## BEAUTIFUL GARDEN OF GRASS.

*(From The New York Sun.)*

Three miles from the pretty Connecticut town of South Manchester is the farm of James B. Olcott, who is becoming famous for his ideas about grass. It seems strange that while poets have sung ordinary people have admired grass for so many centuries, here yet have been so few definite ideas about it. It might almost be said that grass culture was unknown until James B. Olcott began to have practical ideas about it and put these practical ideas into demonstration.

Mr. Olcott is a slender man with an iron-grey beard and the eyes of an enthusiast. His house, which is quaintly and beautifully furnished, is a reflection of the peculiar cast of his mind. For a good many years now Mr. Olcott has had but two objects in life—to cultivate grass and to make other people cultivate it. He has toiled early and late, he has written pamphlets, he has crossed seas and rivers, all for the sake of grass culture.

Every one has observed lawns and parks, has noticed the beauty of color, the striking effects of carefully mowed and weeded plots of grass, has enjoyed the softness and coolness of such well-kept plots. And yet no one who has not seen Mr. Olcott's grass garden can realise how imperfect, how crude, how poor the best lawns are in comparison with what they might be. It is the might be that is Mr. Olcott's purpose.

The other day a reporter visited Mr. Olcott and walked for many hours through his grass garden and listened to what he had to say for

HIS GRASSES AND HIS IDEA.

Mr. Olcott began at the beginning and built up his theory systematically. "A good many people," said he, "do not realise, to begin with, that turf or sod is not a natural product. You do not find it in nature. Take our own prairies for instance. When the great herds of buffalo roamed over them, there was no turf. The grass grew wild and thin here, thick there. The buffalo moved north in summer and south in winter. Just as soon as men came and put herds of cattle on this grass it disappeared. It had no foundation.

"Turf is the product of herds of cattle, sheep and horses. It takes constant gnawing in the same place and constant tramping to beat the roots together into a turf. Wherever there have been herds and pastures, there turf has formed.

"And now, strange though it may seem while this turf has been cultivated in many ways and has been used in all sorts of ornamentations, there has been no real science applied to it. We have had flower gardening and landscape gardening, but no grass gardening to speak of, important part of landscape gardening though it is.

"Take any lawn or green sward anywhere, I care not how carefully it may have been laid out, and examine it closely. You will find in every square foot a dozen different kinds of grass represented, with weeds of all sorts thrown in. And you will find that the turf is not thick and homogeneous but is really thin and made up of all sorts of odds and ends. You would think that any gardener would see that this was all wrong and ought to be remedied. For these different kinds of grasses are of different shades of green and even of different colors. Some of them will mingle into a dense sod, others will not, and thus interfere with the homogeneousness of the whole. The weeds have no business there at all. Then, too some of these grasses will stand frequent mowing, while others require more careful handling. Yet none of these things seem to have occurred to the gardeners who try to

MAKE LAWNS AND PARKS BEAUTIFUL.

"And, again, if you take your different kinds of grasses to the botanists you will be surprised how little they will be able to tell you. They can distinguish most families when the grasses are in bloom, which lawn grass seldom is. But when it comes to the different species of the same family observation has not been close and knowledge is meagre and inaccurate.

"Then take this up from the farmer's standpoint. In is meadow or pasture he will have all these grasses growing together promiscuously. Some grow close, dense, and yield many tons to the acre. Others are thin and poor and yield little. Yet among the farmers the greatest ignorance prevails, both as to the heaviness of grass and the nutritive qualities of the different kinds. How much labor is wasted, how much more is misdirected, or yields only small return. I have even known farmers to grow acres of worthless weed, cut it and harvest it, under the impression that they were growing good grass and were getting an extraordinary yield. Nothing worthy the name of science has been applied to meadows or pasture.

"These things show in outline the need of grass gardening. It is to this need that I have turned my attention for many years and within the last two years I think I have done something toward accomplishing my purpose."

To the south of Mr. Olcott's house lies the acre of ground which makes up his grass garden, in all probability the finest grass garden in the world. In five parallel rows, extending the entire length of the field, are plots of grass, each plot four feet square. There are 250 plots in all, representing over

A HUNDRED DIFFERENT KINDS

of grass. Each plot is separated from its neighbors by a narrow path of bare ground. Thus each grows and thrives by itself, without any intermingling.

In each of these plots there is to be found one kind of grass, and one only. There is not merely a distinction of family, but of species as well, so that no matter how carefully you may examine any one plot you will find that it is uniform throughout. This result was obtained by extraordinary precautions. If you buy grass seed of a dealer you will find when it grows that under the name on the outside of the package a half dozen or a dozen different kinds of grass are included. So Mr. Olcott could not buy of dealers.

For the most part these plots were grown from shred of turf. Some of them came from distant parts of this country, others from other parts of the world. Mr. Olcott would take a bit of sod, tear it up into small pieces, only a few roots to a piece, and then plant those that were absolutely alike in the same plot. In this way there was no mixing of families or of species. For this planting Mr. Olcott has a wooden frame four feet square, with two parallel slats across it at equal distances from the sides and each from the other. In these slats and in the sides of the frame are driven nails equal distances apart, 25 points in all. When this frame is pressed down upon a plot 25 small holes are made in the ground, and in each hole a seed or a shred of turf is put. From these 25 centres of growth the sod forms and covers the entire plot.

All this gives only a faint idea of the minute care which Mr. Olcott takes to get the best results. And when the planting is done the work is only begun. Weeds must be kept out. Other seeds are constantly falling to spring up and spoil the work, and the plants from these must be uprooted. The care of these 250 plots

TAKES ALL HIS TIME

and all his knowledge of the small differences between grasses which may be of entirely different kinds yet similar or the same to the unpractised eye. Mr. Olcott has a unique set of gardening tools of his own invention, and with these he saves all that labor of stooping and hand pulling which is so painful to do and even to watch in the ordinary garden.

Although this garden was started only on April 22, 1890, the good results are apparent, almost amazing, to one unfamiliar with grasses. The points that most forcibly struck the reporter were the uniformity of color and the wonderful thickness of the sods in those grasses which were intended by nature for lawns and green swards.

All New York is familiar with the beautiful color of the grass in the lawns in Central Park. The reporter, looking at those small plots in the Olcott garden, saw at once that those lawns were marred by the thing of which Mr. Olcott has spoken above. The mingling of different shades of green is not inharmonious, it is true. But the uniformity of color, the exact uniformity, gives an effect far more beautiful. And then, too, by using this system, different stretches of sward may be made each of a different shade of green.

But all these grasses are not green. Some are blue, some almost purple, some ashen grey. In this, too, lies a chance for

UNDREAMED OF MARVELS

in landscape gardening. In the texture of grasses there is a wide difference, as all who have felt the rough skin of some field grasses and the smooth skin of others know. For a lawn the soft grasses are of course the better, the softest the best. In these plots all this was brought out clearly.

Mr. Olcott has made many observations as to the thickness with which different grasses will grow. He also has learned much about what grasses will grow thicker with frequent mowing, and what grasses will not stand the close clipping of the lawn mower. A lawn should be thick and close cropped. In these plots you may study these points and grasp much.

There is one variety of grass—the sweet vernal or anthroxanthum odoratum—which gives that peculiar sweetness to the breezes of the country. It has a strong, pure, sweet odor, which comes from its long, silken bloom. Many gardeners have tried to put this into lawns, and have wondered why no odor ever came from it then. Mr. Olcott could tell them that the sweet vernal will not stand close cropping, and should, therefore, never be put into a lawn. Besides, its color is not attractive.

Of there 250 plots these was a dozen at least that were of almost equal attractiveness for lawns. But of all the softest, the thickest, and the best in color seemed to the reporter to be the festina tennifola with its silken fineness and its light green color. For a queer lawn the festuca glauca, which is of a silver grey and which makes a fine, thick sod, would be very desirable.

There is a wide difference between different kinds of grass in their durability. You may have noticed a patch of grass all tattered and torn, in the midst of a roadway. There was a reason why that bit of grass persisted while the rest wore away. Mr Olcott has experimented with several kinds of grass, and has found several that will persist in spite of wear and tear. They belong to the agrostes family. If these grasses were planted in footways or carriage drives they would be a great improvement over gravel or stone, and would at the same time always remain fresh.

Of course turf is a comparatively new thing in this country. But in Europe it is old, as it began with the first pasture grounds.

THE TURF OF ENGLAND

has been made famous by poets and writer for centuries. But Mr. Olcott found the same crudeness and flaws in it as in our own on his recent trip there after new kinds of grass.

The longer a species of grass has been used as a sod the better adapted it grows for that purpose. And Mr. Olcott thought, and rightly, that in those sods of ancient making he would find new grasses that might be brought here and cultivated.

He brought back with him from England and from France some pieces of sod cut from turf that was hundreds of years old, and perhaps in some cases thousands. These pieces he has not yet torn up into shreds and separated into species for planting in new plots. But from the remarkable solidity of their formation, their roots being interwined in a wonderful way, he hopes to get some results.

The most interesting of these pieces is a bit of daisy spangled sod. The piece is about a foot square and there are at least half a hundred English daisies growing with their small, delicate blooms and with white petals tipped with pink. These daisies are like our dandelions in hardiness. The lawn-mower only makes them grow the more thickly.

Mr. Olcott intends to experiment with this daisy-strewn sod. If he has success Central Park should have a lawn of some dark green grass with the seeds of these English daisies planted in it. For the effect certainly is strikingly beautiful. America, however, cannot hope to have sod equalling the English in brilliancy of color, because the English fogs and frequent showers keep the grass constantly refreshed as artificial means cannot refresh it.

At the present stage of grass gardening none but a man of means could afford the time or the money necessary to getting a perfect lawn. But the day is not far away when the right kinds of sods may be had as cheaply as the poor and crude kinds are now sold. Any one who has the time or the money will find himself rewarded if he gets a perfect lawn or grass plot about his house. As for the farmer's side of this experiment, the results are now there to benefit him in larger yields and better yields and hence increased income—all without any increase of labor. Mr. Olcott is a man with one idea, but his idea is a new one and a good one.

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She wouldn't tell a lie for the world
To the man who was all her own
But at least twenty times through the day
To him would this girl tel-a-phone.

The Pope, in order to provide against all possible contingencies, has just concluded a definitive will by which he bequeathes all his personal property to the Holy See.

Banker at (11:30 p. m.)—"I can't say I like Spatts altogether. He goes by fits and starts." Miss Blanche (with a little yawn)—"Well, I wouldn't mind a man going by fits if he did but start finally."

"And what is the trouble?" inquired the young wife of the physician. "Well, I don't think the case is really bad enough for a season at the seashore. I think a cure might be effected by the judicious application of a nice Summer hat."

## Marries a Former King's Daughter.

King Khama of the Bangwato, in Bechuanaland, is one of the most noted rulers in Africa, both because he rules a fairly civilized people and has wide influence, and also because he is a Christian who is most consistent in following his adopted faith. Many a time Khama has been urged to follow the example of other native rulers, and take a large number of wives. He, however, declared that such conduct was not in accordance with Bible teaching, and he lived for many years happily with one wife, whose name was Mabesi, and who had great influence among her people. She, like her husband, was a Christian, though she grew up to womanhood surrounded by all the influences of heathenism. In talking with her country women, she always profoundly impressed them by calling their attention again and again to the fact that Christianity improves the position of the women.

About two years ago this good woman died, and on Oct. 9, last year, Khama was married again, though his 30,000 subjects, who live in his big town of Palapye, did not know of his coming marriage until the day before the ceremony was performed. A few months earlier his son, Sekhoma, had been married with a great deal of ceremony, but the King's own marriage was a very simple affair. He desired to make it as private as possible, without noise and without notice. His first wife had been dead about a year when Khama's counsellors urged him to take another wife. His choice finally fell upon the widow of one of King Sechele's sons, herself the daughter of a native king. She also is a Christian. Khama did not take his people into his confidence until the lady who was to be his wife, arrived at Palapye. The next day they were married, and the day after he was attending to his usual public duties in his quiet active way.

As a statesman, there is no doubt that Khama has outstripped all other Africans. He has always valued the influence of the whites, and has encouraged white influences in his country. He does not permit strong drink to enter his domain. As an instance of his great enerny may be mentioned his latest exploit in the removal of his great town of Shoshong to a new site about seventy-five miles northeast of his old abode. Shoshong had grown more and more unsuitable as the site of a city on account or the scarcity of water. Khama finally decided to remove the entire people to the fertile and well-watered lands in the northeast. He selected a beautiful tract, with plenty of timber, for the new home of his people, and in August and September, 1889, he laid out the new town. It covers about twenty square miles, and the 30,000 people who acknowledge Khama as their ruler, moved to it almost simultaneously. The old town was then burned. The name of the new town is Palapye. Although it was built so rapidly it is a substantial city. The people live in comfortable, well built, red clay, thatched cottages, in whose doorways each owner is seen sitting in the evening in peace. The immense trees give abundant shade, and under the more favorable circumstances Khama's people will certainly enjoy a greater prosperity than ever before.

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## Some Roses.

How many gleams of pink in the world!
The light of the dawn and the eve,
The life of a fleeting cloud,
The happy cheek of a girl,
The glow imprisoned in pearl!
And oh, the sweetness and the gladness
Melting, pouring, through the pinkness
Roses' petals hold for love!
Leaf on leaf folding over,
Or breaking bonds and bursting cover,
Rolling backward, luscious, full;
Wrapping closest at the centre.
Curving thence in buoyant whirl;
Tilting lightly at the edges.
Where the richness pales away.
Burning somehow through the color,
Transfiguring and making fuller,
Shade of pink and hidden yellow.
Lives and glows, a light, a spirit,
Essence subtle, whence and whither?
Mingling softly with this spirit,
Breathing out from form and texture
Of the roses' every fold.
Wafted upward to the senses,
Come a fragrance and a rapture,
Scent of gardens, trace of heaven,
Sweet to wildness, dear, ecstatic.

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It is estimated that the amount of land under cereal crop this year in Manitoba is one million three hundred and eleven thousand acres, of which nine hundred and sixteen thousand are in wheat.