

**THE GARDEN
THAT I LOVE**

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The Garden that I Love by Alfred Austin

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AGENTS

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THE
GARDEN THAT I LOVE

BY

ALFRED AUSTIN

AUTHOR OF 'IN VERONICA'S GARDEN,' 'LAMIA'S WINTER-QUARTERS'
'HAUNTS OF ANCIENT PEACE,' AND 'THE POET'S DIARY'

*Fata con gli occhi per questo giardino,
Chè veder lui t' accenderà lo sguardo
Più a montar per lo raggio divino.*

Divina Commedia, PAR. C. xxxi. vv. 97-99.

*Revised Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure.*

Il Pensiero.

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK.

1906

*This Edition was issued in September 1905 with the kind consent of
Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd.
Reprinted July 1906.*

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DEDICATION

OF THE FIRST EDITION 1894

TO

MADELEINE & DOROTHY STANLEY

Dear Madeleine and Dorothy,

Do you remember how, when first you saw the Garden that I Love, inexorable clouds, as though of opinion your presence was sunshine enough, came drifting from the south, and fitful showers drenched border and flower-bed? But young enthusiasm, and in part perhaps inherited amiability, allowed you to see nothing save unqualified beauty, and even on that morose forenoon you bestowed on them panegyrics they hardly deserve even in their most unclouded moments.

After you were both gone, I said to myself, 'Some day they will have a garden of their own, and they too will love it.' But what is Love? Love, says Veronica's Poet somewhere,

*Is observation, patience, vigilance,
And heartfelt understanding. Love is wisdom
In tender operation.*

But it is neither wise, nor tender, nor loving, to remit to others, however expert, the supreme care of one's garden. You will tend yours with your own hands, and discover its needs with your own heart; and if, in doing so, you have to withdraw yourselves sometimes, more than accords with modern wont, into rural seclusion, your social instincts will not thereby be starved, nor your share in the graces and charities of

life thereby be curtailed. You will find much resemblance between flowers and human beings; for they too grow reserved under coldness or maltreatment, and respond with almost feminine alacrity to every sympathetic endeavour to apprehend them. But, most of all, the cultivation of a garden tends to foster that sense of kinship with the lowly in which you have been trained; since there are none who love their garden so tenderly as the poor. Is it not a consoling thought that what, after human affection, is, I think, the deepest and most abiding of all pleasures, is well within the reach of the humblest cottager? Only yesterday I saw, in a little village garden, a cluster of Crown Imperials that put to shame the best I can boast; and I know full well their higher beauty was but the stalk and blossom of deeper devotion.

You therefore, I know, will tend your own flowers, even as already, in some degree, you tend them at your dear Arlington; bestowing them on your friends, with them decorating the Sanctuary, and oftentimes carrying them—'lilies, lilies bearing'—to the window-sills of the suffering and the pallets of the poor. That is why, more even than for the friendship you and yours have shown me, I ask you to accept the dedication of this little volume.

Believe me always,

Yours affectionately,

ALFRED AUSTIN.

*Swinford Old Manor,
Mayday, 1894.*

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE EDITION ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE S.
ELGOOD, R.I.

‘WHAT!’ said Lamia. ‘*Another* Illustrated Edition!’

‘I believe so,’ I replied, trying to look as meek as I could, but betraying, I fear, that special kind of hesitation which proceeds less from conscious guilt than from embarrassment.

‘Have you consulted Veronica?’ she asked. ‘If you have, I am sure she must have informed you *The Garden that I Love* will soon be as hard to put up with as the Fiscal Question. And what does the Poet say? Have you told him also?’

‘No, nor shall I tell him. He is so prepossessed against popularity, that, when he hears of the ninth, tenth, or hundredth edition of a book, he at once concludes that, current taste being what it is, the work must necessarily be an inferior one.’