

“ALL IN A GARDEN FAIR.”

A GLIMPSE OF THE “HILL,” CLAREMONT.

THROUGHOUT the world there are innumerable instances of the wonders that man can accomplish by means of transforming arid, cheerless wastes into fertile pasture-land and tracts of luxuriant forest-growth. Indeed, we need look no further than this Continent of Africa for such an example of transformation on a large scale. The great Assouan dam on the Nile, completed about three years ago, and by means of which vast stores of water are caught and imprisoned within the thickest of thick walls, ready to be let loose in the dry season, to spread itself over thousands of square miles of unproductive desert in the Nile valley, has already begun to change the face of nature in those regions from the frown of a forsaken wilderness to the smile of waving corn-land. To be able by the simple process of sowing seed, or of planting a few saplings in advantageous soil, to initiate by his own voluntary act the evolution of scenery which, thenceforth, age after age, grows more beautiful, and becomes “a joy for ever,” the while it perpetuates and amplifies itself, constitutes one of the most precious prerogatives that man is enabled to exercise for the improvement of his environment and the continuity of his happiness. Such evidence of man's handiwork we may see all around us, here in Cape Colony. The acorn shoot of the old Dutch settler has become the giant oak which, ranged in stately avenues, forms so marked a feature of Cape Town's suburbs to-day. Those stately Eucalypti and pine trees, which rear their heads so high, represent the industry and forethought of the early colonists, who, loving their adopted country, sought to beautify it by every means in their power. To-day, we of a later generation reap the benefit, and improve where we can.

A typical example of this intense worship of nature expressing itself in the desire to beautify it, is found in the person of the late Ralph Henry Arderne, who, landing at the Cape in 1840, set to work soon after his arrival collecting South African flora, and exchanging indigenous specimens for plants of a rare exotic character with the late Sir Joseph Hooker, curator of Kew. After a while, when he had acquired sufficient capital, he invested in some land at Claremont, unpromising at first sight, but which on closer inspection revealed a rich dark soil, eminently suitable for vegetable life; and from its position on the lower slopes of Table Mountain ensuring irrigation independent of the rains.

This patch of veld is now metamorphosed from scrubby commonage into probably the most unique and comprehensive garden in the world. Commenced by the father, who also founded the Botanical Gardens, and enriched them with many valuable trees, he was eventually aided in this noble work—noble because such a labour of love constituted the truest worship of the Creator—by his son, Mr. H. M. Arderne, to whom he imparted that enthusiasm for arboriculture which, now that he has departed, has been so well and for so many years sustained by the present owner of the garden.

By the kind courtesy of Mr. Arderne we were per-

mitted the pleasure of seeing in all its beauty of form and colour this living, collective monument of spires and domes and canopies of rustling green, which is ever growing and changing, and which nature is always making more worthy to perpetuate the memory of its dead foster-nurse.

In the company of Mr. Arderne, therefore, whom we found, begloved, engaged in pruning a too luxuriant growth, we started on a ramble through this earthly paradise, he describing each tree as it were a well learnt and familiar lesson, and we doing our best to absorb the wealth of beauty into which we were surprised at every turn, and to retain in the memory the reminiscences and little histories which seemed to be attached to every species of tree and shrub in the garden.

On entering “The Hill,” which is the name of the estate, the first object that drew our attention was the wonderful display of hydrangeas, which ranged in colour from white through cobalt-blue to purple, forming vistas of many blooms; and in the case of some examples having a girth of no less than 50 feet; while one bush alone held 1,200 large, full-grown blossoms.

They were in truth a sight worth beholding! Passing up the gravelled walk, our attention was next called to the Monterey cypress, which is an attractive member of the family of conifers, and to the umbrella pine of Japan, its resemblance to the familiar “brolly” being most striking. Walking across the lawn of matted prairie grass which has all the spring and yielding consistency of a Turkey carpet, we examined the lily of the valley tree, which has here attained unusual proportions, and whose flowers, except for their ruddy-brown tint, resemble the small plant of that name. Then a double scarlet thorn was pointed out, and one's mind instantly reverted to remembered English lanes. A fine specimen of the copper beech in another part of the garden helps to form, by reason of its rich colouring, that picturesque *ensemble* of many hues which so pleases and rests the eye when seen from a coign of vantage. Near by it is a tall Himalaya cypress, looking quite at home in its foreign surroundings. As we passed on a black walnut came into view, and we noticed that it was bearing a goodly number of ripening nuts. Interesting as having been planted as a seed collected in the Yosemite Valley, 150 miles from San Francisco, was the Sequoia gigantea, the parent of which measured 90 feet in circumference, and which itself has attained to a considerable size. We now stood in front of a wonderful growth of trailing slender stems, on which myriads of dark magenta blossoms hung, so closely set together as to exclude almost all appearance of foliage. Of this, the Bouganvillea, whose growth is very rapid, there are five varieties, though they do not all flower together, the specimen just described blooming in the summer, while the Lateritia, or red variety, prefers to bedeck itself in winter.

On turning round, many other species of trees, arranged for the most part so as to offer the most pleasing contrasts of shade, height, and especially habitation, meet

the eye in every direction, while the long vistas of lawn between heighten the similitude of the garden to some old ancestral seat. Here are examples of Pawlonia with its lavender-blue flowers, the very oriental-looking *Imperialis japonica*, whose trusses of blossom are about two feet in length, and near by it, for contrast, the South African wild-date palm which grows on the banks of the Zambesi. Next for inspection came the eau-de-Cologne tree (*Pittosporum variegata*), whose green berries when cut unmistakably exhale the odour of the familiar toilet scent. From there we passed to the bottle brush (*Calislemmon pendula*). This shrub carries pinkish flowers shaped like a circular brush, and has long trailing slender stems. Close to it are goodly cedars of Lebanon, recalling the psalms of King David, while, cheek by jowl with the handsome *Parkinsonia indica*, with its light-green feathery foliage drooping as though the heat of its native home had robbed it permanently of all show of vigour, rose the *Camelia japonica*, representing the flora of another eastern country. There are several varieties of this latter tree in the garden, some of which attain a great size—one might say, grow very fat; for one that was measured has a circumference of 75 feet, and others range from 30 feet in girth and upward. On account of their floriferous character, they lend colour to and brighten the garden in the winter season when other showy trees are only budding. Regarding the *Parkinsonia indica*, it should be remarked that, owing to its gracefulness and the beauty of the masses of yellow blossom which cover it in the height of summer, it has well earned the soubriquet of "the ladies' tree," for it is such that the fair sex might easily fall in love with it, being considered one of the great sights of the garden.

Amongst the most striking flowering shrubs we noticed were the *Pavetta Burchelli* with its glossy leaves and orange-red flowers, and another member of the same genus, the *Pavetta kaffra*, which differs from it by having snow-white flowers. These varieties, together with the blue and white *plumbago*, whose timber is used for fencing; the *Dais cotinifolia* with delicate lilac-coloured blossoms; the *Greyia Sutherlandii* with geranium-like foliage, and corymbs of rich red flowers; and the *Toxicophlea* with heavy trusses of highly-scented white flowers and purple berries, are all indigenous to South Africa, and add very materially when in bloom to the picturesqueness of the garden. We were then introduced to the scarlet flowering gums growing in close proximity to each other near the irrepressible *Bouganvillea*. Of these, four varieties are represented, displaying blooms having four distinct shades ranging from brick-red to a rich salmon hue. Near by is a Chinese cypress, a very old black-wood tree of Australia, and the Kauri pine of New Zealand, the gum of which in the form of embedded deposits yields an annual revenue to the Government of £1,000,000. There are also fine specimens of the New Zealand *Dracena cordyline australis* and New Zealand *kentias*. The Australian *Eucalyptus globulus* attains a considerable growth, some specimens planted by Mr. Arderne having now a girth of 25 feet. The *Eucalyptus ficifolia* with its scarlet-coloured blossoms contrasts strikingly with the *Robusta* of the same family, which has white flowers. There are also many varieties of acacias in the garden, which are covered in season with an abundance of yellow bloom. Of the palms represented, which afford a pleasing variety of foliage, the *Phœnix*

reclinata is a native of South Africa. The finest clump on the lawn is 90 feet in circumference. The *Seaforthia elegans* flowers freely, and is very graceful, we were informed, when covered with its pink tassel-like blossoms. *Latania borbonica*, *Cocos plumosa*, and others, flower and fructify freely; but though the true date palm grows well, its fruit will not ripen in our summer. There are seven varieties of oaks to be seen in the garden, of which we may mention the *robusta*, as strong and hale as in its native Sherwood Forest; and the golden oak of Canada (*Quercus concordia*).

The camelia tree, of marvellous spreading growth, is pointed out as an object of interest, since, under its ample shade, Mrs. Chamberlain and party were entertained on their recent visit to South Africa. Other trees and shrubs worth noting are a Chinese privet, having pretty yellow leaves with a green centre; golden elms, and a silver banana from Madeira; the golden-berry holly, just ripening; purple-leaved filbert, silver elms, and a Japanese loquat; double white and scarlet horse chestnut; English weeping birch, yew trees, magnolias, and the camphor tree of commerce (*Laurus camphora*), whose light yellowish green foliage offers a pleasing contrast to the adjoining sombre dark green of the ficus. As an evergreen the camphor tree is without a rival, and has so far the advantage of the oak that, whereas the young leaves of the latter look bright and refreshing in the springtime, tarnishing as the summer advances, the foliage of the camphor is of one certain and attractive shade of green the whole year round. Within a few paces of the last-named tree is the *Platanus orientalis*, which compels attention by reason of its huge girth, measured round its outer foliage, of no less than 120 feet. It is under the shade of these widely-differing trees that 1,200 bushes of rhododendra display in season the choicest and newest varieties of blossoms, including six of pink pearl, and constitute a show that it would repay the visitor to see independently of any other attractions which the garden holds. Mr. Arderne has proved once and for all the adaptability of this shrub to certain localities in South Africa, since all his specimens of rhododendra look healthy, and, shielded by lofty screens of green leaves from the scorching influence of the sun's rays, thrive in his garden equally as well as in their more temperate habitats. The azalea family has also taken kindly to this carefully-kept nursery, as the specimens on view abundantly prove. Forty years ago Mr. Arderne's father imported two plants of the large pink-and-white *Indica* varieties, and from these his son has raised over 1,000 specimens, some of the bushes measuring 30 feet in circumference, which in the flowering season present a gorgeous display of colour. The arum lily, so assiduously cultivated and prized for its chaste beauty in England, and especially in the Scilly Isles, is here seen to the number of some 3,000 growing in lavish luxuriance in the low, swampy parts of the garden, without calling for any care in its cultivation. We now passed on to a rustic Japanese bridge, in the centre of which stands a Japanese summer-house, overlooking a pool whose surface is covered with six kinds of water-lilies. From this point of view a very pretty and artistic sight meets the eye of the beholder. Here is an English holly growing close to the tall papyrus of the Nile; and the wide-leaved taro of Samoa, which the natives use as food. Beyond is the cork tree of Spain, while flanking the banks of the lake are the pencil cedars

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of commerce from British Columbia, English weeping willows, and a Chinese bamboo, which latter is used largely by the Chinese in the manufacture of furniture, of vehicles, and for building purposes, &c. Near at hand are smaller varieties of bamboo, showing curious alternations of colour between the nodes of their stems. Backed by the extensive growth of the Chinese bamboo, and growing on the swampy margin of the pool, are some fine specimens of New Zealand tree ferns, and scattered about in the vicinity are gold and silver hollies, white magnolias, Japanese cedars, and camphor-wood trees, which have been already noticed from another aspect. We were taken with regret from this fairy-like scene, whose background is the giant wall of Table Mountain, and were led to a certain spot whence the queen of the garden could be seen to the best advantage. This was the *Araucaria excelsa*, or Norfolk Island pine, which, amongst others of its class, rears its head proudly far above any other tree in the garden to the height of 135 feet. When, some fifty-five years ago, it was purchased as a mere sapling six inches high for the sum of £5 from an Australian captain visiting Cape Town by Mr. Arderne's father, a great fuss was made over its being planted, and a strong ring fence was put around it to keep off intruders. It was the first of its species to be introduced into South Africa, and great care was therefore bestowed on it. It is now taller than any other tree of its kind on the Australian continent; and though its spirelike summit is exposed to the full fury of the south-east “trades,” it appears to defy the severest gale

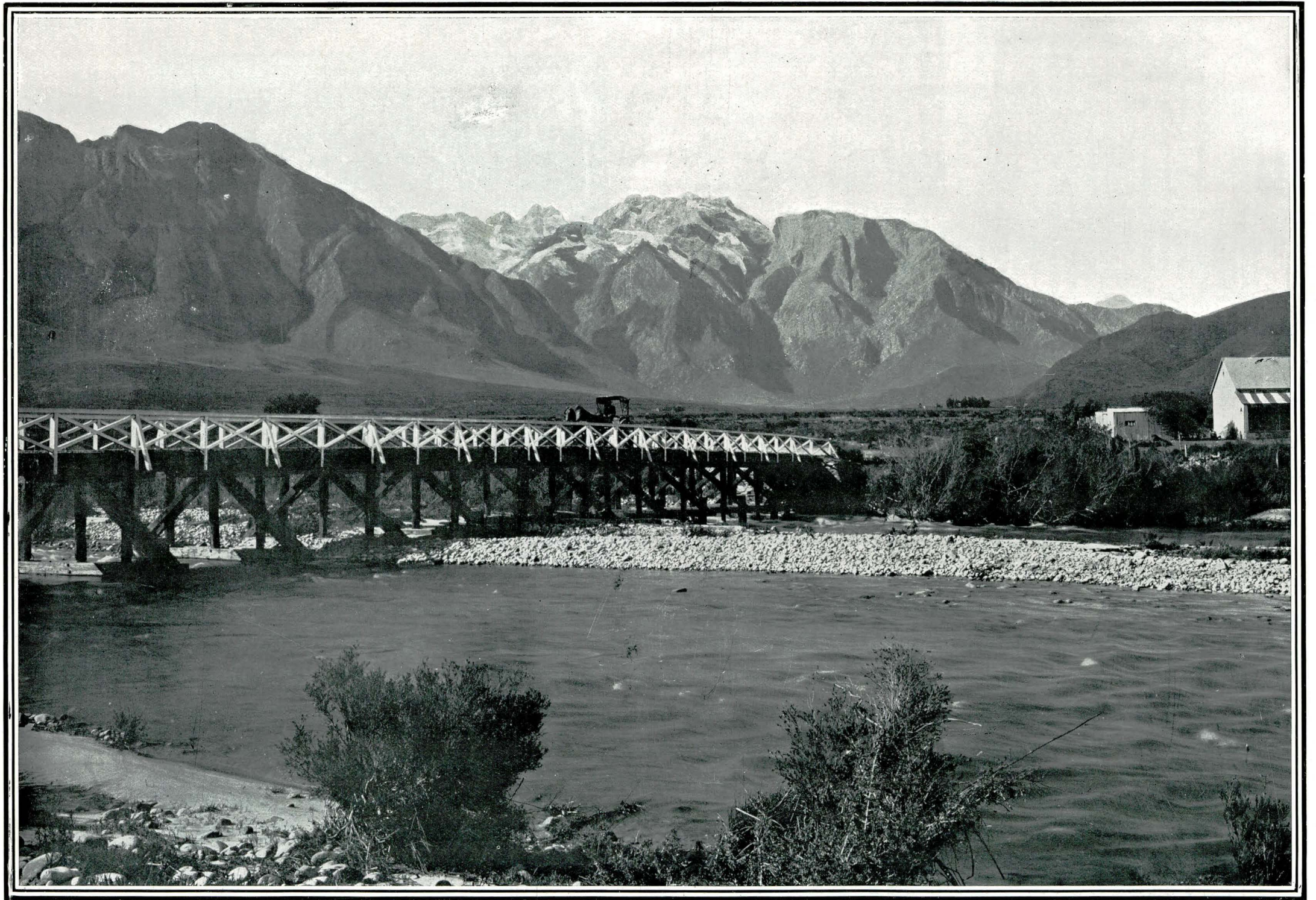
with impunity, as year after year it steadily grows higher and higher.

But evening is coming on apace, and a dinner gong sounding from the vicinity of the quaint old thatched house, to whose walls flowering creepers cling affectionately, warns us to take our departure. Before leaving, however, we pass up the garden, past rose-bushes which form another of the garden's many sights when their turn comes to bloom, until we reach the south-east corner of the estate; and then we look back. In the fading light, with the sun's rays thrown aslant the mass of arborescent verdure, picking out in detail of light and shade individual trees, rendering those of a light green hue more vividly green, and throwing the silver, gold, russet browns, and reds of birch and elm, holly and maple, into high relief against the deep tints of old gnarled oaks and lofty pine trees, this silent yet eloquent congress of the world's representative flora, presided over by the lofty *Araucaria excelsa*, is spread out before us under a canopy of cloudless blue sky, and watched over by the hoary genius of Table Mountain, whom we may fancy seated on the summit writing—writing in stain, cleft, and abrasion the history of the Cape that is past and that is to be. For we may say of this scene, with Keats, that

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
Its loveliness increases. It will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of soft dreams, and rest and quiet breathing—”



CHURCH STREET, STELLENBOSCH.



TWEEFONTEIN BRIDGE, NEAR WORCESTER.