

The Garden and Literature

THE STANDARD CYCLOPEDIA OF HORTICULTURE. By L. H. Bailey. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1935. 3 vols. \$15.

THE GARDEN ENCYCLOPEDIA. Edited by E. L. D. Seymour, B. S. A. New York: William H. Wise & Co. 1936. \$4.

THE GARDEN DICTIONARY: an Encyclopedia of practical Garden Management and Landscape Design. Edited by Norman Taylor. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1936. \$16.25.

Reviewed by MARION PARRIS SMITH

THE tradition of the garden as a setting for dramatic episode is very ancient. Passing over the Garden of Eden which witnessed the unique tragedy of the Fall of Man, the Hortus Inclusus of Solomon's Song, the Persian Garden where in the Fires of Spring are flung the Garments of Repentance, we come to the Garden of the Hesperides, planted on the Lost Atlantis, which Henry Osborn Taylor tells us "has piqued curiosity for two thousand years." The frontispiece of my childhood copy of "The Thousand and One Nights," made it clear that those tales, though full of garden scenes, were recited on a four-post canopy bed, almost identical with my grandmother's. But the next greatest collection of stories was told in a Fiesole garden while the plague raged below in Florence. I feel sure that learned doctors' theses have been written on "The Garden Setting in Shakespeare" (if not, they will appear after this review is published!) and of these I am ignorant, but in a garden "in such a night as this . . . did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well." In a garden, did Olivia mock the "sad and civil" Malvolio, "cross-gartered in yellow," and in a garden, or plesaunce, "with a palace in it," the whole merry comedy of "Love's Labour's Lost" was enacted.

Posterity may look back on the winter of 1935-36 as the coldest since 1492, or as the season which saw the Supreme Court pulverize the Agricultural Adjustment Act, or as the year of the three garden encyclopedias! If we have lost the Triple A, we have gained the Triple E. The very profusion of publication seems to indicate that Spring is coming and that the Depression is going.

Obviously the three compilations deal with the same material; plants cultivated in gardens. But their scope is not identical and they serve varying purposes. "Bailey's Cyclopedia" has been the "Bible and Britannica of garden folk" since it was first published in six volumes in 1900. The revised version, compressed into three volumes, appeared in 1914, of which this is a reissue. The price is reduced from twenty-five dollars to fifteen dollars with no corresponding cheapen-

ing of printing, paper, or plates, which are excellent. Its twofold purpose, of plant identification and cultural direction, is carried out in some 40,000 detailed descriptions of plants, and in hundreds of technical articles written by horticultural experts. Plants from all parts of the world are described, though the emphasis is laid on the horticulture of North America. The information is designed for professional and commercial growers as well as for amateurs. It remains after thirty-six years a standard and indispensable work of reference.

"The Garden Encyclopedia" is generally useful, is designed for amateurs, and aims to give information on the materials, means, methods, and background of gardening. It describes some 5,000 species of plants and contains cultural directions which are clear, condensed, and adequate. Paper, print, and plates are good. "The Garden Dictionary" includes the same general subject matter as the other two, but as the title implies, lays special stress on nomenclature. It is particularly useful for its precise listing of common names, scientific names, brief definitions of terms, and elaborate cross references. There are some 7,000 entries in these categories as compared with over 1,300 listed in "The Garden Encyclopedia." Its forty-eight State maps, showing zones of hardiness, are invaluable and many of its plates are artistic as well as original.

Comparisons are peculiarly odious among three such useful and admirable works. The writer of this article was capable of turning the 5796 pages under review and of looking at the illustrations, but a stern time limit prevented anything but a sampling of the articles, and strictly practical interests determined the samples chosen. Comparing the directions for "dormant spray for San José scale," "Pre-

paring the Cold Frame," "Pruning Grape Vines," "Care of House Plants," "Constructing a Lily Pool," etc., etc., and a much longer list of plant descriptions and miscellaneous items, something like the following comparative estimate might be made. The articles in "Bailey" are the longest, the fullest, the most technical, but for the amateur, not always the clearest. In each of the other two works the cultural directions are adequate. The charts and plates are better in the "Dictionary" and the planting directions somewhat easier to follow in "The Garden Encyclopedia."

Defects exist in all three, though they are mostly sins of omission. The arrangement of subject matter is, of course, alphabetical, but "Bailey's" choice of titles is somewhat arbitrary, the index is far from satisfactory, and it often takes appreciable time to find the information desired. But the most serious lack in all three works is of biographical and bibliographical data. "Bailey" gives brief biographies of 160 Americans under "Horticulturists," but includes no foreigners. In very many instances, he indicates in parentheses the name, dates, and nationality of botanists for whom species have been named. He has a brief, inadequate note on Herbals, and a good check-list of periodicals and of American horticultural books, but only occasional references are made to foreign literature. "The Garden Dictionary" gives a much shorter list of periodicals and books, also limited to America; it cites many botanists for whom species have been named, but usually without dates. "The Garden Encyclopedia" contains no biographical or bibliographical material. In view of the very great interest nowadays in the history and literature of gardening, and in the lives of plant hunters and of botanical and horticultural pioneers, the scanty and defective information included in these latest works is disappointing.

An adequate review should aid the



Wendell MacRae

AN ENGLISH GARDEN ON A NEW YORK ROOF
Pictures on pages 12 and 13 from "Gardens and Gardening" (Studio).

reader in making an intelligent choice of books. To which of these beauties shall the apple be given? "Bailey's Cyclopaedia" is a standard reference book and should be in every public library, in every Garden Club, and on the shelves of all amateurs who have fifteen good dollars to expend. The real difficulties of choice lie between the other two. For the student of botany who is also a practical gardener, "The Garden Dictionary" is probably the more valuable work. For the practical gardener, who is only incidentally a student, "The Garden Encyclopedia" presents its information in a somewhat simpler form.

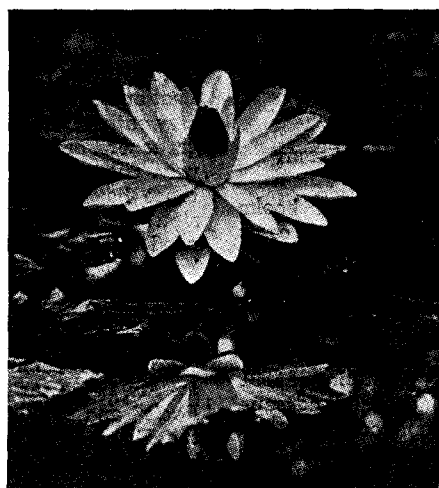
But the botanist and the dirt gardener are far from being the only ones to profit from these valuable books. The house is not only interesting to the architect and the builder, but also to the literary artist who sees in it the setting for an episode in his drama, and who studies architecture and building to get his details right, as he studies tide-tables and the phases of the moon for his marine novel, or time-tables or European railway connections for a mystery story. The garden likewise has its place in literature as background, setting, décor. Why is it not then as important for the author to get his horticultural data as accurate as his architectural or nautical facts? And is it not as great an anachronism to make the colchicum bloom in the spring and the witch-hazel come out with the pussy-willow as to describe an evening scene with the crescent moon rising in the East? If the answer be affirmative, then these Encyclopedias of Horticulture should offer vast and varied source material for the *Comédie Humaine*.

It is the novelists who have used the garden most effectively. In "a prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of the lawn," near the hermitage and just beyond the copse, there was fought, some time before Waterloo, one of the decisive battles of the world, in which all the honors of war were carried off by Elizabeth Bennet, and from which Lady Catherine retreated in disorder. "I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet. I send no compliments to your mother. You deserve no such attention. I am most seriously displeased." It was during a day's visit to Mr. Rushworth's estate at Sotherton, to see the garden in its ancient glory before it fell under the renovating hand of Rep-

ton, that commenced that perverse quartet of flirtations that was to end in Maria's downfall and to cause Fanny Price so many tears. And it was at Mr. Knightley's strawberry picnic at Donwell Abbey, "its ample gardens stretching down to meadows washed by a stream . . . its abundance of timber in rows and avenues, which neither fashion nor extravagance had rooted up" over which the newly married Mrs. Elton, "in all her apparatus of happiness, her large bonnet and her basket," claimed to be "lady patroness," that Emma's resentment was so provoked, and where Jane Fairfax and Frank had their crucial misunderstanding.

When not in parsonages or in mysterious country houses, Brontë heroines were apt to wander over moors, and Mrs. Gaskell's pleasant girls to stroll in fields and lanes, but with Trollope, the garden is as indispensable as the drawing-room or the hunting-field. It was in a Barchester garden "in a walk nearly enveloped by shrubs" that Mr. Slope, who had supped unwisely on champagne, contrived to pass his arm around Eleanor Bolt's waist when, "quick as thought she raised her hand and dealt him a box on the ear with such right good will, that it sounded among the trees like a miniature thunder clap."

Garden walls (Garden Dictionary 852) had a particular appeal for Dickens. At West Gate House Establishment for



NYMPHÆA W. B. SHAW
From the Garden of Dr. Horace
McFarland, Harrisburg, Pa.

Young Ladies Sam Weller gave Mr. Pickwick that "gentle push . . . over the wall on to the bed beneath, where, after crushing three gooseberry-bushes and a rose tree, he finally alighted at full length." It was over a garden wall, outside of Bristol, that Mr. Winkle climbed, assisted again by Sam, to throw himself at Arabella Allen's feet. And it was over a garden wall that the eccentric old gentleman next door tossed cucumbers and vegetable marrows (*cucumis sativis* and *cucurbito pepo*) at Mrs. Nickleby and subsequently "called, gently proposing marriage and an elopement." In the Dream Garden where, as in Peter Ibbetson's Passy, "roses, nasturtiums, and convolvulus, wall-flowers, margolds, and sunflowers, dahlias and pansies and hollyhocks and poppies . . . all bloomed at once, irrespective of time and season."

"The Garden Encyclopedia" has an admirable article on "Color in Gardens," and the "Dictionary" has essays on "The White Garden" and "The Red Garden,"



BAPTISTA AUSTRALIS WITH
DELPHINIUMS

Photos on this page by J. Horace
McFarland Co.

but in the Queen's Croquet Ground "the roses growing on it were white, but there were three gardeners . . . busily painting them red. Alice thought this a very curious thing," but no more curious (or "curiouser") than the presence of exceedingly intelligent insects and caterpillars (Bailey 1042), or of flowers, which like the Tiger-lily (*Lilium tigrinum*) informed Alice "we can talk . . . when there is any one worth talking to."

Like Trollope, our reigning toast, Miss Dorothy Sayers, stages her latest tragicomedy in a cloistered garden, and like Dickens, she is partial to the garden wall as an obstacle to free intercourse. It is in the Fellows' Garden of Shrewsbury College that the woman with the lean and hungry look grips young Lord St. George by the arm and says "here we murder beautiful boys like you and eat their hearts out"; and it is in and out of its bushes and shrubs that flits the Poltergeist.

In recent novels, corpses have been buried in rose gardens (Bailey 3014), under crazy pavements, and (in a garden in the suburbs of Chicago) in a clump of rhododendrons (loc. cit. 2030). The unaccountable fading of a sturdy hybrid tea rose awakened suspicions in the mind of a horticulturally inclined police inspector, and a man was led to the gallows. Also, incriminating evidence, such as wedding-rings, pistols, and coils of wire have been thrown into lily-pools and garden tanks. Now crazy pavements (Dic. 517) and lily pools (Gar. Ency. 539) may be constructed anywhere, but rhododendrons will not flourish in a limestone country, and a properly constructed rose-bed is about the most difficult place in the world for the hasty disposal of a body. It is errors like these that a careful reading of garden encyclopedias would obviate.

Marion Parris Smith is head of the department of economics at Bryn Mawr College. She has long been interested in botany and has a valuable collection of old herbal and garden works . . . Other reviews of garden books appear on pages 14 and 16 of this issue.



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Tastes in Horticulture

FOUR SEASONS IN YOUR GARDEN. By John C. Wister. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1936. \$2.50.

GARDENS AND GARDENING. New York: Studio Publications. 1936. \$4.50.

GARDEN DESIGN OF TODAY. By Percy S. Cane. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1936. \$4.50.

THE NEW GARDEN. By Richard Sudell. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1936. \$2.

AMERICAN FERNS. By Edith A. Roberts and Julia R. Laurence. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1936. \$2.50.

HOW TO MAKE GARDEN POOLS. By William Longyear. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1936. \$1.

HOW TO PLAN THE HOME LANDSCAPE. By Arthur H. Carhart. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1936. \$1.

ART OF THE LANDSCAPE GARDEN IN JAPAN. By Tsuyoshi Tamura. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1936. \$6.

Reviewed by RICHARDSON WRIGHT

FROM the spate of garden books streaming from this spring's presses we fish out these eight as representing the current horticultural taste in America, England, and Japan. For the practising gardener some of them are more than uncommonly valuable.

Since Josiah Conder's two folios of 1891 and 1893 no work on Japanese landscaping, save some small handbooks, has appeared until Mr. Tamura produced this magnificent volume to commemorate the visit of the Garden Club of America to Japan in 1935. The book falls into two sections—first the text, which sets forth the general characteristic of the Japanese garden, its history and philosophy, the elements of its design, and the materials used in making these gardens. The second part consists of one hundred and ninety-three views of Japanese gardens and details of them, each analyzed and thoroughly described, showing the progress in landscape art from the Muromachi period of the 14th century to the present taste for woods and water naturalism. A superb piece of book-making, this volume is an equally superb and definitive study of a complicated art. Under Mr. Tamura's pen it becomes quite simple and sublime.

Then from this to two volumes of English extraction—Mr. Cane's "Garden Design of Today" and "Gardens and Gardening." The latter is a picture book with some scattered chapters on horticultural matters. While the gardens displayed come from a number of countries, this contains a generous section of American gardens. A comparison shows that this country is fast evolving its own landscape vernacular. From a study of Mr. Cane's illustrations and his helpful and practical text one would gather that garden design in England has reached a static

era. True, he considers landscaping the modernist house—advising the use of strong colored flowers or shrubs and columnar forms of trees, yet much of the English garden today is what it was when first Edward Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll produced their designs a decade or more ago—restrained picturesqueness with an evident leaning toward formality. Mr. Cane's point of view is eminently sane. His practical suggestions can readily be translated for the American climatic zones. The book is a serious study and deserves serious consideration.

A third English book is Richard Sudell's "The New Garden." The "new" in this instance refers to making a garden from the soil upwards and in that case falls into the category of practical gardening books. It begins in the orthodox fashion with soil and site, and works up through all phases of garden activity and the care of a wide and suitable diversity of plant material. While it is obviously written for English gardeners, most of the cultural advice is applicable here.

Now turn to the four American books. That on ferns fits neatly into a contemporary enthusiasm. The intelligentsia among gardeners are taking up ferns in a big way. Though the Misses Roberts and Laurence have produced a slim book, it is stout with all the fern knowledge one need know. In addition to an excellent key for identifying ferns, they set down how to grow them, how to use them in gardens indoors and out. The various kinds are well illustrated.

Equally accommodating to the pocket are Mr. Longyear's "How to Make Garden Pools" and Mr. Carhart's "How to Plan the Home Landscape." The former is a breezy, down-to-earth consideration of all kinds and shapes of pools, how to place them to advantage in the garden picture, how to construct them, and how to surround them with suitable planting. When Mr. Longyear gets through, there isn't much more to say about pools. And the same is true of Mr. Carhart's handbook on landscaping. It explains the application of good design to the small property.

Finally the eighth. It is about time John Wister wrote this sort of book. Known heretofore for his studies of particular plant and bulb groups, he turns now in his "Four Seasons" to the broad subject of making and maintaining gardens. In addition to being the best illustrated garden book of the season, it is the most pronouncedly individual. Mr. Wister, praise be, has a sense of humor. He isn't taken in by contemporary fads. He doesn't even believe that a rock garden is necessary unto salvation. But he does believe that trees and shrubs and a good design come before the seed packet. On these topics he is superbly sane. Mr. Wister, while pouring practical advice by the pageful, takes his gardening with a smile. . . . Incidentally he has a weakness for geraniums. So has Mr. Cane on his side of the Atlantic. Perhaps between them they can bring the geranium back into favor again.

Richardson Wright is Editor of House and Garden.