

push parts them and we enter a labyrinth of green paths leading now by a pond, now by a brook, now at the foot of a hill on which the sun rests, now under a dense shade of thick-growing trees. Now we come to a cool grotto offering unneeded rest. So mingled are care and carelessness, that nature seems to play at imitating her imitator, art. Fruit trees abound. The ripe figs hang with others scarcely formed amid the leaves. Apples ripe and golden, green and hard, are mixed with flushing blossom, and on the sunny slopes the vines hang out their clusters, now gold, now red, and heavy with glowing juice. The wind carries the whispers of water and leaves now loudly, now softly in answer to the birds, till one of the latter, a gorgeous-plumaged beauty, sings such notes as hush all others in listening admiration. He is Tasso's bond servant and wears his livery.

His song ended, we pass on and reach a gate of purest ivory,

"And therein all the famous history
Of Jason and Medea is writ."

Within is a broad lawn dotted with groups of flowers, and the air is that of English June, though June it cannot be, for opposite is another gateway, "no gate but like one," of arched boughs embraced and bound together by a vine, and the great bunches hang tempting, some hyacinthine purple, some ruby red, some still green as emerald. But it is the ear which is charmed here even more than the eye. No earthly music can be sweeter. In Spencer's garden,

"Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree";

and only Milton's "melting voice through mazes running" can produce the same effect of dreamy, delicious fascination. Upon all these three gardens there rests a rosy haze which enhances the beauty by veiling it, spreading a faint pink mist over tree and flower, over fountain and hill.

Passing out the misty glamour is gone, but not the pleasure, for we come upon a mingled scene of orchard and pleasance, of vineyard and lawn which is exquisitely pretty.

"The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach,
Stumbling on melons as I pass
Ensnared with flowers I fall on grass."

Andrew Marvell might call himself a puritan, but he forgot his puritanism when he planted that garden.

My lord of Verulam has a pleasance near by, but we will pass that and look in at a quaint little enclosure where grow basil and thyme, balm, marygolds and cuphrasy, lavender and marjoram, with a birch tree drooping overhead. As we turn away we hear a quavering old voice singing "such psalms as Sternhold forth did mete," and for once we like to hear them.

Now we turn aside to a field where flowers spring as though there had once been a garden now neglected. Here grow Christmas roses, Star of Bethlehem and Purification flower, Lent lilies, Passion flower and Crosswort, Pasque

flower, Whitsuntide flower and Herb Trinity, Our Lady's Laces, Our Lady's Smock, Our Lady's Bedstraw, S. Mary's Gold and S. John's Lilies, Michaelmas daisies, the flowers of S. Margaret and S. Valentine, Herb S. Robert, Sweet S. William, S. John's Wort and S. Barnaby's Thistle.

A stream runs here, and standing by a tall Annunciation lily we look across. There is no bridge, but we may see something of the Garden beyond. The air seems filled with a golden light and thrilling with sweetest sound as though the tree-branches were Æolian harps and answered every breath of air with music. There are glorious palms and cedars, and under their shade

"There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen."

"For things that pass are past, and in that field
The indecible spring no winter fears."

Many plants there are, but two are so lovely that we hardly mark the rest, for

"Martyrdom hath roses
Upon that holy ground,
And white and virgin lilies,
For virgin souls abound,"

Lilies with petals of silvery brightness like snow in sunlight,

"Albeit with crimson
Some more precious leaves are veined."

The beauty we have seen before was such as we could understand, this is beyond us:

"It is all gold, it is all splendour—wings
Like pearl and sapphire and such lovely things
Are soaring round."

Walking towards us from the other side comes a form we know well, the face turned upwards, eyes seeking the sky. Some eyes are brilliant, some glowing, but these! they fill us with a sense of what the faculty of sight *may* be, as having seen and seeing what no other eyes have looked upon, We follow the direction of their gaze and the sky above is quivering and shimmering into waves of white light, and the waves curve into form, and shining one behind another in snowy folds are the petals of a great rose. And as we still look, these petals are instinct with life, and we know that each one is a choir of Paradise, and that the brightness flashing from one to another is the golden light of the angels' wings. Our eyes fall. They cannot brook long the glory that Dante loves to look upon, and we draw back from the margin of the stream. But the lily and the rose are more precious to us than before, and we handle them more reverently as faint types of the perfect beauty

BELFIELD.