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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥

The Quotable Gardener

Charles Elliott
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“Gardening is the slowest of the performing arts,” is one of the observations in Elliott’s potpourri of gardeners? quotations. A regular contributor to Horticulture magazine and author of
two gardening essay collections, Elliott has brought together for delight and edification a compilation of sage and witty sayings from many people including authors, statesmen, botanists and painters. Over four hundred samplings of poetry, essay, coorespondence and fiction have been gathered and prettily arranged in this small, square volume. Editor Elliott has chosen to divide and arrange his selections according to theme. He begins with Wisdom (what gardeners hope to gain) and Work (the results)—

To create a little flower is the labour of ages.

—William Blake

and

What a man needs in gardening
is a cast-iron back, with a hinge in it.

—Charles Dudley Warner

Selections are not exclusively one-liners, but often full paragraphs and complete thoughts, as in this one by the woman who created the dominant garden style of the twentieth century in England:

“?It is a curious thing that people will sometimes spoil some garden project for the sake of a word. For instance, a blue garden, for beauty’s sake, may be hungering for a group of white lilies, or for something of palest yellow, but is not allowed to have it because it is called the blue garden and there must be no flowers in it but blue flowers… My own idea is that it should be beauty first, and then just as blue as may be consistent with its best possible beauty.”

—Gertrude Jekyll

And this uncomfortable description comes from the section expertly titled Jaundice,

A garden is like those pernicious machineries
which catch a man’s coat-skirt or his hand,
and draw in his arm, his leg,
and his whole body to irresistible destruction.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

A wonderful collection that keeps one smiling in delight and self-consciousness while browsing back and forth between the leaves. Put this book in the basket with the trowels and garden gloves.

H. SHAW CAUCHY (June 15, 1999)

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