

MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

PARK AND GARDEN ARCHITECTURE.

Some explanation of what is really meant by idealism in the garden and park may be advisable. Well, it is simply man's conception of beauty expressed in wood, stone, tree, shrub, greensward, and gravel walk—the happy union of things which are allowable because they are necessary, useful, or agreeable in themselves, arranged so as to form a pleasing whole. As J. D. Sedding happily expresses it, "it is man's report of earth at her best, man's love of loveliness carried to excess, his craving for the ideal grown to a fine lunacy." Compare the modern park, with its curling walks and drives leading to nowhere, its lakes in all sorts of apparently unnatural and impossible situations, cast iron fountains, bandstand, and even grandfathers' clocks of the same material, unlovely girder bridges, little mountains and miniature Alps, its assortments of rockery stones, arranged like so many gravestones, weak and sickly conifers sadly proclaiming their alienage; compare all this with the stately avenues, grand parterres, quiet alleys, shady walks, sparkling fountains, and all the various associations of the old work, and you get some idea of the gulf which separates the two schools of landscape gardening, the new and the old. Of course the requirements of the public park to-day are not the same as those which had to be incorporated in the old gardens, but the spirit which actuated these old designers might be imported into the modern work, and so make our parks in some reasonable degree on a level with our boasted modern art culture. To attain to the excellence of this old work it is necessary that everything, small or great, be designed in harmony; that everything, whether building, planting trees, shrubs, expanse of water, grass lawns, etc., be designed or planned with due consideration to its fitness, proportion, and balance, without incongruity or discord. To attain this completeness and unity of the whole implies that to a knowledge of architecture, the chief essential, must be added a study of the technics of good gardening and of arboriculture. The true park must, like most other inventions, rest on the foundation of good planning, worked according to whatever characteristic is to have predominance, whether seclusion or recreation, or an equal combination of both. On level ground it is comparatively easy to shut off the various recreation grounds into proper compartments, the eye never being high enough to obtain a panoramic view, but in dealing with a site with considerably

varying levels much would depend upon the disposal of these features. The trampled grass of the cricket crease, the cinder path of the cycling course, and the excited noise of the foot-batters, are disturbing elements which require careful handling, but, as a rule, everything which is calculated to induce physical recreation should receive careful attention. The requirements of the surrounding population would, of course, decide what to go in for, but the following are specially worthy consideration; lake for boating and bathing ponds; children's playground; cycling tracks; football grounds; cricket creases; bowling greens; archery courts; quoit grounds; gymnasiums for both sexes; tennis lawns.

Of the things to specially avoid, the following are very important:

In Designing—Unreality and pretence.

In planning—Narrow walks and drives. On level ground, serpentine lines; on undulating ground, lines which do not express the contours. Main walks which do not suggest directness and a study of the public convenience; the arrangement of football grounds in the centre of a park, unless the park is of considerable size.

In Architecture—All appearances of jerry in construction, and veneer in ornament, spiked hurdle or barbed wire fences, cast iron gates and pillars, lodges copied from the "architecture made easy" books, stock-pattern bandstands, fountains, and vases, conservatories which appear to be built entirely of glass, rustic wood bridges and summer houses, ornamentally designed and conspicuously placed cast-iron urinals, and, generally speaking, stock-pattern anything.

In Landscape Formation—Bad drainage, in trenching, the bringing of subsoil to surface, in formation of beds for plantations, less than 1½ ft. of soil, slopes which rise or fall immediately from the edges of drives or walks, white spar rockwork. Where it is necessary to introduce rockwork, a professional rockbuilder should always be employed.

In Planting—Narrow belts, dotting of single trees, especially small growing conifers on lawns; small specky plantations; a too free use of ornamental conifers and evergreens to the exclusion of hardwoods; avenues which have a variety of trees in the same line.

Generally—Flower-beds around the bases of trees or plantations, clipping trees and shrubs with shears, excepting where formalism is required.

ARTIFICIAL STONE.

The last annual report of the Street Department of Boston, Mass., contains a description of some artificial stone work, which is the first example, says the Engineering Record, of the use of this material on any considerable scale, that the city has yet made. It was put down for a way or foot path serving to connect two parallel streets about 240 feet apart, but with a difference of about 45 feet at the point where it was used. The path is about 138 feet long and 11½ feet wide. It consists of seven flights of artificial stone steps connected by platforms of the same

material, and there is an additional flight of 13 steps at one end. The artificial stone in the walks, steps, and retaining walls cost about \$2,123. The iron railing and fencework cost about \$557. The excavation, foundations, stone retaining walls, and wooden fences were furnished by the street department, and cost about \$2,907. The report states that it makes a fine-looking job, and thus far the experience is satisfactory. The contract price for the wall was 36 cents per cubic foot; for the steps, \$1.15 per lineal foot, for the platforms, 30 cents per square foot; and 10 cents per square foot for surfacing.

Mr. Charles Devlin, of Pembroke, Ont., is said to have invented an apparatus to prevent the escape of sewer gas from sewers. It is in the form of a box, to be placed under the sewer grate, and has an ingeniously attached "door" or covering at the bottom, so arranged that the slightest pressure from water passing through the sewer grating will open it, but immediately after the water has passed through it will close automatically. The sewer will thus be sealed up hermetically, and no gas can escape into house or street.

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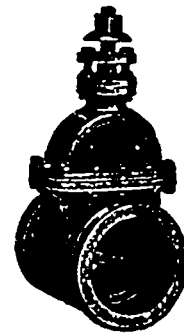
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* From a paper by Thomas H. Mawson, before the Association of Municipal and County Engineers, England.