THE LAWN THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE "NATURAL STYLE" OF LANDSCAPE GARDENING.

THE CORNER OF A GARDEN DEVELOPED IN "JAPANESE STYLE."
"NATURAL STYLE" OF LANDSCAPE GARDENING AT FRANKLIN PARK, BOSTON.
A DRIVE ENTRANCE DESIGNED TO HARMONIZE WITH CONTOUR OF THE LAND.
should be considered first. Even on small suburban places a driveway is usually necessary, if not for carriages, at least for the easy delivery of supplies. The controlling factors for the drive are the point of contact with the highway, the arrangement with regard to its uses at the house and the connection of these two points. If possible the drive should leave the highway at the side of the property nearest the town, or in the direction of the greatest travel, at nearly right angles to the highway and on a level or on an easy grade. For a little distance from the highway it should be sufficiently in view to preclude the possibility of an accident at the junction. In its relation to the house, the drive should be so located as to best serve the uses for which it is intended. Proximity to both front and rear entrances, convenience in delivering coal, ice and other supplies, and last but not least, facility of exit, are some of the considerations which will govern the choice of location. For large places the separation of the purely pleasurable from the practical parts of the garden is often desirable, especially near the house. This may sometimes be accomplished by having both a carriage and a service turn to the roadway, the latter screened from the living part of the house.

In the connecting link between the highway and the house an easy grade is the prime consideration; next, a route which should be fairly direct, and third, a location as pleasing to the eye as possible. Any views, either of the house and grounds or of the surrounding landscape which may be developed in the course of the drive will add greatly to its interest, but must never be allowed to interfere with convenience of access or ease of grade. An entrance drive is first of all intended to furnish an easy and convenient means of getting into the property, and any circuitous route not needed to ease the grade will be recognized at once as inconvenient and artificial, no matter how fine the views which it develops. Except in rare cases a drive with long flowing curves will be found to meet these conditions and at the same time will be most pleasing to the eye. In very small places, especially where the architectural lines predominate, a straight drive may be in keeping; while very rugged sites often require sharp winding curves in order to maintain a reasonable grade. But only where the site demands it, should either of these be used.

IN THE North at least, the principal rooms of an all-the-year-round house should face the south, east or west. And among the principal rooms I include the kitchen, for here the housewife, or the servant, spends a great deal of time, and a cheerful room may help to alleviate much of the drudgery of housework and, perhaps, to solve the servant problem. No person should be compelled to
work the year round in a room having light only from the north. Just which exposure the various rooms will have must be determined by the local conditions of climate and view, and no set rule can be laid down. Personally, I think the dining room, or the dining alcove so frequently found in Craftsman homes, should have light from the southeast, or as near that quarter as is feasible, for a bright and sunny breakfast room imparts a cheer and glow which may last all day. With such an arrangement the kitchen would fall to the northeast side of the house, the large living room to the west side, or at least to the southwest, where it would gain what is usually one of the best views possible of a landscape, because it is apt to include the beauty of the sunset. The question of building for views, the American architect has been slow to face. He has in the past imitated much that was foreign in style and thought but little of its relation to site.

In the modern domestic architecture of America pergola-covered terraces and sleeping porches are coming to be regarded almost as essential. They not only add to the beauty of the architecture, but are a definite inducement for the outdoor living which at last we know we must have if we are going to become a nation of robust people. In addition to this consideration of health, the pergola terrace seems to link the house to the ground as nothing else in the way of garden architecture can serve to do. A vine-covered pergola and a terrace with a cement floor not only mean a chance for healthful as well as picturesque living in the fresh air, the joy of which America has only lately come fully to understand, but also seem to bridge the chasm which formerly opened so wide between indoors and out. Of course, in the East we have got to consider the problem of screening the porch, because as yet in spite of our scientific achievements, we have not done away with the two pests, flies and mosquitoes. A screened porch and a kitchen so placed that they are in the midst of quiet and beautiful surroundings, add enormously to what constitutes essential comfort in the modern country home. I well remember visiting the home of two young foreigners in one of our western cities. They were both day laborers and had purchased a lot in a suburb on the instalment plan. With the roughest of lumber and their own unskilled hands they built a one-room shack having a porch across the front, screened with common cloth netting. There they slept in warm weather, and you can imagine they were about as near to nature inside their home in the winter, in a climate where the mercury often touched twenty below. To my notion, and I know they thought so, too, they had more of a home than the occupants of many a fine flat in the city.

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THE general design of house and drive being determined, we may then turn our attention to the grading of the property. To as great an extent as possible, the topography should be unchanged from Nature's graceful contour. If the site is well chosen we cannot hope to improve the beautiful lines, and also the moving of earth is a very expensive undertaking. When we attempt to improve on Nature's handiwork, she sometimes revenges herself by sending hard showers to wash gullies in our fine lawns, and ice and snow to continue the work of destruction, thereby showing her contempt for our lack of appreciation.

When grading is necessary, it should always be done as closely in harmony with the original surface as we are able to conceive. Plain surfaces and terraces must always be protected by retaining walls or other artificial structures. But that kind of grading is never in keeping with Craftsman homes except on restricted city lots. The lines of the surface should always be in flowing curves. Note also that a concave surface gives an added sense of distance, which is most pleasing, while a convex surface brings a distant object nearer to the eye. For small places, therefore, a concave center with a slight convex roll near the boundaries, will seem to add space to your grounds and at the same time furnish a proper element of strength at the borders. No grade should be precipitous except on the most rugged of sites. Here let it be Nature's work; yours will be almost sure to wash. For carrying water on a grade a good turf is better than any paving, for it is not so liable to be undermined.

In the question of planting, which is commonly regarded as the whole of landscape gardening, we find another feature which depends largely on the characteristics and environment of the site. Here again the more we know of local conditions, and particularly of the flora, the better able we are to achieve satisfactory results. It is only when a detailed study of these is made and applied to each case in hand that the restful feeling of absolute harmony can be gained. Planting is not only a problem of the selection of the proper material, but of the arrangement and grouping of this in an artistic manner. This can usually be accomplished by following some general scheme.

Landscape gardening, like the other conventional arts, has its more or less definite styles, as the Formal or Italian, the Natural, the Picturesque and the Japanese. The Formal, while highly effective in its proper place, is not consistent with Craftsman homes. On the most rugged and wildest sites the Picturesque style is harmonious, but as it requires the most expert treatment to attain purity, and merges almost imperceptibly into the Natural in less exacting situations, it need not be discussed here.
MUCH needs to be said regarding the Japanese, however, for on first consideration it seems to be peculiarly suited to Craftsman homes. It is a truly national style, finely developed, and highly effective in its own environment, but in a broad sense it will never wholly meet American ideals. In its purest expression, it is a miniature copy of some portion of Nature, effected in the spirit of religious interpretation. Each garden has a fixed number of stones and trees, lanterns, hills and other features, with a definite name and place in the composition, every one of which has an exact religious significance. An adaptation of a Japanese effect in gardens in this country might be satisfactory, for without doubt there are many features which we might adopt and modify to suit our local condition; a little stream of water may be as pleasing as a large river, yet a sixty-year-old tree, stunted to a foot high, or a wild mountain reproduced in a twenty-by-forty-foot backyard is grotesque and ridiculous in relation to the breadth and strength of American ideals. Then, too, the Japanese style with its minute details requires the undivided attention of a very good gardener. If you want a Japanese garden, set apart a small area and develop it as one feature of your landscape treatment; but if you let it be the dominating spirit of your place you will find it very hard to carry out in a broad way and very exacting and expensive to maintain.

The Natural style is the one best adapted to nearly all American conditions. But it is in connection with Craftsman architecture that it can be developed to its greatest purity, for the very essence and spirit of each is absolute harmony with local conditions. By the proper combining of the two we may obtain the unity which alone will make a perfect composition.

To develop a place in the Natural style the following points should be observed. All lines of road, grading and planting should flow in gentle curves. The open spaces should be as far as possible unbroken; planting at the margins, roads and paths, near the edges rather than through the middle, should be observed, and no obstructions, either in the way of statuary and fountains or of specimen trees and shrubs, should be allowed on the lawn. The planting should be massed along the base of the house and other structures to unite them to the site. Vines are excellent for this purpose. A massed border-planting of trees and shrubs gives seclusion from unrelated things and variety and interest to the skyline. Careful arrangement, too, will open and yet frame in the best views. Flower beds in straight lines or geometrical shapes are entirely out of place. Straight drives and walks never fit a natural slope. Nature does not work in straight lines. Planting in rows with even spacing is always artificial.
IN ARRANGING for your planting study the natural growth carefully and get your inspiration there. Do not use marsh plants on a dry knoll, or the native growth of a sunny roadside under the shade of trees. Do not try to grow tropical plants in a cold climate. Anything which you find growing wild in the neighborhood, under similar conditions to your own, together with plants from places of like environment, will give a variety sufficient for anyone but the curio collector. Native plants will always harmonize with rugged sites, while the specialized varieties should be used sparingly even on more formal sites, and eccentric plants only with the greatest thought. A weeping mulberry, camperdown elm or clipped evergreen does not look well with Craftsman designs, and forms with variegated or strikingly colored foliage must be carefully placed in relation to the colors used in the finish of the house.

In regard to the different classes of plants, choose those adapted to your requirements. Hardy trees, shrubs and vines do well with little care and that not necessarily expert. Perennials need more attention but are not exacting, while annuals are useful in many places, but require yearly planting. Exotics and tender plants are seldom worth the care and expense necessary for success. Therefore depend mainly on the hardy trees, shrubs and vines; then use perennials and annuals as freely as your skill and means will permit.

As to the place of the landscape architect, he is just as essential as the architect and should by all means be employed if your purse permits. As has been emphasized, all results will depend on the degree to which the local conditions are successfully met. It is the architect’s work to study the local surroundings with regard to all the different elements of the problem, and to bring about a complete harmony not only in the general scheme but also in the minute details. Such service requires training and must be adequately compensated, but in many instances he will save more than his fee and at the same time get results way in advance of what could be obtained without his help. Contractors and nurserymen may know their particular line, but it is only when one has the breadth and knowledge of the whole field that thoroughly good work is done. Naturally, an expert whose energies are directed along the lines of our personal wishes and the problems in hand can come nearer to perfection in developing a characteristic and artistic home setting than the man who, though his ideals are lofty, lacks the craftsmanship to express them.