THE GARDEN OF GOD.

In a sunny bed, by the garden wall,
Grew a row of lilies, snow-white and tall;
There were crimson roses with dew-drops wet,
Velvety pansies and mignonette;
Carnations and lark-spurs and London-pride,
With fuchsias and blue-bells, grew side by side;
And swinging lightly, the dainty sweet-peas
Danced to the song of the birds and the breeze.
I longed with the beautiful, fragrant bloom
To brighten the walls of my quiet room;
But my little maid shook her sunny head,
"Nay, this is the garden of God," she said.

"I water and tend it, and day by day
Its buds and blossoms I give away
To sickness and sorrow and want and sin,
To toil-worn women so pale and so thin,
Poor little children who ask with a sigh,
And beggars that tramp in their squalor by.
Sometimes I wait in the garden for hours,
My cups of cold water to wreathe with flowers.
It is sweet," and the little maiden smiled,
"To hear the rough voices say: 'Bless the child!'
And I think they feel, as they onward plod,
The holy peace of the garden of God."

The little maid, crowned with her sunny hair,
Knelt trilling a song as sweet as a prayer;
She gathered the roses with dew-drops wet,
And bound them to-gether with mignonette,
Then lightly she tossed them so they would fall
On the path beyond the low garden wall;
And I saw two sorrowful, wistful eyes
In a pale face brighten with glad surprise.
And the thin, small hands of a poor child close
In wonder and joy o'er the fragrant rose.
And it seemed as if holy foot-steps trod
By my little maid in her garden of God.

—*S. L. B., in Ave Maria.*

THE FLOWER OF THE FLOCK

CHAPTER VII.—[CONTINUED.]

The old woman as she held her hands fast clasped together in her lap, seemed to share his uneasiness.

'Do not be anxious,' said Ernest assuringly, 'I found the ring in my own boat, which is only made use of to carry over strangers, and whoever it belonged to must surely have passed over in safety. During this summer only one person has been lost in a storm upon the lake, but that has nothing to do with the ring, for it must have been a living and not a dead man who left it in that boat.'

The eyes of Lois flashed as if he would have said, 'I know all about that.'

'There is no doubt,' continued the stranger, 'that the ring, engraven with the two initial letters of my name, is the same that I gave to my brother, and I am certain that in the direst necessity he would hardly have given it away.'

The old woman started as she heard a noise outside, and she looked towards the door which was at this moment opened, and Bertina and Englehard entered.

'And now all my children are assembled,' she said; 'this is my youngest son and my youngest daughter.'

The evening was closing in, but as the young people entered the room with their fresh and simple gaiety, it seemed as if a ray of sunshine brightened it. The stranger fixed his eyes upon the beautiful girl, and with a sudden movement he rose from his chair.

The presence of a stranger in the fisherman's cottage was no unusual occurrence, and returning the supposed greeting with modest grace, Bertina stepped up to her mother.

'Look at this lovely fresh edelweis, mother,' she said, as with a pleasant smile she took off her hat and showed the wreath of velvety alpine flowers that was around it; 'they came from the peak up there.'

'Such a likeness can hardly be simply a sport of nature,' exclaimed the stranger, losing all composure, 'but can it be possible?' He placed himself before her as if he could not trust his senses, and seemed lost in the contemplation of the beautifully formed face and the brilliant yet soft pair of eyes

'Yes, sir; indeed this edelweis,' said Bertina, misunderstanding his surprise, and in a kind manner she offered him a specimen of the rare plant.

'Let it be, child; you are yourself the flower which has so suddenly filled my mind with doubt.'

In great emotion he took Bertina by the hand and drew her nearer to him, while with heightened color she drew back, and Englehard involuntarily approached them.

The old woman breathed as if her breast was oppressed with a heavy load, while the rest continued silent.

'What are you called, child? Tell me your name,' said the stranger anxiously.

'Bertina,' replied the terrified girl.

'Good heavens! mistake is impossible. Everything agrees! That is a wonderful meeting.'

He went up to the old woman, who, with an air of resignation to the inevitable, murmered to herself, 'it is time to speak; it is God's will.'

'To whom does this girl belong? Is she your daughter?'

His words cut the old woman to the heart, while the penetrating look of the inquirer was fixed upon the terrified face, which was overspread with the dark coloring of anguish. She hesitated for a moment, as one hates to give away something dearly-loved, and which has ever been guarded with true and close affection. She fixed her eyes upon him, and collecting all her strength, 'No, she is not my child,' she said.

The stranger bent his head with an expression as if he expected no other answer, but the girl flew to the matron and flung her arms around her as if she would never suffer that she should herself give away a child who had no other mother so long as her memory could go back.

'Mother, I——' she stammered, but her voice broke into sobs and she clung fast to the old woman, who herself felt as if her heart would break.

'Peace, Bertina,' said the matron, gently stroking her cheek. 'I have been as a mother to you ever since you were placed upon my lap a poor, weak little child, but your real mother—no, I am not.'

Expressions of surprise were exchanged among those present, and every face bore signs of deep sympathy. What they had just heard about the girl had never entered any one's mind; and it was a painful thought that she was no longer a child of the house, that she was no longer a sister. It was the more painful from the close affection that had always subsisted among them.

Meanwhile, old Mark sat unobserved in his corner. His son's eyes were full of tears, not so much from the emotion caused by the revelations so new to him, as because he felt that the solution of a dark mystery was at hand. He would have been glad that his father might have been spared, and he felt for the poor child who had only just learned that she had lost a mother, and must now hear of the sad death of her other parent.

With her innocent face bathed in tears, Bertina knelt before the old woman, who with unceasing care had brought her up, and whose dear old face showed the sorrow she felt.

'You were always as kind to me as to your other children,' she sobbed with a broken voice, 'and yet sometimes I felt as if you did not really love me as well as you did the others. I was not wrong!'

'I never failed in my duty to you, and if you could look within'—and she pointed to her breast—'you would see how you have grown into my heart,' said the matron, and then, with a look of true motherly love, she wiped the tears of the weeping girl with a corner of her apron. 'From childhood we all remarked your ways.' 'She is a town-born child, my husband often said to me when we were alone, 'and she has a giddy head and a soft heart.'

'You belong to us, Bertina,' said Englehard, 'you are ours; the ties which so many years of love and dependence have formed between us cannot be severed in this one hour.'

At the sound of his voice Bertina raised her head. His words found an echo in her heart, and her loving look consoled him in this first sorrow of his young life. With a suffused cheek, Bertina turned to the stranger.

'Then, who is my mother?' she asked.

'Yes, woman, you must reveal this secret,' said the stranger, who had been a silent witness of the old woman's fears. 'In spite of the peasant's dress in which I find her, Bertina is the living image of my young sister-in-law, Alberta, her deceased mother. She is the only child of my brother, Herman Gunther. Yes, Bertina, in me you see your uncle, Robert Gunther. I acknowledge you as my dear niece; but for the present I will spare your feelings; later we shall be more friendly and intimate.'

As he addressed the girl she shrank timidly away from him whose hand had inflicted so deep a wound on her heart.

In anxious expectation the whole party assembled round the table by which the old woman sat, and even old Mark, who had hitherto not even moved, stretched out his gray head to listen.

'A little patience, sir,' begged the old woman, as she pressed her forehead, as if she would bring her wandering thoughts into order. At this painful moment, when she was required to give up a treasure which she had hoped was her own, and which was entwined with the very fibres of her heart, it might be difficult to give an exact picture of what had happened in days long past.

'It has been a hard time with me since the day when I and my Wilhelm—God rest his soul—became man and wife, and came here some time later. We were not then so well of as now, I was a poor fisher-maiden, and earned my bread among strangers, when I married a young fisherman. We began very humbly, a little wooden hut and a cow were the whole of our property, but the fishing was prosperous, and I, too, was able to earn a few pence We were as contented and happy at our frugal meals as if we lived in a castle. No one ever saw us sad or unhappy, and as we had no neighbors, no disputes with them could arise. My husband had the best of tempers, and I was so light-hearted and gay that every flower by the road-side and every little pebble in the lake gave me pleasure to look at them.

'But our happiness did not last long. When two children had to share our daily bread there was an end of my earning anything. Our house was not so bright as it had once been, for soon there were three boys and three girls to be cared for, and though our Heavenly Father thought fit to take three of them to Himself, it was still hard to work to support the others. And yet we should have striven for a living if a great misfortune had not befallen us.

'It was a Friday. A storm had taken my husband by surprise on the lake, and I had stood on its side invoking for him the help of all the saints. The violence of the wind carried away the roof of our cottage, and the walls trembled as if shaken by an earthquake. When Wilhelm returned home he found me and the children without the shelter of a roof over our heads and the wind blowing through the old ruin. I need not tell you the misery this caused us, but we kept our courage, although it seemed as if all was lost. We knew very well that chance is not our master, and that if a man only does his own part bravely, God will not forsake him.

'A gentleman who lived at some little distance had pity on us, and sent his work people to repair our little cottage. Wilhelm did some work for him, but the wages were not enough for our support, and the elder children had to go out and earn what they could. The amount of their wages was not enough for all the four, even when we gave them our last morsel. This sorrow cost me the first tears of my married life. Ernest was employed in keeping geese for a farmer who lived at some distance, during the summer; Walter, who now is in service in Brandenburg, was taken into a gentleman's house. And now it would have been easier with us if there had not been any younger child, but Katherine, that dark girl, was not older than little Maurice. One fine evening, when Wilhelm had come home early, we were sitting together, the child on my lap, talking sadly of what we had lost, and how little was coming in, when a gentleman came to our house with a pale, beautiful lady on his arm. A maid-servant followed, carrying a child.

'Are you the fisherman, Wilhelm, who works in the house out yonder?' asked the gentleman of my husband, and on his replying in the affirmative, he went with the servant into the little room, in comparison with which this is a palace, and where we all assembled. I felt very curious and could not think what these two persons could want.

'Poor, but neat and clean,' said the gentleman to his wife, as he sat down upon a bench.

'Good and honest,' she replied, as taking the little one, who was as fair and delicate as an angel, from the maid, she placed her on the bed. My Katherine looked like a gipsy by her side.

'The maid was sent away, and the lady looked at the child with deep emotion; soon her eyes filled with tears. The gentleman was also very sad, and it seemed to me that he cast sorrowful looks both upon the pale lady and his little child. 'Listen to what I say, my good people,' he began, in a kind manner, 'I have a great favor to ask of you. Will you undertake to be the guardians of my child?'

'My husband and I looked at each other thoughtfully. Then we said: 'Ah, sir, we have a hard duty to fulfil towards those whom God has sent us; ought we to make our cross more heavy with strange children?'

'You are at liberty to refuse the proposal I make,' said the gentleman, 'but consider it well. You have been strongly recommended to me as good, honest people. We give up our child with a heavy heart, and it is not to every one we would trust her. But I am going to Italy with my wife; as you see, she is not in good health, and by the advice of our doctor, who thinks the milder climate will benefit her weak chest and restore her voice, we intend to remain there two years. My wife is a singer, I am a painter, and a long residence in Italy will be of great use to me in my artistic studies. We cannot undertake the journey with that delicate child under our care; my wife, in her weak state of health, cannot take charge of her; so we have determined to leave her among these mountains with good and trustworthy people. It is much more healthy in this pure air, where good milk is abundant, than in a close, unhealthy town.'

'I think I see my husband now before me,' said the matron, interrupting herself, 'with a face as dark as a November day, as he replied: 'But, sir, this would be no joke to us; indeed we cannot do it. He was the best man in the world,' she added, exultingly, 'but he who is drowning cannot help another.'

'We will speak of that later,' said the painter kindly. 'Do not fear; your care and trouble will be rewarded.' I had already taken the dear little creature, with her beautiful golden hair, into my arms, and when she looked at me with her great brown eyes, I thought to myself, 'I should never be able to trust you out of my sight. You must always remain by my side.'

'You must know, sir,' she said, as she placed her hand upon the stranger's arm, 'when poverty and distress come so home as they did to us, the heart becomes very soft to its fellow creatures.'

'The strange gentlemen afterwards gave us his name, and agreed as to what he would send us in payment every quarter. We were very well pleased. We made a faithful promise that we would never tell the child to whom she belonged, even if she should not be removed from our care for a couple of years or a little later.

''The child must be spared the sorrow of knowing that her parents are so far away,' was more than once enforced upon us. The little one was to be brought up as our child, and treated just like the others. We promised everything he desired, and when the young man pressed a good sum of money into Wilhelm's hand, with the words, 'This is the first instalment,' even his eyes moistened, and he often said in after times that a greater piece of good fortune could not have happened.

'Of course the young lady had a great deal to say to me, and she commended the little one to me a thousand times. They must have been most excellent people; as they were leaving us we all four wept, and I shall never forget how the pale lady turned again and again from the door to take one more leave of her darling. 'Be comforted,' said her husband, 'the child is sure to be well brought up.'

'And thus it was that Bertina came into our house,' she said, with a look at the weeping girl, 'and when our elder children came home in the autumn they found to their great delight that a new sister had been added to their number. We had a good winter after our hard summer; we were again all united, and had become rich. The money which we received every quarter by post, together with what we had in hand, left us no cause for anxiety. The payments were made punctually, but soon came the intelligence that death had released the young mother from her sufferings, and that the dear child would not at present be withdrawn from our affection. We would not very willingly have given her up. With her prosperity returned to us. We also about this time adopted the child of a deceased distant relative, who became one of our family, and whom I call my youngest son,' she said, looking at Englehard.

'Do not weep, Bertina,' whispered the youth to the sobbing girl; 'she looks down upon you from Heaven even now.'

'Several years passed,' continued the old woman; 'we regularly received our remittances, when all at once they stopped. We had neither money nor news. We have now waited for some years. Our good priest, who, besides our two selves, alone knew this story, wrote himself, and some acquaintances who visited Italy inquired diligently after the painter. It was in vain, and I assure you, sir, that from that time we quite considered Bertina our child. It would have been terrible for me, heart-breaking as if I lost one of my own, and we made no further inquiries. My children have always looked upon her as a dear sister; they know not otherwise, and we allowed other people to continue in the persuasion that she was our youngest. Would it not have been sad for the child who, without us, would have been alone in the world if we had told her that we were not her parents, nor these her companions her brother and sister? We kept the whole matter a secret; God disposes it as most for the child's good.

'Bertina is well educated; she has been cared for both as regards body and soul, and as years have passed she has shown herself in some respects different from my own children. I very well knew why. She resembled her mother in body and mind, and whatever teaching it has been in my power to give her she has received. She has, like her mother, a beautiful voice, and I have sent her to the singing class, where she has also had instruction in other matters. Our good priest says that if she improves her opportunities a good foundation will be laid.

'Time brought us a change. The old cook at Kreuth died. She was much attached to me, and left me all her savings. Just at this moment the right of fishing in this place was to be sold. The former fish master, a very old man, desired rest, and we decided to come here. Our circumstances have improved every year. The fishing is not bad, and in summer the carrying people to and fro across the lake is profitable. I have lived here for more than ten years, and had I not become a widow about five years since I should not have had a sorrowful hour during that time.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Bertina's uncle had listened to the old matron's simple narration with deep attention.

'You are a good, honest woman,' he said, as she concluded, and he shook her warmly by the hand. 'You have well supplied a mother's place, and deserve my most hearty thanks. One point is established beyond a doubt—that Bertina is my brother's daughter, but how the ring which was found in the boat came there is still a complete and anxious mystery. Could my brother Herman, in search of the only being who chained him to life, have come so near to the scene of his past happiness, and then chanced to lose his ring? In that case he would still be living, and we should find traces of him. I will show you the portrait which I had taken of him when we parted; perhaps some of your people may recollect some likeness of it among those they have ferried on the lake.'

He took out his pocket-book, opened it, and gave the maiden the photograph he took from it.

'You must be the first to see your father's likeness, Bertina. This is the picture of the man who has had for the last twenty years the greatest claim upon you.'

By the light of the lamp which Lisbeth brought to the table the daughter looked, much affected, upon the strange features of one so intimately connected with her as her unfortunate father.

'Oh,' cried the old woman, as Bertina passed the picture into her hand; 'how like the gentleman of whom I have just been speaking.'

'Let me look at it, mother,' said Ernest, as he took the photograph into his hands. The longer he looked at it the more anxious became the expression of his face. Then old Mark stood behind him and looked at the picture over his shoulder; he had been, as it were, drawn from his usual corner, into the lighted room. His short breathing induced the young fisherman to turn his inquiring eyes upon the old man. With a terrified look fixed upon the portrait, the old man clung to the back of a chair and a shudder ran through his whole frame.

At the sight of his father Lois came at once to a decision.

'Send Bertina away,' he said as he stepped up to Ernest.

'Go away for a moment; we will soon call you back,' said Ernest to the girl, who at once left the room.

'Now,' said the young man to his trembling father, 'take your heart in your hand and make a full confession. Speak only; all here are right good people, and they know that you are not a saint come down from heaven. Tell all, and let that poor girl know where she has to seek for her father. But, stop,' he said thoughtfully, 'let us speak first, and you shall say what you have to tell at the end.'

Often interrupted by Robert Gunther's questions, Lois then related how he had first met with the unfortunate traveler, then he requested Ernest to tell what occurred to him when he was fishing on the lake the day after the terrible storm.

Ernest told his story in a few plain words, and then it remained for Mark to own that on lifting the dead body he had taken a ring from the finger and had kept it.

'But how the ring came into the boat after that,' he said, with a significant look at his son, 'is more than I can say.'

'It was I who did that,' replied Lois, who had placed himself near the old man as if to support him. 'I forced it into the crack in the boards of the boat; I felt I must do a good act for my father, as he has done many a good one for me. I saw what an anxiety it was to have this ring in his possession, and I took it away and disposed of it in that manner. And I was quite right,' he said in a tone of the fullest confidence.

Old Mark lost nothing in the good opinion of the family by what was brought to light on that day. He had earned his bread for half his life in that house, and they knew that neither his former master nor themselves had ever missed a penny; and he had now done hard penance for having yielded to temptation. For Robert Hassell Gunther there was but one thing of any importance—the fearful certainty that Bertina's father had lost his life amid the waters of the lake,

For a long time he had no words by which to express his feelings, but sat as if stupefied, with his eyes cast down. Although he had been unable to suppress a sad anticipation of his brother's tragical end, it was with difficulty that he recovered from the shock which the certainty of it had given him, and the deepest sorrow marked his countenance when he at last raised his head. No doubt arose in his mind as to the truth of the right-hearted men, whose account merited full belief.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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TO be sold at PUBLIC AUCTION, on THURSDAY, the 25th day of AUGUST, A. D. 1887, at the hour of twelve o'clock, noon, at the Court House in Charlottetown, in Queen's County, under a power of sale contained in an Indenture of Mortgage, dated the twenty-eight day of April, A. D. 1885, and made between John L McDonald, and Mary McDonald, his wife, of the one part, and Peter Murchison of the other part,—All that tract, piece or parcel of land situate, lying and being on Lot or Township Number Fifty-three, in King's County, in Prince Edward Island, and being bounded as follows, that is to say: Commencing on the south side of the Road leading from Cardigan Bridge to Grand River Bridge at the Eastern boundary of land in the possession of John Fogarty, and running thence eastwardly for the distance of seven chains and thirty links, or to the western boundary of land in possession of Roderick O'Henley; thence south along said boundary and the western boundary of land in the possession of Malcolm J. Campbell, for the distance of one hundred and fifty chains to the rear boundary of farms fronting on Cardigan River, thence west to the eastern boundary of land in possession of Allan Wilson; thence north along the said boundary and the eastern boundary of land aforesaid, in possession of John Fogarty, to road aforesaid, to the place of commencement, containing an area of one hundred acres of land, a little more or less.

For further particulars apply to Messrs. McLeod, Morson & McQuarrie, Solicitors, Charlottetown.

Dated the 18th day of July, 1887.

PETER MURCHISON, Mortgagee.

[jy 20, 4i]

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MAURICE O'CONNELL.

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Roseneath Mills, June 29, 1887—3m

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January 19, 1887.

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