

YOUNG WOMEN'S AUXILIARIES.

THE GARDEN OF THE LORD.

My Dear Girls:

Don't you just adore gardens, and doesn't your soul sport itself in the one you are going to have—that lovely one, with the old box hedges and sun-dial, the rows of lilies straight and tall, the foxgloves and lavender, the pinks and bells and that tangle of ramblers and jasmine cool and deep, where you share your joy with the thrush and tanager, and can scarcely tell bird from bloom?

How your fancy flies, and memory, too, at the very name Garden; and as swift as thought you are oceans away in the Villa d'Este Garden, under the charm and spell that magic Italy has been weaving for centuries. There is St. Peter's dome, just cutting the western sky-line; Hadrian's Villa, down yonder in the grove of cypress; back of you lovely Tivoli, with its temple and waterfalls; the Now links on to the Then; pagan joins Christian; and what memories and fancy thrill you just because you are deep in an old garden! That quaint old vicarage garden, with its gay and pungent blooms, keeps fresh the memory of Shakespeare, when a lad in the school hard by. The garden of the yews and the saffron roses around old Stoke Poges, so quaint and yet so ever steeped in silence that flows round and up and back to God. A garden—peace, and rest, and beauty, and communion, and—your best Self. Our Father, we are told, loved to walk in that first garden and talk with His friends, the keepers of the garden. No wonder His Son loved the olive groves, so strangely strong and still, so friendly and confiding. Haven't you met some people—oh, not many, unfortunately—who always make you think of lovely gardens—they are so quiet and restful—they always strengthen and hearten you! Wouldn't it be lovely to minister to this tired, hot, feverish world as the gardens do?

Do you remember that cool and glade-like verse in Isaiah, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually and strengthen thy soul in drought and then thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not?" Can't you just feel the fresh breath of that watered garden, and imagine

the blessing on all who walked through it? I believe the Master enjoys His garden now, though it is not the shadow and shade of the vine and the olives, but rather the men and the women and the children who are growing into His likeness. I believe He has the same satisfaction that an enthusiast takes in showing you his garden in the early spring. You follow him from bed to bed, trying to see through his eyes the flowers as he points them out. Here are Persian poppies, and over there are larkspurs; all along the side are sweet peas, and beyond are hollyhocks—but it is all brown soil to you. "This stick," you say, "this is dead, isn't it?" "Oh, no; that is a Japanese cherry." "But this shrub is surely winter-killed?" "No; that will soon be covered with clusters; that is a rose acacia." It is hard to believe these words when sight is so contradictory. The friend enjoys his garden in hope, seeing with his eye of faith the invisible bloom, confident from past experience that what is only loam and earth will be flower and fruit. So I love to think the Master walks among all the Auxiliary girls, watching their development, comparing their growth, considering them, as He says, "Here in this heart I have planted kindly deeds; in this one the spirit of sacrifice; there a willingness to serve others; and here patient forbearance; and they are all doing well." As the different seeds draw their life from the same soil and develop according to the principle within them, so may every one of us, drawing our life from the one Great Life, develop what He has planted in us, and so we may add glory and beauty to the garden of the Lord. Many of you may be only in the early spring stage of your development, but yield yourself to His care; let Him train you, for He knows your possibility; He will bring you to perfection. As a frost often checks florescence, so being out of touch with Him will mar the blossom. Live in the warmth and glow of His presence. The year of the new Society is at the spring, and will need every one of you to grow tall and straight and strong for the fashioning of the Woman's Baptist Foreign Mission Society. I beg of you, serve the