THE SOUL OF THE GARDEN: BY MARY FANTON ROBERTS

A Garden is a lovesome thing, Get wot!
Rose plot, fringed pool, ferned grot,
The veriest school of Peace; and yet the fool contends that God is not—
Not God! in Gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign:
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN.

THINK of the loveliest gardens you have ever known, and at once you hear water dripping in fountain basins or trickling over shallow beds of glistening pebbles, or you see still pools fringed with marsh grasses or resting clear and green in concrete basins edged with lovely flower de luce and lilies of all kinds; you will remember the hidden fountain in the Luxembourg Gardens and the lost green pool at Swetzingen, you will think of the jade stream in the queen’s garden of Holland, you will recall the mysterious, silent, deep water in the Florida glades; you may even think, as I always do with affection, of little storm pools in the garden of your childhood where the birds fluttered in the early morning after the rain and the autumn winds carried scarlet sailboats from the treetops.

To many of us real rest and peace in a garden must always be synonymous with water, with fountain or pool or little stream; and the lovely old phrase “He leadeth me beside the still waters,” will ever mean the leading of a friend to peace and comfort.

Because of geographic and financial limitations some of us must have our gardens “where constant feet may not trace the woods and lawns by living streams,” where even the murmuring wave of fountain spray is denied us, and yet we may still be possessed of the soul that needs the glimmer and life of moving waters for perfect joy. Recent garden making in America has taught us how possible it is in every kind of a garden, however limited in space, to have the happiness of seeing “the green mantle of a standing pool.” We have only to put a few days’ labor in digging, find a builder to lay and make neat the surface of a concrete basin and then a plumber who will tell the size of the pipe, and how it may be laid and connected with the general water supply. Indeed all of this work can be done by the men and the boys of the house in consultation with the autocratic builder and plumber, and the women of the household can furnish the green mantle around the standing pool by studying the history of water gardens that will flourish in their particular climate and soil.

It is a wonderful thing to plan the building of such a pool. First of all there is the question of placing it in the most romantic spot, and here the imagination of the family is brought into play. Of
A CIRCULAR POOL AND FOUNTAIN IN A HEDGED GARDEN ON THE ESTATE OF MRS. JAMES W. RHODES, ARDMORE, PA.

AN INTERESTINGLY CONSTRUCTED DOUBLE POOL, ALSO IN THE GARDEN OF MRS. RHODES, SHOWING EXCELLENT PLANTING OF FLOWERS BOTH IN THE POOLS AND BORDERING THEM.
A SMALL AND INTIMATE POOL IN THE COZY CORNER OF MRS. RHODES' GARDEN, AT ARDMORE, PA.: THIS LITTLE SKETCHY WATER BED IS ALMOST HIDDEN UNDER THE LOVELY PLANTING OF FERNS AND FLOWER DE LUCE; IN THE CENTER IS A NAÏVE FOUNTAIN THROWING UP A SILVERY SPRAY AND NEARBY ARE COMFORTABLE CHAIRS AND A WORK TABLE: A SPOT FOR WARM SUMMER AFTERNOONS FOR THE HAPPINESS OF A WRITER OR A POET.

ABOVE IS A CONCRETE POOL WITH PLANTING ABOUT IT SO MANAGED THAT IT IS BROUGHT INTO MOST INTIMATE RELATION WITH THE DWELLING: LOVELY GLIMPSES ARE TO BE CAUGHT OF ITS FRESHNESS AND BEAUTY FROM THE WINDOWS AND PORCHES: FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF HORACE SELLERS' GARDEN, AT ARDMORE, PA.
A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN FOR A LONG POOL EDGING A LAWN AND BORDERING A FLOWER GARDEN ON THE ESTATE OF DR. PERCY TURNURE, AT KATONAH, N. Y.: THE STEPS AT ONE END OF THIS POOL AND THE FIGURE AT THE OTHER END GIVE AN INTERESTING VARIETY IN CONSTRUCTION, AND THE PLANTING OF ALL KINDS OF WATER FLOWERS ALONG THE CONCRETE BORDER IS A LESSON FOR THE MAKER OF GARDEN POOLS.
A CHARMING SCHEME FOR AN APPROACH TO A CONCRETE POOL: THIS WIDE, GRASS-GROWN PATHWAY IS MADE OF MOHAWK SLATE CUT IN IRREGULAR SIZES AND SO FRINGED WITH GRASS AS TO SUGGEST A WALK IN A CENTURY-OLD GARDEN; THE BEAUTY OF THIS APPROACH IS FURTHER ENHANCED BY THE RICH PLANTING OF LILIES AND LOW-GROWING SHRUBS ON EITHER SIDE.
THE SOUL OF THE GARDEN

course at times a pool must be placed in the center of a lawn, as a practical water supply for hose and reservoir, or at the end of a garden path a concrete basin may project out a few feet, hinting at pleasure and peace at the journey’s end. But the real lover of the fringed pool will not be content with any such obvious arrangement as this, will even insist that the practical side of it is not to be considered, and that the pool must be hidden away under a group of shade trees, in the end of a rose garden, or at the edge of the woods with shade all about it and lovely flowers to border it and a concrete bench nearby where the dreamer may rest and find spiritual peace.

For a very little pool in a small home garden the loveliest “green mantle” to be found is the wood ferns with the wood wild flowers that grow in marshy places, flower de luce always, and fringed gentian if the pool is in a shady spot. The cardinal flower is a lovely sight with its flaming petals bursting above a bed of ferns, then close to the ground the forget-me-not loves the cool, damp soil and sends out delicate tendrils over the concrete border of the pool. Turtlehead and mimulus can also be planted with the ferns, and back of these, if the pool rests near the edge of the woods, such shrubs as the azalea will blossom with lovely spring fragrance, and the dogwood, viscova, laurel, magnolia, all will furnish a sympathetic background and flourish with deep appreciation of the moisture that should belong to such a spot. Of course the soil planted about a concrete pool must either be brought from the woods, or it must be a rich compost of loam and leaf mold. And when the dry summer days come, the watering of the little pool garden must never be forgotten at twilight.

If a large space is under consideration and the restful pool cuts a rose garden in two or circles a bed of heliotrope or is the great square at the end of a pathway then the actual planting of the flowers in the pool itself must be considered. Soil can be put directly on the floor of a concrete basin to the depth of about one foot, or shallow boxes and tubs filled with earth, holding plants of different species, can be set in. If the season is long enough, lotus should be planted in the pool, and the different water-lilies, water hyacinths and poppies, water snow phlox, crowfoot, spearwort, plantain, all will grow and bear lovely bloom on the surface of the pool if even a little attention is given to their planting and care. Water-lilies are of course the easiest variety of water-flower to grow. But once the enthusiastic lily grower starts, the French and the American hybrids are sure to find their way into this pool and after them the royal blue lily of Zanzibar and the equally notable variety from Australia.

(Continued on page 124)