

IMPROVEMENT OF A COUNTRY HOME.

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OUTLINE.

1. Landscape work in the natural system of composition.

What is included in this work.

2. The farm buildings and grounds.

1. General arrangement of the house and grounds.

2. Relation between the buildings and surroundings.

3. Walks and drives.

4. Fences and walls.

5. Lawn and grass.

6. Planting of trees and shrubs.

A. Arrangement of trees and shrubs.

B. Selection of plantings.

3. General care of buildings and the grounds.

Plate 1. Plan for a farm.

Plate 2. Plan for the home grounds.

1. Names of plantings for it.

The work of landscape gardening or of beautifying the home grounds in the country is better to be planned and worked out in a natural way. The outward appearance must be considered, and, though many farms are not planned and one may think that a plan is not necessary if the natural conditions are to be retained around his home, yet a plan is as much a necessity here as it is in artificial work in gardening.

We judge fairly well of the sanitary, intellectual, and moral status of a community or even of the inhabitants of one dwelling, by the outward conditions. Where the grounds and buildings are kept in good condition and cleanliness is easily seen to be one of the rules observed in that place, the result pleases the eyes of all passersby, even though the place may be small and unpretentious. It would seem that any one who has no love of nature, lacks at least one quality of a man. So much real enjoyment and true happiness may be derived from the work if one has the ability to plan and work out his own home grounds. This task of improving and beautifying one's home is not altogether a selfish matter. The standard of cleanliness will influence people to be rivals in transforming the plots of ground to beautiful and useful advantage.

Nature's method of treating the ground by having slight elevations, gradual slopes, and gently rolling surfaces, spreading out into a level or almost level tract of land, with trees and shrubs together with grass growing in the places where it seems must have been the very best place possible for it to grow; the brook or stream bordered on either side by thick plantings; perhaps a cliff or broken stony hill that has scraggy shrubs and long grass growing close to them;--- all these things are of Nature's own planning, and we love them,

though we can not tell just the reason why.

Now, we may understand that in the work of treating a landscape in the natural style, the first thing of very great importance is to study the art as revealed in Nature, for this is to appear as the work of Nature assisted slightly by art.

The influence of beautiful and restful surroundings is more than compensation to the inmates of the house for all the expenses and work of improvement. A. J. Downing says of a natural style: "In the English garden, one sees and feels everywhere the spirit of nature, only softened and refined by art".

The first province of landscape improvement in gardening, is to abate nuisances of every kind and degree. All possible sanitary precautions in drainage, nature of soil, and the character and extent of vegetation, should be taken;-- natural advantages should be made available and injurious changes should be considered.

These natural advantages may be classed under three heads; (1) those which consist in the nature of the ground itself; (2) the formation of the ground as to elevations and depressions; and (3) the nature and extent of the existing vegetation.

The most desirable situation for a home is a rolling surface or general slope over the whole area, rather than a dead level. The drainage is more perfectly secured, the soil is more porous and better adapted for vegetation to exist upon it, the location is much more healthy, and the water is usually found to be purer and more free from infectious disease germs.

The house and grounds should be located in that part of the farm which is the most convenient to the public road, to the near-by town, to school, and to church. These are the first few things to be considered; then the question arises, whether it is a beautiful

spot for a home; and if it will make a pretty picture when seen from the road or distant hill. If the grounds are carefully planned and arranged, then the idea of comfort and restfulness will be observed from the sight of them.

The house must be placed where it would seem was the best place for it to be built and the other buildings and also the plantings must conform to it.

The buildings are all different in character and therefore must not be crowded together; sufficient distance between them is very necessary to the preservation of good health, yet they should be close enough to be convenient. If the barn is two hundred yards from the house, it will be as convenient as one could wish and also look well from a distance. The wood house, chicken house, and all other necessary shelters should be located where most convenient and should be screened from the front of the house and grounds.

While speaking of the different buildings on the home grounds, it is well to consider for a moment the color best suited for painting them. Several things must be observed; not too bright a color must be chosen; be sure to get a color to harmonize with the surroundings; pure white is injurious to the eyes in sunshiny weather and looks out of place in the country. We would suggest some inconspicuous color that would be somewhat in accord with Nature at some one time during the year. A light gray or stone color is best preferred, but a certain shade of tan or brown, or perhaps a slate or blue gray would not be objectionable. The color of the buildings other than the house, does not necessarily need to be different; the same color is coming to be used for all.

The various fields when seen from the house ought to be in harmony with each other; and should be so arranged that each will seem to be best suited to that place. A rich, green field of alfalfa near the home grounds is always a refreshing sight and appears restful. It has a certain influence upon one -- that of soothing and comforting his tired senses. A river, with heavy plantings on either side running through the farm and near the home grounds, is always a splendid source of supply for watering the stock; the advantage of its being near the home is that the atmosphere is cooled considerably in hot weather by the water and by the shade furnished by the thick foliage of the trees and shrubs.

Another beautiful thing when seen from the house is a field of wheat waving in the wind. We are more or less impressed by each of these things and are struck with their beauty when once we stop to notice the beautiful scene before us. Distant views are best, so the coarser crops are planted farthest from the home grounds.

The walks and drives are very necessary though it must be admitted that they detract somewhat from the natural conditions of the place. They should be as few as possible because of their not being in accord with Nature, and, like the buildings, must be made to appear as natural as possible. Walks and drives must look hospitable and inviting and be really servicable. A drive should be at least twelve feet wide and a walk at least three feet wide. In laying out walks and drives, natural bends or curves should be observed and the abrupt terminations or sharp curves must be permitted in the plan. They should be located where actually needed and properly constructed so as to be durable. The direction they should take should be direct though not straight. A slight curve seems no further than a straight

walk or drive and it has much more in its favor; the eyes sees something new at every point in the walk or drive, so is interested and does not become tired of the same view which is only seen when one is passing down a straight walk. Straight lines are never seen in Nature and for this if for no other ^{reason} ought one to plan the drives and walks in graceful curves.

The subject of fences and walls about the farm or home, is always to be considered when thinking of a country home. There are almost always stock to be driven from one pasture to another at some time during the year, and a fence aids in preventing any attempt at entrance into the grounds. Run-a-ways also occur occasionally, and much injury might be done to the growing crops and trees, if no wall or fence protected the grounds. There are many kinds of fences, but we think a stone or hedge fence of some sort makes a better appearance as well as being more durable. Though costly, a stone fence is good and, if well made, lasts a lifetime. The hedge is the most natural perhaps and the most beautiful of division lines.

The home grounds, especially, should have a small hedge of evergreen, (red cedar, preferable), around it. More opportunity is obtained for better arrangement of the inside plantings and the result will be much more pleasing, if a hedge is used around the home grounds. The question of what to do in improving and beautifying the home grounds is always primarily a question of what not to do. Natural formations on the lawn should not be obliterated although more or less grading has to be done. The grounds should be laid out at least on paper before the house is built so that all superfluous earth may be dumped where it is to remain. The lawn should be well prepared before sowing the seed. Blue grass and white clover sowed

together make a good lawn. The grass should not be kept too closely cut, because that will spoil its natural beauty, neither should it be left to grow and become ragged in appearance. The lawn that consists of grassy slopes and swells that gently rise and melt away gradually into one another is always an agreeable sight, and one poet who was happy in his fancy for these things of beauty in Nature has called such bits of slopes and swells "Earth's smiles".

A beautiful definition of a lawn is given by Maynard in his treatise on "Landscape Gardening as Applied to Home Decoration"; he says, "The lawn may be considered the canvas upon which the home picture is to be made, and trees and shrubs, together with the buildings, make up the most important materials in the work, and no comfortable or beautiful home can be made without them".

Shade about the house is an absolute necessity for comfort in hot weather. Trees and shrubs serve other purposes than being useful for shade; viz, they cover up disagreeable objects, screen and protect from hard winds, open vistas, and form backgrounds for other ornamental plantings. Trees are chosen for their own individual beauty sometimes, and for the variety of form, color, and shades which they present.

All of the plantings on the home grounds must conform to the plans of the grounds and be arranged where they harmonize best with the surroundings. The walks and drives should be shaded in some places while in other places open ground is more pleasing for the walks to be located.

The arrangement of the plantings on the home grounds should be varied. Sometimes, grouping trees and shrubs on a little knoll brings out a desired and beautiful effect that can be obtained in no other way; as a general rule, groupings should be placed in rather low

places or near the border of the grounds. Specimen trees are used for useful as well as ornamental effects; for example, a rare species of spruce, elm, maple, etc. may be planted out in the lawn or near the walk so that its own individual beauty must be observed. A lone elm is often seen in many of our country places.

For a background, the larger and less symmetrical trees are chosen to be planted in the rear; the more beautiful foliage bearing and symmetrical trees are to be placed next; then will come the larger growing shrubs; and lastly the dwarf varieties of trees and shrubs. If this kind of a border is used for the plantings around the whole lawn, it is very necessary to break up the appearance, if there be any, of the straight lines in plantings, for it is unnatural and uninviting.

Evergreens are more beautiful when grouped together; for example, a group of white pines is much more pleasing to the eye than the appearance of only one white pine by itself.

Variety in plantings around the home adds much to the beauty and charm of the place.

The kind of plantings must be studied as to manner of growth, color, foliage, and how suited to the soil, before attempting to plant the grounds. Only those varieties that are hardy ought to be planted. The evergreens are always desirable for decorative work in planting. Some deciduous trees that hold their dead leaves over winter are not objectionable and are even ^{popular} with some people. All deciduous trees, one might say, are always in favor. The fall coloring of the foliage of several species of trees and shrubs are beautiful and are chosen because of it.

The oaks, elms, maples, poplars, catalpas, sycamore, ash,

hackberry, locusts, and bass wood or linden, are all very popular for home planting. Some of the nut trees are liked by quite a number of people. Fruit bearing trees are usually not much in favor on the lawn because of the fruit dropping ^{on} the ground when ripe; an example of this would be the Russian mulberry. A few species of trees are infected by borers, web worms, etc., and great care is necessary to guard against those things when selecting for home decorative planting.

If the home is to be kept in good condition, improvement should continue at all times, for it isn't enough to plan and work out that plan for the first and only time. As time goes on, one may have opportunity to improve further that which was begun.

The work of repairing buildings, fences, walks and drives, and of pruning and caring for trees, shrubs, and lawn, is a continuous task, and much attention is necessary to keep everything about a home in good condition. But in the end, the satisfaction one receives from it is very great in proportion to the worry, work, and expense of repair.

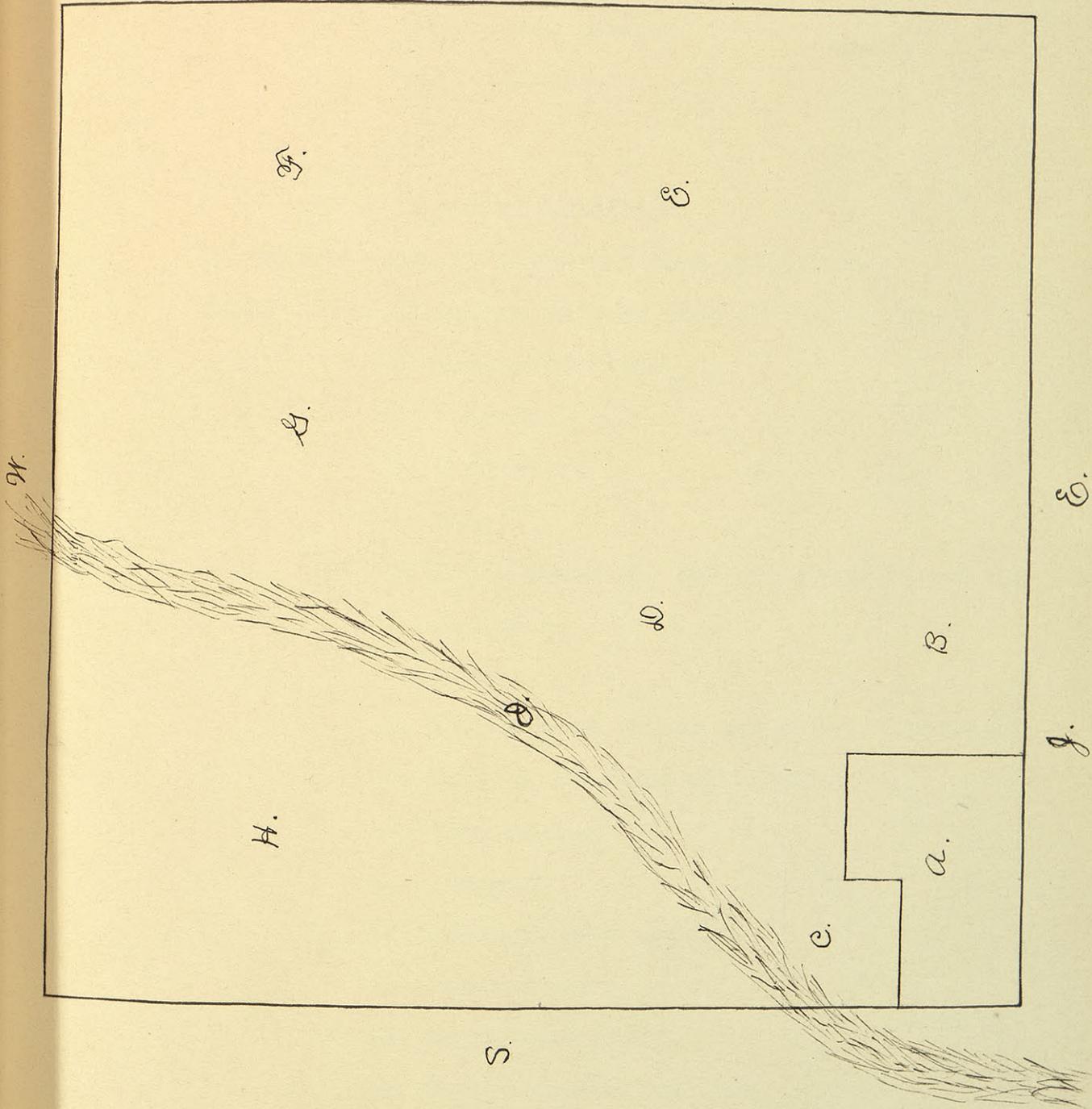
FARM.

Consists of one hundred sixty acres of land.

- A. Home grounds:
- B. Apple orchard.
- C. Alfalfa.
- D. Meadow.
- E. Wheat.
- F. Kaffir corn.
- G. Corn.
- H. Corn.
- I. River.
- J. Public Road.

Farm. (160 Acres.)

N.



BUILDINGS.

- A. House.
- B. Barn.
- C. Chicken houses.
- D. Woodhouse.

Names of Plantings.

Evergreen hedge on south and east of grounds.

Small hedge of spirea on east side of chicken yard.

1. Hackberry trees.
2. Walnuts.
3. Sycamores.
4. Ash.
5. Oaks- three pin and one peach-leaved oak.
6. Dog wood.
7. Linden.
8. Yellow wood, lilac and spirea Vanhouttii.
9. English elms and white elms.
10. Soft maples.
11. Tamarix.
12. Colorado Blue spruce.
13. Ash and elm.
14. Cut leaved maple.
15. Purple-leaved catalpa.
16. Norway maple.
17. Red cedar.
18. Snowball, lilac, and flowering almond.
19. Japanese quince and spirea Vanhouttii.

20. One douglas and two white spruces.
21. Colorado Blue spruce.
22. White pines and one horse chestnut.
23. Sycamores.
24. White and English elms with spirea Thumbergii
and Vanhouttii.
25. Soft maple.
26. White poplar and chestnut oaks.
27. Hard maple.
28. White fir.
29. Scotch pines.
30. Cotton woods.
31. Dwarf pines.
32. Blue and white spruce.
33. Two pin oaks, purple leaved Barberry, and
Austrian pines.
34. Russian mulberry.
35. Two Scotch pines, walnut tree and Douglas
spruce.
36. Plum trees.
37. White elm.
38. Hackberry.
39. Cotton woods.
40. Coffee beans.
41. Two kinds Barberry.
42. White pines.
43. English elm, horse chestnut, and common
barberry.

- 44. Soft maples.
- 45. Honey and black locusts.
- 46. White and chestnut oaks.
- 47. Austrian pines and red cedar.
- 48. One yellow wood, linden, and three wild black cherries.
- 49. Soft maple.
- 50. Elms and ash.
- 51. Small fruit garden.
- 52. Orchard consists of plum, pear, cherry, peach, quince and a few early apple trees.
- 53. Vegetable garden.
- 54. Flower border.

FLOWER BORDER.

- 1. Shrubs.
 - 1. Smoke tree.
 - 2. Golden bell.
 - 3. Mock orange.
 - 4. Flowering almond.
 - 5. Snowball.
 - 6. Roses.

Perennials.

- 1. Golden glow.
- 2. Phlox.
- 3. Hardy carnations.
- 4. Peony.
- 5. Iris.

6. Columbine.
7. Larkspur.
8. Poppies.
9. Asters.
10. Chrysanthemums.

Annuals.

1. Sweet peas.
2. Nasturtions.
3. Pansies.
4. Sweet alyssum.
5. Snap dragon.
6. Dianthus.
7. Petunia.
8. Verbenia.
9. Cosmos.
10. Portulaca.
11. Zinnias.

Bulbs.

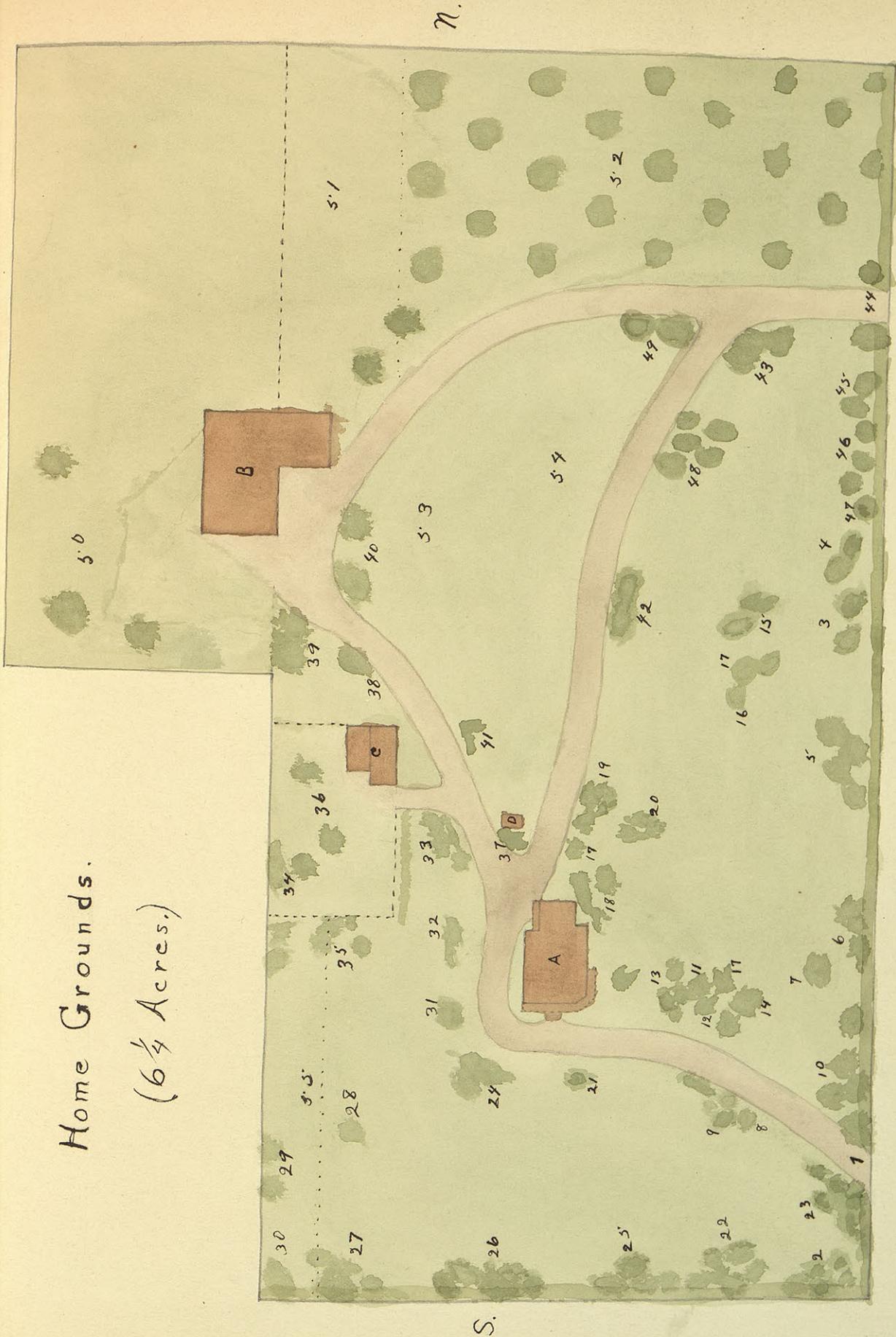
1. Snowdrop.
2. Crocus.
3. Tulips.
4. Narcissus.
5. Lilies.
6. Gladiolus.
7. Cannas.
8. Dahlia.

5. Climbers.

1. Clematis.
2. Pink and crimson ramblers.
3. Balsam apple.
4. Cypress vine.
5. Madeira vine.
6. Sweet pea.

Home Grounds.
 (6 1/4 Acres.)

M.



E.