



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits.

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## EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration photographs, instantaneous or otherwise, besides literary contributions, in the shape of articles and descriptions, as well as short stories, sporting or otherwise, not exceeding 2,000 words. Contributors are specially requested to place their names and addresses on their MSS. and on the backs of photographs. The Editor will not be responsible for the return of artistic or literary contributions which he may not be able to use, and the receipt of a proof must not be taken as evidence that an article is accepted. Publication in COUNTRY LIFE alone will be recognised as acceptance. Where stamps are enclosed, the Editor will do his best to return those contributions which he does not require.

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## Advance Horticulture!

THE beautiful Flower Show in the Temple Gardens last week may or may not have been better than its predecessors of recent years. It is not essential to our present purpose to express a decided opinion on that point. Compared with any exhibition on the same lines which could have been attempted fifty or even thirty years ago, it was astonishing. The splendour and variety of the flowers and the perfection of their development were things stupendous and admirable. In the improvement of known varieties, and in the artificial evolution of new forms of flower, our florists seem to know no limitations. Many days afterwards the mind keeps a clear impression of gorgeous begonias, a blaze of scarlet, of unfathomable depth of colour in gloxinias, of carnations luxuriant and delicate, and of the clear yellow of a certain wonderful arum which, albeit not quite novel, was the object of general admiration. Our forefathers were florists also. The loving care which they bestowed upon their auriculas and upon their tulips was not ill rewarded. Big as are the prices which are given for rare orchids now, these enthusiastic gentlemen of old time gave huge sums for their tulips, and they measured out the proportions of soil for their auriculas with the nice precision which, we all hope, the dispensing chemist uses.

But their opportunities were as nothing to those of our day, when glass is cheap, and knowledge of the principles of hybridisation has advanced enormously, and a whole tribe of skilled men has set itself to work to meet that love of flowers which has become universal among the English people. The things of beauty with which we may

adorn our gardens grow in number every year. "I recall a time," says Dean Hole, "when you might almost have counted on your fingers the orchids of a county, and these in the last stage of galloping consumption. Happy days for mealy-bug and the red spider, and all manner of flies, under the shade of the tiny panes, discoloured by dirt and damp, with peaceful homes in the decaying rafters and beams, and warmed by the smoky flue. In many gardens the sole representative of the narcissus community was the 'Daffydown-dilly'; of the lilies, *Candidum*; and the roses, with the exception of the Provence 'cabbage,' the yellow Provence (which as a rule declined to bloom), the miniature Provence, 'De Meaux,' the moss rose, the York and Lancaster, and a few others, which still bloom in ancient gardens, are only known to us through the pages of Mrs. Gore, and the fascinating pictures of Redouté." Surely with much justice does the Dean of Roses claim to see an abundant fulfilment in our gardens of the prophecy "Men shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." Our opportunities are unparalleled in the history of the world. How shall we avail ourselves of them? What dangers shall we foresee, and foreseeing shun?

Let us distinguish floriculture from the art of gardening, of which the former is the faithful handmaid, but apt on occasion, as in the domestic circle, to win the upper hand. Even in floriculture, the advance of our generation has not been more conspicuous than in the art of gardening. It is hard to exaggerate the debt which England owes to the natural school of gardeners, to Robert Marnock, William Robinson, William Ingram, and to the growing band of men and women who add almost every day new treasures to the library of those who love their gardens with intelligence. The revolt against ultra-formalism and against bedding-out, the movement in favour of what may be called the humane method in dealing with plants, the preaching of a spirit of confidence in Nature—all these things have been of priceless value. The gardens of England are incomparably more beautiful in the leafy June of the Queen's eighty-first year than they were when she was a child at Kensington. Almost might the contented man say in his heart, "We can do no more, let us rest and be thankful."

But we may be well assured that horticulture will not rest; it will grow better or worse, one or the other. It will certainly move, for change is the order of our being. How shall we watch the evolution of our gardens in such fashion that, while we gain much, we shall lose as little as may be? Herein lies the pith of our sermon—the word is appropriate to the discussion of a pursuit in which the clergy have always excelled—and, in truth, the time is come for that which a very good bishop, who was a very bad gardener, used to call "the word of exhortation." Let us seek toleration and ensue it; let us endeavour to cultivate our faculty of appreciating beauty and to extend it. The victory of the natural school has been won, once and for all. Their adversaries have ceased to contend against them, and that is a great thing gained. But the naturalists, to use an old word in a new sense, would do well not to trample upon the fallen and to pour unmeasured contempt upon them. Even the natural school may fall into the vice of pedantry and, so falling, provoke reaction. *De gustibus non est disputandum*, or, in the hearty old Staffordshire phrase, "Different people have different opinions; Some likes apples and some likes inions." There are many kinds of beauty, even in a garden, and in this England of ours there is room for all of them. Valuing at its full worth all that the natural school has done for us, we may none the less be attracted by that savour of the ancient world belonging to the quaint and curious topiary which has been illustrated so often and so well in these pages. Even the architect, whom the natural school hold in abhorrence, is a fellow-creature, and the time may come when, working in harmony with the gardener, he may be welcomed as an ally rather than looked upon as an enemy. But that good time will come only when the architect has mended his ways. Even the preacher of the humane method in the treatment of flowers may run to excess. Thus it is right, doubtless, to give preference to the flowers which suit a particular locality, and to humour narcissi by letting them enjoy the liberty and protection of the long unmown grass. Let the bulbs in the long grass have their place, by all means, but let us never sacrifice the lawns, which are the glory of England. These, it seems to us, are the lessons in which the lovers of gardens stand in need just now. Yet perhaps the teachers, rather than the lovers of gardening, stand in need of the warning. Let the latter remember that our teachers of to-day are, for the most part, men who have been victorious in a justifiable rebellion. In another sphere of life they are like the early apostles of the Cobden Club; they will hear of nothing which does not absolutely conform to their own ideas. To them we would address, in all thankfulness for their past work, a respectful warning. Let them cultivate an open mind, a tolerant generosity in appreciation, a reasonable catholicity of taste. Let them be more anxious to find beauty, and less prompt in deciding what is, or is not, ugly. Let them choose that which is best out of all that lies within their reach. In that direction lie improvement and advance.

In a year when most of the good things are later than usual in coming into season, it seems peculiarly hard that the ill things should come before their due time, yet it is very certain that the hay-fever season has set in earlier than usual, to the torture of those who suffer from this little regarded malady. It is a real distress, spoiling the best months of country life. Unfortunately there is no cure for it. The best preventive is a course of quinine or other tonic taken for a week or two before it is likely to begin; but this year it has defeated that calculation by beginning just when the tonic course should, normally, be begun.

A weekly paper recently suggested that the now clean and purified London Thames will before long be again used by yachts and the modern equivalent of the old pleasure barges. Practical evidence that this will be so followed last week in the arrival of Lord De La Warr's fine yacht, the *Fire Fly*, which steamed up the Thames and moored off the Embankment opposite Somerset House. There she is to lie for the season, making a floating London house, with the power to be off into the country, up or down channel, any day that its owner pleases. Lord De La Warr made the experiment for a short time last year, and found it so pleasant that he has come again. The Countess has accompanied him, and receives her friends on board. According to Lord De La Warr the climate on the river is charming, the nights far cooler and the days quieter than on shore in town. Dining on board is one of the pleasantest experiences of this new social departure. Ten years ago all this would have been impossible, because the river had an evil smell. Now it is almost as clean as need be, and a few years will render it absolutely free from up-river contamination. We shall expect to hear of members' steam yachts moored off the Houses of Parliament before the season is over.

Dismay is the term most adequate to describe the feelings of English sportsmen on the promulgation of the new game law for Norway. If a careful summary by a correspondent of the *Field* is correct in detail, Norway, as a grouse-shooting country, will practically be closed to foreigners, and largely rendered useless for sport to native Norwegians themselves. The paid members of the Norwegian Parliament, after agitating for Separation and Home Rule for some years, have, whether intentionally or not, stopped shooting as sport in favour of snaring and trapping for the pot, this being the inevitable and, probably, intentional result of the Act passed. In future no willow-grouse, hazel-grouse, black game, or capercaillie are to be shot before September 15th. By this time the weather is breaking up, and foreign visitors are all leaving the country. The result will be to leave all the game to the men who gin, snare, and pot-hunt during the winter to send frozen game to market. The result is about the same as if a Home Rule Scotch Parliament passed an Act forbidding grouse-shooting before November in the interests of the crofters. At the same time a change is made in the law as to property in game which sounds retrograde, but is, in fact, a radical move. Hitherto bird-shooting has been free on the State lands on the high fjeld. Now a licence of £5 10s. is to be paid by foreigners, and on private property where free rights of shooting existed, these will now pass to the occupiers. Holiday shooting in Norway, otherwise than for elk and reindeer, will be practically closed.

In our issue of April 22nd we mentioned that some of the members of the Maharajah of Kuch Behar's Assam shooting-party had decided to go on shooting "on their own." Two of them were eminently successful in tracking after heavy rain, for on six shooting days they killed eight head of big game, viz., two rhinoceros, two buffalo, three bull bison (*gaure*), and one bear. The names of these two lucky shikaris are Lord Elphinstone and Mr. P. B. Van der Byl. The latter gentleman unfortunately paid the frequent penalty of jungle sport in the shape of a sharp attack of Assam fever, but is now convalescent, and indeed has reached Kashmir, where he hopes to get some hill sport before returning to England.

Ancient yew trees have been the subject of a number of letters to the *Standard*. Nearly all these celebrated trees stand in churchyards, for which many reasons are given, though the true one is seldom hinted at—that this is a real relic of the old sentiment which produced tree worship. In the temperate countries the tree was the longest lived of all things which have life. As the yew is the longest lived of all temperate trees, it was revered accordingly, the fancy even of the least educated peasant associating it rightly with ages of which the yew's existence was the sole outward and visible symbol. Most of the trees described are mere shells, though these are still quite alive and send out fresh leaves yearly. The National Trust Society looks after them, and issues directions to keep them in repair, as if they were ancient buildings. The most suggestive of the letters in the *Standard* is one from Mr. William Bradbrooke, of Bletchley, who gives instances of the rate of growth of some

of the old yews which are (presumably) still sound. In 1809 a yew at Woodford, in Essex, measured 14ft. 3in. round at 4½ft. from the ground. In October, 1892, it measured over 15ft., a growth of more than 9in. in girth in eighty-three years. If we set 8in. per century as the rate of growth after the tree has reached perfection and begun to decline in branch-producing power, we must have many that saw the Conquest. At Church Preen, near Shrewsbury, is one which measures 23ft. 3in. at 7ft. from the ground. It is hollow, but the shell still swells, and burst an iron band round it this year.

Sir John Lubbock's speech to the Selborne Society dealt with osprey plumes, the New Forest, and small bird protection. The Government set the example of sparing the breeding egrets by abolishing the plume for certain busbies in the Army. Meantime ladies have very largely followed suit, but the Florida ospreys are practically killed off, and a plume of the feathers is now worth £5 in a London shop. Sir John has been briefed by a competent authority as to the growth of timber in the forest. It has long been evident that here and there parts of the old wood should be enclosed for a few years to let seedlings grow up naturally to replace the old trees, otherwise the swarms of cattle and ponies nip them off. It must be remembered that though all the formal plantations will be thrown open gradually, the fences being taken away, they cannot ever look as well as naturally grown woodlands. Such enclosures are resisted by the same class, viz., those who use the forest for their own profit, as that which desires to use bits of the game area for gas-works and sewage farms. But such enclosures should be small, and the sites scattered well over the woodlands.

"Eagles' feathers" are now largely sold to wear in hats and to make plumes and fans. A naturalist contributor who has been enquiring into the source of the feathers used in ladies' hats states that by far the greater number are made up most ingeniously from the feathers of game birds, pigeons, ducks, geese, and other edible birds, but that the "eagles' feathers" are genuine feathers of some large wild bird, and bear a considerable resemblance to the feathers of the wings and tail of certain eagles. Here and there a single genuine eagle's feather is to be seen, and purchased for about 2s. 6d., but the fine chocolate-coloured feathers sold under that name are clearly not those of the royal bird, even were they not so plentiful as to forbid the idea that the eagles in the world could supply them. The answer to the puzzle is that they are not eagles' feathers, but vultures' feathers taken from different species very common in the East. The birds are killed shortly after they have moulted, so that the plumes are not dirtied or spoiled. Vultures are not birds whose death anyone is likely to become sentimental over, though they are useful scavengers. So are the Marabout storks, killed for their exquisite plumes, and their cousins the adjutants.

A thoroughly bad case of wholesale egg robbery has been brought before the Carlisle magistrates. Bowness Moss contains one of the northern breeding grounds of the black-headed gull, which there, as elsewhere, nest in a large colony. The result is that the eggs can be picked up with a minimum of trouble and in the maximum quantity. The County Council had included these birds in the list of species whose eggs were protected, and as everyone knew what the birds were, it was not alleged, even by the defence, that the robbers did not know exactly what they were doing. There were four defendants, a fifth having run away, and these four men had taken sacks to collect the eggs in, doubtless with the object of selling them as food. One had 75 eggs, a second 195 eggs, a third 109 eggs, and the fourth 83. It was proved that notices were posted up, and only one man denied that he knew he was offending. All the defendants were liable to a fine of £1 per egg, or an aggregate of £462.

We are sorry to say that though there was not a shadow of excuse for the men, the Bench decided to deal leniently with them, and they were mulcted in fines and costs, £1 each. Why they were let off thus we fail to see. They knew they were breaking the law; and taking the value of the eggs at 2d. each, the price at which they are sold from the Norfolk gulleries for food, they were in illegal possession of private property to the value of £3 17s., or only 3s. less than their fines and costs.

## Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week shows the portraits of Lady Dundonald and her daughter, Lady Grizel Winifred Louisa. Lady Dundonald, who is the daughter of the late Mr. Bamford Hesketh, of Gwrych Castle, North Wales, was married to Lord Dundonald in 1878. Her husband, who is a keen soldier and colonel commanding the 2nd Life Guards, has not only seen service, but also invented a capital galloping gun-carriage for the use of machine guns with cavalry.