

THE VOICE OF THE GARDEN

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The voice of the garden by Lucy Leffingwell Cable Biklé

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LUCY LEFFINGWELL CABLE BIKLÉ

WITH A PREFACE
BY
GEORGE W. CABLE

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PREFACE

AMONG all the arts music alone can render to poetic verse such enhancing effect as can the art of gardening. Save only sculpture and architecture no artist's product brings such enhancement to the garden as does the book of the poet.

To bring the book of verses underneath the bough, especially the blossoming bough, for the more perfect enjoyment of both, is so obviously right and rewarding that to declare it so seems out of tune with the doing of it. A merest hint of the alliance so sets the harmonies of the spirit into vibration that a justifying word is like a spoken praise of music in the midst—or, quite as bad, in advance—of its performance, and this foreword would itself be without excuse did it not say something more.

Hence this: That between garden and verse there is so close a kinship that the rules of art for either are adequate for the other. Poetic verse is the gardening of thought. Gardening is the versification of nature's poetry. Of such an affinity are the two that a merging of their powers is one of those blessed cases in which one and one make

eleven. Blessed, because such multiplication of their influences upon us is something which our present-day life most genuinely needs.

In our modern world, so hotly busy cooking its feast that it has no time nor heart to sit down to it, we find few moments, few nooks, wherein poetry may take effect on us. We need poetry. We need poetical perception; not for softness, but for strength. On at least one side of the Atlantic there are readers of English verse, semi-occasional, far-behindhand readers, millions of us, who until lately have left the garden not out of our daily lives alone, but out of our characters. Our souls, like our comfortable houses, go unenclosed from the street, the highway, and are not gardened. There may be some like us across the seas, even in those mother isles where gardening is so beautiful. We need poetry, need to realise it round about us and in us; need it as practically as the blood needs iron or salt; and if verse can make the garden—garden make the verse—more alluring and assimilable, and if the two, joining their spells, can find us those nooks in time and place wherein the resolution of life's prose into poetry is made easy for beginners or backsliders, then *there* is an alliance, a reciprocity, an *entente* worth while—worth while! And such, I am allowed to say, is the purpose of this volume.

There is no call here for explanatory comments on what follows; no need to lay the tip of the pointer upon this or that, or even to say that there

are poems naturally belonging to such a collection, which, it is to be regretted, are not here; that always has to happen. "I have the honour"—that is all. Yet one word more begs for place: That these poems might never have been gathered into one company had not its collector been brought up in a garden, a story-teller's garden, and grown up with it, a loving companion of its birds, its flowers, its bees and butterflies, its bordering and intersecting waters, the clouds in the blue above it, its liberty and all its disciplinary order and resultant loveliness.

GEORGE W. CABLE.

NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS,
July 1911.



EDITOR'S NOTE

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