

MY GARDEN.

BY ERIC BROAD.

QUAINT is the garden that I love—and quiet,
Far from the strife and fever of the town:
There, roses blossom in a careless riot
Of red and white, and shed their petals down
On beds emblazoned, in a close confusion,
With mignonette, verberna, stock, and clove
From which an incense, freed from its seclusion,
Scents the box-bordered pathways that I love.

There, is a bower beautiful, and hidden
By twining tendrils—jasmine, clematis,
Wherein I love to rest, while thoughts unbidden
Sorrow awake, or maybe dreamy bliss:
'Tis there I listen to the tuneful rapture
Loosed from the careless thrush's golden throat.
Until the crescent moon in sea of azure
Above me sails—a far-off, fairy boat.

Oh, sweet the rest from all the moil and fretting
That fill my daily life from dawn to close:
Oh, fair that jewel-moon in twilight setting—
The fragrant incense of each dewy rose!
But sweeter far the thought that this fair garden
Is but a foretaste of what life may be—
That, if the fret and toil of life are hard, then
How sweet the peace of Paradise will be.

And if perchance I linger by the dial,
Which stands upraised above a verdant lawn,
Each lengthening shadow represents a trial,
And each will disappear when comes the dawn:
But 'tis the dawn of better life, of gladness;
Of life wherein is nought of grief and pain—
Oh, dear, quaint garden you will chase my sadness
When I shall know your rest and peace again.



THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN THINGS.

With a sigh the old man laid down his pen. On the table before him were scattered many note-books and papers, some brown with age. In their midst was a pile of newly written sheets, the first of which bore the title, "The Story of my Life." A tale of a life full of toil and honour lay bedded in the pages, a record of deeds and rewards of which the most successful of men might be proud.

"Now," he said to himself, "I have told all;" and, as if tired by his task, he bent his head upon his hands. It was his history, for history is the book of memory.

Then the spirit of the aged man became as that of a little child, and sped away through the children's "ivory gate and golden" into a far-distant world. Keen were his eyes, wise was his heart, yet he felt timid as on that night long, long ago when first he strayed out into the dark, and he was glad to take the hand of a bright stranger who seemed to be his guide. For a time he could see nothing, but at last the mist shaped itself into the narrow walls of a cottage. A woman with a sad and tired face was sitting by a slender fire, staring almost fiercely. Now and then she looked to a rough cradle at her side, and the swift glance changed for a moment the light of her face. It became soft and tender, and sweet as an angel. But the smile died quickly as she turned again to work. The black dress, the look of grief, and the big, empty arm-chair at the opposite side of the fire-place told a plain tale of a widow's struggles for her baby son.

It was a vision of a mother's love.

There was a blur in the scene, and when it cleared again it was the same cottage, but the

mother had grown older and seemed more weary, and in place of the baby was a lad. A flush of anger—the senseless, quick-passing anger of youth—lit up the face of the boy. Roughly making his way to the door he flung himself out into the tiny garden path, and so out of sight. But the mother, when she had dried her tears, knelt for a few moments to pray. Then she rose and again took up her work, stooping painfully over it, though there was no sign of pain in her face. Again the boy returned, this time to his mid-day meal. The board was scanty enough—some bread and a little meat; but the meat was passed to the boy, and the mother was content with bread.

It was a mother's sacrifice.

The next scene was a leafy wood, in which the green had turned to golden in the rays of the evening sun. Between the stems of the richly foliated trees were peeps of the nestling village lying a little farther down the slope. It lay quiet in the hush of the evening, like a soul resting in paradise. At the stile, where the footpath from the village turned into the wood, a youth and a pretty maid of the hamlet stood hand in hand. There was a glow on the face of each, with which the setting sun had nothing to do. They were making their solemn pledges against the hazards of the world, for he was going off to a distant city to play a man's part, and she was to remain with her aged father to play a woman's. The farewells being said, the youth turned to the footpath in the wood, at the further side of which his home lay, and, shrugging his shoulders, tried to whistle, as if to show he was a man. But the girl hung long over the stile till the fading light died out of her face, and

across her grey eyes stole the look of one who has lost hope.

It was an idyll of love and faithlessness, for the youth never came back.

To this succeeded a room in the squalid home of a workman in a big city. On the bed lay a young man tossing in the delirium of fever. The housewife, gaunt and strong still—though her face had grown pallid in the lifeless air of a city street—bent over the sufferer and soothed his restlessness with words and tones such as would have surprised the woman's companions in the streets. Ungrudgingly she gave out of her spare living the simple delicacies which the poor can offer in a time of sickness, and so the unheeding sick man was kept in life. When the workman returned in the evening he sent his wife to rest, and then through the summer night sat watching his fevered chum, whom he and his wife nursed that he should not go unfriended to a hospital. As the morning dawned the fever passed, and the common toiler, with his shrewish wife, sobbed their gladness together. Patiently through many days the unceasing care went on, until at last the patient, in measure restored, went finally across the threshold to his own lodging, vowing undying mindfulness of his friends' goodness.

It was the beautiful, costly charity of the poor.

A contrast followed. In the private room of his offices the head of a prosperous firm sat deeply engaged in the details of business. The youth of the previous scenes had grown rich through the exercise of his fertile brain, and whilst still in middle life had come to honour. Presently a workman in his service entered the