

ALDENHAM is a quaint house in a beautiful garden. Its outlines are softened by the stately avenue of elms, some two hundred years old, leading to the front entrance, a leafy regiment breaking the view of the tree-clothed hills towards the famous Harrow School. The history of the mansion is uneventful. It was probably built about 1550, has been altered by various possessors until little of the original structure remains, and has never been sold, but passed by marriage to the present family. There is much to interest the architect and antiquarian. The noble oak hall is of the time of Charles II., and the west front, of the same period, makes a restful setting to

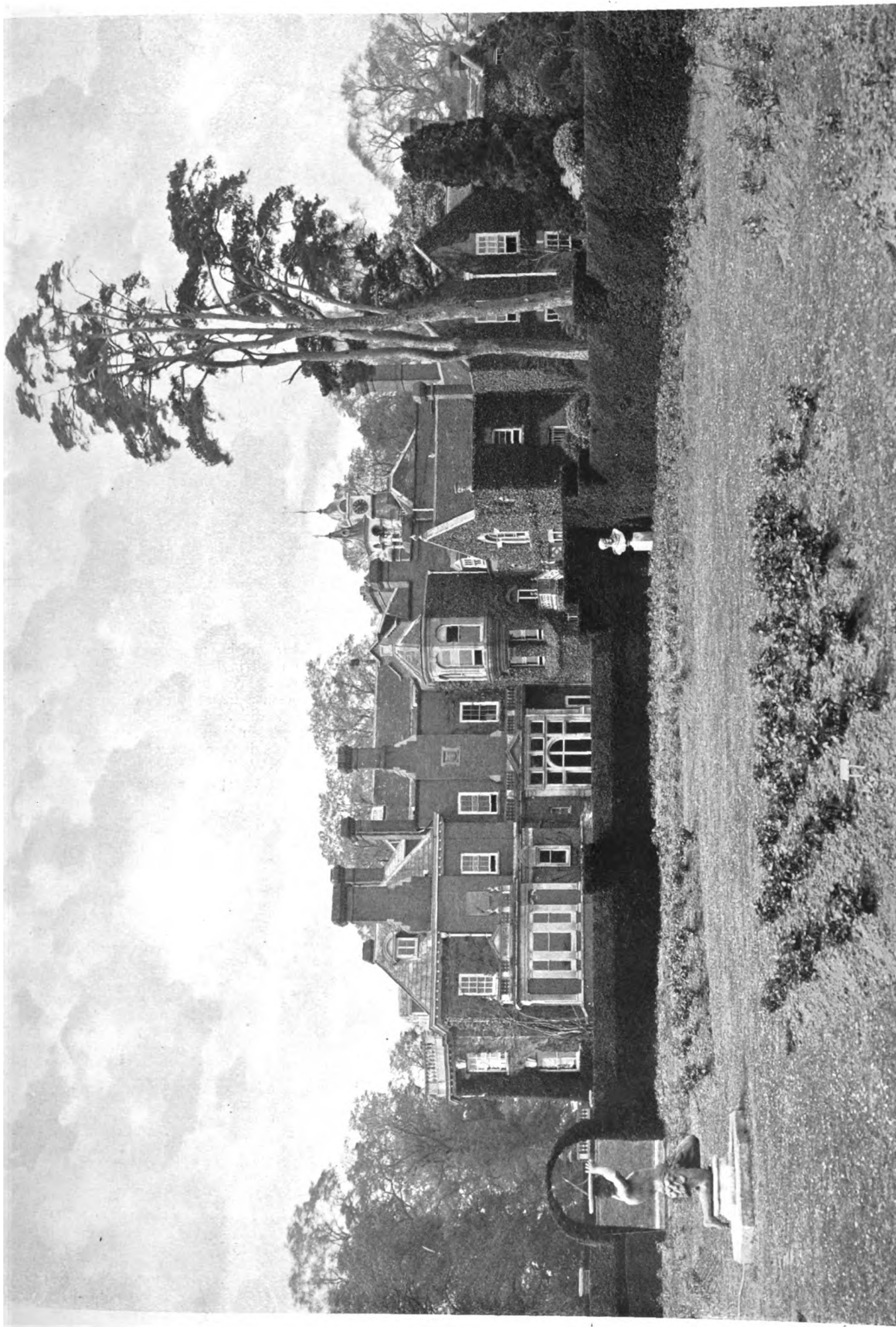
the trees around, for Aldenham is essentially a leafy place, due in part to the lordly groups in park and woodland, but more to the free and delightful planting carried out by Lord Aldenham and his gardener son, the Hon. Vicary Gibbs, M.P., during the past twenty years.

The house is a mixture in every sense, but not a patchwork erection of many styles, as the old and charming Queen Anne character has been well preserved, meriting at this day the description Chauncy gave of it in 1700, a "fair house of brick." The period of George II. is seen in the bow of the drawing-room and the library, and the east front looking on the rose garden is of quite modern times, about twenty-five years ago. There is a simple grandeur in the entrance from the elm avenue. The red brick is toned by the pleasant green of the trees, and nothing obstructs the mansion with its face to the broad stretch of open land. But from the garden front colour and design, effective and simple, make this a glorious retreat, bright and interesting at all times, in the fulness of summer and the depth of winter. When we visited Aldenham the garden immediately against the house and on a quiet terrace was splashed with colour from the dashing array of begonias, fuchsias, and summer bedding, so brilliant that it was refreshing to walk through the quaint pleached alley of limes to the woodland and wilderness beyond, where shrubs of importance for colour of leaf, stem, and flower are massed in a bold and picturesque way. We have never seen anything so effective in an English garden.

This planting is quite modern; in truth, the gardens have been transformed by Lord Aldenham until they may be regarded as new, and the outlines of the estate have undergone the same change. Thomas Sutton, who owned the estate in 1590, would scarcely recognise in the present extensive and well-planted park, garden, and woodland the Aldenham of his far-off day, when, maybe, the garden flowers scented the borders, but few of the things in the wonderful arboretum were known to our ancestors. They are the result of discoveries and explorations of our own day.

It is interesting to know that the estate passed in 1614, with Thomas Sutton's daughter and heir, to her husband, Henry Coghill, in whose family it remained until 1734, and their coat of arms still remains over the hall door. Then it passed

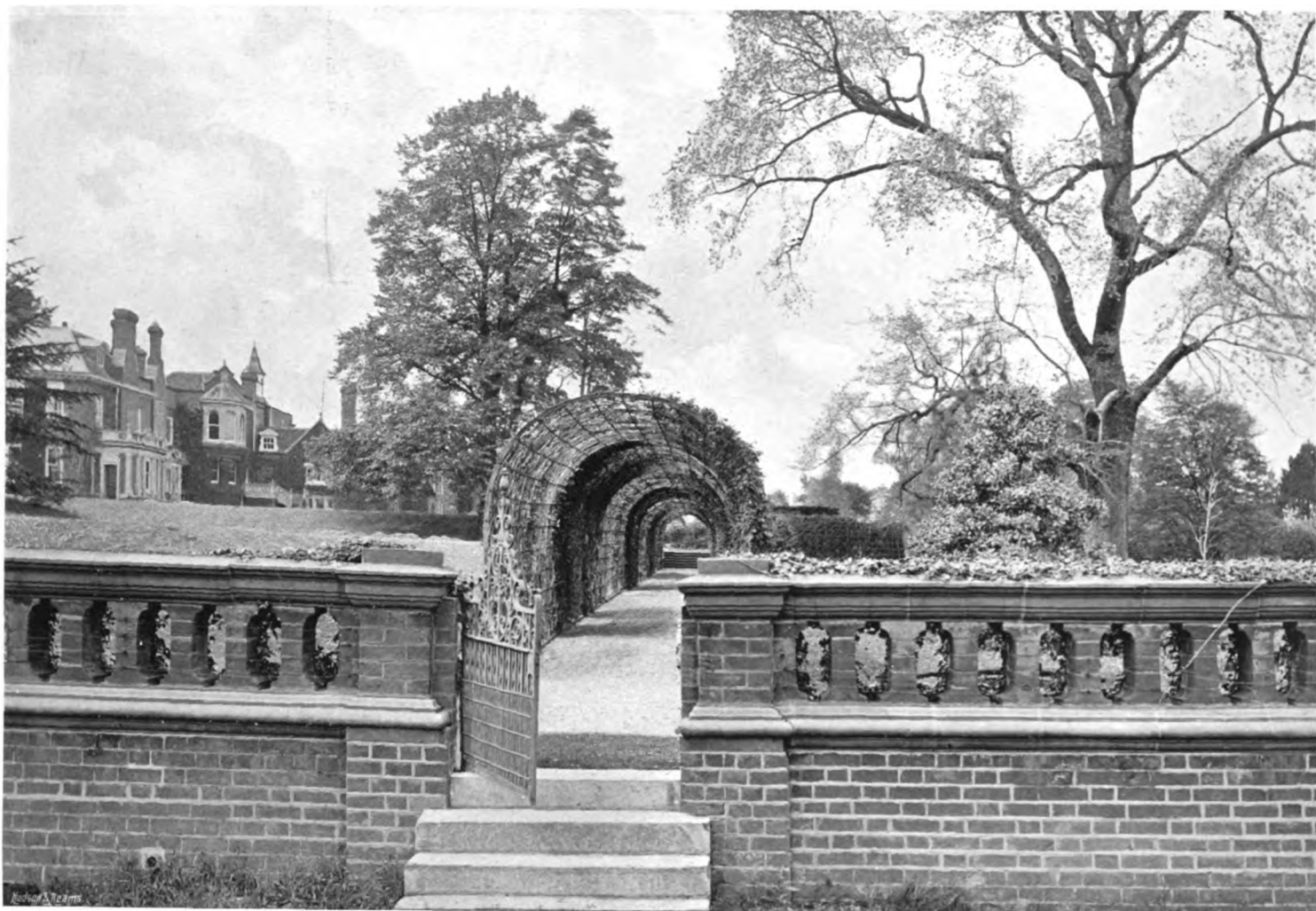




GARDENS OLD AND NEW.—ALDENHAM HOUSE: THE EAST FRONT.

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FROM THE PARK.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

to Robert Hucks, who had married the daughter and heir of another Henry Coghill, and remained in the Hucks family until 1814, when they became extinct in the male line. The estate then descended to a relative—Miss Noyes—and thence to the Gibbs, as heirs-at-law through the marriage of Antony Gibbs (grandfather of the first Lord Aldenham) with Dorothea Hucks.

The gardens and the character of the estate, as we have previously recorded, are in a sense quite modern. It is difficult to know where to begin in a walk through the gardens and

woodland, which comprise upwards of 200 acres, maintained in high cultivation even in those places usually permitted to run wild and unkempt. We may enter one of three picturesque lodges, and make a start at the Aldenham lodge, about two miles from the station. Turning to the right, a charming copper-covered garden seat is an interesting feature, and a restful view is obtained of the house with its elm avenue and green sward. We follow the broad gravel walk, protected on the right from the park by an ornamental railed brick

palisade, broken about every five yards by piers capped with vases and urns in terra-cotta, and further diversified by outward half-circles of bold effect, and in due time arrive at a large carriage gateway. This leads to the well-planted park and new ornamental lake. We have seen this remarkable lake on two distinct occasions—in the spring, when the gorse bushes dashed the scenery with yellow, and in the autumn, the season of colour from the bold grouping and massing of shrubs and plants by the water margin.

This lake and bold rock-work are amongst the principal features of the modern gardening at Aldenham, and we give hearty praise to Mr. Vicary Gibbs for his strenuous endeavours to create a natural and charming picture. Standing on the bridge with three arches that spans it, we see the pretty boat cave, and turning to the opposite side of the bridge the lake, with its two artfully-designed islands, is presented to view. This modelling, and practically forming a new feature entirely, has been accomplished since 1898, and huge mistakes might have been committed in an alteration so ambitious and extensive. We



"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE WILDERNESS.

understand that no professional landscape gardener's aid has been sought to create this picture, but that it has been the result of the work of the able head-gardener, Mr. E. Beckett, aided by Mr. Vicary Gibbs, whom we rejoice to see, like so many of our landowners of the present day, evincing a practical interest in the garden and woodland. This ornamental lake interested us more deeply for this reason, and we are happy to know that simple grouping has been boldly followed with the finest effects.

We hope the influence of such planting as that seen by this lake will spread through the land. There is an absence of that spotting, irritating sticking of single trees here and there, so conspicuous in many gardens, notwithstanding the lessons that have been preached through good garden books and articles in the horticultural journals. Here are breadths of bulrushes rustling in the autumn winds, golden elder, snowberry, thick with creamy fruit during winter, American blackberries, and the soft silver grey of that beautiful willow, *Salix rosmarinifolia*. It is a quiet scheme of colour, from the dense green of gorse to the graceful willow branches casting a grateful shade over the water surface. No expense has been spared to make this ornamental lake a feature for all time of this well-wooded park, and, though so new, the grouping of shrubby things is toning down the colour of artificial stone, until, in the lapse of time, lake, margins, and island will reveal a quiet, dignified beauty.

It is far from our wish to write a mere description of Aldenham and its gardens. The planting of the estate and its remodelling teach practical lessons, and simple grouping is one



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A GARDEN SEAT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of the greatest, with, too, an arboretum containing deciduous trees and shrubs as rare as anything in the botanic garden of Kew. We must, however, proceed through the grounds, and approach nearer the house, with its pretty croquet lawn, and at two angles an arched rose walk, while in the opposite corner is the square yew garden, adorned in the centre with a fine example of lead-work—the kneeling slave. Many interesting features may be seen at this point. The rose walk is a cool and fragrant retreat on hot summer days, and appropriately placed near to the garden of bush roses enclosed within a yew hedge. This meeting of yew and rose is full of subtle charm. It was not so in the days of



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THE YEW GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

long ago, when the landscape gardener was restricted to a few straggling hybrid perennials to scent the breeze; and then the rosery was a place of decay, and as formal as the squares and angles in the parterres. Yew deepens the tea rose tints, bringing out the tender shades, and making a background of colour for the groups of the best kinds planted in beds of simple design. Roses only are planted in the yew garden, and of the best kinds of tea and hybrid tea, the races that have given landscape gardeners rare opportunities of painting pictures of refined and beautiful colour.

In the immediate precincts of the house flowers are massed and grouped everywhere. Colour is laid thickly on the brown earth, and we feel that this indeed is an English home, with its warm red-brick house, pleached alley, and hardy flowers in the borders. In a border by the house are many choice trees, and immediately opposite—when we spent an enjoyable day here in September—a border of sub-tropical plants was remarkable for its effectiveness, by using freely many things to tell their own tale of high decorative importance. For borders of this kind the new *Nicotiana sylvestris* is an acquisition for its leaf and fragrant white tubular flowers, which never hang their heads, like those of the older *N. affinis*, in the hot sunshine.

Near to this gorgeous bordering of exotics is a quiet scene—an orchard garden of apples planted in the grass. We enjoy these old-world gardens in the environs of the house, where the daffodils dapple the grass with flowers, and make pictures of colour with the fruit blossoms enriching the boughs. It is simple and delightful for this reason. In many gardens this form of gardening, imitating the sweet ways of Nature herself, is being carried out with success. But it must be well done, not a mere massing together of a certain number



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THE WEST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of daffodils, a muddled-up representation of the flowers distributed in meadow and copse. Simplicity is the charm of wild gardening, scattering the flowers about in drifts and little colonies. In our next number we shall write more about this beautiful garden.



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TO THE WILDERNESS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

BOOKS . OF THE DAY.

THE first two books to be touched upon to-day are memoirs, both of them of peculiar interest to the readers of *COUNTRY LIFE*, albeit they are concerned with men who, save in the matter of kindness of nature and goodness of heart, had nothing in common. The first of these men, the fourth Lord Lilford, died full

of years in 1896; the second, best known to his many friends as "Freddie" Tait, and to the world at large as the finest amateur golfer that ever held a club, was barely thirty years of age when a Boer bullet laid him low at Koodoos' erg. Yet in both volumes there is this trait in common, that they are full of pathos.

The memoir of Lord Lilford, which is merely a preliminary to a more extended life to be written by a distinguished naturalist, is written by his sister, the Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, the wife of one of Lord Lilford's most familiar correspondents, and it is published by Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co. Ushered into the world with a touching introduction by the Bishop of London, it is addressed primarily "to those who valued my brother's friendship and to whom any record will be welcome for his sake," but none the less it must appeal very strongly to every reader. Here was a man who in boyhood and early manhood was not only full of the joy of life, a high-spirited man, a singer of good songs, genial and kindly beyond measure, much addicted to foreign travel, and a sportsman, but also among the keenest and most acute of ornithologists, a man who really loved the "smale fowles"—and for that matter the great ones also. Yet it was ordained in the irony of fate that during the greater part of his life he should be crippled by hereditary gout, and that he should realise over and over again the fatal truth of the saying "Delicta majorum immeritus lues." But he never was deterred from the indulgence of his ruling passion, even from a bath-chair, and he never repined, and his was indeed, as the Bishop of London says, and as the portrait on the frontispiece clearly shows, "a dignified face, with the marks of suffering upon it, but



"COUNTRY LIFE."

A SIDE WALK.

lightened by a smile which came from a soul beyond the power of pain."

This is not the place, nor am I the man, to enter upon any scientific estimate of the value of Lord Lilford's contributions to the sum of knowledge concerning ornithology, but it is the place in which to look at the development of a singularly lovable character. Thomas Littleton Powys was a born ornithologist. Rising from his first birching, at the age of five, he observed, "It did not hurt much; there's a brown owl flying by."

At a private school in leafy Warwickshire he was an ardent birds'-nester; during his career at Harrow and at Christ Church his pets were as numerous as those of Frank Buckland at Winchester and at Christ Church. One reads of little bitterns in a locker at Harrow, of a badger kept in college rooms (which occasioned some difficulties with the authorities), of tame snakes which he expected his guests to love as he loved them, of lodgings in Down Street later, where he had two armadillos—"scaly bastes" were they called by the Irish maid-servant—which killed the landlady's cat. One reads, too, of practical jokes of a mild order, and of early manhood devoted to sport and travel and natural history in a manner which makes one's mouth water. Everywhere the ruling passion for birds is with him, especially in Sardinia and in Spain, which he loved so well. In the latter he had the extraordinary distinction of discovering a new mammal, *Lepus Lilfordi*, although the distinct character of the species was not recognised nor was it named until after his death. It is, says Mr. de Winton, "by far the most strikingly coloured member of the genus," and, by its picture, taken from a specimen in the Natural History Museum, it appears to be a beautifully dappled hare, with



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THE LAKE AND ISLANDS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

other inhabitants, we have many glimpses in text and illustrations, the latter mainly from the practised hand of Mr. Thorburn, and there are also some very taking little pen and ink sketches by Dr. Drewitt. Also we have glimpses of Lord Lilford as naturalist, of his close powers of observation, which quite remind one of Gilbert White. "I have seen a woodcock carrying her young one; it was done by the agency of her legs, but I cannot say how. My belief is that they tuck them between the tarsi and the breast." This is but a sample from a letter addressed to Colonel Howard Irby, and that letter is but one of many which make the reader regret not a little that Lord Lilford "had something of an Athenian's sense of distinction between the functions of a gentleman and an author." He himself, better than any man who survived him, could have given to the world a picture of Lilford Hall and its aviaries; another may perhaps succeed better than his dignity and modesty would have permitted in portraying the crippled and gentle man who lived among the birds and marked their ways, whose purse was open to all good causes, whose careful advice was always at the service of those who had his tastes. As it is, let us be thankful to Mrs. Drewitt for the book which we have, and let me extract one letter from it which should be read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested by every young ornithologist.

"To Mr. vryn Powys at Cambridge.

"London, May 27th, 1886.

"I am very glad to see that you are taking seriously to ornithology. If you take to collecting birds, I hope that you will not attach undue value to specimens because they are killed in the British Islands; this is a most fatal mania, and tends to the destruction of many interesting birds that are only rare because they are murdered immediately on their arrival. The poor Hoopoe is an instance of this; many are slaughtered on our coasts every year simply for the benefit of the local bird-stuffers, who charge a high price because



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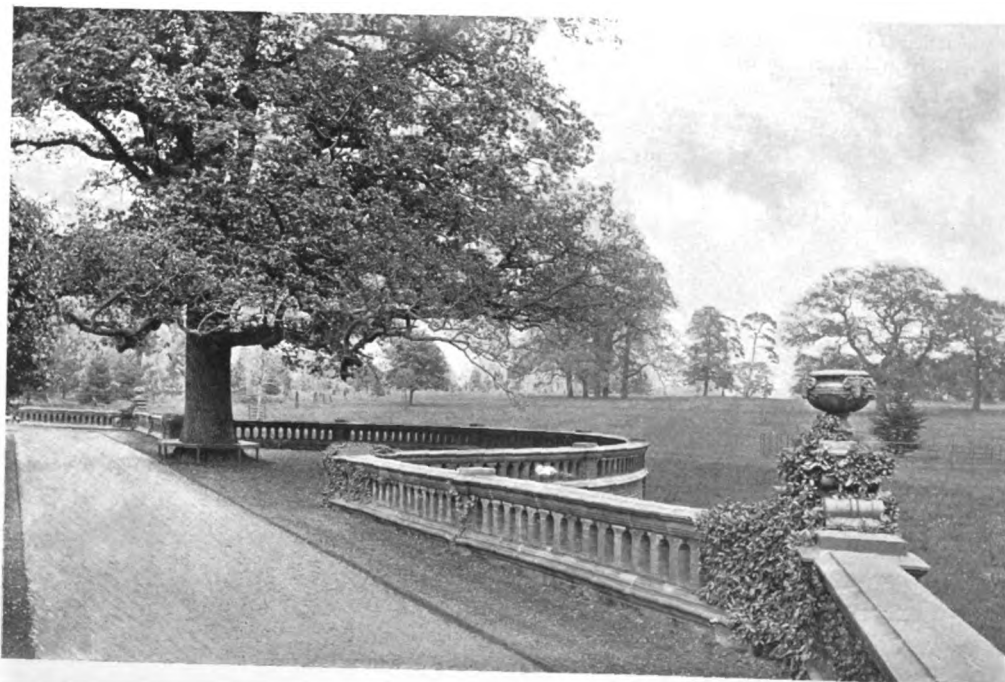
THE BOAT CAVE.

a sparse veil of longer bristles rising from and over the ordinary level of its fur. Of every good scheme for the furtherance of knowledge of natural history Lord Lilford was an ardent supporter, but it must not be supposed that his generosity stopped there. "His correspondence," says the Bishop of London, "had many ramifications, his beneficence was boundless. But in this, as in all else, he was chivalrous as well as wise—he did not like his generosity to be known." But birds and travel were his innocent delights, and it was hard indeed that one blessed with these tastes should have been crippled at an early age. He was, however, of such a spirit as to make the best of the circumstances, cruel as they were. After his death the late Duke of Argyll, that man of many accomplishments, wrote some verses which give so beautiful a picture of the man and his surroundings that one or two of them may be quoted:

"And when from pain, disabling with the years,
His feet could follow wandering birds no more,
He came to settle in his English home,
With friendly wings around him as before.

"Here brooding doves from their deep-shaded
nests,
And plump cranes from out the heavenly blue,
And racing things that run along the sand,
But keep the ocean ever in their view,
"All watched his coming, and his careful glance
That searched their forms, and listened to
their call;
The world of birds was round him to the last,
In those fair homes he made at Lilford Hall."

Of those fair homes, of vultures, goshawks,
night herons, pelicans, flamingoes, water-fowl of
all kinds, hobbies, Greenland falcons, and their



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ALDENHAM HOUSE: THE OAK SEAT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

they are killed in our country. This bird is common in many parts of the Continent, and from a scientific point of view its visits to this country cannot add to its value. I heard rumours many years ago of a bird-stuffer in Cambridge (not Baker) who used to go up to London and buy many of the birds alive in Leadenhall Market that come from Holland, such as Purple Heron, Night Heron, Little Bittern, Spoonbill. This artist used to keep these birds out of sight, kill them one by one, and display them in his shop as having been freshly killed in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, and obtain from the British-bird maniacs something like 150 per cent. on the price he had paid for them. If you mean really to take to ornithology, you cannot do better than constitute Alfred Newton as your Gamaliel, and adopt the fourth edition of Yarrell as your text-book, but I hope that you will extend your interest beyond our shores, and take up, at all events, the birds of Europe. I have never seen the Cambridge Museum, but understand that it is very good—one of the best in England. . . . I think with Yarrell, White of Selborne, and any recent ornithological works in the library in Cambridge, you ought to make a good start, but there is nothing like personal observation in the fields and woods, and let me recommend you to keep notes of what you see and hear, and consider nothing too trivial to jot down. You can at any time see five Great Auk's eggs, to say nothing of a very fine specimen of the bird and a skeleton, at No. 6, Tenterden Street; these are the property of your affectionate, and I hope revered uncle."

Sounder advice no man ever gave to another; and now I pass to a second memoir, Mr. J. L. Low's "Record" of F. G. Tait (Nisbet). The very decoration of the cover, a bundle of clubs, a wreath of laurel, and a claymore, conveys the sad story of the book. It is, as Mr. Andrew Lang says in the introduction, that of a man "of singularly winning nature" who "brought sunshine wherever he came and a reflection of his own constitutional happiness." The whole story is simple and pathetic in the highest degree. To me, who know golf but little, Mr. Lang's picture has the greatest charm.

"He was a young man, a soldier, an athlete, in the fulness of joyous vigour, and I was—at the opposite pole. But, odd as it may seem, I had exactly the same sentiment to Freddie as, when at school, I used to have for a big, kind, football-playing elder kinsboy, if the word may be coined. He was so strong, so good, so jolly, so devoid of conceit, despite his immense popularity, and fame on the Links. It was on the Links at St. Andrews that I generally saw him, and a happy hour it was for many in that wintry little town when we heard that Freddie had come to lighten the murky days of December or January. You saw his broad, sunny smile brightening on you from far away, above his broad shoulders and undandified dress. I stop to gaze across the glooming flats of the sodden Links, and seem to see again him who is now but the brightest of the shadows that haunt this place of many memories. Bruce and Wallace, Cuddies and grim Covenanters, the frail, wandering ghost of the exiled Henry VI., Knox in his vigour and Knox in his decline, the stern Regent Moray and the harmless Lyon King-at-Arms whom he burned; they are all among our haunting shades, with the Queen in her glad youth, and Chastelard, here condemned to die for her, and her French valet in like case, and the great Cardinal in his glory, and the anxious eyes of Mariotte Ogilvy, and Montrose in his boyhood—a thousand characters of immortal memory, with the same shroud around them all. But he who died in Africa, glad and kind as he was brave till his latest breath—he, too, will not be forgotten; he it is, next to one other, younger, and as brave and kind and good as he, whom I must remember best and long for most."

To others Mr. Low's record, which is of golfing exploits mainly, will perhaps be equally attractive. But through that record shines again and again the face and the character of which Mr. Lang speaks with so much of genuine eloquence.

It gives me sincere pleasure to add the words of a great golfer and a good man of his pen to what I have written of the Tait "Record":

"It is sad work for us who knew him, and, knowing him, could not fail to love him, to read the record of the all too short life of the late Mr. F. G. Tait which has just been done by his faithful friend, Mr. J. L. Low. To all who are golfers Mr. Tait's name is familiar enough, perhaps familiar as no other golfer's name has been. For those who are not golfers and may not know all that his name means to us who did know him, it may be well to say that he was the finest of Scotland's players, lieutenant in the famous regiment the Black Watch, who lost his life in a small affair shortly after the battle of Magersfontein, having previously been wounded, and only just returned to active service. That which made 'Freddie' so great and so well loved a figure in the golfing world was not only that he was so good a golfer, but also that he was so good a fellow. There was something, as we have seen said of him, peculiarly 'gay and gallant' about him. As an opponent he was the most generous, whether in course of the match itself—that tries less sweet tempers almost to the breaking strain—or in consideration of its details afterwards. His was a good and charming personality. The qualities which went to compose it are well placed before us in this book,



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which consists of a record of the young soldier's life, together with letters and his golfing diary. The appreciation in which Mr. Tait was held by his soldiers is brought out by extracts given from their letters home, showing that they regarded him at once as a friend and brother soldier, and as a gallant leader whom they would follow wherever he chose to lead. Mr. Low has done his labour of love, in my judgment, very well. The personality of the young fellow so 'gay and gallant,' and withal possessed of a strength of character that does not always go with these qualities, jumps to eyes that grow moist as they read. A touching thing in the book, which is very fully illustrated with reproductions from photographs, mostly of Mr. Tait in the act of playing various golfing strokes, is a fac-simile of a letter received by him on the field of battle, purporting to be written by his dog, and signed with the impress of the dog's inky paw laid upon the page. Nails is the name in which the dog rejoices. We may be sure he deserves this designation of pluck and hardness; and in every letter of 'Freddie's' from the war we read that he sends his 'love to Nails.'

"Mr. Low is to be congratulated on the manner in which he has carried out his sad task. The reading of the book will be a pathetic pleasure to the great multitude of the late Mr. Tait's friends. It is a book that has many merits, and amongst them that it is written with no motive of pecuniary recompense, all profits from the sale going to the benefit of the Black Watch Widows' and Orphans' Fund."

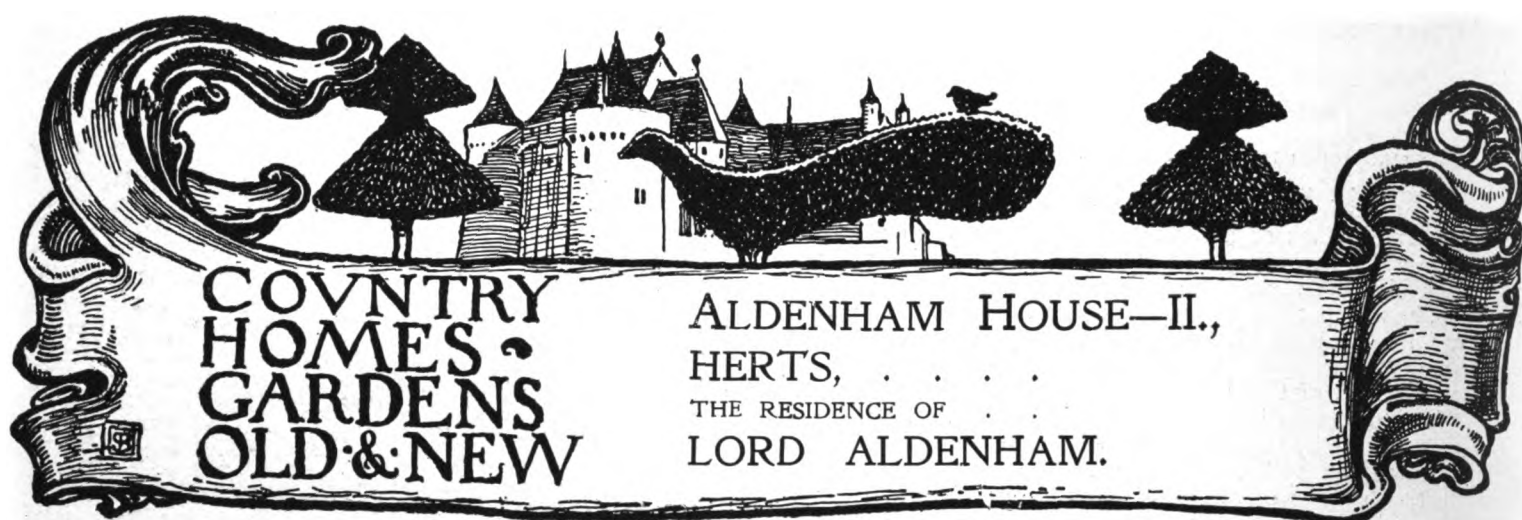
It had been my intention to speak of sundry other books, but my space is gone. I must be content to say of the Rev. Hubert D. Astley's "My Birds in Freedom and Captivity" (Dent) that in equipment it is worthy of the traditions of Aldine House, that its sketches of birds from the hand of the author have a charming quality of sprightliness, which is to be found in its text also. And so I lay down my pen, feeling that I have been dealing with three books which are as wholesome as they are interesting, and that I have been face to face with two men of noble character during all the time of writing.

WILD . . . HAWKS.

IF a comprehensive record could be kept of all the wild hawks which are annually done to death in the United Kingdom, the total would even now be considerable. Most of these are, of course, shot, but a good many are also caught in traps and gins, and more especially



THE LATE MR. F. G. TAIT AT HOYLAKES.



ALDENHAM PARK, as we mentioned in our previous article, is a place of varied beauty. We will now enter the wilderness. Our illustrations convey more forcibly than words the charms of those grassy paths winding through shrubby groups, or forming a restful vista, terminated maybe by a garden seat. It is a place of vistas, cool green walks, and brilliant splashes of colour, not from flowers, but from the stems and fruits of the shrubs used in painting the picture. This massing of shrubs is unusual, and worthy of imitation. No matter whether the winds of winter whistle through the trees, or the rich tints of autumn colour the boughs, this wilderness of shrubs presents bright features. Here an enormous group of the sumach *Rhus typhina*, spreads out its characteristic foliage, dabbled with brilliant colours in September days, there the air is saturated with the breath of sweet briar, and the heavy racemes of *Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora* (the big paniced hydrangea) weigh down the shoots. The Japanese rose, cut-leaved bramble, double bramble, *Cornus sibirica* (the Siberian dogwood), *Rubrus odoratus*, Japanese windflower, *symphoricarpos*, *ribes*, and *spiræa* are a few of the shrubs massed in

this bold and interesting way. One may imagine the effect of dozens of plants of the *Cornus sibirica* in the winter landscape, the effect of a fierce fire, a glorious splash of colour in the grey winter landscape. We can only describe this planting as magnificent for its effectiveness, whilst the restfulness and charm of the wilderness are preserved. This free planting does not disturb the quiet grassy paths flecked with sunlight, and retreats from the glare of "bedders" and the heat of summer and autumn.

Our readers must forgive this somewhat detailed description of the wilderness, for the reason that we wish to impart a lesson to those who at this time of planting and alterations are considering fresh schemes.

By following one of the pleasant grass walks, and leaving the house and famous kitchen garden with its fine ornamental doorway, the north-west side is reached, and here many changes have taken place during the past few years. On every hand are beautiful effects from the choice collection of trees and shrubs, and streams meandering into the moats of the old house that once existed in this portion of the grounds. Nothing remains of the former house except the moats, which have been



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THE UPPER FALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



THE WATERFALLS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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THE SINUOUS WAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

restored according to the old plan—Lord Aldenham found these interesting water protections filled up, and not only so, but trees from 40ft. to 50ft. high had grown in the soil—whilst the old stew-pond is now a delightful bathing-place, grouped around with flowers and shrubs, not the least beautiful at this time being the orange-berried sea buckthorn (*Hippophæ rhamnoides*). Every square yard of this pleasure ground is interesting for its past associations and present planting. There is the Wrestlers' Pond, near to the place where stood the old Wrestlers' Inn,

famed for its prize-fights, in which Tom Sayers worsted many an opponent, and avenues of poplars with thorns in the foreground, and an ancient line of trees which was once the old London and St. Albans main road, diverted by Lord Aldenham for about a mile and three-quarters. This road went through the middle of the avenue on the same level as the lawn, and was moved back for a considerable distance, being taken too through a roft, cutting to give an uninterrupted view from the park, and to shut out passing traffic and pedestrians. These extensive alterations, with new

drives and walks, have been completed during quite recent years, and greatly adorn the splendid estate. We must linger in these gardens of moat, pond, and stream. The collection of plants is rare and interesting, and the way they are used is natural and therefore beautiful. Aldenham, it must be remembered, is not a garden of one season only; it is delightful to visit at all times—during the spring, when the flowering trees are burdened with blossom and the marsh marigolds dot the stream-sides with colour; through the summer months; and in the autumn, to learn the value of the changing leaf in beautifying the landscape. It is impossible, and we have no wish to weary our readers, to name a tithe of the precious plants of garden importance in these grounds. We noticed a glorious group of the blue-green *Arundo arundinacea*; the *Cotoneaster microphylla* sprawls its wiry green shoots, covered in winter with crimson berries, over rock and bank; and upon the water surface float fleets of nymphæas, the many hybrid forms of brilliant tints scintillating jewels in the warmth of a summer day.

Resting upon the bridge,

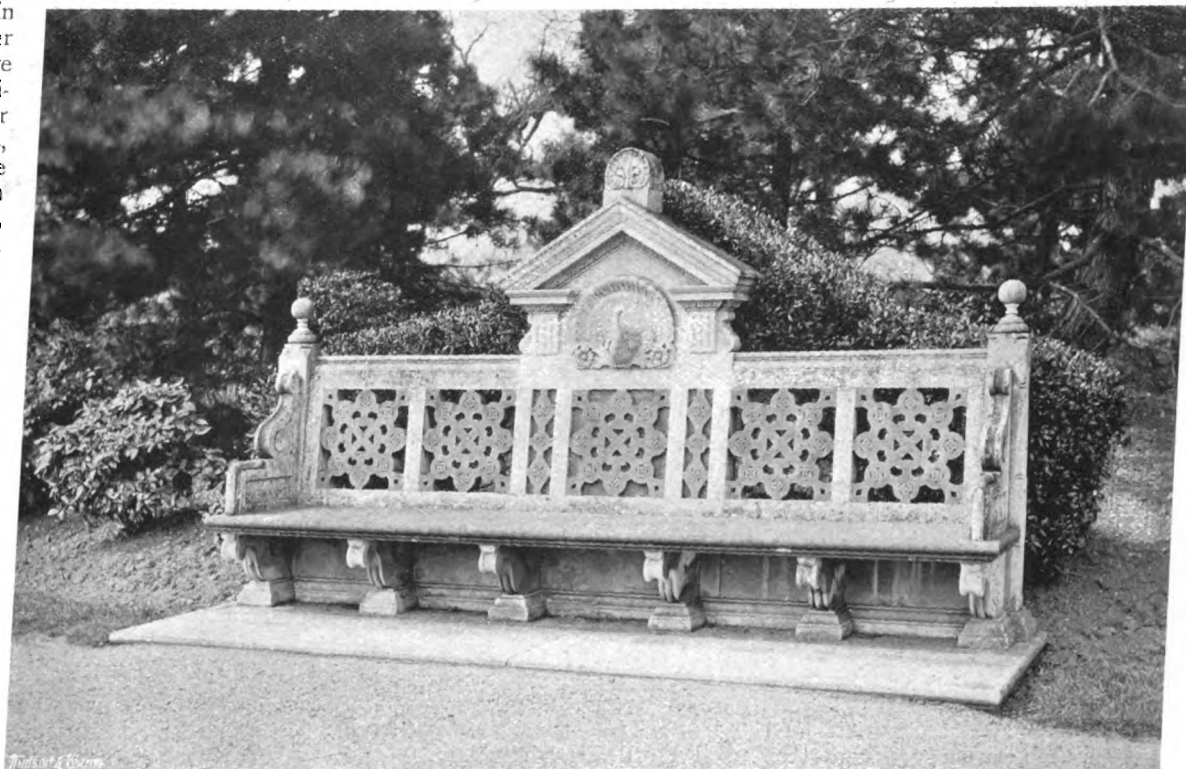


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THE POPLAR WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

the visitor has this planting in groups and glimpses of water in the picture. The bridge walls are covered with saxifragas, sedums, and other plants at home in the interstices, and by its arch, down by the water-side, the sea buckthorn has assumed quite a tree form, interesting as a departure from the spreading bushy shape familiar in its native streams and in many gardens. This is a garden of shrubs and flowers. Roses, the Penzance briars and other vigorous climbers, tumble about in profusion, and rich effects are produced by the bold use of things deep in colour and beautiful in growth. It is a bewildering collection, and we must thank Mr. Vicary Gibbs for such an opportunity of making acquaintance with many rare trees and shrubs which hitherto we did not know. The weeping *Ailantus glandulosus* is probably the finest specimen in the country, and the weeping alder by the margin of the bathing-pond is a tree of graceful beauty. As showing the value of the collection, we may name the following shrubs: Golden poplars, the charming grey-leaved weeping willow (*Salix sericea pendula*), the rare *Xanthoxylum fraxinifolium*, Japanese acers in rich variety, golden Lawson's cypress, the newer hybrid clematises mingling with the shrub groups, the hardy clero-dendron (*C. trichotomum*), *Abelia trifoliata*, and a host of others. The trees and shrubs are massed upon the grass. There is no solid formal way of gardening, and notwithstanding that the alterations have been completed within quite recent years, the impression is that of a garden mellowed by time. With the shrubs are planted hardy flowers to create pleasant pictures, and we well remember the remarkable effect of masses of love-lies-bleeding (*Amarantus caudatus*) reflecting its crimson trails in the water. This is the only occasion on which a plant so melancholy and uninteresting in the border has



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A STONE SEAT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

proved its garden importance. Weeping and variegated leaved trees are in great evidence, and we think the weeping kinds in particular are insufficiently known in English gardens. Why this should be so it is not easy to determine. A weeping tree is generally of graceful beauty, and casts a grateful shade upon the lawn in the hot summer days, but there must be no crowding together. Every tree should display its characteristic charm—the willows by the water-side, the holly upon the lawn, and the thorns in the park. The willow is in its drooping form a thing of beauty, but rarely is it planted in the garden, or, for that matter, any of its precious family. Those who have ugly lakesides, bare as a deal board, should learn something of the importance and beauty of verdure from the pleasure grounds at Aldenham, where everything is so ordered that the flowers of the seasons and the trees in their



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THE KITCHEN GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

varying phases give them beauty in making the landscape grateful to the eye, and splashed with colour from flower or winter bark.

Aldenham is in no sense a modern place. Although many vast alterations have been made of late years, oaks and elms prevail, and a noble group of six elms stands out against the sky; but, as in the shrub masses near the water gardens, weeping trees are one of the features, the weeping beech near the house being unexcelled in the British Isles. It is a splendid specimen of its kind, the branches sweeping the grass and forming a fountain of leafy shoots, an arbour of grateful green in the warm days of summer. The weeping trees at Aldenham are pendulous in the truest sense, and with the beech may be grouped the weeping lime and ash.

We might have written many pages more of the historical and arboricultural features of Lord Aldenham's favourite residence. In the time of the starworts (Michaelmas daisies) the borders are blue with the masses of flowers, and many beautiful seedlings have been raised, and considered of sufficient value to gain the award of merit of the Royal Horticultural Society, whilst the produce from kitchen and fruit garden is of remarkable excellence. Flowers and homely esculents go together. Old-world borders of hardy plants run through the more domestic quarters, and make gay places not regarded as romantic or interesting. This meeting of flowers and vegetables is one of the sweetest lessons in wholesome English gardening, so practically and truthfully carried out in this Hertfordshire home of England. Of Lord Aldenham it is unnecessary to write. His good deeds are known to many, and his love of all that is beautiful in Nature is manifest in the delightful way gardening is portrayed in woodland and parterre. Nor must we forget his gardener son, the Hon. Vicary Gibbs, the popular M.P. for the district, so popular that no one at the recent election cared to dispute his possession. The writer of these notes is especially



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THE WRESTLERS' POND.

'COUNTRY LIFE.'

interested in the work of Mr. Gibbs, for he contributed to "The Century Book of Gardening" one of its most practical chapters, wherein are described the golden leaved, weeping, and other

trees alluded to in this description. We may be pardoned at this season, when alterations are intended or in progress in many English estates, if we record the sound advice given by Mr. Gibbs on page 418 of the work alluded to: "It may be well to consider what sort of trees you should plant in your garden with the best prospect of success. I have heard before now a friend say, 'I really don't know what trees would do with me, and I don't want to have the trouble and expense of planting a lot of trees which, owing to soil or situation, may never



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ONE OF THE LODGES.

'COUNTRY LIFE.'

do any good.' To such an one I would reply, 'Walk out into your country lanes or fields, and see what are the finest trees growing naturally. If you are living on heavy clay soil, they

will be found to be oak and elm; if on a light gravel, walnut, spruce, Scotch fir, etc.; if on chalk, beech—to give a few examples. You do not want in your garden to reproduce exactly the trees which you see flourishing along your roadsides, but what you can do is to learn from these what species are likely to succeed with you, and then you can get garden varieties of them, which, to the casual observer, will be perfectly distinct, though botanically they are the same.' It must be borne in mind that the commonest tree in a vigorous and healthy state is a finer object than one which (however beautiful and conspicuous in its own habitat) is, owing to unsuitable conditions of soil and climate, struggling painfully for bare life. If the reader of these lines should be quite ignorant of arboriculture, and yet desire to start a collection of trees . . . I would suggest in such circumstances that a personal visit should be paid to Kew Gardens, and to one or two of the leading nurseries, where a large collection of good trees can be seen growing, and a selection made."



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THE OLD ROAD TO ST. ALBANS.

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A BRIDGE IN THE GARDENS.

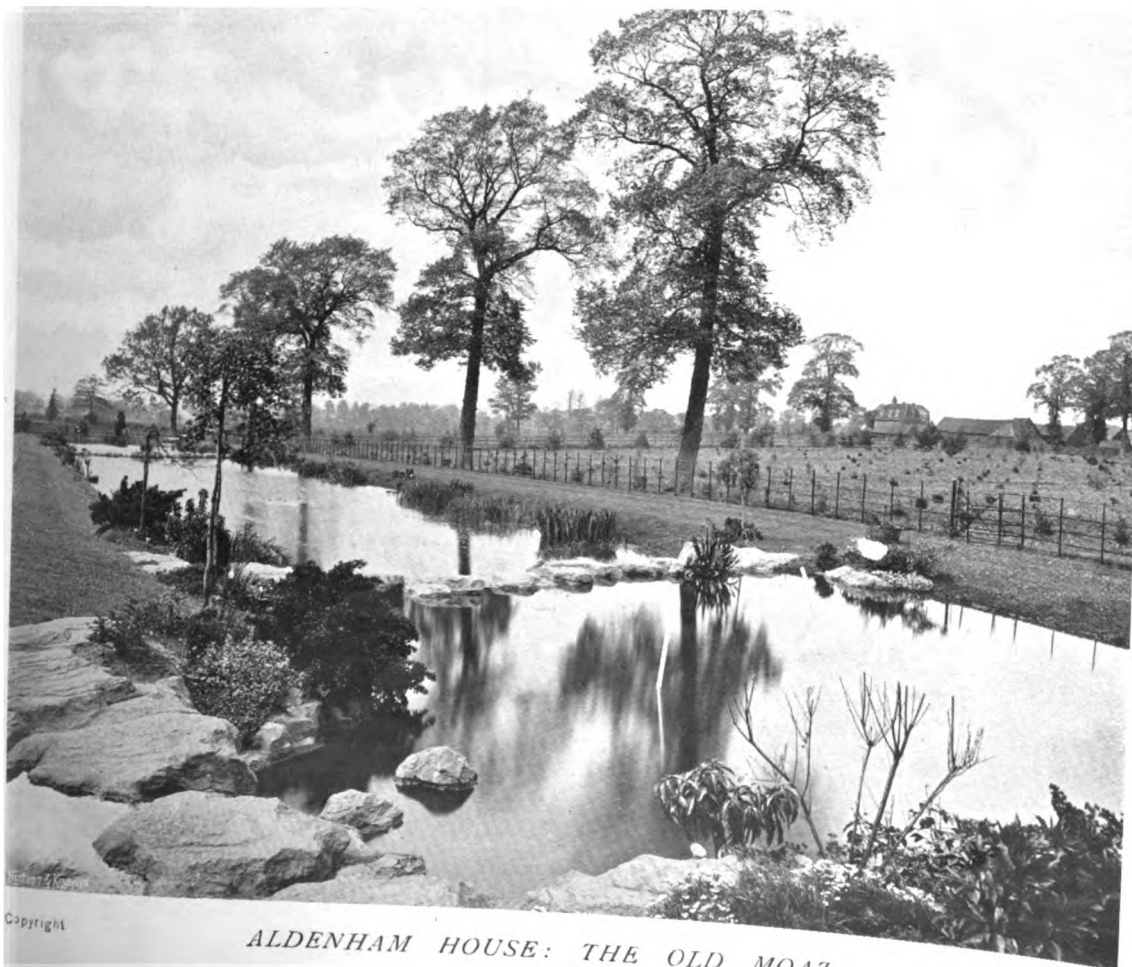
"COUNTRY LIFE"

GAME PRESERVATION IN THE 19th CENTURY.—II.

SCROPE tells us that Rob Doun, or Brown Robert, was born in 1714 in the heart of Lord Reay's country, now known as one of the most celebrated deer forests in Scotland, and for many years rented by the late Duke of Westminster from the Duke of Sutherland; he says also that in the young days of this noted poacher and bard none thought of restraining any inclination

they might have to take a deer, if they found one, and could stalk and shoot well enough to kill it. But towards the end of his life he got into serious trouble on several occasions, for law had been added to law and regulation to regulation, so that by this time it was said, "honest theft is the spoil of the red deer." So the poacher thought it until the day of his death, and although he had fallen out of favour with his chief—not because of his poaching, but because of the sharpness of his satire—the law had few terrors for him, and on one occasion, when he had been caught in the act of "honest theft," he took down his rifle, and proceeded on his way to the Court, there to discover whether he would be let off for his popularity as a poet, or transported for life for his crimes as a poacher. He thought the former; but his wife,

who accompanied him, feared the latter. They had not proceeded far, when Rob discovered deer, and nothing would do but that he must have a shot at them, and so successful was he that he killed two. This, his wife declared, would settle the matter—"he would be transported for life"; but he replied, "Go home, and send for them. If I return not, you shall have more need of them; but fear not, it shall go hard with me if I am not soon with you again and have my share." So he was; and that will show what the state of public feeling in Scotland was about the time when William Scrope first saw the light; and so we only miss a generation of something less than twenty years before the state of the Highlands is laid bare to us by the first and best literary authority on deer-stalking. He was born in 1772, when Rob Doun was but fifty-eight, if he was then alive, and the sport he saw in the Highland deer forest of Athole was many years prior to the publication in 1838 of his book on deer-stalking. The first man in Scotland who is said to have thought it worth while to preserve the game of the country was a Lord Lovat, a race which has produced some very shrewd chiefs; but this is what Scrope has to say of perhaps one of the oldest deer forests in Scotland—the part of the forest of Athole which was cleared of sheep and cattle in 1786, in order to encourage the deer, was 51,708 acres—"All this vast tract is reserved exclusively for deer, with a slight exception as to Glen Tilt, where sheep are occasionally permitted to pasture. In 1786 the



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ALDENHAM HOUSE: THE OLD MOAT

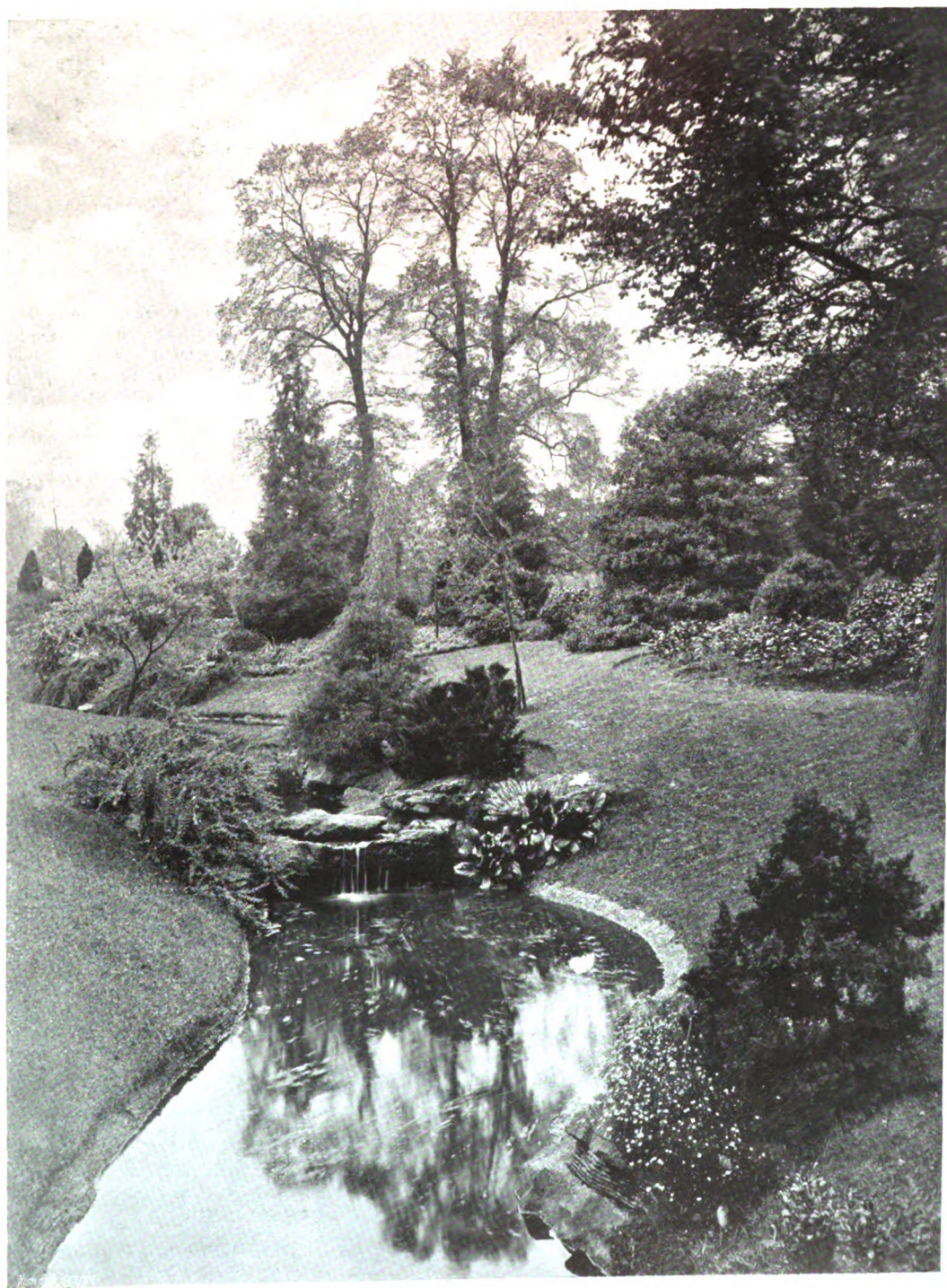
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THE BATHING-POOL.

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ALDENHAM HOUSE: THE LOWER FALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

removed from the north side of Glen Tilt, and from the south, or Ben-y-gloe side, about ten years afterwards. In the year 1776, when Mr. John Crerar went to Blair, the number of deer in all the forest did not probably exceed one hundred; though some small herds have wandered in from time immemorial. The great increase took place in the year above mentioned, when Forest Lodge was built, the sheep and cattle removed, and the hills were thus kept free from disturbance. Favoured and protected as they now were, the increase became very rapid, so that of late years their numbers were computed at about seven thousand." Besides the deer ground, the forest of Athole at that time consisted of 83,742 acres of grouse moor or sheep ground, and one of the first Englishmen who made a practice of going to Scotland for grouse shooting told the writer that he had rented the whole of it at £40 a year; that is without the deer ground. This conversation was in about 1870, and the speaker the late Mr. Laverack, who must then have been about eighty years of age, but at what period he spoke of the writer unfortunately does not know. At any rate, Colonel Thornton, whose book was published in 1804, wandered over the Highlands with gun and falcons without any thought of paying rent; but in St. John's time in Sutherlandshire (1848) sheep farming had driven off both deer and black cattle to a great extent, and the moors were already letting at fair prices for their grouse shooting. All the same, St. John seems to have thought it very necessary to get a strict promise from his own stalker that when he poached deer it should not be on the ground of his employer. This half stalker, three-parts poacher, was not above confessing it, either, when he had a shot over the boundary; so near it, too, that the wounded stag was supposed to have taken refuge on the very ground from which the poaching Highlander had promised to abstain. Nevertheless when Scrope wrote in 1838 there were a large number of deer forests in Scotland, and a great deal of sheep ground was also let for sport; and, although some of the forests had always been known as such, at about this period sheep were being cleared in new directions, and old forests were being added to by clearing off the sheep. At that time stalking was very general, and driving the deer only a very occasional method of coming to close quarters with them, and dogs were not then much used except for bringing the wounded deer to bay.

For this purpose all sorts of dogs seem to have been used; Scrope speaks of the rough greyhound or staghound as the lurcher, and the since famous Glengarry breed had, shortly before, been crossed with the foxhound and also with the bloodhound, which latter, by the way, may account for a deerhound with long hanging ears in one of Landseer's pictures. Besides calling the dog the lurcher, Scrope describes it as the Scotch and also as the Irish greyhound, but this occurs in his descriptions of various forests, which, in most cases, have evidently been derived from other sources, in some cases the owners, and with their descriptions come their names for the dogs they used. Sometimes they preferred terriers, in others collies, and at that time in Jura they coursed and killed the unshot at deer with the rough deerhounds. Up to 1848 certainly grouse were of very little importance compared to sheep, but a very great change soon occurred, for the wool brought from Australia glutted the market, and if it had not been that the fashion for grouse shooting grew into a rage, and that the rents increased with it, the Scots landowners would not have known what to do with their heather ground.

The last Duke of Gordon had a very fine breed of working dogs. The kennel, it is said, was formed before the battle of Waterloo; at any rate, the sale of the dogs after the Duke's death in 1837, and the prices they made, show that grouse dogs were highly valued at that time. The inference, of course, is that grouse moors were even then equally highly valued and paid for. Tattersall's sold eleven of the Duke's dogs after his death, and these made 417 guineas. Most of the kennel had been previously disposed of; and it is worth noting that the Duke of Richmond, who succeeded the last Duke of Gordon in title and estates, was a purchaser at the sale. But in spite of the increasing value of grouse shooting, the preservation of grouse was not in the least studied or understood. Vermin was only just beginning to be killed down, and the lists of birds and beasts of prey slaughtered in the forties and fifties are enough to make one ask how grouse could possibly have existed. Wild cats, falcons, and carrion