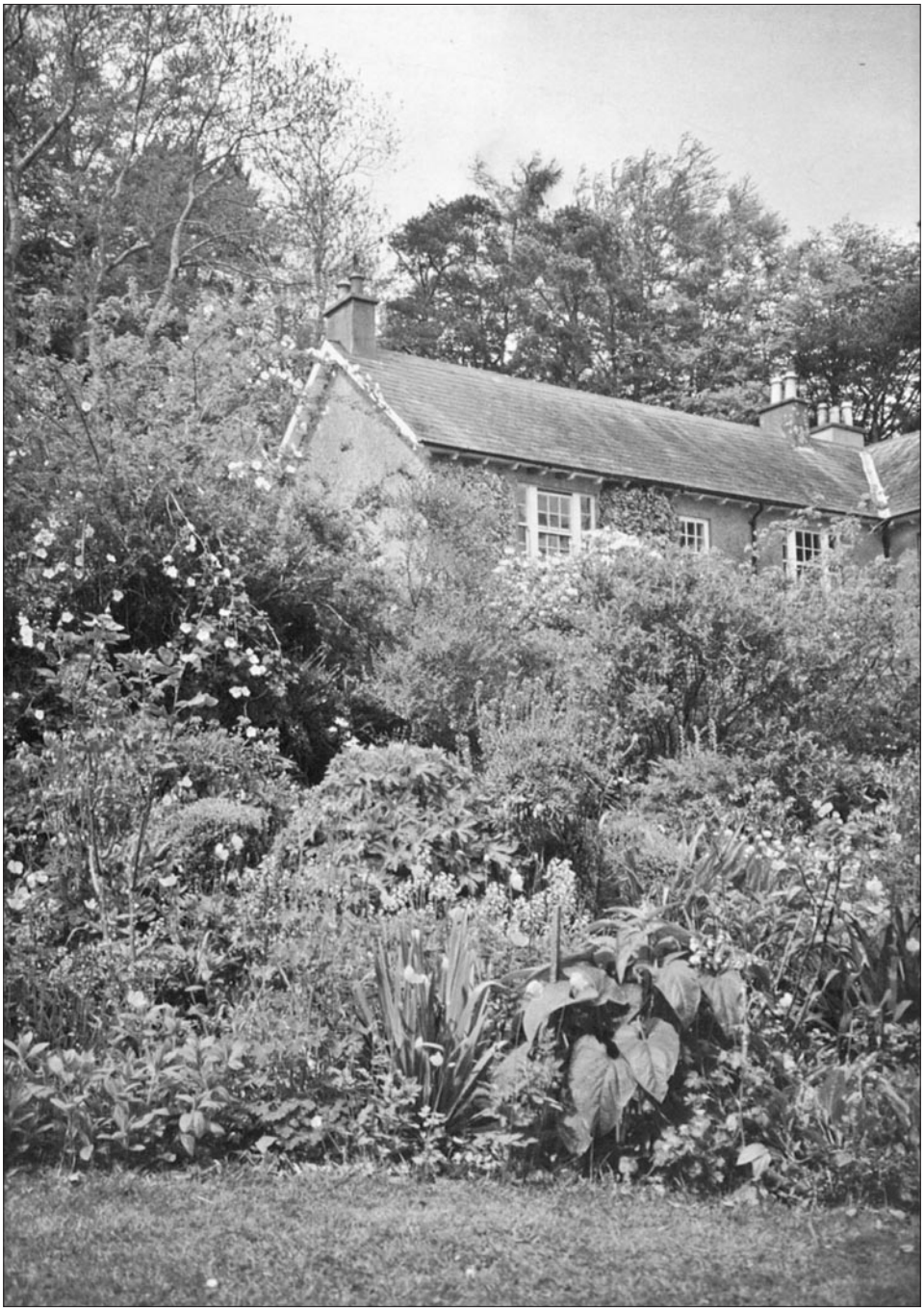


The Medlycott Farm, Roundwood, Co Wicklow
the farm's cattle-run is hidden behind these borders

The traditional Irish farmhouse and cottage garden

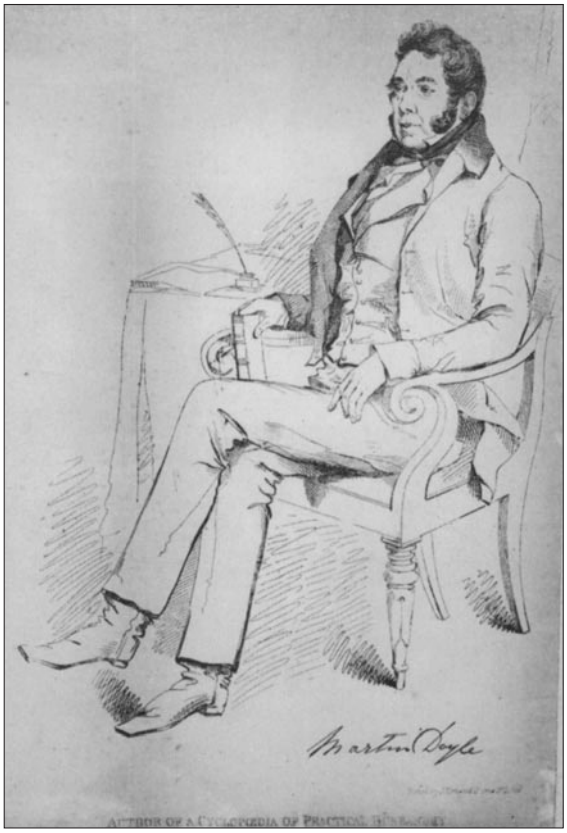
PATRICK BOWE

THE HISTORY OF IRISH GARDENING, AS IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN TO DATE, HAS TENDed to be the history of the gardens of the aristocracy and the gentry. Much documentation, both written and pictorial, survives about these gardens. However, there is a parallel history – that of the farmhouse and cottage garden of which fewer records remain. It is more difficult, therefore, to conjure up a picture of their design and planting. Research on this subject has also been impeded by the erroneous assumption that there has been no tradition of cottage gardening in Ireland in the same way that such a tradition existed in England. However, a little investigation reveals the case to be otherwise.[1]

It is true, for example, that in many western areas where living was at subsistence level, the cultivation around a cottage was often restricted to a small enclosed potato patch. However, prosperous farmers and cottagers, particularly in areas of the country where the soil is more fertile, boasted gardens which were a traditional mixture of flowers, fruit and vegetables.[2] Most of these have now been abandoned, or swept away in modernisation schemes. However, careful observation while travelling around the country will still reveal an occasional traditional garden of this type, often being cared for by an owner of an older generation. One wonders how long many of these gardens will last. It is an apt time to initiate a record of their character and purpose.

Nineteenth-century books and journals provide scattered references to Irish farmhouse and cottage gardens. The writings of Mary Leadbeater and Martin Doyle are particularly rich in information. Mary Leadbeater was born a member of the Quaker family of Shackleton living at Ballitore, Co Kildare. Between 1811 and 1822, she wrote a series of pamphlets on the economy of the cottage and its garden, which were intended to be read by cottagers.[3] Some of the pamphlets took the form of short biographies of cottagers she had known. Others were in the form of dialogues between fictional cottagers but based on her knowledge and observation of the behaviour and language of the cottagers she encountered around Ballitore. The

purpose of the pamphlets was to impart, in an interesting and entertaining manner, hints as to how life in a cottage and its garden might be improved. One of the pamphlets, for example, includes a basic garden calendar with details of simple garden tasks to be performed month by month.



1 – Martin Doyle, author of A CYCLOPAEDIA OF PRACTICAL HUSBANDRY, published in Dublin in 1839 (NLI)

Her pamphlets were followed between 1828 and 1868 by the books of Martin Doyle, the nom de plume of the Rev William Hickey, a clergyman from Ballyorley, Co Wexford (Plate 1). His books were published in a compact format to make them widely affordable. Two comprehensive handbooks, *Practical Gardening* (1833) and *A Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry* (1839) were the best known.[4] Throughout his life, he contributed articles to journals on the subject of farming and gardening on a small holding, and between 1833 and 1840 was co-editor (with Edmund Murphy, a landscape gardener) of *The Irish Farmers and Gardeners Magazine*.[5] By 1852, interest in the subject of cottage gardening in Ireland was such that the *The Cottage Gardener*, a London journal, thought it worthwhile advertising itself in the journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland, and arranging for McGlashan, the Dublin bookseller, to stock copies.[6]

Cottage gardening was encouraged through the awarding of annual prizes for well-kept gardens by local farming societies such as the Navan Farming Society,[7] the North Wexford Agricultural Society and the South Wexford Agricultural Society (founded *c*.1818), to name but a few.[8] Philanthropic societies were also encouraging. The Irish Peasantry Society of London offered for some years an amount of £15 for the encouragement of neat cottage dwellings and gardens within the area of the

Wexford Poor Law Union.[9] In 1837, the Agricultural Society of Ireland offered a prize for an essay on cottage gardening.[10]

Individuals were also convinced of the need to support the development of cottage gardening. In 1838, Ninian Niven, the director of the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, Dublin, proposed to build some model cottages within the garden. They were to be lived in by staff members, who would cultivate small gardens around them for the instruction of the visiting public.[11] An improving landlord, Hamilton Knox Grogan Morgan of Johnstown Castle, Co Wexford, reserved one of the cottages on his estate for occupation by an horticultural instructor, who, by teaching and example, would encourage the other cottagers to maximise the use of their plots.[12] The improvement of flower, fruit and vegetable types was encouraged by the distribution, often free of charge, of surplus seeds and seedlings from the garden of the nearby mansion house.

By gleaning a variety of contemporary publications, it is possible to build up a composite picture of the typical Irish farmhouse and cottage garden of the period with respect to its size, design, planting and maintenance. Before examining these details, it may be useful to quote two word-pictures of a typical garden's overall aspect. Martin Doyle described a prize-winning garden:

> The garden before the house was small but well cropped, fruit trees growing in the borders, and the young thorn quicks which had been planted in the breast of the surrounding fence, carefully preserved from weeds; carrots, parsnips, turnips, cabbages, onions and beans thriving well, and in a sheltered corner there stood nine or ten bee-hives ... A few hop plants and roses appeared over the front wall, nor were these plants unprofitable: Mick had sold the hops on the preceding year for five shillings, and the roses were taken by the neighbouring apothecary in exchange for some medicines...[13]

Mrs Leadbeater described a cottage garden near Arderin *c*.1780:

> The cottage ... had its walls half-concealed with ivy; woodbine in luxuriant clusters, hung from the roof; the little garden behind was fenced with a thick hedge of whitethorns, intermingled with dog roses; and the summer house, impervious to the rays of the sun, was formed by two shady trees of alder...[14]

CONTEXT AND SIZE

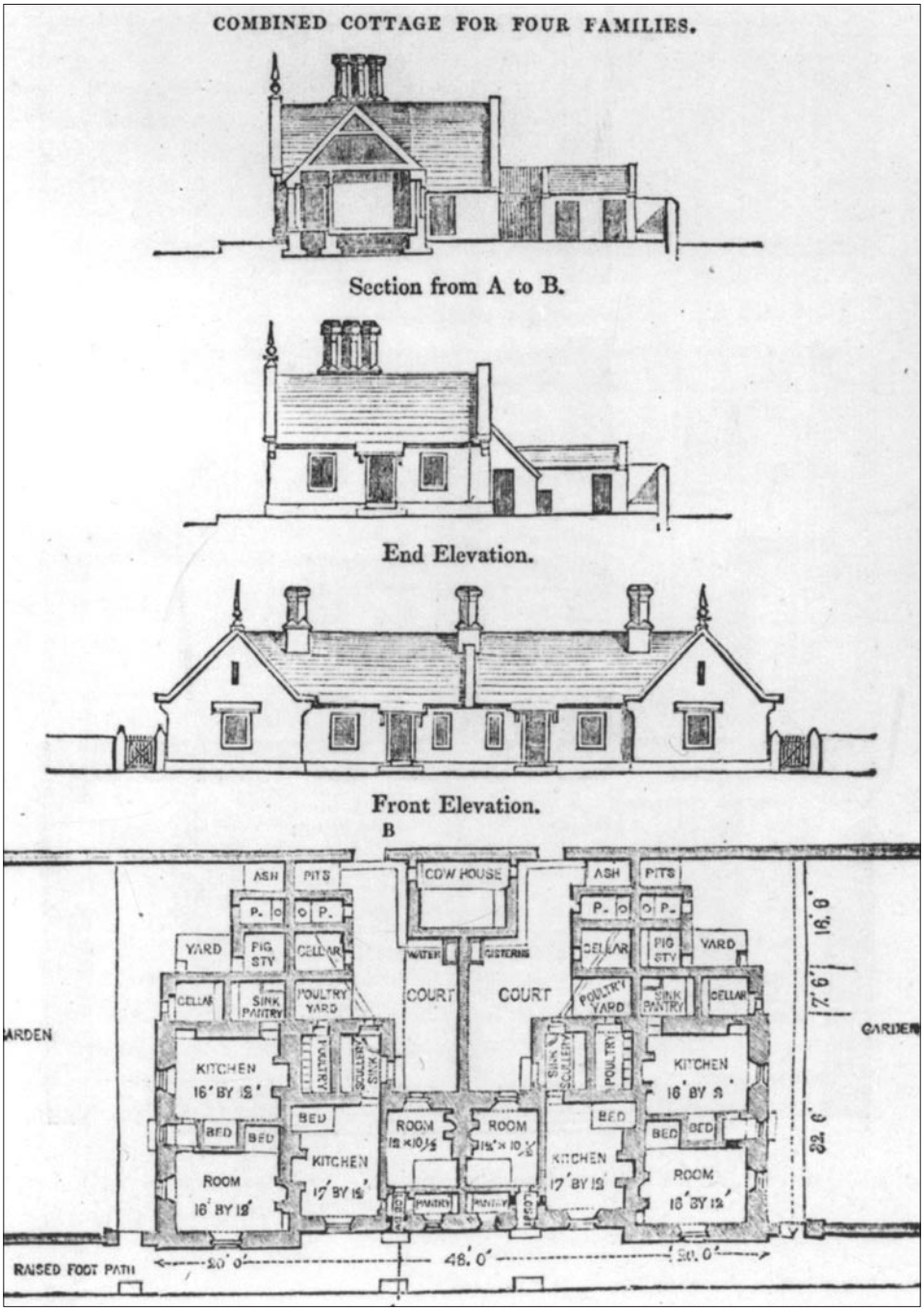
The size of small holdings varied. In towns, weavers and labourers might have but a simple cabbage patch, usually big enough to grow about a hundred plants. In the country, an acre of potatoes, considered enough to feed a family of six for a year,

together with another acre for pasturing a cow, was considered the minimum. However, in areas of poorer soil, the holdings were larger.

Arthur Young, the English agriculturalist, whose *A Tour in Ireland* was published in 1775, writes that cabins in Co Cork usually had four to five acres.[15] He later relates that cabins at Woodlawn in Co Galway had eight or nine acres, two or three cows or two cows and a horse, two or three pigs, many poultry, a rood of flax (for manufacture of the cottager's linen) and a half acre of potatoes.[16] Elsewhere, smallholdings had some sheep, the wool from which provided the raw material for the family's clothing.

The rear of the house was the location of a small farmyard, which included a dung hill that was very important for the manuring the garden. The garden, also varied in size, was located in a separately enclosed area next to the farmhouse or cottage. In some places it lay between the house and the public road; in others it lay also along the public road but to one side of the cottage. In Curracloe, Co Wexford, the location of each garden with respect to its cottage varies along the length of the village street (Plate 2). A more formal grouping is seen in the architectural drawings published by Martin Doyle in *A Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry* for a combined group of four cottages and their gardens (Plate 3).[17]

2 – Curracloe, Co Wexford, photographed by Kevin Danaher in 1947; the informal village-scape shows the differing relationship between the cottages and their gardens (Dept of Folklore, University College Dublin)



3 – A CYCLOPAEDIA OF PRACTICAL HUSBANDRY – the entry under 'cottages' shows a plan for a combined cottage for four families with its associated farm buildings and gardens (NLI)

ENCLOSURE

The garden area was walled or hedged to restrict the entry of farm animals, but also to provide shelter for the garden's small plants. Walling, being permanent, was preferred in areas where field stone was available.[18] However, hedging was a more widely used form of enclosure. Sometimes a hedge was grown not from the ground, but along the top of a grass bank.

The most widely used plant material for hedging was hawthorn or whitethorn, sometimes planted in a double row. Both plants being thorny, they grew into a stock-proof hedge if well maintained. A mixture of whitethorn and the thorny sweet-briar rose, known as eglantine, was also recommended.[19] As the whitethorn flowered in spring and the pink-blossomed eglantine in summer, the hedge was decorative in two seasons of the year. The native dog rose (*Rosa canina*) was also used in the same way. Mixed hedges, containing evergreens such as common holly,[20] and common laurel,[21] were also popular, as these evergreens helped provide good winter shelter. The sally willow, or sallow, was recommended as a hedging plant because its flexible young shoots might be used as the raw material for baskets, which most cottages knew how to make.[22] The osier, a related willow with narrower leaves, was also recommended. In some exposed locations, a cottage might be entirely surrounded by sheltering willow.[23]

Later in the nineteenth century, Monterey cypress, introduced from California, and fuchsia, introduced from South America, were commonly used for hedging, the latter in milder areas only.[24] Occasionally, a taller tree was incorporated in a hedge to provide extra, high-level shelter. For this purpose, elm was sometimes used but ash was preferred since the wood from its shorter branches was useful in the home manufacture of domestic and farm implements.[25]

GATES

The gate in a boundary hedge was usually of the picket type, constructed of wood and hung on wooden posts. It was usually black-tarred to ensure its long-term preservation. Although black might seem, at first glance, a somewhat funereal choice, the cottage windows and door were also traditionally tarred, and both stood out in crisp contrast against the white limewashed colour of the cottage walls. If the cottager could pay, a wooden gate might be replaced by an iron one of local forge manufacture. Iron gates were painted with lead oxide preservative paint, as were the corrugated iron roofs which replaced thatch on some cottages in the late nineteenth century. In counties like Kerry and Wexford, the lead oxide paint was treated as an

undercoat and given a scarlet finishing coat, scarlet being the complementary colour of the prevailing green of the Irish countryside.

Frequently, the boundary hedge was trained over the gate to form an imposing entrance arch.[26] Less frequently, the garden gate was flanked by a pair of sentinel Irish yews.

PATHS

A garden in front of a farmhouse or cottage was usually divided by a narrow path leading from the gate to the front door. The path surface might be constructed of simple compacted earth, needing careful sweeping to keep it tidy. More expensive to make and maintain was a gravel path. The path edging was often made with a line of limewashed field stones. However, dwarf box-hedging, sometimes cut casually with a scythe rather than a fine shears, was also effective as an edging.[27] A row of strawberries as a productive substitute for box was occasionally recommended. A second path around the perimeter of the garden was maintained so the housewife could bring the family's washing to dry on the garden's boundary hedge.

BOWERS

Mrs Leadbeater describes the use of summer houses or shady bowers, formed by training and pruning the flexible branches of willow trees. One of the male characters in her *Cottage dialogues* asserts of his garden: 'I am going to plant sallows there to make a little summer house for my mother to sit in while she watches her bees.' Mrs Leadbeater also describes how a bower was a treasured place for a housewife to sit knitting with her family at the end of a summer's day. Sweet peas and sweet-smelling woodbines were sometimes grown up through the willows' branches so that the bower might be suffused with their scent.

WALL BORDERS

Borders directly under the front wall were a feature of many farmhouse and cottage gardens. In the case of cottages built directly along the roadside, the wall border may have been the only space available in which to garden (Plate 4). The soil was often retained by a line of whitewashed stones (Plate 5). Perennial flowers, shrubs and climbing plants were grown in informal mixed groupings (Plate 6). Wall shrubs

4 – A cottage at the Strawberry Beds, Dublin, is adorned with skilful roadside planting

5 – Scalp Cottage, The Scalp, Co Dublin
with its traditional white-washed field stones used as edgings to beds and borders
(illustrations courtesy National Photographic Archive, Lawrence Collection)

6 – A thatched house and garden, probably in the west of Ireland, showing the mixed planting of climbers, shrubs and perennials in the wall border – note the rainbow (Dept of Folklore, UCD)

7 – The fantastical and whimsical topiary of a cottage at Headfort, Co Meath (National Library of Ireland)

were topiarised to prevent them from becoming too large and shading the already small windows. Topiary is a feature of Irish cottage gardens, as it is of small gardens throughout Europe – it being necessary to confine trees or shrubs which outgrow the modest space available for them. Sometimes topiaries were allowed to develop into fantastically whimsical forms (Plate 7).

GENERAL PLANTING

The interior of the garden was developed with a mixed planting of fruits, vegetables and flowers grown together in a more or less formal arrangement of large beds, the beds often edged with dwarf box hedges. In their formal pattern, they can be said to be imitative on a smaller and simpler scale of the larger ornamental gardens of the aristocratic mansion. In fact, Martin Lacy describes the farmhouses on the Johnstown Castle estate as having parterres in front of them. Some of the farmhouses at Ballykilcavan, Co Laois, and at Doneraile, Co Cork, still maintain formal box beds in front of them (Plate 10). The traditional pattern of box-edged beds surviving in the garden of 78 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin, although located in a city garden,

8 – Killala Cottage, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co Clare
showing the use of exotic plants such as New Zealand flax with its sheaves of sword-like leaves
(Dept of Folklore, University College Dublin)

serves to indicate to us such a box-hedged arrangement and mixed planting (Plate 9). Martin Doyle recommends hedges of rosemary instead of box. However, no other account of its use as a hedging material in a small garden of the period has been found.[28]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many gardens began to display spiky plants with architectural foliage, such as New Zealand Flax or Cordyline Palm, both natives of New Zealand (Plate 8). Their sheaves of sword-like leaves strike an exotic note in the Irish countryside.

WALL PLANTS

Samuel Hayes of Avondale, Co Wicklow, in his book *A Practical Treatise on Planting* (1794), noted in the village of Abbeyleix 'the comfortable, and at the same time, picturesque cottages, with their accompaniment of eglantine and honeysuckle in their little paled-in gardens'.[29] Mrs S.C. Hall in her account of a journey through Ireland – *Ireland, its Scenery, Character, etc*. (1841-43) – also wrote of cottages, this time in Piltown, Co Kilkenny, 'each adorned with climbing roses and honeysuckles'.[30] Many such accounts refer to honeysuckle and climbing roses growing on a farmhouse or cottage wall. The honeysuckle variety seems to have been the native honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), known colloquially as woodbine. The climbing rose varieties recorded are more various. The eglantine referred to above is the pink-flowered native rose, *Rosa eglanteria*. However, a red-flowered climbing rose was also grown. This appears to have been the Apothecary's Rose (*Rosa gallica* 'Officinalis'), since its leaves were used by apothecaries in making healing infusions of many kinds, as indicated in Martin Doyle's description of a cottage garden referred to above. Cottagers also used the leaves in homemade teas for the treatment of sore throats, and in concocting ointments for treating skin abrasions.

One account refers to quite a different rose on a cottage wall: 'the yellow rose'. Although its exact or botanical name has not been traced, it may have been the French tea-noisette, R. 'Desprez a Fleur Jaune'.[31] The most popular cottage roses during the twentieth century were the summer-flowering rambler roses such as R. 'Dorothy Perkins' and R. 'American Pillar', with abundant bright pink small flowers in large clusters.[32] Today, old French roses like R. 'Bourbon Queen' and R. 'Felicite et Perpetuee' are frequently seen growing on the wall of a large farmhouse.

On some cottage walls, fruit trees such as apples and hops were trained, espalier frames being constructed of slender ash poles.[33] One source recommended cottagers to grow whitecurrants as wall plants because they could be sold profitably for the making of the then popular whitecurrant wine.[34]

FLOWERS

Flowers were useful in a small garden because their nectar was collected by the cottager's bees. Flowers, when cut, were also used in decking the altar of the local church, a household shrine or a corpse when it was being waked. Mary Leadbeater mentions that cultivated flowers were also useful in fashioning a presentation posy when the landlord or his wife came to visit.[35] Mignonette, old-fashioned primroses in different coloured seedlings (Plate 11), and sunflowers are some of the flowers mentioned in descriptions. For example, Mary Leadbeater recounts the use of the latter in a farmhouse garden: 'a garden of four acres contained one or more bowers, cherry trees, and a sundial beside which, as in rivalry, rose stately sunflowers'.[36]

Bright tropical flower colour was added to the nineteenth-century cottage garden by the cultivation of pot-grown pelargoniums (often known erroneously as geraniums). These were usually lined out on window cills in summer; in winter they were transferred to the inside cills. In milder areas of the country, pelargoniums were planted in a wall border, and would survive winter after winter outside, often growing into tall woody shrubs dramatically displaying their bright red flowers for many months of the year.

HERBS

Farmhouse and cottage gardens contained herbs, the dried leaves of which were used for brewing medicinal teas and also in concocting cures for the ailments of farm animals.[37] The dried leaves of sage, marigold, camomile, rhubarb and fennel were popular for these purposes, as were sprigs of rosemary.[38] Parsley, thyme and savory were grown in more sophisticated gardens for use in flavouring cooked vegetables and meats.

VEGETABLES

Mary Leadbeater's book *Cottage dialogues among the Irish Peasantry* illustrates a cottage gardener's annual vegetable growing routine:

> I set out early York cabbage plants far enough apart to plant a bean between. At the edges of my early potato ridges, I plant green borecole. When the potatoes are dug, the borecole grows large and gives fine greens for the winter. The later potatoes may have later borecole plants, or single grey peas put

> at the edges and by this way the ground is made most of. Besides this you see, I love my little plants of beans and pease [sic], my beds of turnips, carrots, parsnips and onions: the trimmings of these, and of the cabbage, are thrown to the pig. After the season is over, I plant rape seed, enough for 500-1,000 plants. They stand over the winter, when all else is fallow and I feed the shoots to the cow and the pig.[39]

The principal vegetable crop was potatoes. Hely Dutton noticed about twenty-five varieties, some of them familiar to us today, being grown in Co Galway in 1824: Grenadiers, Red apple, White apple, black, Early Prussians, Cups, Lumpers, English Reds, Cork reds, Barbers wonders, Bangors, Red nose kidney, Leather coats, White eyes, Windleers, Pink eyes, Ox noble, Yams or bucks, Coppers, Purple kidney, American dandies.[40] However, a wide variety of green vegetables was also grown. The agriculturalist, William Blacker of Castle Blacker, Co Armagh, was precise in his recommendation of the quantity and type of vegetables a small farmer ought to sow each year:

> Common Peas, Marrow Peas and Beans – 1 pint of seed
>
> Carrots, Onions and Parsnips – 1 ounce of seed
>
> Leeks, Common Cabbage, Savoy Cabbage, Broccoli and Cauliflower – $^1/_2$ ounce of seed.[41]

This may seem a plentiful variety of green vegetables. However, in many cottage gardens the variety being grown was considerably less. In his survey of Co Clare published in 1808, Hely Dutton noted that 'Almost every cottier has a small garden chiefly occupied with cabbages: some few sow onions, parsnips etc.' [42] In other early nineteenth-century descriptions, turnips, lettuce, celery, 'common grey peas' and 'small horse beans' are mentioned. French beans were grown on tall, freestanding frames in some gardens, but they were considered, on the whole, a vegetable for the 'quality', that is, people who lived in grander houses.[43] In the smallest gardens, only flat Dutch cabbage was grown in addition to potatoes.[44] (Cabbage grown next to seaside cottages and fertilised with seaweed was considered particularly delicious at that time.)[45]

A neatness of appearance in the vegetable garden was encouraged by William Doyle. He recommended that peas and beans should not be allowed to run to seed after cropping, but should be cut down to within three inches of the ground to present a tidy aspect. Such pruning was also recommended because it might result in an additional crop in October.[46] Another late-season ornament of the vegetable garden must have been the thatched dry-earth mounds which were constructed over the cabbages to preserve them after cropping.[47] Mrs Leadbeater writes of a woman,

Betty Bryan, who made cabbage nets for sale. Nets such as these, neatly set over the plants to protect them from foraging birds, must have added to a cared-for appearance of a vegetable plot.[48]

BUSH FRUIT

Blackcurrants and gooseberries were the most commonly grown of the bush fruits.[49] They were grown in lines between rows of vegetables and flowers. Although it was intended their bulk would give wind shelter to young seedling vegetables and flowers, their location was carefully chosen so as not to shade the smaller plants in the garden. Farmers or cottagers who had an orchard often preferred to grow them in one of the orchard's corners.

ORCHARDS

In very small gardens, a fruit tree was incorporated among the vegetables and flowers. In gardens of greater extent, fruit trees were grown in a separate enclosure or orchard (Plate 12). A small orchard typically consisted of between ten and twenty trees, mostly apples grafted on crab apple stock. Common varieties of apple grown in Co Meath, according to R. Thompson in his 1802 survey of that county, were 'summer crofts, winter crofts, jenetings, the eve, Ross nonpareil or French pippin, the golden pippin, the Harvey and the London tankard'.[50] A much greater variety was grown in Co Armagh, famous then, as it is today, as an apple-growing county. Larger farm orchards also had pears and, occasionally, cider apples.[51] For many centuries the cider apples of the Blackwater valley in Co Waterford were renowned, as were the cherries of the area.[52] In some old cottage orchards today, the grass under the trees is carpeted with snowdrops and daffodils, and the perimeter grass banks are covered by montbretia.

BEES

Martin Doyle recommended that 'no smallholder should be without bees'.[53] They were usually kept in straw hives raised on wooden stands and located within the shelter of one of the garden's hedges.[54] Bees not only produced honey but also wax, which was sold for making candles, among other things. The bees would collect nectar from the flowers of beans, buck wheat, thyme, borage, sage and mustard

which were grown in the garden for that purpose. Fruit trees, when in blossom, also provided nectar, as did wild furze, broom, clover and heather in the countryside nearby.[55] Excellent honey was produced in cottage gardens which were located near a hill or bog abundant in heather.

MAINTENANCE

The cottage garden was owner-maintained. The larger farmhouse garden was also owner-maintained, but the services of a paid 'weeder-woman' were sometimes employed.[56] The hoe was a common implement. A light spade for digging, a rake and a pitchfork were also useful tools. A small iron-plough, drawn by a cow or horse, was used for cultivating the ground for larger vegetable sowings.[57] Hedges were clipped with shears, although Mary Leadbeater describes how at one cottage scissors were used: 'They keep the hedges well trimmed, and when disappointed of the garden shears which a neighbour used to lend them, Bridget used her scissors for the purpose.' [58]

Children were sometimes employed in clearing stones and hand-weeding. In Mary Leadbeater's *Cottage dialogues*, a fanciful picture of the part played by children is conjured. A cottage woman asserts: 'My little boys nail sticks together to give them a pretty shape and the girls put down French beans about them, and they run up among the sticks and blossom and look a pretty picture.'

Vegetable surplus such as potato stalks, bean stalks and spent cabbage leaves was useful in feeding the farmyard pig or cow. What they would not eat was mixed with weeds pulled from the garden and fallen autumn leaves in season to provide the pig's litter. In turn, the cleanings from the pigsty and the cow shed were added to the dung-hill, the manure from which, when well-rotted, was used to fertilise the garden. So, there was a close interdependence between farmyard and garden.

THE TRADITION TODAY

The revival of interest in the traditional Irish arts and crafts at the beginning of the twentieth century was paralleled by a revival of interest in traditional Irish farmhouse and cottage gardens (Plates 13-17). Articles in books such as *Irish Rural Life and Industry* (1906), and in periodicals such as *The Irish Homestead* (1895-1923) and *Irish Gardening* (1906-16) encouraged the interest. During the 1920s, a member of the culturally influential Purser family, Mrs Nuttall, created a still-maintained garden near Roundwood in Co Wicklow in this vernacular style (Plates 18-21).

The contemporary failure to recognise the existence of an Irish farmhouse and cottage gardening tradition has led to the unwitting destruction over a long period of time of this part of Ireland's garden heritage. The purpose of this article is to encourage the recovery of interest in this tradition so that the few gardens which remain in each area might be conserved or, at least, recorded. The tradition might then inform the design and planting of our smaller gardens in the future, and so ensure the continuity of this aspect of our garden history.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Photographs by the author unless otherwise stated.

ENDNOTES

1 Other Irish gardening traditions which remain to be investigated if a comprehensive history of Irish gardening is to be realised include that of the rectory and presbytery garden, that of the city and town garden, and that of the planting of public malls and parks.

2 Such were the gardens of the tenants of Hamilton Knox Grogan Morgan of Johnstown Castle, Co Wexford. In praise of this gentleman, Thomas Lacy wrote in his book *Home Sketches* (1852) 276: 'The comfortable and substantially built and slated farm-house, with its neat garden or orchard, and its tasteful parterre, will speak, in language not to be misunderstood, his best eulogium ... while his day-labourers dwell in neatly-slated cottages, where the creeping woodbine, or mayhap the sweetly scented rose, declares, in silent but convincing terms, that comfort and comparative refinement are not strangers to those who live within the range of his influence and bounty.'

3 *Cottage dialogues among the Irish Peasantry* (Dublin 1811), *The Landlord's Friend* (Dublin 1913) and *Cottage biographies* (Dublin 1822).

4 Others were *Hints originally intended for the small farmers of Co Wexford* (1828) and *Notes and Gleanings related to the County of Wexford* (Dublin 1868).

5 See, for example, Martin Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', *Irish Penny Journal*, Saturday 26 September 1840, 111.

6 *Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland and Irish Agriculturalist*, June 1852, 29.

7 R. Thompson, *A Statistical Survey of Co Meath* (Dublin 1802) 334.

8 Martin Doyle, *Notes and Gleaning relating to the County of Wexford* (Dublin 1868) 109.

9 *ibid*.

[10] *Irish Farmers and Gardeners Magazine*, iv (Dublin 1837) 150. In the same article, cabbages, lettuces, onions, potatoes, beans, celery, parsnips, carrots, turnips and leaks are recommended for cottage gardens, as are strawberries planted as an edging along the garden walks. Gooseberry quicks in lines to divide up the garden and shelter the vegetable rows are also suggested.

[11] E.C. Nelson and E.M. McCracken, *The Brightest Jewel, A History of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin* (Kilkenny 1987) 86.

[12] Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', 93.

[13] Martin Doyle, *Irish cottagers* (Dublin 1833) 6.

[14] Mary Leadbeater, *Cottage biographies*, 84. The dog rose (*Rosa canina*), with its pink to white flowers, is a native Irish plant and can still be seen growing spontaneously in many country hedgerows.

[15] Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland...* (London 1775) 277.

[16] Nelson and McCracken, *The Brightest Jewel*, 246.

[17] Martin Doyle, *A Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry* (Dublin 1839) 113.

[18] The clearing of field stones from agricultural land made the land easier to plough as well as providing raw material for walling

[19] *Rosa eglanteria*, preferring lime soils, was not suitable for growing on Ireland's many acid soils.

[20] Samuel Hayes, *A Practical Treatise on Planting* (Dublin 1794). He recommends planting hollies every four feet in a mixed hedge.

[21] Doyle, *Hints originally intended for the small farmers of Co Wexford* (1828) 19.

[22] Hely Dutton, *A Statistical Survey of Co Clare* (Dublin 1808) 145. The sally (*Salix caprea*), being bushy rather than tree-like in growth, is ideal for hedging. The osier (*Salix viminalis*), another bushy willow was also used. The Red Huntingdon willow, also known as the timber sallow, was a willow variety recommended by Martin Doyle in his *Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry*, 324.

[23] Nelson and McCracken, *The Brightest Jewel*, 341. Isaac Weld in his *Survey of the County of Roscommon* (Dublin 1832) 256, also describes a little garden surrounded by willows.

[24] Edward Malins and Patrick Bowe, *Irish Gardens and Demesnes from 1830* (London 1980) 112. The fuchsia is *Fuchsia magellanica*.

[25] Nelson and McCracken, *The Brightest Jewel*, 86: 'slender ash poles are valuable for hoops, spade and pitchfork handles, rakes, tails and garden espaliers: if a little grosser, and somewhat crooked they make the best plow handles, horse hames and swingle trees...'

[26] Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', 94: 'Opposite the house is the garden, entered by an arch cut in a high alder hedge, which has an imposing appearance.'

[27] Martin Doyle, *Practical Gardening* (Dublin 1833) 38.

[28] Doyle, *Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry*, 74

[29] Nelson and McCracken, *The Brightest Jewel*, 154.

[30] Mrs S.C. Hall, *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc*, 2 vols (London 1841-43) ii, 62.

[31] It was raised in France in 1830.

[32] These hybrid ramblers were raised in the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century, and soon established themselves in popularity throughout the temperate world

[33] Hayes, *A Practical Treatise on Planting*, 86.

[34] Leadbeater, *Cottage dialogues*, 79.

[35] Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', 83.
[36] *Irish Farmers and Gardeners Magazine*, iv (Dublin 1837) 143.
[37] See the copy of *Kidder's Receipt Book* which belonged to the Borbridge family of Inch, Co Wexford, in which concoctions for the treatment of sick or injured animals are inscribed in manuscript. I am grateful to Mrs John Medlycott for showing me this.
[38] Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*, 7th ed (London 1772) 13.
[39] Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', 88. 'Borecole' is what we call 'kale' today.
[40] Hely Dutton, *A Statistical Survey of Co Galway* (Dublin 1824) 353.
[41] William Blacker, *An Essay on the Improvement to be made in the cultivation of small farms* (Dublin 1845) 54.
[42] Doyle, *Practical Gardening*, 177
[43] Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', *Irish Penny Journal*, 26 September 1840, 87.
[44] Hall, *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc*, 353
[45] *ibid*., 202
[46] Doyle, *Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry*, 33
[47] *ibid*., 57.
[48] *Irish Farmers and Gardeners Magazine*, iv (Dublin 1837) 27.
[49] Dubourdieu, *A Statistical Survey of Co Antrim* (Dublin 1812) 438, notes the increasing variety of gooseberries available in Co Antrim.
[50] *Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland and Irish Agriculturalist*, 1852, 236
[51] V. Sampson, *A Statistical Survey of Co Londonderry* (Dublin 1802) 438, observes that 'farm houses usually have orchards with apples as well as pears'. Samuel Hayes in his *Practical Treatise on Planting*, 33, refers to the famous cider apples which grew on the banks of the Blackwater in Co Waterford. He also cites the celebrated Irish cider apple variety known as Cacagee.
[52] The variety known as the Affane cherry is mentioned, for example, in Charles Smith, *The ancient and present State of the County of Waterford* (Dublin 1746) 78
[53] Doyle, *Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry*, 103
[54] Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', 334.
[55] Doyle, *Cyclopaedia of Practical Husbandry*, 103.
[56] Doyle, 'Gardens for the Labouring Classes', 178: 'Timothy dresses gardens...' is the only reference I have found to a man whose profession it was to journey around putting gardens into shape in the same way that a landscape gardener might do today.
[57] Hall, *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc*, 163.
[58] *ibid*., 94.

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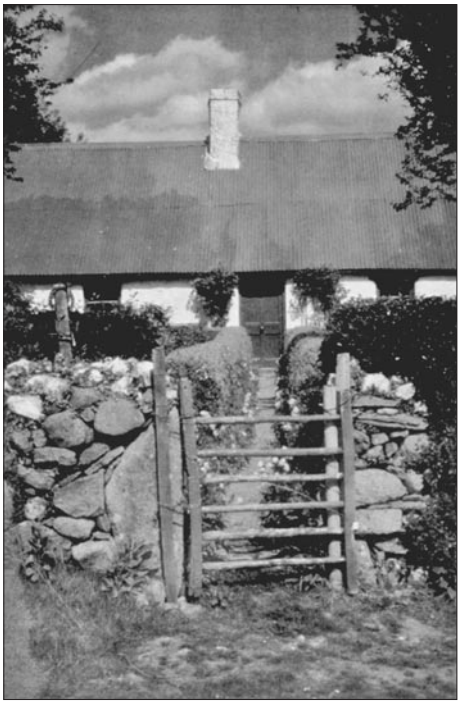
9 – The French garden, Upper Leeson Street, Dublin. The rare survival of a traditional Dublin city garden illustrates the use of box-edged beds of mixed plantings, which was also characteristic of the small rural garden.

10 – A box parterre, with beds in which flowers, vegetables and fruit trees grow, at Doneraile, Co Cork

11 – Old-fashioned primroses of mixed colours fill box-edged beds at Maidenhall, Co Kilkenny

opposite

12 – The apple orchard, underplanted with daffodils, of the Thomas cottage at Greenane, near Rathdrum, Co Wicklow



The Thomas Cottage, Greenane, Co Wicklow

13 – The walled and hedged garden in front of the cottage

14 – Garden walls of field granite are topped with decorative quartz stones. On the left of the handmade gate are hung lucky horseshoes.

opposite

15 – Box-hedges with rounded contours line the path to the rose-framed door

16 – The view from the cottage door down the garden path

17 – Flowering rhododendrons and columbines are followed in summer by flowering martagon lilies, bistorts and montbretias

The Medlycott Farm, Roundwood, Co Wicklow

18 – The farm's cattle-run is hidden behind these borders

19 – Mixed borders of cottage flowers encroach on the narrow garden path

opposite

20 – Box-edged vegetable beds intermingle with the flower beds

21 – Traditional yew topiary flanks the gate to the farmyard