

BOTANICAL GARDENS in BUENOS AIRES

E. B. COMBS



DRIVING out the beautiful avenue of Santa Fe, that practical begins at the Plaza San Martin, and after a due western extension of some 500 yards, bends to the north-west and follows roughly the course of the La Plata for a distance of three miles (40 squares), the entrance to the Botanical gardens of Buenos Aires is reached. Beyond this lies the Zoologic field garden, and still farther on the far-taken Park of Palermo. From both of these the Botanical garden is distinct in spirit and style. It is the embodiment of a refined and artistic taste, a really marvelous blending of the beautiful and the useful.

In 1892 this land was granted to the director general of the public parks, M. Thays, for the establishment of the Botanical garden and the garden was opened to the public in September, 1893. One must know something of the soil and the seasons here to understand how even with a master's hand at the helm, such a marvel has been accomplished in so short a time.

Certain students of medicine and pharmacy from the National college, and other schools of the city, frequent the garden and spend hours in interesting study. Indeed, they have a rich field from which to glean as there are, in what is called the School of Botany, over 5,000 species, all perfectly classified according to the system of De Candolle.

The garden contains about 20 acres of ground, half of which is level, the other half very uneven and ending on the northern side in steep banks that overlook the street. Las Heras. This street is named in honor of the hero whose ashes were recently brought home from Chile, and received with such pomp and ceremony by his appreciative countrymen.

The entire area is triangular in form and is divided into 14 different sections, each plainly marked and devoted to the flora of a distinct region.

The three pronounced styles of gardening, which in a comparatively small area might have produced an inharmonious effect or at least a lack of unity, are so charmingly blended as to give, instead, the fine delight of the Garden of Versailles. The garden is, of course, the most pretentious bit, the "finished coquette," some one calls it, with its statues and fountains and its well-trimmed borders of box. It is not to be inferred that the French garden is superficial (except as this is the usual characteristic of gardens), for there is, both in this and in the Roman garden, a whole history written for those who know how to read it.

To only not be content with the general knowledge of the art of gardening, past and present, is limited, and who prefers a quiet walk to dress parade, the English garden, as it is called, appears most strongly.

Not only are the two American styles represented, but Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia as well. These sections are separated by beautiful walks with exquisite curves and turns; here a magnificent tree, there a flowering shrub, everything in accordance with an artistic taste.

In the South American section, particularly of the Argentine Republic, the collection is wonderfully complete and exceedingly varied and interesting. In the "Libanotes" of the north to the Fagus Antillarum of the south, a species of cactus is chief of the ornamental trees; when properly cared for, it grows into a beautiful, shapely tree. The red and blue, of the same form as the locust, are a brilliant yellow instead of white. The same of this tree has gone abroad. One of Rio Janeiro's most beautiful avenues is lined with them. In France, too, they boast some fine specimens. It grows in any soil, and its bark contains a fast, poison that renders it invulnerable to these enemies.

The "Libanotes" tree is the most valuable and costly of the Argentine woods. Its color is a dark, rich red, and it is so hard and heavy that it seems like iron. It is much used for all kinds of posts, also for framing, and is highly prized by shipbuilders, as the water does not injure it.

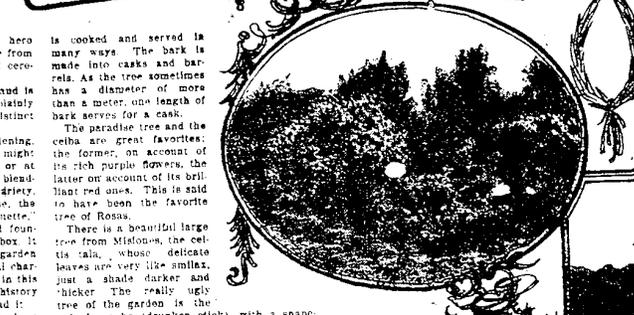
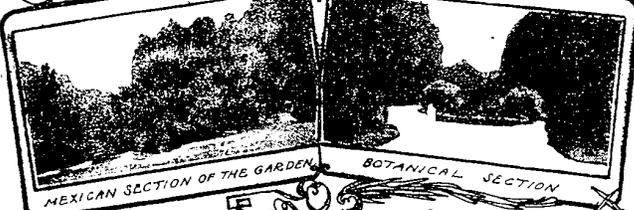
Several varieties of the "Libanotes" grow here. In one province they are not only one of the chief products, but they are also the poorest people find them a nourishing food.

The jacaranda is another ornamental tree much admired for its beautiful foliage and beautiful purple-blue flowers.

The mahogany tree is a native of the province of Buenos Aires, and there are several fine specimens in the garden, with the characteristic blue-green leaf. The blossoms appear in December; they are white and for some time something like a small, white, bell-shaped flower, and from one of the northern provinces, attains great size and is of unusual service to the people. The pith is edible and



LILIES ON THE UPPER PARADISE



LOUIS XIV GARDEN

is cooked and served in many ways. The bark is made into casks and barrels. At the tree sometimes has a diameter of more than a meter, one length of bark serves for a cask.

The paradise tree and the ceiba are great favorites; the former, on account of its rich purple flowers, the latter on account of its brilliant red ones. This is said to have been the favorite tree of Rosas.

There is a beautiful large tree from Mississauga, the "caca," whose delicate leaves are very like similar, just a shade darker and "hicker." The really ugly pain horroga (drunken stick), with a snappy, less swelled trunk, covered with thorns, and having small, irregular branches. It is, however, very useful, as it furnishes a species of "vegetable silk."

In the Tierra del Fuego section, or subsection, there is a most lovely araucaria, a fine dark green, except the tips of the branches, which are of a softer, lighter color. The leaves really seem a sort of developed thorn, the one in the Argentine tree, the ombu is the most remarkable, with its thick, soft bark, its spongy wood, its dense foliage, and long clusters of white blossoms. It is of rapid growth and attains an enormous size. The soil here is too rich for it; so, in self-defense, its immense roots, after a few years, seek the surface. The older trees have numerous little tender branches that spring directly from the surface root and grow straight up through the thick branches, trying to reach the light. There is one in the garden, eight years old, with a height of 50 feet and a diameter of three. At two feet above the ground the trunk divides into two smaller trunks, each sending off long, straight branches. Its roots are just beginning to appear. It is an ideal tree for a child's playground, with possibilities for climbing about and even for "keeping house" among its hospitable branches.

The section of acclimatization is very interesting. Here may be seen the result of assiduous efforts to cultivate various exotic as well as indigenous plants. One very notable success has been that of the cultivation of the yerba mate in Paraguay, after a number of fruitless efforts. M. Thays succeeded by the following method: The seeds were placed in water almost boiling hot; every six hours the hot water was renewed. This was kept up for four days; when the seeds, three in number, were pressed out of their little sheath and planted in a special soil, covered to a certain depth with straw, and kept straight up through the time, and kept constantly moist. Six months' time, and the plants were ready for sowing. The plants grew to the 2 1/2 inches high they were placed in separate pots; when 12 inches, they were planted in the garden, where some of them have now reached a height of 12 feet. What is particularly promising is that the seed from those plants will grow without any special preparation. There has been some discussion as to whether

many kinds, with an occasional ray of color towards above. Where a of the great Sahara is pointed out, it requires a stretch of the imagination to see more than the cases.

Australia is extensively represented. There are 48 different varieties of eucalyptus in this section and the saltbushes are no longer allowed in the main part of the garden, though the gardeners still were proud of the ugly, scraggy bushes. They grow prodigiously in this soil, and thrive in any. The Australian variety has a thicker, more succulent leaf than the others.

Besides the sections mentioned, there is one for industrial and medicinal plants, the section of fruit trees, and still another section devoted to the various methods of reproduction, whether by seed, grafting, or budding.

There are also two conservatories. One of them is beautiful and almost new. The other one was awarded a premium in the Paris exposition of 1889, both for the artistic construction and for the excellent arrangement for heating and ventilating. Its three divisions, which are kept at a temperature of 25 deg., 18 deg., and 12 deg., respectively. The substantial building is an inheritance from the department of agriculture, which formerly occupied this plot of ground. It contains the residence of the director, various offices, and a small museum.

Agricultural engineers who have visited the most famous botanical gardens of both the Old and the New Worlds have written of this one in words of highest praise and appreciation.

Buenos Aires has reason to be proud of its botanical garden, not only because it is one of the richest and most varied in the world, but because of the persistent effort made here to cultivate and to extend the plant and trees indigenous to the country.

The Last Man Ashore.

It was now nearly half a minute past this big steamboat's sailing time and she hadn't started yet. Usually she got away on the stroke of the minute. The cause of the trouble was clear.

Up the gangplank which had been held that half minute for him came a man a tolerably big and stout sort of man, who had not heard or had not needed the warning given

five minutes before in every part of the boat for all to go ashore that were going. But up the gangplank he came. A solitary figure in the plank's wide, long space, and with the passengers lining that side of the boat on it, who had with interest, while looking down upon him with interest, while forward, with his hand on a bell pull at the side of the deck, stood the captain, ready to give the signal in the engine room the instant that man stepped off the gangplank and the plank was hauled ashore.

And so that man to go ashore passed up the gangplank, not looking up, but not hurrying, walking calmly, while everybody on the boat looked down, and while at the same time there stood at either side of the plank two rat six stalwart and abedolored longshoremen, ready to lift the plank and surge it shoreward as soon as this gentleman stepped off it, when they did. They let him get about a foot clear of it and then they lifted it, and with the first surge they gave it brought up against his heels.

Whereupon the last man ashore turned with fire in his eye and with an evident desire to lick somebody, and he was an able-looking man. Evidently he could have licked somebody, perhaps two, but the brief reflection told him that he could not get away with the 12 longshoremen that he now saw smiling at him, whereupon again he turned, now smiling himself, and started on, while in the meantime the instant the gangplank was cleared the captain on the boat had yanked that bell pull and the last lines had been cast off, and now the boat too, though fully 40 seconds late, was at last on her way.

HER QUESTION.



"Well, Miranda, they've found the north pole at last!"

"Sakes alive, Hiram! You don't say! Where did they find it?"

Hard Work for the Daughter.

In a New England weekly newspaper there appeared not long ago the following advertisement:

"A stone mason or his daughter may receive one quarter a music lesson in exchange for work on a cellar."—Youth's Companion.

Country husbands are better trained than town husbands. Over sea's town husband carry a baby on the street!

