

A  
0  
0  
0  
5  
5  
9  
4  
4  
4  
5



305 SOUTH PINE AVENUE  
ANN ARBOR MI 48106-1500

ROOT

Landscape Garden Series

SB  
472  
R85  
v.9



LANDSCAPE GARDEN  
SERIES



IX. COUNTRY PLACES

*The* GARDEN PRESS  
*Davenport, ~ Iowa*



LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
SANTA BARBARA

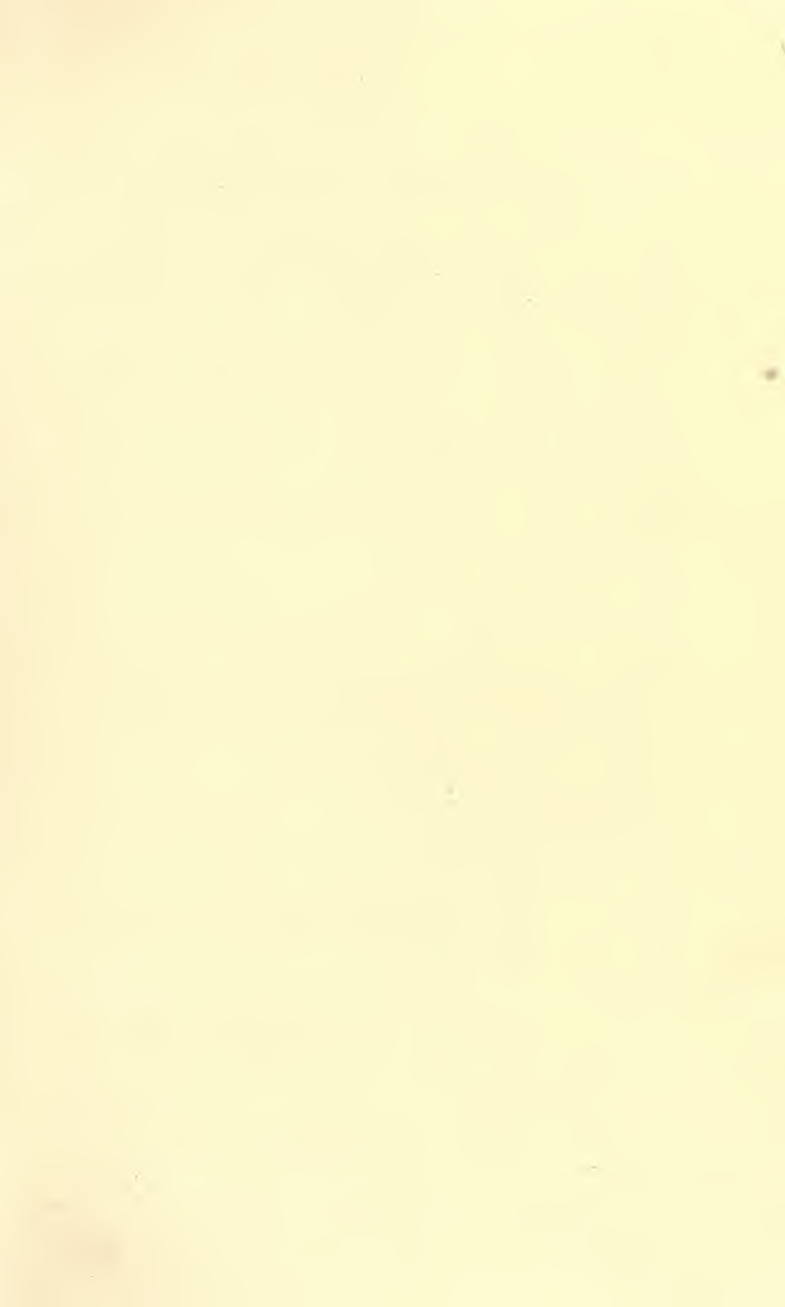
PRESENTED BY

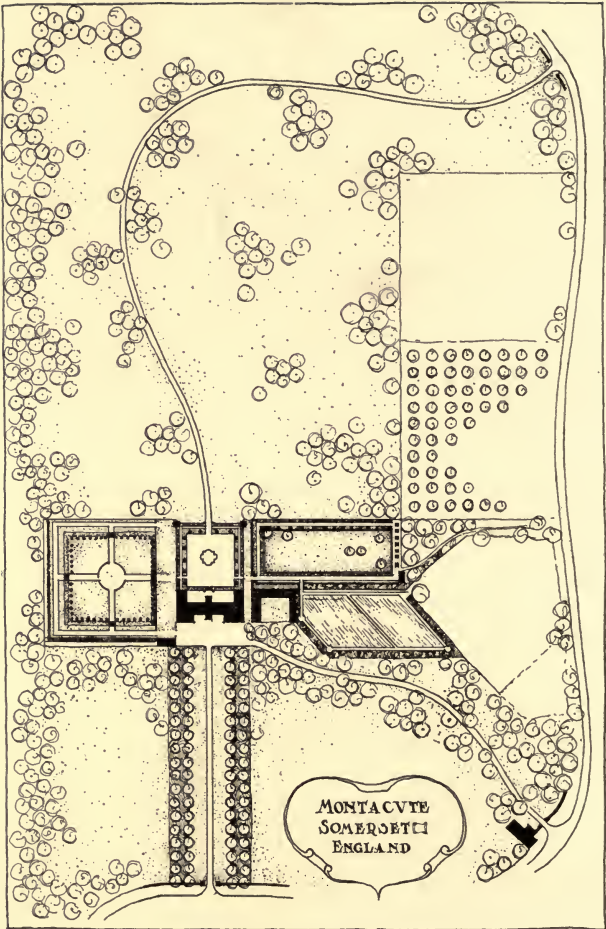
Glen G. Mosher

~~Handwritten signature~~

**GLEN G. MOSHER**







MONTACUTE  
SOMERSETT  
ENGLAND

Fig. 1—An English country place



LANDSCAPE GARDEN SERIES

# COUNTRY ESTATES

BY

RALPH RODNEY ROOT, B. S. A., M. L. A.



THE GARDEN PRESS  
DAVENPORT, IOWA

BLH

*Copyright, 1921*  
*BY L. W. RAMSEY*

*Printed in U. S. A.*

## CHAPTER I

### THE COUNTRY PLACE

**T**HOUGH the country places of America may lack the traditions of English estates and the grandeur and magic of the Italian villas, everyone familiar with the open country must admit that our country homes have a certain charm and individuality that keeps their memory a pleasant one for the visitor and resident. The student and lover of the open country, after a visit to country places, feels that even without centuries of traditions, these places have the fundamental organization of plan that brings one to the same basis of study as one arrives at after a study of the Old World gardens. The houses are in such a relation to the broad sweep of the landscape that it is brought in and included as a part of the composition. This close relation of the house to its surrounding landscape and to its real utility is the secret of the successful English estate or Italian villa.

The basis of a country estate plan as in all design is the "layout" or structural lines. Perhaps the greatest weakness of country place planning at the present time is the neglect of proper organization of its plan and the use of the principles of design or composition in its relation to natural conditions. The tendency has been to emphasize other features of the work at the expense of this fundamental one of design. The most common mistake has been the emphasis of horticultural or naturalistic side of the work to such an extent that there is often such a poor organization of the plan that the enjoyment of even the features that the gardener may have considered the important ones of the estate have been lost.

Examples of this are where the gardens have been placed so as to interfere with the best views, and the service so poorly handled, that it destroys a real enjoyment of the natural scenery. Any attempt to create natural scenic effects in landscape work has, as we know, certain limitations, but such an arrangement of a plan as to give emphasis

to existing natural conditions, depends for its success on the fundamental organization of the plan in the location of the building group and its orientation so as to give the most convenient arrangement for the entrance, lawn, view, garden and service.

When the general *direction* lines for the views are established, and the proper space given to each area or working part, we have the basis of a working plan or scheme. The style of architecture and the emphasis of features should then be determined to fit the needs of the problem. After the buildings have once been built and such construction work as grading, road building and planting, are done, it is difficult to rearrange them so as to make a satisfactory plan. A road that may be made to emphasize natural scenery by frequent turns and detours from a natural line of direct approach may have certain advantages for a morning walk, but for use as a motor road or entrance may be inconvenient.

A road that has curves and turns because of grade, topographical reasons, may be the best solution of the problem, but a deliberate turning and twisting in order to display features becomes unhandy because of the loss of its purpose as an entrance drive.

This has brought about the division of the drives into entrance, or business drives and displays drives, motor or carriage roads and bridle paths.

In the organization of the plan for a country place, the location of the house group and its immediate surroundings so as to take advantage of the best views, is of the first importance to the owner for the best endowment of the open country and the landscape architect for the success of the plan. The principal views out have an important influence on the general location and orientation of the house. The principal axes are determined by the general view directions. In the opening or closing of other views and vistas, care must be taken that too many lines do not carry out so as to produce a confusion of views. A magnificent view down a river or across a valley, is the principal picture.

A careful following of the principles of design or composition in the organization of a country place plan is not something that concerns itself with problems where the plan itself may make a great decorative

formal plan like Versailles or the Villa d'Este, but it should be the basis of the simplest problem that the landscape architect has to deal with. Suppose you are to work out a plan for a simple farm place, the same principles apply. There will first be the question of landscape emphasis, style of architecture, etc., but before these the question of the location of the buildings group, its orientation and convenience of arrangement must be determined. Are the buildings to be built in one group or as separate units? In many of our country places an attempt has been made to carry the landscape plan out along natural lines and this desire on the part of the landscape architect has given an over-emphasis to the grounds that defy both the architecture and the open-country view. The result has been to give us a type of country place entirely out of harmony with its surroundings.

In a country place of the most naturalistic type, the architectural group should be planned with a very careful study of the views so as to have them in an axial relation with the house and its setting. If the axis lines do not carry out into the country view we soon find our whole scheme lacking in the ideal country atmosphere.

As the emphasis of a country place is the open country view, the long axis of the house is placed so as to feature this. The entrance is usually placed opposite this and the gardens and service sides of the house arranged so as best to fit the natural requirements of the problem. The proper use of the division lines of the separate areas is the fundamental basis in the organization of any landscape problem. Whether the emphasis is to be formal or informal in the general layout and planting, the same principles apply in the solution of the problem. The areas about the house must first be adapted to the requirements of each problem as to size and shape and then to the natural landscape conditions of the country. One of the faults with many of our American places is the entrance portion of the residence. While we may not aim at securing magnificence a casual entrance takes away the dignity of the house and keeps the visitor from securing a good first impression of the place.

The country atmosphere is a feature that is apt to be found lacking in what was for a long time considered as the true American country home. In the gradual development of these places the real

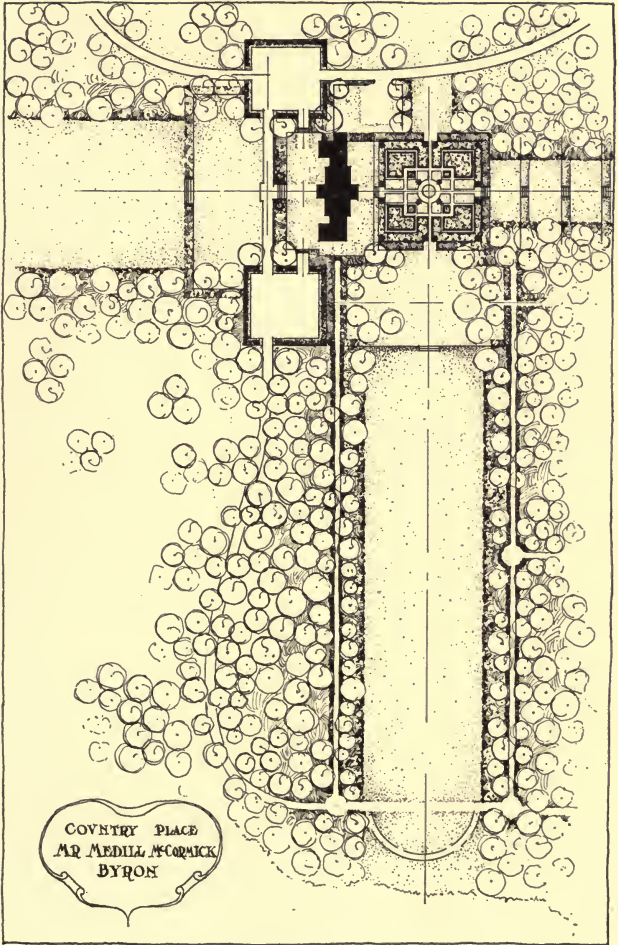
---

---

The house has been located in the midst of woodland conditions and the views opened out into the open country. A well marked line has been made to separate the kept grounds from the natural woodland but in no case has the use of this feature been restricted. Pleasure drives and walks lead from the house-grounds out thru the "natural" gardens and woodlands to the open country which surrounds the house on every side. The principal view has been emphasized by the location of the house and its relation to the living rooms and broad terrace.

---

---



COUNTRY PLACE  
MR MEDILL McCORMICK  
BYRON

Fig. 2

achievement that gives them their individuality is their independence of decorative horticulture.

No line can be drawn between the design and the horticultural elements of a landscape scheme. The planting must have, as the basis of its arrangement, good design; and the design must have good planting, so that in each lies the pattern of good landscape architecture. The landscape architect must have a working knowledge of the basic principles of design and an understanding of plant forms. While a detailed knowledge of horticulture as listed in an encyclopedia is not necessary, he must understand plant forms and local plant conditions. Although a good gardener, horticulturist, or nature lover, may understand plants from his own interest as to methods of growing, varieties, and kinds or natural habits of growth, it is the basic principle of design that governs their fundamental arrangement as regards the organization of the plan that is the final test of good landscape design.

While flowers and decorative plant material must always be the feature of a garden, the garden should never exist for its flowers alone, but should have, in addition to its horticultural value, a studied color plan and gracious lines of design and be in harmony with the entire scheme. The real permanent features that are the basis of a successful country place plan or composition, are to keep the open country atmosphere, to make the plan and house a part of the landscape and then to combine and blend the two by the use of plant material that will not become of itself the controlling element of the whole place.

"Creation of landscape" in order to make an excuse for the introduction of exotic and gardenesque plant material was at one time the fashion in America. The American country home, in which the "natural" effect was produced by the winding road, mounds, iron deer and other figures, a weeping mulberry, weeping elms, with formal beds of cannas and geraniums, or elaborate "carpet beds" of intricate pattern, was at one time extensively developed in the Eastern States. The more modern adaptation of the architectural part of the country place to the natural landscape has given us open country estates in which the house group, orchard, garden, recreation features, and the big sweep of open fields and forests, are all fused in one. In much of this early gardening of America, as regards country places,



little attention was paid to the fundamental principles of design in the organization of the plan so as to bring the surrounding landscape into the scheme and provide for convenience and pleasure. The real beginning of the movement to the open country began after the profession of landscape architecture had arrived at a point where the real underlying principles of design had become the basis in the solution of a landscape problem.

The owners had brought back with them from abroad an appreciation for good work, and although the first plans may have shown more of the nurseryman's art than old-world traditions, the basis of the plan was such that careful study and reconstruction had brought about a gradual realization of the model which was the inspiration. A factor that has had an important bearing on the bringing together of underlying principles of arrangement has been the garden clubs, magazines and books dealing with gardening in its relation to the open country.

Early landscape architecture in America had no distinctive style of its own, but was based on traditions of the old world. The Colonial houses, with their well arranged building groups, with door-yard gardens and the house grounds enclosed by a fence, was, for general arrangement of plan and plant material, almost transplanted from Europe.

Although the final result may give the effect of natural conditions or informality, the same principles have been used in its organization as in the most formal and intricate plan. The problems of design are essentially the same. Depending upon nature or accident, is not a safe basis for the important views. The principles of design govern not only the fundamental organization of each problem in the design of a country place, they govern also in the study of even the smallest detail.

This close relation of natural open country landscape and architecture fused into an organic whole brings one to the secret of the underlying charm of the English estates, the correct basic organization or plan and the following of the fundamental principles of design in the working out of these plans.

An English country place in which the open country is made an important feature, and the organization of the plan becomes in itself a

---

---

Types of open country views in which the "landscape" is spread out like a map. Our interest in this type of scenery is first of all in the enjoyment of the freedom of the open country. The view from a country place is of the greatest importance in its success from a landscape aspect and determines the layout and organization of the plan. The size, shape and location of the house and its architectural treatment of terraces and gardens should be governed by the size or extent of the view out. A great deal of study on the ground should be given to the planting and grouping of trees near the house so as to emphasize and frame in or continue the open country view.

---

---



Fig. 3



An arrangement in which the size and location of the "areas" was determined by natural contour conditions and views out over the open country.



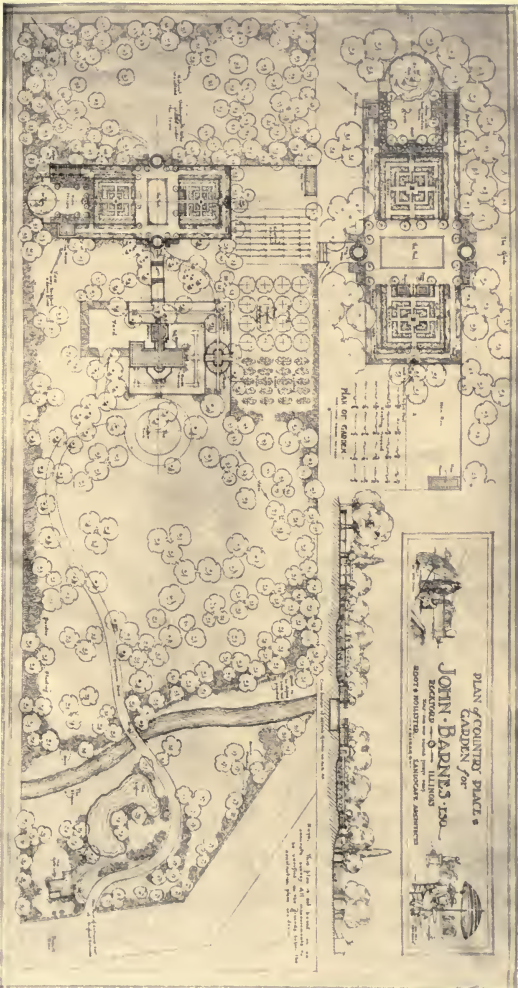


Fig. 4

pleasing composition of line, is shown in Fig. 1. The circulation between the several divisions has been studied so as to give easy access from one to the other without interfering with their designed use. The main entrance is from the bottom of the plan with the service to the right. The unique garden court of Montacute House is one of the famous landscape features of England and has been used as an illustration of "what to do" in many books on Landscape Gardening. All in all, this is, as a plan, beauty of architecture, and landscape gardening interest, the best example of a real country place to be found in England.

While the economic and social conditions of America will always keep our country places distinctive as a type from those of the old world, it will not prevent the bringing in of the same principles in their building that are basic for all good work in landscape architecture and architecture.

True country atmosphere as a feature is a characteristic that is apt to be found lacking in what was, for a long time, considered as the typical American country home.

With the Centennial, at Philadelphia, in 1876, this type of landscape architecture was in its best stage of development. Gardenesque style of planting became almost the accepted one throughout America where there was any attempt at a studied arrangement of planting, walks, drives and garden areas.

The first real departure from this type of landscape gardening came with the work of Vaux in the use of the open lawn and natural landscape effects with masses of native shrubs arranged to produce a naturalistic effect of the whole scheme. Any formal grouping of plants was now arranged as a garden. It is only within recent years that plant material has become a part of landscape architecture in the development of our country places, and not the controlling element. Even today, the few architects and owners of country places in America recognize in landscape architecture a field of art that has to do with the basic principles of arrangement of land for convenience and beauty with the use of plants as one of the materials of construction and not the one thing that must be dealt with. The open vistas out

into the open country become not only a part of the landscape plan, but a part of the architectural group as well.

Architecture that depends upon the masking of trees and shrubs to produce the desired effect is not the type that becomes an aid to landscape architecture.

The first real departure from the decorative horticultural style of planting was based on the theory of the open lawn, which seems to have originated from a theory in painting, that of an arrangement of three planes, foreground, middle plane and background, or distance. In this type the planting interest is developed by the variety of material used and its arrangement so as to give a variety of sky-line. This type of plant arrangement has been much used in park planting and in small home grounds where the landscape is a created one.

From this type of planting we have developed the American park type and with it the basis of the American park, which is something that we can well be proud of, as the parks of America are not equaled in the world. All this has formed the big controlling elements of the country place development, which is the preserving of the natural scenery.

This style of landscape architecture does not differ much from that of the old world in general arrangement of plant material and the use of the space. The Colonial house with its dooryard garden, which was the controlling unit of its group of buildings, was for general arrangement of plan and plant material almost transplanted from Europe. The space available was used to the best advantage and even in the early days was limited. The buildings were grouped for convenience of use and the settlements made up of these for protection. The tendency of the "protective" grouping was to produce an "enclosed" style of planting, that later became almost universal as a style of landscape gardening. Interesting exceptions are found when the view out was carefully considered in the arrangement, as in Mt. Vernon and other estates in the South.

The country places of this type along the Hudson and throughout Eastern States are familiar, with the open lawn or terrace with mounds and beds of bright flowers, gravel walks winding in and out among clumps of evergreens and past arbors and summer houses, and such

---

---

Two types of roadside planting, which, when combined with open country views, made up the real enjoyment of a drive out into the country. The "planted up" drive is characteristic of American country plans that in a way makes them distinctive. The park-like type is the real landscape plan of our public parks and the idea was taken from the English country place entrance drive, but was combined with the open country views in the make-up of our parks. Park-like, or enclosed landscape, depends for its interest on the plant material used and its grouping, with pleasing composition of lines and areas.

---

---





Fig. 5

other architectural features as rippling fountains and urns and statues placed against shrubbery and trees for accent. The whole arrangement was such as to set off or display such decorative and unusual plant material as weeping trees and shrubs, bright foliage, such as golden syringa, and copper and purple beeches.

A Victorian house with its decorative horticultural style of landscape gardening (the enclosed type) left little to the imagination and when occupied with tracing out the winding paths the visitor's attention was seldom allowed to wander to open country views. The style became a good fore-runner to the name "Show Place," that was for many years the achievement that the nurseryman held up to the owners of country places as the one thing that was desired.

To steep oneself in tradition and then to set to work to invent new forms which shall be guided by the principles and contain within themselves the boundaries of the old, is the right method in designing landscapes, and is the only way to design successfully. This makes for a continuity of tradition and leads one away from a too exclusive study of nature and an attempt at imitating natural scenery with unsuitable materials where conditions are not fitting for such imitation.

A certain arrangement of trees and shrubs as arranged by nature may look well within the midst of natural conditions, but when transferred to the middle of a city loses its real meaning. Rocks, as arranged by nature, have a meaning different from a grouping of stones aided by cement and an unnatural grading of the soil unless the scale of the problem is such both by size and use as to warrant the particular scenic effect.

In landscape architecture, as in all other art, there have been periods when the traditions and great designs of the past have been forgotten in an attempt to invent a new style. The real reason for this has been a lack of real understanding of the underlying principles of design, by the so-called landscape designer, rather than a deliberate attempt for originality. These several "styles" can be traced directly to an attempt to emphasize some feature, such as horticultural material, and the resulting style known as the "decorative" in which we have an arrangement of plants for themselves alone as in the "clump", "belt" and "dot" system of planting and the present or "natural" type, in

which an attempt has been made to let "nature" work unmolested. This style is usually out of scale and not based on axis lines.

A personal preference for informal or natural arrangement over formal or designed landscape does not enter into the organization of the problem as to direction of approach. The fundamental organization of our problem, then, is what gives to country places arrangement, order and selection; and makes the whole place a unit rather than haphazard collection of unrelated things or a slice of unassimilated nature.

From the enclosed, or 1865, type of decorative planting we have the open center, or open lawn, and boundary planting with the accent plant brought in a relation to the bays and promontories of the planting. The over-accentuation of the boundary brought about the use of more naturalistic plant material, but lacked the basic principle of design in that the big lawn was made the controlling feature of the place. Gardens now became very much restricted or abandoned altogether, the service cramped, and in many cases the house located at a disadvantage for convenience. "Sunken" drives and paths were utilized so as not to break up the lawn. The principal view from the house became also the "show" view from the road or entrance drive. The "natural" or informal type of gardening was used and the familiar irregular curves that were drawn around the planting lines were formal in that they were planned.

The "open lawn" type of planting at its worst, with the "foundation" screen about the house, and the irregular curved boundary planting and garden of bean shaped or informal planted areas was taken out into the open country as a means of harmonization of the home grounds.

The lack of organization of the plan at the start and its failure in bringing in of the open country was a fault of this type of design. The aim of the landscape plan was to screen out the house or to break up its architectural lines. The lack of sympathy between the architecture, landscape plan, and the open country all combined to produce a country place that defeated the aim of the owner, while in the immediate suburbs of a town or in a village this type of landscape did not appear incongruous, if the organization of the plan was such as to pro-

---

---

A plan for a country place in which the location of the buildings has been determined by contour, tree growth, view out over the open country, and utility. The tree growth in this case was the real feature of the property, so that the house location was determined by this and its orientation by the direction of the view and prevailing breeze from the southwest. The garage and gardener's lodge are placed so as to control the entrance to the house and the farm group. The locations of the farm group and gardens were determined by the soil conditions, lack of tree growth and contour. The whole plan has been so related by roads, views, tree growth and architecture to make a working and attractive open country place with the natural landscape kept as a real feature.

---

---

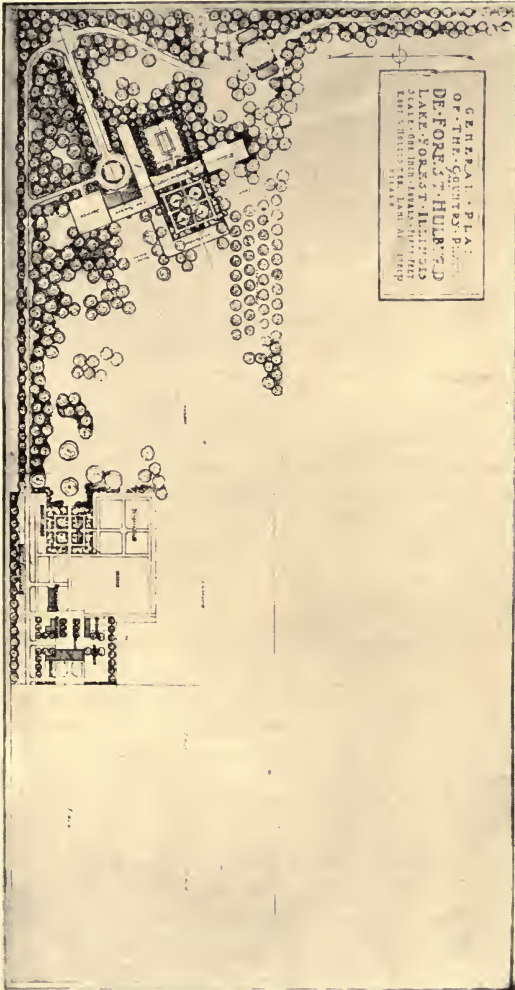


Fig. 6

vide the proper proportion between the several divisions—view, garden, entrance, and service.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, with the movement westward, another kind of landscape arrangement and architecture sprang into use in America. The conditions about the house became less formal and the arrangement of buildings into a group abandoned. The buildings were placed in rows along the road or street and a favorable aspect to the sun provided for. When planting was done exotic or decorative material was used to "dress up" the house lawn and emphasize that part of the grounds.

While this type of planting was primitive and without tradition, it became almost an American style with its culmination in 1840 when Andrew Jackson Downing became the leader in the profession of Landscape Architecture in this country.

The son of a nurseryman, he was trained as a boy to carry on the business that his father worked in, but the nursery business did not appeal to him in the same way that it had to his father, and he began the practice of landscape architecture as a profession through the use of plant material rather than the growing of it as a business. The work of Downing became a style and he established by his practice and writings a tradition that has had a marked effect on country place development in America.

In country planting, where the landscape gardening is home grown, the sale of native shrubs and trees by the nursery agent is very limited. The pictures of bright colored flowers, unusual plant forms and peculiar foliage makes a "better seller" in a catalogue than such material as may be collected from the woods and fence row. All of this horticultural material, while valuable as accents in the more cultivated types of planting, has a tendency to change the open country home into an enclosed type of landscape where there is a distinct tendency to "create" a piece of horticultural or gardenesque planting. The result of this type of landscape design, which began with a few "different" or exotic plants, soon became a style and produced the "enclosed grounds", and in which no attention was paid to the open country.

A great factor in bringing about a good feeling and understanding between city and country has been the development of country places

in America. After a few years of experience with open country living, few, if any, country place owners fail to form different ideas of farm life and its problems. It has, however, long been the rule that a young man leaves the farm and goes to the city to work, so that when he is an old man he will have enough money laid by to go back to the country to live. The owner of the smallest "War Garden" in 1917-1918 became for the time an agriculturalist and even though the actual amount of food consumed was small, the sentimental result of the interest aroused in plant growing and soil cultivation was great. Much of the lack of sympathy and mutual understanding between the city and country that existed a few years ago has almost disappeared and not a little of this has been through a more intelligent realization of the different problems of town and country having the same principles in their solution.

The farmer who lives his life in the open country appreciates the natural scenery more than is generally realized. While he may not understand the principles of composition and be able to analyze the open country views that form an important part of his daily life, he no less appreciates the scenery that is all about him and will point out the important views that can be seen from various parts of the farm and describe them in a most vivid way.

The farthest point that can be seen, the most beautiful trees and the landscape value of each, the ever changing landscape and sky and their meaning are important factors of the daily life on the farm, while to the city dweller these changes are catalogued as day and night—sun and cloud—warm and cold—windy and still, or a geographical analysis of views and landscapes.

The farmer's knowledge of plants is based on their usefulness and classed as weeds, crops, hedgegrows, brush, woodlot, timber, May-flowers or wildflowers. The view of the open country to him has interest as good fields of farm crops free from weeds, clean fence rows, fruit trees pruned so as to bear good fruit. The middle distance becomes collected into a certain number of acres of farm land, meadow, cultivated fields, pastures and woodland and the distant view into his neighbor's farm or some familiar hill so many miles away. The whole,

---

---

The open country and farmstead views should be protected along the public roads. The natural scenery often provides pleasing compositions that are marred by the frequent introduction of advertising schemes of various types. Placards nailed to trees not only work harm with their hosts but mar otherwise beautiful views and quiet country scenes. A better appreciation of the value of good landscape as a part in the making of good roads will do more to protect our open country "picture galleries" than laws or propaganda against signboards. A concrete pavement walled in by advertising resembles too much the city from which the tired city dweller is supposed to escape by a trip to the open country.

---

---





Fig. 7

however, has another interest, that of its attractiveness as natural scenery and the open country life that it represents. A certain amount of landscape value is always placed on every farm by its owner aside from the value of the land for farming.







SB  
472  
R85  
V.9

THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Santa Barbara

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 559 444 5

