RURAL AND SUBURBAN

THE GARDENS OF VICTORIA

Victoria, the Beautiful City of English Culture and Babylonian Magnificence

All that remains of the celebrated Hanging Gardens of Babylon is a myth. Yet there must have been some haunting beauty to have carried even the legend of them down to these strenuous days. Modern gardens in many lands have flourished since that dim era, and the Gardens of the Tuileries, the Jardin des Plantes, the famous Kew Garden, and the Royal Botanical Garden are all household words in every land.

Nearly every city of modern times boasts of its parks and conservatories, and in some metropolises the culture of flowers and the love of the decorative in blossoms, shrubs, plants and tree-life is manifested in a very high degree. Perhaps in uniqueness and artistic effect there is no single city in the world which has made of its gardens such dreams of loveliness as Victoria, British Columbia, the capital city of the province, and Canada's most individualistic metropolis.

The mystery of the gardens is unsolvable. Analysis, demonstration, classification all elude one in wandering among their bewildering array of colors, shaded and divided with hedges and century-old oak, now pale with a myriad drift of sad lilies, tall and fair, now set on fire with a blaze of poppied magnificence. All the unriddled charm of the flowers is here, hypnotic in its drowsy spell. The almost cloudless sunshine of the city, combined with the scent of the sea air drifting across, suggests an uplifting, a mirage of flight, as though these glorious gardens were suspended in space, the reincarnation of the hanging gardens of Babylonian days.

No one can look on these gardens and not be moved to the soul with their beauty.

"For flowers have been known to heal
A common man's despair."

And the miracle of color and perfume, the sweet purity of green leaf and tender bud are more than spoken words; more than music, or dreams.

It is doubtful if these places can mean as much to their builders as they seem. For to look on them long would be to linger in them constantly, lured by the lotus-eating enchantment of their exquisite environs. And you do not see many people in them. They are mainly alone, not empty, for such caskets could not be empty, and they have, indeed, a rare sense of solitude, as some marble statue might, at midnight, where the leaves lie furled and the plash of a fountain sounds faintly.

No two of these gardens are alike; and so they seem as separate individualities. Some people write books, some compose music, some paint pictures or model in clay or marble. Cultured as Victoria is, nothing more clearly shows its artistic taste than its gardens. You will see this in a thousand ways so unobstrusive that the carelessness of apparent nature shows the preciseness of instinctive art in arrangement, detail, space, modelling, colorschemes, background, and infinite genius of loving sympathy.

The very lawns and hedges are thought out with a care and patience which bespeaks the artist. There are no false notes, no discords in these symphonies of color. There is a blend of many beauties carried to a harmonious whole, so that the entire effect is instantly and lastingly impressed on the spectator.

Everywhere the smaller gardens are seen, so that there is really an atmosphere of flower culture the whole city over. And it thus might seem as though the more stately ones were the outgrowth of a school of beauty, a classic advance from the beginnings of the little plots on the side streets to the wide and spangled radiance of the lawns stretching seaward and sunward in noon-day brilliance, for the sea reaches up longingly to many a cove and inlet where these gardens hang breathless in the spring and summer days, and the slant of the gulls' wings throw grey shadows down where the roses flash like jewels in a queen's diadem. Always there is the sense of an ocean nearness about these gardens, even when the sea is hidden beyond the far line of shelving downs or crested headland.

Variety is constantly apparent, as the seasons melt into one another. From the dainty hues of crocus and daffodil, the heavy perfume of the narcissus and the lilied freshness of spring, the gardens flame into marvelous rose beds and ranks of roses, with sometimes a silent old gardener working among them.

"The rose in the garden slipped her bud
And she laughed in the pride of her youthful blood,
As she thought of the gardener standing by,
'He is old, so old, and he soon must die.'"

A man may stand midway of pastured blossoms in a miniature sea of daffodils or tulips, surrounded on every side by the flowers.

Sheltered as these lovely gardens are from nearly every hint of wandering sea breeze or land zephyr, the ensemble presents a sense of luxurious quiet. The air is weighted with odor of rose and narcissus, of lilac and hyacinth as the days come in and go by. And steeped in the sunshine these cloistered spaces dream, unruffled by the challenge of the years. The song of a bird, an occasional soft-spoken voice among their blossoms, the glint of a stray band of lost ribbon, or the white hair of some ancient gardener might only hint of the outside world.

"The melancholy moonlight, sweet and lone,
That makes to dream the bird upon the tree,
And in their polished basins of white stone
The fountains tall to sob with ecstacy."
—Ernest McGaffey in the Canadian Courier.

FLOWERING PLANTS FOR INDOOR DECORATION.

The general tendency during the last few years has been to use more flowering plants in the decoration of the house than was the practice ten to fifteen years ago, and this has tended somewhat to limit the cultivation of many of the older ornamental-foilaged plants. This is rather a pity, as not only did these plants require a fair amount of skill to grow them well, but they also made, in many instances, very fine effects in indoor decorations, whether as isolated specimens in large rooms or vestibules, or when used in conjunction with some of the more graceful flowering plants in the decoration of fireplaces, windows and other recesses. If carefully hardened off before putting them in the house, many of these plants would do two or three turns in the house during their period of beauty, especially if this happened to be during the summer or early autumn months, consequently, so much glass house room was not required for their cultivation as is necessary for flowering plants.

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At the present time, in a great many places flowering plants are used exclusively, with, perhaps, the exception of a few Kentias or other Palms; and when this is the case, a great deal of forethought is neces — to keep up a supply of suitable plants, particularly where greenhouse room is limited. In very few instances will a flowering plant last longer than from ten to fourteen days in a dwelling-house, and very often less, so that it behoves everyone to grow those plants which grow quickly and that do not occupy greenhouse room very long.

In a short article such as this it would be impossible to enumerate all the flowering plants that would be useful throughout the year; but I can, at least, touch on a few that are not only decorative, but which may be grown with a minimum amount of space under glass. During the winter and spring months bulbs of many kinds may be are extremely useful, though for house decoration possibly Tulips, Narcissi and Liliums are the most popular, and the last named may be had in bloom all the year round if the bulbs are obtained from cold storage at intervals of two months. Lilium speciosum album, L. s. roseum and L. longiflorum are the best for this purpose, and they may be used in conjunction with almost any class of flowering or foliage plants and prove very effective. Tulips and Narcissi never look so well as when made up in pots and pans to fit the particular vase or jardiniere that they are to be put in when in the house, and the larger the receptacle the better the effect.

Many of our hardy flowering shrubs are now used very successfully. Considering that many of them only require from six weeks' to two months' forcing to get them into bloom, they may well be considered economical, and once established in pots, many of them will force well for several seasons if treated properly after they have flowered. Among the most useful of this class of plants are several varieties of the shrubby Spiraeas, double Peaches, Almonds, Cherries, Laburnums, Wistaria, Magnolias, Lilacs, Azeleas and Rhododendrons. This is only a short list, and specific varieties I have not mentioned, this being quite unnecessary.

Following these hardy shrubs, Roses are extensively used in the house, and many of the Dwarf Polyantha varieties are exceedingly effective, last well and, as they can be cultivated in very small pots, they are doubly useful. It is, however, the taller-growing varieties of the Polyantha and wichuraiana sections that make by far the boldest show, and whether grown as trained specimens, weeping standards, or simply three or four shoots tied in to a stake and the young growths allowed to hang down, they are all equally beautiful. Undoubtedly the two varieties that up till now have dominated all others are Dorothy Perkins and Hiawatha, the latter lasting particularly well in the house; but there are very many more worth cultivating, such as Tausendschon, Tier, Philadelphia Rambler, Una, Mrs. F. W. Flight and American Pillar, while the two varieties shown at the Temple Show this year, Excelsa and Coquina, must not be missed by anyone interested in Roses for indoor decoration.

Another class of plants useful for this purpose are the annuals, and there is nothing I know that gives more pleasure than the cultivation of these in pots. They are simple in their requirements, are not long about, and serve their turn in the house quite as well as many plants that require from eighteen months' to two years' cultivation. Cinerarias, Primulas, Cyclamen and Calceolarias are all well-known annuals, as also are Celosias, Schizanthus, Mignonette and Torenia; but Clarkias, Nemesias, Larkspur, Salpiglossis, Coreopsis and Gypsophila elegans are subjects that are not so well known as they ought to be, all of them making most useful pot plants, especially where inside window boxes and fireplaces have to be decorated during the summer months.

Clarkias are worth a special note, as they are the most decorative annual I know, and may be grown into quite large specimen plants by potting on into 8½in. pots, or if kept in 4½in. pots they are very useful as pot plants, the varieties Double Salmon, Carnation Flaked and Carmine Queen being especially good for pot culture.

For autumn decoration one cannot, of course, be without Chrysanthemums, and many varieties, particularly the singles, make good pot plants; but it is as cut flowers that these plants excel. Another bright plant for the autumn is Salvia splendens, and though the blossoms are apt to drop somewhat after a few days indoors, they are, nevertheless, of too showy a nature to be left out. Poinsettias are also splendid for autumn decoration, and whether used for the living-rooms or the table, they provide a glow of color at a season when it is much needed.

There are now many varieties of winter-blooming Begonias, but for use in the house there is not yet one that surpasses the old Gloire de Lorraine, or, if a white variety is required, Turnford Hall, and both of these may be had in bloom from early October to April, and after hardening a little they stand well in the house, and the soft color is often preferred by ladies to the more showy Salvias and Poinsettias.

As mentioned before, I have not tried to enumerate all the useful flowering plants, but rather to touch on some that are fairly easily grown and many of which may be thrown away after they have once flowered. In the disposition of these about the house, care must always be taken to see that the colors harmonize with the decorations of the rooms. Choose the best-shaped, graceful plants for standing out by themselves, and those that are not quite so good may, of course, be utilized in the formation of groups, filling of jardinieres, window boxes and other places, always bearing in mind that a few plants used to produce a certain effect are far better than crowding, which means less light and air to each individual plant and, of course, a shorter life. Most of the plants mentioned are of a fairly hardy nature, but a few among them will keep better in the house if subjected to a little hardening process before taking them in, and a small amount of trouble will be amply compensated for by the greater satisfaction to one's employer and one's self.—Thomas Stevenson in The Garden.

NARCISSI FOR DAMP SITUATIONS

The double poet's narcissus, N. alba plena, thrives best in a moist, heavy soil. It often fails to flower in dry locations, and it resents pot culture and forcing. All the poeticus types should be planted in heavy, damp, low ground, but the double gardena-flowered form, alba plena, flowers only when grown in heavy, damp soil.

CLEMATIS INDIVISA

In some of the warmer parts of the country this New Zealand Clematis may be grown and flowered successfully on a wall or fence out of doors; but in most parts of the country it has to be accommodated in a cool greenhouse. It has in some places contracted a bad name as being a plant of indifferent constitution and very liable to severe attacks of mildew. In most cases this may, however, be traced to wrong methods of culture, and usually to its being planted in too close and warm a structure. Providing frost is kept away, the cooler the plant is grown the better, while free ventilation is necessary at all times. Under the best possible conditions, with a good loamy soil containing lime, the plants grow freely and quickly covers an extensive area. It is seen to the greatest advantage when the main branches are trained to wires beneath the glass of a conservatory or corridor and the secondary branches allowed to hang loose. Under such conditions at flowering time the starry white blooms are seen to the best possible advantage. C. indivisa may be grafted in spring on pieces of root of the common C. Vitalba, the work being done indoors in a warm structure. As soon as the union of stock and scion is complete, however, the young plants should be transferred to a cooler house. Young one year old plants form nice pot plants for greenhouse decoration in spring.—D.

Many of the Gardens of Victoria are panoramic in extent—acres of dreamy Lotus Land

BULBS AFTER THEY HAVE BLOOMED

Hardy bulbs which have been forced indoors can not be forced a second season, so throw them away as soon as the blooms fade and get the pots put out of the way. On the other hand, if one wants to get all there is in the bulbs, and has enough patience, they can be grown in the garden after the forcing.

Keep them in the light, warm room, and water as usual until they show, by the yellowing of the foliage, that they are ripening. When this stage is reached, gradually withhold water until the foliage is entirely yellow.

Let the ripened bulbs rest until soon after midsummer and then plant outdoors where they can be left undisturbed for a few years.

When freezing weather comes, mulch the bed as a protection, and when the mulch is removed in the spring the green sprouts should be showing.

There may be a few inferior blooms the first year, but the second year there should be good ones, with better ones to follow.

WHEN TO SELL HOGS

The question is often asked, when is the best time to sell hogs? In my effort to answer this very important question I want it understood that I speak for my own immediate neighborhood, and give my own twenty years' experience only in preparing hogs for the butcher. Of course, you all know different localities and different conditions make a great deal more or less profit in hog raising. Some feed their hogs too long and consume part of the profit by so doing, while others do not feed long enough or liberal enough to make what they ought to make. In these times of high feed and high labor and low-priced meat, it is necessary to figure very close, or some of us will have to quit the hog business. I run all my hogs on alfalfa from birth until sold, either for breeders or the packery, and as soon as they weigh 200 pounds each, or about that, I sell or kill them.

If you are feeding pure blooded hogs they will weigh 175 pounds to 225 pounds each at six to eight months old. I think seven months old is the best age and most profitable hog we can sell. The younger you sell the less risk of disease, the less trouble, time and feed it takes. The sooner you sell the more room and better care for the next litter. The cheapest gain is made while the pig is small. A pig weighs about three pounds at birth. With reasonable care it will gain on an average one-fourth pound per day for the first ten to twenty days. So you see it doubles its weight in twelve days, and at 65 cents per bushel for corn and $1.50 per 100 pounds for shorts, the first three pounds of gain costs about three and one-third cents per pound, allowing eight pigs to the litter for each sow. I figure on the rule that it takes only a small amount of fire to heat a baling wire, but it would take a lot of fire to heat a 300-pound rod of iron. So I say it takes but little to make a pig gain a pound per day. But it takes about eight to ten ears of corn per day and some slop to make a big hog hold his own.

Some men say if the market is low, feed longer (even though feed is high)—they may go up. Others will say: "Feed is high; I will sell (while they are not fat); they may go down." Now, friends, let me tell you, don't try to get the market ready for your hogs, but get your hogs ready for the market. Sell when they are fat and not before. Keep the kind that top the market and you will make money if feed is high. Registered hogs gain faster, bring more money for the feeder and make more pounds of meat out of the grain fed them than any other animal on earth.—J. C. Hestand in Farmer's Advocate.

STABLE HINTS

It is not hard work, but poor care, which ruins the average farm horse.

When the nights become warm enough there should be a night pasture ready for the work horses. Turn them out, not to eat, but to rest.

Always give them a good cleaning and brushing after they have eaten their supper and before they are turned out.

When a horse is cared for in this way, he will do more work and always keep in fine condition.

Always remove the harness at the noon hour, and use as little harness as possible when doing farm work.

Unless it is necessary to use blinds on the headstalls, don't do it.

Again we say, look well to the work collars. See that they are wiped clean and dry every time they are taken off the horses. Keep them soft and pliable by frequent manipulation, and if they become too stiff to yield to such treatment, pound the face gently with a round stick.

Never leave home without a blanket for the horse.

If a horse is fidgety and nervous and lays back his ears while being harnessed, there is a reason for his conduct. It is more than likely that he has been frightened or abused by his former caretaker. Continual kindness will in most instances effect a cure.—Farm Journal.

POULTRY NOTES

Dry earth makes the best dust bath, but coal ashes answer very well. Sufficient lice exterminator to be effective cannot well be incorporated in the dust bath. If the hens need treatment for lice the best plan is to give them a thorough dusting with some of the advertised lice powder or dry sulphur.

WHAT PIGEONS TO RAISE

There is no best breed of fancy pigeons. The one that suits your personal taste is the best one for you. The Homer is the best breed for raising squabs for broilers. A nice pen of white Homers combines both beauty and utility. This is also true of any of the colored Homers.