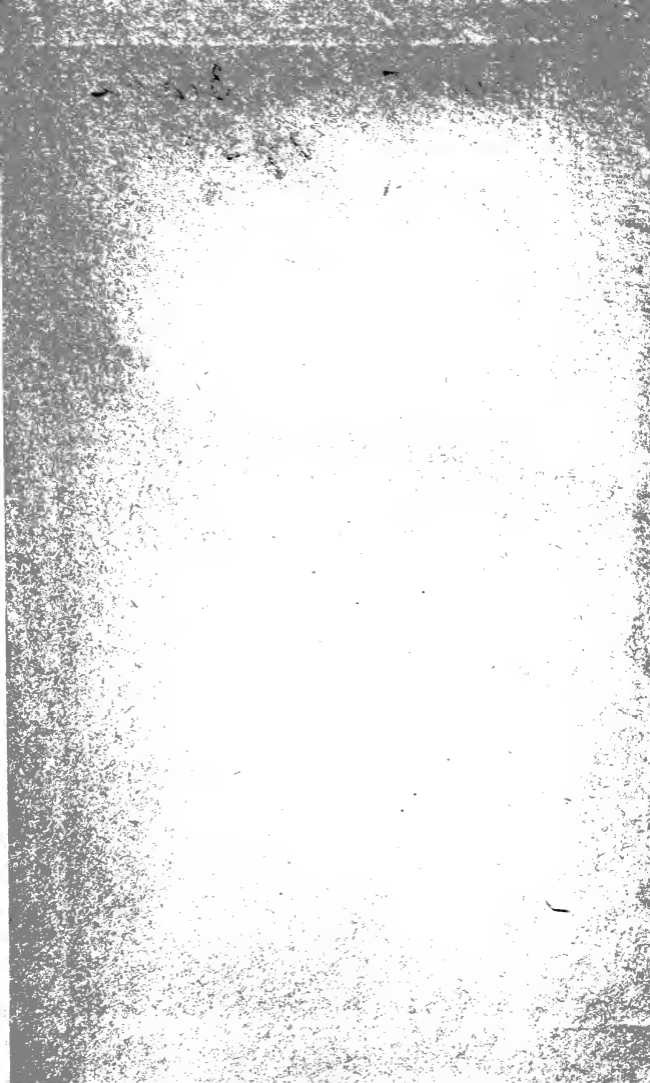


THE OLD GARDENS OF ITALY
HOW TO VISIT THEM

MRS. AUBREY LE BLOND

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1923.



Amelia D. Saks

THE OLD GARDENS
OF ITALY



THE RAM GATES, BOBOLI GARDENS.

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HOW TO VISIT THEM

BY

MRS. LAUBREY LE BLOND

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HER
PHOTOGRAPHS

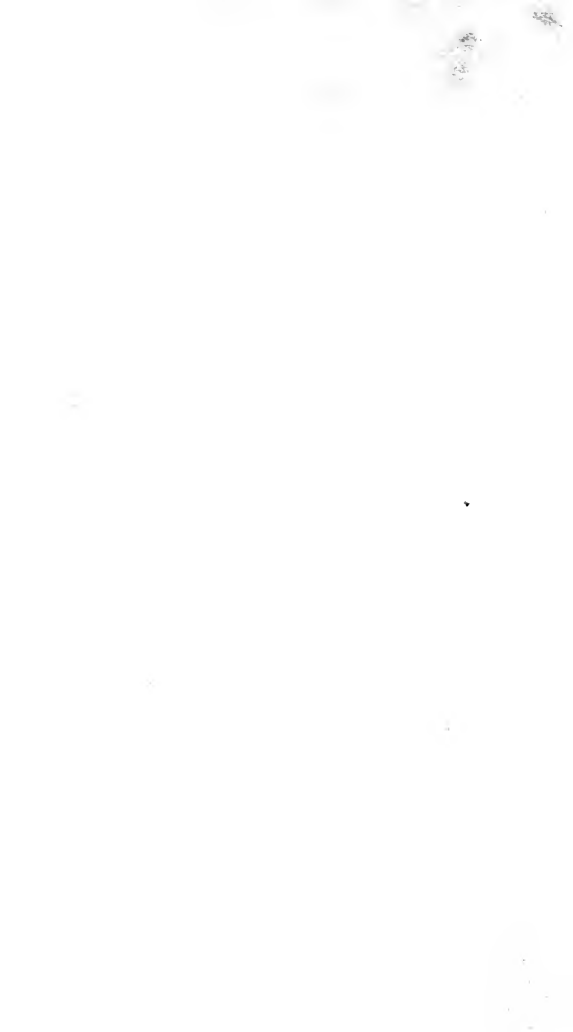
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“ It is the glory of the Italian garden architects that neglect and disintegration cannot wholly mar the effect they were skilled in creating—effects due to such a fine sense of proportion, to so exquisite a perception of the relation between architecture and landscape, between verdure and marble, that while a trace of their plan remains one feels the spell of the whole.”

Italian Villas and their Gardens.



INTRODUCTION.

THIS little book only aims at guiding the traveller to most of the old gardens of Italy and leaves it to the larger works to furnish him with fuller information and more numerous plans. The author, when illustrating "The Art of Garden Design in Italy," by H. Inigo Triggs, was struck by the difficulty experienced in finding the various gardens and learning from whom permission to view them was obtainable. It seemed to her that a small volume including as many gardens as she could hear of, and condensed within reasonable limits, might find a place between the big books giving technical information, and those, such as Elgood's beautiful "Italian Gardens," that aim more especially at the pictorial representation of a subject intensely fascinating from whatever standpoint it is viewed.

The list of books relating to the gardens of Italy will, it is hoped, be found useful to the amateur. Many can be consulted at the library of the British Museum, and others at the Ambrosiana Library at Milan, the Uffizzi and Marucelliana Libraries at Florence, and other libraries elsewhere. Mrs. Wharton's delightful book on

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“Italian Villas and their Gardens” has proved more helpful and inspiring to the writer than any other.

Italian gardens, not unlike those we still find, were known even in Pliny's time. In “The Letters of Pliny the Consul” (the quotation is taken from Dodsley's translation of 1747), he describes a terrace perfumed with violets at his villa at Laurentum (near Ostia), and he goes on to say that it is “encompassed with a box-tree hedge,” and that there are walks suitable for hot or cold weather. But it is of his villa in Tuscany, where he usually spent the summer, that he gives the minutest word picture. (Book V., Letter VI. This is the letter with the famous allusion to “liquid acanthus.”) The *topiary work was, according to our ideas, over elaborate, yet the whole garden and house must have been of great dignity and beauty. It was at this villa that Pliny had his dinner on a marble bench overhanging a basin on whose surface floated the smaller dishes “in the form of little vessels and water fowl.”

During the dark ages that succeeded it is unlikely that anyone maintained or laid out villas, and even in the sixteenth century, that golden time of art, we meet with no gardens south of Rome,

* The “topiarius” was the slave entrusted with the difficult and responsible task of clipping the hedges and designing and keeping in shape the various animals represented in box and other shrubs and the clipped inscriptions. These were very elaborate, but happily the custom was so modified in the best XVIth century gardens that except in three cases where the name of the villa is cut in box, the writer has never seen any topiary work in Italy that could be objected to.

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and none except in the neighbourhood of towns. It was not till the seventeenth century that villas and palace gardens were constructed near Naples and Palermo. The disturbed state of the country rendered it unsafe to live elsewhere than in a city or a castle. One exception there was, but it combined the charm of the country villa with the security of a fortress. This is the Farnese Palace at Caprarola, which is in a wild district a considerable distance from Rome.

The old gardens of Italy owe much of their charm to their entire suitability to the house, its occupants, and the climate. To transport their schemes bodily to America or England must always be a mistake, for it is not the garden itself, but the lessons that its designers have taught for all time, that one should carry home. At the best period of Italian garden architecture, that of Vignola, we see how carefully the plan was thought out in all its details, and how house and garden were treated as one. The term "villa" in Italy always means the whole property, the "casino" being the house. The symmetrical lines of the clipped hedges and the straight paths near the dwelling carried on the idea of walls, and when the distance from the house was sufficiently great the formal gave place to the wild, and a shady wood or *bosco* filled in the allotted space till the boundary was reached. The scenery of the district was worked into the scheme by means of high terraces commanding beautiful views, or openings in the walls of verdure. An old garden was often by no means large, but it

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was so varied that it appeared much larger than it was. One of the best examples in the whole of Italy of the successful treatment of a small space is the Villa Gamberaia, near Florence. The grounds cover only about three acres, yet they have a breadth and airiness and variety that could be equalled by no ground laid out in the landscape style. There is an exquisite water garden, a long bowling alley of green turf, a sunk rock garden, a sunny lemon garden, a dark, cool *bosco*, and a terrace overlooking the valley of the Arno.

Grass does not grow well in Italy, with its fierce summer sun, so turf is not largely used. Still, we find here and there a charming *tapis vert*, and whenever it is brought into the scheme it is in just the right place. The heat also prevents most flowers from flourishing in summer, and therefore, in the most southern parts, with the exception of roses, we find few flowers in Italian gardens. Their designers were thus restricted to the use of such materials as were available, and perhaps this very limitation led them to turn to the best account what they had. Box, cypress, and ilex were their principal evergreens, and lent themselves to many charming effects. The fragrant box borders with their exquisite shades of colour, the dignity of the tall cypress in long lines forming an avenue, or pointing to the deep blue sky from a terrace, the dense shade and gnarled trunks of the ilex, were all beautiful in their several ways. Had Pope lived in the sixteenth century he would hardly have written that "half the garden just reflects

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the other." True, there was always symmetry and balance, but it was not till the style was rendered absurd by exaggeration and foolish conceits that it aroused the scorn of those who had never troubled to study examples of its best period.

A garden in those days was essentially a place to live in. It had sunny walks for cold days and cool, shady woods and dripping grottos—the "splendid improprieties" of Horace Walpole—for hot weather. Stairways and ramps led from terrace to terrace when the garden was on a hill side, and the abundance of water usually available supplied many fountains. In the designing of these schemes most of the greatest sculptors and architects of the day took part, yet even when the simplest means were used the pools and fountains are always delightful, each with its own especial loveliness. Whether one stands by the great central fountain and water spaces at Lante, or by the plain rectangular pond with its tall cypresses at Falconieri, the supreme suitability of each to its surroundings is borne in upon one.

Those who declare that they like what they call "natural" gardens perhaps hardly realise what they mean. Surely it is quite as unnatural to slavishly copy nature as to frankly follow a certain artistic design. Early in the last century "Capability Brown" was busy designing feigned steeples for non-existent churches in order that the view might become more attractive. A cascade was considered so "unnatural" that whenever a "meandering stream" changed its level the pretty

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fall was masked by a clump of trees, and fountains were banished because they were "artificial."

If we must always be surrounded by copies of nature, why did not architects go a step further, and let the dwelling represent a cave? A building of any sort, frankly obvious as such, is totally "unnatural."

The whole aim of the landscape gardener was to "improve nature," rather than to design a garden which should be a garden and nothing else.

The writer has included no gardens that she has not herself visited. She has very briefly described a few that no longer bear any but the faintest traces of their original design. During her garden pilgrimages she has sometimes been doubtful whether a certain villa was worth a visit or not. She would have been saved much time had a reliable authority told her positively that it was too much "landscaped" to be of interest. She thinks it may be of use to the traveller to know not only what to see but also what to avoid.

Doubtless there are other gardens in Italy which should be included in this guide but which are unknown to the writer. She would therefore be extremely grateful if her readers would tell her of any they have seen that she has missed. An address that will always find her is 8, Nevill Park, Tunbridge Wells.

She desires to convey her heartiest thanks for much help in compiling this book to Miss Helen Zimmern, Miss March Phillips, Sir George Sitwell, Count Cicogna, Professor Spinazzola, of

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the Museo di San Martino, Naples, Commendatore Guido Biagi, Director of the Laurenziana Library, Florence, Cavalliero Arturo Bruno, Cavalliero Camillo Bondi, and many others. The courtesy that she has invariably received from the owners of the gardens visited and from their representatives and *employés* has rendered her work most pleasurable.





PALACE OF STUPENIGI, FROM AN OLD PAINTING IN THE PALACE.

Old Gardens of Italy.

PALACE OF STUPENIGI, NEAR TURIN.

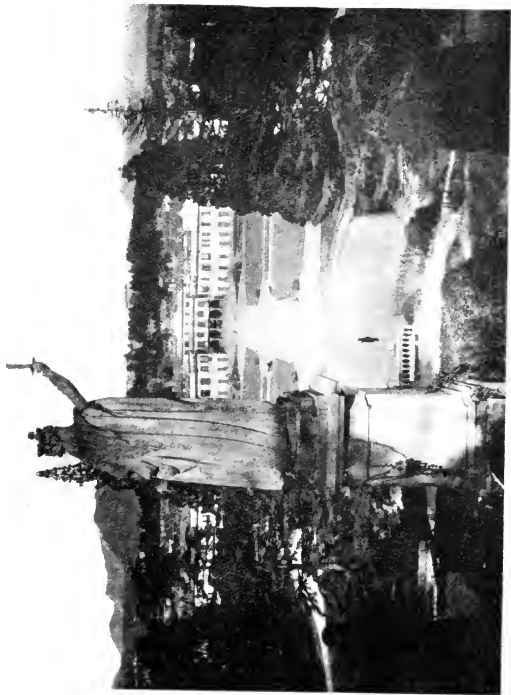
BELONGING to Queen Margherita of Italy. Can be visited only by special permission. The gardens were once formal as may be seen by a painting now hanging in one of Her Majesty's private rooms. Only the merest outline of the original design remains, and the student of gardens will learn nothing from a visit.

PUBLIC GARDENS, VARESE.

THE gardens of the palace built for the Duke Francis III., of Modena, in 1773. The iron work enclosing the forecourt is very fine. The hill is crowned by a *bosquet*, and though all the detail of the gardens has been done away with, yet in their broad outline they are a good example of old palace gardens. They are now the public gardens of Varese, and are situated within the town. The palace is the present town hall.



THE GARDENS OF STUPENIGI, FROM THE PALACE.



PUBLIC GARDENS, VARESE.



IRONWORK AT THE DUCAL PALACE, VARESE.

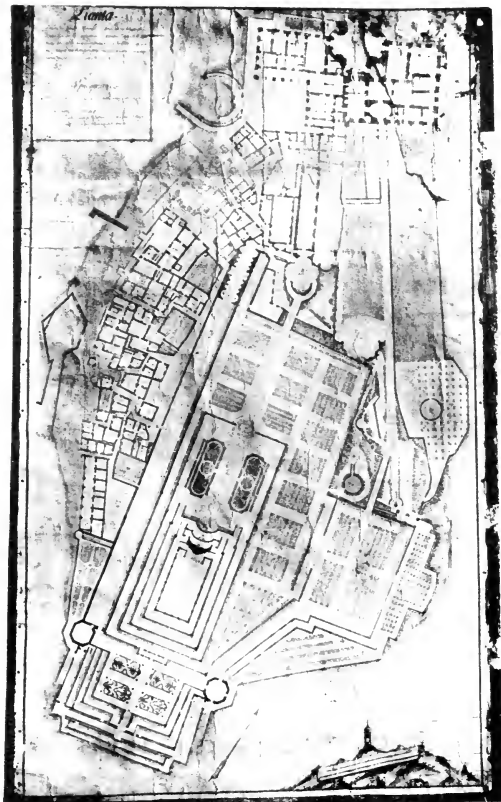
PALAZZO RECALCATI, VARESE.

Now the Excelsior Hotel. This beautiful building, with its charming courtyard and grounds, was erected at the end of the eighteenth century, but followed the style of older villas. The outlines of the old garden exist, in spite of the sad boast in the hotel prospectus that "nothing of artificial gardening marring nature is to be seen." However, one may hope that the proprietors of so excellent a hotel may use their great opportunities and make this garden an example of what a stately old Italian garden should be and has been, now that there is a revival of the taste for such gardens.

The race of the Recalcati died out and the property was purchased by a Swiss family, the Morosoni. Verdi was an intimate friend of theirs, and composed part of his opera "Lombardi" at the villa.

The *parterre*, with its central fountain and clipped box hedges, might be once again as charming as of old. Excavated under its further end is a grotto with a flowing stream through it, and stepping-stones. It is a pretty and original feature.

The Excelsior is about a mile from Varese, and can be reached by electric tram. It is on a hillside overlooking the lake of Varese.



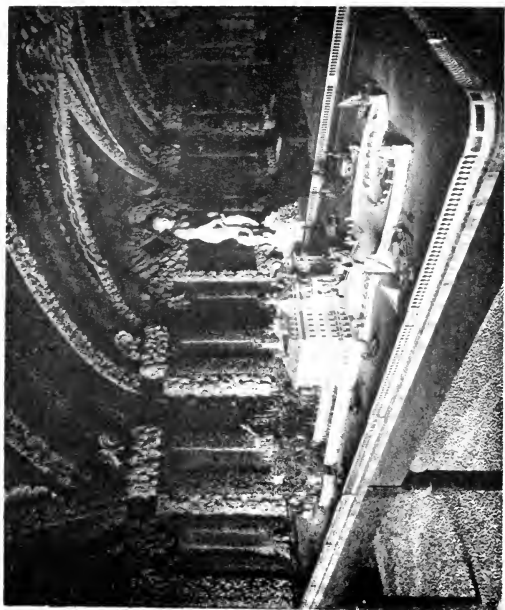
PLAN OF GARDEN, ISOLA BELLA

ISOLA BELLA, LAGO MAGGIORE.

FORMERLY Isola Isabella. The laying out of the garden was commenced in 1632 by Count Carlo Borromeo, and was continued by Count Vitaliano IV. Carlo Fontana, Castelli, and Crivelli had all a share in the construction of the palace and grounds, while the planning of the water-works was carried out by Mora, of Rome. The work was finished in 1671. The grounds are daily open to visitors.

The old model in the palace, showing the scheme for the whole island which it was intended should be covered entirely by the palace and its grounds, gives a better idea than anything else of the unity and harmony of the plan, so frankly artificial yet so entirely in keeping with its surroundings. The palace was never completed, but on the model the beautiful water entrance that was projected is clearly seen.

The garden, the most important in Lombardy to students, is fully described in all books on the subject. There is a detailed description in Dr. G. Burnet's "Letters." He visited it only fourteen years after the completion of the garden, in 1685. Two features, however, a hasty visitor might overlook. One is the extremely clever way in which the commencement of the central walk is hidden from the palace and from the courtyard. Owing to the shape of the island it was impossible for this walk to be placed in a straight line from the axis of the house. It is reached by a double staircase from the court, and on emerging the walk is seen



MODEL OF PALACE AND GARDEN, ISOLA BELLA, AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED.

running straight on and screened by trees from below. The illusion is perfect. The second point of interest is the use that has been made of the gigantic cistern for supplying the fountains, into which water can be pumped from the lake. This forms the foundation of the series of terraces that are so conspicuous at the end of the island opposite to the house.

The place still belongs to a member of the Borromeo family.

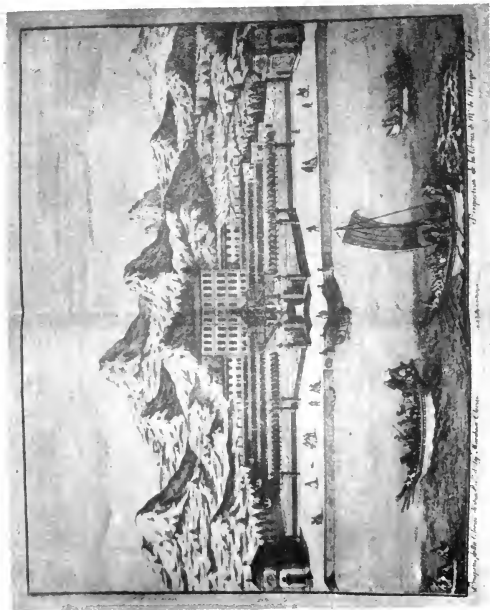
The motto "Humilitas," in ironwork held aloft by a statue, seems hardly appropriate to this sumptuous residence of a prince of the church.

A plan of the house and grounds may be seen in the rooms of the caretaker.

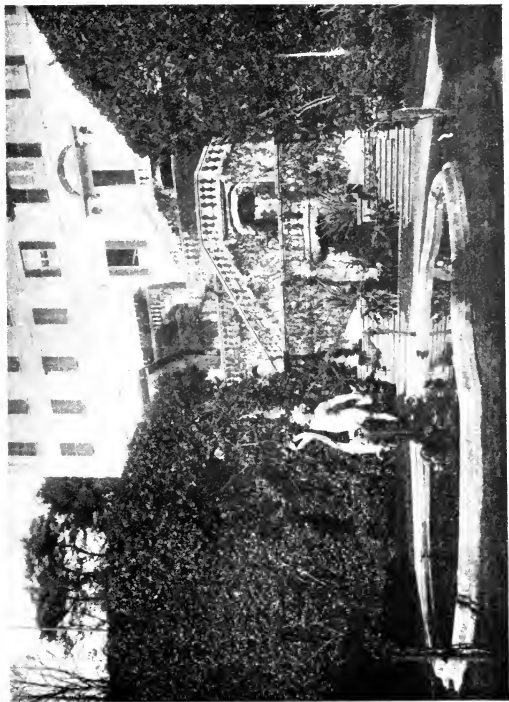
VILLA CARLOTTA, CADENABBIA, LAKE OF COMO.

FORMERLY Villa Sommariva. Built in 1747 for the Marchese Clerici. It afterwards passed to Count Sommariva. It was purchased in 1842 by Princess Albrecht, of Prussia, and its name was then changed to that of her daughter, Charlotte (or Carlotta). It now belongs to Prince George of Saxe-Meiningen, who inherited it from Princess Charlotte, his first wife. It is open daily to visitors.

Of the original formal plan but little remains except the beautiful water entrance, the wrought-iron gates, and balustrade with statues enclosing the garden, and the forecourt with its fountain and



VILLA CARLOTTA, FROM AN OLD PRINT.



FORECOURT AND STAIRWAY, VILLA CARLOTTA.

terraces above, each reached by a double stairway of graceful design.

The traveller, studying the art of garden design in Italy, should, after seeing the Villa Carlotta, turn to his right towards Tremezzo. Shortly after passing through it he will find a couple of delightful water entrances. The further one has a most interesting plan, which is worth study. From here a row of twenty minutes or so will take him to the Villa Balbianella (or Arconati).

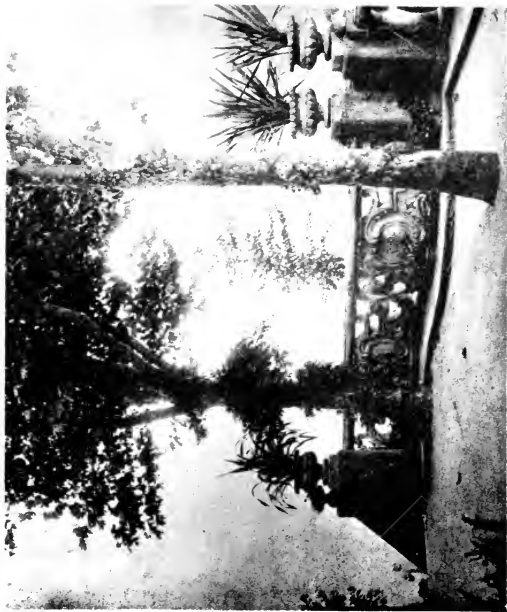
VILLA BALBIANELLO, LAKE OF COMO.

ALSO known as Villa Arconati Visconti. Always accessible. Built in 1785 by command of Cardinal Durini, and at one time the residence of the Bishop of Como.

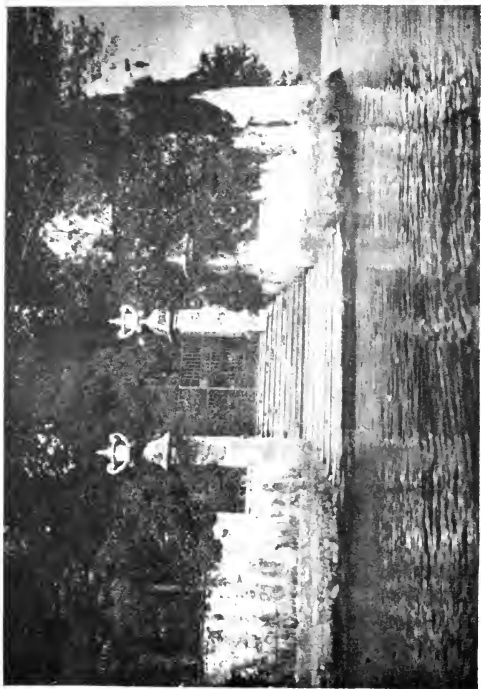
The balustrade of its garden terraces is the famous feature of this villa, and it has two beautiful water entrances, one on either side of the point of the promontory on which it is situated. On an upper terrace is a statue of a Bishop in the act of blessing the waters beneath, and several more statues of Bishops adorn the enclosing wall of the little harbour.

VILLA GIULIA, BELLAGIO, COMO.

THIS villa must at one time have had a formal garden, but nothing of it remains. The approach to the villa from the Como arm of the lake (at the



BALUSTRADE, VILLA BALBIANELLO.



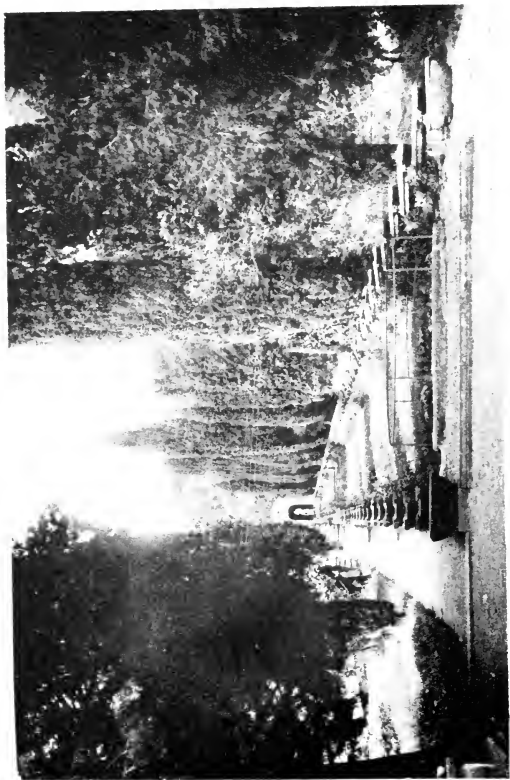
WATER GATE, VILLA BALBIANELLO.

little hamlet of Loppia) should not, however, be overlooked.

The plan is a fine one, and from the water's edge a beautiful *viale* of cypress climbs the hillside by means of nine flights of sixteen steps each. From the summit a perfectly straight level avenue, enclosed by wisteria-clothed walls with a *tapis vert* in the centre and a path at each side, runs to the villa. It is more than 1,000 metres long and thirty broad. Thus the Villa Giulia straddled right across the peninsula, from the one arm of the lake to the other, the garden descending in terraces to the Lecco arm. This *viale* and walk is now open to the public. It was constructed by Leopold I., of Belgium, who at one time owned this property.

VILLA D'ESTE, CERNOBBIO, LAKE OF COMO.

COMMENCED in 1568 from designs by Pellegrino Pellegrini for Cardinal Ptolomeo Galleo. Passed on his death in 1601 to his nephew, Ptolomeo, Duke of Vito. He did not reside there, and eventually it was bequeathed to the Jesuit Order. In 1769 the villa was let to Count Mark Odescalchi and in 1779 to General Marleani. He afterwards bought it and resided there. In 1815, Carolina, Princess of Wales, purchased it. She renamed it the Villa d'Este, and added considerably to the house and grounds. In 1868 the place was purchased for a hotel, and such it has continued.



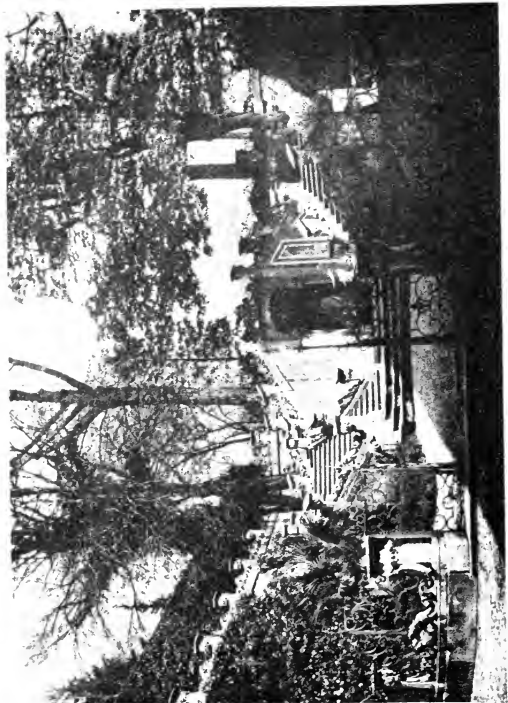
CYPRESS ALLEY, VILLA D'ESTE.

The only portion of the formal design still remaining is the great cypress *allée* and the grottos below its termination, and what was once the *parterre*—now lawn tennis courts. The cypress walk is bordered on either side by a series of stone basins one above another, from which water drops. At the culminating point is a huge grotto, enclosing a statue and fountain of Ariosto, so usual in schemes of this sort. The lower series of grottoes, in pebbles and stucco, are of exceptionally tasteful design. The remainder of the grounds are laid out in the landscape style, with imitation ruins and little temples. The absurd mock fortifications on the hillside were erected by Countess Calderara, wife of Napoleon's general, Dominique Pino, who, returning home after his triumphs in Spain, was pleasantly surprised to find his victories commemorated in this astounding fashion.

PALAZZO GIOVIO, COMO.

Now the Museo Civico. A fine old palace built about the middle of the fifteenth century for the Giovio family. It remained in the possession of their descendants till 1894, when it was purchased by the town of Como for a museum.

The garden is quite a small town garden, but the double stairway leading from the courtyard to the level of the first floor of the palace is beautifully planned, and it has charming gates of wrought iron. It is well worth a visit.



PALAZZO JOVIO, CONIO.

VILLA CRESPI, COMO.

ALSO known as La Gallia. At Borgo Vico, twenty minutes' walk from the landing place of the steamer at Como. An electric tram runs past the entrance.

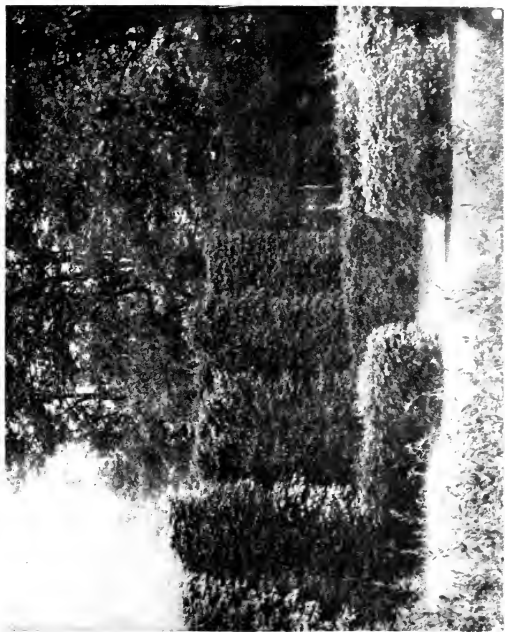
Though the villa was built in 1615 by the Abbot Marco Gallio (nephew of Tolomeo, Cardinal of Como), the garden was only laid out in the old style within the last few years. It is interesting to the writer as being the only example of the formal style that she has seen in a modern Italian garden. It was commenced by Prof. Lodovico Pogliaghi, of Milan, who, however, did not complete it. It can be well seen from the high road and is quite small. The gardener (who, in the absence of the family, is the caretaker of the house), Signor Eugenio Marilly, is courteous in showing it and its beautiful hot houses. He presented the writer with a finely illustrated brochure containing a history of the villa. It is now the property of Donna Giulia Crespi Morbio, who bought it in 1901, and by whose orders the garden was laid out. The grounds on the villa side of the high road (which cuts them into two parts) are still quite in the landscape style.

VILLA CASTELLAZZO DEI ARCONATI,
NEAR MILAN.

ABOUT seven miles out on the road to Varese, and within five minutes' walk of the station.



DRAGON FOUNTAIN, VILLA CASTELLAZZO.



THEATRE, VILLA CASTELLAZZO.

It was designed by Jean Gianda, a Frenchman, and the grounds are very large, but though quite flat, the architect has introduced much variety. They contain a beautiful orange garden, a theatre of clipped beach, large aviaries, a seraglio for wild beasts, and many fountains.

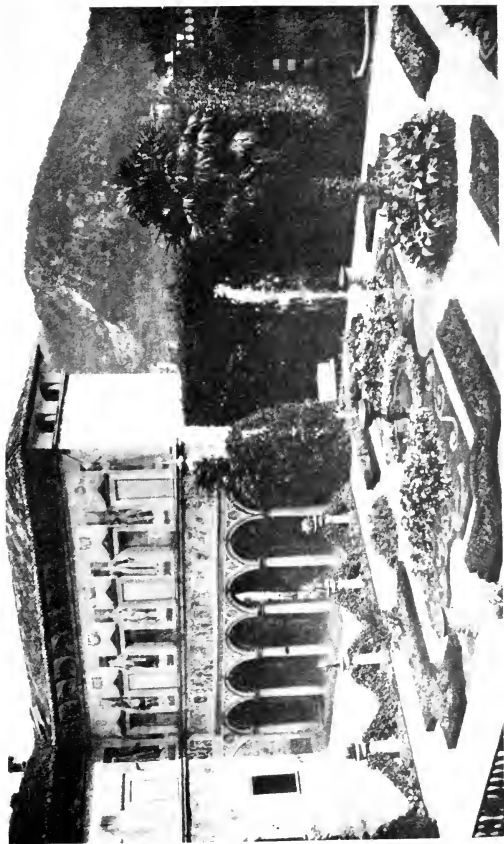
The ironwork, with stone statue-surmounted pedestals enclosing the forecourt, is extremely fine. It is difficult to obtain permission to visit this villa.

VILLA CICOGNA, BISUSCHIO.

THE station is Bisuschio, on the Varese-Porto Ceresio line, about half an hour by train from Varese.

On leaving the station, turn to the left, cross the railway line, and follow the high road. About a mile from the station, on the right, is the chief entrance to the villa, consisting of modern iron gates and a picturesque lodge, also new, but designed to match the beautiful old villa. Following the road, the village is soon reached, and passing through it to the right, the house is arrived at. It is about one and a half miles from the station.

Count Cicogna most kindly allows visitors to be shown over the grounds, and in this house and garden the old plans have everywhere been most carefully preserved, so the place is one of the most enchanting in Italy and retains all its magic of former days, while it is kept up as are scarcely any others that I have met with in the country. The



SUNK GARDEN, VILLA CICOGNA.

situation is beautiful beyond the power of words to describe, and the steep hill-side lends itself to a scheme such as we find here so charmingly carried out. The house is built into the slope, and as one ascends from the ground level to the lower terrace a delightfully characteristic and picturesque stable-yard with an old well will be noticed, bounded by the retaining wall of the garden. The lower terrace is laid out with flower beds and has a central fountain, while its inner side has a gallery or long grotto clothed in maidenhair fern running along the whole length. Above this is the upper terrace, and from the end near the house one suddenly obtains a view into the depths of the most enchanting little sunk *giardino segreto* I have ever seen. The larger portion is laid out in symmetrical box-edged beds, and the rest in water spaces. The forecourt and *loggia* which connect it with the house, break up the scheme very attractively.

There is a pretty *chateau d'eau* with steps at each side down the hill-side at the back, and in the deep shade of the woods innumerable smooth paths give cool walks at varying levels.

From the front of the villa the old idea of a straight avenue to the entrance gates has been revived, and in the centre it divides and circles round a pool.

With regard to the history of the villa, I am indebted to Count Cicogna for valuable information, and he kindly sent me a copy of *Ars et Labour* for August, 1909, in which a beautifully illustrated article about the place appears.



VILLA CRIVELLI, ENTRANCE GATES.



VILLA CRIVELLI, SLOPING PARTERRE.

In 1476 the records of Varese tell, with great wealth of detail, that the Duke of Milan, Galeazzo Maria Sparza (whose wife was Bona, of Savoy), used to come habitually to Bisuschio to hunt bears in the neighbouring forests, and made his headquarters with the brothers Agostino and Antonio Mozzoni, an extremely ancient family tracing its origin to the Moccioni of Rome. The house and gardens were constructed by order of Ascanio Mozzoni, of Milan, a famous poet and savant of his time, who, however, did not live to see the completion of the work. Angela Mozzoni, daughter of Pietro—the last of the branch—married, in 1580, Count Gian Pietro Cicogna, and thus brought this magnificent estate into that family. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the brothers Francesco and Maino Mozzoni remodelled the villa and gave it the form it has to-day, and which is typical of Renaissance architecture in Lombardy. Campi di Cremona, so well known all over Lombardy, and at the neighbouring Villa Medici, at Frascarolo, painted the external decorations of the porticos.

VILLA CRIVELLI, INVERIGO.

INVERIGO is reached in one and a half hours by train from Milan (North station). The villa crowns the hill and is five minutes' walk from the station. Visitors are not welcomed, but by walking through

the outbuildings (to the left of the main entrance in the village) it is usually possible to visit the garden.

The grounds stretch *en pente* down to the road (between the Villa Crivelli and the Rotondo), and their axis is between the villa and a building with a tower facing it and belonging to the same property. The central line is carried on up the opposite hill-side by means of a flight of steps and a cypress *viale* terminating in a stone seat and statue, which was obviously the old approach to the Rotondo.

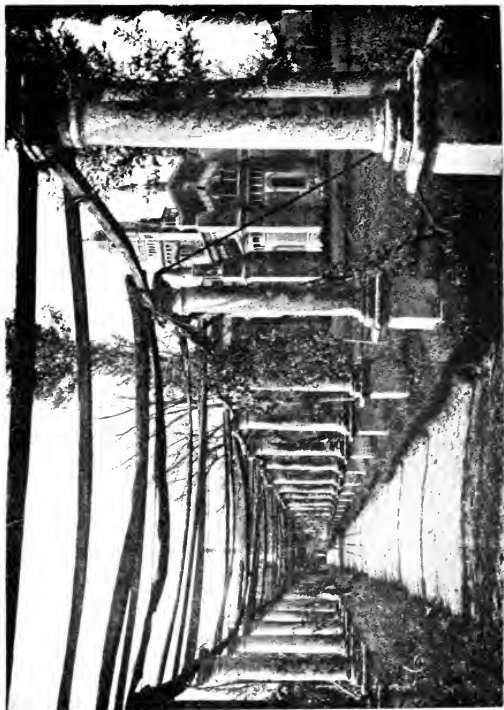
The Crivelli garden has certain rather attractive features, though on the whole its exposed and unsheltered aspect deprives it of the charm of the more secluded villas. Its grey stairways, balustrades, and statues are taking, and the level portion between the two houses gives the privacy denied to that on the open hill-side.

THE CERTOSA DI PAVIA.

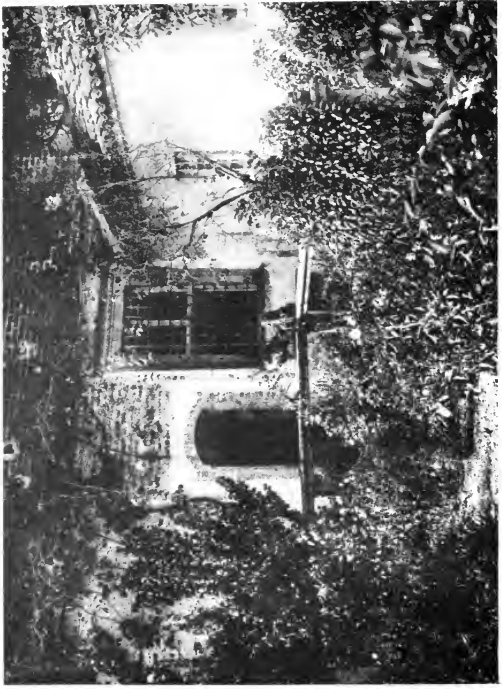
To visit the whole of the grounds a special permission, obtainable from the director of the monastery, is necessary.

The Certosa di Pavia is so fully described in guide books that the writer need only say that it was, when built, the most magnificent monastery in the world, and owed its origin to Giovanna Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan. It was begun in 1396.

The garden of the small cloister is a good example of the treatment of an open space enclosed by



PERGOLA, CERTOSA DI PAVIA.



MONKS' GARDEN, CERTOSA DI PAVIA.

arcades. The tiny monk's garden is delightfully planned, the centre being enclosed with a stone rail, of which the angles are gracefully carved. The public is admitted to this delightful little retreat, so it need not be described more fully here. A long stone pergola, hung with vines, leads to the large fish pond, usually a prominent feature of a monastery garden. This part of the grounds is not shown, but there is nothing specially interesting about its design.

GIUSTI GARDENS, VERONA.

No record is to be found among the public archives of the building of this town palace nor of the laying out of the gardens. Dr. G. Burnet, who visited the garden in 1685, writes: "There is a noble garden in Verona, that riseth up in Terraces the whole height of a Hill." And John Evelyn, in his Diary, says: "At the entrance of this garden grows the goodliest cypress, I fancy, in Europe, cut in a pyramid." We know that in 1739 a *parterre* and a maze still existed. These have now disappeared, and the only survival of the original plan is the glorious cypress walk, beginning near the entrance gate and rising first in a slope and then by terraces to the culminating point of the grounds. There are a couple of fountains on the lowest level of the gardens.



GIUSTI GARDENS, VERONA.

The Giusti Gardens now belong to a market gardener, who readily admits visitors.

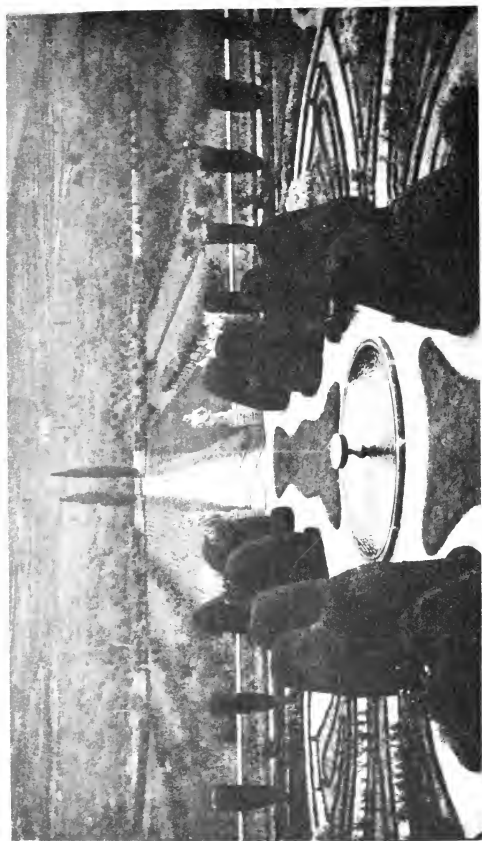
VILLA CUZZANO, VERONA.

AN hour's drive on a level road from Verona. The palace was the country residence of the Scaliger family. It is now the property of Signor Arvedi, who is most kind in allowing visitors to see it. The terrace garden, a wide parterre of broderie, with central fountain, retains its old design and is very attractive, backed by the fine old house. The grotto contains the usual waterworks, but they are not in order, as is so often the case in these old places. Below the terrace garden is a *pente* to the entrance gate guarded by two old cypresses, but all this ground has been utilised for vines. Immediately behind the house, rising effectively above a double stairway, is a chapel. The whole planning of the chapel, house, and garden is most characteristic of its period.

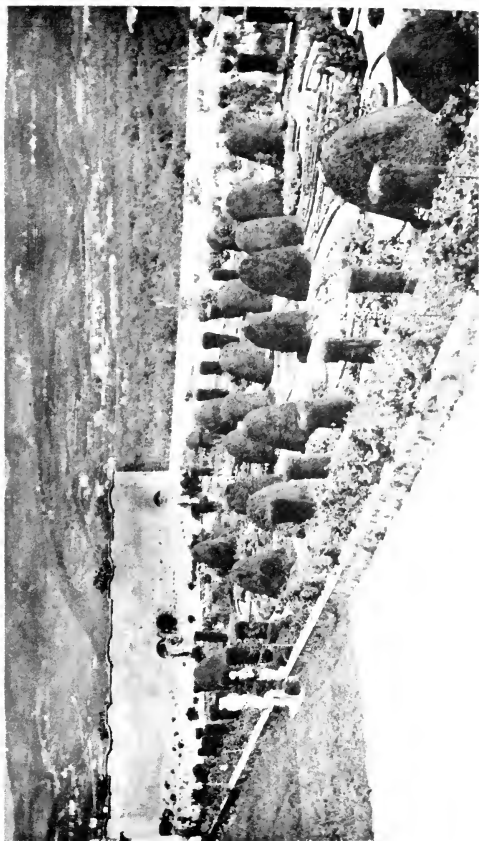
The property was at one time very extensive, and its enclosing wall is still conspicuous for some distance before one reaches Cuzzano. There is no village of that name, which applies only to this estate.

VILLA VALMARANA, VICENZA.

I VISITED this villa in September, 1910. The quickest way to it at first coincides with that to



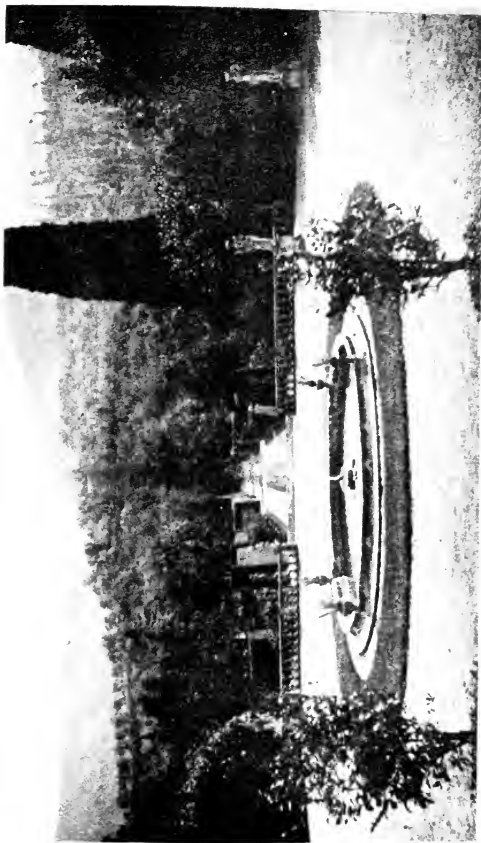
VILLA CUZANO, VERONA. THE ENTRANCE.



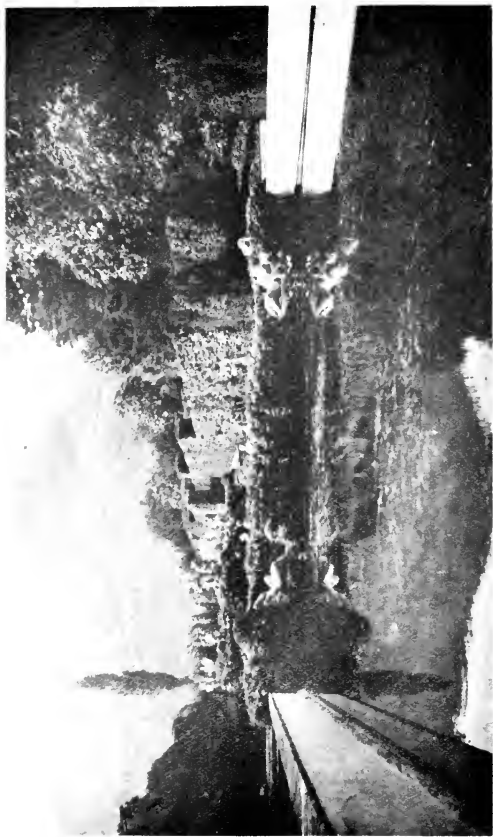
VILLA CUZZANO, VERONA. PARTERRE.

Madonna del Monte. At the top of the first series of arcades (where the church comes into sight) turn along the level road to the left, and after a few yards take the narrow path to the right. This leads between houses for five minutes and joins another coming in from the left close to the picturesque grotesque-crowned wall of the Villa Valmarana. I could not gain admission as no one was in charge and the whole place was locked up. The parterre and lemon house are, however, open to view from the road through iron gates, and the very attractive Loggia attributed to Palladio are well seen. The *parterre* was quite modernised and uninteresting, and the *stanzone* empty. I feel sure, from what I saw, that nothing of the fine old garden described as follows in "Evelyn's Diary," has been retained :

"Count Ulmarini" (a footnote to "Evelyn's Diary" says Lassells calls him Valmerana) "is famous for his garden, being without the walls, especially his *cedrario*, or conserve of oranges, eleven score of my paces long, set in order and ranges, making a canopy all the way by their intermixing branches for more than 200 of my single paces, and which, being full of fruit and blossoms, was a most delicious sight. In the middle of this garden was a cupola made of wire, supported by slender pillars of brick, so closely covered with ivy, both without and within, that nothing was to be perceived but green; betwixt the arches there dangled festoons of the same. Here is likewise a most inextricable labyrinth."



FROM THE CASINO STEPS, VILLA DONÀ DALLE ROSE.



WATER SCHEME, VILLA DONA DALLE ROSE.

VILLA DONÀ DALLE ROSE,
VALSANZIBIO.

TWENTY minutes' drive from Battaglia, which is half an hour by train from Padua. The property of Count Donà dalle Rose, who most kindly admits visitors at any time to his garden, which is one of the most beautiful and interesting in Italy. It was constructed in the sixteenth century for the Martinengo family.

The whole planning of this garden, though quite in conformity with the style of the period, is in one way unlike any other that I know. Driving towards the tiny village that here, as everywhere else in Italy, nestles up close to the residence of the chief magnate of the place, one is struck by a fine old stone archway, pierced by an iron *grille*, whose purpose is to give a view from the outside up the beautiful water scheme, and, from the inside, to form a suitable termination to it. Owing to the fact that the garden fills up the narrow valley and that the house, in order to enjoy a sunny aspect has to face across, instead of up or down it, the usual planning of a *chateau d'eau* down the hill-side was abandoned, and the water was conducted down the very centre of the valley in a series of broad pools. This involved a cross scheme, so from the centre of the villa starts a broad clipped walk transverse to the water, and in the middle stands a fountain forming the true centre of the design. From here one looks up towards a steep *viale* of cypress on the

hill-side behind the villa, and, turning, up a series of huge grassy steps bordered by trees forming a pendant to it on the opposite hill-side.

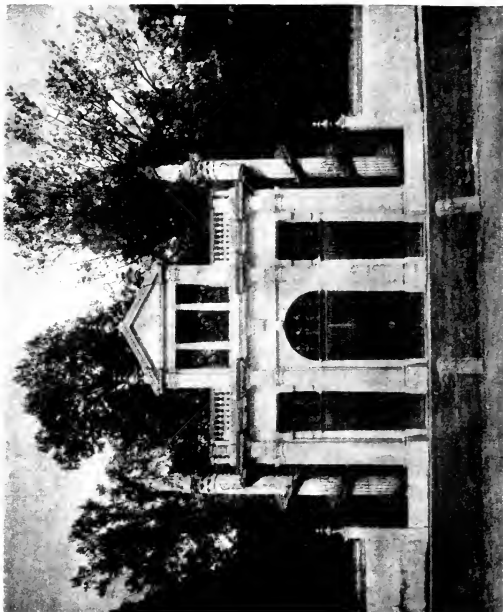
Within this great square, and parallel with its lines, are magnificent pleached alleys, the finest I have seen in any garden, and passing along them, and then between clipped hedges the visitor finds himself in a square compartment given up to a maze, the well-trimmed divisions of which are kept cut at the top to so even a surface that from the commanding outlook in the centre the whole plan is as clear as a print in a book of designs. Another compartment contains a large circular pond, in the middle of which is an island devoted to a colony of rabbits. Judging by the statues of stone rabbits round the edge, this appears to have been constructed for the purpose for which it is still used.

The steps from the house to the villa are pierced with many secret fountains, and others rise at the side of the central walk.

The Hotel delle Terme, at Battaglia, forms good headquarters from which to visit this beautiful garden, and also the chateau of Cattaiò, but the latter retains no trace of the old garden.

PALACE OF STRA, ON THE BRENTA CANAL.

Also known as the Villa Pisani. Built about 1740 for the Pisani family, of Verona, by Count



CLAIRVOYÉE, STRA.

Frigmelica. Bought by Napoleon I. for Eugene Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy. Now a national monument. Permission to visit it may be obtained at the Ducal Palace, Venice. It is on the line of the steam tram that runs along by the Brenta canal from Padua to Fusina. Thus it can be visited either from Padua or from Venice, whence a steamer runs to Fusina in connection with the steam tram.

Very little trace of the once extensive formal garden remains. There is still a maze and a terrace bordering a lemon garden and various summer-houses, but of the great *parterre* seen in Costa's etching no vestige survives. The stable is probably the most magnificent in the world, a veritable palace with collonade in front, and within are rows of stalls, each being decorated by a marble horse on a column, every one differing from its neighbours.

The most distinctive examples of garden architecture at Stra are the *Clairvoyées* and gates. The former are a very French feature, and these windows in the wall, with their beautiful gratings of wrought iron, serve to give life and variety to the grounds within, and are usually placed at the culminating point of a long alley. There are some magnificent gates, too, at Stra, particularly that which faces what was once the water entrance. It has two tall columns, one on either side, with a winding iron staircase round each and a terrace above. It is said that Cardinal de Rohan had a drawing made of this gateway in order that he might have a similar one built at Saverne.

PALAZZO DORIA, GENOA.

BUILT by Fra Giovanni Montorsoli, of Florence, in 1529, for Admiral Andrea Doria. Situated close to the chief railway station. The palace is now in part public offices and grounds, and may freely be entered at any time.

The plan made by M. Gautier in 1832 (see *The Art of Garden Design in Italy*, by H. Inigo Triggs, Plate 17) shows that even then much of the garden remained. In 1904 the writer carefully went over the whole of the ground above the palace to the boundary behind the colossal statue of Jupiter, beneath which is buried a dog that the Doria family took care of for the King of Spain. Gigantic disused cisterns, built in huge squares, honeycombed the hill-side and formed the only reminder of the prodigious garden scheme that once existed. A large hotel now occupies this site.

The slip of ground between the palace and the sea is all that now exists of a garden visited by Evelyn in 1644 and charmingly described by him. "It reaches," he wrote, "from the sea to the summit of the mountains." Little imagination is needed to picture its magnificence at a period when the lower terrace, with its white marble balustrade, bordered the water, long before the present unsightly line of docks interposed. This was the spot where the admiral held his famous banquet, when three times new plate was brought and that which had been used was thrown into the sea.

Between the sea terrace and the terrace of the casino the large *parterre* still remains, with its handsome white marble fountain, the central statue of which, in guise of Neptune, was thought to be a portrait of the admiral, and was executed in 1600 by the Carloni. The design of the *parterre* is now concealed by an over-abundant growth of trees and shrubs, as is so frequently the case. Two fountains adorn the upper terrace. The palace should be entered to view the *loggia* painted by Pierino del Vago.

VILLA SCASSI, SAMPIERDARENA, GENOA.

FORMERLY Imperiali. Built by Galeazzo Alessi (lived 1512-1572), of Perugia, who also laid out the gardens. His best-known buildings are all at Genoa. The casino is now a school and the grounds are public gardens. Reached by tram in about ten minutes from near Genoa railway station. Always open.

The gardens rise in three levels behind the casino, and are most interesting both on account of the early date of their construction and the good taste of their design. They are slightly *en pente* and have good stairways leading from terrace to terrace, and the usual central grottos in both the retaining walls, the lower having a pool in front. The terraces have tasteful screens at their terminations.



VILLA SCASSI, SAMPIERDARENA.

VILLA COLLODI, PESCIA.

ALSO called Villa Garzoni. During the middle ages it belonged to the See of Lucca, and in 1430 was besieged by the Florentines. It was for generations the property of the Garzoni family, and still belongs to them. The present house and garden date from the middle of the seventeenth century. In an old book owned by the proprietor of the Hotel Universo, at Lucca, the writer found a statement that the design was due to Ottaviano Diodati, a native of Lucca, who also competed with Vanvitelli for the design for Caserta. But as Francesco Sbaria's ode to "The Poms of Collodi" was written in 1652 (about a century earlier), the garden must have existed then. The old book is a "Guida di Lucca," compiled by Marchese Antonio Mazzarosa, Lucca (Tipografia di Guiseppe Giusti), 1845.

The garden of Collodi is open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays. It is about two miles from Pescia station. Cabs will be found there.

Collodi is imposing rather than charming. The position of the casino, quite detached from the chief scheme of the garden, is peculiar, and gives the impression that from the first the grounds were laid out for public use. The fact that the tiny hamlet is only gained by passing through the gates of the great feudal demesne strengthens this suggestion, and detracts from the sense of harmony and

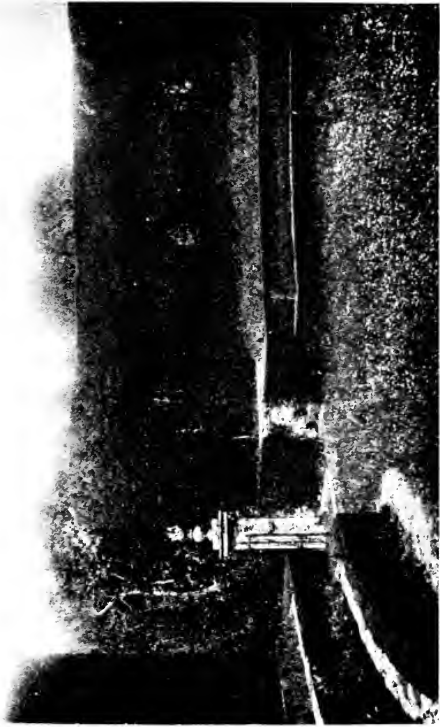


VILLA COLLODI, PESCIA.

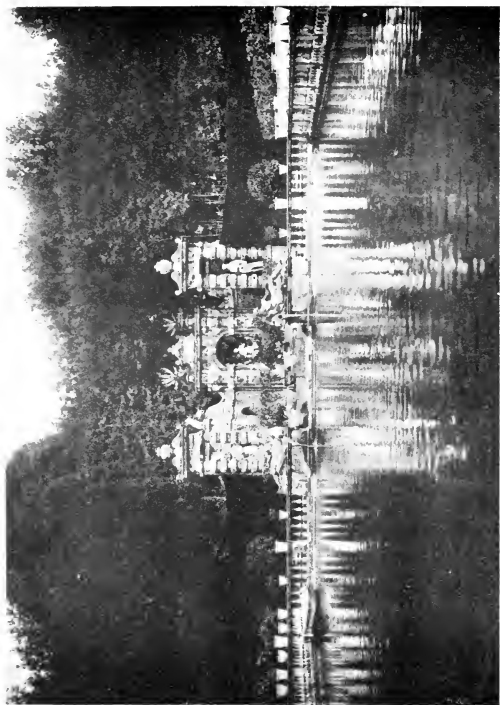
privacy conveyed by most of the famous gardens. At the top of the cascade is a huge figure of Fame with two others reclining at her feet and representing Florence and Lucca. The cascade itself is broken up by figures of birds. A dense *bosco* of ilex clothes the slope above, and terrace above terrace rises to meet it from the *parterre*. The great middle terrace is backed by the high clipped edge of the *bosco*. At the end of this terrace, when walking towards the casino, and on the inner (or right) side, is a pretty little theatre, with wings of topiary work as at Marlia. A rustic bridge across a small ravine leads to the house. From the road below a wonderful system of ramps rise past two sentry boxes to the palace. Collodi is by far the most important garden in the neighbourhood of Lucca. The two large pools in the *parterre* are not pleasing features of the design.

VILLA MARLIA, LUCCA.

LUCCA is a good centre for the garden explorer. Even within the city the writer came on the remains of two old gardens. One is the garden of the Palazzo Bottoni, just outside the Porta San Gervasio. It retains only its rectangular plan with four gates and a grotto. It is not worth a visit, but the concierge readily admits anyone interested, and postcards of it may be seen in the shops. The other is the garden of the seventeenth century



GARDEN THEATRE, VILLA MARLIA.



WATER GARDEN, VILLA MARLIA.

Palazzo Controni (now Pfanner), a beautiful building, from the stairway of which the garden is visible. The latter belongs to a maker of soda water, and it has a pretty formal design with a central fountain. The palace is close to the ramparts, near San Fredianó, and seems always open. Of the country villas, that of Marlia is the most important. It first belonged to Count Orsetti, and in 1806 was bought for the Crown. It was embellished by the Princes Baciocchi, and is now the property of Prince Borbone di Capua. It is shown to visitors on application.

Marlia can be reached by steam tram from the Porta Santa Maria in about a quarter of an hour. It is a walk of ten minutes from the point on the high road where visitors leave the tram. This is the same tram that runs to Saltocchio (for the Villa Bernardini) a little further on.

Of the once formal plan of the grounds only three features remain. Of these the little theatre is particularly charming, with its close-clipped wings, its stand in topiary work for the conductor of the orchestra, its tiers of grass-covered seats, and its enchanting glimpse through the entrance of the fountain without, placed just on the axis of the stage. This secluded, circular little theatre is one of the best of its kind in Italy.

Very simple and attractive is the lemon garden, or, as one might perhaps call it, the water garden. A large tank, into which two urns held by huge recumbent figures below a grotto empty themselves, fills one end of the enclosure, and on its balustrade

stand the great pots which are so decorative a feature of an Italian garden.

In front of the house there is a pretty water scheme backed by a small cascade.

VILLA BERNARDINI, SALTOCCHIO, LUCCA.

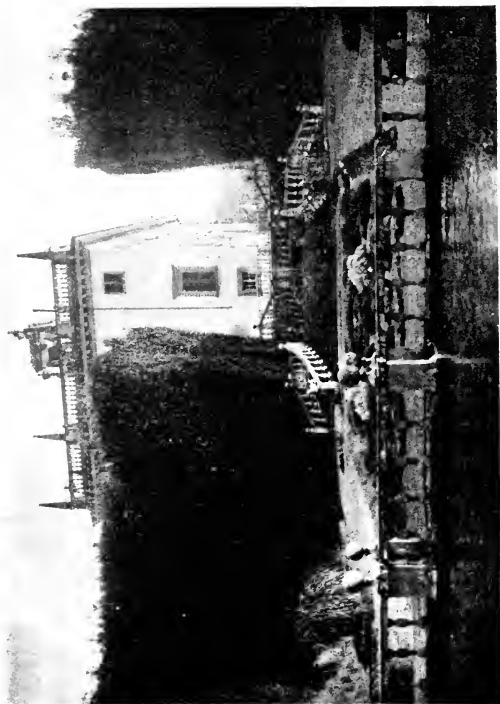
REACHED by the same steam tram taken for Marlia. Get out at Ponte Rosso, half-an-hour's run. Go under narrow railway arch, keep straight on, and in five minutes the great *viale*, a mile long, will be seen. This is of ash, each tree exactly matching its neighbour. The villa is visible at the end.

On reaching its central gate turn to the left, follow the wall, and ringing at a side entrance ask permission to enter the grounds.

The design of the garden is a fine one, and the writer regrets that she does not know where a plan of it may be seen. There is a secluded water garden close to the house. A series of small terraces with fountains and mosaics descend to a semi-circular, balustraded pool, and the whole is enclosed in a high clipped ilex hedge. Near the tiny chapel is the site of what was once a little lemon garden, a veritable *giardino secreto*. The general scheme of the grounds may be traced in the many clipped walks which terminate in fountains. As is the case in all these gardens in the neighbourhood of Lucca, there is an abundant water supply. A pretty little



VIALE, VILLA BERNARDINI.



FROM THE WATER GARDEN, VILLA BERNARDINI.

series of tiny stone basins, one below another, is at the end of one of the paths, and above is a long rectangular pond. There is plenty of shade and the house and garden are in a pleasant position on sloping ground which lends itself to a better scheme than at Marlia, where the site is nearly level.

The guide book alluded to in the account of Collodi gives four more villas with old gardens near this spot, those of Buonvisi, Orsetti, Fantinelli, and La Lucchesini, but the writer could not hear of any remains of good gardens still existing other than those she visited.



TERRACE OF THE SECRET FOUNTAINS, VILLA TORRIGIANI.

VILLA TORRIGIANI, CAMIGLIANO,
LUCCA.

THIS villa seems to have been built for and long belonged to the Santini family. It is now the property of the Marchese Torrigiani. In the Pinacoteca of Lucca is a portrait of a member of the Santini family when a boy, with a background showing a garden laid out in formal style. Post-cards of this are obtainable in the shops. The garden is shown on application to the gardener. It may be reached by electric tram (starting in front of Hotel Universo) in about half-an-hour to a cross roads (which the conductor will indicate). From there the road is absolutely straight for about two miles. Then the beginning of a magnificent *viale* of cypress trees will be reached, about 130 on either side. The villa is visible behind handsome iron gates at the end. The only part of the grounds now formal is the so-called "Garden of Flora." This is a sunk garden with grotto and garden house and innumerable secret fountains. The design is more curious than beautiful, and the charm of the place lies in its cypress avenue and its attractive and finely placed casino rather than in its gardens. It is possible for the enthusiast to visit all the Lucca villas—Marlia, Bernardini, and the three at Camigliano—in one day by motor or even by carriage. It is a round of about twenty-five miles.



VILLA MANSI.

VILLA MANSI, SEGROMIGNO, LUCCA.

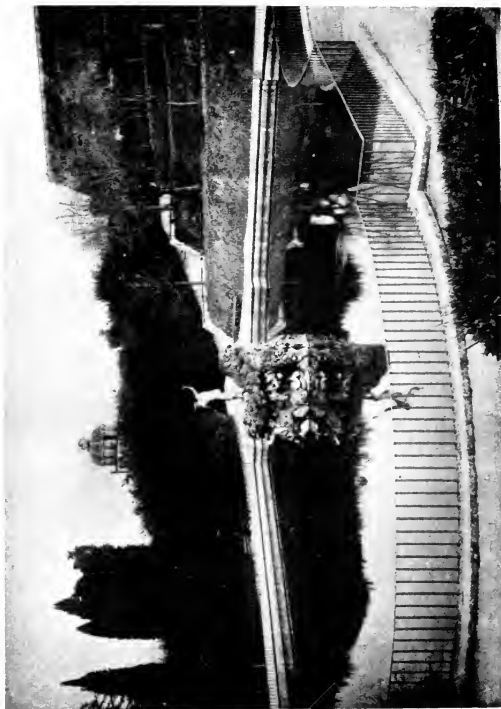
ABOUT twenty minutes' walk from Villa Torrigiani. Anyone will point out the way. The front of the villa, which resembles that of Torrigiani, is attractive, but the garden now contains no formal features except a balustraded pool with statues. Just beyond it is the Villa Mazzarosa, with small circular temple erected in 1830 to the honour of famous men of Lucca. The grounds did not appear formal, but the writer failed to enter them. The house was built about 1813—far too late for a garden of formal design to have been planned. Yet at Lucca the appreciation of the old style lingered long, for in 1785 an amphitheatre for horse races was laid out in a way strongly reminiscent of an old garden design. The plan may be seen in one of the glass cases at the Pinacoteca.

BOBOLI GARDENS, FLORENCE.

THE garden of the Pitti Palace was commenced in May, 1550, by Il Tribolo, assisted by Buontalenti. Open to the public on Sundays and Thursdays after mid-day.

This large garden is particularly interesting because it retains nearly all its old design. Being a Court garden, space had to be provided for pageants and large gatherings, hence the *raison d'être* of the amphitheatre. The most beautiful feature of the grounds is the Isolotto, an oval pool with an island and central fountain reached by two bridges with fine entrance gates surmounted by marble rams, the constellation Capricornus having been that favoured by Cosimo I. A clipped ilex hedge surrounds the pool. Charming little fountains are placed at regular distances on the margin of the water. The treatment of the balustrade of the island in the intervals of which stand lemon pots, should be noticed, as also the beautifully-designed water spaces beneath Gian Bologna's great central fountain, permitting the gardeners to quickly fill their cans by dipping them in. The Isolotto is at the lowest point of the garden, and a glorious *viale* runs straight down to it from near the fountain of Neptune. Visitors, however, can most quickly reach it by skirting the garden side of the palace till they reach the lemon houses, close to which it is situated.

Another delightful feature of the grounds is the



NEPTUNE FOUNTAIN, BOBOLI GARDENS.

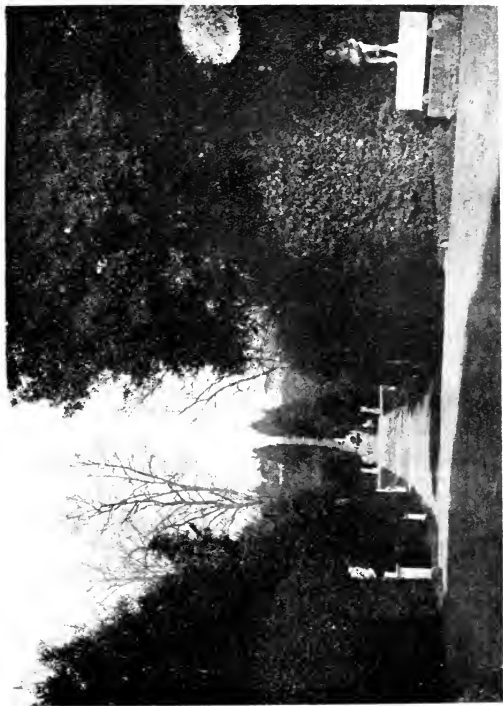
Giardino del Cavaliere. This is a sort of *giardino segreto*, laid out on the very summit of Michael Angelo's ramparts, with symmetrical flower-beds and a central fountain surmounted by a charming figure of a child in marble. Bronze monkeys are grouped round the lower ledge of the pedestal and dip their toes in the basin.

In the *Uccellaia, a wild part of the grounds not far from the Belvedere, is a very beautiful fountain of simple design surmounted by a figure of Ganemede in white marble and with a carved marble seat on either side. Vines are now grown here, and the enclosure is kept locked.

As few people now admire the exterior of Buon-talenti's grotto, built to receive four unfinished statues by Michael Angelo, many fail to penetrate to the innermost recesses of it. Yet here stands a lovely white marble fountain by Gian Bologna, with a figure of Venus above, four satyrs crouching under the basin, and a representation of rippling water on the base. This was one of the famous sculptor's early works, but did not satisfy him in his later years.

The obelisk in the centre of the amphitheatre came from the Villa Medici at Rome, and the great

* These bird traps may still be seen in various parts of Italy. Montaigne describes one near Lucca, at the villa of M. Benoit Buonvisi, as follows: "Dans une espace d'environ cinquante pas, ils plantent divers arbres de l'espece de ceux qui restent verts toute l'année. Ils entourent ce lieu de petits fossés, et pratiquent au dedans de petites allées convertes. Au milieu du bosquet, est un endroit pour le chasseur qui, dans certains tems de l'année, muni d'un sifflet d'argent et de quelques grives prises exprès pour cet usage et bien attachées, après avoir disposé de tous côtés plusieurs appeaux avec de la glu, prendra dans une matinée deux cents grives."



LOOKING ACROSS THE ISOLOTO, BOBOLI GARDENS.



STATUE OF VENUS, GROTTA OF BOBOLI GARDENS.

open space here was used for pageants. When Francis I. was married a great naval fight was represented in the arena.

The group of the fountain of Neptune, above the arena, was the work, in 1565, of Stoldo Lorenzo. The not very pleasing figure of Abundance (supposed to be a portrait of the wife of Francesco I.) was begun by Gian Bologna and finished by a pupil. It was put up in 1636 to commemorate the fact that Tuscany prospered under her king while famine reigned elsewhere in Italy.

THE CORSINI PALACE, FLORENCE.

THIS is not the Corsini Palace on the Arno containing the famous Picture Gallery. It is Prince Corsini's private residence, 40 Via del Prato, and the garden is not shown. It is rather an interesting example of the treatment of a perfectly flat piece of ground in a town, and most of it retains its old design, as the accompanying illustration shows. There is a charming *loggia*, with fountain, leading from the house, and the walk, bordered by statues (which, to make the path seem longer, decrease in size as they retreat), is on its axis.

VILLA CORSINI, CASTELLO, FLORENCE.

FORMERLY I Rinieri or Il Lepre dei Rinieri. At the beginning of the fifteenth century this villa



GARDEN OF CORSINI PALACE FLORENCE.

belonged to Palla Strozzi, afterwards exiled by the jealousy of his fellow-citizens. In 1460 Alexandra Bardi, widow of his son Lorenzo, sold it to Bernardo di Stoldo Rinieri. Till then the place was simply known as Il Palagetto. In 1571 it passed into the hands of Francesco di Jacopo Sangalietto, in 1597 of Pagolo di Giuliano Donati, and later was bought by Cosimo, son of the Grand Duke Ferdinando II. de Medici, so that he might have a house of his own near his father. Afterwards it belonged to the Jesuit order, and finally came into the possession of the Corsini family. It now belongs to Prince Corsini, who most courteously gives permission to visitors to see the grounds and who is himself a great authority on the old gardens of Italy. Villa Corsini is quite close to Villa Petraja and the Villa Reale, Castello.

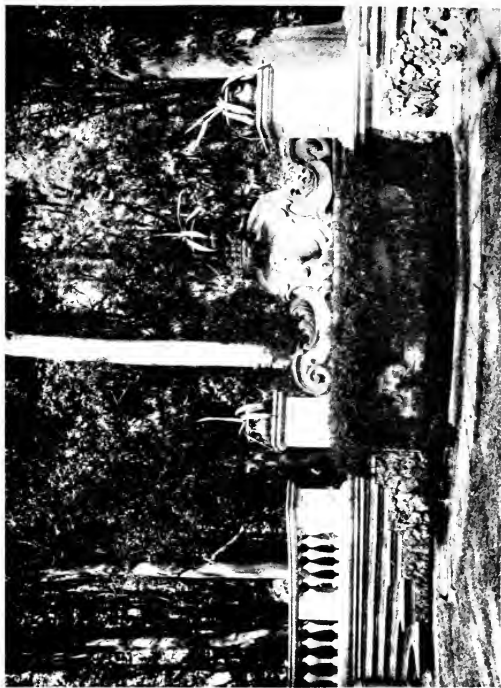
The house was remodelled during the end of the seventeenth century by Antonio Ferri.

The villa is, like Castello, on a high road, the entire space at the back being thus reserved for its gardens. In this way much greater privacy is ensured when the grounds are not very extensive. As Mrs. Wharton points out, the plan is very usual in France, and we see it in nearly all Italian town gardens—the Boboli gardens, for instance, and the Giusti Gardens at Verona.

The garden of Villa Corsini has much quiet charm. The *parterre*, with its central pool, is laid out in an intricate geometrical pattern, and bordered on three sides by a wall over which climb roses, the picturesque garden front of the house forming the



GARDEN SEAT AND TABLE VILLA CORSINI, CASTELLO



FOUNTAIN, VILLA CORSINI, CASTELLO.

fourth boundary. An ilex walk directly faces the entrance through the court. In the *bosco* a little above the rest of the garden is a beautiful, cool scheme with dripping basin, marble horses' heads, and stone seats in circular enclosures. Il Tribolo's statue is said by Vasari to once have formed part of the fountain, but it is now at the other end of the grove. Beyond it is a riding space.

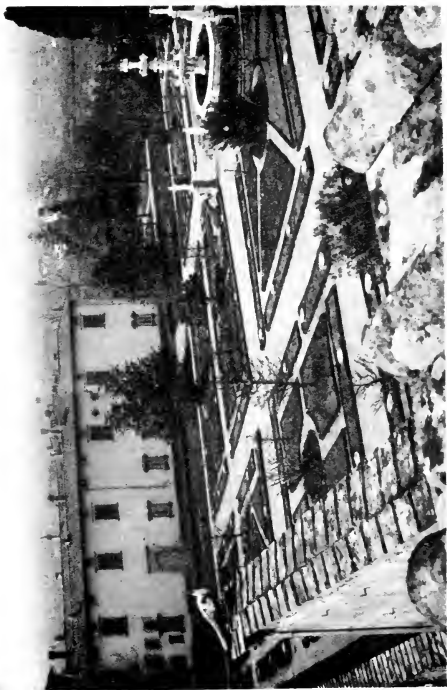
VILLA REALE, CASTELLO, FLORENCE.

FORMERLY Il Vivajo, a Royal Villa. Permission at the Pitti Palace, Florence, where also a *permesso* for Petraja is obtainable, and one for Poggio a Caiano, if this is thought worth visiting. A tram from near the cathedral runs through Castello.

Built for Lorenzo and Giuliano di Piero Francesco de Medici, from designs by Buontalenti, on the site of, and partly from the remains of an older house.

The greatest sculptors of the time worked on the decoration of the gardens, Piero di Cosimo, Bronzino, Pontormo, Il Tribolo. The engineer of the water-works was Piero da S. Casciano.

As at Petraja, the great *parterre* is *en pente*, but the slope is so much gentler that the effect is better, and in this case the house is below, and not above, the garden, thus rendering the scheme visible from it in its entirety. A huge retaining wall lends itself to the construction of a grotto which was planned by Il Tribolo. It abounds with secret fountains



PARTERRE, VILLA REALE, CASTELLO (WINTER).



FROM THE BOSCO, VILLA REALE, CASTELLO.

and has groups of animals carved in different coloured marbles. In the centre of the garden is the glorious fountain generally believed to be by Gian Bologna, but attributed by Vasari to Il Tribolo. On a higher level, close to the *bosco*, is a delightfully typical gardener's house, with lemons in huge pots standing by it. The pool in the *bosco* has in its centre a large figure by Gian Bologna representing the Apennines. On the ends of the tiled roof of the *stanzone* are beautiful bronze birds.

VILLA DELLA PETRAJA, CASTELLO, FLORENCE.

A ROYAL Villa. Permission at the Pitti Palace, Florence, when the *permesso* for Castello is applied for. Castello should be visited first. The villa is very old, and the family of Brunelleschi had it till 1362. It was then a fortress, and in 1364 the sons of Boccaccio de Brunelleschi defended it successfully against the English troops of Aguto. It was in 1427 in possession of Palla di Noferi Strozzi, and was confiscated with the rest of that rebel's goods. In 1468 Benedetto d'Antonio Salutati bought it for 23,070 scudi. A Medici, Cardinal Fernando, next owned it. In 1859 it passed into the Italian civil list. Vittoria Emanuele II. restored it and often resided there. It was much embellished by Buontalenti, to whom the present form of the house and grounds is largely due.

The *parterre* of Petraja is *en pente*, which usually

in the writer's opinion, gives a rather untidy, neglected appearance. In the centre is a fine, though simple, fountain on a little mound reached by charmingly planned steps. On the upper terrace stands Il Tribolo's masterpiece, a fountain brought here from Castello by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo. Carocci refers to the beautiful bronze female figure surmounting it as Venus, but others believe it represented the city of Florence. Some think that the bronze is by Gian Bologna. Great tanks below the terrace contain carp, said to be of fabulous age. From Petraja it is easy to descend straight to Villa Corsini.

POGGIO A CAIANO, FLORENCE.

A FORMER Medici villa and now belonging to the Crown. *Permesso* at the Pitti Palace. Reached by steam tram (from opposite the railway station) in about two hours.

Nothing of the once formal plan of the grounds remains except the entrance to the lower garden and the magnificent *stanzone*. It is most certainly not worth a visit when gardens are the only objective.

VILLA CARREGGI, FLORENCE.

THE famous villa of the Medici, where Lorenzo died. Now the property of the Segre family, of Rome. It is never shown without a private introduction.

There was once a formal garden, but only the *parterre* remains. A student of old gardens would



PARTERRE, VILLA PETRAJA, CASTELLO.



FOUNTAIN BY IL TRIBOLO, PETRAJA.



STAIRWAY, POGGIO A CAIANO.



PARTERRE, VILLA CARREGGI.

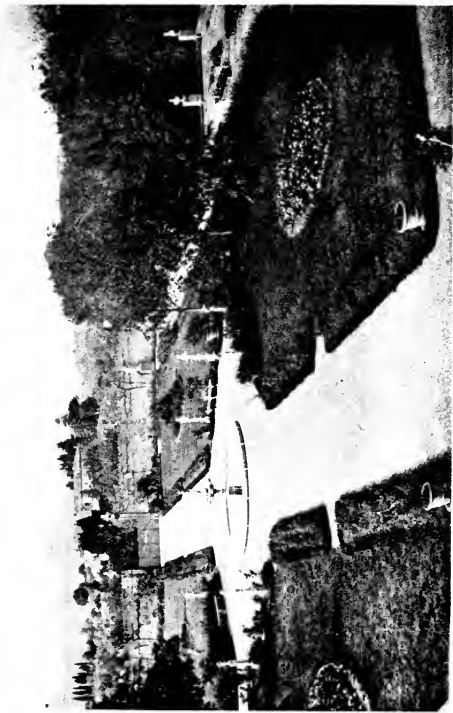
find nothing of interest, although the house, with its charming *loggia*, where the philosophers met, and its various other historic associations will always remain one of Florence's most interesting and important villas.

VILLA POGGIO IMPERIALI, FLORENCE.

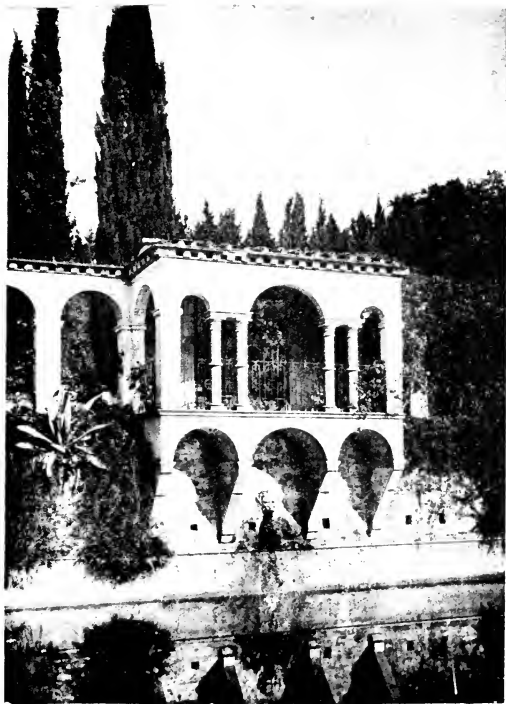
FORMERLY Poggio dei Baroncelli. Now a girls' school and not accessible. Built for Maria Maddalena of Austria in 1622. For many years the favourite residence of the grand-ducal Medici. The magnificent approach is now a public highway, and descends to the left (going) not far from the Porta Romana. The semi-circular court outside the villa and the *parterre* with its central fountain at the back, together with the *bosco* on a lower (instead of, as usual, higher) level, are the only remains of the once beautiful garden plan. The *parterre* retains none of its bedding design. The student, if he has a spare hour, may like to go as far as the entrance, but it will not be worth his while to obtain permission to go over the house and grounds.

VILLA PALMIERI, FLORENCE.

FORMERLY Villa Schifanoja or Fonte de'Tre Visi. Was said to be a favourite retreat of Boccaccio, where his famous company betook themselves when Florence was devastated by plague. The villa belonged originally to Cione di Fine, of the



PARTERE, POGGIO IMPERIALI.



LOGGIA, VILLA PALMIERI.

Fine family, then passed to Solosmei, who possessed it in 1427, and from Matteo it was bought in 1457 by Marco Palmieri. It was this family which beautified and added to the villa and its charming garden. Afterwards the villa belonged to the Grand-duchess Maria Antonia of Tuscany, then to the Earl of Crawford, and on Lady Crawford's death in 1907 it was purchased by an American, Mr. Ellsworth. Queen Victoria of England twice stayed at Villa Palmieri.

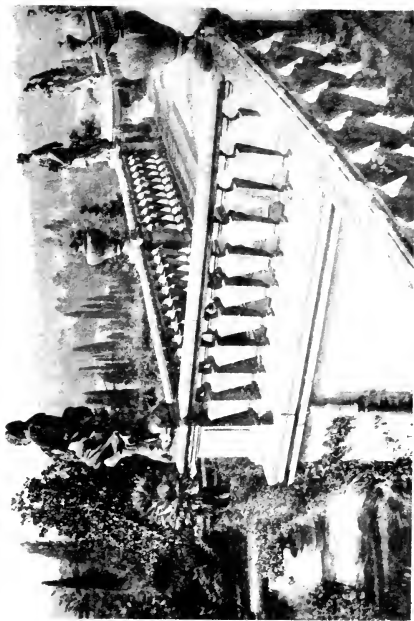
The great beauty of its grounds is the magnificent balustraded terrace, which is reached from the picturesque lemon garden below by a double ramp. Formerly the entrance was on this side, and the fine gates and approach, with the house standing out boldly above, is poorly compensated for by the convenient carriage way which lands visitors at the level of the great court.

A *giardino secreto*, in a sheltered and sunny spot, is of not very pleasing design. The same may be said of its fountain. This bit of sunk ground would lend itself to a pretty scheme, and the writer has been told that Mr. Ellsworth has greatly improved the gardens, retaining their design, since she was there.

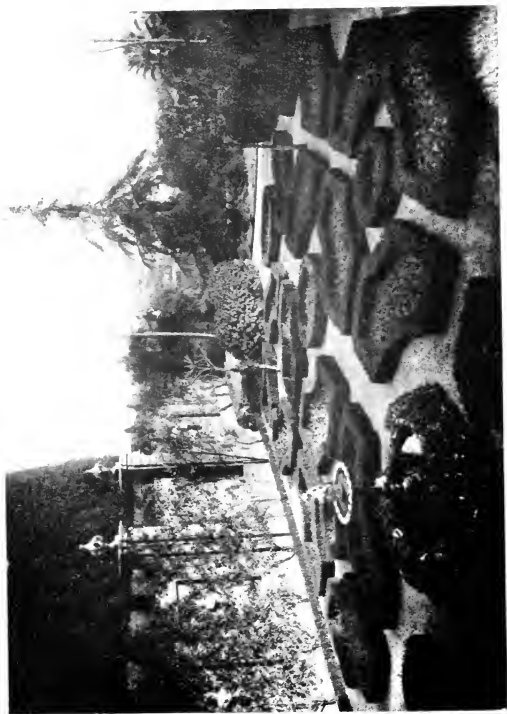
A little *loggia* overhangs a pool, and it was in this summer-house that Queen Victoria usually had tea.

VILLA BONDI, FLORENCE.

FORMERLY Villa Dante. There is nothing left of the formal plan of the grounds, which now owe



TERRACE, VILLA PALMIERI.



SUNK GARDEN, VILLA SALVIATI.

their charm only to their delightful position and the two *loggie* of the beautiful house. This villa is historically of much interest, and permission to visit it is sometimes given by Cavalliero Camillo Bonda, Manefattura di Signa, Florence, to whom it belongs.

VILLA SALVIATI, FLORENCE.

THIS villa belonged, in the fourteenth century, to the Del Palagio, and from them, a century later, passed to the Da Montegonzi. In 1469 Arcangiolo di Messer Bartolommeo sold it for 1,800 golden florins to Alamanno Salviati. It was here, according to tradition, that Jacobo Salviati received the head of the beautiful and unhappy Caterina Canacci, slain by his wife, Veronica Cybo.

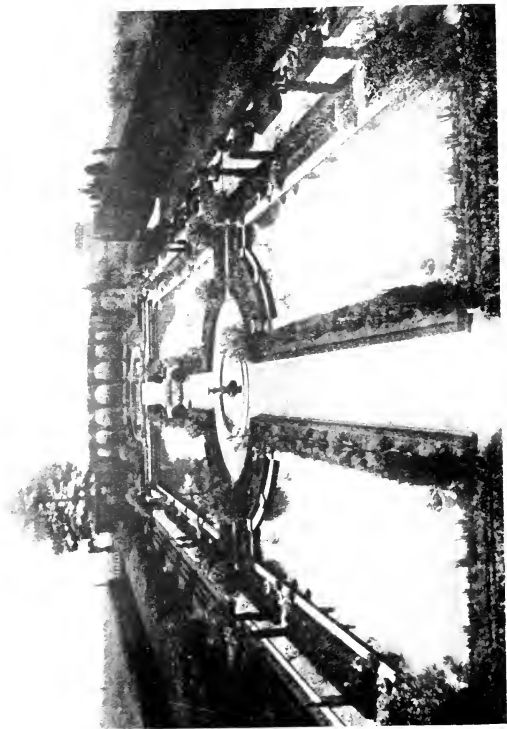
The villa was in later years the property of Prince Borgese, then of Mr. Vansittart, and then of Mario, the famous singer. It now belongs to Madame Turri, who bought it in 1900.

The garden is perfectly kept and very charming, but except the delightful little sunk *parterre* and the magnificent *stanzone*, none of it is formal.

It is not usually shown.

VILLA GAMBERAIA, SETTIGNANO, FLORENCE.

THE name of Gamberaia first occurs in a document at the Badia of Florence containing a transfer dated



WATER GARDEN, VILLA GAMBERAL.

January 17th, 1398, of the house and land from the Badessa of St. Martino, at Mensola, to Giovanni di Benozzi, of the same brotherhood. In the beginning of the fifteenth century a man of Settignano, Matteo di Domento (known as Gamberelli) had five sons. All were sculptors and architects but Giovanni. Bernard and Antonio emerged from the crowd of workers the place then harboured. These two men, better known as the Rossellini, executed many beautiful works at Florence and elsewhere. In 1592 Giovanni, son of Bernardo Gamberelli, bought Gamberaia from Domenico di Jacobo Reccialbani, and so improved the place that from thenceforward it was known as the Palagio of Gamberaia. One cannot but think that the studio must have been constructed at this time for its artistic possessor.

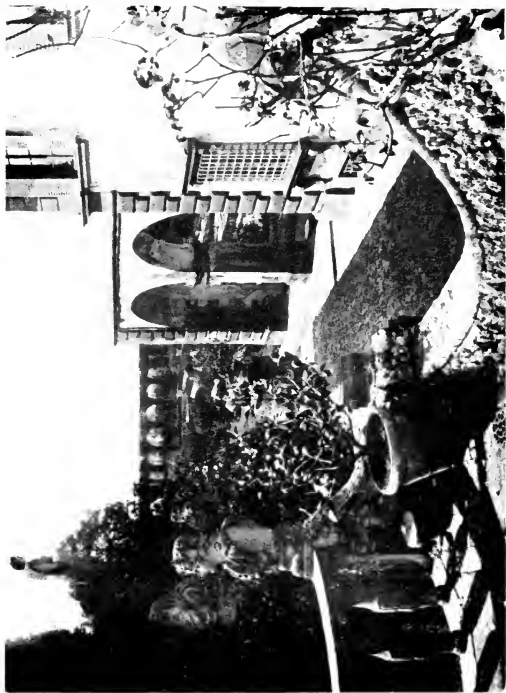
After passing through the hands of the D'Outrelean family, it was bought by Princess Giovanna Ghika, sister of Queen Natalie of Servia, who, with her friend, an American lady, Miss Blood, now resides there. Under no circumstances is it possible to see the garden while the family is in residence, but when they are absent permission may be applied for from the Princess's agent in Florence. The Settignano electric tram from Florence runs within a few minutes' walk of Gamberaia.

In some respects the grounds are the most attractive the writer knows. The position of the villa, standing finely on a ridge overlooking the valley, is charming, and the surroundings of the house, though occupying barely three acres of land, are

marvellously varied and absolutely retired. A clipped drive leads to the house, and beyond, a trifle sunk, lies the oblong water garden, a sunny *parterre* laid out with pools instead of flower beds, and terminating in a semi-circular pond backed by a clipped screen. On the inner side (for the grounds lie on a shelf broken up into terraces) and a little above is a long grass terrace running nearly the entire length of the garden and dividing it into two portions. This is one of the most delightful features of the place and is very rare in Italian gardens. The turf is kept as green as if it were in England. This long alley terminates at one end in a balustrade over which a glorious view of Florence is disclosed, and at the other by a grotto and a group of great cypresses. Facing the house, and reached through gates from the grass terrace, is an enclosed rock garden with a double stairway, one on either side, leading respectively to a *bosco* on one side and to the lemon garden on the other. The latter is gay and sunny, with a fountain and huge red pots, and backed by a picturesque *stanzone*. Another *bosco* is reached from this level, and through it winding paths lead down again to the grass alley.

On the outer side of the house runs a terrace with sculptured balustrade giving beautiful views. Close below are the fields and vineyards, which in nearly all cases in Italy border the grounds.

The Capponi family, early in the eighteenth century, embellished the grounds with fountains and statuary.



FROM THE LEMON GARDEN, VILLA GARBIERA.



VILLA MEDICI, FIESOLE.

VILLA MEDICI, FIESOLE.

ALso known as Belcante or Il Palagio di Fiesole. One of the many villas of Lorenzo de' Medici. Here he usually spent his week ends, and here, as at Careggi, the meetings of the philosophers took place. Cosimo III. sold it in 1671 for 4,000 scudi to Senator Cosimo del Sera, to whom belonged the crest which still adorns the corner of the terrace bordering the old avenue. In 1721 it was inherited by the Durazzini, who, in 1725, sold it to the Borgherini. In 1771, when this family became extinct, the villa was bought by Colonel Albergotto, who, the following year, sold it to the widow of Robert Walpole, Earl of Oxford. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Mr. Spence purchased it, and it now belongs to Mrs. McCalmont. The garden has, to a certain extent, retained its old design. Owing to the site it occupies—along a narrow shelf on the steep hillside—it can never have had an elaborate plan, but whoever laid out the grounds made them conform admirably to their position. The beautiful cypress avenue leading steeply up from the old road to Fiesole is now a public highway. Where it formerly reached the house there is still a little forecourt with cypresses and a fountain. The *loggia* of the house on the other side opens on a lawn, once, no doubt, a *parterre* laid out with flower beds. Two grottos form the ends of the paths on either side, and a central gateway leads to the long cypress



ON THE TERRACE WALK, VILLA MEDICI.

terrace, the glory of the grounds. Near the end next the *parterre* is a pretty garden seat and table in coloured tiles. Steps lead up behind to a densely shaded walk above.

The garden can only be seen by means of a private introduction.

VILLA CAMPI, SIGNA, NEAR FLORENCE.

LAI D out by the Pucci family towards the end of the sixteenth century. Now the property of Professor Castellucci, of Florence. Can usually be seen on application to the gardener. Is about two miles' walk from Signa by short cuts. It is well to take someone from Signa as guide.

Mrs. Wharton says that Villa Campi has always lacked its house. On the other hand, Mr. H. Inigo Triggs considers that the two existing buildings formed the casino, being divided, as at Lante, for the sake of symmetry. The writer, whose opinion is of far less value than either of these, cannot but believe, after a long day spent at Campi, that so stupendous a scheme as the grounds disclose must have been intended to harmonise with a much more imposing residence than the two small houses we now find. The entire hill, on all sides and for a long distance down, is occupied with a design of great dignity and beauty. The larger part is now unenclosed and appears no longer to belong to the villa. It consists of several long *viali* of cypress, of ilex, and of other trees terminating in groups of



GARDEN STAIRWAY, VILLA CAMPI.



PARTERE, - VILLA CAMPI.

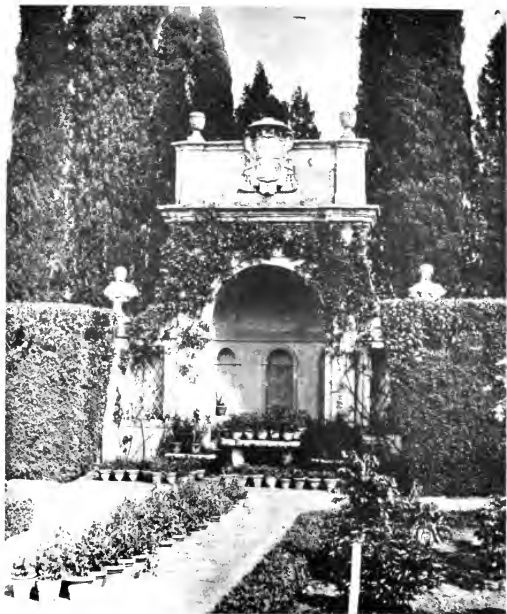
statuary or tanks of water. They all radiate from a point in the centre between the two houses.

Immediately on entering the garden proper, one sees that its *parterre* occupies the very summit of the hill. Below the *parterre* it descends by a charming stone stairway to a terrace *en pente* and ends at a pool and balustraded retaining wall whence there is a wide outlook to the valley below and hills beyond. A series of ramps descend on each side, under trees, from the casino to the lower ground, with shady walks, fountains, and statuary. The garden, though quite neglected, is one of the most interesting and naturally beautiful the writer has ever seen.

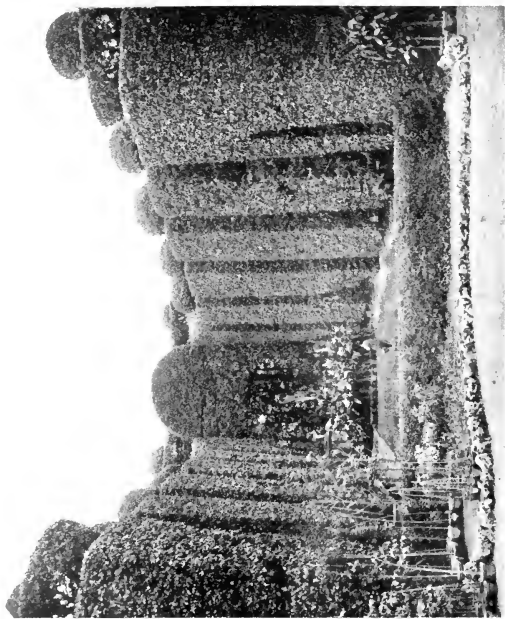
VILLA VICOBELLO, SIENA.

ASCRIBED to the famous architect, Peruzzi (Baldassare, 1481-1537). About three miles from Siena. The property of the Marchese Chigi. *Permesso* at the Chigi Palace, Siena.

This is one of the very few old Italian gardens which is well kept. It has an oblong lemon garden with picturesque summer-house at one end and the house at the other. The *stanzone* and the back of the outbuildings border the whole of one side, and a clipped ilex hedge the other. In the centre of the latter there is a gateway (facing one opening into the courtyard) and steps lead down to another terrace garden, laid out in formal style as an orchard, with pools and box borders. The scheme is an



SUMMER HOUSE, VILLA VICOBELLO, SIENA.



THEATRE, VILLA SERGARDI, SIENA.

attractive one. There is the usual *bosco*, but in terraces, below the other side of the casino, and a courtyard has a beautiful well set between columns in the wall.

The whole design of Vicobello is dignified, simple, and in keeping with its situation on a hill, with charming views of Siena. Not far from it is the Villa Gori.

VILLA GORI, SIENA.

OR Palazzina. About two miles from Siena, near the Osservanza. It was built and laid out for the Gori family in the seventeenth century. Visitors courteously admitted to the grounds on presentation of their visiting cards.

The Villa Gori is unique in the length and denseness of its ilex tunnels and its enchanting garden theatre. The *parterre* of the theatre is laid out in a *borderie* of turf and gravel, and is surrounded on three sides by clipped ilex. The stage is raised some three feet and the wings are formed of clipped cypress, with one tall, perfect cypress rising in the very centre. The charm of this little theatre, approached by a dark pleached alley, cannot, as Mrs. Wharton truly says, be conveyed in words.

VILLA SERGARDI, SIENA.

ABOUT a mile outside Siena. There is a charming, well-kept garden theatre, so placed that it is visible

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right through the great doors at the centre of the house. The rest of the grounds are in the landscape style.

VILLA DEL COLLEGIO ROSI, SPELLO.

THERE is here a small formal garden, with *borderie* of box. In the cathedral is a painting showing an old garden.

The writer has not visited Spello, so cannot say whether the garden is worth seeing or not.

For Spello, it is best to sleep at Foligno (Hotel Posto).

GARDEN OF THE QUIRINAL PALACE, ROME.

It is not known who originally laid out the garden, but the plan as we see it in Falda was a monotonous one, and it is small wonder if here, in the very centre of a great city, much of the design was obliterated and every attempt given to provide shade. The grounds are very shady and retired, and the alleys provide charming views through clipped archways of the great fountain in the centre of the palm walk. There are secret fountains at one spot, and a huge water organ, which no longer is in working order, is within a great, grotto-like recess. Here, too, are some marble groups representing the Forge of Vulcan, etc.

An extremely handsome sun-dial, the only one



FOUNTAIN IN THE QUIRINAL GARDENS.

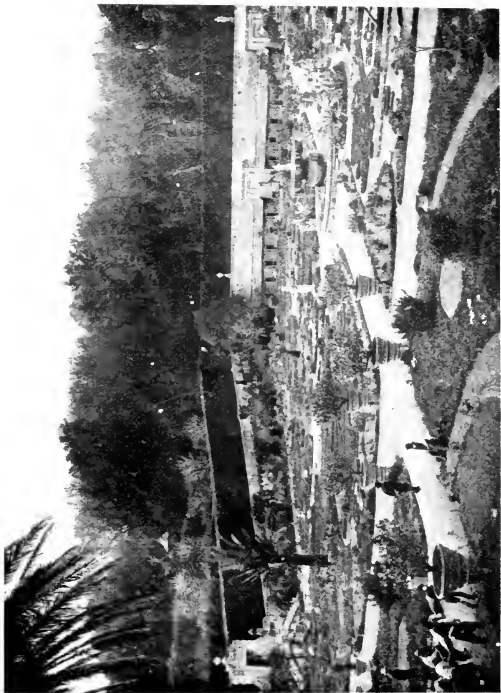
the writer has met with in an Italian garden (except the sun-dials affixed to the walls of buildings, which are common) stands near the palace, and a beautiful vase on a pedestal not far from it. Here, too, is the Fountain of Venus. There are several balustrade terraces, affording delightful views, and a small sunk *giardino secreto* that recalls the earlier design. The gardens are never open to the public, and permission to visit them, obtainable through an Ambassador, would only be given under very special circumstances.

VATICAN GARDENS, ROME.

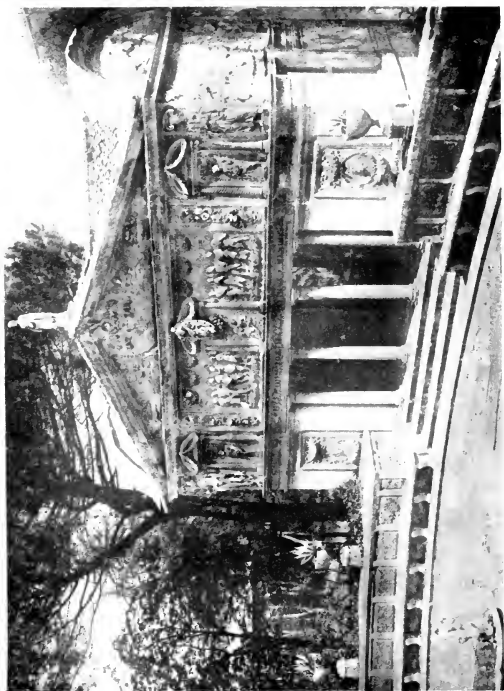
THESE gardens were probably first laid out under Sixtus IV. (1471-1484). They were extensively improved by Raphael and afterwards by Sangallo the younger. The beautiful little garden house was built for Pius IV. in 1560 by Pierro Ligorio. For permission to enter the gardens apply some weeks in advance at the office in the Vatican.

Although much of the old design has been altered, and the grounds are now by no means well kept,* there still remains the great sunk *parterre* with the ilex-hung terraces above it and the exquisite little oval court with its two vaulted porticos and its garden-house and arcaded pavilion placed

* At no time do these gardens seem to have been well kept up. Dr. G. Burnet wrote of them in 1686, "the gardens are ill maintained," and it must strike all present-day visitors also that "There are none that lay out so much *wealth* all at once as the Italians on their *Palaces and Gardens* and that afterwards bestow so little on the preserving of them."



PARTERRE, VATICAN GARDENS.



VILLA PIA, VATICAN GARDENS.

at equal distances. In the centre is a fountain designed by Gio. Vasanzio. The garden-house is a storey lower on its outer elevation, a ramp leading down on either side to the ground level, where, under a portico, is a pool with water constantly dripping over the edge at one point and falling on a slightly hollowed paved walk. This device, so suggestive of coolness, is seen elsewhere (for instance, at Villa Corsini, Castello), where a tank or fountain is in a shady spot and intended as a summer retreat.

On a level with this pool were the old gardens of the Villa Pia (as the garden-house was called), but practically no trace of them remains.

A terraced garden with grotto and an adjoining court with a huge wall fountain scheme ("That noble cascade where the ship dances," as John Evelyn describes it), and a great tank on which floats Bernini's bronze ship,* are reached through a gateway near the upper terrace, overlooking the *parterre*. There is an old plan of the grounds hanging in the gardener's house, which is close to the entrance to the gardens (this is from the vestibule, where is the turnstile of the sculpture gallery) and he will show it if asked to do so.

There is no regularly constructed *stanzone*, the lemon trees in their pots being placed in winter along the retaining wall that borders the *parterre*. A projecting eave is then temporarily formed of tiles and the front is hung with matting. The

* It has been suggested that the ship symbolises the primitive church, tossed on a rough sea.

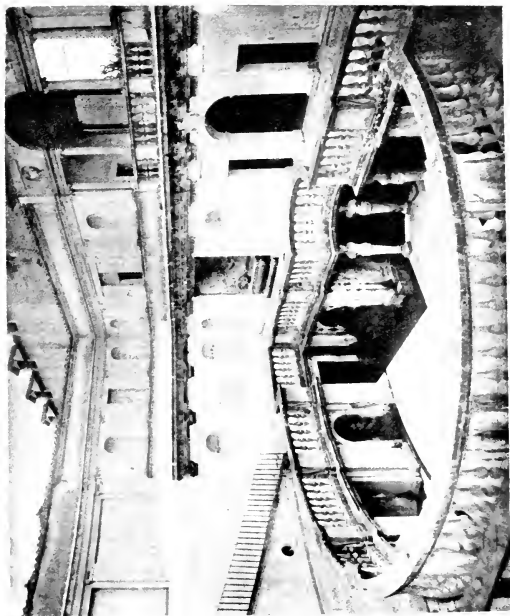
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parterre is laid out with various elaborate devices in box, such as the Papal Arms. It is too fantastic to be in good taste. In the centre is a large fountain. There is a charming entrance from the Vatican to the *parterre* through a wrought iron gate.

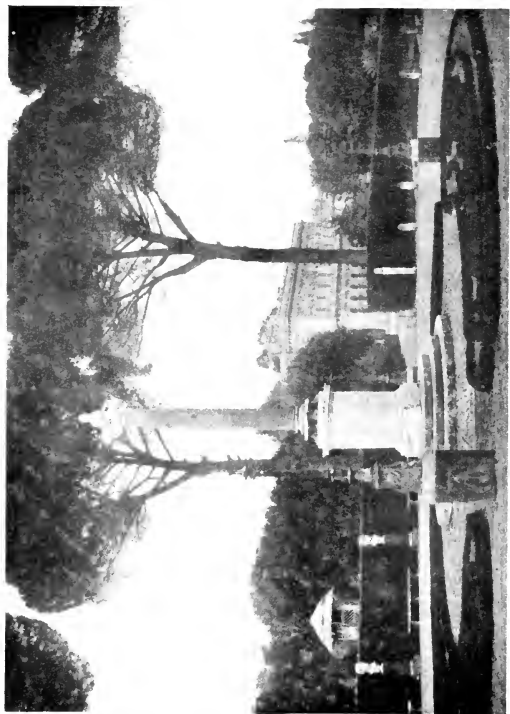
VILLA PAPA JULIO, ROME.

BUILT for Pope Julius III. (1550-1555), who himself assisted his architects in designing it. It is in great part the work of Vignola, but Michael Angelo, Vasari, and Ammanati all appear to have given suggestions for it. The villa is now a museum of antiquities found in the province of Rome. It is open daily, and is not far outside the Porta del Popolo.

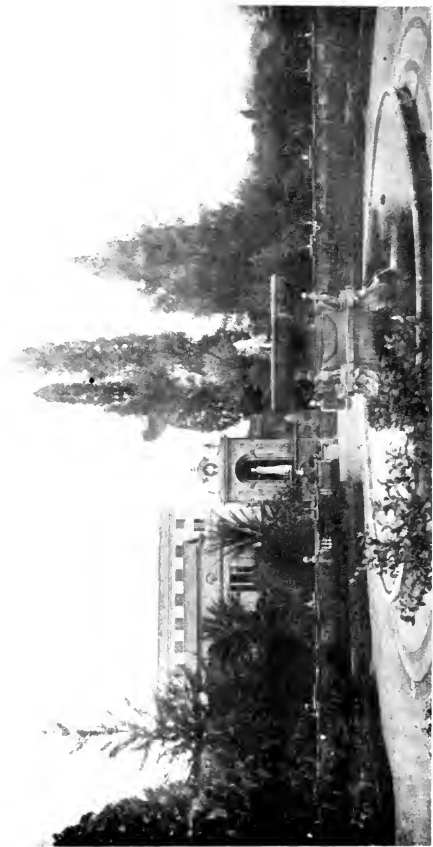
Although nothing remains of the actual garden, yet the garden architecture is so beautiful that no one should fail to see it. The vaulted arcade, with Zuccherò's famous frescoes, runs round the semi-circular garden side of the house. It is faced by a wonderfully airy-looking *loggia* beyond which is the sunk grotto or bath, reached by a double stairway. This is the most delightful feature of the grounds, and must have been cool even in summer. Another *loggia* beyond gives access to what was once a *parterre* of flower beds, with five fountains placed amongst them. As Mrs. Wharton says, nowhere else do we find so perfect an interpretation of the old Roman villa style of architecture.



SUNK GROTTTO, VILLA PAPA JULIO.



VILLA ALBANI.



CENTRAL FOUNTAIN, VILLA ALBANI.

VILLA ALBANI, ROME.

JUST outside the Porta Salaria. Erected in 1746 for Cardinal Albani, from his own designs, assisted by the architect, Carlo Marchionne. Sold in 1834 to the Count of Castlebarco, and in 1868 to Prince Torlonia, whose family now owns it. The garden was laid out by Antonio Nolli. Neither the casino, with its collection of statuary, nor the grounds are shown except by means of a private introduction.

The large *parterre*, with the terrace overlooking it, the central fountain, grottos, and niches with statues, as well as the *ilex bosco*, all show the old classic design.

VILLA MEDICI, ROME.

Now the French Academy. Open to the public on Wednesdays and Saturdays after 9 a.m. Built by Annibale Lippi in the middle of the sixteenth century for Cardinal Ricci, and purchased soon afterwards by the Medici family. Cardinal Ferdinand Medici adorned the garden elevation with beautiful bas-reliefs and sculptures. Velasquez, while residing here in 1630, painted two charming little pictures of the garden and house which are now in the Madrid gallery. In Sala III. of the Picture Gallery of the Naples Museum is a painting of this garden by Sebastiano Vranckx, of Antwerp, dated 1615. It shows a large equestrian statue and a few other embellishments no longer there,



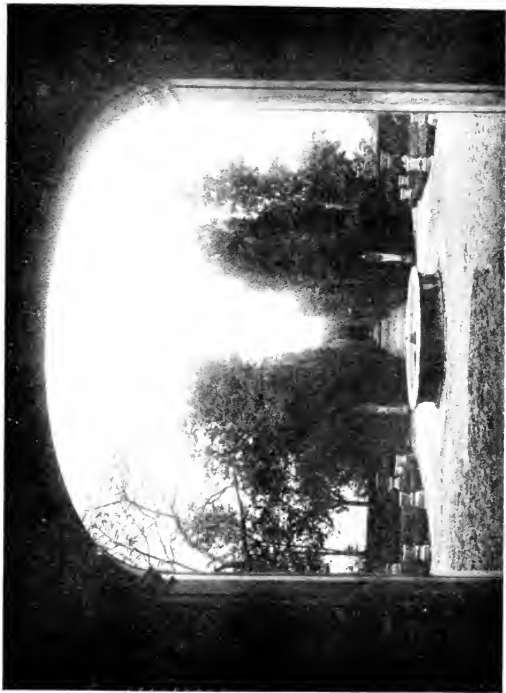
GARDEN ENTRANCE, VILLA MEDICI, ROME.

but otherwise the garden appears much as it does now. Galileo resided here in 1633-34, and Marie de' Medici lived here when young. It became the property of the Duke of Parma in 1801, and in 1803 was purchased for the French Academy. Here it is that those who have gained the Grands Prix de Rome for painting, sculpture, architecture, engraving of medals and of precious stones, and musical compositions are sent by the French Government for four years to complete their studies.

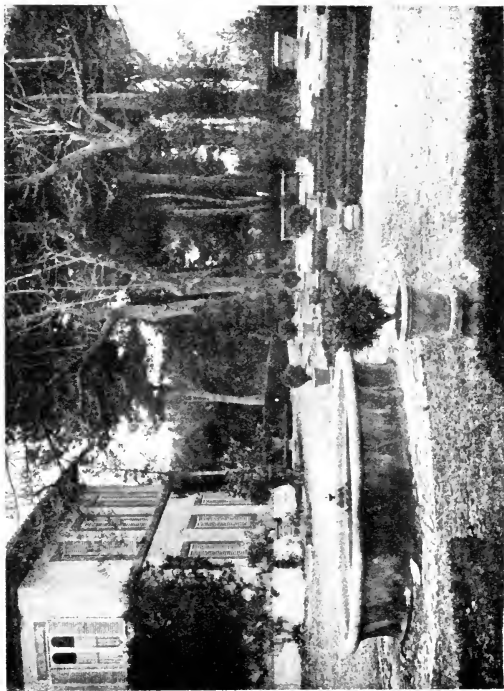
The grounds have all the charm of a simple dignified design, unspoilt by the hand of the landscape gardener. The forecourt is very spacious, and beyond it is the *parterre*, with its high clipped box hedges and its fountains. A beautiful *loggia* runs along one side of the flower garden, and must formerly have served as a lemon house. It acts as a retaining wall to the *bosco*, which is above. At one spot in the grounds an iron *grille* permits of a view outwards, a very French feature observable also at the Palace of Stra. The garden of the Villa Medici, though one of the best examples of its period, is too familiar to travellers to need further description.

VILLA CHIGI, ROME.

OUTSIDE the Porta Salaria, a mile or so beyond Villa Albani, and on the other side of the road. Most courteously shown on request to those really interested in old Italian gardens. The property of the Chigi family.



GARDEN OF VILLA CHIGI, FROM ARCHWAY OF HOUSE.



PARTERRE, VILLA CHIGI.

A long, low, Tuscan-like house, with simple but charming grounds. Like many Tuscan villas, the farm lands come quite up to the garden boundary. The vista through the archway of the house opposite the entrance gate, down a long clipped walk, is most attractive. The garden is laid out in box-enclosed plots, and there is the usual lemon garden with pools and cool, dark ilex wood. The villa is quite close to the high road, which is here enlarged into a bust-fringed semi-circle.

VILLA CORSINI, ROME.

Now the Reale Accademia de Lincei. The grounds are now botanical gardens and a public park. For permission to enter the garden apply at the Corsini Palace. The palace was built for the Riario family, who sold it in 1729 to Clement XII., who bought it for his nephew, Cardinal Neri Corsini.

Of the finely designed grounds nothing is left except the cascade, which is a simple and charming arrangement of stone basins one above another, with a terrace and grotto at the top.

VILLA PAMPHILJ, ROME.

FORMERLY Villa Belrispiro. Open to the public on Mondays after 1 p.m., and on Fridays from 10 to 2.



CASCADE, VILLA CORSINI, ROME.

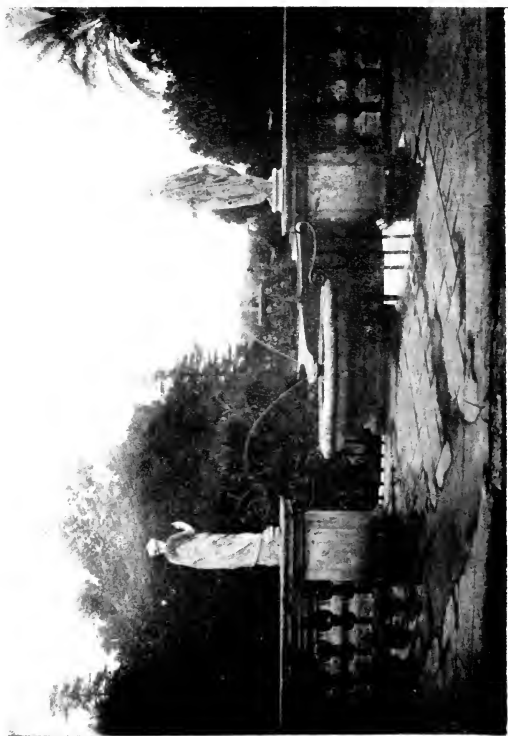
Erected by Alexandro Algardi about 1650 for Olimpia Pamphili, for her son Prince Camillo Pamphili. Now the property of Prince Doria. About half-a-mile outside the Porta San Pancrazio.

It has been suggested that the great *parterre* was laid out by Le Notre, when he visited Rome in 1678, but from internal evidence this seems improbable.

From the beautiful terrace a flight of steps leads down to the *parterre* through wrought iron gates. There are large pools at each end, with water spurting from the bronze Pamphilj lily in the centre. They are very effective, more especially that just below the terrace, where is situated the lemon garden. Much of the ground has been "landscaped," but the whole park was originally laid out on a formal plan, and this is still traceable in the planting of the trees.

The house was intended to have a long wing on either side. It was in its present form never meant for a residence, but merely a casino, or place where the owner could entertain those friends who visited him for the day. When a villa was so close to Rome, as was the case with the Villa Pamphilj and the Villa Albani, less attention was paid to the requirements of a country house than in places like Frascati and the hills above Florence, where the villas were lived in during the summer and shut up in winter.

The Villa Pamphilj has also a modest dwelling house hidden away in the woods.



FROM THE LOWER TERRACE, VILLA PAMPHILI.

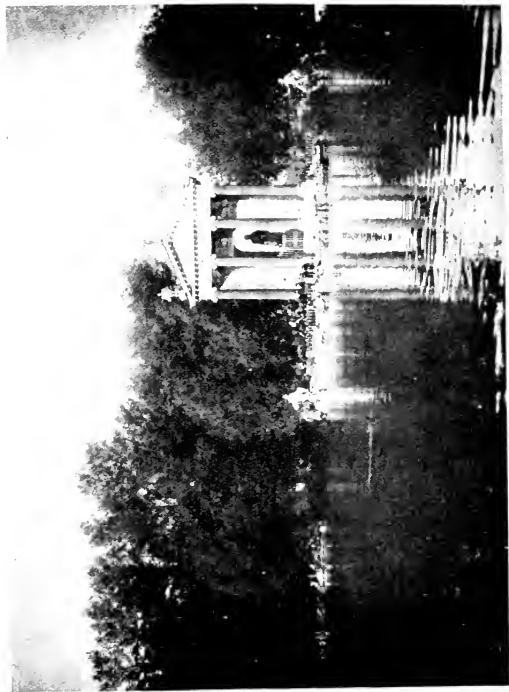
VILLA BORGESE, ROME

Now known as the Villa Comunale Umberto Primo. Built about 1618 for Cardinal Scipio Borghese by Giovanni Vasanzio (Il Fiammingo). Gardens laid out by Rainaldi and extended by Domenico Savino. Waterworks designed by G. Fontana. Gardens "landscaped" in 1789 by Jacob Moore and Pietro Camporesi.

It is now a public park, and is entered by a gateway just outside the Porto del Popolo and by another opposite the Porta Pinciana (at the top of the Via Veneto), and by others of less importance. The formal part of the original design is seen in the fountain and enclosing caryatid figures behind the casino (this part of the grounds is now going to ruin), in the *giardino segreto* with its aviary, fountains, and gateways to the north-west of the house, and in the delightfully planned forecourt with its stepped-up balustrade and seats and its entrance between two statues with fountains at their bases. The park, which is very extensive, including some hundreds of acres, has here and there noticeable features. It contains what was formerly the private garden of the Borghese family, a small enclosure with symmetrical flower-beds and a lake, on the banks of which stands a temple of Æsculapius. This and the hippodrome were probably additions of the eighteenth century. In 1902 the property was purchased from Prince Borghese for the State for three million francs (£120,000).



ENTRANCE TO FORKCOURT, VILLA BORGHESI, ROME.



LAKE AND TEMPLE, VILLA BORGESE.

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John Evelyn writes of it : "The garden abounded with all sorts of delicious fruit and exotic simples, fountains of sundry inventions, groves, and small rivulets. There is also adjoining to it a vivarium for ostriches, peacocks, swans, cranes, etc., and divers strange beasts, deer, and hares. The grotto is very rare, and represents, among other devices, artificial rain. . . . The four sphinxes are very ancient. To this is a volary full of curious birds."

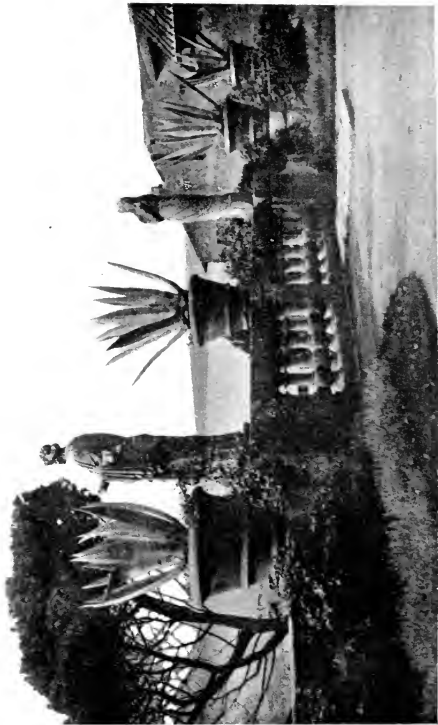
VILLA COLONNA, ROME.

THE Villa Colonna is the garden of the palace of that name. *Permesso* at the palace (Piazza Apostoli), open Wednesday mornings. Entrance to garden is at 15 Via del Quirinale.

Laid out by Don Filippo Colonna in the seventeenth century.

This little garden has much charm. The present entrance is through the gardener's house, but the fine double stairway on the outer side still remains, though the walk within is choked with undergrowth.

An orange garden with flower beds radiating from a circular pool in the centre occupies one half of the flat ground on the top of the hill, the other half, beyond the *viale*, which runs from the entrance gate, being *bosco*. On the same level as the orange garden and separated from it by a clipped hedge is a terrace overlooking the city. A pretty *chateau d'eau* descends from the terrace beneath,



TERRACE OVERLOOKING ROME, VILLA COLONNA.



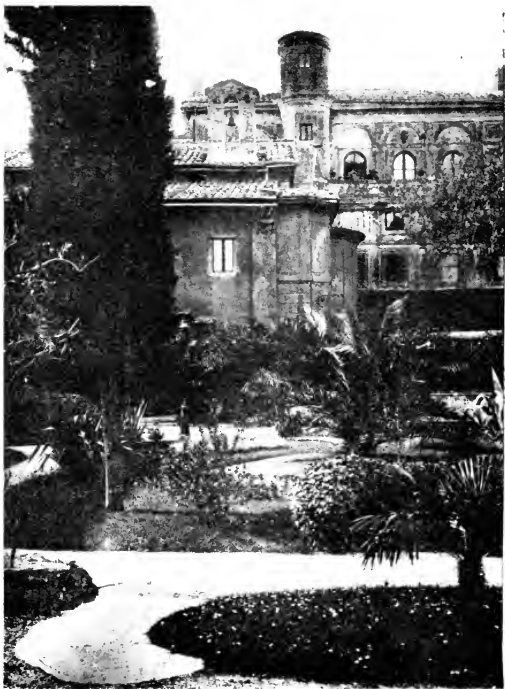
LEMON GARDEN, VILLA COLONNA.

nearly to the level of the first floor of the palace, but is screened from it by a hedge and divided by a stretch of turf where formerly there were *parterres*. The ground made it difficult to design a good garden plan, and rendered it impossible for the water scheme to be placed, as is usual, opposite to the centre of the palace. This defect, as it was considered, was therefore hidden by trees. Between the palace and the garden runs a narrow street crossed by stone bridges from the upper part of the house to the grounds.

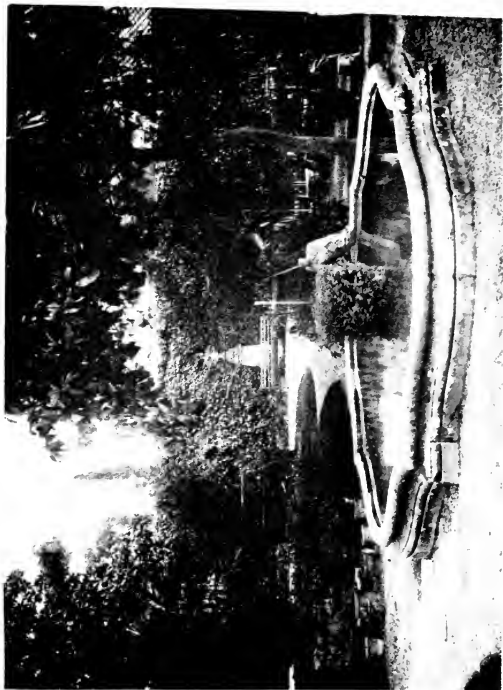
VILLA OF THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA, ROME.

THE church of the order, Santa Maria Aventina, also called *Del Priorato*, is within the grounds. Visitors ring at No. 40 in the small piazza at the top of the Via di Santa Sabina, decorated with obelisks and coats of arms of the order. The garden is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. till dusk. The entrance door contains a brass-bound keyhole, through which is the famous view of St. Peter's along a clipped *viale*.

It is thought that Piranesi, who restored the chapel in 1765, also laid out the gardens. Though small, they are worth a visit, for they were admirably planned with regard to the restricted and uneven ground at the architect's disposal. They include a sunny orange garden with fountain and box hedges, and a couple of terraces, one below the



HOUSE AND CHURCH, KNIGHTS OF MALTA.



GARDEN, KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

other, overlooking the Tiber, and perched on the very edge of a steep cliff.

VILLA MADAMA, ROME.

THOUGH hardly a vestige remains of this once famous garden, it cannot be entirely omitted from a handbook to the subject, for the design of the grounds of the Villa Madama was the model for nearly all the formal gardens of Italy. It was never finished, but in 1516 it was begun for Cardinal Giuliano de Medici (afterwards Pope Clement VII.) by Raphael, who died before the work was completed. Guilio Romano and Antonio da Sangallo went on with it, but in 1527 it was nearly destroyed by the troops of Cardinal Colonna, and later it passed into the hands of the Chapter of St. Eustace, the Duchess of Parma (who named it *Madama*) and the King of Naples. It still remains in his family, being now the property of the Count of Caserta, and, like the Farnese Palace, at Caprarola, it has been allowed to fall into absolute decay. It may be seen on Saturdays after 9 a.m., and is on the north slope of Monte Mario. A tram runs from the Ponte Margherita to near the triumphal arch at the foot of the hill. There is a long terrace with a tank and niches in its upper retaining wall. Below is a series of grottos and a long basin. These are all that now exist of the huge garden scheme here projected.

The villa is worth a visit, however, on account



VILLA MADONNA, ROME.

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of its beautiful stucco decorations by Giovanni da Udine. The building is in a ruinous state, and it seems deplorable that such glorious historical properties as Villa Madama and the Caprarola Palace should not either be properly kept up by their owner, or acquired by the nation.

VILLA MATTEI, ROME.

Now Villa Celemontana. There is now no formal garden whatever. The entrance is close to the church of San Stefano Rotondo, and permission to visit the garden is obtainable at Ambrosini's, 57 Via della Minerva, third floor, between 11 and 12 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Villa open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

At one time there must have been a magnificent garden, for in Evelyn's Diary we read that he was told that it was "inferior to no garden in Rome for statues, ancient monuments, aviaries, fountains, groves, and especially a noble obelisk, and maintained in beauty at an expense of 6,000 crowns yearly, which, if not expended to keep up its beauty, forfeits the possession of a greater revenue to another family." He regrets that he did not visit the Hortii Mathæi, as he calls it.

VILLA D'ESTE, TIVOLI.

BUILT in 1549 for Ippolito d'Este, Cardinal of Ferrara, by Pirro Ligorio. It has always remained



THE POOLS OF VILLA D'ESTE.

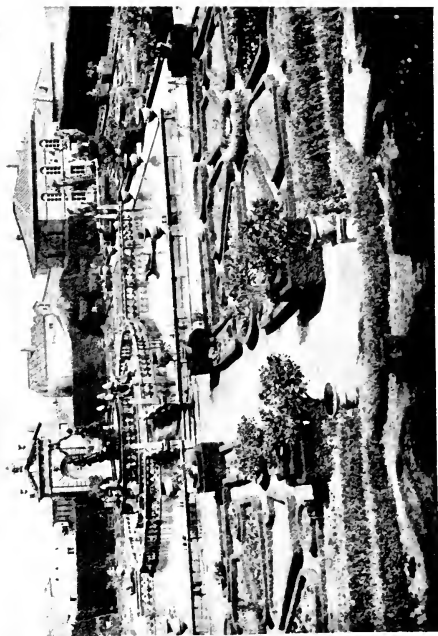
in possession of the Este family, and now belongs to Archduke Francis Ferdinand Este, of Austria. Open daily to the public.

The gardens of Villa d'Este have retained their ancient design perhaps more completely than any others in Italy. Their chief feature is the treatment of the bountiful water supply, brought at huge cost from the Anio. The fountains, etc., were planned by Orazio Olivieri, and are totally different to anything of the kind elsewhere. One of the lower terraces is fringed with jets, and fountains rise one above another at the middle of each stage of the central ascent. Four great, oblong pools, with enclosing balustrades, stretch from side to side of the lower portion of the garden, with an immense cascade at one end, and rising from a terrace above it is a water organ. A tiny *giardino secreto* is close by. The whole plan of the grounds on the face of a steep hillside has been carried out in a fascinating manner and regardless of cost.

VILLA LANTE, VITERBO.*

DESIGNED, it is believed, by Julio Romano and Vignola. One of the Casinos was begun in the fourteenth century by Raphael Riario as a hunting lodge. Cardinal Ridolfi and Gianfrancesco Gambara, then Bishop of Viterbo, carried on the work, the latter laying out the garden, and on his death in

* There is an unusually full description of this garden in Montaigne's Travels. He visited it in 1581.

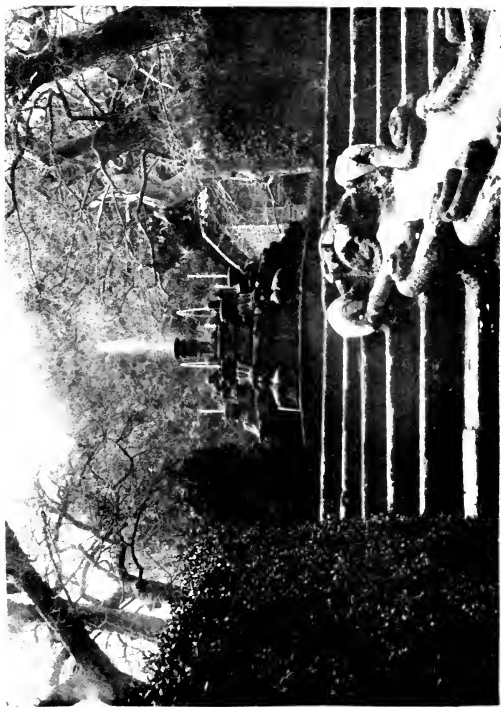


THE PARTERRE, VILLA LANTE.

1588 the villa was bequeathed to the Holy See by Cardinal Cassale, his successor. Cardinal Montalto, nephew of Sixtus V., built a second casino exactly like the older one, and also erected the beautiful fountain in the centre of the *parterre*. The crest borne aloft is his. We see this heraldic device, or one very similar, elsewhere. It will be noticed at the Villa Vicobello, Siena, on the obelisk of the Piazza del Popolo, Rome, and in many other places. The writer has tried in vain to discover if, wherever displayed, the crest is that of the same family. She would greatly value any information readers might be able to afford.

Villa Lante now belongs to the Duke of Lante, who most kindly permits travellers to visit the grounds even when he is in residence. The Duchess is American, and warmly interested in her beautiful garden, which is perfectly kept. The original design remains absolutely unspoilt. Bagnaia, the village in which Lante is situated, is two and a half miles from Viterbo.

Lante is perhaps in every particular the most delightful garden in Italy. Its situation, on sloping ground, is perfect, and abundance of water is available for the fountains. The design is that of a master hand in its uniformity and appropriateness. It is an all embracing scheme, including the casinos, the sunny *parterre* laid out as a lemon garden, the spacious and shaded terrace, the water that runs from basin to basin and springs from fountain after fountain, the charming twin garden houses and the perfect balance of every part with every other.



FOUNTAIN AND SERPENT WATER SCHEME, VILLA LANES.

While the plan is bold and unhesitating, no detail has been overlooked. The channels down which the water foams are purposely roughened to produce the delightful tinkling that sounds so refreshing in hot weather. The fountains of black marble like those at Viterbo are of simple design, but contain innumerable openings for the spurting water. The balustrade that borders the steps leading from one terrace to another bears on it an enchanting design along which runs and drips a silvery thread.

The great central fountain of the *parterre* rises from wide water spaces, and its base is reached by four stone bridges. A high, clipped hedge encloses the *parterre* on three sides, and gives it that air of seclusion which we so often find in the old gardens when they approach close to the house.

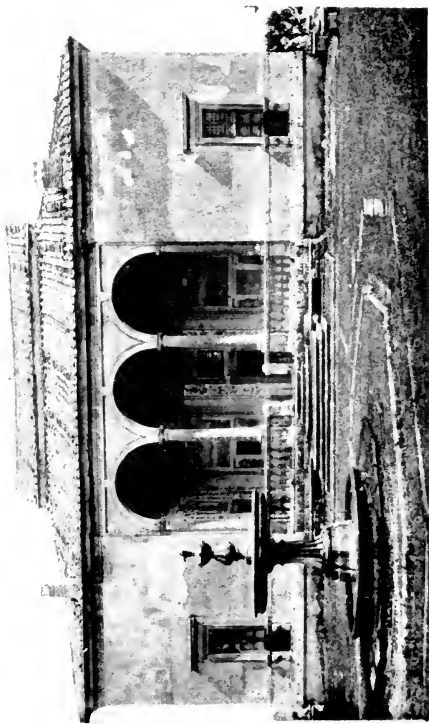
An old fresco of the villa may be seen on the wall within the *loggia* close to the entrance to the *parterre*.

The great crab that will be noticed on the front of the garden houses was the heraldic device of Cardinal Gambara.

FARNESE PALACE, CAPRAROLA.*

BUILT about 1547-49, by Vignola, for Cardinal Alexander Farnese (nephew of Paul III.). Now

* Montaigne wrote enthusiastically about the palace and its grounds which he visited in 1581: "Je n'en ai vu aucun dans ce beau pays qui lui soit comparable."

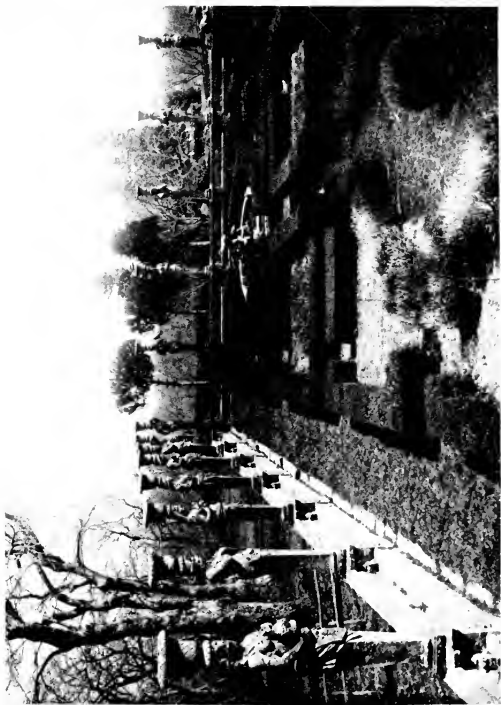


GARDEN HOUSE, CAPRAROLA.

the property of H.R.H. the Count of Caserta. *Permesso* from Monsieur le Commandeur Vincenzo Scala, Administrateur des Biens Farnesiens, Palazzo Farnese, Rome. If it is desired to visit the garden as well as the house a special permission for the "Villa ed il Palazzo Farnese di Caprarola" must be asked for.

Caprarola is in every way the most amazing place of its kind in Italy, and no garden pilgrim can afford to omit it from his programme. From Rome it is reached by rail from the Trastevere Station to Capranica (on the Viterbo line), forty miles, whence it is a drive of four miles to Caprarola. Or if Viterbo be the headquarters Caprarola can be reached from there (about eleven miles). This road used to be dangerous, the Ciminian Forest having for centuries past borne an evil reputation, but now the excursion is an absolutely safe one. The first sight of the great, loftily situated, five-sided palace, with its immense stairway, is very striking. It is rare that a summer residence of the Middle Ages is found so far from a large town, and hardly ever do we see one, as is so often the case at home, in an isolated spot. The Farnese Palace is on the margin of the little hill town of Caprarola, which it completely dominates.

Behind the palace and separated from it by a narrow moat is the garden. Two large rectangular spaces, one above the other, will first be visited, the box outlines of their former flower-beds still discernible, but their grottos and statues in ruins.



PARTERRE, CAPRAROLA.

Then, passing out from these through a glade, one reaches the upper garden, on which the architect concentrated his highest efforts. This part of the grounds, to anyone unacquainted with the plan, comes as a surprise. It is so unusual to find such a scheme at a considerable distance from the house and not on its axis. The upper garden, with its charming little casino, is treated as a totally distinct part of the property.

It is approached by an avenue, and the casino stands just at the head of a water scheme with fountain representing river deities on the upper terrace and a stone-built arcade with stucco work on either side. A fountain at the bottom sends up a tall, thin jet, which effectively completes the composition.

The casino is two storeys high on its lower side, but being built against a great retaining wall, it has only one storey on the elevation facing upwards. It stands amidst a delightful little garden laid out with box-edged beds. Three fountains are placed at equal distances from each other, and the enclosing wall is ornamented with caryatides looking inwards and bearing vases on their heads. Though not in themselves beautiful, these great stone figures are extraordinarily in keeping with their position, and the general design would seem to the writer unthinkable without them.

On the upper side of the Villa Farnese, above the fountain, stretch *parterres en pente*, the scheme finally ending at a gate giving access to the high road. This part of the garden is so neglected that

it is rapidly becoming impossible to trace the original plan.

In Vignola's beautiful little garden house a peasant family now lives, whose children beg from the few strangers who visit the grounds. If the garden of Caprarola could be restored to its former beauty and thrown open for a fee to the public, in these days of motors it would soon recoup the outlay for its owner. It is very sad to see so glorious an example of one of Italy's formal gardens falling into such decay that eventually no vestige of it will remain.

VILLA TORLONIA, FRASCATI.

FORMERLY Conti. Belonged originally to the Conti family. It passed, in 1650, by marriage, to a Sforza, and finally to its present owner, the Duke of Torlonia. Permission to visit the garden can usually be obtained through the Frascati hotel-keepers. Little remains of the purely formal part of the grounds, but the scheme of stairways by which the level of the *bosco* is gained from the carriage drive, is of unique design. It extends the whole length of the terrace.

The water theatre and cascade are very beautiful, and simple in design. At the top is a charming balustraded pool, where the water for the cascade and fountains is collected. The *bosco* are of ilex, and at the intersection of the principal walks stand fine fountains.



CASCADE, VILLA TORLONIA.

VILLA BORGESE, FRASCATI.

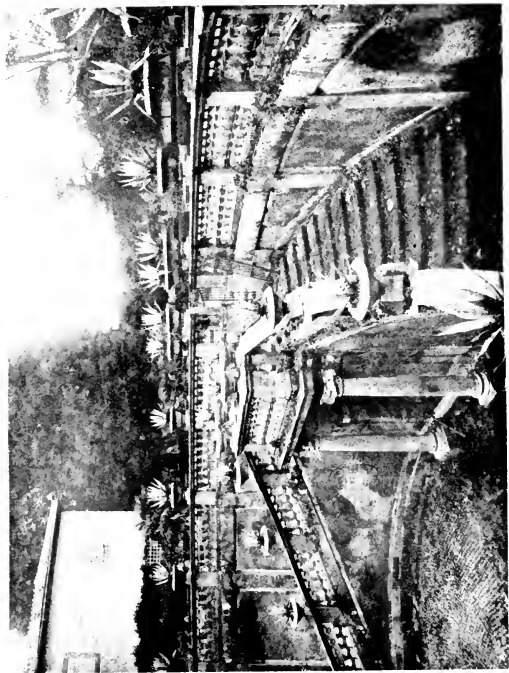
OR Taverna. Given to Pope Paul V. (Camillo Borghese, 1605-21) by Count Taverna, Governor of Rome. Shown freely. The garden is small, but the disposition of the grounds retain their original design. The sunk semi-circular court is good, and the *giardino secreto* is entered through a picturesque doorway.

The fine entrance gateway to the villa, with its avenue, is now disused.

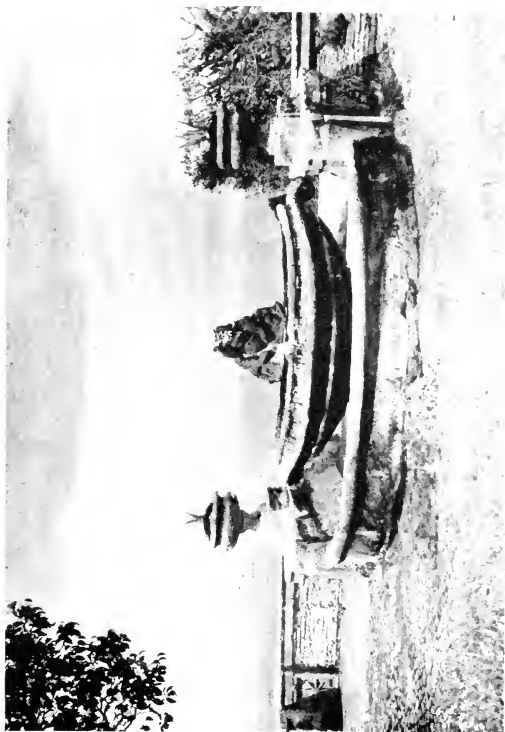
VILLA ALDOBRANDINI, FRASCATI.

WAS begun in 1598 for Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, nephew of Clement VIII. Designed by Giacomo della Porta. The engineer who carried out the water-works was Orazio Olivieri. *Permeso* obtainable at the Frascati hotels.

The chief features of the grounds are the cascade and water theatre. Dr. G. Burnet, who saw them in 1686, writes: "The *water-works* in the *Aldobrandini Palace* have a magnificence in them beyond all I ever saw in *France*, the mixture of *Wind* with the *Water* and the *Thunders* and *Storms* that this maketh is noble." He also refers to the water-works of the Ludovisio and Monte Dragone. Evelyn, who visited Frascati somewhat earlier, describes Fontana's water theatre very fully, and after telling how the water falls down the hillside, he speaks of "an artificial grot, wherein are curious



STAIRWAY, VILLA BORGHESI, FRASCATI.



FOUNTAIN OF TERRACE OVERLOOKING CAMPAGNA, VILLA ALDOBRANDINI.

rocks, hydraulic organs, and all sorts of singing birds, moving and chirping by force of the water. . . . In the centre of one of these rooms rises a copper ball that continually dances about three feet above the pavement, by virtue of a wind conveyed secretly to a hole beneath it; with many other devices to wet the unwary spectator.”

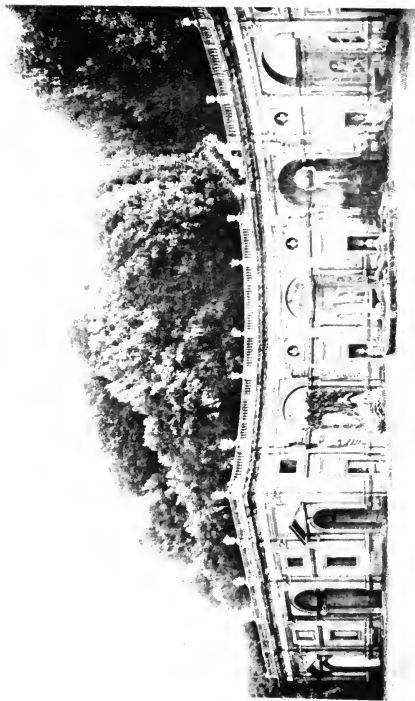
None of this elaborate mechanism is now in working order.

The stream supplying the cascade starts from a glade above, where are the cisterns for the water supply, and falling over three successive drops it reaches a narrow channel, whence it passes between two columns and falls from step to step till it emerges in the water theatre which faces the entrance to the villa.

Ilex woods cover the hillside. The *parterre* to the east of the casino, with its pergola and boat-shaped fountain, is charming. The elevation of the casino on the Frascati side is imposing, and the grille of iron and stone enclosing the grounds where they adjoin the public gardens of Frascati is in good taste. The entrance here is closed, and the visitor should follow the road mounting to the south-east till he comes to an avenue.

VILLA FALCONIERI, FRASCATI.

BUILT in 1648 by the architect Borromini for Cardinal Ruffini, and the oldest villa at Frascati. The grounds were laid out about twenty years



WATER THEATRE, VILLA ALDOBRANDINI.



RESERVOIR, VILLA FALCONIERI.

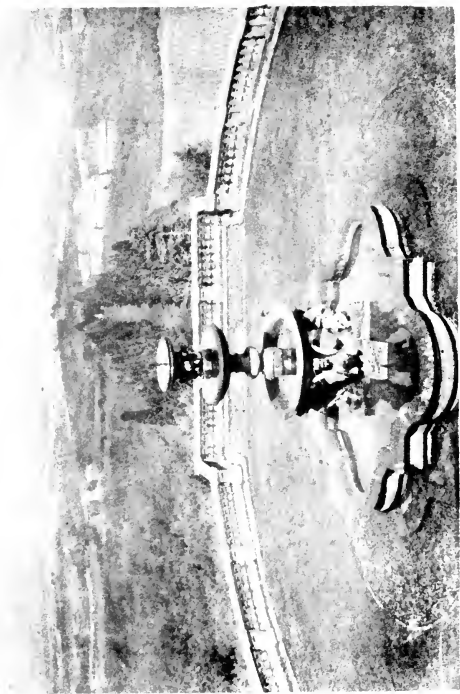
earlier. It afterwards belonged to the Sforza and Falconieri families, and in 1906 was purchased by the German authorities, and is now the German Academy. Noticeable are its fine stone gateways, the outer having been constructed in 1729 by Cardinal Alexander Falconieri, and the other giving access to the inner court.

The chief feature of the grounds is the beautifully placed reservoir, which stands on a lonely cliff and is surrounded by magnificent cypresses. It is connected with the park by a double stairway of appropriate simplicity of design.

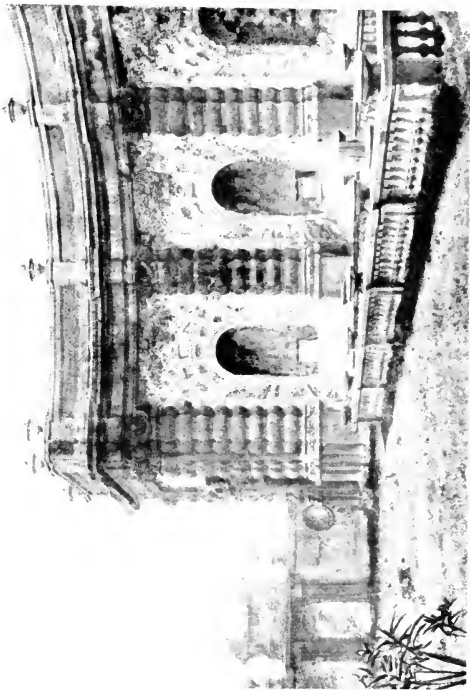
VILLA MONDRAGONE, FRASCATI.

THIS villa is now a Jesuit College. The grounds are shown to anyone really interested, on application to the director. Begun in 1567 by Martino Lunghi for Cardinal Marco Altempo, enlarged by Pope Gregory VII., and finished by Paul V. and his nephew, Cardinal Scipione Borgese.

The magnificent *loggia* by Vignola and the water theatre by Giovanni Fontana are the chief features. The latter, though in a ruinous state, still bears traces of its mosaics, its surprise fountains and the reliefs in its niches. There is a fine fountain on the terrace at the back of the house, and from here may be seen the beginning of the cypress avenue which these princes of the church intended to continue the whole way, in a straight line, to Rome. The curious columns at the corners of this terrace



DRAGON FOUNTAIN, AND AVENUE INTENDED TO GO TO ROME, MONDRAGONE.



WATER THEATRE, MONDRAGONE.

are the kitchen chimneys, the house having an extra storey below on this side, as it is built against a slope.

VILLA MUTI, FRASCATI.

A MILE or two out, on the Grotta Ferrata road. Freely shown. A most interesting garden, though changed in detail from its original state. It is on three levels, and its box maze is the best of the kind in Italy. It is a good example of the admirably varied treatment of a small piece of ground on a very broken hillside.

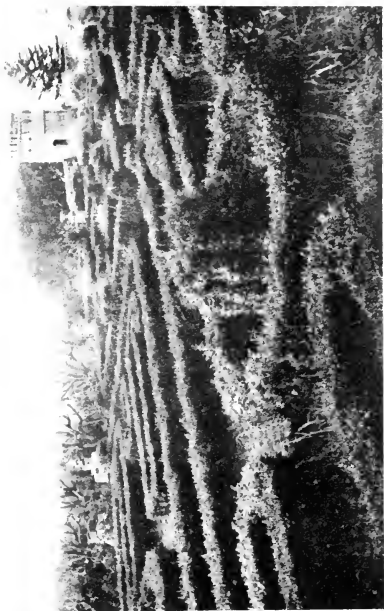
It is approached by two avenues of ilex.

VILLA LANCELOTTI, FRASCATI.

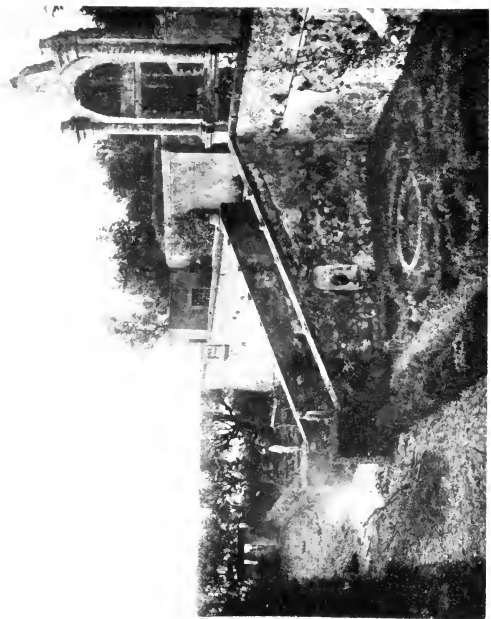
BUILT about 1560. Under no pretext whatsoever are visitors admitted. The garden, though beautiful, does not present the interesting and varied features that we find in most of the other Frascati villas. It consists of an oblong *parterre*, enclosed by clipped ilex hedges and laid out in a design in box. At one end is the house, with the usual water theatre at the other. Here it was that Cardinal Baronius wrote, at the end of the sixteenth century, his learned Church History.

VILLA PALLAVACINI, FRASCATI.

FORMERLY Belpoggio. Can be freely entered, but contains no remains of its once fine grounds except



MAZE, VILLA MUTI.



STAIRWAY TO LOWER GARDEN, VILLA MUTI.



PARTERRE OF PAPAL PALACE, CASTEL GANDOLFO.

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the ilex tunnels on each side of the *parterre*. This was raised on a great platform, and glorious views may be had from the terrace opposite to the house.

PAPAL PALACE, CASTEL GANDOLFO.

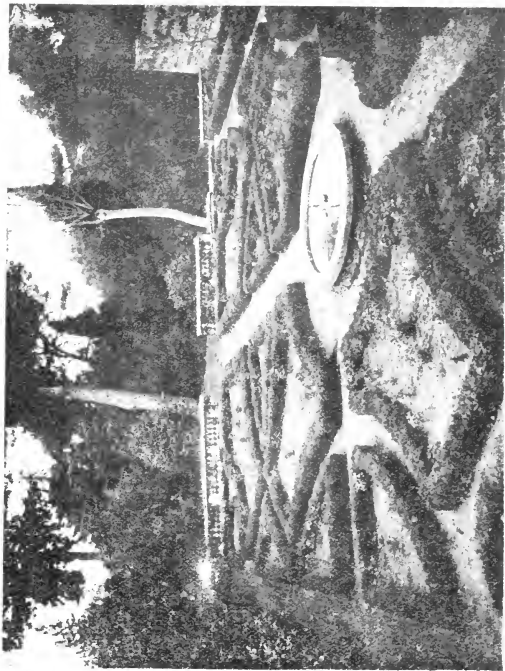
THE summer palace of the Popes. Erected by Urban VIII., from designs by Carlo Maderna. Of the once beautiful garden, situated on a steep hillside, practically nothing remains, a few marble stairs, the star-shaped basin of a fountain, and some wall niches being the only signs of its former splendours. The upper terrace overlooks the lake of Albano. It is difficult to gain access to this, but the lower part of the grounds, where they border the high road, are often open. They are absolutely neglected, and soon it will be difficult to realise that a garden ever occupied the site. By the decree of May 13th, 1871, the Vatican, Lateran, and the above palace have the privilege of exterritoriality.

VILLA BARBERINI, CASTEL GANDOLFO.

OF this garden nothing of the old design remains. The entrance gates usually stand open.

VILLA BORGESE, CASTEL GANDOLFO.

THIS villa is now a Jesuit College, and visitors are rarely admitted. It still retains a small, sunk *parterre*, and some remains of a terrace scheme beyond.



PARTERRE OF VILLA BORGESE, CASTEL GANDOLFO.



STATUARY GROUP BENEATH UPPER CASCADE, CASERTA.

PALACE OF CASERTA, NEAR NAPLES.

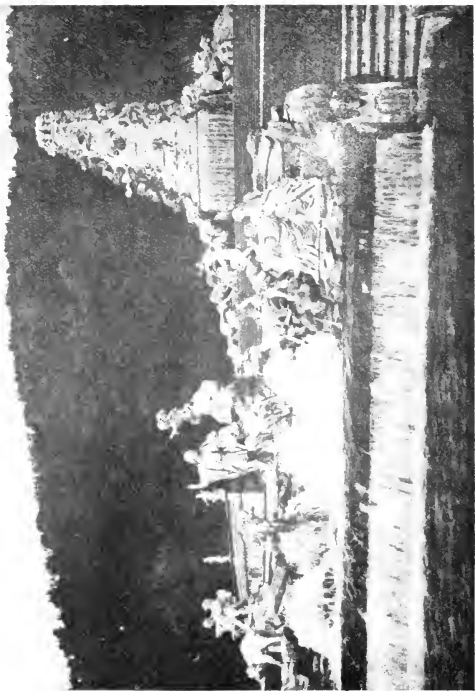
BUILT in 1752 for King Charles III. from designs by Vanvitelli. The gardens are laid out in late French style. Permission obtainable at the Palazzo Reale, Naples.

The feature of the grounds is the great cascade, with its groups of statuary at each fall illustrating the story of Diana and Actæon. The water is brought from Monte Taburno by an aqueduct twenty-one miles long. The portion of the grounds known as the park, the entrance to which is near the upper cascade, is entirely in the landscape style. It has, however, a good orangery. More attractive is the *casetta*, a charming little moated garden house on the other side of the cascade, not easy to find without a guide, and therefore usually overlooked. The grounds are very extensive. The palace was intended as a country residence for the King of Naples, and is unfinished.

VILLA FLORIDIANA, VOMERO, NAPLES.

BUILT at the beginning of the XIXth century for the Duchess Floridiana by Ferdinand IV. Purchased in 1892 by Colonel Davis, who still resides there.

The house is finely situated, and its terraces descend to the edge of the cliff. As it is lived in during the summer, much growth of vegetation is encouraged, so that the garden can hardly be called



CASCADE WITH GROUPS OF STATUARY, CASERTA.



THEATRE, VILLA FLORIDIANA.

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formal. There is, however, an enchanting little theatre with quaint busts at its entrance. The owners are very kind in allowing anyone really interested in gardens to visit it. The station of the Vomero *funiculaire* is close to the villa.

THE ROYAL PALACE, PORTICI.

BUILT for Ferdinand IV., and at one time had a large and formal garden. It is now an Agriculture College. It retains—but in an ill-kept state—its *parterre*, with central fountain and big pots and traces of a large *bosco* above. This is on the land side of the palace. On the sea side no trace remains beyond the bare framework of the terraces.

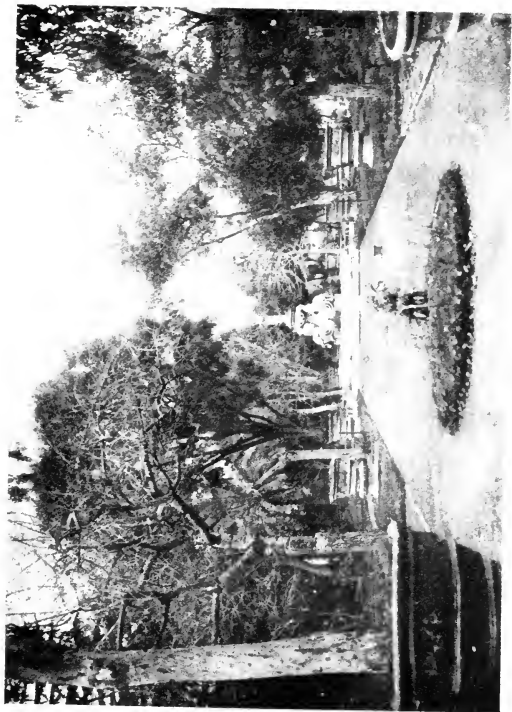
The electric tram from Naples passes right through the central court of the palace.

LA FAVORITA, RESINA.

NOTHING of the once fine garden is left, and a recent inundation completed the ruin. Some wrecks of garden houses, and broken statues only make the scene more desolate. The palace is let in summer in apartments. The tram passes the door, but the grounds are not worth a visit from even the most enthusiastic of garden architects.

LA FAVORITA, PALERMO.

THIS Royal villa, in the Chinese style, was built by Ferdinand I. Here took place the famous ball at which Lord Nelson was made Duke of Bronté.



PARTERRE OF ROYAL PALACE, PORTICL.



THEATRE, VILLA CASTELNUOVO.

The villa is about four miles from the Porta Macqueda, and its grounds are open to the public, though the *parterre* at the back is not always shown. It is the only formal part of the grounds. Permission to visit it may, however, be obtained at the palace at Palermo, where the greatest courtesy is sure to be met with.

The *parterre* is laid out with an elaborate *broderie* pattern in box, and dates from the last part of the eighteenth century.

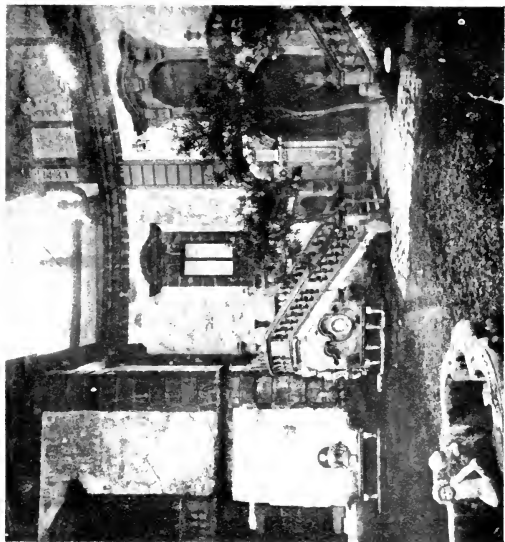
Of the other two famous villas at Palermo, the garden of the Villa Giulia (now Villa Flora) is the property of the town, and is used as public pleasure grounds. Its former symmetrical plan, laid out in 1777, remains, but it is of little interest. The Villa Tasca has a garden of the purely landscape type.

VILLA CASTELNUOVO, PALERMO.

A MAGNIFICENT old garden must once have existed here. The property now belongs to an Agricultural College, and the grounds are not open to the public but would probably be shown on request to anyone studying the subject. Castelnuovo is about four miles from Palermo, on the left-hand side (going) of the same main road that leads past La Favorita.

The garden theatre still remains, and is the largest the writer has seen. The wings are of cypress, and it has a stucco background in imitation of a landscape with a cascade, castle, etc.

There is also a magnificent cypress *viale*.



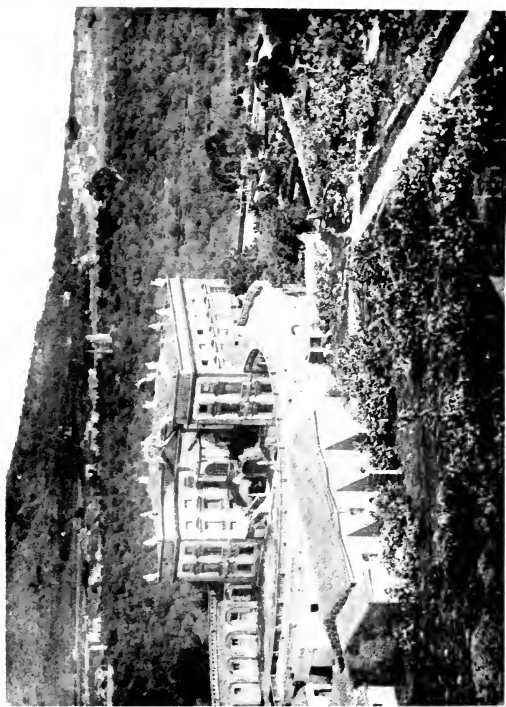
VILLA VALGUARNERA.

THE VILLAS AT BAGHERIA, NEAR
PALERMO.

TEN miles by train from Palermo. There are three villas here, which formerly had laid out grounds, and are interesting architecturally as they have a certain local individuality. The accompanying illustration of Villa Valguarnera shows the very original circular forecourt. Old plans and engravings of villas and gardens may be seen at the Museum at Palermo, where the writer received the greatest courtesy and help in the research she carried out there.

The villas at Bagheria are all near together, so can be visited in one day, and though the grounds of none are worth seeing in their present ruinous state, yet the beautiful outer stairway of the garden entrance of Villa Palagonia, the circular forecourt of Villa Valguarnera, the elevation of the house on that side, and the drive by which it is approached, with its arcaded gateways, merit attention.

The Villa Palagonia has a court with enclosing wall and gateways surmounted by grotesque figures, and the entrance gates to the villas are decorated with hideous and colossal statues in the worst Baroque style. These villas may be seen at any time, and without special permission.



VILLA PALAGONIA, BAGHERIA.

LIST OF BOOKS CONSULTED.

ENGLISH.

- The Villas of the Ancients*, by R. Castell, 1728.
Specimens of Ornamental Art, by Lewis Grüner, 1853.
Old Herbals, German and Italian, by J. F. Payne, M.D. (*Magazine of Art*, 1885).
History of Gardening, by London.
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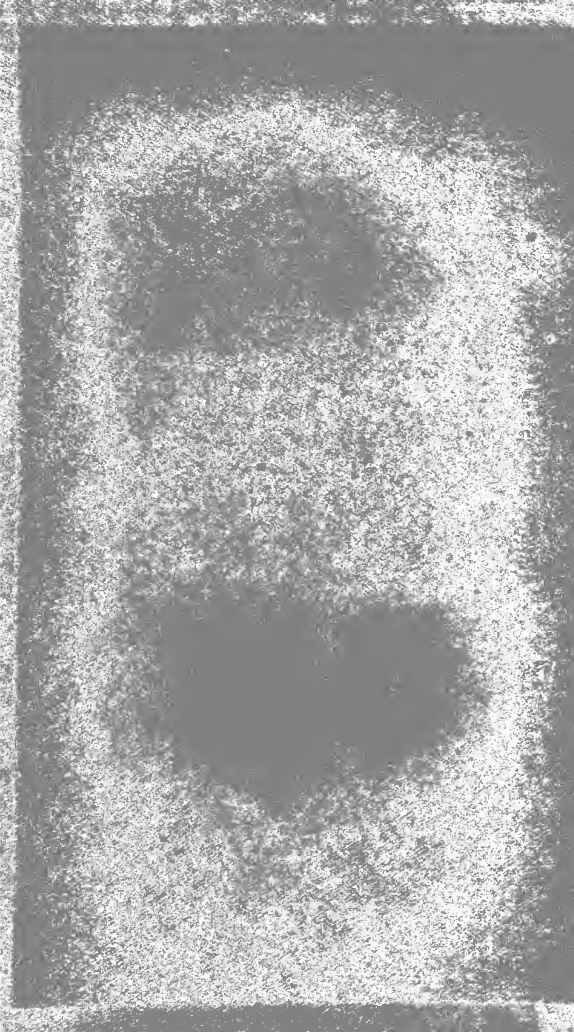
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