


A FEW HINTS ON LANDSCAPE GARDENING.—IV.



THE distance from the main road at which a house is to be built should be governed by its size and by the extent of the grounds by which it is surrounded. Similar considerations also govern the disposal of the approach, or carriage drive, by which access is had to it from the main road, and both these considerations are too often entirely lost sight of by those who plan their own ground.

Manifestly in the case of small village and city lots it would be in poor taste to attempt to introduce those curves in walks and drives which grace the park-like surroundings of an elegant country seat; and, indeed, in most such cases the straight lines are the most suitable because most economical of space, and encroaching least upon the precious green sward.

Unfortunately, many a fine mansion, owing to a lack of taste on the part of the owner, is built so near to the road that no opportunity is left for the beautiful in the arrangement of the grounds, and the house itself appears to the greatest disadvantage; and all this notwithstanding the possession of broad acres which the wealthy proprietor might have drawn upon to extend his house grounds. Where, however, they are admissible, gentle curves in the walks and drives are more in keeping with our modern ideas of taste than the straight lines, and the stiff geometric style of gardening of the ancients. Our model is nature itself, in which we see the

curve predominates, and the trees and shrubs are not in straight lines, but grouped in ever varying shapes and forms. In such a case, then, the disposal of the approach is a study, and should be made to enter the grounds amid dense groups of forest trees and shrubs, so arranged as to conceal the house itself until the best point of view is reached, after which there should be little to attract the eye away from this object. But though curves are desirable they should not be introduced too freely or without at least some apparent reason; as, for instance, a group of shrubbery, a large tree, or perhaps an elevation, about which an easy ascent is desirable.

It is recommended that the entrance from the public road be not too abrupt, but at an easy angle, so as to give the approach as much importance as possible. It is also important that the carriage way should not skirt the boundary too closely, for that would betray the limit of the estate, and impart a sense of confinement, which is not in good taste; indeed, all such division lines should be concealed from view as much as possible, not by stiff, formal rows of evergreens or other trees, but by groups so arranged as to conceal objectionable features when viewed in passing, or from the windows of the house. And just here another important point should not be overlooked, viz., that these clumps of trees and shrubs be also so disposed as to leave open to view,