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# Gardeners Are in Her Debt

A Gardener's Testament, by Gertrude Jekyll. London Country Life. 10s 6d

GERTRUDE JEKYLL'S passing in 1932 was a loss to the world of letters as well as to the world of gardening. She had written 10 books, quiet as compared with the volubly amusing works of Farrer, distinguished and eclectic as compared with the sermonizings of Robinson. She had humanity and wit, and her teaching, based on years of experiment and observation governed always by taste, was that of a master.

In "A Gardener's Testament," compiled from her papers, it is possible to see how she worked,

what she worked for and why her contribution to the art of gardening was charming and distinguished.

She devoted her life to the intelligent revolution of the English garden, which she found "in the thralldom of the bedding system," and which she left nearer her ideal of "a place of quiet beauty such as will give delight to the eye and repose and refreshment to the mind." Gardening, in her childhood, was the expression of complacency. "My own young days were passed in a place where, on the southeast side of the house, was a garden of three concentric rings of beds in turf, each four feet wide, all filled alike with the same scarlet geraniums. In the center was a round bed of the same with a stone holding a variegated Agave."     ♣   ♣   ♣

Two of the things she did best for English gardening were to wipe out, as nearly as possible in a nation that at the time adored scarlet in another respect, that military geranium, and to knock that symbolic agave off its perch. Other gardeners were with her at the same time doing more or less the same thing. Though others, notably Robinson, preached harder and thundered harder and revealed more heat and force of argument, it was always she who was the artist first and the teacher afterward.

The present volume, being a collection of papers and essays, lacks, no doubt, the homogeneity she would have preferred, but it still is superior to the average gardening book, in taste, charm and instructional value. The remarks on annuals, on wild and garden roses, on color in the garden, on the mixed border and on a score of other subjects are admirable, and, as always, lavishly illustrated by photographs from the garden of one who practiced what she preached