

**THE GARDEN BEAUTIFUL;
HOME WOODS AND
HOME LANDSCAPE**

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The garden beautiful; home woods and home landscape by W. Robinson

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Principio arboribus varia est natura creandis;
 Namque aliae, nullis hominum cogentibus, ipsae
 Sponte sua veniunt, camposque et flumina late
 Curva tenent; ut molle siler, lentaque genistae,
 Populus, et glauca caecutia fronde salicta.
 Pars autem posito surgunt de semine: ut altae
 Castaneae, nemorumque Iovi quae maxima frondet
 Aesculus, atque habitae Graiis oracula quercus.
 Fululat ab radice aliis densissima silva;
 Ut cernis ulmisque; etiam Parnasia laurus
 Parva sub ingenti matris se subicit umbra.
 Hos natura modos primum dedit; his genus omni
 Silvarum fruticumque viret nemorumque sacerdotum.

VIRGIL, *Georgics*, Liber Secundus.

Some trees under no compulsion from men, grow up of themselves, of their own accord, and spread widely over the plains and the winding river banks, like the pliant osier and the limber broom, the poplar, and the willow groves that look so hoary with their grey leaves. Some again spring up from the dropping of seed, like the tall chestnuts, and the forest-monarch which puts forth its royal leaves for Jove, the aesculus, and the oaks—in Greece deemed oracular. With others a forest of suckers shoots up from their roots, as with cherry-trees and elms—nay, the boy of Parnassus rears its infant head under the mighty aspect of its mother's shade. These are the modes which Nature first gave to men unasked—to these the whole race of forest-trees and shrubs and sacred groves owe their verdure.—*CONINGTON*.

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GARDEN BEAUTIFUL
HOME WOODS AND HOME LANDSCAPE

By W. ROBINSON

AUTHOR OF THE 'WILD GARDEN': 'ENGLISH FLOWER GARDEN', ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1907

PREFACE

This book is for the country house, or any place where there is woodland, or land to plant; its object is to get people, after thought of the needs of a true garden, to think more of their woods from aesthetic and other points of view. Its aim is to teach the best of all lessons for garden-lovers—too often absorbed in the exotic, the curious, and the tender—that our own country's trees are the most beautiful we shall ever have, and our native flowers as fair as any. I do not mean any extension of the pleasure-ground, so often a poor 'sticky' thing, little better than the stereotyped flower-garden, but the real woodland. Small gardens are often the most beautiful and the best for the happiness of their owners; but we have to think of the many who have greater opportunities, too seldom embraced—woodlands that are not brought into any happy relation with the house and are often not accessible from it. In the district in which I live there are hundreds of acres of beautiful woods never seen by any but the gamekeeper, woods sheeted with Kingcups, Primroses, and Wood Hyacinths, more beautiful in their effect than any garden.

These woodland gardens rarely depend on the

Preface

vi

weather, and while Carnations and Roses in the garden may fail through weather and other causes, the woodland flowers are always true to their seasons, and no garden effect can equal theirs in breadth and in succession of beauty over the same ground. With their soft background of underwood it is vain for the gardener to attempt to rival them. During our winters no real flower-gardening is possible in these islands, save in favoured spots near the coast, and even the scared little conifers stuck out in the flower-beds (as before the King's palace in St. James's Park last winter) do not help us. Yet our climate is excellent for the hardy evergreen trees of the north, which give us shelter, warmth, and dignity; and no country of Europe is more favourable to such life than ours. It is not the 'pleasure-ground' but the woodland which enables us to grow fine trees, and their place is the wood and not the pleasure-garden. How seldom 'pinetums' or botanic gardens in England and France contain a well-grown Pine! The whole system of dotting trees on grass is a wrong one; the true way to enjoy their beauty and favour their growth is in woodland planting. Those who have no woods, but have bare lands to plant, can raise woods in ten years if they keep out cows, horses, rabbits, and hares for seven years.

Other reasons for taking to the woods are, that there we at least get away from the vain though harmful talk about 'styles' with which most books on garden design are filled. We also part with the new and foolish teaching of the forestry books, separating tree-culture into two branches—arboriculture and silviculture. If we go into a real wood anywhere we may soon see that true beauty is there and vigour too. Much wealth has been wasted in our islands in planting Pines in pinetums and pleasure-grounds where they never show their true character nor even grow well, in spite of often costly and needless preparation of soil.

In the free woodland weeding or routine of any kind need not trouble us; and there we may easily naturalize good native plants not already to be found there, or the finer woodland plants of other countries (Narcissus, Snowdrops, blue Windflower) and native plants not found in our district (Royal Fern, the Snowflake, and Lily of the Valley).

The open, airy, and well-considered ways I plead for are not against our woodland work in any way. The finest trees are often found at the sides of rides, their roots occupying all the ground; and such rides are best for hunting, shooting, riding, walking, and every use or pleasure to which woodland can be put.

The words 'Home landscape' in the title lead to the idea that all of the work suggested in the book may be done with benefit to the general effect of the landscape. Two chapters from the 'English Flower Garden' are added with the view of making clear the essentials of garden design and planting, as if we endure a lifeless garden within view of the windows we are not likely to get to the fairest of all gardens, the Woodland garden. The hard and ugly lines so often seen about country houses, and which often come from modern ways of fencing and stereotyped plans, have no good reason to be. The artistic eye soon finds them out, and the artist will get out of their way. The only true test of all such things is the artistic one—Do they make for ugliness or for beauty? Breaking into the woods in the way I plead for here gives us many chances of improving the home landscape and opening out views—often airy stretches—into new country, even the rides through a foreground of young woods becoming a fine feature. For the rest, every idea that the book suggests I have proved the good of myself.

W. R.

*Gravetye Manor,
Primrose time, 1907.*