

Some English Gardens

Gertrude Jekyll

Table of Contents

BROCKENHURST

HOLLYHOCKS AT BLYBOROUGH

GREAT TANGLEY MANOR

BULWICK HALL

BRAMHAM

MELBOURNE

BERKELEY CASTLE

SUMMER FLOWERS

ROCKINGHAM

BRYMPTON

BALCASKIE

CRATHES CASTLE

KELLIE CASTLE

HARDWICK

MONTACUTE

RAMSCLIFFE

LEVENS

CAMPSEY ASHE

CLEEVE PRIOR

CONDOVER

SPEKE HALL

GARDEN ROSES

PENSHURST

BRICKWALL

STONE HALL, EASTON THE FRIENDSHIP GARDEN

THE DEANERY GARDEN, ROCHESTER

COMPTON WYNYATES

PALMERSTOWN

ST. ANNE'S, CLONTARF

AUCHINCRUIVE

YEW ARBOUR: LYDE

AUTUMN FLOWERS

MYNTHURST

ABBAY LEIX

MICHAELMAS DAISIES

ARLEY

LADY COVENTRY'S NEEDLEWORK

SOME ENGLISH GARDENS



PHLOX
FROM THE PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. GEORGE E. B. WREY

PREFACE

THE publication of this collection of reproductions of water-colour drawings would have been impossible without the willing co-operation of the owners of the originals. Special acknowledgment is therefore due to them for their kindness and courtesy, both in consenting to such reproduction and in sparing the pictures from their walls. On pages xi. and xii. is given a full list of the pictures, together with the names of the owners to whom we are so greatly indebted.

We have also had the valuable assistance of Mr. Marcus B. Huish, of The Fine Art Society, who has taken the greatest interest in the work from its inception.

G. S. E.
G. J.

BROCKENHURST

THE English gardens in which Mr. Elgood delights to paint are for the most part those that have come to us through the influence of the Italian Renaissance; those that in common speech we call gardens of formal design. The remote forefathers of these gardens of Italy, now so well known to travellers, were the old pleasure-grounds of Rome and the neighbouring districts, built and planted some sixteen hundred years ago.

Though many relics of domestic architecture remain to remind us that Britain was once a Roman colony, and though it is reasonable to suppose that the conquerors brought their ways of gardening with them as well as their ways of building, yet nothing remains in England of any Roman gardening of any importance, and we may well conclude that our gardens of formal design came to us from Italy, inspired by those of the Renaissance, though often modified by French influence.

Very little gardening, such as we now know it, was done in England earlier than the sixteenth century. Before that, the houses of the better class were places of defence; castles, closely encompassed with wall or moat; the little cultivation within their narrow bounds being only for food—none for the pleasure of garden beauty.

But when the country settled down into a peaceful state, and men could dwell in safety, the great houses that arose were no longer fortresses, but beautiful homes both within and without, inclosing large garden spaces, walled with brick or stone only for defence from wild animals, and divided or encompassed with

living hedges of yew or holly or hornbeam, to break wild winds and to gather on their sunny sides the life-giving rays that flowers love.

So grew into life and shape some of the great gardens that still remain; in the best of them, the old Italian traditions modified by gradual and insensible evolution into what has become an English style. For it is significant to observe that in some cases, where a classical model has been too rigidly followed, or its principles too closely adhered to, that the result is a thing that remains exotic—that will not assimilate with the natural conditions of our climate and landscape. What is right and fitting in Italy is not necessarily right in England. The general principles may be imported, and may grow into something absolutely right, but they cannot be compelled or coerced into fitness, any more than we can take the myrtles and lentisks of the Mediterranean region and expect them to grow on our middle-England hill-sides. This is so much the case, with what one may call the temperament of a region and climate, that even within the small geographical area of our islands, the comparative suitability of the more distinctly Italian style may be clearly perceived, for on our southern coasts it is much more possible than in the much colder and bleaker midlands.

Thus we find that one of the best of the rather nearly Italian gardens is at Brockenhurst in the New Forest, not far from the warm waters of the Solent. The garden, in its present state, was laid out by the late Mr. John Morant, one of a long line of the same name owning this forest property. He had absorbed the spirit of the pure Italian gardens, and his fine taste knew how to bring it forth again, and place it with a sure hand on English soil.

It is none the less beautiful because it is a garden almost without flowers, so important and satisfying are its permanent forms of living green walls, with their own proper enrichment of ball and spire, bracket and buttress, and so fine is the design of the actual masonry and sculpture.

The large rectangular pool, known as the Canal, bordered with a bold kerb, has at its upper end a double stair-way; the retaining wall at the head of the basin is cunningly wrought into buttress and niche. Every niche has its appropriate sculpture and each buttress-pier its urn-like finial. On the upper level is a circular fountain bordered by the same kerb in lesser proportion, with stone vases on its circumference. The broad walk on both levels is bounded by close walls of living greenery; on the upper level swinging round in a half circle, in which are cut arched niches. In each leafy niche is a bust of a Cæsar in marble on a tall term-shaped pedestal. Orange trees in tubs stand by the sides of the Canal. This is the most ornate portion of the garden, but its whole extent is designed with equal care. There is a wide bowling-green for quiet play; turf walks within walls of living green; everywhere that feeling of repose and ease of mind and satisfaction that comes of good balance and proportion. It shows the classical sentiment thoroughly assimilated, and a judicious interpretation of it brought forth in a form not only possible but eminently successful, as a garden of Italy translated into the soil of one of our Southern Counties.



THE TERRACE, BROCKENHURST
FROM THE PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. G. N. STEVENS

Whether or not it is in itself the kind of gardening best suited for England may be open to doubt, but at least it is the work of a man who knew what he wanted and did it as well as it could possibly be done. Throughout it bears evidence of the work of a master. There is no doubt, no ambiguity as to what is intended. The strong will orders, the docile stone and vegetation obey. It is full-dress gardening, stately, princely, full of dignity; gardening that has the courtly sentiment. It seems to demand that the actual working of it should be kept out of sight. Whereas in a homely garden it is pleasant to see people at work, and their tools and implements ready to their hands, here there must be no visible intrusion of wheelbarrow or shirt-sleeved labour.

Possibly the sentiment of a garden for state alone was the more gratifying to its owner because of the near neighbourhood of miles upon miles of wild, free forest; land of the same character being inclosed within the property; the tall trees showing above the outer hedges and playing to the lightest airs of wind in an almost strange contrast to the inflexible green boundaries of the ordered garden.

The danger that awaits such a garden, now just coming to its early prime, is that the careful hand should be relaxed. It is an heritage that carries with it much responsibility; moreover, it would be ruined by the addition of any commonplace gardening. Winter and summer it is nearly complete in itself; only in summer flowers show as brilliant jewels in its marble vases and in its one restricted parterre of box-edged beds.

It is a place whose design must always dominate the personal wishes, should they desire other expression, of the succeeding owners. The borders of hardy and half-hardy plants, that in nine gardens out of ten present the most obvious ways of enjoying the beauty of flowers, are here out of place. In some rare cases it might not be impossible to introduce some beautiful climbing plant or plant of other habit, that would be in right harmony with the design, but it should only be attempted by an artist who has such knowledge of, and sympathy with, refined architecture as will be sure to guide him aright, and such a consummate knowledge of plants as will at once present to his mind the identity of the only possible plants that could so be used. Any mistaken choice or introduction of unsuitable plants would grievously mar the design and would introduce an element of jarring incongruity such as might easily be debased into vulgarity.

There is no reason why such other gardening may not be rightly done even at Brockenhurst, but it should not encroach upon or be mixed up with an Italian design. Its place would be in quite another portion of the grounds.



BROCKENHURST: THE GARDEN GATE
FROM THE PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF MISS RADCLIFFE

HOLLYHOCKS AT BLYBOROUGH

THE climate of North Lincolnshire is by no means one of the most favourable of our islands, but the good gardener accepts the conditions of the place, faces the obstacles, fights the difficulties, and conquers.

Here is a large walled garden, originally all kitchen garden; the length equal to twice the breadth, divided in the middle to form two squares. It is further subdivided in the usual manner with walks parallel to the walls, some ten feet away from them, and other walks across and across each square. The paths are box-edged and bordered on each side with fine groups of hardy flowers, such as the Hollyhocks and other flowers in the picture.

The time is August, and these grand flowers are at their fullest bloom. They are the best type of Hollyhock too, with the wide outer petal, and the middle of the flower not too tightly packed.

Hollyhocks have so long been favourite flowers—and, indeed, what would our late summer and autumn gardens be without them?—that they are among those that have received the special attention of raisers, and have become what are known as florists' flowers. But the florists' notions do not always make for the highest kind of beauty. They are apt to favour forms that one cannot but think have for their aim, in many cases, an ideal that is a false and unworthy one. In the case of the Hollyhock, according to the florist's standard of beauty and correct form, the wide outer petal is not to be allowed; the flower must be very tight and very round. Happily we need not all be florists of this narrow school, and we are at liberty to try for the very highest and truest beauty in

our flowers, rather than for set rules and arbitrary points of such extremely doubtful value.

The loosely-folded inner petals of the loveliest Hollyhocks invite a wonderful play and brilliancy of colour. Some of the colour is transmitted through the half-transparency of the petal's structure, some is reflected from the neighbouring folds; the light striking back and forth with infinitely beautiful trick and playful variation, so that some inner regions of the heart of a rosy flower, obeying the mysterious agencies of sunlight, texture and local colour, may tell upon the eye as pure scarlet; while the wide outer petal, in itself generally rather lighter in colour, with its slightly waved surface and gently frilled edge, plays the game of give and take with light and tint in quite other, but always delightful, ways.

Then see how well the groups have been placed; the rosy group leading to the fuller red, with a distant sulphur-coloured gathering at the far end; its tall spires of bloom shooting up and telling well against the distant tree masses above the wall. And how pleasantly the colour of the rosy group is repeated in the Phlox in the opposite border. And what a capital group that is, near the Hollyhocks of that fine summer flower, the double Crown Daisy (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*), with the bright glimpses of some more of it beyond. Then the Pansies and Erigerons give a mellowing of grey-lilac that helps the brighter colours, and is not overdone.

The large fruit-tree has too spreading a shade to allow of much actual bloom immediately beneath it, so that here is a patch of Butcher's Broom, a shade-loving plant. Beyond, out in the sunlight again, is the fine herbaceous Clematis (*C. recta*), whose excellent qualities entitle it to a much more frequent use in gardens.

The flower-borders are so full and luxuriant that they completely hide the vegetable quarters within, for the garden is still a kitchen garden as to its main inner spaces. These masses of good flowers are the work of the Misses Freeling; they are ardent gardeners, sparing themselves no labour or trouble; to their care and fine perception of the best use of flowers the beauty and interest of these fine borders are entirely due. Indeed, this garden is a striking instance of the extreme value of personal effort combined with knowledge and good taste.



BLYBOROUGH: HOLLYHOCKS
FROM THE PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. C. E. FREELING

These qualities may operate in different gardens in a hundred varying ways, but where they exist there will be, in some form or other, a delightful garden. Endless are the possibilities of beautiful combinations of flowers; just as endless is their power of giving

happiness and the very purest of human delight. So also the special interest of different gardens that are personally directed by owners of knowledge and fine taste would seem to be endless too, for each will impress upon it some visible issue of his own perception or discernment of beauty.

About the house and lawns are other beds and borders of herbaceous flowers of good grouping and fine growth; conspicuous among them is that excellent flower *Campanula pyramidalis*, splendidly grown.

Though Blyborough is in a cold district, it has the advantage of lying well sheltered below a sharply-rising ridge of higher land.

GREAT TANGLEY MANOR

FORTY years ago, lying lost up a narrow lane that joined a track across a wide green common, this ancient timber-built manor-house could scarcely have been found but by some one who knew the country and its by-ways well. Even when quite near, it had to be searched for, so much was it hidden away behind ricks and farm-buildings; with the closer overgrowth of old fruit trees, wild thorns and elders, and the tangled wastes of vegetation that had invaded the outskirts of the neglected, or at any rate very roughly-kept, garden of the farm-house, which purpose it then served.

What had been the moat could hardly be traced as a continuous water-course; the banks were broken down and over-grown, water stood in pools here and there; tall grass, tussocks of sedge and the rank weeds that thrive in marshy places had it all to themselves.

But the place was beautiful, for all the neglect and disorder, and to the mind of a young girl that already harboured some appreciative perception of the value of the fine old country buildings, and whose home lay in a valley only three miles away, Tangley was one of the places within an easy ride that could best minister to that vague unreasoning delight, so gladly absorbed and so keenly enjoyed by an eager and still almost childish imagination. For the mysteries of romantic legend and old tale still clung about the place—stories of an even more ancient dwelling than this one of the sixteenth century.

There was always a ready welcome from the kindly farmer's wife, and complete freedom to roam about; the pony was accommodated in a cowstall, and many happy summer hours were

spent in the delightful wilderness, with its jewel of a beautifully-wrought timbered dwelling that had already stood for three hundred years.



THE PERGOLA, GREAT TANGLEY
FROM THE PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. WICKHAM FLOWER

In later days, when the whole of the Grantley property in the district was sold, Great Tangley came into the market. Happily, it fell into the best of hands, those of Mr. and Mrs. Wickham Flower, and could not have been better dealt with in the way of necessary restoration and judicious addition. The moat is now a clear moat again; and good modern gardening, that joins hands so happily with such a beautiful old building, surrounds it on all sides. There was no flower garden when the old place was taken in hand; the only things worth preserving being some of the old orchard trees within the moat to the west. A space in front of the house, on its southward face, inclosed by loop-holed walls of considerable

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

