

BEAUTIFYING A COUNTRY HOME.

IDA COOK.

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- O U T L I N E . -

Beautifying a Country Home.

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- BEAUTIFYING A COUNTRY HOME. -

He who has the privilege of laying out home grounds should consider the work as an art - for it demands quite as much in the way of aesthetic feeling, creative power and executive skill as does the art of sculpture and painting.

This is the art which creates beautiful composition upon the surface of the ground. We are the painters with the earth as our canvas. It differs from the other arts, in that it uses the same materials as nature herself, as been said:-

"This is an Art

Which does mend Nature; change it rather but

"The Art itself is nature".

We see man producing many effects which, under favorable conditions nature herself might have produced without the aid of man.

Home should stand for harmony, order, neatness and contentment. In order to have these we must study our surroundings and the materials we have to work with.

The first thing to be considered in choosing a home is the site. The factors to be considered in choosing a site are health, good neighbors, conveniences and social enjoyment and not less than these should be considered the change of making trees and shrubs succeed.

The site for a home is often selected without regard to its suitability from a healthful point of view. One of the important considerations in selecting a site is dryness and this depends mainly upon the facility with which rain can pass off or through the soil and the distance from the sub-soil water. We must not select a flat and non-porous land or land with impervious stratum immediately underneath for a building site. A gravel soil of considerable depth and on a slight slope is perhaps the best we can select.

Nearly every soil contains the materials needed by plants in general, for nearly all soil contains decayed vegetable matter.

Another thing that must be considered in selecting a site is the possibilities of securing good water; for water is one of the prime necessities of life, and that it be pure is not by any means the least important of the health requirements.

Having selected our site before any planting is done we must decide upon a plan of arrangement. We will not be able perhaps, to carry out everything as we have it mapped out on paper but this will give us a better idea how to begin our work. Having selected the site and decided upon a plan, next thing to do is to decide upon the buildings.

One reason why more attention has not been given to beautifying home grounds is because our country homes are so young, and our fathers have been working hard to get out of debt and to accumulate wealth.

Handsome and attractive homes do not necessarily mean an expensive house and elaborate grounds. Do not build too nice a house but let it be one you can afford and then keep it well painted. The house should be located some distance from the road. Our farm homes

should not give the idea of being cramped. The house should be roomy in appearance and neatly built but should not show extravagance in the architectural plan. Good sized porches lend much to the appearance of the place. The rooms should be arranged conveniently because we live to enjoy happiness; and the happiness of living necessarily depends very much upon what degree of convenience, comfort and enjoyment the place in which we live will afford. Our homes must be convenient of access, not only for the occupants but for all who may come in contact with them. "A centre amidst a busy and weary world, for

Friendship, love and repose."

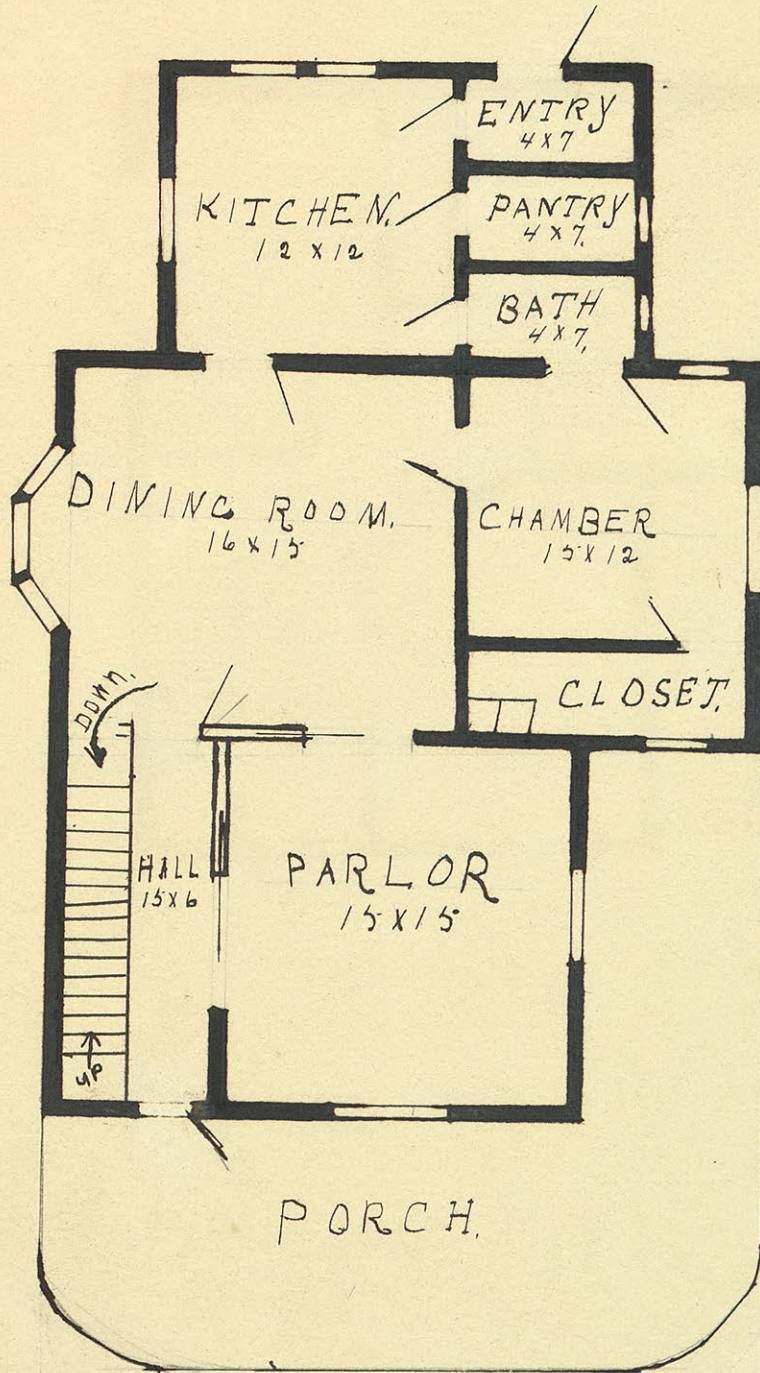
We must consider the advantage of being near neighbors, where social intercourse may be frequent; and nearness to rail-roads, school and church must also be carefully considered. We should have our out-buildings neat and as few as possible. There is a world of expression in the character of the out-buildings to the passer-by. We should not have so many small buildings scattered around that it would give the idea of a small village to the approacher. Buildings are necessary but they show that they are artificial at the best, and the color they are painted often has much to do in spoiling our landscape. The milder and softer tones are best. There should be similarity of tones though the depth of color may differ materially.

Plate I is a well arranged country house. It is a two-story house; there is a little entry room to the kitchen; this is necessary in the country for it gives a place to hang the coats and to leave the muddy over-shoes etc. The pantry is arranged with a window. The bath is located near the kitchen, so the bath-room part of the year will be warm enough from the heat of the kitchen range. The

SCALE.

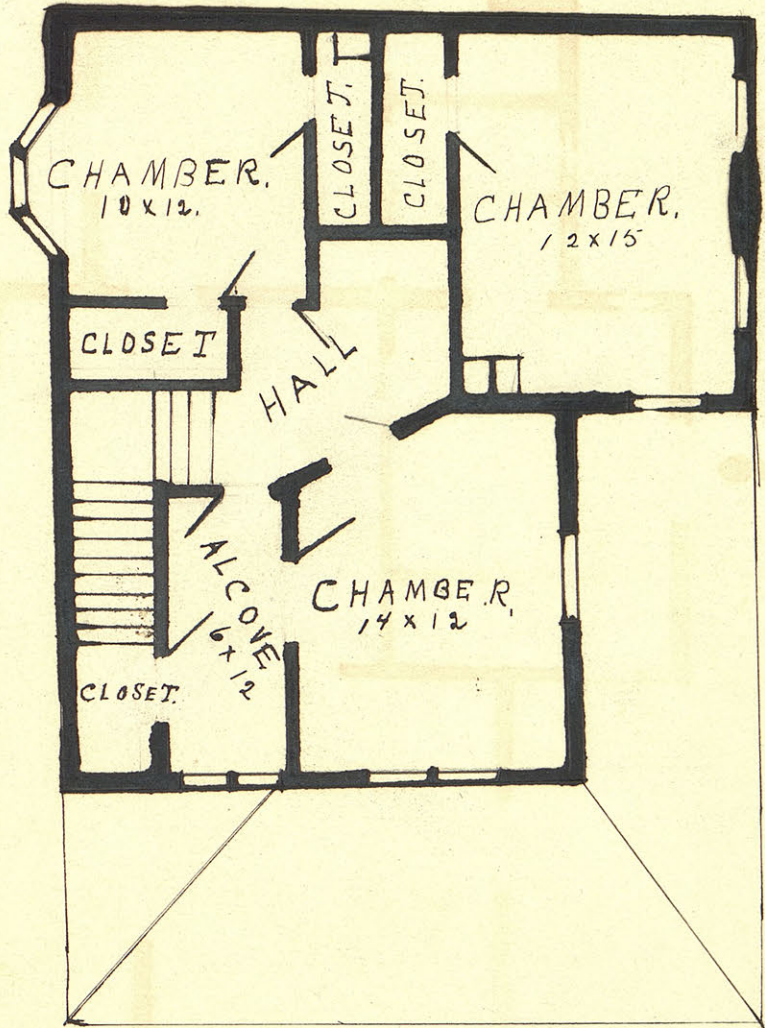
$\frac{1}{8}$  in = 1 ft.

PLATE I.



SCALE.

$\frac{1}{4}$  in = 1 ft.



Dining room has a large window on the east that will give plenty of sunlight; there is also an outside door on the south; this is necessary so that the help on the farm may enter the dining room without passing through the kitchen. There is a nice bed room on the first story with a good sized closet. A large porch runs around the front of the house; this gives the house a roomy and inviting appearance. In the second story there are three good sized bed rooms; all of them have good closets. We should always have plenty of closets. Each room can be entered from the hall. The little alcove would make a splendid sewing room and the closet by it would be a handy place to keep the sewing.

We want harmony between the grounds and the buildings. The buildings should appear like they belong where they are and anywhere else would take from the unity of the picture. As an English writer says "There should be a union - A happy marriage it should be, between the house beautiful and grounds near it". How shall we secure this union? By expensive planting? No, not necessarily. The external appearance of our houses is more within our control than the internal, because with a small amount of money and with labor intelligently and tastily expended we are able to have a beautiful lawn. A lawn near a residence should be judiciously and sparingly planted.

To seed a lawn properly, the land should be thoroughly manured, plowed and harrowed. All stones, roots and stumps removed, and a coat of good rich loam spread over the surface. Spring is the best time for seeding a lawn. Some of the good lawn grasses are *Agrostis Alba* and the Kentucky Blue Grass. It is always best to use an abundance of seed. Nothing looks more inviting than a well kept lawn with plenty of grass and shade. Lawns may be considered the



canvas upon which the home picture is to be made. There should be a wide extent of lawn to give repose and unity to the picture. Open outlooks should be left. Simplicity is our watchword in preparing our lawns. "Simplicity is the mother of beauty".

In the country we can use the natural style of planting to a good advantage. Climbers on the porch add much to the naturalness of a rural home. Some of the good climbers are:- (Lonicera) honey suckle, Morning Glory - (Ipomoea), (Celastrus Scandens), Bitter sweet - (Clematis) Virgin's Bower - (Ampelopsis) American Ivy, Virginia Creeper and the Hop vine.

Some hardy shrubs near the house are often necessary to make an encircling garment. The different shades of green should be well distributed and each should form a mass of sufficient size to prevent any look of spottiness in general effect. Each should harmonize with its immediate neighbor and each should bear the right relationship to the house.

Our lawns are often spoiled by too many pattern flower beds. They are often very rigid and symmetrical in outline and conspicuously brilliant in color. We need flowers, for as the poet has said,-

"Flowers, bright, beautiful flowers,  
They are linked with life's sweetest and happiest hours -  
They comfort us when lonely and cheer us when sad."

The principal faults of our flower beds are want of proper selection in the plants themselves and faulty arrangement. Some of the flowering shrubs as the rose, are in bloom only a few days once a year, and during the rest of the year gives a display of dingy foliage. We must have roses but the place for most of them is in the garden.

We can arrange our flowers so as to have a succession of bloom from the time the crocus unfolds its tiny buds in spring until

until the frost of Autumn. Some of our pretty flowers that can be used to a good advantage are tulips, pansies sweet peas, asters, chrysanthemum, larkspurs, peony, poppy, primrose, verbena, narcissus, crocuses, petunias, and many of the flowering shrubs can be used.

Flowers will give an artistic effect if used as borders and edged by shrubs. Our shrubs should be hardy and native. Some that may be used are:- Alders, June berry, (Amalanchier Canadensis) Barberry, (Berberis); the purple leaved barberry is a variety of this - and Thunbergu, Button Bush (Cehpalanthus Occidentalis) dog-wood (Cornus), Hardy Hydranga (Hydrangea Paniculata Grandiflora), lilacs - Bush Honeysuckle - (Lonicera Tartarica) - Spiraeas.

It is necessary to mar our lawns by roads and walks but they should be as few and inconspicuous as convenience will allow. As I have previously stated we must draw a plan of arrangement before any planting is done. The roads and walks are so important that we must also plan for the various roads and paths which run throughout the property.

For an approach to be good there must be an easy turn in from the high road. In places of much size a curved entrance drive is better than a straight one. Our walks should be located where they will be most convenient and as nearly as possible give the shortest distance between the points to be reached. Graceful curves give the idea of quiet and leisure.

Groups of shrubs may properly be placed in curves of roads and walks so as to give a natural effect and convey the impression that the curve was caused by a group of trees or shrubs standing there before the road. A path should never be made across a lawn simply to give access to flower beds, for the flower beds themselves have no

business there. The objects which supply the reasons for the curvatures must look natural or the artificiality of the whole arrangement will at once be made plain. Whatever the object chosen to justify the bend in a road should be a real and permanent obstacle; something over which wheels cannot pass and which cannot be removed without destroying it.

It is better not to have the front entrance to the house cut through the grassy lawn, but have the walk to one side, as is shown in Plate II. Cement makes about the best walks.

It is often said "that the condition of roads in any community is an index of the intelligence of its people". Broken stones make a good permanent road. A few trees may be used to good advantage along our roads. We must not have our roads and houses thickly shaded and yards cramped by the use of too many trees. The improver divides his ground into light and shade to suit his preference for either extreme. Balance of light and shade is the principle of expression, and of beauty of the landscape. For a back-ground we should select the larger trees, such as the sycamore, locust, elm, box elder, and maple; and for the fore-ground some of the smaller trees and shrubs. In planting trees we must allow for a vantage and open lawn.

The trees are surely nature's jewels and if we neglect to adorn our homes with nature's jewels and thus leave the love of the beautiful undeveloped the loss is irreparable, but in setting them out we must study the way they naturally grow. Do we ever see trees in a row in the woods? No; let us take a lesson from it; how nicely trees may be grouped about walks and yards to give an air of naturalness that could not be obtained any other way. Grouping of trees of similar characteristics are generally avoided unless the place is of

large extent. Some of the good shrubs can often be used in the foreground. We should use shrubs more than we do to plant around the trunks of the trees. They will add much to the natural appearance.

Solitary plantings should be those of characteristic beauty, as the elm, oak, ash, norway maple, spruce, pines etc. In the country it is well to have one or two good shade trees in our front yard, but they should not be placed so as to obscure the house or road. In grouping we must try to secure harmony of color. In selecting a tree we must consider the texture, color and form of the trees.

A well prepared soil for a lawn also makes a good soil for trees. A large ball of earth should be taken with the roots of the tree; nearly all of the feeding roots are destroyed and can supply but a small amount of sap to replace the moisture that evaporates from the large number of branches and buds; so the buds should be removed proportionally to the injury of roots. In planting the soil should be pressed firmly in contact with every fibre leaving no air spaces around any of them, and the roots should be spread in a natural position.. We can often plant our trees thicker at first if we will only thin them out as they grow.

With the word home we should always associate the idea of a grassy lawn, with trees and the air made joyful by the music of birds.

"There is a lesson in each flower  
A story in each grove and bower -  
On every herb on which we tread  
Are written words, which rightly read  
Will lead you from earth's fragrant sod  
To hope and holiness and God."

In beautifying our country homes we have to consider our fences. Things to be considered in selecting a fence are cost,

taste and adaptation. The most expensive is not always the most artistic. Fences are used to keep our land distinct and separate and also to prevent intrusion. They are objectionable for merely ornamental purposes. Our fences should be as inconspicuous as possible and much is added in the way of naturalness if we allow vines to grow upon them. Stone fences can be used where there is plenty of stone. Arbor Vitae makes a good looking fence and perhaps the best of the fences used now are woven wire. Fences in the country are a necessary expense, but since they are necessary, we must take pains with them and keep them in good condition so our place will not have a ragged appearance.

Plate II shows a plot of the farm yard of a home of 80 acres. The farm faces the North. The buildings are located about 1/8 mile from the road; two acres are included in yard, which includes the barn, house and hen-house, and the edge of garden is shown. The rest of the twenty acres can be sown in alfalfa and this will give a pretty view from the house. The land slopes gradually toward the north, which makes it a desirable location. The slope of the land makes it so a pond is arranged conveniently in the north-east corner by the road; this is a pretty view from the house; some trees and shrubs are planted along the edge of the pond. The orchard is west of the house.

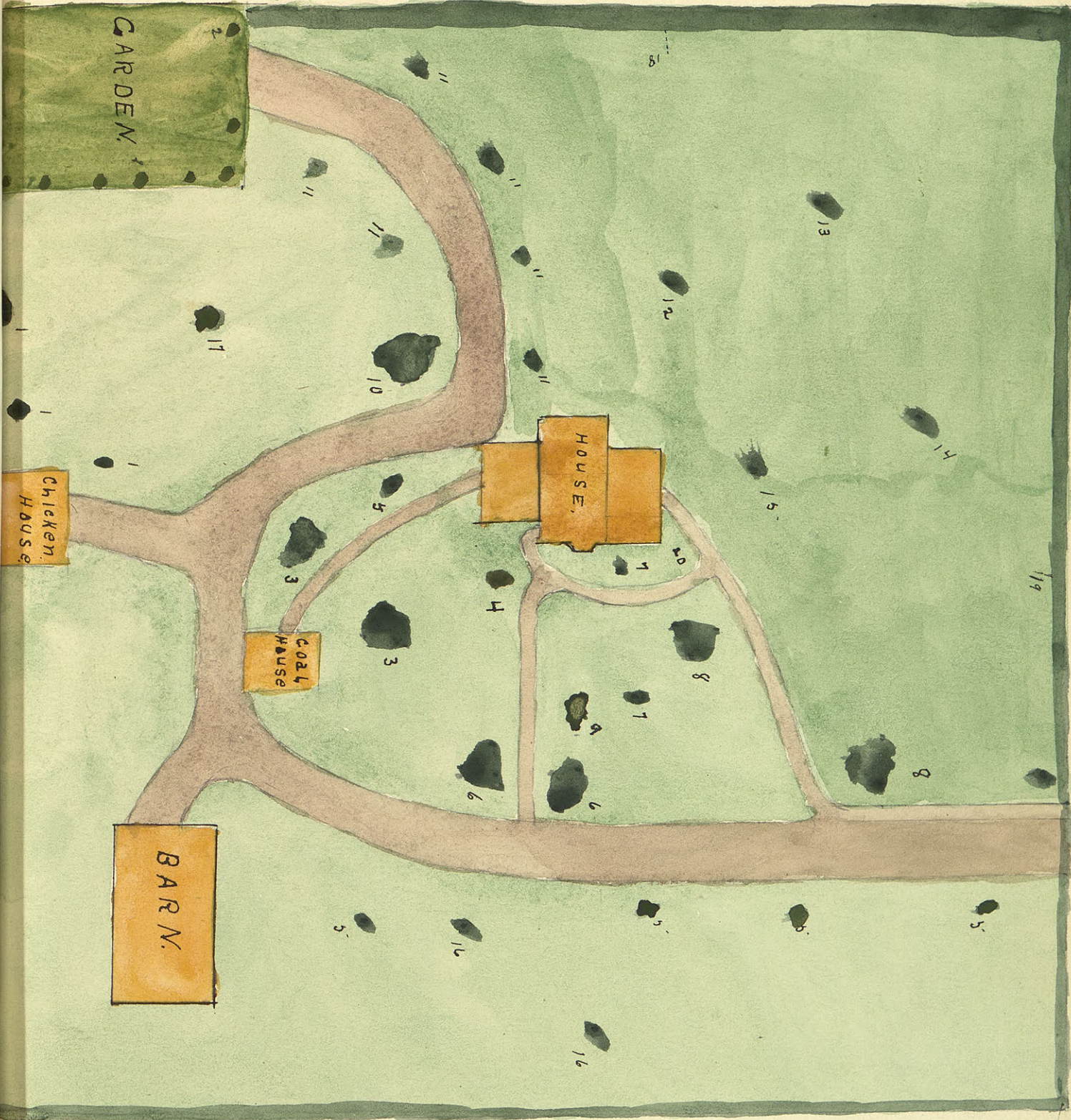
We should take great pains in making our homes attractive. It is our duty whether we have a lot or a large ranch to study the grounds and the ways to ornament them. We cannot make our homes too pleasant or too beautiful. Whatever makes home pleasant and attractive lessens the temptations to stray into the paths of evil.

PLATE II.

SCALE 1 inch = 2 1/2 rods.

10

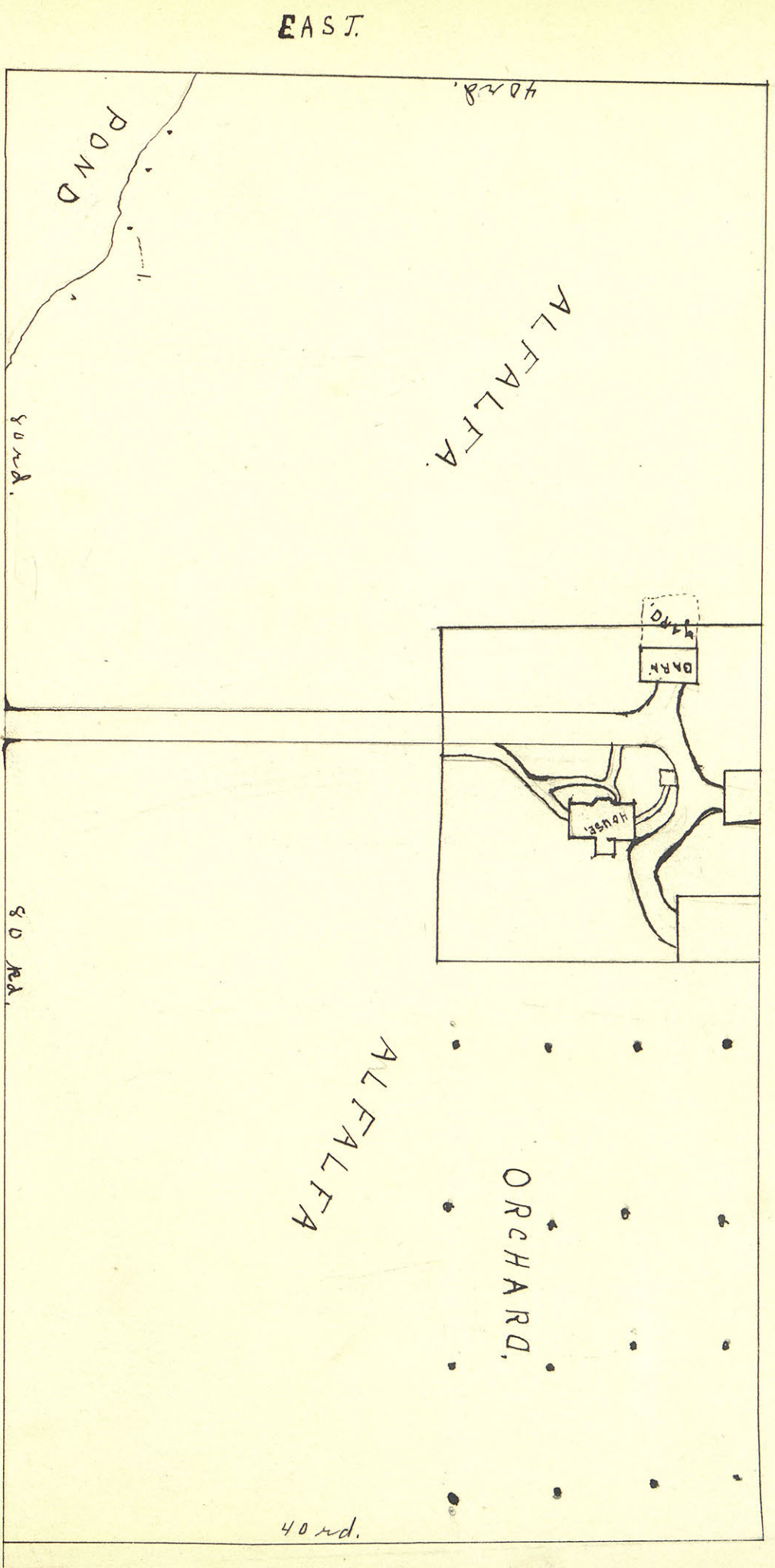
North



East.

PLATE III.

SCALE. 1 cm = 8 m



1. COMBINATION - BLUESPRUCE

NORTH

## Plantings in Plate II.

1. Mulberry.
2. Roses along the garden fence.
3. Clumps of white pines and snow balls.
4. Soft Maple.
5. Sycamore.
6. Clumps of Pin Oaks.
7. Norway Maple.
8. Clump of Douglas Spruce.
9. Shrub Mock Orange.
10. Clump of Hard Maples.
11. Elm.
12. Blue Spruce.
13. Shingle Oak.
14. Iron Tree.
15. Elm.
16. Cotton-wood.
17. Yellow wood.
18. Border.
  - 1st row - Snow balls.
  - 2d " - Lilacs.
  - 3d " - Spiraeas.
  - 4th " - Peony.
  - 5th " - Petunia and Poppy.
  - 6th " - Verbena.
19. Fence around yard of Ligustrum, Privet.
20. Bed of Pansies.