

THE ARCHITECT AND THE GARDEN.*

The intimate relationship between the house and the garden, and consequently between the house designer or architect and the garden, is almost entirely overlooked by or unknown to the general public. This ignorance may, perhaps, be due to the architect himself, who has in the past failed to make use of opportunities when called in to design a new home or to alter an old one. Architects, as a body, have failed to study garden craft and design, or to realize how great is the connection between house and garden from both the practical and æsthetic point of view. But interest is being aroused, both amongst the public and the profession, in this, to me, most fascinating branch of our art, and it behoves us to be fully prepared with reasons why the architect's jurisdiction should extend to the garden, and to see that our knowledge is founded upon sound principles.

I do not propose to go much into the question of the right or wrong in garden design. I would rather dare to paraphrase Kipling and say, "There are nine and sixty ways of constructing" garden lays, and every single one of them is "right"—so long as we keep before us the spirit of the old English garden, and understand the principles which underlay its formation and development. Perhaps, at the outset, I had better say what I personally conceive those underlying principles to be.

First of all, then, seclusion. For if this was not the great aim of the old gardeners, it is an end which has certainly been attained. The brick wall with its green crusted coping, the close-clipped hedge, defying the prying eyes of the curious, high trellis-work with its entwining creepers, all point to this end, and while serving the useful purpose of giving shelter to fruit and flower, wrap the whole garden with a tranquil air of seclusion, security, and mystery. This was well understood in the seventeenth century, and is, I think, clearly the reason why Georgian houses were so often placed close to the road in order to give more space and seclusion to the gardens lying behind them.

After seclusion comes usefulness. Gardens were not made merely for pleasure, but to provide the home with necessities and delicacies elsewhere unattainable. Fruit growing was a fine art. The bakehouse, brew-house, game larder, fishpond, dovecot, herb garden, walled fruit garden, orchard, quincuna, and stillroom were necessities, and not merely evolved out of playful fancy. Then there is, I think, no doubt that the fishpond or tank owed its origin in mediæval Catholic England to the demand for fish. The old-fashioned herb garden too must not be forgotten. The culture and curving of "simples" was formerly part of a lady's education, and gardens were oftentimes renowned for this feature alone. There was also the necessity for good, dry paths and terraces, for it was in the garden that exercise was largely taken, roads being few and bad. The garden was therefore an integral part of the home—indeed, an absolute necessity—for, if the household was not self-supporting, it could barely exist. Thus garden and house grew up and were designed together, for each was the complement of the other.

The next question is—Do these principles still hold good; are the same necessities still in existence; can we, after making all due allowance for the lapse of centuries and rapid growth of modern requirements, still say that the same factors should form the basis of good garden

design in this twentieth century, and, if so, how is the architect thereby affected? A little consideration will, I think, show that in reality almost all the old conditions should apply at the present time.

First, seclusion. The greater number of houses, and the greater chances of being overlooked by near neighbours, serve to make strongly defined boundaries, which will act as screens, even more imperative than ever, and thus we have ample excuse for "high-walled gardens green and old," hedges thick and trim, and well designed trellis as bounding lines.

Of the usefulness and necessity of a garden the need is still the same, though perhaps at first sight not so apparent because the reasons are more psychological than materialistic. Fruit and vegetables can probably be bought from the greengrocer as cheaply as they can be produced in most private gardens, but the demand for them is greater than ever. Jam and pickle factories have done away with the absolute necessity for home-growing, but I think everyone will agree that home-made jams are far superior. I am sure that few people realize how much can be done and how much pleasure obtained from even a limited number of well-cared-for fruit trees, and what is more beautiful than an apple or pear orchard either in early summer or autumn? Then, too, there are many trees such as mulberry, quince, medlar, cherry plum, filbert, which, while full of delight to the eye, are useful as well. These planted with discernment will give pleasure to generations. Without going quite as far as Voltaire's "Candide" and saying, "Let us cultivate our garden, for that comprises the whole duty of man," I am certain that if nowadays gardening, not merely flower gardening, but honest fruit and vegetable growing, with the accompanying culinary knowledge, was better understood and followed we should hear less of broken nerves and jaded energies. There is no recreation more healthful than gardening, and health is the ground plan of all that is worth having in life. Then, too, there is its educational influence, especially upon children; and there is no better way of teaching scientific truths and imparting a true system of observation of nature than by means of the well-ordered garden. Of the joy of the "pleasure garden" there can be no doubt, and, surely, we should be able to appreciate this part of the garden, and derive moral and physical good from it as much as our ancestors. . . . The house and garden still require each other to make the home one perfect whole. Each must fit in with the other, and each must be in most cases subject to some special circumstance of site and locality.

Who, then, is so fitted to bring this about as the man who designs the house? He must have a hand in the laying out of the garden, or full advantage of the site may be lost, and so the chance of welding together house and garden through some happy accident of nature may be missed for ever. How can we convince our clients that one mind should control the two? The end can only be achieved by taking our client (or more often his wife) with us. If he is a careful man, or anxious of expense, it may be well to approach the garden from the materialistic point of view. Point out the desirability of determining where surplus earth may be removed at one hauling, and thus save labour and form your broad lines all in once. The making of paths from old material may be suggested, or the position of the carriage drive if the house is to have one. If by some such means the ice can be broken then, perhaps the rest may be plain

* Summary of a paper by H. P. G. Maule, read before the Discussion Section of the British Architectural Association.