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# SOME FOREIGN BOTANICAL GARDENS AND PARKS

Charles E. Bessey  
*University of Nebraska*

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Nebraska bred classification, using the money to make the premium in the fourth class. Motion lost.

Now it recurs upon the adoption of the report of the committee. Adopted.

Mr. Bassett: On page 15 where 40 before the word animal, insert the words "all matured animals." (Mr. Bassett here reads). Adopted.

Mr. Bassett: On page 26 strike out 21 that relates to stallion horses. Adopted.

Mr. Bassett: Class 3 on the recommendation of the swine men, we have stricken it all about Nebraska bred animals, etc. I move the adoption. Carried.

Professor Bessey is with us and is on this program to give us a short speech upon the topic of the Botanic Gardens that he has seen abroad.

Prof. Bessey: (Here Prof. Bessey stated to the reporter that he would furnish a manuscript of his remarks.

#### SOME FOREIGN BOTANICAL GARDENS AND PARKS.\*

BY CHARLES E. BESSEY.

*Gentlemen of the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture and the Affiliated Societies:* Last summer I had the privilege of visiting a number of botanical gardens and parks in different parts of Europe. The American visitor abroad is constantly reminded of the abundance of parks and botanical gardens in not only the larger cities but even in the small cities and towns. In London, Hyde Park is a great tract of land, at least a mile and a half in length and from one-half to three-quarters of a mile in width, situated in the heart of the city: It contains in the neighborhood of 600 acres. Some portions of it are heavily covered with trees and shrubs, others are sparsely covered with trees, and still other portions again consist of greensward without shrubs or trees. Here and there are often beds and masses of ornamental flowering plants. Walks and drives are provided at frequent intervals. In some places the people are kept from walking upon the grass, while in other places they are permitted to use the ground very freely. I saw boys and girls of all ages playing as freely in this park as they do in the fields and public places in this country. Not far from this park is a smaller one, Regent's Park, nearly circular in shape, and containing about thirty acres. This is considerably more ornamental, and apparently the public cannot use the ground as freely as in Hyde Park. St. Jame's Park and Green Park are two much smaller parks together aggregating perhaps one hundred acres. These are not far from Buckingham Palace, the residence of the King, and are situated in a very densely settled portion of the city. Here the children of all ages gambol about on the ground without any fear whatever from the police. In fact it seems that to a very large extent these London parks are for the benefit of the people.

When we consider that there are here in the heart of London nearly or perhaps quite 1,000 acres of land set apart for park purposes we may realize how fully the people of that great city believe in open places for the benefit of the women and children and the tired men. These parks if cut up into

\*Stenographic report of an oral address.

lots and sold would bring almost fabulous amounts of money. How it has happened that the real estate agent has been kept from laying his grimy hands upon these open places is more than I can tell. These parks if sold for building purposes would yield hundreds of millions of dollars, and yet the sturdy Englishmen would resent most fiercely any attempt to restrict or reduce their area.

Now add to these parks in the heart of the city the many parks in the suburbs, Richmond Park, Wimbledon, Kew, Chiswick, etc., etc., aggregating perhaps 2,500 to 3,000 acres, and we have some idea of what the great English city has done for its people.

But this is not all. In the suburb called Kew are the Royal Botanical Gardens, known the world over as the Kew Gardens. Here on an area as large as a Nebraska farm are gathered all of the plants which can be made to grow under the care of the most skillful gardeners to be found in the kingdom. Here in the great Arboretum one may walk through a forest which if not primeval is as dense and wild as the primeval forest itself. Here one may find trees brought from America, from distant parts of Europe, from Asia, from India, and from Africa. Here are grown in profusion shrubs of all kinds from all climates, and here under glass where the temperature and the moisture conditions are made to imitate as closely as possible the different climates, may be found tens of thousands of species of trees and shrubs and herbaceous plants, all labelled and named so that "he who runs may read." Here daily, thousands of people walk through the great grounds finding at once recreation and instruction. Who can measure the value of these great gardens to the people who live in London itself.

Add now to this the fact that from all parts of the world scientific men come to study the collections of plants which are brought together in the Kew Gardens. It is the Mecca of botanists the world over, and to this place sooner or later every systematic botanist must come in order to study the great treasures which for a century or two have been gathering in this place.

In Berlin, the capital of Germany, an area of probably 500 acres is set aside under the name of the "Thiergarten," and here again as in London the people swarm day and night, walking through the paths under the shade of the great trees, lingering by the beautiful shrubbery and admiring the great beds of fine flowering plants. Here are found at intervals, monuments, statues, and other architectural structures which commemorate the great deeds of the German people,—a tribute to the feeling of patriotism which is so prominent in the Fatherland. A mile away are the old botanical gardens, still in the densely built up portion of the city. Thirty or forty acres of ground are set apart here for trees and shrubs and plant-houses. Here I saw the greatest collection of cactuses to be found any place in the world. Although the cactuses are American plants it is true that if one wishes to study thoroughly these plants of America one can do so best by going to Berlin and making use of this unrivalled collection of living, growing plants. But this old garden has proved to be entirely too small, and within the last few years at the little suburb of Dahlem on the southwest edge of the city the government has set apart about 150 acres of land, and here a new botani-

cal garden has been installed. Here one may even now find plants of all kinds from all countries and all climates. Here the government has erected fine office and laboratory buildings, and at the time of my visit the great plant-houses were just being enclosed. When the work is completed this will rival the Royal Gardens at Kew.

In Vienna, although the city is an ancient one, those in authority have seen to it that there are great areas left vacant for breathing places for the public. One afternoon I visited the great Prater Park on the edge of the city, three miles long and from one-third to a half a mile in width. Here are from 600 to 800 acres of land, some of it open, forming meadows on which the children play, some of it in very dense forests, some of it covered with shrubs. Some portions of it have been treated very carefully with the best development of landscape effects, while others have been allowed to remain in as nearly as possible a natural state. I saw at least 50,000 people at the time of my visit, and as I looked over the great crowds that had flocked here for recreation and rest, I questioned whether the number was not double this. What a park of this kind means to the great city I have not time here to discuss. It means at least life and health and enjoyment for tens of thousands, yes hundreds of thousands, of women and children and tired men.

Away across Central Europe into the land of the Czar is the old city of Moscow, the old captial city of all the Russias. Here I found a botanical garden belonging to the Agricultural Institute which rivals anything to be found in America. The garden includes not only a great Arboretum in which trees from all parts of the temperate portions of the world are grown, but in addition, the garden proper, where plots of herbaceous plants representing many of the botanical groups, are planted and carefully studied. In connection with this garden is a large farm with fine buildings and modern improvements. Both garden and farm seem to be maintained for the purpose of instructing the people. Visitors are welcome here and the object-lesson which is before them cannot fail to be very beneficial to the farmers and the gardeners of this portion of Russia.

Now go south across the great Steppes to the northern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains. We leave the great cities of Europe and find ourselves in the region where there are only small cities, and towns of moderate size. We stop at Kislovodsk in the foothills on the northerly slope of the mountains. Here is a town of about 6,000 inhabitants. It lies along the banks of the Kuma River which flows down from the snowy summits of the mountains. Yet in this little city there is a fine old park, not situated as we might suppose, on the outskirts where the land is cheap, but in the very heart of the city. Here are perhaps 100 acres of land covered with trees most of which have been planted, and filled with paths and booths, public halls and playgrounds, and running through it is the roaring stream which adds greatly to the charm of the place. Here every night one may listen to the music furnished by one of the military bands. It is a cool, peaceful, restful place, and as one thinks that all this is in a little town in an out of the way corner of the world, he cannot help wishing that his own people in this enlightened land esteemed such things as highly as do these people.

At Vladikavkaz, a city a little smaller than Lincoln, lying at the north end of the great military road which crosses the mountains through Dariel Pass, I found a city lying on a level plain. The city was founded by one of the former rulers of Russia for the purpose of guarding this pass, and yet here I found that the principal street was in the form of a delightful avenue. Down the center of the street had been planted a double row of trees and between these an elevated walk had been built. This walk is perhaps two feet above the level of the street on each side, and is twenty or twenty-five feet in width. On a hot day one may imagine how pleasant it is to walk down this avenue under the shade of the overhanging trees, and as the evening coolness comes on this becomes still more attractive. At frequent intervals comfortable seats have been provided, and here the tired people come out and rest for an hour or two every evening. Here the children play, running back and forth as children will. But this is not all. At the side of this same avenue are the city gardens covering from fifty to sixty or seventy acres. One enters these gardens as he would the private grounds of some wealthy owner in this country, but after entering he finds himself in a shady park. The portion of the park nearest the street has been set aside for the children, and here are provided many games, swings, and similar things for their enjoyment. This portion of the garden is always full of the voices and the chatter of happy children. Further on are statues, and ponds, and fountains, and here from time to time there are music and other means for enjoyment and recreation. Remember that this is in a far away Russian city which was built not for beauty but through military necessity. Here, if any place in the world, such things as parks and gardens might well be forgotten, but here we found parks and gardens which are more attractive than any that I know of in a city of equal size in this country.

Now cross the great mountain range and in the dry and parched country of Transcaucasia, to the banks of the Kura River, and the city of Tiflis. The rainfall here is not to exceed twenty inches a year and the soil is for the most part very sandy, and yet in this city of about the size of Omaha are found large parks for the benefit of the people. Alexander Park, covering perhaps twenty acres, lies in the heart of the city. All around it is the bustling, hurrying crowd of men and women engaged in trade, and inside of the park are trees, flowers, fountains, pools, statuary. Here are grounds on which children may play. Here every night one may hear good music. Here are seats for tired people, here in fact are all the things that contribute to the enjoyment of people day and night.

On the north side of the city a new park has been recently laid out for the benefit of the inhabitants of that portion of the town. In connection with the new park are gardens for the acclimatization of plants and for other economic purposes. I know of nothing like this in any city in this country excepting New York and St. Louis.

At the south end of the city are the Botanical Gardens of Tiflis. Here are gathered trees and shrubs and flowers as well as rare plants, including palms and ferns and bamboos. While open to the public under certain restrictions, this is not intended as a public park in the ordinary sense, yet those who

enter the grounds find here all kinds of plants labeled correctly, so that those who visit may receive instruction. Perhaps ten to fifteen thousand different species of plants are grown out of doors on these interesting grounds. Then there are plant-houses, libraries, and collections of preserved botanical material. I was very much surprised at the magnitude of the work which was under way in this botanical garden, and yet it must be remembered that this is all in connection with a city no larger than our own metropolis of Omaha.

Still further south 100 miles or more, on the plains of Southern Armenia, under the shadow of Mt. Ararat, is the little city of Erivan containing about 30,000 people. It lies on the hot and dusty plains in the immediate vicinity of the great mountain. The rainfall is probably not to exceed ten inches a year. On the edge of the city runs the river Zenga which flows from a mountain lake, Lake Gokschai, many miles northeastward. Nothing will grow here except under irrigation. The land is a dry and parched one, and yet in this city of Armenians, Turks, Grusians, and other non-European types, we found in the center of the business portion, a park of considerable dimensions. It is true that it was not as beautiful a park as many that were visited, but a park in a region of but ten inches of rainfall cannot rival the parks in London; yet here was valuable land set aside for this purpose. Around the park were gathered the hotels and the larger business houses. Through the park there ran the irrigating ditches and here were provided walks and seats in abundance, and at night electric lights and music, and here the people at the end of hot days gathered to talk, to chat, to walk up and down, and to listen to the music.

At Batum, a city of 30,000 people, lying at the east end of the Black Sea, and until twenty-five years ago a Turkish city, we found another park which might well be envied by any American city of equal size. Although so recently wrested from the Turk, the city has made much progress in the development of its parks. We found one portion to include many trees which we had not yet seen, and these trees are not confined to the region alone. We found many American trees growing luxuriantly in the parks, showing that the managers were men of education and broad training, and here too we found to our delight a botanical garden with hundreds of trees both native and foreign all named in such plain way that the ordinary visitor might gain much valuable information in regard to them. Again we found walks, and pools, and statues, and seats, all contributing to the comfort and enjoyment of the many visitors.

Crossing the Black Sea from the east end to the west end, we reached the great mercantile city of Odessa with its half million people. Here one might well excuse the people for not giving attention to things like parks and botanical gardens, for this is the great mercantile city of Russia, and it lies on a sandy, gravelly shore of the sea, and is watered by but very little annual rainfall, and yet along the sea front is a fine boulevard with walks and playgrounds and here children and the tired mothers gather day and night. A short distance away, and connected with it, is Alexander Park, of about 100 acres with a dense growth of forest trees and under-shrubs, and here

again as before, seats and other conveniences are abundantly provided. One cannot go through these foreign parks without having it impressed upon him that the purpose of the park is to provide resting places and playgrounds for the tired people, while at the same time adding to the element of beauty. Further down the coast in the suburbs of the city we found a row of parks, and here to our delight, we found also a botanical garden where the government under the direction of the University is introducing large numbers of foreign plants, and labelling them so that those who visit the grounds may be instructed as well as amused.

I need go no further in my illustrations. What I have said of the parks of these cities has been simply to bring the matter before you in order to emphasize the fact that in the cities abroad the making of parks and gardens is looked upon as one of the necessary things in every city. In America we ought to imitate this good habit. It is true that in this country our largest cities have parks, but to a very great extent they are situated in the suburbs alone, and the very people who should have the opportunity of getting to them, never reach them, and our smaller cities generally have no parks at all, and when we come to our towns and villages what can we say? There are no places for the children and the women and the tired people generally.

Coming now to our own city of Lincoln, a city which has many things about it which are very attractive, one is made to drop his head in shame that we have no parks. It is true that four blocks of land, between D and F and 6th and 8th streets were originally set apart and labelled "City Park," but this is scarcely more than a "common," for here cattle and horses and swine are permitted to roam at large. For years this has been a reproach to the city. All that is good in it we owe to the private efforts of the public spirited women of the city, and yet year by year their efforts have been largely negatived by the utter lack of public spirit shown by our officials. This little tract of land was not fitted by nature for park purposes, and yet it has been made less useful by its absolute neglect.

We must preach a reformation. It is not to our credit that this city has no breathing place in it. We must have not one alone, but several public grounds where children may play, where people may gather, where they may sit and rest in the cool of the evenings of the hot days of summer. Why can we not set aside in the Antelope Valley a tract of land on which we may erect a proper Lincoln Park worthy of our city? Such a park would be central, such a park could be visited by the great majority of the people of the city. Is it not worth our while to consider matters of this kind?

Finally, is it too much to hope that within a short time the University may establish a botanical garden where may be gathered all of the native plants of the state, all of the plants which may be made to grow in this region, where every plant grown shall be labelled so that the visitor as he passes through the garden may learn not only the name but the history of the plant as well. Such a garden may be a place of beauty and of interest and at the same time it may have a high educational value for the people of the state.

President: Prof. Burnett will make a few remarks.

Prof. Burnett: I want to explain before offering this resolution the purpose. I think you appreciate by this time the fact, the many things which we are endeavoring to do in the experiment station, taxes the resources available and limit the operations which we are able to carry on; that the money available for work is too small. Now there has been introduced in congress a bill which provides that the next Congress shall give an additional appropriation to the experiment stations of the several states, beginning with \$5,000 to each experiment station for the first year, and increasing by \$2,000 each year for five years, until this sum shall reach \$15,000, a sum equal to the amount now given by the United States government for the experiment station. The resolution I wish to introduce, is this:

*Resolved*, That we, the members of organized agriculture, and the several agriculture societies of Nebraska, indorse House Roll No. 8——, providing for an increased appropriation by the Congress of the United States for the aid of the experiment stations established in the several states under an act of Congress approved March 2d, 1887, known as the Hatch Act.

*Resolved*, That a copy of this resolution be sent to each member of Congress from Nebraska.

I move the adoption of that resolution. Adopted.

Prof. Henry: Include the chairman of the committee on agriculture of the House.

———: Would be glad to do so.

President: Is there anything further to come before the meeting, if not, we will consider ourselves adjourned for the evening.

#### FIFTH SESSION.

CHAPEL, MEMORIAL HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA,

Lincoln, 8 p. m., January 21, 1904.

Evening meeting called to order by Prof. T. L. Lyon, who presided:

We will be favored this evening by a musical selection by Miss Flossie DeArnold.

Prof. Lyon: Of the many branches of agriculture that which treats of the soil is the most important; it is the most important because it is at the foundation of all agricultural prosperity. Without a fertile soil, and without a soil capable of producing large yields, well bred crops and well bred live stock are practically useless. There are certain reasons why the subject of soil fertility is of peculiar interest to Nebraska. One reason is because we have here a soil that is practically new, a soil that has not been depleted or sufficiently depleted so that it will be difficult to bring it back to a state of high productiveness. It is still in a condition where it is possible, with a comparatively small outlay of time and money to keep it in a perfect crop-producing condition.

Another reason why Nebraska is peculiarly interested in this subject, is because there are certain conditions of the soil and certain conditions of the climate in parts of this state, that would make it a difficult matter to recover that fertility if it were once lost. The matter of incorporating barnyard