration of flowers, not a joy for one person only, but for everyone who has eyes to see. No, these Dutchmen were saner than we think, aye, saner than they themselves knew.

Tulips are ancient flowers. Xerxes, and Alexander, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba are amongst their later memories.

Brilliant flower, blooming so gloriously in our twentieth-century garden, what have you stored in the halls of your memory? Did the little children of Babylon love to pick your blossoms for their mothers as they made their way down to wade in the shallows of the storied Euphrates or to fill their water-pitchers at some still pool near the bank? Did the youth of Nineveh buy bunches of your bright bloom from the flower sellers in the market, to be later tossed over a low parapet onto the



roof of some blind-walled house whose shadows lay sharp and blue across the narrow street? Or were you in Ur? Did you grace the altars of that white temple? If you did, marked you a young man go by, priested far too young, his rivals said? What did you think as you met those fearless eyes, the kingly brow? Did not some spirit of prophecy stir within you? Did you see in him the founder of a great race, the most persistent type of humanity the world knows? Did you dream that with a white-hot coal caught from the fire of that old temple's learning this young priest would kindle such a flame that mankind for ages would be lighted on its spiritual journey? Those cities that you knew, O wondrous flowers, are dust within a desert dust; yet you have seen perchance a thousand cities that were dust long ere Ur or Babylon reared proud towers to the skies of Dawn.

What do you think of our electric lights, Mynheer Von Tulip? Do you like the glare? Ah, you are thinking of the golden vessels gleaming on the pillars of the great banquet hall to light benches piled high with fruit and strange old world foods and set with goblets abrim with scented wines and jewelled in rare



designs. Do you remember how those flickering flames cast restless shadows of dark-eyed dancing girls and wrestlers, flute-palers and swordsmen, on slaves with their ewers of wine, of bright-robed guests and on flashing armor? How your lights sharpened or softened that marvellous riot of colour. Do you hear again the clash of cymbal and dulcimer, the shrill wail of the twin pipes, the booming of grotesquely shaped drums? Do you see again the flaring cressets and dripping torches, the vessels of cunning workmanship hanging from the carven columns by their golden chains and filling the air with the odour of burning incense? Look once more on that barbaric splendour. See, the ruler of the feast lifts the great goblet of wine to his lips and quaffs therefrom—no poison in that. Now he gives it to a slave and it is borne to each guest, in turn, and so the feast goes on. Barbaric splendour, you old Tulip, even as our boasted civilization is! Can you carry a whisper back to those ancient ringing halls? If so, tell them that we, the Flower of the Twentieth Century, are as fond of barbarism as they were, but lack the courage to admit it. Tell them we, too, are barbarians at heart.



CHAPTER III
MY HYACINTHS



CHAPTER III.

I envy not the rich their fields
Nor councillors their power,
While all the world my palace is
And every weed a flower.

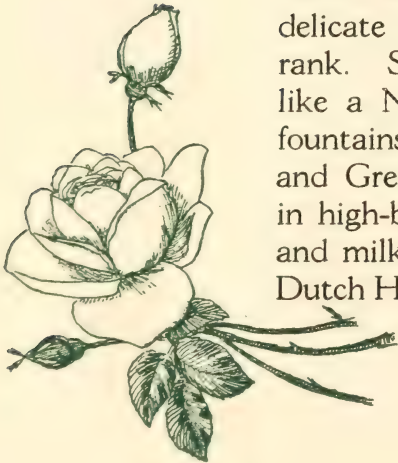
—*Roundelay.*

SOON after the early Tulips and mixed with them and the May-flowering Tulips, come the Hyacinths. They are the real Africanders. They are not Kruger, Botha or Rhodes. For while these men were or were not born in that land, they are not real Africanders. It takes centuries to establish a new race in a country and to so breed and train them that their relationship to the land is such that they are homogenous. Rhodes was just as good an Africander as Kruger, in fact better, for he gave those Southern Velts a high ideal. De Wet was no more an Africander than Methuen, indeed less, for he forgot his honour. The soil is very slow of making citizens of the little two-legged crea-



tures who fret and fume above it and at last burrow into it and sleep—would that our politicians were as careful.

Hyacinths are rare in my garden. I am not fine enough for them. They need a grand garden. When I see one blooming in my garden, I feel as though I owe it an apology for introducing it into such plebian surroundings. For mine is no great garden, dropping terrace by terrace to a haha fence beyond which reaches a deer park, no castellated grange with formal bordering beds of brilliant flowers. Such environment the Hyacinth loves, twenty gardeners and gardeners' boys to look after Her Grace the Duchess of Hyacinth who moves in stately robes among her fellow flowers, using but the richest and rarest of perfumes. She is not a lover of the humble and mean, but asks for rich soil and delicate surroundings as befits her exalted rank. She loves formal landscapes laid out like a Noah's ark, gardens with unnatural fountains and precisely dressed children, Hans and Gretchen, who wear wooden shoes, sit in high-backed chairs eternally eating bread and milk and looking painfully clean. The Dutch Hyacinths are so clean and proper, too



proper. I prefer flowers with a "dash of the Devil" in them instead of such a perpetual go-to-church-and-be-good-and-prim appearance. But all formal families have their wild branch, some mad-cap girl or wild boy, often the best of the whole lot. I don't mean the spoiled ones. Our Hyacinths are no exception. Look at her face—the Duchess—once more and then turn to this group of flowers. Saw you anything more pure than these Roman Hyacinths? White ones and pink ones, swaying and bending over their foliage. They have no ramrod backs like Her Grace the Duchess. See this spike of white bloom, like a lovely girl that clasps your arm with both hands and swings and sways by your side as you walk down a country lane on a midsummer morning, demurely innocent, blyther as a singing lark, snow-white of heart and life, yet full of a dear mischief. What a Sweetheart! What a Sweetheart! But Her Grace will have noting to do with them, rarely even mentions them. "They are very common, my dear," she purrs to the Marchioness as they stand upon the stately terrace of Her Grace's ancestral home. "They mingle with trades-people and the lower



classes. Why, I caught one talking to the gardener's boy yesterday and only this morning one laughed at the footman. Of course, I am bound to admit that they are pretty and I understand that they are clean in their houses and quite respected by the middle classes and they are clever, but my dear they are not of the aristocracy."

My poor little daisies are looking much abused. They are still trying to bloom in a ragged, half-hearted way, but Springtime is the time of their great glory. Then my flower borders are spotted with pink and white and red and our little maid goes out and coos over them and croons tiny songs—songs that never have been reduced to writing by the old Masters, songs that are far too subtle for instrumentation or human orchestration—for they do not lend themselves to artificiality, however beautiful it be, nor to fixed forms. She is a little human blossom and her song is to her as fragrance is to a flower. It is part of the great oratorio of the Universe. It belongs to the same music as the hum of bees, the mating call of birds and crickets, the lisp- ing of the leaves, the rush of wind in the trees, the thunder of the sea in storm, the whisper



of little waves on moon-lit beaches, the prattle and gurgle of the forest brook. The stars are its choristers and the Morning and Evening stars its soloists. And so the cooing of our little maid and other folks' little maids, and the thousand, thousand pleasant tones rise a perpetual halo of sound about the Earth; and to spirits drifting the highways between God's stars, these sounds must come as divine chords from His great harp, each string of which is a living world.

I like these Daisies, but sometimes I like the single, wild variety almost better than the big, fat ones we are so proud of—wild Daisies with pink fringed eyes that close so tightly at night and open so widely by day—are like babies' eyes that gaze at you solemnly and happily from their cradles, clean and cosy and utterly lovable.

I wonder if there is any playground in the whole world lovelier for children than a meadow bright with Daisies and Buttercups, Cowslips or Cuckoo-flowers and flooded with soft, keen Spring sunshine? Children make chains from all sorts of flowers—Clovers, Dandelions, Bennets—and they fill their dimpled hands with Buttercups, Primroses and Violets,



but for very little children nothing can equal a daisy chain around their necks nor a posy of Daisies for the hot, chubby fingers to clasp.

But to return to my Daisies. The slugs and other pestiferous creatures have made havoc of the leaves. I must attend to them with soot and spray and stick, with heavy crushing boot, or gingerly picking fingers. The Daisies will look up again in a few weeks, especially if the weather be not too hot. They like the clean cool sunshine of Spring and early Winter and will feel better when the summer heat is past. When too numerous they should be thinned out rather than replanted.

And now that I have glanced over my Daisies, what can be more natural than to turn to Buttercups? There are things that go together though they are not related, such as Dogs and Cats, Horses and Cows, Roses and Honeysuckle, Beans and Peas, Primroses and Violets, and Buttercups and Daisies. Of course, we do not call them Buttercups in our gardens, but *Ranunculus*, for even gardens have their manners and customs. One speaks of a Potato-patch, of a bed of Beets or Carrots, or a row of Peas. I wonder why we make



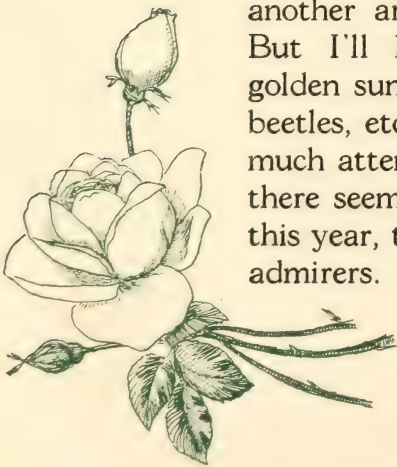
such differences. I suppose 'tis a half-understood effort to express relationships too subtle to be defined. Potato-bed does not sound so well as Potato-patch and perhaps Ranunculus sounds better than Buttercup in a garden—even if it doesn't it sounds more polite. I remember I planted the rhizomes late in the Winter between two clumps of White Phlox. I stuck them in with their strange and rather creepy looking claws downward. They remind me of an insect with short, thick legs, whose body has dried up, or like chicken's feet cut off at the ankle and dried with the toes all pointing one way. These Ranunculus are perennial and double, their flowers are like little golden buttons. There are larger varieties both single and double, but I did not get any this year. I bought mixed ones. There is a queer thing that I have noticed about mixed seeds and roots and that is, that the mixture contains a large quantity of uninteresting varieties and very few fine ones. I have come to the conclusion that the word "mixture" refers to the victim's feelings when he sees the purchases he bought and the presence of a neighbour prevents him thinking out loud.



When I was a small boy I used to think that butter was yellow because the cows ate Buttercups. My observations as I grew older led me to reconstruct my ideas. Cows don't like Buttercups and won't eat them willingly.

In my opinion there is no yellow quite so striking as the Buttercups', they have robbed the very sun of his shine. Their only rival is the single yellow trumpet Daffodil, which is a trifle warmer in shade but lacks a little of its sheen.

When a child, like all youngsters, I believed that if my playmate's chin reflected the Buttercup's yellow he liked butter, but my youthful faith in the efficacy of this test of practical science was early dimmed by the discovery that, given the proper light, all chins reflected yellow independent of their owner's likes. Thus was early shattered another article of childhood's simple creed. But I'll leave my Buttercups, like little golden suns in my garden, for the birds and beetles, etcetera, to admire; they don't need much attention to make a good show and as there seems to be enough of the "etceteras" this year, the Buttercups will have no lack of admirers. I wish we could invent flowers



that worms and slugs and caterpillars and a thousand other pests wouldn't dry up, cut up and saw off and chop up and roll up and eat out and spit on or slime over. I wonder if they pestered Adam and Eve in Eden? If they did, I'm sorry for the pair. They had no insecticides, nor spray guns and worst of all, no suitable language with which to express their feelings.



CHAPTER IV
MY ERYSIMUM



CHAPTER IV.

The Erysimum its incense spills,
Its golden petal sheds;
The Tulips' flags fly saucily
Above the Daisies' heads.

—*My Garden.*

LAST NIGHT I took a fancy for a walk in my garden. It was a place of witchery under the full moon whose light flooded lawn, and flower, and bush with elusive wonder. I wandered down a path that I have neglected for a few days which wound between currant bushes and past the raspberry canes that line the Western fence. Three or four years ago I scattered Rocket seeds there and left them to their own sweet will. I do not recollect the variety, but think they were mixed. They have done well, blossoming, seeding and growing without care, and now the air was sweet with their perfume. They were higher than my waist and so many that I found it difficult to force my way along the path with-



out destroying some of them. Their white and pink and purplish-pink blossoms were like a miniature sea. I do not think that I have ever seen a more beautiful sight or a more ethereal loveliness than those flowers in the moonlight. They were so full of bloom that they appeared to give radiance to the walk, as though a residue of twilight lingered there or that the moonlight had gathered into a pool of fragrant pink and white vapoury water or molten moonbeams. Some artists would say that they had created an atmosphere but to my mind they had done more than that, for they had become spiritualized and had caught a high beauty that was at once holy and healing yet utterly joyous. Their elusive loveliness took possession of my soul and exalted it, as the sound of bells ringing in a far-off valley of heaven might possess and exalt the soul of some one of Earth who dreamed beautiful dreams. They became to me no longer flowers, but a Presence, whose smile was the glory of the moonlight and the scent of whose garments was the fragrance of an angel. Yet with all their ethereal beauty they were of the Earth, perhaps a glimpse of her own divine soul. They were like Lilith



with her magical beauty, Lilith with her sweet allure of lip and eye—Lilith dewed with the divine splendour of new-made Earth's first sweet morning. So looked my Rocket last night under the witchery of the moon.

It is strange what a difference there is in the appearance of our gardens and flowers in the moonlight and in the sunshine. For no matter how beautiful they may be by day there seems to be a touch of daintier loveliness, a more haunting and indescribable grace by moonlight. It may be that in the harder sunlight the spirits who walk in our gardens have some of our commercial age in their makeup; but the spirits who walk there at night are they who sang and danced through the fragrant dew of Earth's young days, when all life was set to winged and happy-hearted music. But that is so long past that now only at rare intervals and on moonlight nights do these white Presences come from faraway exile, sad yet not wholly hopeless, infinitely pure and sweet, to waken old memories and old loves, to see the smile on forgotten lips and to find out if the troubled heart of rebellious man is weary of its wanderings, tired of its shams and ready to return to its old love.



So they are listening in our gardens and at the gate of our hearts for the sound of our footsteps coming back to the glory of our lost divinity and to the waiting arms of their white comradeship. It may be that I am just fanciful: it may be all a dream induced by those flowers under the magian beauty of the early summer moonlight, or it may be that they have given me of their consciousness and knowledge.

I think that we have lost a little by calling them "Rocket" or even "Sweet Rocket". Their ancient name was "Hesperos" the Greek for Evening, sounds finer than "Rocket" to my ears. Old Theophrastus called them "Hesperos" because many of their varieties were especially fragrant in the evening. One of the commonest and I think one of the best of them, is *Hesperis Matronalis*. It is known by several common names, Damask Violet, Dames' Violet or Rocket and Common or Sweet Rocket, so we cannot complain of lack of choice in the matter of names. There is another good variety called *Tristis*, meaning sad, though why "sad" puzzles me. The *Hesperis* will grow well on old walls or ruins, and is often so used. It likes sandy-loam soil



best and doesn't mind a little shade if stress is made on the "little". They are perfectly willing to take care of themselves, and will seed and carry on indefinitely if left alone. But if you wish to grow the double sorts you must propagate from roots of double varieties.

The Hesperis is a native of South and Eastern Europe, Asia Minor, Persia and Siberia. They saw the Western march of our great Aryan race and later the penetration of the Mongolian tribes into the centre of Europe. They perhaps heard the thundering tread of the hosts of Genghis Khan as they flooded across Asia to break their yellow surf against the spouting red walls of us Western peoples, who were so nearly overcome yet mysteriously saved when everything looked hopeless. So when I remember all this I am not surprised at the aura of that part of my garden, nor that of the spirits who haunt it.

From the native distribution of these flowers one might suspect that they came to Europe with that great Aryan emigration from the shadowy "Roof of the World" half a million years ago. So I believe that the spirits who visit my garden underneath the summer moon are of those who came with



these flowers on that long journey, and they come here for the sake of old comradeships, and old memories and perhaps the sadness of old loves. Yet I think that the Hesperis offer their fragrance as a pledge of hope, the promise of a new morning, far off as yet and almost unheralded but not unknown or unprophesied, in which the ancient splendour, the ancient gladness and the old loved comrades shall be resurrected in new and unconquerable beauty.

From the middle of May till the middle of June is the time of their flowering, after which I cut away the greater part of the seeding stems or I should have so many Damask Violets that my garden would have room for nothing else. But they are a most lovable flower and they are fine for the house too, making beautiful posies for the centre table, fresh, clear-cut and bright, and even in the daytime faintly fragrant. They remind me of sweet, clean-hearted girls in dainty frocks. I don't think my garden would be perfect without them; for if I had none I should feel that from a crowd of happy comrades one of the best loved and sweetest was absent. And so last night I walked among them in the



moonlight and as I stopped to pick my way one bent its dewy spike of bloom and touched my cheek softly cool and fragrant and I felt as though some holy Being had kissed me.

There is another plant in my garden which I had almost overlooked, not because I don't love it, but because it is like some of our friends, those unobtrusive ones who are always rendering dear services to us, yet so quietly that we do not realize their giving until a turn in life's road divides us and we wake to the knowledge of how rich their gifts were and how rare the service of love which they laid daily at our feet. This is my *Erysimum* with its fragrance and colour.

The name *Erysimum* is taken from the Greek "Ergo" to draw, an allusion to its property of blistering for which it was used during past centuries. Its common name of Hedge Mustard probably bears on the same custom. *Erysimum* is one of the earliest flowers in our gardens, linking Daffodil with Tulip but outlasting the latter. It blooms for several weeks like the Wallflower and at about the same time, in fact they are cousins. I may as well admit that this way of tracing relationships is not always fair, even we hu-



mans are not proud of some of our relations. The man who said, "We are born to our relations, but thank God we may choose our friends", must have suffered embarrassing comparisons with relatives himself. Yet the Erysimum has a lot of fine relatives as well as the otherwise—Cabbages, Turnips, Wallflowers and Stocks, to name but a few of the fine ones; and there are amongst the otherwise many varieties of wild Mustards and Charlocks who are such a pest on many farms. The Erysimum does not require much care. It is a biennial and will go on seeding itself year after year if left alone. I never bother mine because it is so utterly dependable, carrying on with its work just as well when I am away as when I am present. Its bright yellow blooms always leading the flower-spikes upward, like the Wallflower and Stock, and making a golden splash of colour wherever they grow, as well as offering their fragrance to any who care for it. The stem is often curved near the root, owing perhaps to its rather fragile growth when young, but it straightens up before it blooms and one doesn't look for flaws with so fair a face to gaze on and so choice a gift of scent. They are



semi-background plants, to be grown about where you would grow your ten-week Stocks or Wallflowers. But if you will give them an unwanted sunny corner or an old unused bed, then their golden flames will greet you every Spring and last till early Summer comes with her stately presence and perchance more obtrusive flowers. This is one of the few plants in which I prefer the officinal to the common name, *Erysimum* sounding better in my ears than Hedge Mustard. There is a caress in it, a musical cadence, a tone of endearment, and when spoken softly there is a sigh of love in *Erysimum*.



CHAPTER V
MY LILIES



CHAPTER V.

The breezes hum a quiet tune
About my garden beds,
And all the flowers have caught the theme
And nod their drowsy heads.

The birds that sang the whole day long
Are twittering sleepily,
Or little silent ghosts of shade
They flit from tree to tree.

And over all doth brood the dark
The soft enfolding night,
The stars shine on my silent flowers
Who dream the dreams of light.

—*My Evening Garden.*

MY GARDEN is dreaming to-night.
The Madonna Lilies look strangely
spiritual in the dim light and the air is heavy
with their perfume. A beetle drones from
the Laburnum tree. I hear him enter a
thicket of Roses. Over the fence I caught the
dark, angular flutter of a bat in the ray of the
rising moon. The bat is Cubist. Flying
reptiles were the first Cubists, the rest of
humanity are said to have descended from



Simians. I prefer monkeys to reptiles. I'm no Cubist and don't intend to be so long as my digestion is good and prohibition chills the world.

My garden under the stars is not the same garden it is under the sun; it is a stranger to me and pregnant with all possibilities and spiritualities. There come sweet spirits to my garden at night. Also it has about it that withinness which we associate with past centuries, a knowledge of years that are ageless, of time that knows not decay, an ever presentness of the Past. It is thinking, perhaps, of the dainty feet that tripped so lightly across its lawns last night beneath the moon. It thinks it so intensely that they become vivid to my soul and a shadow steps smiling from beneath the Acacias' drooping boughs and bends above a Rosebush. But what shadow is that upon his wrist? As I live, 'tis a falcon. There, it has vanished and other shadows come; some are still, some walk in stately leisure down the paths, or clank in armour with lordly plumes waving above the proud head. And there are lesser shadows, quaint little maids to play with little boys who have long-curved hair and are dressed in



velvets with lacy sleeves and collars. And fair-faced girls who walk demurely beside their elders, yet find opportunity to cast a witchery of love over the hearts of passing youths.

And so I dream in my night-garden until a voice calls me and I come to myself with a start: Ah, last night, last night, old garden—this last night of your dreams is five hundred years ago.

Now come my Lilies again. Lilies, I find, do not like being moved and when moved should always be given a richer soil than they left and it must be well drained.

It is difficult to talk about Lilies as a whole, because the Lily family is so extensive, also I am never sure just what interpretation my friends may give the name "Lily". Right here do I register a protest against ignorance. It is painful to note how vast the ignorance of the average human is of common things which would make their lives wider and happier if they knew them. The street crowd have just four names for flowers: Lily, Rose, Marguerite and Pansy. These four names are all they know of the loveliness of our gardens. But the same crowd will know every slang sporting



term, every stupid baseball idiom by heart, while the simplest flower of the garden, in the window or on the table, is beyond their naming.

Lady Brainless Luxury lolls languidly on the cushions of her automobile and gazes at me with more or less insolence. She wears a bunch of Narcissi in her corsage which she calls Lilies. She knows the terms in every shady game of cards played at afternoon teas, and every dance from the stately waltz to the latest goat-like, semi-bestial caperings that society indulges in. But she doesn't know a Daisy from a Sea-anemone. Her sister, the shop girl, knows no better. I am not advocating a special course in botany or flower-nomenclature, but I think that the average man and woman should have what one may call a general working knowledge of their surroundings which would naturally include flowers. I believe this—I was going to say contemptible—but I'll say pitiful ignorance is mostly the product of the foolish education—forgive the word, O Wisdom—of present day schools. Our children are all educated to be teachers, and poor teachers at that, and not to be men and women with a



commonsense knowledge of the world. Fifty years ago practically all the country folks and a large percentage of city people knew not only the wild and garden flowers by name, but most of the birds as well. They had few schools then.

I am admiring a fine group of Arums in the florist's window. A Gushing Young Thing exclaims, "Oh, what lovely Lilies."

Do you refer to these?" I enquire blandly.

"Yes, those Lilies. Aren't they just too sweet!"

"Simply gorgeous," I reply, and turn away. Arums are not Lilies, not even of that family.

My neighbour looked over my fence and enquired:

"Where did you get those lovely Daisies?"

"What Daisies?" I asked.

"Those," she said, indicating a group of Feverfews. "Or perhaps," she added, hastily drawing on her store of botanical knowledge, "You call them Marguerites."

I laughed at her childlike offering of one mistake for another. Neither name was right, I assured her. These are double-white



Feverfew and there is a big gulf between them and the common Daisy and almost as big between them and the Marguerites. The latter do not do well in my garden. I blame the climate, but if I understood flower talk I might have to place the blame nearer home. Common humanity's knowledge of flower names is as limited as that of the man who boasted that he knew three botanical names, and when asked for them said: "Appendicitis is one, and I just forget the other two."

I have no Bermuda Lilies. They are too soft for this climate and I am never sure whether or not I like them. They are the Easter Lilies—the saints—they haunt churches and funerals; they love the houses of those who put in the six weeks of Lent in wishing it were over. Most of the saints, so far as I can find out, seem to be a hybrid between hypochondria and anæmia or chronic indigestion and the fear of death. Some of my friends have a morbid love for the poor saint creatures and their homes are filled with pictures of saint this or that, all well meaning individuals no doubt, but judging by their general appearance they were well advanced cases of Bright's disease when they were



“took”. Their eyes are turned up at a theological angle, a few tears ornament various parts of their anatomy, at the proper spacing, while they are grasping their chests as though trying to stifle a cough before company. Those saints always go with Easter Lilies—and it’s tough on the Lilies.

“And yet there is something sacrificial about Lilies,” observed a friend who, wandering around my garden, had stopped beside a clump of white ones. “I always think,” she continued, “That the church made a lovely choice when it took the white Lily as its emblematic flower. I speak of the true Lily, not the so-called ‘Calla Lily’. Daisies represent innocence, Violets modesty, the Rose love and so on; but the white Lily, motionless beside the altar in a dimly-lit chancel, is a fit emblem of holy love, of true purity—the purity that has suffered and known tears. Its very breath is worship. Its almost spiritual whiteness suggests immortality. No wonder that the angels of the Resurrection are pictured holding Lilies in their hands or standing amongst them—‘Consider the Lilies’ always means more to me than their beauty when I see them in our chancels like angels wrapt in



adoration, their fragrance ascending before the altar like a breath of prayer."

Now here is a group of Garden Lilies, which are also called Madonna Lilies. They always look so clean and capable, like wholesome maidens who will some day make strong and beautiful mothers. I am fond of this variety, it adds a touch of white dignity to my garden. More than that, it adds something higher.

My Snapdragons and Sweet Williams, my Sweet Peas and other flowers are thinking of the lovely things of Earth, while the Garden Lilies, though of Earth, are thinking of the lovely things of Heaven. They stand so straight and strong, so robust that there is no mistaking their birthship of Earth which is love, but that subtle fragrance, that elusive whiteness in the twilight, hints of their high dreams and far-winged ideals. They are also old, old flowers. They have lived with humanity so long that they understand our ways and are motherly towards our children. Now the Rose Auratum, the Album, the Bermuda and many others are new to us and our ways, and they are a trifle haughty and stand-offish towards mankind. What child



with any sensitiveness would dare pick a Bermuda? Why, the flower would wilt them with a look. But did you ever see a sweet-faced child with a bunch of garden Lilies in her arms or standing by a group of them? If you haven't, don't you die until you have.

Here stands a group of Tiger-lilies. They are easily grown and will thrive on comparatively poor soil. Their three methods of multiplying are most interesting; they multiply from seed, by dividing the roots and from the bulbils, which are little bulbs, grown on the stems at the leaf junctions. Lilies differ from many bulbs, notably Hyacinths and Daffodils, in that they go on blooming year after year, whereas Hyacinths and Daffodils and so forth throw their finest bloom the third or fourth year as the case may be, after which they deteriorate, splitting up—mothering—into small bulbs which have to mature before they produce a good bloom. Some of my friends do not know this and wonder why the bulbs they planted last year are not so fine this year. Lilies mother, too, but keep on throwing good blooms while doing so.

I wonder why Tiger-lilies make one feel



creepy. If I am weeding or hoeing in their vicinity I always keep a wary eye on those Lilies. They remind me of a band of brigands armed and ready for red slaughter. There is an air of the elemental savage about them.

But I have other Lilies, mostly Japanese ones. By the way, what a lot we owe to that brave and polite fragment of the ancient world, the world we read about in musty books filled with traveller's tales of marvellous things they didn't really do—history souled and winged with imagination. I am not referring to China, whose fertile soil sweats humanity from every pore, but to versatile Japan. I shall not catalogue the things we learn from her, but here is a sample in these Lilies, the most gorgeous of all our Lilies. This is a group of *Speciosum*, the *Roseum* and *Rubrum*. Beside them grows a cluster of *Albums*, than which there is nothing more exquisite. And here is the *Queen*, the most magnificent of all the Lilies, the *Auratum*. We have in the *Auratum* an instance of incorrect description made by many merchants. Look in the catalogue and you will find the *Auratum* often described as the golden-banded Lily, whereas it should be the golden-



rayed Lily. It is not a big mistake, but to one who does not know, it would give a wrong impression, for there is no band around the petal, but each petal has a ray of gold adown its centre. This Lily is a true queen. She rules not only the aristocracy, but the common folk, and she is as gracious to the rough-handed cottar, as to the satin-skinned lady who rarely does a harder task than to push chocolates between her pretty lips.

The golden-rayed Auratum is daytime Lilies; they look better in the sunshine. My Garden Lilies are just as royally beautiful at night as in the day, but these glorious Orientals court the day. The fierce sunlight suits their tropical beauty. Then indeed they reign with all queenly magnificence and yet in spite of this no one would accuse them of being even slightly barbaric. No, old Japan, strange dweller on Earth's Eastern rim, your civilization is vastly different from ours, but not less gentle nor less artistic. We Europeans had thought that our wonder-story was the only one, until we met you and then we found, that as we had written the wonder-story of the West, so you had written a wonder-story of the East; the cup from



which your young men and maidens drink is as full of the golden wine of romance and chivalry as is the cup at which our youth sips. See, I make obeisance. I clasp my hands before me and shake them, bending low and bowing I draw in my breath hissingly. Was that right, O Queen of the Dawn-Land? Do not the little steel-strung men and flower-faced maidens under the rising sun often salute you thus? See, I salute you Western fashion, fingers to brow—Good-night!

But wait one minute, Fellow Dreamer in my Garden—I thought I saw My Lady Nicotine. Ah yes, there she is. I caught a worm eating a leaf of the pink one to-day. The worm subsequently died, though not of "tobacco heart" and hardly of tobacco poisoning; however, if it had not taken to my tobacco plant it might still be living a life hurtful to the community.

The faint sweetness of the Nicotiana helps to make up for the comparative meagreness of the bloom which rather detracts from their decorative value. They are inclined to be thin-necked and scrawny, like old maids who are still struggling and yet like many of these same old maids are really sweet and attrac-



tive when you become better acquainted with them and know enough of the geography of their minds to avoid dangerous turnings and muskegs. Nicotianas need to be in the half-background with lower flowering plants in front. They like lots of sun and heat, also a rich soil. My neighbour, who is a heavy smoker, has just been regarding the Nicotianas with a speculative eye and breaks the silence with—

“I suppose a mon couldn’t smoke those leaves raw?”

I hasten to assure him that a “mon” could not.

He ponders awhile, evidently drawing from the well of knowledge; it must be a deep well. At last the bucket comes up abrim, for he adds before he leaves his favourite observation pale in the fence—

“I understan’ it taks conseederable o’ time and skill to prepare tobacco leaves for smoking.”

I straighten up to nod agreement and see the intellectual back of his head disappearing through the gathering twilight.

But the twilight ceases to gather for a moment. I see my neighbour has returned.



His face like a pocket edition of a stormy sunset glows above the Tiger-lilies. His voice rises enquiringly,

“I suppose ye’ve no seen my dog?” I reply in the negative, and he explains: “He has been troubled sore of late with wee beasties and I gave him a carbolic bath an hour ago. When I was just feenishing, some of the soap entered his eye which he resentet, and he went out o’ the door with conseederable speed. However, I’ll no worry, he’ll be back th’ morn.”

My neighbour disappears and twilight returns to its business.



CHAPTER VI
MY CANTERBURY BELLS



CHAPTER VI.

The pregnant dark's white ecstasy of day
Breaks over Eden's vales and radiant hills.
The dew-cool wind its early incense spills
Breathes on the mists that melt in light away.

—*Lilith.*

THIS MORNING broke with the promise of a lovely day and I am in my garden early to catch some of its sparkle. The dawn wind is sweet and cool. It bathes my face and enters my nostrils like crystal water from some Elysian spring. It is a lovely morning. I don't mean a fine morning, but a lovely one. The Rosebushes droop to the lawn heavy with dew. The lawn itself is sheened with clouded silver and the sun on the pearls of dew that tip each spire of grass, flashes a thousand diamonds that advance before me in a rainbow band as I cross the lawn. It is as though shining, fairy cohorts were escorting me to the home-land of the rainbow. This is one of those rare mornings,



better than the ones we call fine mornings, for fine mornings come in the ordinary course of earth's events, but lovely mornings are those of Eden's summer left on God's hands after the two upstanding ones had gone from it, bowed down, and Eden was dismantled. Once in a while, as a special treat, one of those untainted mornings is sent to our old earth to keep hope alive and to quicken memory and desire, that we may not cease to long for nor weaken in our struggle to get back to that lost Eden of delight.

To-day is one of those days, yet how few will see it. For a day may be the day of a thousand years in glory, yet our eyes be so clouded that we do not perceive it. In the old story of Eden the poor apple eaters were thrust out. I question the truth of this—it was not necessary. The fact is that because of their tainted vision Eden had ceased to exist for them. God might have kept them there, but with the curse of their unbalanced knowledge would they have seen the sparkle in the sunshine? Would not the graciousness of dewy flowers, triumphant sunrises, the anthem sunsets or the starry splendour of night's brooding skies have disappeared for



them? In that strange mystery story, Eden with its beauty vanished when the foolish heart turned from it to the apple.

But still on rare mornings ere the unlovely things of earth go forth to seek their prey, the sunrise world forgets its sordid cares and dreams back to Eden. Once more its paths are kissed by angel feet and gracious beings walk beside us as we meet the dawn with unruffled brow, pure heart and eyes serene.

On such mornings as this I am grateful for two things: The sublime loveliness of the earth and that gift within, straight from the heart of God which enables me to perceive it—God's beauty in the world that calls to me, God's beauty in me that gives reply.

This morning my mind heard a tinkling of bells, so airy and light that had not the sunrise thoroughly attuned me I doubt if I should have heard them. For they were bells that rang only in the world of the imagination; they are set chiming by spirit winds from the lands of memory and romance on the other side of the mountain of dreams.

My neighbour, who is also an early riser, was out enjoying the freshness of the morning. I'm not at all sure but that in spite of many



intemperate happenings there is not a fine man back of that fiery face. I wish I had the power to look behind the screen of cheeks and eyes—I believe I should see some one splendid there. I don't think he knows it himself, because he is so used to wearing his mask that he doesn't know what his real face is like; perhaps he will not know until stern old Mother Death picks him up in her sweet irresistible arms and washes his face and undresses him and puts him to sleep till tomorrow, when her sister the Resurrection Angel will kiss him awake. Then he will wonder how he could have let his face become as dirty as it was before bedtime.

Now he is coming to his favourite place. There he is, his face like a rising sun before a stormy day. The Tiger Lilies are eclipsed completely. I know he will say "Good morning" in his short snappy way. There it is—"Good morning!" It comes like a double pistol shot.

I straighten up and reply, "Good morning, neighbour."

"What are ye studying the mornin'!"

"I was looking at my clump of Canterbury Bells," I replied, and added, "They look so



bright in the morning sunlight that I had a fancy I heard them chiming."

My neighbour grunts. It sounds like the noise one would make if a belt were suddenly pulled tightly around one's stomach. But mind, it is not a grunt of derision; it is really one of acquiescence. Like the jolly grunt a fat pig would make if a friend had just told him that perennial joke about Bacon and Shakespeare.

So my neighbour grunts and then feeling that he must make some comment if only because I called him neighbour, yet with true Scotch caution not wishing to commit himself without due consideration upon such an important subject, he hedges and comes back at me with, "Ye're fancifu' this morning."

"But," I persist, seeing I'd got him interested, "Can't you almost hear the bells ringing?"

"There's whiles I might," came the guarded reply, "But no this mornin'. I was early to bed last night, an' never touched a drap all day."

I feel a sudden suspicion of my neighbour and glance sharply at him. Now if he had been Irish I should have caught a twinkle in



his eye, but he is Scotch and the gaze that answers me is innocent of guile.

My neighbour looks slowly over the Campanulas, then says abruptly, "About the dog—I found him asleep on the door mat. One of his paws is wounded. I'm thinkin' he's been fightin'. The rascal!"

The last two words were not said in a disparaging tone, but in one of pride. For I've noticed that however peaceable a man may be himself, he is always a proud man if he has a dog that can fight. I believe that if a Quaker owned a dog that wouldn't fight, he would feel moved by the spirit to sell it and buy one that would, not because he believes in fighting, but because he doesn't believe in dogs that get licked. Consistency is an adorable grace much prized for purposes of omission.

My neighbour breaks in on my moralizing, "Did ye grow them yourself?"

He is looking at my Canterbury Bells again.

"Oh yes, I sowed the seed last year."

"Will they come up again next year?" he enquires.



"No, they are biennial, blossoming the second year and then dying."

"Ye'll no be remembering their botanical name?"

"*Campanula Media*," I reply proudly.

"My daughter makes a lot of fuss of that dog. In fact she makes such a fool of him that the poor beast doesn't know he is a dog."

My neighbour, who has big round eyes in his ruddy face, is looking straight at me as though he expects me to faint at the above information. I don't faint and he returns whence he came. The hero is a fat, shapeless animal, old and wheezy, who always barks at me and if I make a neighbourly call next door, he invariably goes behind me and grabs my leg. His teeth are too dulled by age to hurt. But it's "infra dig." being bitten unexpectedly and jumping and saying "ouch!" just when you are trying to impress your neighbour with your wisdom or her pretty daughter with your gallantry. The surprised look on their faces when you suddenly caper like a three-year-old is distinctly disconcerting to a man's pride. The daughter calls to the dog with a pitiful smile at me, while her mother apologizes and says—"Poor Bobs, he's



too old to bite—anyhow his bark is worse than his bite.”

I often wonder how many kinds of an idiot the man was who dug up that old chestnut about the bark being worse than the bite. I never feared a dog's bark, but distinctly avoid his bite and whenever I hear a dog with a business-like bark, I make a point of letting it go at that if I can. I'm no hand at experimenting to see if it is worse than his bite. Bobs is without a single gentlemanly instinct. He has bitten me three times this summer already. A visitor, who once watched the performance, from a safe distance, said he believed it was the dog's way of making friends. I pointed out to him that it wasn't my way and that I wished the dog would treat me on a business basis and leave friendship out. If he'll only bark, I'll take the rest for granted. Anyway I think he ought to bite somebody else now; he has had three turns at me.

But my Campanulas are waiting, perhaps they are used to waiting for they are a group of flowers rather neglected in our gardens. I have been a culprit in this matter, for out of many varieties I have only two kinds, the



Canterbury Bells and the Cup and Saucer. I ought at least to have some Chimney Bell Flowers, Carpaticas, Host's Roundleaf and a few others. They are such generous bloomers. My Canterbury Bells are a mass of blue or white or rose blossoms. They are very effective in masses and if I wish I can snip off all the seed pods when the bloom withers and in a couple of weeks a second crop will appear.

The blossoms of the Canterbury Bells have a glister to them that reminds one of the Daffodils. You would think they were a fabric woven of fine silk with needle-point sparkles on them. Several branches of my plants were partially broken in a rainstorm the other day and now they lie along the grass whose greenness by contrast brings out a very delicate quality in the blue and pink shades which is not noticeable otherwise. I must remember that next year and put some plants where they may droop over the edge of the lawn.

They are excellent for cutting and will continue to bloom as long as a bud remains to open. Also they are of easy cultivation in any well-drained soil.

My grass is a constant source of irritation



to me. It won't stay cut and cutting grass I abominate. My opinion is that the lawn mower is the noisiest instrument of outdoor torture invented in the nineteenth century. When it doesn't need sharpening, it needs setting. When you get it set it needs sharpening. When you have attended to these, the knives bend. Free the knives and it begins all over again. It never cuts all that it should, but will insist on leaving a bent here, another there, until the lawn looks like a young curate's chin. It seizes every little ant hill as an excuse for choking and skidding and every almost unnoticeable depression as an opportunity to shirk work and the footpounds of energy you waste and the calories of heat you raise are in gigantic disproportion to the result. You return again and again to those places and jerk the pesky machine over them; the offending part remains intact, but you have scraped up a couple of yards of turf in your efforts. After it is all over and you are wiping the plenteous results of honest toil from your face and out of your eyes, your neighbour appears and tries to be facetious: "I see ye've been trying to cut the grass." This goes beyond forbearance. You glare



at the lawn mower because even in extremities such as this you recollect that it is bad manners to glare at your neighbour and failing to find a reply that would utterly squelch him you resort to sarcasm.

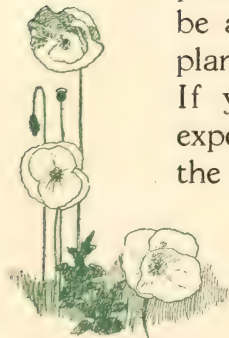
“Oh, no,” you say, “I was only giving the lawn mower a little exercise. I never mow the lawn until snow comes.” My neighbour looks knowingly at me, gives a grunt and turns away. The ruffian; I know he is laughing. He wouldn't laugh though, if he knew that this mowing machine is his. I borrowed it last night and I've hit three stones with it this morning. My own machine is in ill health. I've come to the conclusion that lawn mowers are either born delicate or become invalids soon after birth.

Over in one corner of my garden I have a group of the wicked flowers, the poisoners, the Aconitums. Not the “Winter Aconite” which pushes its little happy face up through the last of the frost as though to throw a mischievous challenge to old Winter, its funny little blossoms and palmate leaves looking as though they had been pressed together and flattened by the snow-packed earth so that it has to grow holding its face in its hands.



No, I refer to the Monkshood, *Aconitum Napellus*, Wolfsbane with its magnificent spikes of dark blue florets, sinister, especially some of the spikes, like cowled Jesuits whose feet are as silent as fate.

It is wise not to handle Aconite much because of its poisonous qualities. There are four varieties of Aconite used more or less in medicine of which the *Aconitum Ferox* is the most deadly, it being one of the principal ingredients in the Hindoo poison "Bish". A curious fact has been noted and that is that the wild Aconite is more poisonous than that which is cultivated, especially the mountain grown, they being mountain-loving plants, the *Ferox* making its home on the slopes of the Himalayas. So our garden Monkshood is not so virulent as the wild of the same variety. But this is not a treatise on Toxicology, so I'll not say much more about poisonous plants except this, that if you were to exclude all poisonous plants from your garden, you would be almost flowerless. Also, one part of the plant may be more poisonous than another. If you have a sensitive skin and wish to experiment, just roll up your sleeves and weed the carrots or mess about in your English



Mustard bed. You will soon be glad enough to stop and spend the next few hours rubbing your arms. But to return. The Monkshood is a background plant. It is a group plant and looks much better in mass effects than singly. Though they are quoted as three to four feet high, I have seen them six feet in rich soil. They come in with the fox-glove and have a somewhat similar habit of growing. If your garden is small don't grow them, if you have a large garden don't be without them. If you are nervous don't go near them because you will be constantly watching to see if some of those little cowls are not lifted, revealing faces with sinister eyes intent on your movements and plotting deadly things against you.



CHAPTER VII
MY FOXGLOVE



CHAPTER VII.

For hertes are satisfied with life
Who round about do see
In common thynges such wholesome worth
Such goodlie companie.

—*My Lady.*

I HAVE mentioned another plant in my garden. It flowers about midsummer-day, a background plant, the Foxglove. The purple-flowered one is the Digitalis of our medical friends. When they want to prod up your heart or spur the kidneys on to greater efforts they give Digitalis and lo, the deed is done. If it doesn't work, call the undertaker—if it does work, call two undertakers. It's a cardiac poison, useful but in the end deadly. I wonder when people will stop curing themselves sick with drugs, those nauseating things that cure the disease and kill the patient. There are more graves dug by drugs than by all diseases put together. Between Drugs, Diets and Diseases and the



other few hundred medical humbugs of this age, the poor bewildered life-force is clean scared out of its clothes—the body.

Our Digitalis is called by the common people like us Foxglove. It is spelled more properly Folksglove and is said to mean fairy-gloves. But there are other explanations offered: the most likely of which appears to be that "glove" is a corruption of the old word "gleown" meaning music. The Foxglove then being Folksgleown because of its resemblance to a favorite musical instrument of those days, which consisted of a row of bells strung on a wooden frame. Children delight in gathering the blossoms and fitting them on their clumsy little fingers and playing grown-ups. The Foxgloves are wonderfully ornamental and if planted just within the edge of your shrubbery they will pierce the tangled branches, thrusting their spikes of blossoms out into the open a rising rocket of bloom. The blossoms grow smaller and paler towards the tip of the stem, which has a tendency to curve. One of my friends likens them to pale fingers beckoning the wayfarer to the woods and untold delight. When the bloom is well over it is well to cut the spikes,



for otherwise you will spend a lot of time fighting an invasion of Foxgloves next Spring—for they bear seeds like the sand of the desert in number. Last year I threw a seeded spike, by accident, over the fence into my neighbour's garden. I wanted to climb over and get it, but Bobs made a fuss—in fact he sent me an ultimatum that he would consider it an act of war if I did, so I left it where it fell. Bobs subsequently worried it all over the garden. My neighbour doesn't like weeding and I shall wait for some hot day and watch him pull Foxgloves till his back is aching good and hard, and then I'm going to tell him and sit by and see Bobs catch it. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and I wish my neighbour had the walking stick habit—a good stout walking stick.

There goes Bobs now. He has his black nose against a knot hole in the fence and is barking with forty lung power. I think I see what is the trouble. He has chased a cat out of his garden and over into mine. It has taken refuge on the top of the clothes-post. I'll let the pesky creature stay there. I dislike cats more than Bobs, that is strange cats. Snuggles isn't bad—for a cat.



Some cat jumped into my clump of Gypsophila last night and spread it out. My gorge rose when I saw it but it was not good. There wasn't a cat in sight, so I dropped the hastily gathered stones. I find another cat has scratched up my new lettuce bed—lettuce and all. I wish there were some sort of "Keep Off the Grass" sign one could erect for cats. But I don't know anything of the sort save a dog and I'm not sure which is the worst. This I do know, that until people learn not to keep cats in cities, we shall have no birds, and until they learn not to keep dogs, we shall have dirty and unsightly street corners and devastated gardens. Dogs and cats are for the country and not for the city. But man is not half so good at adjusting himself to his environments as he proudly believes. He moves into town and tries to have all the advantages of the country with the advantages of the city. Take hens, for instance. I don't keep hens. One visited me once, but I assured her that she was not welcome and she left hastily over the fence taking a piece of brick with her—my donation. She stated that she was positive that she would not return. She has not returned, which I con-



sider a triumph of diplomacy on my part. It also goes to show how convincing to the average mind an argument is when well directed. I covered up the hole in my carrot patch where she had been examining the crop also the place in the path where she had subsequently wiped her feet. She hadn't done much damage to my flower beds—in fact she had left almost a third untouched, her time being somewhat limited, that is, the latter end of it was. She was only here an hour and I finished repairs easily in half a day. Chickens love flowers. They are connoisseurs. I have come to this conclusion after much experience. Take any garden that is infested with hens as an example; if there is a patch of unplanted ground or a waste corner you won't see a hen near it. But let there be a bed of choice flowers anywhere around and every hen in the parish will be scratching in it.

I have a clump of Mignonette in the South flower bed. Mignonette means "Little Darling". It is not a bad name, though I think the plant is overrated. It is a plant one has to stand aloof from to catch the fragrance; if you are too close you get the harsh acrid odor of raw vegetation. It is a good garnish-



ing flower for bouquets of Sweet Peas and other highly floriferous plants. It droops rapidly and the water you keep it in should be changed once a day and the ends of the stems pinched off. Don't plant Mignonette too thickly if you wish for good spikes of bloom; it's an unsociable plant and dislikes crowd. The Mignonette odour is always difficult to catch; the particles must be very far apart in the air and inclined to gather in pools. You can walk past the Mignonette bed half a dozen times and not get a scent of it even down the wind; on the other hand, you may get it quite powerfully at an angle some distance from the clump. This, of course, is more or less common to all scents. Mignonette is a good pot plant. Put it in a rich soil and give it a liberal dose of liquid manure, pinch off all lateral buds until it is tall enough and then let it go; give it plenty of sun but not too much heat, and you will have a blooming plant that will last for months. If the sun is very hot, you must shade the plant, or it will go to seed too rapidly. It is not an annual in a favourable climate, but a perennial.

Mignonette conjures up a marvellous



scene if you will let it. Yonder sets the sun in a sheet of burning gold. The hot day closes over the Libyan desert. The great river flowing Northward bears, here and there, stately barges upon its waters. We are in a noble city. The wide streets branching off at right angles are lined with splendid palaces and temples and are avenued with pillars. A horde of slaves bearing jars and skins of water suddenly appear. They are throwing the water on the road to lay the dust. They come and go in thousands. Overseers run among them driving them with sticks and whips which they use freely and brutally. Now comes a troop of horsemen in gorgeous uniform, guarding a magnificent couch whose silken hangings are fretted with gold and silver, on which, with fans of peacock feathers to keep him cool, a man is reclining; a man with cruel mouth, insolent eyes and brutal face. The giant Nubians that bear the couch walk carefully, for life is cheap and a stumble might mean to lose a head. Ah, old Cheops! Thou hast left thy gardens where the Mignonette grows; thou hast left thy ponds where the Lotus sweetens the night air. To-night thou wilt lodge in Memphis and close



its temples. Thou wouldst rob them of their pillars of granite and hornblende, their capitols of limestone and brecca, if thou darrest, but even thou who didst make every freeman in thy land a slave, hast feared to do that. Isis and Osiris were a little too much even for thy egotistical intolerance. Thou fearest after all the final summing up of Horus. But to-morrow thou goest out to see the preparations made by thy architects for building thy granite pyramid. To-night shall Memphis streets be lit mile after mile with flaring cressets set on the pillars of its great avenues and singing girls with clashing cymbals and little bells on their ankles will dance voluptuously before thee and thy favourites. The streets shall be thronged with soldiers and slaves, merchants and mendicants, with scowling homeless priests who walk with gaze on the ground, muttering strange prayers and vast curses, mourning their dark and silent temples, yet fearing thee.

The air near the fountains is sweet with the scent of Mignonette and my spirit sees a change. It is dark. The dripping water in the clepsydra marks the hour of midnight. The air is hot and there is a smell of pestilence.



A sudden wailing in a nearby house and out rushes a man weeping and tearing his garments, from his neighbour's house runs another weeping man and from the house beyond another joins them, tearing his hair, and so on until the streets are filled with weeping, terror-stricken crowds.

"On to Pharaoh's palace," is the cry, and tossing like an undulating river dimly lighted by the smoky glare of thousands of torches, the crowd goes wailing and surging through the palace gates.

The Pharaoh sits on his throne pale and silent; his father heart is wrung with the news a trembling attendant has just whispered in his ear.

"O, mighty God, envied of the Stars. Thy first-born is dead. Also, O Osiris, there hath been slain of the pestilence the first-born of all thy nobles, thy peoples and thy slaves excepting those of the Israelites, also the first-born of thy cattle. Now come thy people desiring thee to send these Easterns from our midst even unto the least of their slaves that the curse may depart from us."

The Pharaoh sits as though he were part of the great carved throne that supports him,



despair and rage, fear and sorrow greet him by turn as he watches, silent and grim, his harsh face showing the underlying emotions that a strong man shows when baffled. Suddenly there is a whisper near the door—before its biting sibilants the confused voices grow silent, there is a commotion and a herald enters and approaches the throne bowing low with outstretched arms and cries—"O Pharaoh, live forever." The Pharaoh lifts his arm slowly, the palm of his hand downward, the herald rises, "Osiris, the two Israelites would have speech with thee." A look of fear and anger comes into the strong face, a gesture of assent and the herald backs away with uplifted arms, the Pharaoh sits, his face stern, his hands gripping the carven supports of his throne. There is a stir at the door and the Israelite enters with his companion and halts at the foot of the dais, he makes a dignified obeisance which is answered. The shadow deepens on the face of Pharaoh; pride struggles with fear as he exclaims in harsh tones:

"What will ye?"

The massive face of the Israelite turns towards Pharaoh; he speaks not, but signs



to his companion. The hall suddenly fills with resonant silver tones as the Israelite's companion, stepping a pace forward, exclaims: "That ye let the Chosen of God go free."

Through the hushed multitude that has shrunk back from the throne leaving the space to the Israelite, there runs a murmur like sound of a distant storm. But the silver voice of the mouthpiece of that majestic man who waits with eyes fixed on the face of Pharaoh again rings out—"Thus saith the Lord." The Pharaoh starts to his feet with a gesture of despair as he exclaims, "I have sinned against your Gods. Arise and get you hence, you and your people and go in peace, tarry not and my people shall give presents to your people for a peace offering for your Gods."

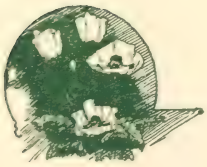
The Israelite turns and followed by his companion moves through the throng which opens a way for him, their eyes fixed fearfully on his face or on the staff which he carries in his hand, that symbol of the dread, mysterious power which has wrought them so much woe.

A few hours later vast crowds gather in the streets of the city, far as the eyes can see, between the flaring cressets, reaches the



multitude of marching people whose density is broken at intervals by droves of bleating goats and sheep and lowing kine. Here and there a swaying torch adds dim help to vision by bringing into faint relief the many heads, the white strained faces of the throngs that are moving forward and the throngs who watch them go. Out into the night—the multitude crowds between the stately temples and palaces, winding from side to side of the wide street, twisting like some monstrous serpent, weird, threatening and ominous as the visions of some mad necromancer's dreams. Far ahead of their foremost ranks burns a low star which shoots up fierce flames and lights with flickering rays the heads of the great Israelite and his companion, who are leading the host.

Once more I catch the scent of Mignonette and I perceive the centuries have flown. In a great school of Lower Egypt sitting on their benches of carven wood or stone the philosophers and scientists listen to the discourse of their leaders. I see a young man of noble aspect speaking. His robe is thrown back from his arm and shoulder and he is balancing a stick in his hand.



“What is his name and what hath he to say?” questions a newcomer.

“His name is Archimedes,” replies his informant, “And to-day he speaketh on a new discovery which he calleth the ‘Lever’. He is a man of marvellous intellect. He maketh many strange devices in mechanics. But a short while since, when introducing this lecture he exclaimed, ‘Give me a fulcrum on which to rest my lever, and I could raise the Earth.’ Yesterday he lectured on burning mirrors, also on a cochleon by turning which he raiseth water to any height he wills. He is also a great geometrician and next week will deliver lectures upon many figures, including the Sphere, the Cylinder and the Circle. He knoweth more than any man living of hydrostatics and is said to be a follower of Euclid, who hath been with Osiris these two score and a half years. It is also whispered that the Rulers of the School have offered him a seat in the class, the one once held by Euclid, but that he hath refused, being desirous of serving his friend, Hiero of Syracuse, a city on the Island of Sicily; there he hath built strange engines to defend its walls, also he hath—”



The voices drone away and I come to myself. I was kneeling on one knee and bending over my bed of Mignonette. The little Egyptian rogues, that's the way they paid me out for saying I didn't care for them very much! After all they are fragrant and when properly grown, quite pretty, especially in mixed nosegays for our corner tables.



CHAPTER VIII
MY NASTURTIUMS



CHAPTER VIII.

O heart abrim with laughter,
Sing for the joy of day!
Fling to the winds your sackcloth
And ashes of dismay!

—*A Song of Laughter.*

I AM WONDERING if Autumn is not here. Although it's only the first week in August there was a tang in the air as I walked in my garden this morning. What plants of lettuce that were left in the bed are going to seed; the rhubarb leaves are showing discoloured patches and the notching and punching of worms. My Rose trees have but a few lonely blooms that look off colour and weary, showing brownish stains next to the calyx in striking contrast to the tinted glory of their June and July predecessors. I note that they are not so fragrant either and that what fragrance they have is dull and weak as though the stopper had been left out of the scent bottle overnight. The birds are lethargic, the quick



snappy life is absent from their movements and voice. The little hummingbirds have stopped fighting except when robbing the same bush of flowers. This morning I was watching one of them rather closely and I noticed that it did not seem to discriminate between the flowers as regards their honey-bearing properties. The one I watched went to Rose after Rose to wing off disappointed after a brief thrust of its beak into the flower heart. Also it tried to extract honey from the tip of some of the Rose branches where the young and old leaves had been scorched to Autumn colours by the sun. From the Rose it went to my Dahlias. It tested several but only the coloured ones; not a white one would it notice. Hummingbirds are vicious fighters. Often I have left little glades in the woods because there were so many of them fighting there and I didn't wish to play the part of the innocent bystander. They were very excited, darting to and fro with little angry cries. Many times their wings fanned my face, so that I feared for my eyes. Their long sharp beaks would ruin an eye if not cause worse damage. I'm not afraid of a mouse or a spider or other horrid beasts that



are such nightmares in the feminine world—but hummingbirds, ugh! Those wielders of thin rapiers would daunt a stouter heart than mine.

This morning I have been looking at my row of Nasturtiums. Don't look it up in your dictionary, because I don't mean real Nasturtiums, but what are called Nasturtiums. If you look up Nasturtiums, you may be surprised to find that you are introduced to a rather insignificant group of plants of which the watercress is the only representative of any dignity. By Nasturtiums, I am referring to that series of brilliant climbing flowers commonly known by that name. If you wish to look it up, you must do so under its proper name, *Tropæolum*. The great Indian Cress or Nasturtium is a close relative of our Geraniums and Pelargoniums while the true Nasturtiums—the Cresses—are related to turnips and cabbages. You see that our so-called Nasturtiums, the *Tropæolums*, are quite aristocratic, while the real Nasturtiums are the kitchen garden folk. The *Tropæolums* are a handsome family of between thirty or forty relatives, and they practically all hail from South America. The common ones in our



gardens are the Major (the tall) and the Minor (the short). I shall speak of them by their common name, Nasturtiums, here.

There is also another member of this genus, the Peregrinum, Canary Creeper, or Canary Bird Flower. This is an annual in our Northern climate, but a perennial under its own warm skies of Peru and Mexico.

My row of Peruvians, the common Nasturtiums, are always a joy to my heart. Many people think they are common folk but I've just shown you that they are highly connected. A bowl of Nasturtium blooms would decorate the table of a king, especially if the room were dark or gloomy. Their fifty tints of living gold is as a splash of sunshine lighting the neighbourhood with beauty. The sweet slightly pungent smell always makes one feel hungry, for they remind one of savory food. Their green fruit is nice pickled, while their leaves help to make a salad good. They are an all-round plant, appealing to eye, nose and mouth, and are one of our most brilliant, if not the most brilliant, of our garden border and climbing plants. The dwarfs for the borders, the tall for the climbing. These flowers are said to have the strange property, under



suitable atmospheric conditions, of emitting electric sparks.

Snuggles does the same. When I was a boy, our old cat had her hair almost rubbed off her back in the interests of science. I would descend on pussy like a wolf on the fold and cart her off to a shadowy corner of the room and start the rubbing process. At the first few strokes, pussy would think I was loving her, and would arch her back and start to purr. A few more vigorous rubs and pussy would begin to object, then fight, until, just when she was arc-ing well, there would be a wild scramble of cat and small boy, and puss would make for the kitchen and safety, swearing disgracefully.

Snuggles is really the property of my neighbour, but is very kind and permits me to live near him. He is not particularly fond of Nasturtiums, except for strategic purposes. Nasturtiums growing along the lower fence he seeks as a screen behind which he disposes his forces—himself—to use them to the best advantage against his enemy, the ubiquitous dog. Further than this, Nasturtiums to him are as pearls to swine or Bitter Apples to the Ambrosia-eating Gods.



Snuggles' mistress is fond of Nasturtiums; she has her window boxes full of them, one plant of the Major variety to every foot along the outer edge. Between are planted an occasional Calceolaria, or Lobelia, the *gracilis* variety. You can buy a dozen of each for a total of a dollar, or if you have a good window can raise both from seed and slips at a cost of fifteen cents—these, with five cents' worth of tall Nasturtium seeds are enough to plant twenty feet of window box. The greenhouses will fill the same boxes for you for five dollars, but if you think the greenhouse-filled boxes will beat the home-filled, you are mistaken; make the boxes deep and fill with soil, feed the Nasturtiums sparingly, and their golden laughter, with here and there an overspray of blue from the Lobelia or the sphered fountain of bright yellow Calceolarias, will give you a bank of flowers fit for the battlements of heaven.

One of the peculiarities of the Nasturtium is to grow away from the sunlight. It seeks shade and it insists on throwing its trailing grace inside the verandah rail instead of out, so the trailers should be pushed outward and some little stones tied to them where they



will not show, the result being that these gay troubadours will grow where they are desired to. This goes to prove that the moral faculties of plants, like those of human beings, are always amenable to reason—if reason be backed up by other things. The most moral people of my acquaintance are of that manner of flesh. Dear saints, how hard they struggle towards heaven, eschewing the joys of this world not so much because they are wrong, as because they fear they cannot have both a good time in this life and heaven in the next. They tie weights on their souls to make them grow heavenward. If ever any sinners enter heaven, they'll have to keep mum or the saints will have pain in their celestial stomachs and suffer acute melancholia, thinking over the good times they might have committed on earth and yet have won heaven. I wonder if they'll think the game is worth the candle? Anyhow I'm not going to refuse oranges and eat potato peelings this winter for the problematical sake of the peach next summer. I often think when I see the stupidly serious faces of some people going to church, the *sotto voce* tones, the laughterless lips, how long it will take them to get over their religious



dyspepsia and learn to laugh after they get to heaven. I believe I'd rather be a happy sinner than a sad saint. I'd rather enter the next life with laughter on my lips, than enter with my eyes clouded with despise of earth. It would comfort me much more to hear the expectant young angels call, "Here comes another jolly good fellow," than to hear them say, "Here comes another saint, boys, let's beat it."

My Nasturtiums are of an ancient lineage. Could they speak our language perhaps we should learn the secrets of those ruins on the upper ridges of the world in the Cordilleras, those remains of ancient cities, whose busy hum has been so long silent that even legend of them has passed from the memories of man. What happened in those days which smote such a silence on their world that no sound of their teeming life has penetrated to us? Did ever the feet of happy children patter about those silent streets? Did noble youths woo loveliness on twilight eves under the leafy trees of their gardens? Did the seas, on which their forgotten navies sailed, know strange and hideous monsters, whose silicated bones are all we have left of them? What



strange portents did they see? Was it a glacial age that, year by year, savage, adamant, remorseless, crept towards them from the bitter North, the iron tooth of its blinking ice fields biting deeper and deeper into the earth's loveliness? Or did it come without warning after some glorious summer evening when the burning amethyst of the sunset glow winked out suddenly as earth swung, unwarned and helpless, into a dreadful plane of space wherein some gas of glaciation, limpid and invisible, shed its black and poisonous doom? Was this destruction consummated after long years, or was it accomplished in one terrible hour so that when those great plains met the astonished day, they mocked the sunlight with bitter death and with a silence so complete that not even Nature's prolific fatherhood could gender plant, insect or animal life again in that dreadful graveyard? O strange Nasturtiums, with your hot, haunting odour, did you rim those plains then? Did its multitudes hold the riddle of Easter Island as a matter of common knowledge? Did some dreadful star smite down, born from the deeps of space? Or some frightful ring of matter in the skies, collect and break, dis-



rupting our old earth, crushing Atlanta beneath the frenzied sea, lifting new mountains, ushering in a new climate, a new geography and a new world on whose naked shoulders reigned cataclysm and desolation? What have you seen, O golden strangers from the mysterious Southland, strangers indeed to my body's eyes, who yet have such friendly communion with my soul, who seem so intangibly, yet so surely related to a yesterday of mine that perchance was a thousand centuries ago? I am not wise enough to answer you as yet, little flower, nor as yet is my memory awakened sufficiently to know. Some day perchance a word, a fragrance, a voice shall, as a key, open that unknown door in the spirits' hidden halls through which we shall step, as to a fairy land, into the memories of a thousand centuries of life and growth and love and strength, beauty and joy.



CHAPTER IX
MY PHLOX



CHAPTER IX.

The sky's vast dome prict with majestic stars
To minds that take nobility for joy,
Shall drench with gladness, not this life alone
But all the steeps of immortality.

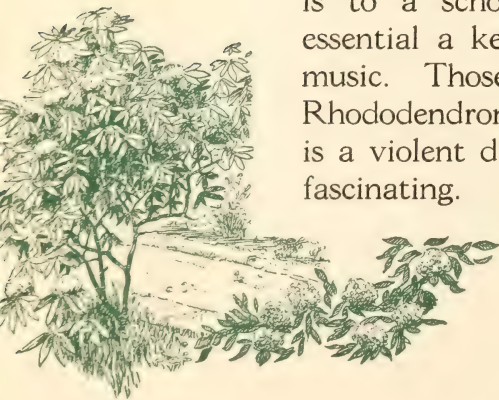
—*Ode to Delight.*

TO-NIGHT above my garden the stars hang as jewels set in Earth's celestial crown. It is one of those nights in which the mind almost becomes infinite—for I see not only the glittering constellations as a whole, but note each individual star, its colour and brilliance, each a pellucid drop of living fire, a jewel of the Almighty set in the floors and walls and roofs of His dwelling, which after all has no floors, walls or roofs, but only Himself, who is Floor and Wall and Roof, the Centre and Circumference of His habitation, Infinite Thought, ungraspable by our five senses, incomprehensible to our greatest minds.

The trees and shrubs are vague shadows



full of delicious sensations. I can just see a clump of Lilies, stately and elusive, in the centre bed; I know that they are flanked on each side by La France Roses. In my mind I don't mix Lilies and Roses that way, but in practice I do and they get along well together, too. There is a very peculiar thing in nature, which is her ability to place almost any colour and tint together without a clash. She rarely grows in harmonious colours when left alone, and will usually reduce man's mistakes in this to a negligible quantity if left to her own devices. I only remember one case where she completely failed, and that was where some unimaginative worshipper at the shrine of Flores had planted Hyacinths of a particularly reddish-purple disgrace around a Rhododendron of a puce-red travesty of colour. To go past that garden when both were in full bloom was as painful an experience as running the gauntlet is to a schoolboy. Harmony is just as essential a keynote to a garden as it is to music. Those Hyacinths in proximity to the Rhododendron were as hurtful to the eye as is a violent discord to the ear. It was also fascinating. I went that way a dozen times



just to revel in the disagreeable feelings it aroused. That's funny, isn't it? But then, I'm normally human, the kind that disbelieves the "Wet Paint" sign till I get some on my fingers or clothes.

My clumps of perennial Phlox look like white shadows if you can imagine such things. They are very vague. The purple clump is invisible and the two farthest of the white clumps are more apparent to the eyes of my imagination than to those of my body. Starlight is not a brilliant illuminant, so far as earth is concerned and besides my garden is shadowy with trees. Yet at night it holds something that sun nor moon has. It tells me lovely things about the Stars.

My neighbours, the Stars, are very old. They are very beautiful. Their friendship for me is of centuries' growth. I found it waiting for me on this last return. They never vary in their friendship. Their love for me is deep and pure. They are always glad to see me. They soothe me when I am cast down and rest me when I am weary. I would rather offend under the sun than under the Stars, for pierced with their ethereal splendour, my soul is lifted, is exalted, until I, too, know myself



as a citizen of the infinite. My spirit, winged with the beauty of immortality, greets the glory of the Stars no less wonderful than they. My neighbours, the Stars, are marvellous good friends. They are terrifically just. They say no word of reproach, yet whenever I go out to meet them I endeavour to cast from me all that is less than the highest, all untight things, all that is not spiritually clean. For, though they have not said so, I feel sure that they would not like me to do otherwise. When beneath their light I am all courageous and the high things of God are mine. And when with them I am not dismayed by death.

My garden in the Starlight becomes as a thing apart. It is no longer of the earth only, but drenched with heaven. Loveliness in it becomes more spiritually fair, womanhood more graciously strong, manhood more thoughtfully tender. As I move, silent-footed about its paths, my heart beats in tune to celestial music, my feet forget that they are clay and tread the air. Weariness leaves as I pass by odorous beds of flowers and thickets of Roses, past tall scented Lilies swaying gently in the night wind. The higher trees are whispering—nature's æolian harps, and I



—I am no longer trammelled by Earth's clay,
I am winged. And there in my garden speak-
ing with my neighbours, the Stars, Love walks
imperial with me and my life beats syn-
chronous with Heaven's Eternal Tides.

But I am forgetting my Phlox who are
patiently waiting for my attention. Most of
our Phlox are from the Southern parts of
North America. Those eyes that gaze at
you from the graceful creeping varieties or
the tall stately ones, have watched the sun
rise and set across the undulating prairies.
They have seen the Indian hunt the mighty
herds of buffalo. Perhaps they could tell you
stories of the mound-builders, that mysterious
race which died away before the onslaught of
their more warlike neighbours, now disap-
pearing in their turn before the great white
race, more relentless, more pitiless, more in-
human and more murderous than they. Phlox
have been so changed and interbred by
civilization that the early and late varieties,
especially the tall ones, have become inextric-
ably mixed. The dwarf strains have been
so improved that they scarcely know them-
selves. We have a lot of different flowers
from those inland seas of green rolling plains,



all of which are improving under cultivation, growing more beautiful, stronger and useful. But the Indian, under whose proud foot those flowers used to grow, is not improved, is rather wasted, morally, mentally and physically by our civilization. I wonder if our great human race is too proud in its parts for any part to accept changes forced upon it by another. Each part is willing and able to work out its own salvation, its own civilization, but not to accept another's. I wonder if our preaching and praying for them is not all wrong, if the greatest gift we could give them would be room and air that they might win for themselves that thing which we cannot or know not how to give. Surely our particular civilization is not the only one—perhaps not the best. If it is, earth is a pauper after all, a pitiful waster of God's good time!

Outside botanical gardens it is very rare to see early-blooming tall Phlox. It would seem that in the mixing of the varieties that characteristic had been lost. The flower heads have become more dense, although their characteristic scent has not grown more marked, but it has a wholesome quality of which I am very fond. They do not like



poor soil and an application of liquid manure once or twice during the summer will be well repaid. My garden soil was naturally lean and hungry when I first claimed it from the forest, and although I put in what I thought to be a liberal supply of manure, my Phlox positively refused to budge beyond the six-inch mark. Instead they produced a thick mat of dwarfish ill-shaped leaves at the tip of each shoot and then just sat down and waited. I watered liberally with no result, so I took bone flour, the only fertilizer I could get at the time, and added an ounce or so of nitrate to say every two or three pounds of the flour, and gave a good dressing of it to each plant, scratching and watering it in. This started growth again. The plants added a foot and a half to their height and gave a fair crop of bloom. But their appearance was peculiar for they left that bunch of dwarf leaves intact, that is, the leaves did not wither at all and were in fact a darker hue than the normal ones, so that the stalks looked as though they were built in two stories. I have seen this occasionally before, but not so strikingly, for not a stalk on any of the clumps escaped.

I have found that a generous application



of liquid manure to all my plants during their first few inches of growth is a great aid, if they do not seem to get hold of the manure forked into the earth at the time of planting. Maybe when they are so young they don't know how to eat, or can't elaborate their food from the more crude state. Anyhow I have found that they do better on a plus of liquid manure and a minus of solid than vice versa. Of course, I don't mean to say that I would give all liquid by any means. I believe in good old-fashioned barnyard manure well forked in. There is nothing better and no real substitute.

By the way, I always use a fork in my flower beds and around trees. A spade often does damage to the roots and will cut more bulbs than the fork. But in breaking up ground, especially new ground, a mattock and spade are by far the best, after that the fork is always as good and often better.

The recumbent forms of Phlox (Drummond's) are splendid for covering beds and spaces that would otherwise look bare. They are brilliantly coloured and easy to grow and offer a wide choice. They have no particular odour, but this objection can be over-



come by planting Verbenas with them, as the similar habits of Verbenas lend themselves to this mixture. In fact, it often requires quite close observation to distinguish between the two.

Beside harmony of shape and colour, some art is required when mixing plants to get the proper combination of scent. Roses and Lilies are best by themselves, so too are the Syringas, for the rich perfume of the Lilac would be injured by a mixture. But Verbenas and Sweet Peas and Balm or Wallflower and Balm and Sweet-briar blend exquisitely. Jonquils also combine splendidly with the last three. Hyacinths should be by themselves. But there are many combinations which you can find out for yourself and you will find, as I have, that the variations seem almost endless. Tall Phlox with their clean country odours, and their somewhat prim foliage, set at perfect right angles like the four points of a compass, are better unmated. They look handsome in a high vase for a large room, but for ordinary sized rooms their splendid panicles are a trifle too big. So mine are not cut; they are left unrifled of



bloom, white sentinels of the border-land of my garden, lords of my outland marches.

I do not care for a prim garden, and only a fairly tidy one. I like to plant my flowers in such a mixture that the favours of one may hide the faults of another. For instance, I plant *Nemophila* and Evening Scented Stocks together that the thicker foliage of the former may, to a certain extent, hide the rather bare stems of the latter. I like a well ordered garden. By this I mean where the minimum amount of order is combined with the maximum amount of freedom. Within certain broad lines I let my plants choose for themselves where and how they will grow. So many people make their gardens with a measuring tape and a parallel rule. Each plant is fitted in its place without regard to true beauty, which is sacrificed to uniformity. They throw taste and individuality to the winds and out of a tangle of beauty chop the acme of ugliness. A man with a thirty by forty front garden will try to copy a city park, working out formal flower beds wherein plants are tortured into the shape of problems of geometry. The average city park, while a riot of colour, is about as interesting



to walk in as the carpet room of a furniture store. It is not laid out by artists but by artisans, the kind of people who trim ornamental trees to look like a mop or torture them into animal shapes and lay out the flower beds to look as nearly as possible like a child's attempt at colouring the figures in a page of Euclid.



CHAPTER X
MY ASTERS



CHAPTER X.

About the thicket flames the Golden-rod, while white
The Pearly Everlasting spreads the news
The briar-tangled grasses on the forest edge
Reveals the Aster's dainty bloom. The pools
Catch the still heavens between the tufted sedge.

—*Ode to Autumn.*

ASTERS always arouse in me two kinds of feelings. I love the wild varieties. I admire the garden ones. The wild ones are of the very soul of the prairies and of the blossoming wildernesses of the Northern Hemisphere. They are a miracle of flowery fairy wands. I have seen them on the prairies when their slender branching stems were curved with the weight of starlike blooms which were set so closely together that there was not sign of a stem at all. Some varieties had flowers as large as a quarter, others so small that a dozen blossoms scarcely cover my thumbnail. These flowers are memory flowers. They are redolent with the spirit of



the wilds, of tangled grasses in sunny glades and long the forest edges. They are sweet with the memories of sparkling mornings when Autumn loiters down the waiting hills, of brown-gold sheaves of wheat, of the barley's dull white beneath the hunting moon, its bearded heads rustling faintly in September winds. Where the pasture land meets the russet woods and the untrodden grasses grow high and intermingle with the advance guards of the copse, there singly or in miniature thickets we see the Asters, in all shades of purple, from light to dark and occasionally an almost pure white one. Little wholesome maids of Autumn, sweet cool presences vaguely fragrant with the tang which only Autumn woods and Autumn hills and vales can give, a tang born of leaves turning crimson and gold in the lazy sunlight of the Fall.

I have a bunch of Wild Asters in my garden. They are planted in a corner which is nearly as wild as a made garden can be. They have my full permission to do as they please except to look like civilization. And so they are growing there starring a little tangled thicket of Roses with their blue fringed eyes. Aster means star. The Asters



were so named, I suppose, because the yellow centres and white or blue petals reminded folks of stars inset in rays. They are a dainty flower though the word fragile does not describe them, but rather, slender and wholesome. The garden varieties ranging through all the shades of white and pink and purple are splendid for mass effects, the dark purples and whites being especially bold and striking for conventional beds. For these I prefer the more dwarf and compact varieties, while those of the tall, branching habits I like for single effect and for cutting. I am fond of all varieties, but find that those with very long drooping petals show the effect of rain much sooner than the shorter-petaled do, the petals being inclined to mat when wet, thus giving them a very bedraggled appearance.

There, they have caught me in a road which winds through woods of Beechen and Oak trees, Hazel and Hawthorn, Bramble and a tangled growth of Rose and Woodbine. Young Sir Harry of Underwolde Hall is rollicking along, his mare picking her way daintily down the bridle path among the trees. He is gay this morning and is whistling a lilting madrigal. A feather is set rakishly in his hat



and his doublet of finest velvet is slashed in the latest fashion. The sound of a man's voice, raised somewhat untunefully in a drinking song, comes echoing out of the thickets ahead. The mare stops and gazes inquiringly down the bridlepath. Sir Harry's gay whistle ceases abruptly and his hand drops on his sword. Even a man on merry hours bent must needs be ever on his guard lest some highway rogue in green jerkin, or smocked villains from the outer marches, or even Old Nick O' the Wood himself, should suddenly appear and essay not only to rob, but to slit a throat as well. But it is neither of these and Sir Harry, though no coward, looks relieved when he sees advancing toward him through the hither glade a fat-paunched friar bestride a bony-looking nag, which he belabours rather too frequently with a stout oaken staff as he beats time to his singing.

"Marry, Friar Ambrose, but thou gavest me a start! Whence comest thou this morning?"

"From my Lord of Cotswold, his castle, Sir Harry."

"Ha!" exclaims Sir Harry, looking sharply at the friar. "And how is my Lord? An' he



be well, methought I would see him, for my steward would buy beeves from him against St. Michaelmas feast."

The friar looks at the young man with friendly appraising eyes.

"Thy pardon, Sir Harry, if I misdoubt thy words and think that thy visit to Cotswold is not born of a great desire to see its Lord." Sir Harry looks askance for a moment, then replies slyly—

"Methinks, Friar Ambrose, that the rollicking stave I heard thee sing ere thou camest round the bend was not born in holy cloister either, but rather from a flagon of good Flemish or round a bowl of spiced ale." Friar Ambrose laughed till his capacious paunch wobbled like a jelly.

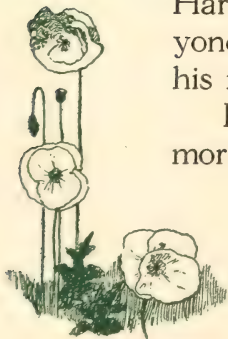
"Thou hast a shrewd tongue, Sir Harry. But I bethink me now that his Lordship of Cotswold, with his Lady, set out for London town yestere'en to be at the King's Court for a month and further he left the Lady Editha with her needlewoman behind, where—so the birds say—she hath loneliness for a companion. Also this morning, after I had broken my fast with my usual dry crust and pitcher of water,



she gave me this token, constraining me to deliver it to one Sir Harry of Underwolde."

The young man caught the sprig of Wild Aster that the friar fished from his pouch, pressed it to his lips for a moment, then stuck it in his cap alongside the feather. Turning a red but laughing face towards the friar, he said, "My steward hath a flagon of good Flemish in the cellars, shouldst thou care to wash the taste of thy dry bread and water from thy tongue. Also he may perchance find thee a fat capon, or a venison pasty to go with it. Here is my token. Take it and Underwolde Hall is at thy service. Also if thou wilt have thy missal ready which containeth the words of Holy Matrimony, I mayhap shall have need of thee come Michaelmas day." And turning his mare once more into the path he galloped away. Friar Ambrose gazed after him for a moment with kindly eyes, then with a final wave of the hand and a muttered "pax vobiscum" as Sir Harry glanced back ere he disappeared beyond a clump of Beeches, the friar too turned his nag and resumed his journey.

It is a pity that we people do not grow more of the perennial Asters. Of course, one



reason may be that our gardens are so small. I think, however, that the real reason is that we are ignorant of them and no one calls our attention to them, the florist for business reasons being too busy with the annual varieties to bother about the perennial, and what we see is largely what we buy. We are born conservative. It is a common thing in a seed store to hear in reply to a dealer's recommendation of a certain seed—"I don't know that flower, so I'll not buy it."

The perennial Asters are a hardy race and of easy culture, much more so than the so-called China Asters, the annual one. The latter, however, are more showy and as a whole are better for cut flowers. They are charming rather than beautiful or pretty. North America supplies the vast majority of perennial Asters, although Europe and Asia both produce a few. They are a temperate zone plant, hence their freedom of growth in our garden and perhaps this is one reason why we do not grow more of them. It is difficult for us to see beauty in our immediate neighbours. I have known people living in fishing ports who wouldn't touch fish. The



human is a singularly perverse beast and often very stupid.

The garden Aster with its fringe of green leaves tucked in around its chin always reminds me of a very properly dressed up lady who will have nothing to do with common flowers "You know, my dear, they do not come of a good family, so of course we never recognize them," whispered the Lady Aster, referring to the late blooming Stocks and Marigolds. After all the Lady may be a trifle disdainful, a trifle proud of her blue blood. I admit that if you want to see her at her best, you must give her plenty of room and good soil; she will not tolerate a crowd; why should she? She is really worth room which you will admit at once if you gather a good handful of the purple and white blooms, arrange them together in a cut glass bowl and place them as a centre piece on a large and preferably round table. If you can find flowers more royal than they, good, clean, wholesome royalty, or more worthy of your homage, tell me, for I should like to see them.

A friend who loves Asters, yet does not always see eye to eye with me, says—"They are royal, undoubtedly, but of Gypsy blood,



they are not disdainful but carry the tang of the good old earth always with them though they may be gardened and civilized, schooled and varied, yet through it all they keep themselves without flaw and opening wide eyes to the skies of Autumn, they hold their wild, sweet gypsy blood untainted." Perhaps my friend is right. Perhaps the China Asters are not civilized out of their true nature, that in spite of all our efforts the clean-eyed flowers are still true to their old love, to ancient Autumns and Wild-land spirit, they still clothe their souls with the grace of the untrodden ways, and keep their clean, royal, gypsy hearts inviolate.

The sun is warm to-day, closely warm, not hot like a midsummer sun, but a clinging heat that in the street makes one uncomfortable. There is a whitish haze; the sky, because of it, looks a pale and washed out blue, in marked contrast to the keen bright blue of Spring or the violet blue of Summer. In my garden the flowers feel it and droop a little wearily. Here and there a leaf is beginning to curl at the edge. The Roseum Lilies, while not yet in bloom, are showing a decided tendency to go yellow in the leaf. I have noticed that



before and am not sure whether it is due to lack of moisture, a poor soil, or both; I fancy, however, that there is something more fundamental than external conditions at the root of it, something to do with the Lily nature. I do not mean to imply that it desires its leaves to grow yellow, but that it is ready to sacrifice all for the sake of the bloom. The results fully justify the sacrifice. I have planted some of these bulbs a little way inside the edge of the shrubbery. They have grown up and outward at the same time, and are now showing just outside the wall of green. The buds will be open in a few days and then I shall have one or two friends that I know rushing in to see them, green with envy under the impression that I have captured a new plant different from any that they have themselves. They are such funny people. I have met several of them. They have a nice garden and they love it a little, but they miss the real glory of a garden, for they subordinate their love of flowers to their desire to be better or different from their neighbours. I had a beautiful lot of Wallflowers last Spring and a neighbour came in especially to see, as he said, if they were as good as his. He walked



all around the beds, comparing them and occasionally sniffing, not smelling, at them. In one corner near my gate was a small Wallflower grown with others from a packet of seed I purchased. It was a strange puce colour, poor in growth and very unattractive in tint. My neighbour stopped at the gate and remarked complacently, "You have some nice Wallflowers, but I think I can beat you both in colour and in size." Just then his eye fell on that little runt of a plant. Instantly his complacent look gave place to one of envy as he turned to me—

"What's that?"

"A Wallflower."

"Where did you get it?"

"One of the lot I raised from a packet of seed I bought."

"Well, that's the best Wallflower you have."

"Is it?" I remarked indifferently.

"Why, man alive," he waxed vehement, "I don't believe there is another like it in the district. I've never seen one like it before." And as he went off I could see covetousness undulating up and down the back of his coat. I am now daily expecting diplomatic relations



to be broken and a state of war declared by my neighbour in order that he may seize that plant. Or since there is no moon this week, it may be—but then I won't say more. It's unkind to think that even a shining prize like that runty Wallflower would be enough to cause the feet of my neighbour, otherwise a good citizen and a pillar of his church, to leave the path of rectitude if for only one jump and back again, and yet and yet—I've seen quite a number of ruined churches and pillars.

I have another friend who, after looking at my Dahlias last year, made fun of them and lauded his own as being unique. "But," I objected, having seen his the day before, "your Dahlias didn't strike me as being extra beautiful."

"That cuts no ice!" he exclaimed—he is not always choice in his English—"The point is this: there are none like them in the country. Why I paid a dollar and a half apiece for some of them."

"I paid that price for a dozen," I said.

There was a sniff of disdain. "That's all they're worth" he grunted. He is very rude sometimes. As he left my garden he turned



to me very impressively with this important information, "I think that the greatest pleasure of a garden is to have a plant or flower which no one else has." He is a good man, but the gods were unkind and withheld from him the true love.

My neighbour appears at the fence.

"Have ye seen Bobs?"

"No," I reply, noticing at the same time that the Autumn sun seems unable to add anything to that sturdy colour. The tip of the nose looks more burnished than ever and now shines like a glorified Mars in a red sky.

"Bobs chased a cat into the bush just now and we've not seen him since."

"Oh, he'll be back soon," I reply soothingly. "You can't lose Bobs."

"I'm no saying he is lost, but he ought to be back by this time." And my neighbour's two round eyes are fixed on me as though I had eaten the dog and he could detect the outline of him through my waistcoat. My knowledge of said Bobs leads me to believe that he is more likely to eat me than I him. My neighbour meditates for awhile and then, "Did ye hear that King George is suspected of being a Socialist?" I refuse to bite. My



neighbour has tendencies that way, especially marked when looking on the wine when it's red. I don't like Socialism, so I carry the war into Egypt.

"I saw Bobs in the bush two blocks down the street yesterday having a row with another dog," I remark. My neighbour's face grows more animated.

"Did ye now? Bobs is no just an ordinary dog." Then after a cautious look over his shoulder, "Did ye no see which licked? He used to be good at fightin', but he is no so young now as he was, ye ken. But when he was young, he could whip any dog of his size."

I didn't tell my neighbour that I was impressed with the idea that Bobs didn't whip his opponent this time. My reason for this impression was that the said Bobs used his vocal chords in a distinct key of disapproval, while he executed a strategic movement to the rear, in fact many such movements and very rapidly, the last including an ignominious retreat at high speed with colours down, into the sacred precincts of home. When I first sighted the fray I was minded to interfere for the sake of neighbourship, then I remem-



bered the fate of the innocent bystander, also three bites on my right leg. After all Bobs was on the knees of the gods, and I concluded they would put him down when they were tired without my help. Besides the other dog looked unfriendly.

My neighbour is speaking again. He has a bunch of dark Sweet Peas in his buttonhole, too. Well, we're all on the knees of the gods, I believe that I have quoted that before. If the gods are colour blind, we'll probably pull through. My neighbour, having shot in with "Good day", has gone, taking the precious Bobs, who, in the meantime, had turned up, with him. The atmosphere resumes its normal temperature again and life flows gently back into unemotional channels.



CHAPTER XI
MY GOLDEN-ROD



CHAPTER XI.

Life wears a sound of joy that goes with singing Spring,
Summer with laughter fades so soon away,
Winter with snow wreathes stands ashivering—
But Autumn comes with vivid eyes and each sunburned hand
Filled with rich fruits, his head with berries crowned,
And splashing russet wines about the land.

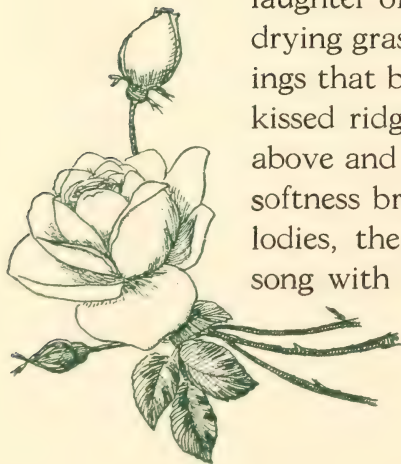
—*Ode to Autumn.*

A ROBIN flew down just now, found a worm and is trying hard to swallow it by starting at the middle, and going towards both ends at once. It looks rather a sticky job to me, but the Robin seems to enjoy it. Now it changes its tactics and starts at one end and the worm goes down after a succession of gulps. Here is hoping that it stays there. I have noticed that this is not always the case, that, to use a slang term, the worm refuses to "stay put". This requires repeated effort on the part of the enthusiastic host to make things comfortable and so avoid pathetic references by humans to his discomfort as in the case of poor "Tit Willow" of musical fame.



I was watching a Kingfisher the other morning down by the sea. He had flown ashore from the shallows with a fish—it looked like a smelt—in his beak. He held it by the middle—crossways—and I was wondering how he would swallow his breakfast and whether he would first pick it to pieces, when with a little toss he snapped the fish into the air, caught it head on and down into the empty gulp. After a moment he left, skimming along under the arching trees a winged blue flame, the little juggler of the water marches.

My garden can boast a healthy root of Golden-rod. The Golden-rod that blooms about the hazy hills on soft warm afternoons of early Fall when the very breezes whisper quiet and all nature seems resting after the laughter of bloom and song of harvest, when drying grasses rustle with soft chaffy whisperings that begin near and die away over wind-kissed ridges, when the sky curves pale blue above and a Presence of infinite strength and softness broods over all and croons faint melodies, the first bars of earth's sweet cradle song with which she sings asleep, flower and

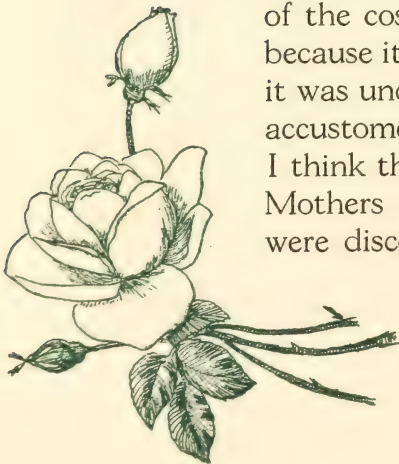


plant and tree ere winter covers them with
down of snow.

The air of Autumn is second to none for
sweetness, yet 'tis not the honeyed sweetness
of later Spring and Summer, but sweetness
with a tang in it which acts as a flick to our
nostrils and we quicken our step unconsciously
and walk more firmly. We may not feel the
swift-winged, light-heartedness that we did in
the Spring, but there is a fullness in our
laughter, a deep fundamental tone in our joy
that swings us along the tangled woodland
ways with a strength that is untiring. A new
life has been born in us. It has the vigour of
Autumn seas and the joy of downward dancing
waters; it has strange powers and is filled
with dim memories. A sense of life that
drifts at will about the thickets where stray
bees hum drowsily across cool hills, where
Golden-rod and Asters and late Sunflowers
bloom and where the still air is heavy with
aroma of seeding herbs. It floats lazily about
fields of barley and sheaved oats and wheat,
of tree-set foreland and wooded closes. This
new life has our every-day life and some other
old life, some intangible memory of the past,
woven into its fabric and mixed with all is the



Golden-rod—the very spirit of Autumn incarnate. Its old generic name of *Solidago* practically means to make whole, to heal. "It being a plant of great virtue in the healing of grievous wounds and of much benefit to those suffering divers diseases, blains and running sores from whatsoever causes, and such as suffer from pestilent humours of the blood that manifesteth itself in sores and painful assault of the body will find it a puissant aid to restore health. The leaves must be picked with the tender stems at the latter end of August, preferably of that which groweth in the hedgerows of the uplands. A sovereign remedy may be made by crushing the leaves in a mortar and mixing the pulp with fresh sheeps' tallow." So runs an old formulæ of our great-grandmother, who could heal a wound just about as well and as quickly as our titled medicos and with one-hundredth of the cost. But this does not appeal to us because it does not sound so profound, though it was undoubtedly safer and better. We are accustomed to read of the Fathers of Medicine. I think that it would be truer to speak of the Mothers of Medicine, for a lot of remedies were discovered by old country women, our



great-grandmothers, who at various seasons gathered their herbs and hung them in bunches on the kitchen rafters to be transferred to the loft or herb room later. We have all sorts of intricate ways of gathering, curing and preparing our medicine these days, but I question if we have advanced so much as we think. We have carried our chemistry to such a pitch that we now extract and use the so-called active principal or alkaloid of a plant instead of an extract of the whole plant, but I doubt if we have increased its general efficacy. I do not think that the extract of a plant, when torn into its constituent parts, is so healing as the mother tincture or pulp. I doubt if the chemical constituents of a plant are as healing when apart as they are when combined by nature in her superb and matchless laboratory. I believe we get better all-round results from Aconite than we do from Aconitin, from Belladonna than from Atropin, from Digitalis than from Digitalin and so on. For besides a far wider range of action exercised by the natural extract, we get a different and more healing action due possibly to that intangible thing, the totality of the component parts, the spirit of the



crowd, rather than the spirit of the individual I am not denying that exceptions to this exist.

But I am forgetting my Golden-rod which is waving half-defiant plumes of yellow in the farther bed near the Wild Asters, its cousins. I planted them close to each other for company. That is the way nature plants them, and I have a whim that they would be happier growing among their friends. Nature places certain flowers near each other and why shouldn't they form friendships? They have grown that way perhaps half a million years, they have many things in common and are no doubt complementary in some way to one another; perhaps in some intangible manner each helps the others grow towards loveliness. If flowers need flying things and flying things need flowers, why not flowers need flowers? As a child I always felt sorry for the solitary pine one occasionally sees jutting out from the face of a grey cliff where its root had managed to find a hold. It looked pathetic to me, and as the evening shadows stole along the Range and down that corrugated, stern face and glooms crept up from the valley veiling that sun-limned pine, or sharpened the emptiness of its surroundings, my young heart used to



feel sorry for its loneliness and wonder if in some strange way it did not miss companionship and envy its friends on the slopes above or in the valley below. There seemed to me to be no compensating conditions. I remember another kind of pure loneliness that I appreciated and almost envied and that was where I saw some grim, storm-scarred veteran of the hills thrust its head above the mountain's highest crest, alone, but with a regal solitude as befits an old King, Storm Defier and Lord of the great hills, one, who having overcome all, has no peers, only subjects. The wisdom of the forest was of its youth's knowledge. Now the giant storms only could meet its thoughts, the tides of interstellar space alone whisper to it of unknown things, the great dwellers of our Universe the Sun and Stars only could companion it.

But I am forgetting, the twilight deepens in my garden. I can just make out the swaying plumes of the Golden-rod. I have planted it where it can get good soil, moisture and a certain amount of shade, so the stems are three feet high and the plumes well developed.

There are many varieties of the Golden-



rod, most of which are from North America, while a few are from Europe—none, so far as I am aware, from the Southern Hemisphere. I often wonder how some of these plants came to be native. Did they originate in Europe or across the wide blue Atlantic in America? Did the old Norse Sea Kings, who knew America before Columbus dreamed, bring the seed here or take some back with them to Europe? Or did some feathered argosy carry, on muddy feet, the rich merchandise that should set wild fields asheet of gold or star with blue every woodland way? Or are we half a million years behind in our knowledge? Did some continent, wiped out by that dread, watery cataclysm of our legends, hold a great civilization whose children, exploring the islands which now form America and Europe, scattered seeds on them, seeds grown in the pleasant meadows of their home land, old Atlantis or older Lemuria, long since buried beneath the wild waters of the all-obliterating sea? I find that Golden-rod and dusk and the untamed odours of my garden are rare stuffs on which to dream.

Bobs is barking at me. I can tell from the direction of the sound that he is standing



with his nose just as close to his favourite knothole as he can get it. He is taking his constitutional before being imprisoned in the basement for the night. When I am not around to be barked at he chases imaginary cats over the fence with great rejoicing, always keeping a business eye on my premises to see if I am about; if I am he will transfer his vocal demonstrations from mythical cats to me. I don't know what Bobs would do without me; I believe he would die of ennui. I seem to be the salt of his life. Cats may come and cats may go, but I stay on forever. It's too dark for me to see him from where I stand, except as a blur of white, but I can picture just how he looks with his nose thrust pugnaciously against the knot-hole, the absurd remains of a tail jerking to and fro and his eyes looking in no particular direction as he barks. I really don't believe he dislikes me, but I never saw a dog that worked so hard to keep up a pretense of animosity as he does. He labours at it until he almost persuades himself that he believes it. He has no initiative, hence his struggles to keep up appearances and talk, for I never resent his attentions. Once in a while when



his folks are away, I may heave a rock or a piece of brick in his direction, or jab a handful of herbage through the knot-hole against his black nose, but I do it with no feeling of anger in my heart, only an honest endeavour to play my end of the game, and I am certain that he accepts it in the spirit in which it is offered, even to the amount of half a brick, for on its receipt the garden rings with his exultant shouts. My offerings to Bobs always seem to come as a surprise to him. This is no doubt owing to his innate modesty. Bobs does not appear to be one of those "dumb" but noble friends of man. I am positive that he is not dumb and I have never seen anything approaching the sacrificial in his behaviour. He has retired now in answer to a quiet call from the basement. His mistress's daughter is a very sweet lady, also she is pretty, and Bobs, being a gentleman of the old school, is naturally gallant, for a dog may bark a lot and still be a gentleman. Besides he has gathered wisdom from the harvest of years and he knows that though gentle of voice and kindness itself, yet that daintily moulded smooth right arm carries well-developed muscles and that those slender



fingers, so deft at embroidery, can also wield the rod of discipline in a most impressive manner. So in answer to the call, Bobs abruptly brought his evening song to a close, the last few tones gurgling inarticulate in his throat, and my garden is left to the ghosts of many cats, the shadowy flowers, the faint starlight, the brooding silence and the presence of a Peace that passeth all Understanding.



CHAPTER XII
MY DAHLIAS



CHAPTER XII.

Sacred to sun and wind and rain
I keep my garden rare,
I like to feel its touch of grace
Within the City's glare.

I like to think perchance when falls
The hush of evening hours,
Some spirit tired of men awhile
Comes here to love my flowers.

—*My Garden.*

THIS MORNING early when my garden, silvered with dew, lay a gleam in that spirit light which precedes not exactly dawn, but the fuller radiance which we usually call dawn, I was standing on the South path by the old-fashioned flower bed when I became aware of the scent of Cloves. The damp morning air was drenched with it. I wondered for a moment what plant it could be. I knew I had no Carnation there and then I caught sight of three Brompton Stocks in full bloom. The last six inches of their rather bare branches were laden with fragrant blossoms. It oc-



curred to me how rarely Nature makes or uses anything for one purpose only. Look at the Rosaceæ: on the one hand Roses, on the other Apples, Cherries, etc. Here again the Cruciferæ: on the one hand Cabbages, Turnips, etc., on the other Wallflowers, Stocks, Erysimum and so on. Now I wonder if nature made flowers for us to enjoy or for grubs to eat. She is a strange old lady, full of quirks and crochets, but marvellously wise, always doing the unexpected thing, which when done, appeals so to common sense that we wonder why we did not think of and expect it.

For some reason or other I had forgotten my old-fashioned bed by the South walk with its Sweet Williams and Pinks, Wallflowers and Stocks. Our Stocks, like many other families, have both annual and perennial branches. The annual is by far the commonest and best for show cultivation because of their compact habit of growth. But if you have an odd corner or a semi-background and desire a sweet savour in that vicinity, put in a few plants of Brompton Stock, it will repay you, for like its cousin the Evening Scented Stock, its clinging sweetness will far more than com-



pensate for the somewhat leafless stems. Its scent is redolent with memory of high-walled gardens, splashing fountains, old rambling houses with casement windows and picturesque gable ends, broken roof-lines and clustered chimneys. Inside wide, low-ceiled rooms, wainscotted in oak, black with the mystery of years. You wander into the garden and watch the stately peacock strut across the lawn. Proud fowl, he knows he is a privileged character, that no other bird save Phyllis's pigeons are allowed on those velvet-grassed terraces. A little Page has just come out to announce that dinner will be ready when the dial shows twelve o' the clock. And you wander on with the little Lady Elaine prattling beside you of the calf which Betty the cow hath, of the fact that her father's favourite bracket hath five puppies of which Arthur hath one given to him, Lancelot and Harry have one each saved for them when they shall return from Bristol town where they have been since the day before Midsummer's Eve. And as she prattles along she crushes with dainty frock-swept feet the sprigs of Thyme and Rosemary, of Balm and Lavender and Mint that hedge the paths of



the lower garden, where she gathers with her chubby fingers a handful of catnip for Ann, her mother's old tortoise-shell cat, then you return through the orchard close, where the apples and pears are scattered beside the paths from their espaliers and peaches loom golden-red upon the walls. Now cometh Master Humphrey, the cellarer, to announce something. He bows low, "My Lady desireth me to say that the venison ye hunted yesterday now smoketh on the platter and Her Ladyship desireth the honour of your company." You enter the wide old hall where a hearty voice cries welcome and Sir John strides up to shake your hand and apologize for leaving you unaccompanied, as he had to be up ere sunrise to set certain varlets a-reaping in the upper farm and "troth, I had to cozen one lazy villain with my whip," he added, laughing.

You enter the wide dining hall whose casements on the South are open through which Rose and Woodbine swing saucy arms into the room, while on the West side French windows opening on the lawn, which is as green as my Lord's doublet. You greet her Ladyship who rises gracefully from her high-



backed chair and advances with smiling face to bid you "Good morrow, Sir Charles". You bow low to that white-haired lady with her bright, happy eyes and cheeks as pink as any seventeen-year-old miss and pinned among the laces of her wondrous gown you see a posy of Stocks plucked by the Lady Winnifred especially for the occasion. You escort her Ladyship to her place and take your own at her right hand; the bunch of keys hanging at her waist jingle musically as she moves. A sign and the serving man removes the great pewter dish cover and—you wake up standing on the South path of my garden beside the bed of Brompton Stocks. Near my bed of Stocks are my Dahlias. I wonder why people will persist in calling them Day-lias when the "Dah", the first syllable, is as plain as the nose on one's face. It should be pronounced as it is spelled and not "day". This plant is named in honour of a Swedish botanist, Dr. Dahl.

I haven't a wide collection of them, just a few each of the Decorative, the Cactus, Single and Show varieties. I have picked those that bloom best for me. I have no desire to try for prizes at a show. I grow my



flowers for myself, for the joy and love of them and for any friends who care to come and enjoy them with me and carry away a bunch of rainbows in their hands. One of my neighbours goes in for giant in the flower line and prizes. He never gives a flower away and rarely has one indoors on his table, for he keeps them all for this or that show, or to see if he can beat so and so for size. He is always grumbling about his garden. Either he has too many worms and bugs or too few. It's too dry or too wet, or the soil is too rich or too poor. If you go in to look around he behaves as though you were waiting to pick something just as soon as his back is turned. On the whole his garden is not a source of joy, but a pleasant misery to him. I am not opposed to Flower Shows, in fact I like to go to them, I like to grow the best flowers I can in my own garden; but to grow flowers for prizes or to beat my neighbour is not my desire. I don't love my flowers that way. I love them for themselves.

This Dahlia here is a crimson Cactus Dahlia. I believe it did have a name, but it was given to me unnamed and it doesn't need one; it's pretty enough without. The Cactus,



the Collarette and others of their kind, are the Artists. They are so careless about their dress even to the point of superficial untidiness, but they are lovely. As there are human artists whose physical presence appears untidy, perhaps unkempt, yet when they open their souls and you watch the wonder of them and their splendid spirit shining through, you forget that they ever were untidy, you wonder even why you thought so and as you grow to know them better you learn to love and honour them and value their friendship as you would a gift direct from heaven. So with these Artist Dahlias. At first sight you are apt to think them untidy, a carelessly dressed flower. This is perhaps more marked in Dahlias than in other flowers, because the older varieties were so prim and each petal so precisely in its proper place that we unconsciously measure by that standard.

Some of my friends say that Dahlias will do well in poor soil. I don't doubt them, but mine won't. Mine may be exceptional plants, although I think not. But they want good soil and when they don't get it they won't play, that's all. So I fork in stable manure



before I plant them and when the stems are up I make depressions around them, drawing the earth in a wide circle and fill this two or three times a week with water, occasionally adding a little liquid manure, or on wash days all the soapsuds I can spare from other plants. I find that my Dahlias want plenty of moisture in spite of their having first come from Mexico, which I always considered a rather dry place. I plant healthy-eyed tubers singly, finding that there is too much foliage if the whole crown is planted. For the same reason I do not plant the old tuber, but a young healthy one with a couple of viable eyes and I stake it as soon as possible. I used to wait until the plants needed support before I staked, but I found then that I often injured the new roots when driving the stake. I now avoid this by staking when planting. I have grown Dahlias from seed and if planted early they will produce flowers the same season, but with limited garden space it is unwise, as new worthy varieties are rare.

I think plants are like animals, they respond to love. I have seen beautiful blooms produced under most adverse conditions for some one who loved the plant—and I have



seen plants, that by all the laws of gardening ought to have produced a miracle of bloom, throw only mediocre ones. After all, why should not the fancy be true? We believe Love is the Great Heart of the Universe, and many believe it is the Primal Force. If this be true, then all things, plants included, must respond, not only to the Universal Current of Love, but to the tiny side eddies that ebb and flow around each living creature. I have noticed that people who love plants can grow them, whether it be in terraced gardens before a pillared palace or in a rusty tomato can in the garret window of a city tenement, in my garden or in my neighbour's. For called forth by that magic of the heart, each plant grows as an altar gift to the Most High in His Temple of Love.

So my garden grows, each plant loved for itself and responding to love as best it may. I like none better than the other. I love my Pansy and my Rose alike, my Lily and my Daisy. They are all children of Love, and children of my love by natural and inevitable relationship as well as adoption, my little fairy-eyed brothers and sisters fashioned by



the same Hands and Thought and Love that fashioned me—and out of the same rich clay.

I have said very little about planting, because many of my flowers plant themselves. I don't like formal gardens—neither do I like sloppy ones, so I first put my flowers about where I want them to grow and then leave them to themselves. They have settled down now, not in every case just where I put them, but close enough to show that they mean no disrespect to me, only that they found it absolutely necessary to change my plans slightly. I like my Clematis by the house or verandah pillars, my honeysuckle near, but not quite in contact with my bedroom windows, my Wallflower close to the downstairs windows, in fact just under them, and in early mornings when I lie half awake, or later in the day when I am reading or writing, the winds, wandering, merry robbers that they are, carry in puffs of fragrance to me like waftings of joy caught from some far away celestial laughter.

And so my garden dreams. Or is it I who dream? Somehow it seems more at home in the world than I. For at rare intervals by day, oftener by night, when



entering into it suddenly, I have a sense as though everything had stopped as I entered, that some lovely life-secret of the garden was almost caught off its guard, almost, but not quite, seen by me. That because of my lack of some subtle sense I was looked upon as partially an outsider, even though a loved one, not yet quite fit to behold the full beauty of that secret. For perhaps my garden does not dream, but lives a real life, I only thinking it dreams because I am partly blind. It may be that some day a deep initiation shall give vision to my eyes, and hearing to my ears—then with a rush of fragrance I shall see not only the living soul of every flower, but that Spirit whose radiant Presence is what I now sense as the intangible grace and beauty of my garden, the lovely Spirit of—My Garden Dreams.



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The type-face which has been used in the composition of this book is Monotype No. 38E, commonly called "Goudy". This is one of Frederic W. Goudy's first designs, produced in 1905. It is not a copy of any existing letter, although in colour it savors somewhat of French, being very light and delicate. While Goudy is classed with the "old style" family, it is not a strictly representative type. The letters are closely fitted yet enough white space inside and outside of each character to give a pleasing balance to the colour of a page.

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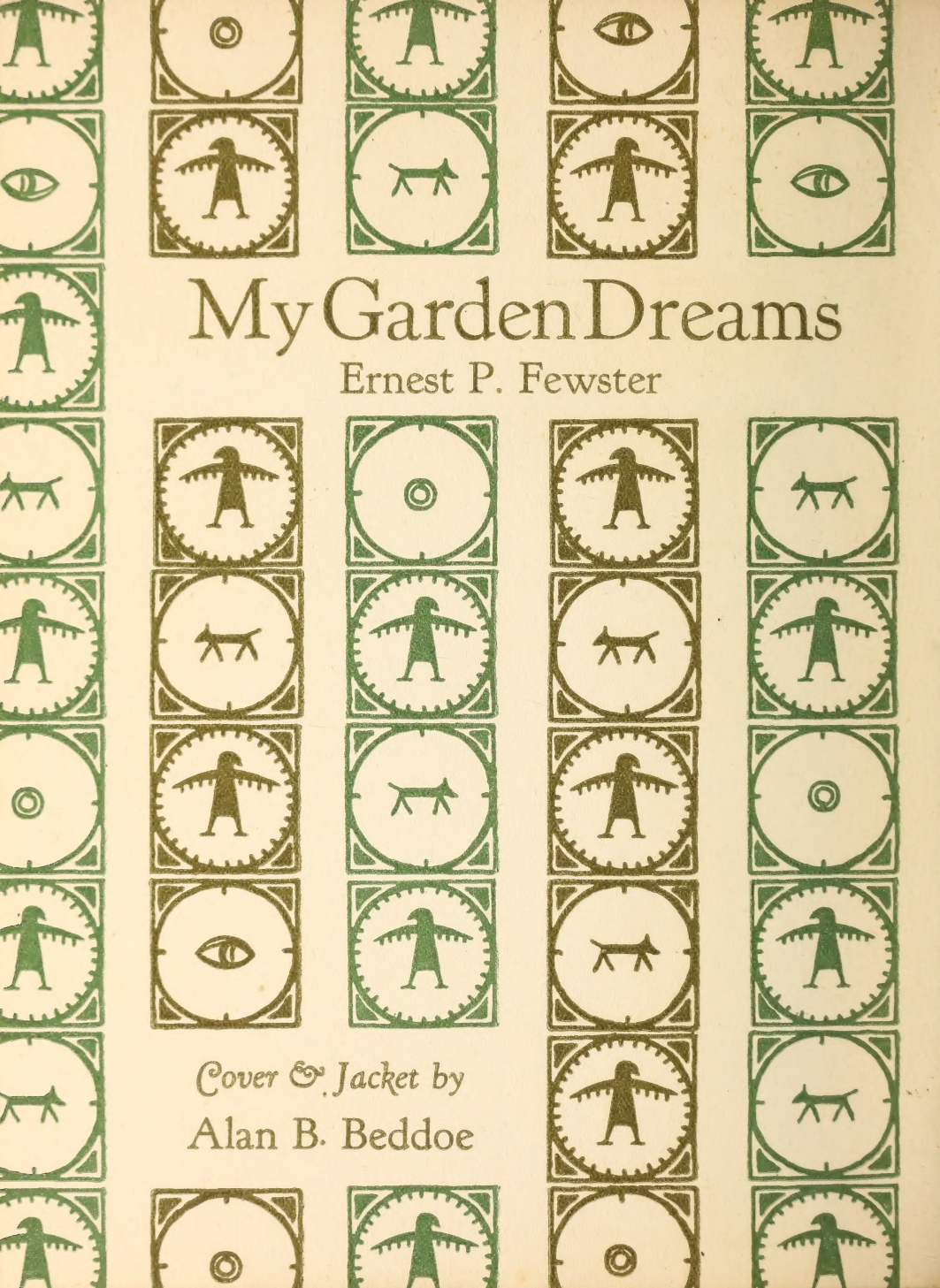
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My Garden Dreams

Ernest P. Fewster

Cover & Jacket by
Alan B. Beddoe

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