

IN A ROSE GARDEN.

It is with a thought of Easter and the Easter blossoms that we make our March journey, for we know that in the sunny glass houses—the birth places of the winter blooms—lilies, azaleas, carnations, roses and all the flower world are now putting forth their buds, ready to make sweet the approaching festival of the Resurrection.

It is a pilgrimage worth the making, as Toronto citizens have discovered. There is rarely a day in the week, or an hour in the day, that flower lovers may not be found wandering up and down through the great acreage of the Dunlop conservatories, basking with the myriad blossoms in the glorious sunlight that flashes through the crystal roofing, sharing with them the fructifying heat, and becoming one with them in silent receptivity of all gracious natural influence.

For they overpower our humanity—these forests of beautiful things. We leave our passions and pains outside in the chill March world, as factors that are no more part of us; we enter into a newer life and growth—the growth of the lilies.

Acres under glass! A dozen great conservatories, which stretch their glittering length down through vistas of foliage; and thousands of blossoms lifting their graceful crowns in the sunshine.

It is the fairest picture that Toronto can show. It is the sweetest anthem that could be sung. And no Easter

sermon, from lips however eloquent, could tell forth such gracious truths as do the beautiful still-growing blooms.

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Every one knows where the Dunlop roseries are, west and north and west again, far along Bloor street into the freshness of country air. The trolley drops us close beside them—we see the expanse of glass—a two and a half acreage glittering in the sun; and in a moment we are out of the grey and the chill and the scudding March clouds, we are out of our pains and humanities too,—we are in a tropic land and—considering the lilies.

We are greeted by Mr. Dunlop, who is always found among his blossoms; and with his permission, begin our ramble—a dear familiar ramble it has become to many of us—under glass and amid masses of rose blooms, on and on as long as we will, with ever fresh vistas opening before us.

What a walk it is! Here are rose bushes by the mile—clean, healthy, sturdy, stemmed plants with never a touch of mildew or blight. Such perfect cleanliness, such daintiness even, is about these acres of blossoms. Hardly a decayed leaf may be seen, while

the rich dark mold in the expanse of beds is as free from litter as the cherished pot in a woman's window garden.

The same condition is observable throughout the great area of grass. There is nothing of murkiness, of broken or begrimed panes; all is radiantly clear and bright. It is easy to understand how the sweet delicate blossoms flourish in such an atmosphere.

Mr. Dunlop's conservatories are built in modern style, the short span of roof being to the south, so that the sun is at right angles to the angle of the glass, giving increased heat from December to March. Eighty thousand feet under glass, a dozen great glass houses radiating from a center; and in these early months of the year, these months of hot-house blooms, two thousand roses are cut each day, while the sweet-freighted bushes push up two buds for every one that is taken.

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We reach the fragrant roses through a miniature forest of feathery green banks



MR. DUNLOP IN HIS CONSERVATORIES.

of plummy fern, asparagus and palms, with a great bed of smilax climbing skyward by means of slender cords; every leaf is agloss with sunshine and radiant with uplifting. It is beautiful to be in the sunlight glow amid this fresh young growth. But we pass through and beyond it to the first of the rose gardens—a great gleaming place filled with proud delicate fragrant beauties of cream and sunset tints.

Never a red rose here, never a touch of deep color, but only our fairest favorites, the exquisite Sunset blossoms.

We stand for a little far down in the midst of them. There is none to disturb us. The men are busy in other places. So silent it is that we can almost hear the buds uncurling their soft petals; yet it is the silence of intense life and vigor,—not of death.

The sky above the clear domed roof is blue, softened with chasing cloud drifts; the sunshine, intensified and sparkling through the glass floods us with golden warmth. It bathes the beautiful creamy blossoms, until they almost droop in the languor of light and heat, and we can watch the delicate petals uncurling and the buds breaking to full bloom.

What intense life; what content; what

perfect growth and development; what power of fructification, is expressed in this beautiful silent place with its long stretches of blossom. "Consider the lilies—how they grow." The involuntary sense of contrast between this gracious growth and human striving, presses strong upon us as we stand thus restfully among the Sunset roses.

And then we pass from one great glass acreage to another. Here are the crimson roses, from the deep-tinted damask to the pale shell-pink of the bridal rose. Great full-hearted American Beauties send their heavy sweetness to greet us, while the Jacqueminot awaits our coming. We pause to admire the moss roses—crimson buds enveloped in their fretted fringe of green.

Presently we are among the white roses, so delicate and pure. They too, have their great glass garden, and down among them we find that rarest and most fairy-like conception—the white moss rose. We involuntarily held our breath, as we bent over the bewitching thing, so dainty, cool, and exquisite.

Acres of roses under the sunlit glass, ready for the Easter cutting, sweet and bright for the Easter churches! It is a beautiful thing to stand in the midst of them. But other flowers were ready also. Two great conservatories are given over to carnations, a flower fast increasing in popularity and the cultivation of which is a specialty second only to the roses in the Dunlop conservatories.

One would hardly recognize the old-

fashioned, ragged-fringed 'pink' in these stretching fields of double white beauties, with their fragrant clove perfume.

We pass amid flaunting azaleas and rhododendrons, their sturdy bushes all aflame.

Violets and sweet peas, and the Easter lilies standing like tall white angels with golden harps; these we find all ablossom in the sunlight. But we come back among the roses. We walked on an elevated pathway above the rosebush tops, and looked down at the mass of delicate bloom—on and on, far down beneath the glass, until once again we are alone, hidden in a wreath of growing things.

The odor of the fresh earth beds comes about us with vitalizing power, the leaves and blossoms glisten with recent spraying. All about us, and in far reaching vistas, is a wealth of delicate roses bending in bud and blossom upon their slender stems. Up above through the arching glass the blue sky with its drift of soft white clouds bends graciously to the great stretch of bloom beneath the glass, while the sun pours an eternal summer time down. And as we stand in the midst of the flowers the joy and beauty creep into our hearts, and we gather, in the brooding silence, the secret of their peace.