

DISCURSION

From Midsummer Day to mid-July it was my good fortune, in company with a keen and knowledgeable companion, to make a tour of over two thousand miles to nearly forty gardens in the North of England and Scotland. To adequately describe my impressions would mean issuing this number of the BULLETIN without offering any attractive plants.

Our first call was at Wiseton, Doncaster, where I was surprised to find a larger tree of the cut-leaved beech than that growing at Knap Hill. Furnished to the ground, I paced its spread as twenty-four yards square. We made Kelso in the early evening and looked around the gardens at Hendersyde Park, where Delphiniums are so well cultivated in a well-planned herbaceous border.

Next morning was spent looking around Ederston, where *Rosa rubrifolia* grew in perfection and *Hieraceum aurantiacum* was naturalised among the hay. Later to gardens at Selkirk and Innerleithen, both rather wind-swept and cold, but both having attractive and well-planted borders, and one a collection of good flowering shrubs, which included *Rosa cantabrigensis* and *R. Farreri*.

In the evening to Newton Don, Kelso, where a host of good things is to be found. Particularly fine were the carefully planned and well-cultivated phlox borders, while the lilies in the walled-in garden were all that lilies should be; but more attractive to me than all this was the lovely wild garden where Primulas, Meconopsis and Lilies were so beautifully blended to form a natural picture.

Leaving the Border Country next morning, we arrived at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, about noon. To do these gardens justice will need one day a discursion entirely devoted to them. Sufficient is it to say now, we were so delayed as to arrive at Dirleton nearly three hours late to see the gardens at Invereil, where was clearly demonstrated in a terribly wind-swept garden how the use of wattle hurdles can turn failure to cultivate certain plants into the production of fine healthy specimens. Our host would not let us leave the district without seeing the remains of that one-time great collection of trees and shrubs at Smeaton, and the unique rock garden with its wonderful collection of plants at Green Craig, Longniddry. This made a full day, and we rushed on for Glasgow very late at night. Sunday was spent more leisurely, and on Monday we set off in earnest, doing two small gardens in the suburbs of Edinburgh in the morning, a brief return to the Botanic Gardens in the early afternoon. Thence to Carberry, with its well-arranged shrub borders and fine climbing plants. On to Inveresk Gate, where among a most surprising collection of rare trees and shrubs, Correas were growing outside on the walls and *Mutisia decurrens* was ten feet high on the wall of the house.

Then to work north, calling *en route* at Balbirnie to see the old specimens of Himalayan Rhododendrons, species such as *arboreum*, *campanulatum* and *cinnabarinum* growing in thickets; *Cotoneaster frigidia* thirty-five feet high; and in the wood, planted in 1819, the largest plant of *Rhododendron catawbiense* I have ever seen. Next, to Birkhill, sloping down to the Tay, where *Rhododendron bullatum* flowers in the open.

Next to Dupplin, with its deep gorge which has been made into an attractive rock and wild garden, and where gardening and climbing are synonymous. The banks planted with masses of yellow Azaleas and the whole surrounded by wonderful Conifers.

From the extensive landscape at Dupplin the collection of plants got together at Perth, by Mr. and Mrs. Renton, was indeed a contrast, for here are to be found more treasures per square yard than in any other garden I know. Outstanding was a perfect example of *Notbolirion hyacinthinum* four feet six inches high, with thirty-eight flowers.

Still heading north, mention must be made of Glamis, with its lovely setting, and Pinetum, and Cortachy, where the candelabra Primulas around the lake were at their best, their colours being so much more intense than usually seen in southern gardens.

Of Crathes Castle and its gardens I could write pages, but the outstanding impression received was that it is possible to have in one and the same garden a collection of rare plants and an effective grouping of these. *Lonicera splendida* was good on a wall, while the well-groomed Yew hedges must be seen to be believed. The white border in the flower garden, too, was a feature which we did not see elsewhere. In the woods (carpeted with *Trientalis europaea*) is being planted a collection of good Conifers.

(To be continued)

F. P. K.