Press Cutting – Modern Garden Architecture At Tyringham, Buckinghamshire – Country Life

COVNTRY HOMES & GARDENS OLD & NEW

MODERN GARDEN ARCHITECTURE AT TYRINGHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE—I.

Two garden pavilions designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, and a sheet of water flanked by formal gardens have recently been appended to the house originally designed by Sir John Soane.

IN the decade immediately following the war, it seemed as if the spacious life in country houses that, in retrospect, was like a long summer's evening, was unmistakably finished. Soothsayers were not wanting who pointed to the many properties for sale, the old mansions being demolished, the gardens going derelict. The architect who, before the war, had built so many pleasant country houses appeared to have turned for ever to more serious projects: a new capital for India and new palaces of commerce in London. One looked at the aristocratic pleasure grounds of Georgian mansions, where the grass waved unkempt on the lawns, and the temples and banqueting houses stood dejected as though the social order that produced them was dead indeed.

Shyly the nymphs and fauns have stolen back from the woods whither they fled in confusion in 1914. In this district at least, where Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire meet, Flora and Tellus have regained their composure. At Easton Neston, and here at Tyringham, they have re-vested ancient abodes with gardens as fair and spacious as any of their heyday in the eighteenth century. In both, too, the naiads and gods of the flood have contributed their element abundantly, while here, at any rate, the Muses join briskly in the general stir. Moreover, all these personages who preside over country life return invigorated from their exile in the wilderness. Thalia has never looked better, and Melpomene, so far as I know, has never before caused men to build for her so well appointed a temple of music.

It is, perhaps, not quite gallant to call these ladies by their old names. In the interval since their last appearance they have cropped their hair, adopted the athletic costume of Modern Woman and, agreeably to the spirit of the age, tried to substitute their pretty names with high-sounding abstract cognisances. At first one is deceived into believing that a new spirit has directed the making of these gardens and temples. The long pool and one of the adjoining temples is dedicated to Youth and the salubrious exercise of swimming. The other, we are given to understand by an epigrammatic inscription, is dedicated to ultimate Truth. But look behind the horn-rimmed spectacles,



Copyright

I.—THE SOUTH FRONT OF THE HOUSE

"COUNTRY LIFE"



Copyright 3.—THE PAVILIONS, FROM THE NORTH END OF THE POOLS. "COUNTRY LIFE."

and there is the pastoral Thalia, as gay as ever; and there is Melpomene, for all her references to the Infinite, beguiling us with harmony and tragedy just the same.

We may, then, take our ease here undismayed. Continuity has been preserved. The ancient gods of the garden still reign, if under different names, and, in spite of the warring of continents, these gardens at Tyringham are the lineal descendant of those fashioned by Le Nôtre and Vanbrugh, of the pleasaunces of Italy and the civilised groves of Le Trianon. Infused with a more serious sentiment, perhaps, and directed by an intelligence more cultivated, here is the old pastoral revived and re-invigorated.

Tyringham as it is to-day certainly bears little resemblance to the traditional home of an English squire. But over a century has elapsed since it cut adrift in search of a more civilised fashion of life. We can read of a family that took its name from the place living here from the earliest times till the year of the Plague of London, when an only daughter married Mr. Backwell (sad lapse), an alderman's son. A century later a Miss Backwell introduced her husband, Mr. Praed, to Tyringham. And in 1792 William Praed commissioned a dangerously thoughtful architect to replace the old grey manor house with an elegant classic "villa." The story was told at length by Mr. Arthur Bolton in COUNTRY LIFE in 1917, where the greatest living



Copyright 4.—THE BATHING PAVILION, FROM ACROSS THE POOLS.