

**FLOWERS AND
GARDENS: NOTES
ON PLANT BEAUTY**

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Flowers and Gardens: Notes on Plant Beauty by Forbes Watson & Canon Ellacombe

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FORBES WATSON & CANON ELLACOMBE

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ON PLANT BEAUTY**



Forbes Watson

**FLOWERS AND
GARDENS**

NOTES ON PLANT BEAUTY

BY

FORBES WATSON

EDITED, WITH A PREFACE, BY

REV. CANON ELLACOMBE

VICAR OF BITTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE



**JOHN LANE: THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON AND NEW YORK MDCCCCI**

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PREFACE

THE following papers have been written during a last illness, which has often made it impossible to examine the specimens I could have wished. In the Primrose, for example, I have only been able to make out satisfactorily the drooping aspect of the leaf: how this combines itself with the more rigid character in the different stages of the leaf I do not fully understand. For the same reason many of the illustrations, especially in the chapters on Gardening, have been selected as being the most ready to hand rather than as the best. In my remarks on Gardening I have no wish at all to disparage the modern systems. My aim chiefly was to point out the faults of modern gardening, because its merits are such as it is impossible to overlook. Lastly, in many instances my remarks bear more or less reference to the works of Ruskin, the greatest and best of

Preface

art-teachers; but where I have consciously borrowed from him, I have said so. These papers are left in charge of a friend for publication.

FORBES WATSON.

The pen fell from the hand of my friend when he had written the foregoing lines. Within two days he was taken "home" to his "Father's house." This short interval was filled with intense suffering, save only during a brief sleep, when the flowers of which he had been writing, and which loving hands brought to blossom near his bed, haunted with their beauty and perfume the unsleeping sense of the imagination, and lured him through enchanted fields, where in his dream he saw vision after vision of an unutterable glory of floral splendour. The ecstasy of his delight in that dream abode with him, and lifted a bright light over the few hours of agony that intervened ere he slept again in the peace of Death. He believed a foretaste had been given him of "that which remaineth for them that love God"—that He whose dying lips were touched with gall had given him a sweeter anodyne in his brief agony.

Preface

The papers published in this little volume were written to solace the languor of the last months of life, when a malady, which had crept by slow approaches upon him, broke down his strength, and arrested a professional career which had begun but recently. They betoken a mind gifted with quick, clear, and delicate perception, independency of judgment, and unsparing truthfulness. These were my friend's characteristic gifts. They are dimly mirrored in these pages, but more clearly in the memory of those who knew him well. To them this little volume will be welcome, because of him: to others, perchance, it may be welcome for the worth it has, because it tells of the beauty there is in God's fairest frailest handiwork in flowers, and bears some trace of the rarer amaranthine beauty of a soul which wore "the white flower of a blameless life."

J. B. PATON.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

NEARLY thirty years have passed since this book was published. At its first appearance it was fully appreciated by a few persons, among whom Mr. Bright, the author of a "*A Year in a Lancashire Garden*," may be specially mentioned; but it has long been out of print and is now very scarce, so that the time for a second edition seems to have fully come.

For it is not a book that should be buried or forgotten. In many respects it stands quite alone among the numberless books on gardening and flowers, for it takes a special line of its own, in which it really remains supreme; a few authors have touched upon the same line, but only in a slight sketchy way as a small part of the larger subjects on which they were writing, and a few have attempted some feeble imitations of the book and have failed signally.