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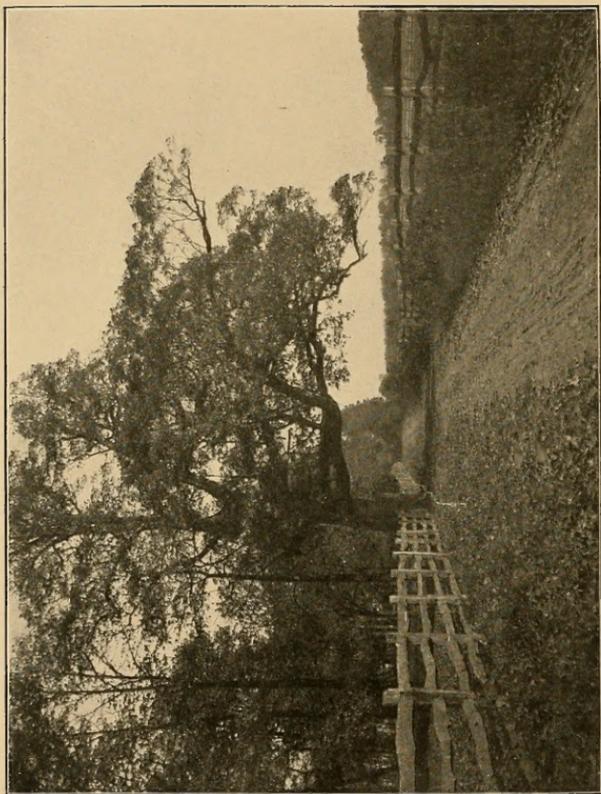
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Oak Tree on Rabbit Lane

GERMANTOWN  
*OLD AND NEW*

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Its Rare  
and Notable  
Plants

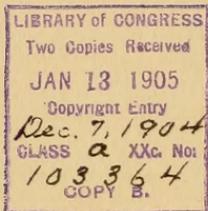


1904

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BY EDWIN C. JELLETT

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Germantown Independent-Gazette

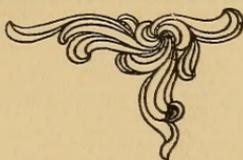
Germantown, Pa.

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To  
CLARA HELEN BAUMANN  
*a native of Germantown whose  
ancestors beautified it in the  
past as their successor honors  
and enriches it in the present.*

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## PREFACE

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This outline sketch of our "rare and notable plants" was prepared at the direction of "The Germantown Horticultural Society" and was read at its public meeting of May 9, 1904,—the same later appearing in the columns of the "Germantown Independent-Gazette."

At the time of writing, there was no thought of publishing the paper, it being hurriedly assembled outside the time required for daily positive duties within the limits of one week,—and was intended only for a simple address.

This will partly explain, if it does not excuse obvious defects, and since I have been urged by several members of the Society named to present the paper in print, I have concluded to send it forth with all its faults from the same types by which it first appeared, asking only that the circumstances be remembered, for no one I feel confident, is able to satisfactorily present the plants of Germantown in an article so brief,—or more definitely,—I am not able to do so. To the original paper I have added an index, which I hope may not be found superfluous.

For the illustrations which grace our pages, I am indebted to S. Mendelsohn Meehan,—who suggested this paper,—and to Horace F. McCann—who printed it. The faces which familiarly greet us I have added to dignify our work, for past and present they represent the "stuff" which built our town—

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PREFACE

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preserved it,—and now keep it,—forever famous. Last, but not least, I feel sure we are all pleased with the appearance of our “book,” and to Erwin W. Moyer, whose skill and good taste built upon a substratum apparently hopelessly unpromising a structure so creditable, I wish to record my heartiest thanks.

E. C. J.

SECOND EDITION

I am surprised and touched by the reception given our little “Book,” for knowing its deficiencies, I did not anticipate the welcome given it. As originally announced, our paper was intended for a definite address, and I had no idea it would prove of interest beyond the immediate “circle” for which it was prepared. Upon repeated requests for publication, I was prompted to issue an edition I thought sufficient for the demand, but this in a few days was exhausted, and to satisfy a further demand, I am again urged to issue a “new and enlarged edition,” Horace F. McCann, the proprietor of the “German-town Independent-Gazette,” volunteering to become responsible for the same. To this there can be no objection and only one reply, but in view of the fact that the article was written for our “Horticultural Society,” I do not feel justified in altering more than I slighted, or in adding more than my haste overlooked. With this explanation, Gentle Reader, I

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*PREFACE*

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wish to thank you and retire, hoping shortly that we meet again,—for if you love flowers, trees, babbling brooks, pure air, glorious sunshine and congenial company, so do I, and through the delectable fields of our Home Eden I trust we may together roam, until the richness and beauty of its sacred possessions rise to a proper appreciation, and as wide as they are deserving become known.

Oct. 18, 1904.

E. C. J.



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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### FRONTISPIECE

Oak tree on Rabbit Lane, near County Line Road.  
Photograph by Charles Edward Pancoast.

### PAGE TWENTY-THREE

"Morris-Littell" House, at southeast corner of Main and High streets. The rear part of this house I believe to have once been the residence of Dr. Christopher Witt.—(E. C. J.) Photo by J. H. Russ.

### PAGE TWENTY-NINE

George Redles. A remarkable botanist, whose knowledge of our native and cultivated plants is unsurpassed, and whose modesty is equal to his acquirements. Photograph by Mrs. George Redles.

### PAGE THIRTY-ONE

Wakefield, a notable historic mansion, whose surrounding grounds exhibit many of our finest plants. Etching by Joseph Pennell. Penna. Magazine.

### PAGE FORTY

Naglee Houses. "Original" houses, exhibiting to the present, the stone dwellings of early Germantown. Print also shows "Jake," Turn-Pike Bridge, and "Joe Nafes." From drawing by John Richard.

### PAGE FORTY-THREE

Weeping Elms. Beautiful specimens shading the entrance to Meehans' nurseries. Cut from "Meehans' Monthly."

### PAGE FORTY-SIX

Louis Clapier Baumann, in his day the leading Florist of Germantown, and the first "wholesale grower of cut flowers" for the Philadelphia markets. Photograph copy by E. C. J.

### PAGE FIFTY

Hemlock Grove of the "Monks," situated on the Wissahickon, above Kitchen's Lane. Photograph by E. C. J. From "Meehans' Monthly."

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### PAGE FIFTY-ONE

Jersey pine,—or *Pinus Rigida*,—those shown appearing on the Wissahickon at Spruce-mill,—or Thomas's Mill Road. Photograph by E. C. J.

### PAGE FIFTY-SIX

Charles J. Wister, who preserves the traditions of "Grumblethorpe," and following in the footsteps of an illustrious line, is honored and beloved wherever known. Photograph by Samuel R. Gray.

### PAGE FIFTY-EIGHT

Thomas Nuttall, a noted naturalist, lecturer and explorer. An exceedingly rare spleenwort keeps before us his name. From "Botanists of Philadelphia," by John W. Harshberger, Ph. D.

### PAGE SIXTY-ONE

Ivy Lodge. The home of John Jay Smith,—who, after a long active life in intellectual and good works, here died September 25, 1881. Photograph by E. A. Frey.

### PAGE SIXTY-THREE

Johnson's cypress trees and spring. Our greatest and most noted cypress grove, and which has no equal near Philadelphia. Photograph by Henry Troth.

### PAGE SIXTY-FOUR

Elliston P. Morris, owner of the "Deshler-Morris" mansion which President Washington occupied, and the possessor also of one of the finest gardens in Germantown. Print of "The Germantown Independent-Gazette."

### PAGE SIXTY-SIX

R. Robinson Scott, an eminent Germantown horticulturist, and the discoverer of the famous fern known as "Scott's Spleenwort." Photograph copy by E. C. J. Print of "Fern-Bulletin."

### PAGE SIXTY-SEVEN

Cancer-root, the strangest and rarest plant in our territory,—a native of the Wissahickon woods. Collected by E. C. J. for Meehans' Monthly. Photograph by Henry Troth.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### PAGE SEVENTY-ONE

"Wyck," a marvel of quaintness, and of exquisite beauty. The oldest house and garden in Germantown, and the richest in its associations. Photograph by Gilbert Hindermeyer. From "House and Garden."

### PAGE SEVENTY-FIVE

Johnson Homestead, at northwest corner of Main street and Washington lane, a house renowned in local history, whose garden is its equal in absorbing interest. Print of "The Germantown Independent-Gazette."

### PAGE SEVENTY-EIGHT

"Pomona Grove,"—the home of Col. Thos. Forrest,—later of Amos R. Little,—the "cut" showing in the foreground, its famous yew. From Meehans' Monthly.

### PAGE SEVENTY-NINE

Cliveden, the centre of the Germantown battle ground, and the home of many beautiful plants. "Cut" shows the original Papen, or Jansen House, also "Chews' spring," once near where E. Johnson street now is. From print furnished by Dr. Naaman H. Keyser.

### PAGE EIGHTY

Upsala, celebrated for its stately beauty, and its possessions of rare and unique plants. Photograph by J. H. Russ.

### PAGE EIGHTY-FOUR

Joseph Meehan, a noted botanist and horticulturist, whose writings form an integral part of our best floricultural magazines. Print of "Floral Exchange."

### PAGE NINETY

Prof. Thomas Meehan, a noted scientist, educator and writer, the author of the greatest books upon our native flora, and the nestor of American Horticulture. Print of "Meehans' Monthly."



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# GERMANTOWN

## Rare and Notable Plants

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IN the presentation and consideration of our home plants of special interest, it should be kept in mind that nearly all, if not quite all were transplanted to the positions they now occupy, and that there is here no disposition to compare or contrast with other plants of greater age, of more historic worth, our rare and notable plants of "nature" and cultivation.

Our purpose is rather to show that, with our town's increase in girth and years, we have had a like advance in intelligence and culture, and that our old mansions, gardens and those who keep them have earned for Germantown the title,—“the most beautiful suburb in America.”

We have no yew trees 3000 years old, no oak trees of 2000 years' growth, no “Burnham beeches,” nor have we other plants of great age equal to those of older countries and especially England, but such as we have we shall in outline endeavor to present, and direct attention to the fact that they have merited and received the attention of visitors, who have had opportunity for observation abroad. About ten years ago, George Nicholson, curator of the Royal Botanical Gardens of Kew, London, was the guest of Prof. Thomas Meehan, and spent some time here. After leaving he said:

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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“Germantown is a place which every foreigner interested in American trees should visit, as the people of this suburb of Philadelphia one hundred years ago were especially interested in the introduction and cultivation of rare trees, and the first cultivated specimens of several American trees were originally planted here, and may still be seen. The roads of Germantown are shaded with beautiful rows of native trees, and behind them stretch the green lawns of innumerable villas.”

John Walter, editor of the London Times, while here expressed similar views, and many other visitors and writers who passed through Germantown have left us interesting and valuable records of their “impressions.”

To name all our worthy plants were a hopeless task, and one I shall not attempt. Our efforts shall be rather to trace the thread of development, and by examples of past and present conspicuous plants to illustrate its growth. To do this properly we should go back to the settlement of the town itself, know the causes which gave it birth, understand the character of its founders and their pursuits—its growth material and intellectual, before we may be able to meet its merits with an equal appreciation.

Always while walking along our Main street I am reminded of the popular well-known thoroughfare of Oxford, England, which it strangely suggests, and I sometimes wonder if it was not this ancient

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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street, and not the central highway of Philadelphia, which to our own principal thoroughfare 150 years ago gave us High street, a name by which it was long known. Be this as it may, our Main street in a very striking way resembles its more widely known namesake abroad, a highway Hawthorne described as "the noblest street in England," and to which "Wordsworth devoted a sonnet to the stream-like windings of that glorious street."

As I follow our "avenue's" pleasing course, I am further reminded of old Edinburgh's hallowed hill, and as I picture its steep ascent, its numerous historic buildings, its atmosphere of an antiquity which may be "felt," I see Sir Walter Scott from his carriage strenuously discoursing upon its wealth of interests to the delight of his guests and his own apparent satisfaction, for to him Edinburgh was home, and to so entertain his friends was "very heaven," and as I look into the future, I see our own "cannongate" of not one whit less historic value, by one as illustrious, made as widely, and as permanently known.

In olden time it was the custom to approach Germantown only by the "Great Road," for indeed for a period there was no other way. The original survey map of Germantown, dated October 24, 1683, now in the possession of Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker, is void of side roads or lanes, but this defect immediately after the settlement was remedied,

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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maps following, showing lanes to mills, and later maps showing other roads connecting Germantown with important near-by pikes east and west. After Rittenhouse Mill road, and Lukens' Mill road, one of the most important of later roads was Bensell's or School House lane connecting our Main street with Ridge road, a favorite route with travelers when the quagmires and quicksands of "3-Mile Run" proved troublesome.

In a letter dated March 7, 1684, which Francis Daniel Pastorius wrote his parents, he gave them this information: "As relating to our newly laid out town Germanopolis or Germantown, it is situated on a deep and very fertile soil, and is blessed with an abundance of fine springs and fountains of fresh water. The main street is 60 feet wide, and the cross streets 40 feet in width. Each family has a plot of ground for yard and garden 3 acres in size. The air is pure and serene, the summer is longer and warmer than it is in Germany, and we are cultivating many kinds of fruits and vegetables, and our labor meets with rich reward."

The ground of which Pastorius wrote was not the immigrants' first choice, but after a difference with William Penn, was selected on account of its elevation, and also because it was open ground with only here and there groups of trees. After the survey lines were established, farms and gardens, and of course, houses were located on each side of the

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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main road, the farm boundaries extending in parallel lines from the "Great Road" east to Bristol township line, now Stenton avenue, and west to the Roxborough line, now Wissahickon avenue. In other respects these lines, however, were never strictly drawn, and places on York road to the east, and Roxborough on the west, were nearly always referred to as "Germantown."

The Main street farm lots began a few feet north of "Lower Burying Ground," now Hood's Cemetery, and were plotted northward in divisions of "half lots" of 115½ feet front each, or "whole lots" of 231 feet front each, to a point adjoining "Upper" or "Concord Burying Ground," located a few feet north of Kyser's, or Abington, now Washington lane. The original settlers of "42 persons in 12 families" were located upon this road, for so it had been planned. In "a further account of the Province of Pennsylvania," published in 1685, wrote Penn:

"We do settle in the way of townships or villages, each of which contains 5000 acres in square, and at least 10 families; many that had right to more land were at first covetous to have their whole quantity without regard to this way of settlement, tho' by such wilderness vacancies they had ruined the country and then our interest of course. I had in my view society, assistance, busy commerce, instruction of youth, government of people, manners, con-

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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venience of religious assembling, encouragement of mechanics, distinct and beaten roads, and it has answered in all those respects, I think, to the universal content."

Our first settlers were not tillers of the soil. Pastorius records they were "mostly linen weavers, unaccustomed to husbandry," but "yeomen" closely followed, and soon

"The meads' environed with the silver streames" were planted, and by a gracious providence stimulated to transmit to us the increase. William Penn quoting Robert Turner, wrote—"the manufacturers of linnen by the Germans goes on finely, and they make fine linnen. Samuel Carpenter, having been lately there, declares they had gathered one crop of flax, and had sowed for the second and saw it come up well."

This Samuel Carpenter was a busy resident of Philadelphia, and was familiar with Germantown by reason of being the holder of 500 acres of ground in the vicinity of present Branchtown.

Very early in the growth of the new colony the importance of Germantown was recognized, and although its founders were disappointed, desiring ground upon a "navigable stream," they made the best of what they considered a poor bargain, and losing no time, they, under the direction of Pastorius, gave life and vigor to the new "town," planted, cultivated, and eight years after the settlement, Old-

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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mixon stated, "the whole street about one mile in length was lined with blooming peach trees." Soon the hastily constructed log cabins gave way to substantial buildings of stone, and much of the stone, I doubt not, came from the quarry of Godfried Lehman, located at what is now Main and Price streets, where the old round-house once stood. Those who remember the Heivert Papen or Jansen house, built in 1698, and which about 25 years ago was removed from the northwest corner of Main and Johnson streets, may picture the houses "built of stone which is mixed with glimmer," observed by Peter Kalm in his visit here in 1748, the same as yet stand for observation in the homestead houses of the family giving name to Naglee's Hill.

About this time the character of Germantown began to change, although this change did not become pronounced until 50 years later. An influx of settlers of means and the improved conditions of the natives created new desires, houses became larger and more elaborate, "plantations" or "estates" began to take the place of farms, trade stimulated by wealth became of more importance, and the commingling of commerce and culture gave to Germantown an atmosphere not enjoyed by those who planted the settlement.

With the advent and accumulation of gain came those luxuries which only wealth and its attendant desires are able to accommodate, and the severe sim-

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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plicity of those who for conscience sake left the Fatherland to aid in the "holy experiment" and found a commonwealth, slowly gave way to an expanding era of change.

There were writers of this period who give us other impressions. One of the most unsympathetic of these was Silas Deane, who in 1775 wrote:

"Germantown consists of one street built mostly of rough stone, two miles nearly in length, and the houses resemble the appearance of the inhabitants, rough children of nature, and German nature too." This writer doubtless was an ancestral connection of Lewis Carroll, who, in "Hunting of the Snark," wrote,

"The crew was Dutch,  
and behaved as such."

But though rather uncomplimentary, Deane's account is extremely interesting, and as Townsend Ward reports him, is as follows:

"The greatest improvement on nature is that on their groves, owing by no means to luxury, but to penury and want. The growth is red oak (*quercus rubra*), interspersed with black walnut (*juglans nigra*), etc. The poor are allowed to cut up the brush and trim the lower limbs; this leaves the groves in the most beautiful order you can imagine. All is clean on the ground; removing every shrub and bush, leaves the wind full play to sweep the floor, and the soil, by no means luxuriant, shooting

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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up the trees rather sparingly, so much grass starts as to give a pale green carpet; while the trees are trimmed up ten to fifteen feet on their trunks, and give the eye a prospect far into the grove, and the footman or horseman free access."

As we may readily imagine, the original Germantown settlers were a busy people, so with the exception of Pastorius, Godfried Lehman, and a few others, we have little from them, and for our information we are obliged to depend upon visiting travelers. Ten years before the time of Deane's report Major Robert Rogers wrote thus of Philadelphia:

"In short, scarce anything can afford a more beautiful landscape than this city and adjacent country, which for some miles may be compared to a well regulated, flourishing garden, being improved, as I have been informed, to as great advantage as almost any lands in Europe."

In 1799 Duke de la Rochefoucault described Germantown as "a long village near 2½ miles in extent. The houses to the number of about 300 are all built on the side of the highway, and are erected pretty close to each other."

Of the planting of the people he wrote:

"They raise a good deal of wheat, and still more Indian corn, but very little rye or oats."

Rev. John C. Ogden, who visited here in the same year, describes the village in much the same way, and noted, "the road is muddy and dusty when

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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rains or droughts prevail. The houses in Germantown are very universally shaded with weeping willows, the Lombardy poplar, and other ornamental trees. The gardens are under excellent cultivation, with valuable fields in their rear."

Several visitors of importance we shall pass, for the purpose is merely to expose the line of continuity to enable us to form a better idea of the floral life of old Germantown, and with a recollection of Edward H. Bonsall, who, as Rev. S. F. Hotchkin reports, lived here from 1819 to 1835, we will turn aside into another path. Evidently the last-named was a poor observer, for he said, "in a circle of six miles with Chew's house as a centre, outside of Main street, there would not have been found 5 houses superior to an ordinary farm house," a statement so absurd as to require no consideration.

This brings us to days which Robert Thomas and Joseph Murter, venerable residents living with us, remember, and we shall now endeavor to follow the development of our many fine estates enriched by mansions, gardens, rare shrubs and notable trees, and with these note as much as we possess or remember of data and lore as may give promise of interest.

To me it is extremely interesting that original holdings are yet held by families whose ancestors first occupied them, and I doubt if there be another settlement in America where uninterruptedly so

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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many generations have occupied the same ground. Names which come readily to mind are Pastorius, Logan, Rittenhouse, Johnson, Keyser, and a group of other names of early settlers represented by the Wisters. Yet we have with us "Wyck," its original house built by Hans Millan, its original settler, standing surrounded by its original garden, and its occupant and owner, Miss Jane R. Haines, a direct descendant of the first owner—a house whose only local competitor for age with the possible exceptions of Rock-House, and Naglee's Houses,—is the "Fraleigh House, clearly of later construction, which stands in what was once Dr. Christopher Witt's garden, later Miss Elizabeth C. Morris' garden, situated at the southeast corner of Main and High streets, a building which may be seen to the rear of Mrs. Farnum's charming latticed residence.

Local history, to me at least, is always alluring, and it is with difficulty that I hew to the proper line, the temptation being to venture a little more. But we shall leave Dr. Witt and these pleasant shades to follow in the footsteps of others perhaps less well known.

By an unwritten law, observed from the days of Godfried Lehman to those of Charles F. Jenkins our latest guide, Germantown has been approached from the south by way of Main street, and a custom so honored I hope not to be the first to disturb. Many of us, indeed most of us, I think, are able to

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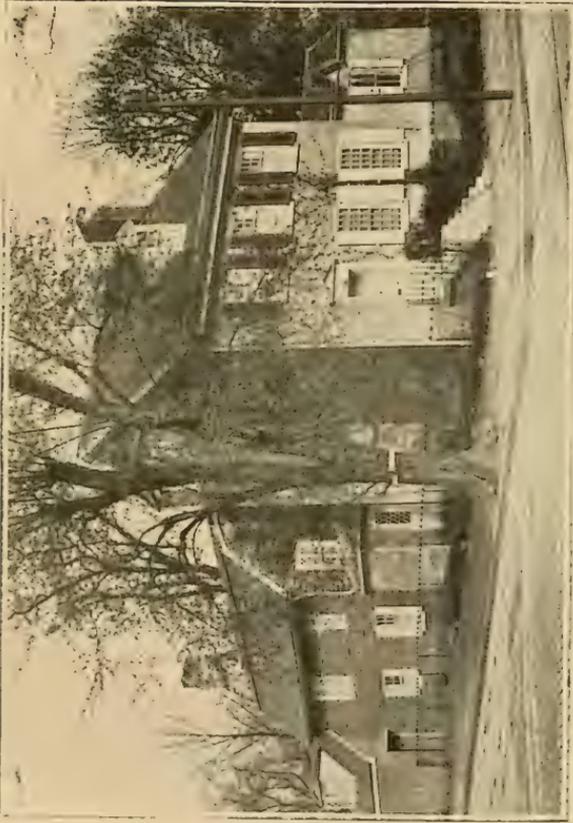
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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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recall Germantown village of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles or more, when the large buttonwood tree (*platanus occidentalis*) at Naglee's house stood entire, shading on late afternoons "Turnpike Bridge" near; when horse-cars, ignoring schedule, halted at the temporarily deserted tree at the fork, in waiting for "Jake," who was somewhere out of sight northward on the hill, and no more in a hurry than those in the car, who looked upon as an unwarranted innovation a noisy train which passed to disturb their restful meditations; when laden wagons unfortunate jumped the track, seriously interfering with suburban traffic; when on "market days" long lines of wagons laden with hay, straw and other commodities numerous, twice a week struggled through and oft-times blocked the busy road. Time was, and that not long ago, when Charles J. Wister, the well-known beloved father of Grumblethorpe's present owner, under the shade of his street trees, dined upon the sidewalk, with none to wonder nor molest; and Conestogas with other vehicles numerous, which James Stokes records, passed and repassed as naturally as present day trolleys, to whose inveterate clash and bang we have become accustomed. Those were the days when gardening was a pleasure if not an "art," and the planting of the good old plain gardeners, who never dreamed their calling would be elevated to a "science," is before us now to judge.



Morris Littell House



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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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At the house of Isaac Norris, until a generation ago standing on Germantown road, near Tenth street, and widely known as "Fairhill," was one of the finest gardens in the colonies. This garden was of the formal type, and "Francis Daniel Pastorius, of Germantown, himself a man of taste, pronounced Fair-hill garden the finest he had seen in the whole country,"—so wrote Thompson Westcott in "Historic Mansions" of Philadelphia, and this same writer continues: "Some of the trees and plants came from France. There were catalpas from the Southern States, and it was here were grown the first willow trees (*salix alba*) in Pennsylvania, the introduction of which is told by Franklin in his account of noticing the sprouting of a willow which had been used in a basket which he saw on board a ship which came to a wharf on the Delaware. Franklin took the sprout, and presented it to Debby Norris, who planted it, where it became the parent of many trees of the same species which have since become so common."

There are many white willow trees about Germantown, two fine specimens each with trunks 4 feet in diameter by 70 feet in height, being located on East Coulter street, corner of Cumberland street; but nearly all our best weeping willows (*salix babylonica*) have disappeared. Now no vestige remains of the rows of willows which lined both sides of Church lane, east of Willow avenue, notable trees

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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which Thomas MacKellar described for Rev. S. F. Hotchkin. Under one of these trees, which stood prominently in the middle of the road, tradition says General Washington was accustomed to spend an evening hour in its shade. There yet remains to us, however, interesting willows near the entrance to Vernon, at Wyck, and several large and beautiful specimens are on the estate of Charles Weiss, East Washington lane, near Stenton avenue.

As you may remember, the weeping willow is a native of China, and by the Dutch was introduced to Holland. By these same people it was also introduced to England, one of the first specimens in that country being planted at Hampton Court.

Advancing northward by way of York road, we note on the grounds of J. Bertram Lippincott a fine white oak (*quercus alba*) with a trunk four feet in diameter and rising to a height of 80 feet. Here also is a specially fine white pine (*pinus strobus*), but there is hardly a place of importance in or near Germantown where there are not conspicuous, if not great, white pine trees. It is a characteristic of a white pine that it dominates wherever it is, and a plant which at a distance appears to be of great proportions, near is found to be disappointingly ordinary.

From "Solitude," located east of York road, south of Fisher's lane, the best plants have disappeared. There yet, however, is a catalpa (*catalpa*

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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bignonioides), having a trunk three feet in diameter and a height of forty feet; a chestnut (*castanea vesca*), with a trunk of five feet in diameter and a height of 70 feet; a tulip poplar (*liriodendron tulipifera*), 4 feet in diameter and 100 feet in height; and a finely proportioned walnut (*juglans nigra*), 3 feet in diameter and 80 feet high.

These trees are surpassed by others elsewhere, the walnut in particular being excelled by like trees on Morton street near High street, on Main street above Tulpehocken street, at Nutwold on East Johnson street,—all superior plants, and by a wide branching tree of the same species overspreading a spring-house on the grounds of Frank Smyth, Washington lane, east of Chew street, a specimen 6 feet in diameter and 90 feet high, I think by all odds the finest in Germantown.

On Fisher's lane east of York road is an exceedingly fine white poplar (*populus alba*), having a trunk 48 inches in diameter and a height of 80 feet; and farther east on the same lane, with its lands bordering those of "York Farm,"—the last American home of Fanny Kemble,—is Champlost, a beautiful estate occupied by Miss Fox, where grow several of our finest plants,—but it, like other favored places near, being situated beyond our proper limits, we shall with this mention pass it, to stop at a worthy neighbor.

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Bordering York road, above Logan Station, is "Clearfield," now "Fairfield," a plantation which Henry Drinker purchased in 1794, and so named because "James Fisher has a place that has been called 'Newington' for many years, 'twas thought best to change the name," wrote Elizabeth Drinker in her entertaining "journal."

This plantation or farm was held for two years by the Drinkers, its mistress delighting in its occupation and rewards, recording its cherries ripe May 17; describing an odd tulip (*tulipa gesneriana*), which grew in its garden, a plant "with 8 leaves, which I look upon as a curiosity, never having seen one before with more than 6 leaves," and continuing she noted, "a very beautiful place it is, how delighted and pleased would many women be with such a retreat."

The beauty of Clearfield was appreciated by successive owners and care was taken for its preservation. Although a railroad has cut the place in sections, and its collections are depleted, it yet preserves sufficient of merit to attract the most superficial plant observer. Here at the old mile-stone—"2 M. to R. S., 4 M. to P."—surrounded by high trees and ivy-covered, is its secluded mansion, which one approaches by box (*buxus sempervirens*) bordered walks, winding between borders of heavy shrubbery, and about are several conspicuous hem-

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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lock (*tsuga canadensis*), beech (*fagus ferruginea*), and button-ball (*plantanus occidentalis*) trees.

Near the upper entrance gate is a white pine, and beside the house a Norway spruce (*picea excelsa*), both of strange development, and as odd as any of the grotesque growths I have seen at Wildwood, N. J., and elsewhere on the Atlantic coast.

Here also is a curious Austrian pine (*pinus Austriaca*), with a depressed crown; an unusually fine specimen of Himalayan pine (*pinus excelsa*), 50 feet in height, second only to pines of the same species at William Rotch Wister's, Belfield avenue; at Justus Strawbridge's, School House lane and Wisahickon avenue, and at Caspar Heft's, Main street, near Manheim street, the latter a specimen which George Redles considers the best in our territory, but which I think is fairly equalled by a conspicuous rival at Cliveden.

At "Fairfield" is a fine specimen of rare Japan cedar or cryptomeria (*cryptomeria japonica*), the acknowledged "queen of evergreens," 25 feet in height; also a fine white oak (*quercus alba*), 80 feet in height; a white or silver birch (*betula alba*), 40 feet in height, the latter a fine plant, but not equal to specimens at Fern-hill and at E. W. Clark's, Wisahickon avenue and School House lane. Also here, as reported by Philip C. Garrett, the present occupant of Fairfield, for Mrs. Anne DeB. Mears—"over the upper spring-house is an ancient and famous

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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catalpa tree pictured in the horticultural journals, which still bears its beautiful crop of blossoms every year," a tree yet vigorous, and near the mansion, between it and the road, is a fine cedar of Lebanon (*cedrus libani*), 50 feet in height. All these plants are prominent, and may be plainly seen from the road.

"Stenton," once extending from Fisher's lane to Nicetown lane, from Germantown road to York road, and situated from "Fairfield" to the west, has been shorn of much of its wealth. A. J. Downing, who visited it, thus describes it in "Landscape Gardening" of 1849: "Stenton, near Germantown, four miles from Philadelphia, is a fine old place, with many picturesque features. The farm consists of 700 acres, almost without division fences—admirably arranged—and remarkable for a grand old avenue of the hemlock spruce (*abies canadensis*), 110 years old, leading to a family cemetery of much sylvan beauty."

This same "splendid avenue of hemlocks," described later by Townsend Ward, is no more, and of interest at Stenton now is but a tulip poplar, a large plane tree (*platanus occidentalis*), a few persimmon trees (*diospyrus virginiana*) and a row of Lombardy poplars (*populus dilatata*), plants surpassed by many with us, and by two plants of exceptional merit, one a wide-spreading black walnut (*juglans nigra*), appearing to the south of the man-



George Redles



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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sion, and the other a notable elm (*ulmus Americana*), having a trunk 4 feet in diameter and a top spreading at a height of 120 feet, a plant which on part of Stenton grounds disposed of, may now be seen in the garden of Dr. William H. Hickok, at north-east corner of Eighteenth and Cayuga streets, a magnificent specimen said to have been mature in the days of James Logan and William Penn.

Near-by and north of Stenton is "The Cedars," a green grove wherein Professor Stewardson Brown long dwelt, and where this gentleman informed me is a fine specimen of swamp magnolia (*magnolia glauca*), two rare yellow-flowering magnolias (*magnolia fraseri*),—a lemon-scented variety of great beauty, by many considered our finest magnolia, and a small tree of the always rare cedar of Lebanon. Here also are several fine specimens of swamp cypress (*taxodium distichium*), familiarly known about Philadelphia as Bartram's cypress.

Without exception, the finest grove of trees in Germantown is that in the midst of which "Wakefield," a near neighbor of Stenton and Fairfield, is situated—a grove composed of immense juniper (*juniperus virginiana*), chestnut (*castanea Americana*), white oak (*quercus alba*), red oak (*quercus rubra*), and tulip poplar (*liriodendron tulipifera*) trees. Here is a green-flowering cucumber tree (*magnolia acuminata*), perfectly proportioned, having a trunk 2 feet in diameter and a height of 30

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

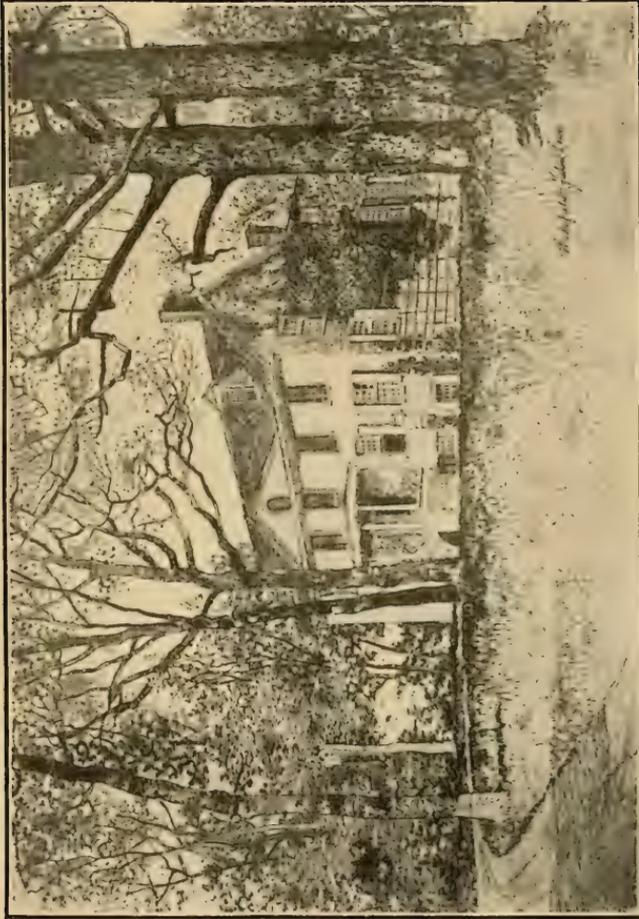
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feet. Also here on the front lawn is a tulip poplar, measured by John Warr and George Redles, a tree 5 feet in diameter of trunk, ivy-covered from the ground to its first limb at 40 feet, and rising to a height of 130 feet, a noble specimen equal to celebrated relatives growing on the Virginia mountains, where the species is said to attain its greatest development; truly a tree, especially when in bloom, deserving Benjamin Franklin's appellation—"King of the American forests."

Passing for the present "Little Wakefield," we halt in lower Fisher's lane to note a most interesting white oak (*quercus alba*), long familiar to me, but which I overlooked until directed again to it by George Redles. This is a rugged tree 4 feet in diameter trunk and 60 feet high, perfectly formed, and growing on the top of a rock it has cleft in twain.

William E. S. Baker, in "Widow Seymour," accurately locates this tree "between the Wakefield mills in Fisher's Hollow, close by the bank of the Wingohocken creek, and at the curve of the lane." "The immense flat-rock" which supports this tree is also associated with "Widow Seymour," and those of a poetic temperament may here find much of interest. Advancing to the elevation at Stenton avenue and Fisher's lane, we find before us at Mrs. M. H. Stiver's two of our finest trees, one a white oak, the other a red oak, each 4 feet in diameter and 80 feet high, both plants perfectly shaped, and with



Wakefield



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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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huge wide-spreading limbs, covering an area equal to their height.

Other fine specimens of oak we have are a group of three fine white oaks at Old Oaks Cemetery on Wissahickon avenue; a red oak at Stewart A. Jellett's "One Oak," Pulaski avenue, near Apsley street; a beautiful tree on the grounds of Francis B. Reeves, Clapier street and McKean avenue; our most striking and picturesque oak at Judge F. Carroll Brewster's, Manheim street, near Wissahickon avenue; a great white oak at Ivy Hill Cemetery, near Pennsylvania Railroad, a single finely developed specimen 5 feet in diameter and 100 feet high; and if not the largest, one of the finest, and certainly our most interesting oak planted by John Wister in 1813, and now adorning Vernon Park.

There are several fine trees on Fisher's lane, but we shall now stop only at T. Charlton Henry's place, where Alexander Lawson was long gardener, to record an exceedingly fine copper beech, and a century plant (*agave Americana*), which here bloomed a few years ago.

Retracing our steps through Wister's woods, we pass a declivity on which once grew a celebrated memorial beech. This tree stood to the north of Fisher's lane and Wakefield street, and through age and abuse came to its end in the year 1870. The Germantown Telegraph, January 29 of the named year, gave an account of this venerable and vener-

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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ated tree. Near the earth its trunk was 3 feet in diameter, and "many very ancient scars and markings were on its surface, and among them within an escutcheon, deeply engraved and quite legible, were the initials D. L. W., 1771," cut there by Daniel and Lowry Wister. It is a pleasure to note that this interesting work has been preserved, and is now among the treasures of "Grumblethorpe."

Continuing through Wister's wood, a place where its late owner loved to roam, we note near the upper spring an odd twin growth, to which Charles T. Macarthur, superintendent of the Germantown Gas Works near by, directed my attention. Here are two trees, one a red oak and the other a tulip poplar, which for several feet together grow as one, resembling a unity of two species, I discovered growing on Dark Run lane, near the Asylum pike, some years ago.

Following the Wingohocken Valley southward we round the point to "Mill" or "Valley creek," and on our left find "Little Wakefield," the home of Ellicott Fisher, where a number of chestnut, butternut and tulip poplar trees of fair proportions may be observed, but not any of which are equal to the lofty vigorous specimens appearing on "Wakefield's" bank to the right, where sturdy oaks, not observable from the front, here impressively stand. "Belfield Homestead, with its famous coffee tree and lovely boulevard of maples," now appear before us a per-

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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fect haven of rest, its most prominent plants thus referred to by W. E. S. Baker, standing conspicuous above a bordering wealth of vegetation. Here also are superior specimens of Juniper, ailanthus, dogwood, and Judas trees, the last two being among the finest productions of our American forests.

From the valley we turn into Thorp's lane, once a gem of rural beauty, but now sadly changed, to view a beautiful avenue of silver maple (*acer dasycarpum*) extending from the main entrance to the mansion where Fanny Kemble wrote "My children were born, my first and only American home." In "Records of Later Life" the same gifted author, under date of 1837, notes: "The other day, for the first time, I explored my small future domain, which is bounded on the right by the high road, on the left by a not unromantic little mill-stream with bits of rock, and cedar bushes, and dams, and, I am sorry to say, a very picturesque, half-tumbled-down factory; on the north by fields and orchards of our neighbors, and another road; and on the south by a pretty, deep, shady lane, running from the high road to the above-mentioned factory. There are four pretty pasture meadows, and a very pretty piece of woodland, which coasting the stream and mill-dam, will, I foresee, become a favorite haunt of mine."

"The Farm" or "Butler Place" yet contains many notable plants, though the "row of old acacia trees near the house" was removed, and "a double

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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row of 200 trees planted along the side of the place" show wear. The latter, however, is of great interest to us, for in spite of an acknowledged "combined ignorance" a majority of these plants have lived, and from "York Farm" in 1874 Fanny Kemble wrote: "The trees I planted along the low enclosure hedge of Butler Place, 30 years ago, stretch their branches and throw their shadows half over the road which divides the places."

Though exceedingly pleasurable, we may not linger here too long, and to all interested in Germantown and its associations, I suggest the reading of "Records of Later Life" and "Further Records," both books of great interest, and mainly produced at "Butler Place" and "York Farm."

There are many avenues of silver maples (*acer dasycarpum*) worthy of record with us, among them being one in Town Hall Park, another at the Pulaski avenue approach to "Fern-hill," and also that leading to the Pinckney homestead, where Judge William D. Kelly, and later, Charles W. Brinley once lived.

Other striking maple-lined avenues may be seen at Justus C. Strawbridge's, School House lane and Wissahickon avenue, at Samuel Welsh's, West School House lane, both of great beauty; also that of Garrett's Hill on our main street, with others numerous; and on Norwood avenue, extending from Chestnut avenue to Sunset avenue, Chestnut Hill, is

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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one beyond compare. At Butler Place the hemlock (*tsuga canadensis*) hedge continues of more than ordinary merit, but it is equalled by a vigorous old hedge belonging to Dr. R. W. Deaver,—Main street and Walnut lane, and is surpassed by a notable hedge of the same species at Thomas P. Galvin's grounds, West Walnut lane, and by the remarkable hedges of "Fern-hill." Other plants at Butler Place worthy of notice are a black walnut and a coffee tree, both of immense size and majestic proportions. Distributed throughout our territory are many large and beautiful coffee trees (*gymnocladus canadensis*). One of these may be seen at Dr. I. Pearson Willit's, on West Walnut lane; another holds its place in Vernon Park; and a specially fine specimen stands before the Welsh mansion at Spring-Bank.

At Dr. George De Benneville's "Silver Pine Farm" is a group of white pine (*pinus strobus*), which if not the largest is at least the most imposing one among us. These trees are nine in number, are about two feet in diameter trunk, rise to a height of from 80 to 100 feet, and their shattered arms are familiar to every frequenter of Branchtown by way of Green lane or York road. As these trees gave name to the place, so we may refer to a farm house-like structure which once stood where Masonic Hall now stands on Main street near St. Luke's Church, a house in 1832 the home of Bronson Alcott, and the birthplace of Louisa M. Alcott—which from a group

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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of trees before it, became known as "Silver Pine Cottage."

In this same cottage, while rector of St. Luke's Church, Rev. B. Wistar Morris also dwelt, and this in a measure may account for his love of "Oregon pines," though his old-time neighbors say he was elected bishop for quite another reason.

Conspicuous specimens of white pine, in some respects our most impressive tree, may be seen at Loudoun, at Toland's, at Henry's, all near Naglee's Hill; at Fern-hill, at George Blight's and Dr. James Gardette's on Wissahickon avenue; at Manheim, where there is a beautiful tree three feet in diameter and 90 feet high; at Carlton on Indian Queen lane; at Armstrong's on Duy's lane, and at almost every place on School House lane from John Alburger's, near Greene street, to William Weightman's, near the "Falls;" at Jacob A. Datz's, Stenton avenue and Mill street, and at Alfred Williams', near by; at Old School, County line and Limekiln pike; at Vollmer's, East Washington lane; at Upsala and Lutheran Seminary—indeed, so many and so generally distributed are these beautiful plants that it is needless to further enumerate.

At Butler's Place is an odd white pine, which curiously at a height of 40 feet had its terminal bud destroyed, the result being the development of a trinity of side buds. In like manner there is also a remarkable specimen at Philip Guckes' on West

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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School House lane, a tree  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter by 70 feet high. This tree's terminal bud at 40 feet elevation having been destroyed, two side shoots were developed, which each sturdily rose to an additional height of 30 feet.

Without exception, the finest and most perfect white pine in our district is a plant growing on a knoll on "Perot's Farm," now Northwood Cemetery. This tree has a trunk  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter, rises to a height of 70 feet, has a spread of 40 feet, and is vigorous, perfect and very beautiful.

At "Outalauna," the residence of Joseph Wharton, is an exceedingly fine silver poplar (*populus alba*), and near at "Bonneval Cottage," the home of Mrs. Anne de Benneville Mears, are two immense buttonwood trees (*platanus occidentalis*) with trunks 4 feet in diameter, each with a height of 100 feet, and 40 feet spread. In "Old York Road," Mrs. Mears, writing of "Bonneval Cottage," states "it was surrounded by a fine lawn and in front still stands one of the sycamore trees whose age is over 300 years, and its companion was planted by Dr. George De Benneville, Sr., in 1768."

With us continue many notable buttonwood trees, although all our home trees are inferior to specimens growing in more favorable locations. On Pawling Road near Audubons' "Millgrove" stands a magnificent plane tree, and Governor S. W. Pennypacker recently wrote me, "there is a button-

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

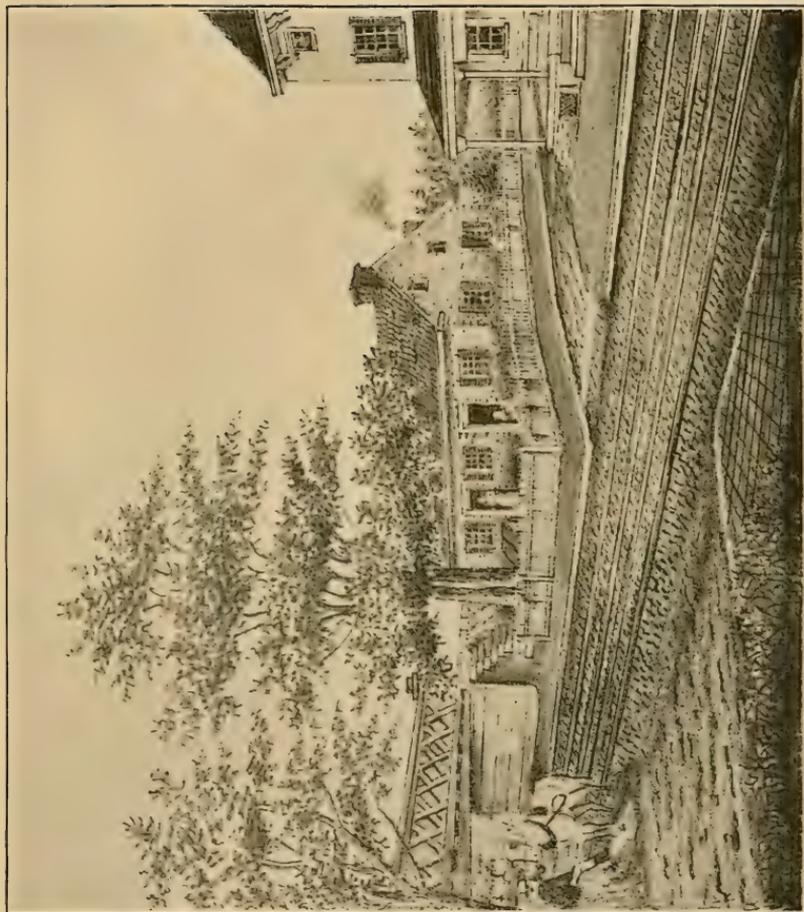
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wood tree on an island in the Perkiomen at Rahns' Station which is 10 feet in diameter, the largest tree I know." In Case's Botanical Index, Page 46, there was recorded in 1880 a buttonwood tree growing in Greene county, Indiana, having a trunk 16 feet in diameter, and which rose with a clear trunk 25 feet, the altitude reached being 160 feet, and plane trees much greater than this are known.

It would be futile to name all our worthy specimens, far or near, so I shall without mention pass many to locate a few which more directly appeal to us. Many of us may recall the buttonwood 3 feet in diameter and 80 feet high which once stood at Main street and School House lane, and we all may remember the buttonwood tree within the gate to our "Earthly Paradise," and whose denuded trunk stands to remind us of days when settlers first took up ground on "side land lots." Here with an additional story of recent growth is Naglee's house, where James Logan for a season dwelt, a building like the "Rock House," a venerable survivor and typical representative of the stone houses of early Germantown.

Recently we have lost one of two well-known sycamore trees at Mechlin's or Wagner's, and the tree continuing is but a reminder of its former greatness. Another interesting specimen on Main street is that on the grounds of William Heft, a tree 5½ feet in diameter and 80 feet high, one of two trees which



Turnpike Bridge and Naglee Houses



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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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changed the name of a public house once here from "Ye Roebuck Inn" to "Buttonwood Hotel." Though often so asserted by over-zealous loyalists, these trees were not planted "by Philadelphia's first mayor," but by "Andrew Garret, who carried them from the banks of the Schuylkill, and here set them in place, as "The Guide" some years ago instructed us. Andrew Garret may be remembered as an eccentric character, who during the latter part of the eighteenth century had a dwelling on Indian Queen lane, near the "Falls." Here he lived alone, and by robbers was one night foully murdered, a sufficient warning, let us hope, to all of like preferment.

Other interesting buttonwood trees are located at the pump on Manheim street, where there is a specimen 4 feet in diameter by 80 feet high; at Manheim near the club house, where is an odd-shaped specimen having a short trunk 4 feet in diameter, and awkwardly branching limbs rising to a height of 100 feet; at Friends' grounds on Main street, where is a rare tree 4 feet in diameter by 60 feet high; and another specimen at Market Square, now only of interest because it was planted by Samuel B. Morris; at Dr. Ashton's on West School House lane, where there is a majestic tree, and several others worthy a visit are in this immediate neighborhood. Rare specimens may also be seen at spring-house on Cresheim road, above Allen's lane; at William Dewees spring-house at the bend in the upper Wis-

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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sahickon, where grow two fine specimens; at "Spring Bank," the residence of John Welsh, where is a perfect plant, 4 feet in diameter and 100 feet high; and two trees in Wissahickon avenue, near "Fern-hill" entrance, one 6 feet in diameter, 100 feet rise, with a spread of 80 feet, and the other about its equal, are the finest plane trees we have.

At National Cemetery, Haines street and Limekiln pike, are many beautiful trees, though but few of unusual size or rarity. Here are fair specimens of ginko (*salisburia adiantifolia*), but not equal to the ginkos of Edward Hacker, Wister street; Charles J. Wister, Main street; Lloyd Miffin, Penn street; Benjamin H. Shoemaker, Mill street; and that of Alfred C. Harrison, at Thorp's lane, Chestnut Hill. Larch (*larix Americana*), but surpassed by the larch of David Pancoast at High and Baynton streets, by that of "Fairfield," of "Upsala," and several others. Silver birch and other trees of superior merit are here, and also here is a fine white pine, while in sight is a number of specimens of the same species at Middleton's on Limekiln pike. Among the best plants at National Cemetery is an arbor vitae (*thuja occidentalis*) group of 12 feet in diameter spread and a 30-foot height, and an exceedingly fine specimen of *retinospora plumosa*.

Several years ago there were several fine trees on Christopher Ludwig's farm, Haines street, near Chew street, but the best of these have disappeared,

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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and there now remains but mediocre plane and walnut trees to halt us at the house of Washington's doughty baker general, who spent here several years of his honest life, and who from his "labors" rests in St. Michael's Lutheran Churchyard. Opposite "Ludwig Farm" is "Awbury," containing the homes of John S. Haines, Thomas P. Cope, Francis R. Cope and other members of well-known families of like name, where are many rare and beautiful plants. From "High Street Station" which was, there extended to the Cope houses a rustic walk shaded by a double row of silver maples, and this shortened continues to remind one of the celebrated "walks" of Addison at Oxford and Milton at Cambridge. Shielding Haines street, east of Chew street, is a row of specially fine scarlet maple (*acer rubrum*) trees now in bloom, and at "John Haines' gate" grow two fine elm trees, each having a trunk  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter, a height of 60 feet and a spread of 80 feet, entirely covering the entrance to this most inviting place.

With us are several fine elm trees (*ulmus Americana*), one being on the grounds of Charles Edward Pancoast, East Johnson street,—another is in the "Concord graveyard," and two very beautiful weeping elms of the Galena type on Chew street, opposite Church street, shade the entrance to Meehans' nurseries.

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Not long ago several of our largest trees were to be found at Old Oaks Cemetery, grounds once a part of John Tucker's "plantation." This burying ground was located on Township Line road, and extended from near the toll-gate at McKean's hill to the railroad, south. Here was a number of immense chestnut trees, but the finest have been destroyed, as was also an immense chestnut 11½ feet in diameter, which once stood on the grounds of Moses Brown, School House lane, near the "Falls." Our best, however, did not class with trees elsewhere. At Hereford, Bucks county, Pa., there is, or was, standing on the farm of James Schlegel a chestnut tree 8¾ feet in diameter, 90 feet high, and said to be 200 years old. At James A. Wright's place on Township Line road, near Clapier street, is an imposing grove of great chestnut, silver maple and oak trees; at "Carlton," Indian Queen lane, is a number of chestnut trees of immense girth, but of no great height, storm riven and impressive; but perhaps our largest chestnut trees are located on the grounds of Thomas P. C. Stokes and Dr. George Strawbridge, Wissahickon avenue, near Frank street.

"Fernhill," which from "Old Oaks" appears on an elevation before us, is slowly but surely losing its choicest plants, and during a recent visit there with George Redles, John F. Sibson, its efficient manager, attributed its losses to noxious gases proceeding from the steel works near by. Here, in addition to



Weeping Elms



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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plants previously noted, are superior specimens of barberry (*berberis vulgaris*), weeping dog-wood (*cornus F. variety pendula*), common beech (*fagus ferruginea*), a fine specimen of Virginian fringe tree (*chionanthus Virginica*), and a larch of perfect proportions, 2 feet in diameter and 40 feet high. To compare with these, along Wingohocken creek, immediately north of the "Rocky Mountains" in Meehans' nurseries, is a grove of fringe trees very beautiful when in flower, and at Manheim there is a magnificent larch, 2 feet in diameter of trunk, rising to a height of 80 feet.

The finest larch in Germantown once stood on the grounds of Hugh McLean, corner of Carpenter lane and Cresheim road, but this great tree a few years ago unfortunately met its fate.

At Thomas Jones', Manheim street and Wissahickon avenue, is a holly (*ilex opaca*) 15 feet high, with a spread of 15 feet, a beautiful specimen, but equaled by two notable plants at Vernon, and surpassed by Wister Price's specimen on Manheim grounds, a tree having a trunk  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter, 25 feet high, with a branch spread of 20 feet. Here also is a rare *virgilia*, the first, and once the finest specimen in cultivation,—a tree now showing the ravages of old age, but none the less interesting. A *virgilia* younger (*cladrastis tinctoria*), vigorous and beautiful, overhangs the gate of "Grumble-

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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thorpe," Main street, opposite Queen street, and is the best of its species I know in our territory.

The charms of "Caernarvon" have flown, but Manheim possesses a beauty of its own, one of its many attractions being the finest group of rhododendrons (*rhododendron maximum*) in Germantown. The neighborhood of "Manheim" to me is of great interest, but we may not stop to consider its historic associations nor to refer to all its plants worthy of notice.

By far the finest silver maple in Germantown stood on the grounds of Louis Clapier Baumann, at corner of Manheim and Henry streets. This fine tree some years ago I measured, and when it was felled to make way for improvements, these measurements were verified by John Holt. The tree was perfect in every particular, of commanding height, and was a notable landmark of Manheim street. An account of this plant I prepared for "Forest Leaves," of June, 1897, wherein it is described as being 138 feet in height. At half its altitude it had a spread of 35 feet on every side of the main trunk, and at 1 foot above the ground the trunk was 4 1-3 feet in diameter.

We have many fine specimens of silver maple continuing, and one of the finest stands on Cresheim road, near Gorgas street. Another appears to the rear of Dr. John D. Godman's house, Main street, opposite Pastorius street. Another, and once a very



L. C. Baumann



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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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striking plant, one of a row of trees planted in the year 1848 by Robert Haines when the street was opened, stands at the corner of West Walnut lane and Adams street, but this tree a few years ago was visited by marauders and now it is but a relic of its former greatness. At "The Corvy," the residence of William Wynne Wister, there are several silver maples, not specially great, but of interest because they are directly on Main street and shade the house where Gilbert Stuart lived.

It is recorded that Jacques Marie Roset who lived on the upper side of Manheim street, adjoining James R. Gates' lumber yard,—and not at "Spring Alley," as has oft been reported,—had a beautiful garden, the products of which it is said he loved to distribute, one of his recipients being Fanny Kemble, who from her home on York road frequently passed this way on driving trips, a recreation she always loved. It is also recorded that Roset first introduced tomatoes to Germantown, but this does not appear to be correct, for the credit belongs, I think, to E. B. Gardette, whose place on Wissahickon avenue, opposite Manheim street, is marked by three notable pine trees rising to a height of 80 feet.

This gentleman came to America during the Revolutionary period, and it is said his gardener first grew the tomato (*lycopersicum esculentum*), or love apple, for the color of its fruit. Melons or cante-

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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loupes were also first raised here, it has been stated, but this I have never been able to verify, "for the seed of the canteloupe was brought to this country from Tripoli and distributed by Commodore James Barron," so I give the credit for what it is worth.

This, however, I know, Philip R. Freas, a neighbor of Commodore Barron, had a canteloupe patch which the "brickyard" boys well knew, and about it I doubt not Philip Walters, and George Redles—who having reached years of discrimination, has now no need to ask if it be "true that horses when old never lie down"—can tell you more than I.

Baumann's great maple grew on ground which once belonged to "White Cottage," an estate at one time owned by the Logans. Here lived Dr. Samuel Betton, who was succeeded by his son, Dr. Thomas Forrest Betton, the friend of Rafinesque, and here under Samuel Betton, its present occupant and owner, William Kulp, well known to many of us, has been many years gardener. Recent changes have robbed "White Cottage" of its seclusion, but with it yet continue many beautiful ivy-dressed trees, which spread their branches over the grounds, in season almost shielding the house from view.

Near General Wayne Hotel, on Manheim street, is a specially fine ailanthus (*ailanthus glandulosus*) 2½ feet in diameter of trunk, with a height of 50 feet, and at the Keyser-Rodney House, Main and Duval streets, and on Garrett's Hill, opposite Lovett

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Library, are conspicuous superior specimens. Also on Manheim street, near Main street, is a honeylocust tree (*gleditschia triacanthos*) with a trunk 3 feet in diameter by 80 feet high, and larger and finer specimens are on Pulaski avenue, near Seymour street, and in front of Michael Schlatter's stone house, Main street, near where the road turns off for "Wheel Pump," Chestnut Hill.

At "Carlton" is a magnificent beech (*fagus ferruginea*) 3 feet in diameter of trunk, with a height of 60 feet and a spread of 40 feet, the finest specimen I know in our territory. We have many fine beeches, one being at "Awbury," and another at Miss Nixon's, on East Tulpehocken street. There are also exceedingly fine specimens at George L. Harrison's, on West School House lane; at William Heft's, on Main street; at "Fernhill," and at places elsewhere, too many to name.

By George Redles my attention was directed to a large dogwood (*cornus Florida*) growing near Queen Lane basin, and there true to life, between the basin and Midvale avenue, may be seen a notable specimen  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter by 20 feet high, with a spread of 20 feet, and here are two sassafras trees (*sassafras officinalis*) 2 feet in diameter by 40 feet high, both notable plants, one, however, surpassing the other in form. These are remarkable plants, and stand on historic ground, once part of "Carlton."

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Here the army of Washington was encamped, and here during an encampment of the Civil War Joseph Meehan, botanist and horticulturist, active among us, first did "picket duty." Here also is a tulip poplar, 4 feet in diameter and 100 feet high, not equal to Wakefield's notable specimen, but yet a plant of great merit.

We have many superior tulip poplars, one 4 feet in diameter and 100 feet high being at "Woodside," Edward T. Steel's residence on West School House lane; another on John Wagner's grounds on the same lane being 5 feet in diameter and 60 feet high. There are also several fine tulip poplars at Thomas MacKellar's, on Shoemaker's lane, but the finest specimen here, like the Blair linden at Main street and Walnut lane, has been despoiled.

At "Torworth," the residence of Justus C. Strawbridge, and also at "Blathewood," Joseph S. Lovering's place adjoining, we have very fine specimens of hemlock (*tsuga canadensis*), as indeed we have in many parts of Germantown, but our finest hemlock trees are in "the Wissahickon," where almost the entire southern bank of its romantic stream is fringed by this refreshing tree, and wherein are groups of groves above Kitchen's or Garsed's lane, above Allen's lane, at Devil's Pool, beside Megargee's dam, and near Rex avenue, plants ranging from 1½ to 2 feet in trunk diameter and from 60 to 80 feet in height. Also near Rex avenue bridge is a



Hemlock Grove near Kitchens Lane



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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specimen hemlock of graceful proportions, having a trunk  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter and rising to a height of 100 feet.

Among our most interesting plants are the native "Jersey pines," which appear sparingly about Germantown. With us are two varieties, that on School House lane opposite Gypsy lane, and others in the same neighborhood extending to the mouth of the Wissahickon, are technically known as *pinus inops*.

At Walnut lane and Wissahickon avenue is a specimen of *pinus rigida* one foot in diameter and 30 feet high. At James A. Mason's, near Upsal Station, is a group of *pinus inops*. At Thomas' Mill road on the Wissahickon, and eastward on the same road in the open above Towanda street, are from one to two hundred *pinus rigida*, interesting survivors of a flora supplanted. On Stenton avenue, near Bethesda Home, we have an isolated group of *pinus inops*, and at County Line road and Limekiln pike, also on Mt. Airy avenue near Main street are solitary specimens of the same species. Interesting specimens are also distributed throughout Chestnut Hill.

The Wissahickon is covered by numerous valuable plants, but of these a majority is too densely crowded to develop to the best advantage. Several years ago Thomas Meehan in Meehans' Monthly, asked for data of sassafras trees, the text-books and

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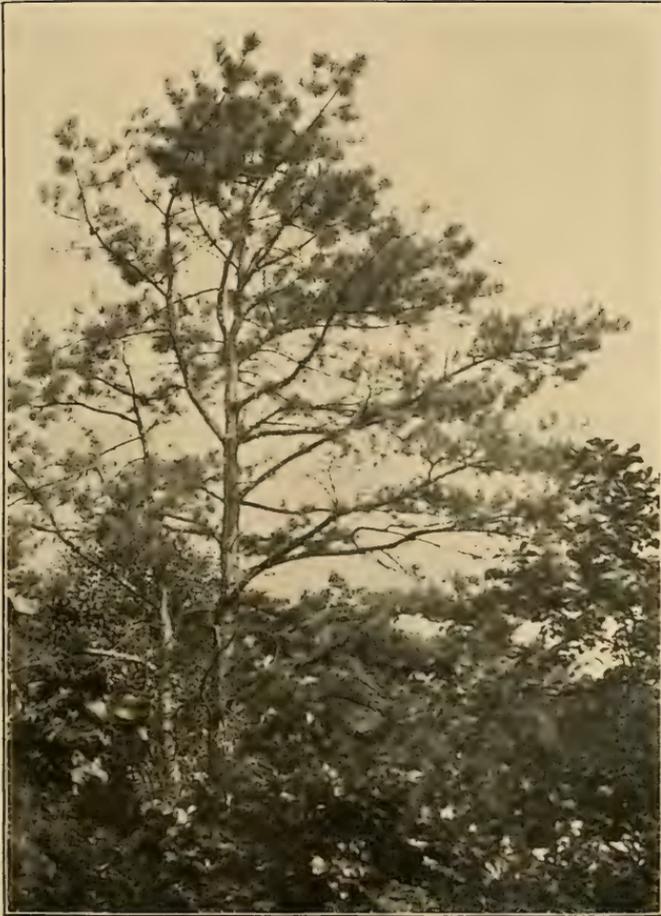
GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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general information agreeing that the average height of mature specimens of this plant to be 30 feet. At "Solitude," and at the "Indian Mound" on E. W. Clark's grounds, School House lane, there are specimens rising to a greater than this height, and at Tulpehocken and Musgrave streets were twin specimens, one now surviving, exceeding this height, and finely formed. Near the "Suicide's Grave," north of Rabbit lane, George Redles informed me there is a specially fine specimen, and for the knowledge of an immense specimen on McCallum street, near Carpenter's lane, I am indebted to Joseph Meehan. In the Wissahickon, near Thorp's lane, I measured a slender specimen 80 feet in height, but the finest plants of this species I know were those measured for me by Joseph Heacock, two plants growing near Media, each three feet in diameter and 80 feet high.

About home we have numerous and exceedingly fine specimens of juniper (*juniperus virginiana*). Almost wherever one goes these may be observed—along the borders of the Wissahickon, at "Bummers' Cave" on Stenton avenue, on Chew street north of Johnson street, a place known to Ellwood Johnson as "Vinegar Hill," and at Tulpehocken street and Wingohocken creek. This latter tree has a trunk 3 feet in diameter and is 35 feet high. A short time ago it was a healthy, beautiful specimen, but now it is partly or wholly dead, a



Wissahickon Pines



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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plant when in its prime approached in my knowledge only by two like it which grow on Sunnyside town pike, near "Indian Creek Meeting." At Roberts Le Boutillier's on East Washington lane, and elsewhere near, there are many other specimens worthy of record, but space and time details and elaboration forbid.

The deep frost of last winter played havoc with many plants, partly or wholly destroying box, ivy and other evergreens not usually affected. The celebrated evergreen magnolia (*magnolia grandiflora*) at Lippincott's, Broad and Sansom streets, Philadelphia, entirely dropped its leaves; in many ponds all the fish were killed, and losses in other directions one may not yet undertake to estimate. Untouched, however, we have many box-bordered garden walks, such as may be seen at "White Cottage," at "Grumblethorpe," at "Wyck," at Spring Bank, at William M. Bayard's on upper Main street; formal designs set in green like those at Robert S. Newhall's, Main and Gorgas streets; but the most elaborate and most perfect of our box borders are those adorning the garden of George C. Thomas, at Blue Bell Hill, protected by beautiful hedges of osage orange, arbor vitae and neatly clipped hemlock.

I never pass "Spring-bank" without thinking of John Welsh, its late and honored owner. Here I often saw him walking "in the cool of the day" under the shade of the "glorious" trees which line the

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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front of the estate, and always excepting Grumblethorpe and Wyck, there is not to me in Germantown a more delightful spot. Here we have already noted a few plants, and we shall stop only to look at a perfect tulip poplar, 3 feet in diameter at trunk, with branches rising to 80 feet, a tree vouched for by Martin Constabel the gardener as "planted by John Welsh himself," also here is a specimen oak now 20 feet high, the acorn producing which N. Dubois Miller told me was brought from Jerusalem and here grown. In this direction we shall now go no farther, but will southward turn, and by way of Main street which we left at Stenton, proceed to a conclusion. Naglee's and "Joe Nafle's" we shall pass, and the Loudoun pines we have already noted.

Since the days of John Hart at Loudoun, progress has here forced its way, and many fine plants, including those on the adjoining grounds of James S. Huber, have retreated before its irresistible advance, and the great tree on the hill equipped with a swing, also an immense tulip poplar near, like "Green's meadow" and Toland's spring—implanted in the memory of every "Smearsburg" girl and boy of the last generation,—are gone forever. Toland's and Wagner's and Henry's are holding out "like grim death," but it is only a question of time when "Wayne Junction" shall overwhelm them.

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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It is a pity I have often thought that fruit trees are not more often planted for shade, and native sweet-scented flowering plants for bloom, in a measure to bring the best of orchards and woods to home, and thus more directly beauty and utility combine. Our wood plants without exception may be readily grown if removed at a suitable time and properly planted, and I have never had failure in growing laurel (*kalmia latifolia*), arbutus (*epigaea repens*), and other of our native plants usually considered difficult or impossible to transplant.

Those of us familiar with Main street and Cheltenham avenue 25 years ago may remember "Tinker" Frey's famous swamp magnolia (*magnolia glauca*). This is no more, but we have now at George Redles' on Wister street; at Dr. Herman Burgin's on West Cheltenham avenue; at John P. Ilsley's, East Walnut lane; also near Christ's Church rectory on West Tulpehocken street; fine specimens of this common in New Jersey swamps, but rare in cultivation, plant.

Virginian fringe tree, perfectly hardy, and a very beautiful plant in bloom, although we have several fine specimens, is not common enough in gardens, exceptions not subject to this criticism being conspicuous and notable plants on the grounds of Dillwyn Wistar, Wayne street near Coulter street; Samuel Emlen, Coulter street near Greene street; and William M. Bayard, Main street near Carpenter lane. Fringe tree appears spontaneously as far

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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north as the southern counties of New Jersey, and several years ago it was found by Joseph Meehan in the woods near Millville, though before this, it had been collected in the same district by Dr. J. B. Brinton. These, with Judas tree (*cercis canadensis*), elder-berry, (*sambucus canadensis*) and our native dogwoods in variety, are but a few of many worthy native plants, but enough I hope, to direct attention to the subject.

A creeping yew (*taxus adpressa*) appears in front of "Conyngham House" or "Hacker House," Main street, opposite Bringham street, but is not equal to the famous plant once at Upsala, yet, however, there is a most beautiful specimen of this rare evergreen in the garden of Edward Hacker on Wister street. On grounds to the rear of Conyngham House are several valuable plants for data of which I am indebted to Miss Howell.

Here was one of "the first wild flower gardens" of later Germantown, containing plants from many parts of the United States, but a garden of which only a trace now remains. Also here is "the finest grove of over-cup oaks (*quercus macrocarpa*) about, so Thomas Meehan always said," "and a specimen of strange weeping oak" (*quercus pendula*).

"Grumblethorpe," one of our most familiar homes, is now before us, and its plants are second only to its other possessions. Its occupant and owner is Charles J. Wister, to whom credit earned



Charles J. Wister



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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fully given would seem but empty flattery. Here all his long life lived Charles J. Wister, the father, a man whom his neighbor, John Jay Smith, pronounced "the greatest botanist living," and here amidst the sanctity of its associations lives the son, a most worthy successor. Quoting from an article written several years ago by William E. Meehan, which is sufficiently full for our purpose, there is growing at "Grumblethorpe" "a number of interesting trees, among them three old pear trees, two late Catherine and one sugar pear. There are records to show that these trees are about 150 years old. The sugar pear, which still bears abundantly, is 50 or 60 feet high, and has a girth of six feet. An aged ivy has completely overgrown the trunk and has climbed almost to the topmost branches. A very fine specimen of the famous larch of the Alps, familiar to every student of Swiss Alpine scenery, is also growing on these grounds. This tree, knotted and gnarled with age, has a trunk  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet in circumference, and the tree is probably the finest of its kind around the city."

A Japanese ginko tree, 36 inches in diameter of trunk, 50 feet high and exceedingly fine,—a specimen among the first importations of this plant, and almost equal to the celebrated tree at "Woodlands," is here, and it may be well to add this is the first recorded ginko in America to fruit. Both the Wister and woodland specimens, however, are inferior to

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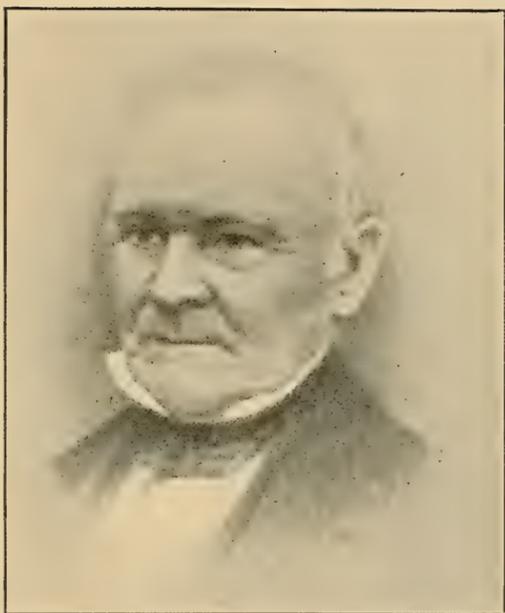
## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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a magnificent ginko 3 feet in diameter of trunk, 80 feet high, standing on the grounds of Moses Brown, School House lane, near "the bend in the road," this being without exception the finest "maiden-hair" tree I know. "About 1830 Charles J. Wister planted one of the first ailanthus (*ailanthus glandulosus*) brought from China. This is one of the most rapid growers of any known tree, and has attained a height of over 70 feet, and has a girth of 12 feet 2 inches."

Here also is a rare specimen of papaw (*asimina triloba*), a tree equaled only by a plant of the same kind at Vernon, and another at "Wyck," 12 inches in diameter by 40 feet high. "A gray or silver poplar (*populus alba*), introduced about the latter part of the last century from Italy, is also growing in Mr. Wister's grounds. Its trunk measures 10 feet 4 inches, and its branches cover a great area of ground," its height being 80 feet. Also at Grumblethorpe grow a number of exceedingly fine figs (*ficus carica*), but these like a noted group of similar plants at Fern-hill are usually protected in winter. Without protection, however, and in the vigor of a well-rounded maturity is here a finely proportioned orange tree (*citrus trifoliata*) 8 feet in height, and beside it is a swamp magnolia appearing as natural as though it stood on its "native heath," while overshadowing the mansion near, are beautiful specimens of overcup oak and honey-locust trees,



Thomas Nuttall



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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each a plant 24 inches in diameter of trunk, and rising to a height of 60 feet. A number of black-berry (*rubus villosus*) bushes in sight, remind us of Thomas Nuttall, an Englishman by birth, but an American product in botany and ornithology,—He, a most interesting character, an account of whom Charles J. Wister happily presented to our Horticultural Society a few years ago. No stranger to Germantown was Nuttall, and upon one of his visits to the garden of Grumblethorpe, while in the company of Charles J. Wister, Sr., and Junior, pronounced the progenitors of the plants we have referred to as “in-correctible rascals, you’ll never be able to do anything with,”—apparently looking upon their improvement as a thing impossible.

When we remember that the old fruit trees of “Grumblethorpe” have lived through the busiest life of our town, and yet bear as they did at a time when Christopher Saur in a building close by printed pamphlets and books now highly prized, we may well halt for a moment of reverential meditation, not for the trees and their produce, but for the power which gave them life, which sustained them, and which has given them to us. Beside the garden wall,—Christopher Saur and wife having “finished their course,” now sleep, but the trees live on.

Customs with their periods change, and God-fried Lehman who was “laid away” in his garden, a spot on Main street now covered by George

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Weiss's coal yard,—was removed to the quiet of the "Brethrens Grounds," where he awaits the herald of the eternal dawn. Francis Daniel Pastorius, whose resting place has mystified local historians for a hundred years or more, worries me not, for guided by many "signs," and following a common practice, I believe he was buried in his garden, and on the ground to the rear of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, I doubt not he took the "step into the dark," and passed to the light of the world beyond.

Interesting trees the garden of "Grumblethorpe" suggest, are the Chancellor pear, which originated on the grounds of William Chancellor, School House lane, adjoining Germantown Academy, and the original Keiffer pear, produced by Peter Keiffer at his nursery on Livezey's lane, west of Wissahickon creek.

While in the vicinity of Germantown Academy, let us notice there a beautiful specimen of blood-leaved maple (*acer J. atropurpurem*), and also one of equal worth on the grounds of Miss Jane E. Hart, diagonally opposite.

These plants are very fine though small,—but superior specimens may be noted at Dr. James Darach's, Greene street, near Harvey street,— and at Mrs. Thomas W. Evans', Cliveden avenue and Main street, the latter I think our representative plant.

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Thanks to Meehans' nurseries, we have many fine specimens of this showy tree about Germantown, and among a number known to us one of the best is on the grounds of William Rotch Wister, Belfield avenue. Also in the garden of Samuel Emlen, West Coulter street, among other rare plants is the most beautiful specimen of cut-leaved maple (*acer J. dissectum* a.) I have ever seen.

Passing the residence and one-time garden of the "annalist" John Fanning Watson, we now turn in Penn street to visit "Ivy Lodge," the home of John Jay Smith, whose long, useful life was here lived, where much of his best work was done, and from whence he departed to the habitations of the "just made perfect." "Ivy Lodge" is of interest in many ways, but we shall stop only to mention a sun-dial with a noted inscription associated with Stenton, and one of two original "constable boxes" which once did service for the "borough,"—the other box being preserved at "Manheim,"—and present a few plants. Both dial and box are conspicuous objects in the garden, and surrounding them are some of the rarest shrubs and trees in our midst. For more than I am here able to give, credit is due Miss Elizabeth P. Smith, a daughter of John J. Smith. At "Ivy Lodge" is a specially fine specimen of weeping beech (*fagus H. var. pendula*), a memorial red oak (*quercus rubra*) planted by Miss Smith's mother, and an immense black oak (*quercus nigra*).

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

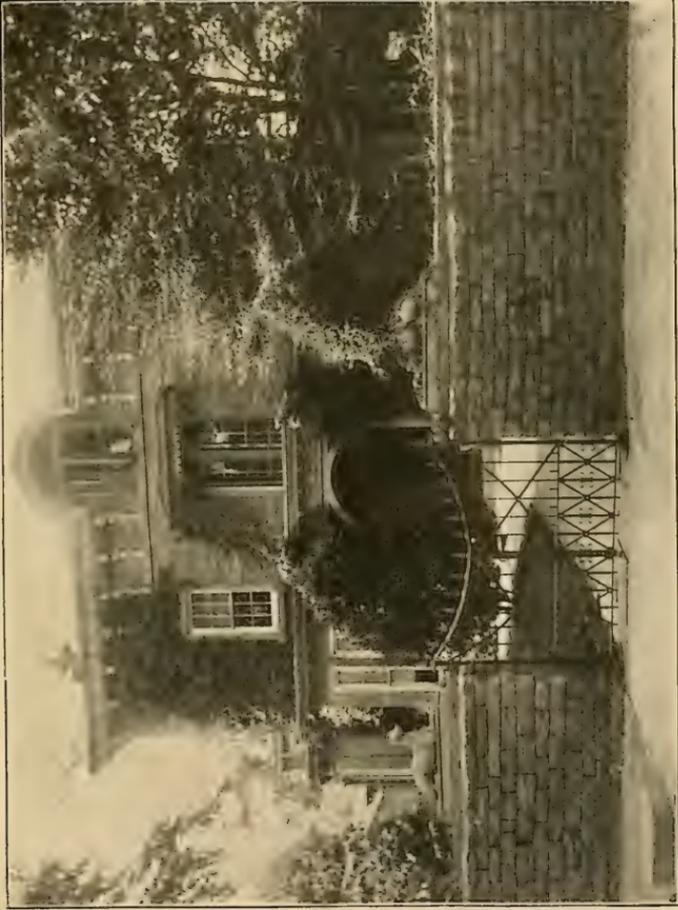
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Also here once grew a notable juniper (*juniperus squamata*), and several specimens of *araucaria*.

Miss Smith told me her father many times here tried to raise *araucarias* (*arucaria imbricata*) in the open, but never succeeded in keeping them over three years, this much being "considered quite an achievement." In England *araucarias* of great height are quite common, so I doubt not the length and severity of our winters is responsible for the plant's non-existence in our gardens. At "Ivy Lodge" are several fine *mahonias* (*mahonia aquifolium*) of 35 years' growth, and with the exception of a small specimen growing on the grounds of Edward Hacker, on Wister street, here is the only cedar of Lebanon (*cedrus libani*) to my knowledge growing strictly within the town limits. This is a fine plant about 25 feet in height, and is one of two memorial trees planted in 1852 by John Jay Smith and John Granville Penn, the latter the last of the "proprietor's" line,—in honor of William Penn and James Logan. The "William Penn" tree, planted by a descendant of James Logan, is the plant we may see. The James Logan tree planted by a descendant of William Penn, is no more, having gone the way of "all the earth." An orange tree over 100 years old yet continues one of the notables of Ivy Lodge.

Until a few years ago there was on the grounds of Colonel Galloway C. Morris, on East Tulpehocken street, a very fine cedar of Lebanon, but this to



Ivy Lodge



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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make room for "improvements" was destroyed. A "cut" of this plant, however, survives, and with a description may be seen in Vol I, page 39, of Meehans' Monthly. Our best and most notable cedars of Lebanon stand in North Laurel Hill Cemetery, and these grown under the care of John Jay Smith are said not to be excelled in America.

I wonder how many who pass up and down Main street, or who visit the Friends' Library, notice the trees at "Friends' Meeting." To me these are always a delight, and I love to look back into the spacious, restful grounds, for here and wherever these "meetings" are, is a picture of peace. We all are apt to know more about "green hills" far away than of those immediately before us, for the things at hand often appear ordinary, while those heard of or seen under unusual conditions are rated by an exalted measure.

Walking in the Wissahickon upon two occasions with men of travel, I asked, "Did you ever see a more beautiful place?" One answered, "It is very much like the scenery of New Zealand, but it is better." Another said, "I have traveled throughout Europe, and the only place that will compare at all with it is the Trossachs in Scotland, but in extent it is insignificant compared to this." Henry Carvill Lewis, who "circled the globe" before attaining his "majority," told me in all his travels he saw nothing that in his estimation approached the beauty of the

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

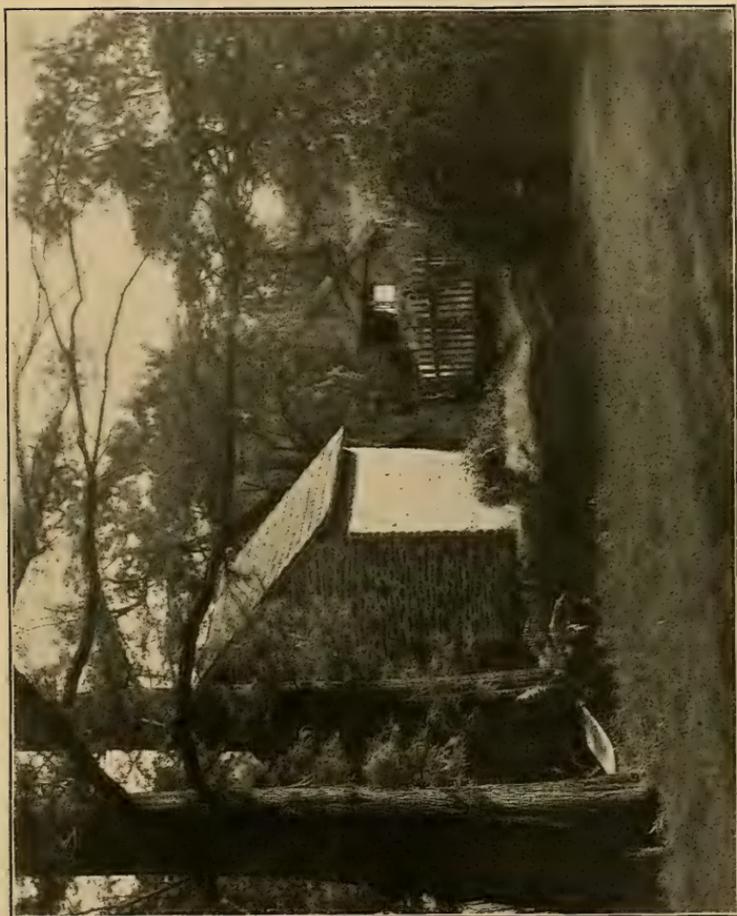
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Wissahickon, and others who have traveled far and who lived long abroad have told me "the Wissahickon is incomparable."

So we may know much about "Bartram's cypress," a plant 9 feet in diameter and 120 feet high, while we may not have noticed the beautiful cypress at "Fairfield;" the specimen at David Peltz's, on Nicetown lane; the exceedingly fine specimen 2 feet in diameter and 80 feet high at James E. Caldwell's, on Manheim street; specimens at Henry's, Main street opposite Fisher's lane; at David Hinkle's, on Main street, near Penn street; at "Ivy Lodge;" at Vernon; at Town Hall Square; at several points on West Walnut lane; at Pomona; and the group of three very fine cypress trees we passed at Friends' grounds.

There are many other fine cypress trees with us, but our most noted ones are on Main street, above Washington lane, where at Ellwood Johnson's is a group of three trees of unusual height, and one solitary plant  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter by 100 feet high, conspicuous by its size,—this tree since the death and decapitation of the Bartram "Triplet," being the finest specimen I know, and the only one near Philadelphia which satisfactorily exhibits its families' characteristic "knees." These plants grow upon "Honey Run," on ground once owned by Peter Keyser, whose son of the same name, a "preacher" and tanner, brought them from South Carolina, and un-



Johnson Cypress Trees and Spring





Elliston P. Morris



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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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der his direction about the year 1800 were here planted by Elijah Haupt, so Miss Elizabeth R. and Ellwood Johnson informed me.

At the Deshler-Morris home, owned and occupied by Elliston P. Morris, is one of our finest gardens, possessing several of our largest and finest trees. Mr. Morris wrote me:

"The exact age of some of my fine old trees is uncertain, the family tradition is that some of them were planted by my grandfather, or members of his family. I doubt not some of the older trees were there when it was President George Washington's residence during the yellow fever epidemic of 1793. The great storm two years ago with its wind and sleet sadly spoiled my most attractive trees, and in some cases left me but skeletons of their former beauty, notably a 70-year-old elm tree planted by my father, Samuel B. Morris, which stands in the middle of my grounds."

Those who view the garden of Mr. Morris wonder at its freshness, and proceeding with its owner:

"The great secret of my lawn is the unbroken expanse of grass, and the planting in conformity with established rules of landscape gardening. I have still some choice specimen trees, notable an immense English horse-chestnut (*aesculus hippocastanum*), with a girth I should think of some 10 feet; a hybrid English walnut (*juglans regia*) and butternut (*juglans cinerea*) very unusual, about 70

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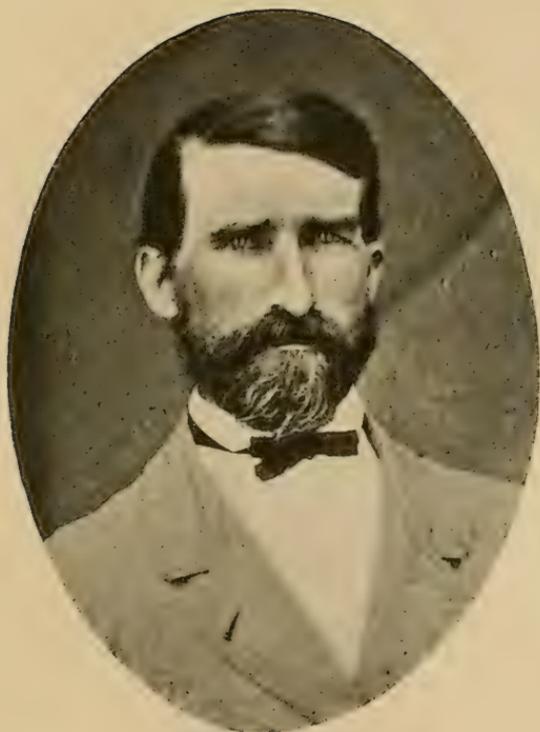
## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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feet high and a girth of say 8 feet; a pretty specimen of the lovely cut-leaved beech (*fagus S. heterophylla*); a 70-year-old magnolia glauca, a fine box tree (*buxus arborescens*), and some 100-year-old box-bushes (*buxus sempervirens*), and a good variety of shrubbery, with its ever changing bloom."

With us are many exceptional gardens, and these, with the beautiful garden of Mr. Morris, I trust may be presented at another time.

We have also many rare "wild garden plants," and such native rare and notable plants as Goldie's shield fern (*aspidium goldianum*), a large clean vigorous fern extremely rare in Eastern America, but native to the Wissahickon woods; climbing fern (*lygodium palmatum*) as its name indicates a climber, of slender growth and exquisite beauty, once common in New England, and here once a native of Rittenhouse woods; walking fern (*camptosorus rhizophyllus*), a strange unique plant of low growth, sometimes rooting at the tips of its bended fronds and advancing by successive growth steps,—a plant flourishing near Bummers' Cave, and in several localities in the "Wissahickon;" Nuttall's spleenwort (*asplenium pinnatifidum*), one of the rarest of the world's ferns, a gem first recorded by Henry Muhlenberg and overlooked, but rediscovered on the banks of the Schuylkill river near "Falls of Schuylkill" and recorded in "Genera of North American Plants" by Thomas Nuttall,—a plant which also



R. Robinson Scott



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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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once grew in the lower Wissahickon; Scott's spleenwort (*asplenium ebenoides*), a celebrated cross between *asplenium ebeneum* and *camptosorus rhizophyllus*, the most noted of known ferns, originally discovered on the west bank of the Schuylkill river, opposite the mouth of Wissahickon creek by R. Robinson Scott, a well remembered landscape gardener and horticulturist, who for a long time dwelt on West School House lane near Main street,—this fern being later discovered at the soap stone quarry near Lafayette's crossing on Schuylkill river, and though now known at several "stations," yet continues the one fern to disturb the equanimity of "hair-splitting" enthusiasts; Wister's coral plant (*coralorhiza Wisteriana*), named by Solomon W. Conrad in honor of Charles J. Wister, the late owner of Grumblethorpe, an abused memorial now recognized as distinct, a plant rare in Germantown, but plentiful on the slopes bordering Conshohocken's Gulf Mill road; *obolaria* (*obolaria Virginica*), an elusive, beautiful and extremely rare plant pictured in Dr. Darlington's *Florula Cestrica* and appearing where it is difficult to find in Rabbit Lane woods; Adam and Eve plant (*aplectrum hyemale*), select, unique, almost solitary, a native of two sections of our Wissahickon woods, and a prize wherever found; cancer root (*conopholis Americana*), the strangest plant in our territory, a weird, mysterious unattractive wonder, but appealing to us because of its extreme rar-

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

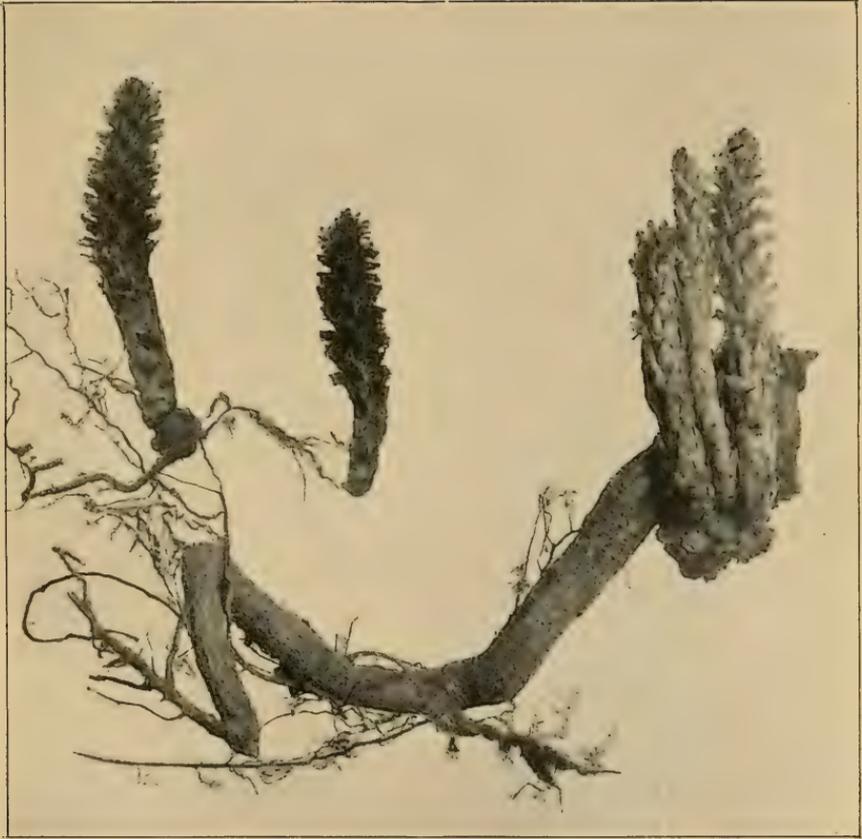
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ity, it like the beautiful fringed gentian (*gentiana crinita*) which flourishes near, both occupying in seclusion the Wissahickon hills; these, and other rare and valuable plants, like Dutchman's breeches, *chaerophyllum*, and orchids in variety we have, but which in this hasty superficial way we may only refer to and leave.

On Main street, opposite Armat street, in a house occupied by Edward Manley, a one time preceptor of mine, once lived Christian Lehman, scribe, surveyor, notary public and nurseryman, and here in the old "nursery" is an English walnut to remind us of the first local importer of this valuable tree. The present specimen belongs to a later period, but is doubtless a product of an original planting of surrounding grounds. From a much used advertisement of the Pennsylvania Gazette of April 12, 1768, we learn that there was "to be sold—a choice parcel of well grown young English walnut, as well as pear and apricot, and a curious variety of the best and largest sorts from England of grafted plumb trees fit for transplanting this spring or next fall, as well as a great variety of beautiful double hyacinth roots and tulip roots, next summer season, and most other things in the flower or fruit nursery way, by Christian Lehman."

"Vernon," although its native charms vanished with its open stream, meadow, spring-house and protecting shrubbery, yet preserves much to hold and



Cancer Root



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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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interest us. The ground now covered by Vernon include the estate of Melchoir Meng and part of that of Henry Kurtz, both plant lovers possessing fine gardens, which were enriched by cultivations of Matthias Kin, a celebrated plant collector.

Here is the locally known "Meng's magnolia" (*magnolia macrophylla*) procured by Kin, the first magnolia of its kind cultivated in North America, and here are oak and hemlock trees planted by John Wister in the early part of the last century. Several noted trees once here have gone. One was an immense buttonwood with a trunk having a diameter of 5 feet; another was a weeping willow (*salix baby-lonica*) located near the spring-house, and others were a large horse-chestnut which shaded the front of Kurtz house, and a large linden (*tilia Americana*) once prominent on the street before the door of Melchior Meng. Many doubtless may recall Meng's house as "Oliver Jester's tin shop," until a few years ago standing on Vernon's southern front.

Old gardens, and the grapes of which Pastorius wrote have gone, but we have in new Germantown, gardens superior to any of olden time, and I warrant the 8-inch diameter grape vine-trunks of middle Wissahickon are equal to any the "founder" ever saw. So, too, the two gardens of Dr. Christopher Witt are no more, and there is nothing surviving to suggest them.

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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On the Geissler-Warner tract, part of which was once occupied by Dr. Witt, whereon also he had his first garden, stands St. Michael's P. E. Church, and on its rear chancel wall is an ivy recently replanted by E. A. Frey. This plant, carefully transferred from a former position, is a hardy "English ivy" brought originally from Sir Walter Scott's "Abbotsford" by Dorsey Cox, and was here planted under the direction of the late beloved rector, Dr. John K. Murphy.

At this place also grew a white mulberry tree (*morus alba*) of local celebrity, one of many which sprang up in this neighborhood, the parent tree being at the "cocoonery," Hermann and Morton streets. Although Dr. Philip Syng Physick, nor his son Philip had any direct connection with this tree, it is justly prized, and I am pleased that in the form of a "Canterbury chair," inspired by Rev. Arnold Harris Hord, "St. Michael's" present rector, made by George Redles, it now occupies a prominent position in the chancel of the church, for beyond these associations, it was grown in the Warner burying ground, where was laid the remains of Christian Warner, Daniel Geissler, Dr. Christopher Witt, and perhaps John Kelpius, all Mystics and early botanists, and we have before us a memorial sanctified by the blood it contains.

Though the Warner ground mulberry was a foundling, we have on the original "multicaulis"

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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grounds where Philip Physick lived a solitary specimen of mulberry of unusual size, 3 feet in diameter by 40 feet high now in bloom, to remind us of a "South Sea bubble" burst, which troubled the investors of a generation past.

Among the noted trees of Germantown was a pecan once standing on the grounds of Dr. William R. Dunton, and which was removed after the erection of the First Methodist Church. This tree was grown from one of several nuts which Thomas Nuttall brought from Arkansas and presented to his friend, Reuben Haines, a prominent officer of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, and at whose home in Germantown he was a frequent guest. The nut which produced Doctor Dunton's tree was given by Reuben Haines to his neighbor, Daniel Pastorius, and two nuts were planted in his own garden, all developed to plants of maturity, but the trees at "Wyck" died, while the Pastorius tree reached large proportions, bore fruit, and it is to be regretted that a specimen of so much interest could not have been preserved.

In many respects a pecan (*carya olivaeformis*) resembles a hickory (*carya tomentosa*), a tree whose name occupies an important place in the early records of Germantown. From our Township line boundaries the ancient "hickories" have disappeared, and I shall refer only to a notable one which stood on Baynton street, west of Church lane, a tree

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Thomas MacKellar described as "the finest hickory" he ever saw.

"Wyck" throughout the history of Germantown has been conspicuous, and I am sorry that present bounds will not permit us to enlarge upon it. To this attractive spot came the most noted naturalists of the last century, and following in the path of generous culture came Lafayette, who in the year 1825 was given here a public reception which is distinctly remembered by Robert Thomas and Joseph Murter, honored citizens already referred to, who attended it. At "Wyck" is growing a Spanish chestnut (*castanea vesca*) raised from a tree whose parent nut was planted by Washington at Belmont for Judge Richard Peters. Also here is a white walnut (*juglans cinerea*) grown from a tree planted by Lafayette at Belmont, upon his "farewell visit" to America. Also here among many rare and interesting plants is a seckel pear—which from a graft taken from the original tree growing in the "neck" near Penrose Ferry bridge, Philadelphia,—was raised, and here planted by Reuben Haines. Two immense linden trees once standing on the front lawn, by age and storm demolished, have vanished, our plate exhibiting the for a time survivor one. A valuable drawing of Wyck made by Thomas Stewartson in 1868, shows these two trees spreading their branches over, and high above the mansion roof. Many of us may remember it was an immense tree standing on



Wyck



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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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“Wyck” ground, and afterwards in the centre of the street almost opposite “The Barn,” which gave to Walnut lane its name. This walnut for several years was permitted to keep its place, but in due time became a prey to expediency.

Likewise it was a noted oak which gave name to a familiar “east-side” lane, and the circumstances attending were almost identical with those serving the Walnut lane dedication.

Among plants rare, though not rare plants, are several which have always puzzled me that they are not more general in cultivation. One of these is tamarisk (*tamarix gallica*), a shrub or small tree common enough in other parts, but with us scarce. The finest specimen of this plant we have is one 8 inches in diameter, rising with a bushy head to a height of 16 feet, and growing in the garden of Mrs. Frank Cooley, 106 Hermann street. Ordinarily tamarisk is of a thin, straggling habit, but responding to care and liberal pruning this plant shows a remarkably heavy, vigorous growth, as a cut, page 173 of volume 12, Meehans’ Monthly, fairly illustrates.

On our way northward, let us as we pass Charles Megargee’s mansion, now the home of a popular club, recall a rare oriental spruce recorded by William E. Meehan. Impersonality in writing is often its greatest strength, but the credit for a large amount of city history presented by Mr. Mee-

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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han I should like to see justly given, for much that has appeared and repeatedly reappeared belongs to him. The oriental spruce (*picea orientalis*) once here was considered a remarkably fine one, and belonged to the "most northern growing of all the pine tree family." This specimen was brought to Philadelphia "by Engineer George W. Melville on his return from the famous De Long expedition," the specimen being secured "on an island near the mouth of the Lena river."

Among our scarce plants is persimmon (*diospyros Virginiana*), though why this should be I do not know, for outside our territory, and especially in the neighborhood of the Perkiomen Valley, it is one of the most common of trees. At Stenton; on Abbotsford avenue near James A. Wright's place; in the Wissahickon near David Rittenhouse' birthplace, and also at Livezey's Mills;" near Rabbit lane and County line; we have meritorious if not great persimmons; and at Miss Hocker's, Main street above Washington lane; also at Joseph C. Channon's, Main street above Pastorius street, we have at each place two specimens, noteworthy because being directly upon our main highway they serve to remind us of farm days and the simple character of our one-time village. Here, too, at "Channon's," under the care of Miss Amelia R. Wood, is a lusty Japanese persimmon (*diospyros kaki*) which never fails to fruit. Also here, as well as at Miss Elizabeth

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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R. Johnson's near-by, are quince, pear and apple orchards, survivors of ancient days, blossoming as of old.

Townsend Ward, with others before him, following the lead of Judge Samuel W. Pennypacker, who discovered Plockhoy's connection with Germantown, have given accounts of a great but almost unknown man who had the confidence to address Cromwell upon his plans, a religious writer of wide influence, the founder of a successful community, which existed nearly 200 years before that of the more widely known "Brook Farm" of New England. This man was Peter Cornelius Plockhoy, and his colony was located on the Delaware river, where the town of Lewes now is. Ward records: "In 1694 there came to Germantown an old man and his wife. He was blind and poor, and his name was Cornelis Plockhoy, the founder and last survivor of the Mennonite colony broken up 30 years before at the Hoorn Kill by Sir Robert Carr. The good people of Germantown took pity on him;" and continuing with Judge Pennypacker, "they gave him the citizenship free of charge." They set apart for him at the end street of the village by Peter Klever's corner a lot 12 rods long and one rod broad whereon to build a little house and make a garden; in front of it they planted a tree. Jan Doeden and William Rittenhouse were appointed to take up "a free will offering" and to have the house built."

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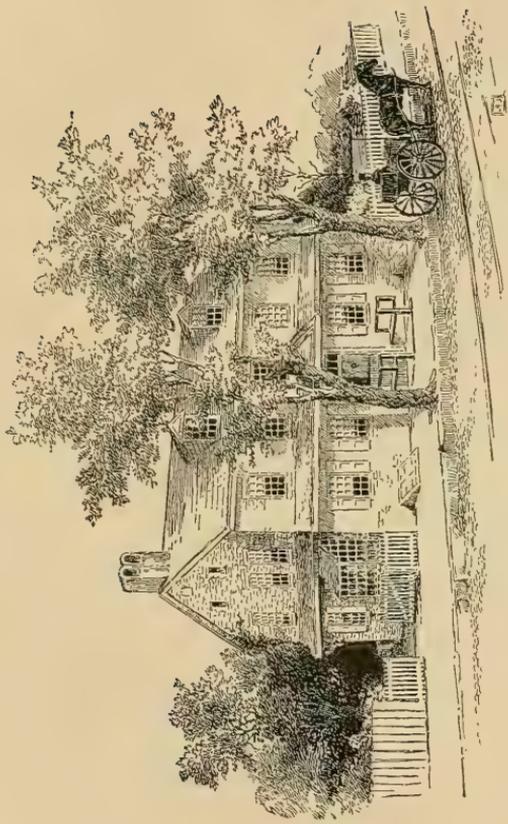
GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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I refer to this because Plockhoy, more than he is, should be identified with Germantown, because a tree in this early life of the colony was considered of sufficient importance to name, and also because this house and tree stood upon Kyser's lane within sight of the homestead owned and occupied by Miss Elizabeth R. Johnson, in whose charming garden situated at the northwest corner of Main street and Washington lane, we shall stop for awhile to be instructed and entertained with accounts of her historic plants. Among the rare treasures here is a fine Persian lilac (*syringa persica*) planted in 1771, which continues vigorous and spreads "its sweetness" upon the receptive "air." A curious fig (*ficus carica*) here is the development of a shoot which for 4 years after the removal of the parent tree did not appear, but is now, as figs go, a stately plant, and which unprotected, fruits. Here also on the southern exposure of the mansion is the first wisteria (*wisteria speciosa*) planted in Germantown, and one of the first planted in America, a plant of immense proportions, and whose numerous runners over-spreading two near-by trees weighted them to earth.

Many fine wisteria plants we have, and at Ellwood Johnson's fascinating retreat adjoining there is a most beautiful specimen; another is at "Grumblethorpe;" another at William Rotch Wister's on Belfield avenue, and yet another at Dr. Herman Burgin's on West Cheltenham avenue; also at David



Johnson Homestead



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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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McMahon's on East Cheltenham avenue are two handsome wisterias grown as standards, and a beautiful specimen stands on Chestnut avenue,—near St. Paul's Rectory, Chestnut Hill. All these are notable plants, and conspicuous among an innumerable company which help beautify our town.

At the Johnson homestead are several fine box trees planted in the year 1800, and these bring to mind other superior box trees; plants on Hermann street, near Baynton street; at Hacker house on Main street; at Vernon; and at many other points in our territory.

At Ellwood Johnson's we shall halt for a moment to partake of his sparkling spring water, and note a pear tree of Revolutionary days which yet spreads its branches over a charming spring-house. Here until the storm which overthrew Christ Church steeple, stood an old willow (*salix babylonica*) with a trunk  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter, and one of the first weeping willow trees planted in America, a notable specimen which outliving its strength was felled by the great wind of the storm referred to, but now a scion from its roots has risen to preserve its memory.

Also here among many notable plants is a fine specimen of the rare clammy locust (*robinia viscosa*), and the largest hazelnut (*corylus Americana*) I have ever seen, a plant of 20 feet in height, and covering a large area.

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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Passing Concord School, its nature-loving pupils, George Lippard and William E. Meehan, with other associations of interest to plant students, we halt at "Pomona Grove" to present a plant which should not be forgotten, for "Pomona" and its charms are now a memory. At the northeast corner of what is now Baynton street and Pomona terrace once stood a yew, which by those competent to judge was considered remarkable. No one has been able to definitely state where this tree came from, nor when it was planted. All agree that it was a mature imported plant and was placed at "Pomona" by Col. Thomas Forrest. There need be no mystery, however, for it is well known a yew grows rapidly for 20 or more years, more slowly for a hundred years, after which period it exists in a practically stationary condition.

Prof. Thomas Meehan pronounced the Pomona yew one of the finest he had ever seen, and his ripe knowledge and wide travels gave a distinct value to the opinion. This plant was in perfect condition, covered a circle of 13 feet diameter, and stood at a height of 20 feet. With Mrs. Akers we sigh—

"Alas, that vandal hands should tear away  
The ancient landmarks dear to other days,  
And spoil the verdurous temples in a day,  
Which nature took so many years to raise!"

It is to be forever regretted that the efforts of our Germantown Horticultural Society to secure



Pomona Yew



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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this gem for Market Square failed, for it rather than objectionable intrusions now there, would better serve the purposes for which the block was set apart.

We have, however, near Market Square in the garden of Elliston P. Morris, a small, but perfect and very beautiful specimen of English yew, identical in variety with the plant so unfortunately lost, and at Vernon yet flourishes a specimen second only to the one so inexcusably destroyed.

Continuing—we pass Miss Arrott's select school, which was once a barn, and Leonard Stoneburner's house and farm, he an active citizen, whose pride lay rather in the speed of his horses than in "crops" and trade and politics, all of which claimed a large share of his attention; also passing Naaman K. Ployd's garden, and his numerous plants of more than local interest—we soon reach "Cliveden," first occupied as a country seat by Chief Justice Chew in the year 1763. This is the battleground's centre, and is sacred because of the men who died there; but while appreciating this, let us work and pray for a time when war shall be considered a crime, and the taking of human life for any cause, be dastard murder. At "Cliveden" there are now no plants of the Revolutionary period, and many of its finest shrubs have been planted within my memory.

"Growing close against the Chew mansion is a beautiful rose of Japan. It is certainly at least 75

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

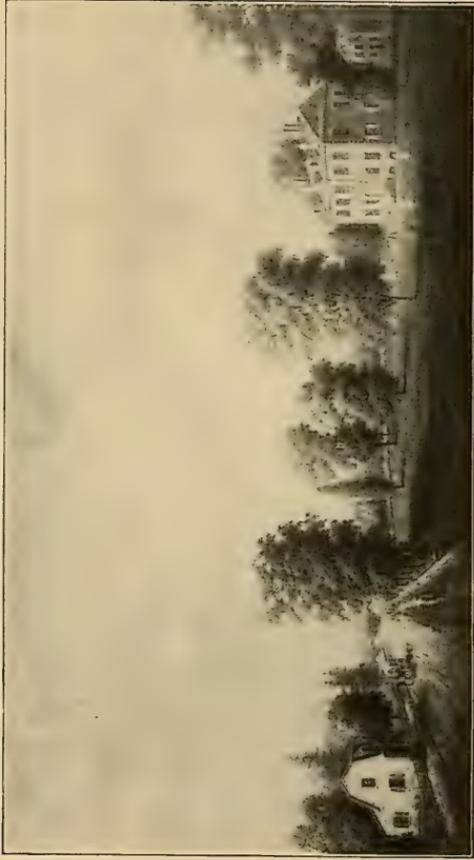
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years old, and has delighted all who have seen it by the quality and beauty of its large red blossoms," so noted William E. Meehan. Mrs. Chew wrote me: "There were a number of magnificent English elms, a row along the front of the place near the street, extending as far as Upsal street, and another row along Cliveden street."

Near the barn there is at present an elm (*ulmus campestris*), a sole representative of the trees indicated. The street "trees were killed by wanton boys when the family temporarily left the place about 40 years ago," and by the fathers I doubt not of the "Dogtowners," who stoned every Rittenhouse School boy of my own class reckless enough to venture alone into the reserved precincts of "Beggartown." Here is a beautiful specimen of European larch (*larix Europaea*), and to continue with Mrs. Chew, "the tulip poplars on the west side of the house were planted by Blair McClanachan during the few years after the battle that he owned the property. The oak on the lawn in front of the house was planted about 70 years ago by one of the family."

The pine tree (*pinus inops*) on the front lawn "may be accounted for in the following way I think, although I do not positively know. Mr. Chew, the son of the Chief Justice, owned a number of very fine farms in New Jersey, and his tenants there were of the same family for generations, and they were



Cliveden and Vicinity



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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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on the most kind and friendly terms with Mr. Chew. I imagine that this tree when very small may have been brought as a gift to Mr. Chew by one of his tenants, and there planted by Mr. Chew himself."

Until lately surviving on Upsal street was a companion pine, which from its position gave strength to this opinion, for these trees appeared to have been twins planted in "Cliveden" equi-distant, —though it may be they were procured from a grove once part of Chew's wood, a known specimen from which transferred 50 years ago by George Paramore to his family's homestead on East Washington lane, there near the house yet flourishes.

"Upsala," opposite to Cliveden, which we all know well by name, possesses several of our finest and most notable plants. Miss Sally W. Johnson, who owns and occupies it, generously gave me an account of its rare home plants, which we may now only present in outline. Among these plants were grapes planted and cared for by Dr. Johnson, a very large white flowering camellia, a white flowering sweet jasmine, a laurestinas, a daphne, not equal to the one which Miss Ann Chew had in her hall by the front window. Of her garden, Miss Johnson's account is so interesting that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting. In it "there were in summer Bordeaux lilies, and varlotta purpurea, a handsome red clustered lily, and agapanthus with their odd shade of lavender blue; funkias, vincas, oriental

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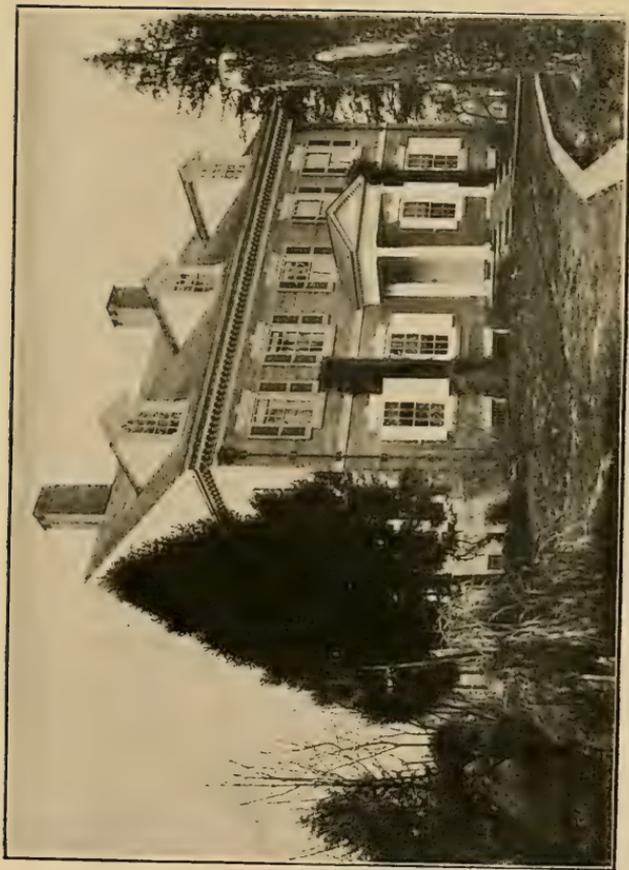
## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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poppies in garden beds, and the 'York and Lancaster' rose still blooms, though it is a curious dwarf. The Marie Louise, a sweet light pink rose, has lived on all through the garden for I am sure the past hundred years. I try to replace the trees or plants that have died. There was once a double row of white Hawthorn to the Johnson street entrance. The red berries were so bright, and made a charming English decoration for Christmas. A double pink Hawthorn was a very fine tree."

"The fringe tree was an old favorite, arching gracefully over the middle walk, and when gone was replaced by another, and a group of tartarian honeysuckle is still blooming every spring after the daffodils and cowslips and double low buttercups with their mottled shiny leaves, periwinkles and lilies of the valley were in every shady spot, and the late summer was gorgeous with phlox—the hardy—and Drummondii, larkspurs, tritoma, trumpet vine, and the like."

Though many of "Upsala's" best trees are no more, here yet are several of which we may be justly proud. The once well-known creeping yew is gone, and the silver fir planted in 1800, which reached 100 feet in height, a plant figured and described in A. J. Downing's "Landscape Gardening," was removed several years ago, and a memorial apolinian fir was planted in its place.



Upsala



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Here is a famous American yew, a plant distinct from English yew; a noted catalpa, a dwarf spruce, a handsome tulip-poplar, a number of towering white pines, an exceedingly fine cryptomeria or Japan cedar, which greatly excels specimens at "Fairfield," at Edward Hacker's on Wister street, at Peter Keiffer's on Livezey's lane, and which is equalled only by a like tree at Moses Brown's, on West School House lane; and here is a California mammoth or "big-tree" (*sequoia gigantea*), a plant now about 25 feet in height, the rarest, and with the exception of a small specimen growing near the spring in Meehans' nurseries,—so far as known to me, is the only specimen of a size worthy of consideration in Philadelphia. This tree, now showing the effects of last winter's unusual frost, stands directly in front of the mansion, and my prayer is that "Upsala" unaltered, and its owner in health and "perpetual youth," may continue until it attains the proportions of its most illustrious progenitors.

Time presses upon us, so we shall pass rapidly Billmeyer house, where are beautiful specimens of locust (*robinia pseudacacia*), walnut and honey-locust (*gleditschia triacanthos*); Peter Leibert house, where are fair Norway spruce, horse-chestnut and silver maple trees; the Church of the Brethren grounds, where grow four of our finest trees, two larch trees, each 2 feet in diameter and 60 feet high, and two coffee trees of magnificent development, plants 2

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

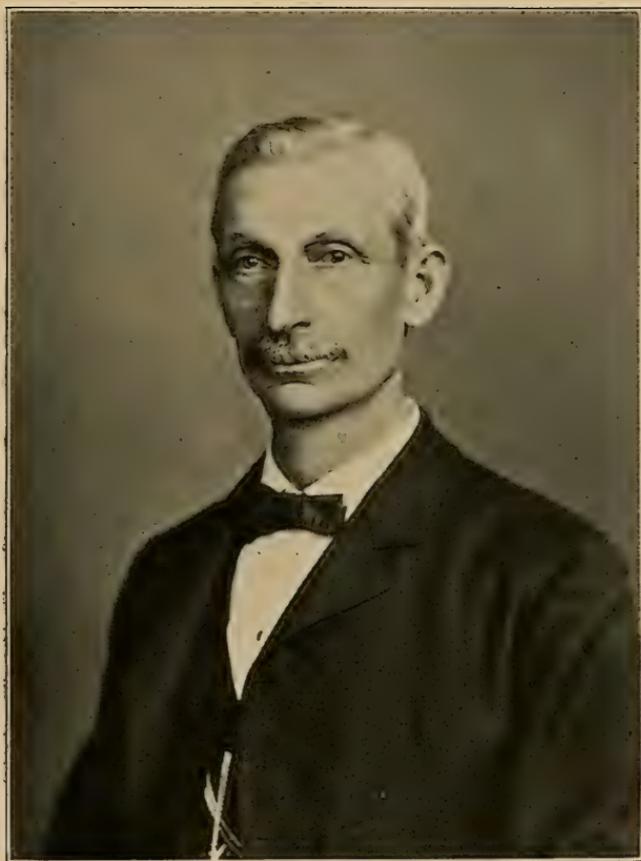
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feet in diameter by 80 feet high each; several striking plants of merit at Peter D. Hinkle's; St. Michael's Lutheran Church grounds, where is a superb specimen of Irish yew (*taxus*, var. *Hibernica*), resembling, but in beauty far exceeding, similar plants at St. Vincent de Paul's Church, and Lower Burying Ground; Phil-Ellena, the one-time residence of George W. Carpenter, whose garden of home gardens, if not the greatest, was at least the one most widely known, but its rare plants are now distributed and its notable trees in the main leveled to accommodate "Pelham," a late product of capital and change.

At George Hesser or William M. Bayard house, opposite, is a number of fine box-bordered walks, an impressive linden resembling the linden in Concord Burying Ground, and a picturesque white pine, but these without further mention we shall neglect to stop briefly at Joseph Meehan's, on Pleasant street, and at Meehan's nursery on Main street, the latter once located at the southeast corner of Meehan avenue, where numerous plants now beautifying home streets and gardens were first grown.

Among Joseph Meehan's "wild plants" is a handsome aster, discovered by this botanist near Gettysburg, Pa., a plant which for several years has been growing in his garden. As yet the "authorities" have not decided upon a name, so we have the pleasure of first presenting it as aster Meehani.



Joseph Meehan



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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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Here also is a specimen of the rare Franklin tree (*gordonia pubescens*), and with the exception of a like specimen at Meehans' nurseries, and another near Horticultural Hall, also one raised by William De Hart and now growing near Lansdowne, it is the finest specimen I know.

In our "Flora" I have referred to the parent of this tree, which was a scion of the plant brought from South Carolina by William Bartram. The original plant, abused at Bartram Garden after the retirement of Colonel Carr, was rescued and revived by William De Hart at his garden on Darby road, where it grew for several years. It was then presented to Joseph Meehan, on whose grounds, its energy spent, it struggled through a precarious existence to an honored death—truly an interesting record of the most remarkable plant in botanical nomenclature.

From Main street nursery Thomas Meehan removed to "Hongs' Farm," on Chew street. His partner, William Saunders, located first on Johnson street near Greene street, and later took charge of the experimental gardens at Washington. At the Chew street nurseries are many of the choicest and most notable plants in America, specimens from which plates of the "Flowers and Ferns of the United States" were figured. Famous individual shrubs and trees in great variety and the largest and finest Japanese oak in America ; indeed so many "new

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GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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and rare plants" that I shall leave them, trusting that Joseph Meehan may favor us with a paper upon the same, and at present we shall be content with reference to a few valuable ones I think him likely to ignore—namely, cut-leaved plum (*prunus myrobolana*, var. *dissectum*); *halesia Meehani* or silver-bell, a species of shrub or small tree bearing beautiful white bell-shaped flowers; weeping dog-wood (*cornus* F., var. *pendula*); and rose-flowering dog-wood (*cornus* F., var. *flore rubro*); all distinct varieties originating at these widely known and justly famed nurseries.

I had thought to completely cover our territory, but within the "time limit" this I have found impossible. There are many "estates" of merit with us to which I have not referred, and on them and elsewhere near are many deserving plants and odd growths I should like to introduce and enlarge upon, such as a cherry (*prunus serotina*) of immense proportions, situated on Fisher's lane, near Lower Burying Ground; a very fine silver-bell tree on the grounds of George W. Russell, Seymour street near Morris street; two beautiful elms on Spencer's Farm, and standing near the site of "Roberts' Mill" on Church lane, near Township Line road; the Henry Lenhart memorial stone in Market Square Church grounds, which since the year 1830 has been enveloped by the root growth of a silver maple, and in its vise-like grip is supported vertically; several

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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commemorative trees, emblems of affection, such as the purple beech and white pine trees planted on Greene street near Coulter street by "Dr. Rivinis, a grandson of the botanist for whom Rivinia or rouge plant" was named; and the "Mollie Middleton," "Helen T. Longstreth" and numerous other marked trees in the Wissahickon; the very rare varnish tree, a fine specimen of which grows on the grounds of Moses Brown, West School House lane; an exceedingly fine American aspen on the grounds of Dr. Daniel Karsner, Tulpehocken and Greene streets; a group of large pine trees at Adams street and Washington lane; the wild goose lily treasured by Ellwood Johnson, a unique plant resembling, but quite distinct from *Hemerocallis Flava* of our gardens; a valuable and perfectly formed Norway maple, situated on Chew street, near Washington lane, a tree which always leads its kind in leaf and flower; two noble specimens of black oak,—conspicuous on "Vinegar-Hill,"—owned by Ellwood Johnson; an immense hawthorn (*crataegus oxyacantha*) on Magnolia street, near Johnson street; and near at John H. Dunn's a beautiful specimen of weeping beech; individual paulownia (*paulownia imperialis*), catalpa (*catalpa bignonioides*), and smoke trees (*rhus cotinus*) of merit, conspicuous in many places throughout our domain; a celebrated Irish yew once standing beside the Carpenter Mansion at Phil-Ellena; a white oak of remarkable growth showing a trunk 5 feet in

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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diameter, a height of 60 feet, and having an immense limb tapering from 2 feet in diameter, 32 feet long, projecting horizontally for its entire length, and completely spanning Rabbit lane, east of E. Rittenhouse Miller's place; a magnolia, the product of skill if not art, flourishing on James E. Gowen's grounds at Main street and Gowen avenue, a monstrosity formed by the union of a circle of plants drawn together at about 3 feet above the earth and united rising in a central trunk, reminding one of Alexander Pope and his strange fancies at Twickenham; a curious seat at "The Cherries" at Spring-bank, naturally supported by the outgrowth of two oak trees, —and near the same spot, a storm-cleft chestnut tree, which strangely has renewed itself; many rare and beautiful magnolias, such as may be seen at Mrs. Taws' West Tulpehocken street, at Thomas Meehan's, at "Wyck," at William Heft's, and in general distribution throughout our territory; "cut-leaved" plants in variety, such as may be seen on Baynton street near Walnut lane, at Cheltenham avenue and Godfrey street; at J. H. Dunn's, Morton and Johnson streets, and at many places elsewhere; Kil-marnock willows and "weeping plants" of great merit innumerable; rare plants at Miller & Yates'; the celebrated "paragon chestnut" of William L. Schaeffer, a variety of Spanish chestnut (*castanea vesca*) which originated on what is now the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb grounds, and obtained

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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wide celebrity; fern-leaved beech (*fagus*, var. *asplenifolia*) at Edward S. Buckley's, and weeping beech (*fagus*, var. *pendula*) at C. B. Dunn's, with another noted one at Thomas C. Price's, all of Chestnut Hill; also the native pine, ginko tree, and notable hawthorn of Summit street; the fine arbor vitae hedge, cut-leaved beech, and beautiful Colorado blue spruce of Montgomery avenue; the hawthorn, English oak, and rare shingle or laurel oak of Stenton avenue; the hedges of osage orange and Norway spruce on Norwood avenue, as well as remarkable specimens on the same road of Hymalayan pine, cut-leaved, and weeping beech, including a fine swamp magnolia at Miss Comegys' School; specimen azalias on Chestnut avenue; mountain ash on Prospect avenue, and worthy other plants distributed throughout the Crefeld territory too numerous to record; with beautiful tree lined Sunset and Beech avenues; the conspicuous noteworthy linden and silver maple trees marking the site of William Dewees' house; a swamp cypress not supremely great,—but of interest because it recalls Joseph Middleton and Monticello and the strange service recorded in "The Sparrowgrass Papers," all now associated with Mt. St. Joseph Academy; Caleb Cope's garden grotto, with its swamp magnolia, sour gum, and a few remaining conspicuous plants to remind us of this one-time well-known, much used and valuable resort of the "old school;" the "new garden" of John

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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T. Morris on Wissahickon, a botanical garden in every respect save name; and many unique plants stationed throughout the length and breadth of the Wissahickon region.

But among our superabundance it has been possible only to place a few guide posts to point the way to all who care "to lead or follow" to a possession which in other parts is suggested only by such rich old settlements as Alexandria, West Chester and some New England towns, but not any of which so far as I have been able to observe, is able to approach the treasure ever present with us. Much that we desire to present we thus are obliged to curtail or ignore, and with one more thought we shall conclude.

When visitors of distinction called upon George W. Childs at "Wootten," they invariably were requested to plant a tree. The custom is a pleasing one worthy of imitation, and should be encouraged. Wrote Thomas Meehan:—"Trees are associated with our dearest memories and most important events." Abroad memorial and historic trees are so numerous that we refer to them only for illumination, and in our own country we have the "Charter Oak" of Connecticut, the famous "Elm of Cambridge," and the "Treaty Tree" of Philadelphia. Other trees quite as important, but not so well known, are the "Liberty Tree" of Newport, the mulberry tree of Maryland under which the first settlers met to establish



Prof. Thomas Meehan



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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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a government, and the plane tree of Burlington to which New Jersey colonists tied ship before the founding of Philadelphia.

Stop soon we must, and passing many home plants of tender associations, I shall select one, and close with mention of a memorial tree near Kitchen's bridge in the Wissahickon, a pin oak (*quercus palustris*), planted "Arbor Day, 1903, by the pupils of Andrew G. Curtin Public School in memory of Thomas Meehan, the friend of boys and girls." No truer words than these were ever penned, but let us not limit, for Thomas Meehan was a friend to all—the world is better because he lived, and there is no one in Germantown this day who does not enjoy the fruit of his great work.

So we pass, and although our list of plants is indicative only, and those named but meagrely "presented," yet we trust enough has been noted to direct attention to the beautiful creations placed before us to enjoy and sufficient to demonstrate that with "progress," culture has not backward moved. We have no need to covet or compare, for in a magnificent fullness we have what others have not, and while we envy not nor desire another less, let us for ourselves strive to deserve the favors so bountifully given, and take lesson, for false accumulations are vanity, so let us spurning the selfishness of the few who ignore the rights of the many, find pleasure in pursuits which no abuse is able to restrict nor

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*GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS*

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monopoly to control, for when schemers and their usurpations are no more, nature incorruptible and unalterable will continue steadfast on her way.

Now as I go about our "village," developed to a full-fledged town, I rejoice that we have so much for the enjoyment of the many, and so little that is not as free as our own desires. As of old, our common highway follows its tortuous course, and although peach and weeping willow and lombardy poplar trees of long ago have vanished, other trees of sturdier mould have risen to take their place. Large, substantial houses in the ripeness of age continue with us, but those who built them sleep in our shaded graveyards, and we may decipher their names on bleached and weather-beaten decomposing stone. Lofty trees planted by those who "have gone before," in "the fullness of time" stand as monuments to them, and as friends to us to shade and protect.

Time "may come, and time may go," for nature is change, and change nature, but to us "Providence has been very kind," and the past though hardly pressed, yet dominates the present.

Mansions and plantations justly venerated have become the property of all, and now among us we have "Vernon" and "Stenton," "Waterview" and "Cliveden" as public parks, not great nor finished as yet, but ours, while behind looming up in the possibilities of "pleasure grounds" is "Fernhill," and

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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with us forever secure is the peerless Wissahickon.

Though slowly, the character of our town alters, "orders old giving place to new," but I rejoice that we have so much to remind us of days gone by—"Cliveden" and "Upsala," "Grumblethorpe" and "Wyck," to any of which an enforced change would be a catastrophe.

Logan, Huber's, Green's, Spring Alley, "Tinker" Frey's, Vernon and Chew springs have gone, but Wister, Cope, Harvey and Johnson springs continue to remind us of rural long ago. Henry's, Vernon and Methodist lane pumps, once with never-tiring handles traveling uncomplainingly "neath earth and sky" for the public good, have been retired, but "Manheim street pump" unfailingly dispenses to who so e'er will wait. Toll-gate, Conestoga and stage-coach have disappeared from our turnpike road, and the trolley has "followed after," yet in spite of "all temptation" we cling to the past, and the "Germantown wagon" undaunted waits upon us to do us service.

Change truly is in the air, but there is a remarkable blending of the old with the new. The curse of war has passed from among us, "swords have been beaten into plough-shares, and spears into pruning hooks," "peace and plenteousness" reign within our borders. No more the cannon's thundering roar disturbs our homes, and "storied groves of Johnson's lane, where Washington the bold led

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## GERMANTOWN RARE AND NOTABLE PLANTS

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Freedom's sons on British guns in the brave days of old" are free of strife.

Now from many gardens on our "Appian Way" the perfume of blooming plants "maketh glad the heart of man;" native birds frequent, charming with enlivening song our Main street lawns, and from above, falling upon never-tiring ears, "the great bell still tolls the hours," as one by one they round to remind us of youth and age and the "vast forever," while over the "belgian block," heedlessly perhaps, "the noise of traffic rolls."

Days come and go, the wheel turns. With us, "too soon, too soon, the noon will be the afternoon, to-day be yesterday." "The night cometh" when no man may work. While it is yet day, let us remember those who "planted and watered" that we might benefit, and not forgetting our obligations to them, to ourselves and posterity, let us appreciate and provide, so that generations to come may receive with the increase those blessings so generously showered upon us, that the Germantown of greater opportunity to be, may upon the traditions and heritage preserved and bequeathed, rise to heights not attained, because unknown to us.

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# INDEX

---

A	Abington Lane .....	17
	Abbotsford .....	70
	Abbotsford Avenue .....	74
	Acacia .....	35
	Academy of Natural Sciences .....	71
	Adam and Eve Plant .....	67
	Adams Street .....	47, 87
	Addison's Walk .....	43
	Ailanthus .....	35, 48, 58
	Alburger, John .....	38
	Alcott, Bronson .....	37
	Alcott, Louisa M. ....	37
	Allen's Lane .....	41, 50
	Apple .....	75
	Apricot .....	68
	Apsley Street .....	33
	Araucaria .....	62
	Arbor Vitae .....	42, 53, 89
	Arbutus .....	55
	Armat Street .....	68
	Armstrong's .....	38
	Arrott's School .....	79
	Ash, Mountain .....	89
	Ashton, Dr. ....	41
	Aspen, American .....	87
	Aster, Meehani .....	84
	Asylum Pike .....	34
	Audubon .....	39
	Awbury .....	49
	Azalea, Hardy .....	89
B	Baker, W. E. S. ....	32, 35
	Barberry .....	45
	Barn, The .....	73
	Bartram's Cypress .....	64
	Bartram Garden .....	85
	Bartram Triplet .....	64
	Bartram, William .....	85
	Barron, Com. James .....	48
	Baumann, Louis C. ....	46, 48
	Bayard, William M. ....	38, 53, 55, 84
	Baynton Street .....	42, 71, 78, 88

---

---

*INDEX*

---

Beech	29, 45, 49
Beech Avenue	89
Beeches, Burnham	13
Beech, Copper	33
Beech, Cut-leaved	66, 89
Beech, Fern-leaved	89
Beech, Purple	87
Beech, Weeping	61, 87, 89
Beech, Wister's	33
Beggarstown	80
Belfield	34
Belfield Avenue	29, 61, 76
Belmont	72
Bensell's Lane	16
Bethesda Home	51
Betton, Dr. Samuel	48
Betton, Samuel	48
Betton, Dr. Thomas Forrest	48
Big-tree, California	83
Billmeyer House	83
Birch, Silver	29, 42
Birch, White	29
Blackberry	59
Blair Linden	50
Blathewood	50
Blight, George	38
Blue-bell Hill	53
Bonneval Cottage,	39
Bonsall, E. H.	22
Box	28, 53, 66, 77, 84
Branchtown	18, 37
Brethren, Church of	83
Brethren's Grounds	60
Brewster, Judge F. Carroll	33
Brickyards	48
Bringhurst Street	56
Brinley, Charles W.	36
Brinton, Dr. J. B.	56
Bristol Line	17
Brook Farm	75
Brown, Moses	44, 58, 83, 87
Brown, Prof. Stewartson	31
Buckley, Edward S.	89

---

---

*INDEX*

---

Bummers' Cave .....	52, 66
Burgin, Dr. H. ....	55, 76
Burlington Plane .....	91
Butler Place .....	35, 37, 38
Butternut .....	34
Button-ball .....	29
Buttonwood .....	24, 39, 40, 41, 65, 69
Buttonwood Hotel .....	41
Burying Ground, Concord .....	17, 43, 84
Burying Ground, Lower .....	17, 84, 86
Burying Ground, Upper .....	17

*C*

Caernarvon .....	46
Caldwell, James E. ....	64
California Big-tree .....	82
Cambridge Elm .....	90
Cancer Root .....	67
Canteloupe .....	47, 48
Canterbury Chair .....	70
Carlton .....	38, 44, 49
Carpenter, George W. ....	84
Carpenter's Lane .....	18, 45, 52, 55
Carpenter Mansion .....	87
Carr, Colonel .....	85
Catalpa .....	25, 26, 30, 83, 87
Catherine Pear .....	57
Cayuga Street .....	31
Cedar, Japan .....	29, 83
Cedar of Lebanon .....	30, 31, 63
Cedars, The .....	31
Century Plant .....	33
Chaerophyllum .....	68
Champlost .....	27
Chancellor Pear .....	60
Chancellor, William .....	60
Channon, Joseph C. ....	74
Charter Oak .....	90
Chelten Avenue .....	55, 77, 88
Cherry, .....	86
"Cherries," The .....	28, 88
Chestnut .....	27, 31, 34, 44, 88
Chestnut, Horse .....	69, 83
Chestnut, Paragon .....	87

---

---

INDEX

---

Chestnut, Spanish .....	72, 88
Chestnut Avenue .....	36, 77, 89
Chestnut Hill .....	36, 42, 49, 51, 77, 89
Chew, (Miss) Ann .....	81
Chew, Chief Justice .....	80, 81
Chew Mansion .....	22, 79
Chew, Mrs. ....	80
Chew Spring .....	92
Chew Street .....	27, 42, 43, 52, 85, 87
Chew's Wood .....	81
Childs, George W. ....	90
Christ's Church .....	77
Christ's Church Rectory .....	55
Church Lane .....	25, 71, 86
Church Street .....	43
Clammy Locust .....	77
Clark, E. W. ....	29, 52
Clapier Street .....	33, 44
Clearfield .....	28
Climbing Fern .....	66
Cliveden .....	29, 79, 81, 93
Cliveden Avenue .....	60, 80
Cocoonery .....	70
Coffee Tree .....	34, 37, 83
Comegys' School, Miss .....	89
Concord Ground .....	17, 43, 84
Concord School .....	78
Conestogas' .....	24, 93
Conrad, Sol. W. ....	67
Conshohocken .....	67
Constable Boxes .....	61
Constabel, Martin .....	54
Conyngham House .....	56
Cooley, Mrs. Frank .....	73
Cope, Caleb .....	89
Cope's Grotto .....	89
Cope, Francis R. ....	43
Cope's Spring .....	92
Cope, Thomas P. ....	43
Corvy, The .....	47
Coulter Street .....	55, 61, 87
County-Line Road .....	38, 51, 74
Cox, Dorsey .....	70

---

---

INDEX

---

Crefeld	89
Cresheim Road	41, 45, 46
Cryptomeria	29, 32, 33
Cucumber Tree	31
Curtin, A. G., School	91
Cypress, Bartram's	31, 63
Cypress, Knees'	64
Cypress Swamp	31, 64, 89
<i>D</i>	
Darby Road	85
Dark-Run Lane	34
Darlington, Dr. William	67
Darrach, Dr. James	60
Datz, Jacob A.	38
Deaf and Dumb Asylum	88
Deane Silas	20, 21
Deaver, Dr. R. W.	37
De Benneville, Dr. George	37, 39
De Hart, William	85
Deshler-Morris Garden	65
Devil's-Pool	50
Deweese, William	41, 89
Dial, Stenton	61
Doeden, Jan	75
Dog-town	80
Dogwood, Common	35, 49, 56
Dogwood, Rose-flowering	86
Dogwood, Weeping	45, 86
Downing, A. J.	30, 82
Drinker, Elizabeth	28
Drinker, Henry	28
Dunn, C. B.	89
Dunn, J. H.	87, 88
Dunton, Dr. William R.	71
Dutchman's Breeches	68
Duval Street	48
Duy's Lane	38
<i>E</i>	
Ebony Spleenwort	67
Edinburgh	15
Elder	56
Elm	31, 43, 65, 80, 86
Elm, Cambridge	90

---

---

INDEX

---

	Elm, English .....	80
	Elm, Galena .....	43
	Elm, Weeping .....	43
	Emlen, Samuel .....	55, 61
	Evans, Mrs. Thomas W. ....	60
	Experimental Gardens .....	85
<b>F</b>	Fairfield .....	27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 42, 64, 83
	Fair-hill .....	25
	Falls of Schuylkill .....	38, 41, 66
	Farm, The .....	35
	Farnum, Mrs. ....	23
	Fern-Hill .....	29, 36, 37, 38, 42, 44, 49, 58, 92
	Fig .....	58, 76
	Fir, Apolinian .....	82
	Fir, Silver .....	82
	First Methodist Church .....	60, 71
	Fisher, Ellicott .....	34
	Fisher's Hollow .....	32
	Fisher, James .....	28
	Fisher's Lane .....	26, 27, 30, 32, 33, 64, 86
	Florula Cestrica .....	67
	Flowers and Ferns of United States .....	85
	Forest Leaves .....	46
	Forrest, Col. Thomas .....	78
	Fox, Miss .....	27
	Fraley House .....	23
	Frank Street .....	44
	Franklin Tree .....	85
	Freas, Philip R. ....	48
	Frey, E. A. ....	70
	Frey, "Tinker" .....	55, 92
	Friends' Library .....	63
	Friends' Meeting .....	41, 63, 64
	Fringe Tree .....	45, 55, 82
	Further Records .....	36
<b>G</b>	Galena Elm .....	43
	Galvin, Thomas P. ....	37
	Garden, Kew .....	13
	Gardens, Old .....	69, 70
	Gardette, E. B. ....	47
	Gardette, Dr. James .....	38

---

---

INDEX

---

Garret, Andrew .....	41
Garrett's Hill .....	36, 48
Garrett, Philip C. ....	29
Garsed Lane .....	50
Gates, James R. ....	47
Geissler, Daniel .....	69, 70
Genera of North American Plants .....	66
Gentian, Fringed .....	68
Germantown Academy .....	60
Germantown Horticultural Society .....	59, 78
Germantown Lots .....	16
Germantown, Maps of .....	15
Germantown, Method of Settlement .....	16
Germantown, Old Roads of .....	16
Germantown Road .....	25, 30
Germantown Telegraph .....	33
Germantown Wagon .....	93
Ginko .....	42, 58, 89
Godfrey Street .....	88
Godman, Dr. J. D. ....	46
Goldies' Shield-fern .....	66
Gorgas Street .....	53
Gowen Avenue .....	88
Gowen, James E. ....	88
Grape .....	69
Great-Road .....	15, 17
Green Lane .....	37
Green's Meadow .....	54
Green's Spring .....	92
Greene Street .....	38, 55, 60, 87
Grumblethorpe .....	24, 34, 45, 54, 57, 59, 60, 76, 93
Guckles, Philip .....	38
Guide, The .....	41
Gulf-mills Road .....	67
Gum, Sour .....	87
Gypsy Lane .....	51

<i>H</i>	Hacker, Edward .....	42, 56, 62, 83
	Hacker House .....	56, 77
	Haines, Miss Jane R. ....	23
	Haines, John S. ....	43
	Haines, Reuben .....	71, 72
	Haines, Robert .....	47

---

---

*INDEX*

---

---

Haines Street	42, 43
Hampton Court	26
Harrison, Alfred C.	42
Harrison, George L.	49
Hart, Miss Jane E.	60
Hart, John	54
Harvey's Spring	92
Harvey Street	60
Haupt, Elijah	65
Hawthorn	15, 82, 87, 89
Hazel-nut	77
Heacock, Jos.	52
Hedge	37, 89
Hedge, Arbor Vitae	89
Hedge, Norway Spruce	89
Hedge, Osage Orange	89
Heft, Caspar	29
Heft, William	40, 49, 88
Hemlock	28, 30, 37, 51, 53, 69
Henry House	38, 54, 64
Henry Street	46
Henry, T. Charlton	33
Hermann Street	70, 73, 77
Hesser House	84
Hickok, Dr. Wm. H.	31
Hickory	71, 72
Hicories	71
High Street	15, 27, 42
High Street Station	43
Hinkle, David	64
Hinkle, Peter D.	84
Hocker, Miss	74
Holly	45
Holt, John	86
Honey-Locust	49, 58, 83
Honey-Run	64
Hong's Farm	85
Hood's Cemetery	17
Hord, Rev. A. H.	70
Horse-cars	24
Horse-Chestnut	69, 83
Horse-Chestnut, English	65
Hotchkin, Rev. S. F.	22, 26

---



---

## INDEX

---

	Hotel, Buttonwood .....	41
	Hotel, General Wayne .....	48
	Howell, Miss .....	56
	Huber, James S. ....	54
	Huber's Spring .....	92
	Ilsley, John P. ....	55
	Indian Creek Meeting .....	53
	Indian Mound .....	52
	Indian Queen Lane .....	38, 41, 46
	Inn, Ye Roebuck .....	41
	Ivy .....	28, 32, 48, 53, 57
	Ivy, Abbotsford .....	70
	Ivy, English .....	70
	Ivy Hill Cemetery .....	33
	Ivy Lodge .....	62, 64
<i>J</i>	Jansen House .....	19
	Jellett, Stewart A. ....	33
	Jenkins, Charles F. ....	23
	Jerusalem Oak .....	54
	Jester, Oliver .....	69
	Johnson .....	23
	Johnson, Doctor .....	31
	Johnson, Miss Elizabeth R. ....	65, 74, 76
	Johnson, Ellwood .....	52, 65, 77, 87
	Johnson, Miss Sally W. ....	31
	Johnson's Spring .....	92
	Johnson Street .....	27, 43, 52, 82, 85, 87, 88
	Jones, Thomas .....	45
	Judas Tree .....	35, 56
	Juniper .....	31, 35, 52, 62
<i>K</i>	Kalm, Peter .....	19
	Karsner, Dr. Daniel .....	87
	Keiffer Pear .....	60
	Keiffer, Peter .....	60, 83
	Kelly, Judge Wm. D. ....	36
	Kelpius, John .....	70
	Kemble, Fanny .....	27, 35, 36, 47
	Kew Gardens .....	13
	Keyser .....	23
	Keyser, Peter .....	64
	Keyser-Rodney House .....	48

---

---

INDEX

---

	Kilmarnock Willow .....	88
	Kin, Matthias .....	69
	Kitchen .....	50
	Kitchen's Bridge .....	91
	Klever, Peter .....	75
	Kulp, William .....	48
	Kurtz, Henry .....	69
	Kyser's Lane .....	17, 76
L	Lafayette .....	72
	Lafayette Crossing .....	67
	Landscape Gardening .....	30
	Larch .....	42, 45, 57, 80, 83
	Laurel .....	55
	Laurel-Hill Cemetery .....	63
	Lawson, Alexander .....	33
	Lebanon, Cedar of .....	30, 31, 63
	Le Boutillier, Roberts .....	53
	Lehman, Christian .....	68
	Lehman, Godfried .....	19, 21, 23, 59
	Lehman's Quarry .....	19
	Leibert, Peter .....	83
	Lenhart Memorial .....	86
	Lewis, Prof. Henry Carvill .....	63
	Liberty Tree .....	90
	Lilac, Persian .....	76
	Lily, Wild Goose .....	87
	Limekiln Pike .....	38, 42, 51
	Linden .....	50, 69, 72, 84, 89
	Linden, Blair .....	50
	Lippard, George .....	78
	Lippincott, J. Bertram .....	26
	Livezey Lane .....	60, 83
	Livezey Mills .....	74
	Locust .....	83
	Locust, Clammy .....	77
	Locust, Honey .....	49
	Logan, James .....	31, 40, 48, 62
	Logan Spring .....	92
	Logan Station .....	28
	Lombardy Poplar .....	22, 30, 92
	Longstreth, Helen T. ....	87
	Loudoun .....	38, 54

---

---

INDEX

---

---

Love-apple	47
Lovering, Joseph S.	50
Lovett Library	48
Lower Burying Ground	17, 84, 86
Ludwig, Christopher	42
Ludwig Farm	43
Lukens' Mill Road	16
Lutheran Seminary	38
<i>M</i> Macarthur, Charles T.	34
MacKellar, Thomas	26, 50, 72
McClanachan, Blair	80
Magnolia	88
Magnolia, Evergreen	53
Magnolia, Glauca	31, 58, 66, 88, 89
Magnolia, Meng's	68
Magnolia Street	87
Magnolia, Swamp	31, 58, 65, 88, 89
Magnolia, Yellow Flowering	31
Mahonia	62
Maiden-hair Tree	58
Mammoth Tree	83
Manheim	38, 41, 46, 61
Manheim Street	33, 41, 45, 46, 47, 49, 64
Manley, Edward	68
Maple, Baumann's	46, 48
Maple, Blood-Leaved	60
Maple, Cut-Leaved	61
Maple, Norway	87
Maple, Scarlet	43
Maple, Silver	34, 35, 36, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 83, 86, 89
Market Square	41, 79
Market Square Burying Ground	86
Maryland Mulberry	90
Mason, James S.	51
Masonic Hall	37
McCallum Street	52
McKean Avenue	33
McKean's Hill	44
McLean, Hugh	45
McMahon, David	76
Mears, Mrs. Anne DeB.	29, 39
Mechlin House	40

---

---

INDEX

---

Meehan Avenue .....	84
Meehan, Joseph .....	50, 52, 56, 84, 86
Meehan Memorial .....	91
Meehans' Monthly .....	51, 63
Meehans' Nurseries .....	43, 45, 61, 62, 73, 83, 85
Meehan, Prof. Thomas .....	13, 51, 56, 78, 85, 88, 90, 91
Meehan, William E. ....	57, 73, 78, 80
Megargee, Charles .....	73
Megargee's Dam .....	50
Melon .....	47
Melville, Eng. George W. ....	74
Memorial Trees .....	33, 62, 87, 91
Meng's Magnolia .....	69
Meng, Melchior .....	69
Middleton House .....	42
Middleton, Joseph .....	89
Middleton, "Mollie," Tree .....	87
Midvale Avenue .....	49
Miffin, Lloyd .....	42
Milan, Hans .....	23
Mill Creek .....	34
"Mill Grove" .....	39
Mill Street .....	38, 42
Miller, E. Rittenhouse .....	88
Miller, N. Dubois .....	54
Miller & Yates .....	88
Mile Stone, Old .....	28
Milton's Walk .....	43
Montgomery Avenue .....	89
Monticello .....	89
Morris, Bishop B. Wistar .....	38
Morris, Elizabeth C. ....	23
Morris, Elliston P. ....	65, 79
Morris, Col. Galloway C. ....	62
Morris, John T. ....	90
Morris, Samuel B. ....	41, 65
Morris Street .....	86
Morton Street .....	27, 70, 88
Morus Multicaulis .....	70
Mt. Airy Avenue .....	51
Mt. St. Joseph Academy .....	89
Muhlenberg, Henry .....	66
Mulberry .....	90

---

---

INDEX

---

	Mulberry, White .....	70, 71
	Murphy, D. D., Rev. John K. ....	70
	Murter, Joseph .....	22, 72
	Musgrave Street .....	52
	Mystics .....	70
<i>N</i>	Naffe, "Joe" .....	54
	Naglee Hill .....	19, 38
	Naglee House .....	23, 24, 40, 54
	National Cemetery .....	42
	Newhall, Robert S. ....	53
	Newington .....	28
	Nicetown Lane .....	30, 64
	Nicholson, George .....	13
	Nixon, Miss .....	49
	Norris, Debby .....	25
	Norris, Isaac .....	25
	Northwood Cemetery .....	39
	Norwood Avenue .....	36, 89
	Nuttall's Spleenwort .....	66
	Nuttall, Thomas .....	59, 66, 71
	Nutwold .....	27
<i>O</i>	Oak .....	13, 34, 44, 54, 69, 80, 88
	Oak, Black .....	61, 87
	Oak, English .....	89
	Oak, Japanese .....	85
	Oak, Jerusalem .....	54
	Oak Lane .....	73, 88
	Oak, Laurel .....	89
	Oak, Mossy-cup .....	56
	Oak, Overcup .....	56, 58
	Oak, Pin .....	91
	Oak, Red .....	20, 31, 33, 34, 61
	Oak, Shingle .....	89
	Oak, Weeping .....	56
	Oak, White .....	26, 29, 31, 32, 33, 87
	Oats .....	21
	Obolaria .....	67
	Ogden, Rev. J. C. ....	21
	Old Oaks' Cemetery .....	33, 44
	Oldmixon .....	18
	Old-School .....	38

---



---

INDEX

---

	39
"Old York Road" .....	39
"One Oak" .....	33
Orange .....	62
Orange, Hardy .....	58
Osage Orange .....	53, 58
Outalauna .....	39
Oxford .....	14
<i>P</i> Pancoast, Charles E. ....	43
Pancoast, David .....	42
Papaw .....	58
Papen House .....	19
Paragon Chestnut .....	88
Paramore, George .....	81
Pastorius, Daniel .....	71
Pastorius, Francis Daniel ....	16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 60, 69
Pastorius Street .....	46
Paulownia .....	87
Pawling Road .....	39
Peach .....	19, 92
Pear .....	57, 68, 75, 77
Pear, Catherine .....	57
Pear, Chancellor .....	60
Pear, Keiffer .....	60
Pear, Sugar .....	57
Pecan .....	70, 71
Pelham .....	84
Peltz, David .....	64
Penn, J. Granville .....	62
Penn Street .....	42, 61, 64
Penn, William .....	16, 17, 18, 31, 62
Pennypacker, Gov. S. W. ....	15, 16, 39, 75
Penrose Ferry Bridge .....	72
Perkiomen Creek .....	40
Perkiomen Valley .....	74
Perot Farm .....	39
Persimmon .....	30, 74
Persimmon, Japanese .....	74
Peters, Judge Richard .....	72
Philadelphia .....	14, 15, 30, 31, 41, 53
Phil-Ellena .....	84, 87
Physick, Philip .....	70, 71
Physick, Dr. Philip Syng .....	70

---

---

*INDEX*

---

Pinckney Homestead .....	36
Pine, Austrian .....	29, 87
Pine, Himalayan .....	29, 89
Pine, Jersey .....	51, 81, 89
Pine, White .....	26, 29, 37, 39, 42, 47, 83, 87
Pinus Inops .....	51
Pinus Rigida .....	51
Plane, Burlington .....	90
Plane Tree .....	30, 43
Pleasant Street .....	84
Plum, Cut-leaved .....	86
"Plumb-tree" .....	68
Ploekhoy, Peter Cornelis .....	75, 76
Ployd, Naaman K. ....	79
Pomona Grove .....	64, 78
Poplar, Gray .....	58
Poplar, Lombardy .....	22, 30, 92
Poplar, Silver .....	39, 58
Poplar, Tulip .....	27, 30, 31, 34, 50, 54, 80, 83
Poplar, White .....	27
Price, Thomas C. ....	89
Price, Wister .....	45
Prospect Avenue .....	89
Pulaski Avenue .....	33, 36, 49
Pumps .....	93
<i>Q</i> Quarry, Lehman's .....	19
Queen of Evergreens .....	29
Queen Lane Basin .....	49
Quince .....	75
Rabbit Lane .....	52, 74, 88
Rabbit Lane Wood .....	67
Rafinesque, C. F. ....	48
Rahns' Station .....	40
"Records of Later Life" .....	35, 36
Redles, George .....	29, 32, 44, 48, 49, 52, 55, 70
Reeves, Francis B. ....	33
Retinospora Plumosa .....	42
Revolutionary Pear .....	77
Rex Avenue .....	50
Rhododendrons .....	46
Ridge Road .....	16
Rittenhouse .....	23

---

---

*INDEX*

---

Rittenhouse, David .....	74
Rittenhouse School .....	80
Rittenhouse, William .....	75
Rittenhouse Wood .....	66
Rivinia .....	87
Rivinus, Dr. ....	87
Roberts Mill .....	86
Rochefoucault, Duke de la .....	21
Rock-House .....	23, 40
“Rocky-Mountains” .....	45
Rodney House .....	48
Rogers, Major Robert .....	21
Roset, Jac. M. ....	47, 81
Rose of Japan .....	79
Rose, York and Lancaster .....	82
Roxborough .....	17
Russell, George W. ....	86
Rye .....	21
<b>S</b> Sassafras .....	49, 51
Saunders, William .....	85
Saur, Christopher .....	59
Schaeffer, William L. ....	88
Schlatter, Michael .....	49
School-House Lane, 16, 29, 36, 39, 40, 41, 44, 49, 50, 52, 58, 60, 67, 83, 87. ....	
Scott, Sir Walter .....	15, 70
Scott, R. Robinson .....	67
Scott's Spleenwort .....	67
Schuykill River .....	41, 67
Seckle-Pear .....	72
Seymour Street .....	49, 86
Seymour, Widow .....	32
Shoemaker, Benjamin H. ....	42
Shoemaker's Lane .....	50
Sibson, John F. ....	44
Silver-bell .....	85, 86
Silver-Pine Cottage .....	38
Silver-Pine Farm .....	37
Smearsburg .....	54
Smith, Miss Elizabeth P. ....	62
Smith, John Jay .....	57, 61, 63
Smoke-tree .....	87

---



---

*INDEX*

---

Smyth, Frank .....	27	
Soap-stone Quarry .....	67	
Solitude .....	26, 52	
“Sparrowgrass Papers” .....	89	
Spencer Farm .....	86	
Springs .....	54, 93	
Spring-Alley .....	47, 92	
Spring-Bank .....	37, 42, 53, 88	
Spruce .....	83	
Spruce, Colorado Blue .....	89	
Spruce, Norway .....	29, 83, 88	
Spruce, Oriental .....	74	
Stage-Coach .....	93	
St. Luke’s Church .....	38	
St. Michael’s Lutheran Church .....	43, 84	
St. Michael’s P. E. Church .....	70	
St. Paul’s Church Rectory .....	77	
St. Vincent De Paul Church .....	84	
Steel, Edward T. ....	50	
Stenton .....	30, 31, 61, 74, 92	
Stenton Avenue .....	17, 32, 38, 52, 57, 89	
Stewardson, Thomas .....	72	
Stiver, Mrs. M. H. ....	32	
Stokes, James .....	24	
Stokes, Thomas P. C. ....	44	
Stoneburner, Leonard .....	79	
Strawbridge, Dr. George .....	44	
Strawbridge, Justus C. ....	29, 36, 50	
Stuart, Gilbert .....	47	
Sugar Pear .....	57	
“Suicides’ Grave” .....	52	
Summit Street .....	89	
Sunnyside Pike .....	53	
Sunset Avenue .....	36, 89	
Swamp Magnolia .....	55	
Sycamore .....	39, 40	
<i>T</i>	Tamarisk .....	73
	Taws, Mrs. ....	88
	Thomas, George C. ....	53
	Thomas’s Mill Road .....	51
	Thomas, Robert .....	18, 22, 72
	Thorp’s Lane .....	35, 42, 52

---

---

INDEX

---

Three-Mile Run .....	16
"Tinker" Frey .....	55, 92
Toland House .....	38, 54
Toll-gate .....	93
Tomato .....	47
Torworth .....	50
Towanda Street .....	51
Town-Hall Park .....	36, 64
Township Line Road .....	44, 71, 86
Treaty Tree .....	90
Trossachs .....	63
Tucker, John .....	44
Tulip .....	28, 68
Tulip-Poplar .....	32, 34, 50, 54
Tulphohocken Street .....	27, 49, 52, 55, 62, 87, 88
Turn-pike Bridge .....	24
<i>U</i> Upper Burying Ground .....	17
Upsala .....	38, 42, 56, 81, 82, 83, 93
Upsal Street .....	80, 81
<i>V</i> Valley Creek .....	34
Varnish-tree .....	87
Vernon .....	26, 33, 37, 45, 58, 64, 69, 77, 79, 92
Vinegar-Hill .....	52, 87
Virgilia .....	45
vollmer, Charles E. ....	38
<i>W</i> Wagner House .....	40, 54
Wagner, John .....	50
Wakefield .....	31, 34, 50
Wakefield, Little .....	32, 34
Wakefield Mills .....	32
Wakefield Street .....	33
Walking Fern .....	67
Walnut, Black .....	20, 27, 30, 37, 43, 73, 83
Walnut, English .....	65, 68
Walnut Lane .....	37, 47, 50, 51, 55, 64, 73, 88
Walnut, White .....	34
Walter, John .....	14
Walters, Philip .....	48
Ward, Townsend .....	20, 30, 75
Warner Burying Ground .....	70
Warner, Christian .....	69, 70

---

---

*INDEX*

---

Warr, John .....	32
Washington, George .....	26, 43, 50, 65, 72
Washington Lane .....	19, 27, 38, 53, 64, 76, 81, 87
Watchman's Box .....	92
Watson, John Fanning .....	61
Wayne Junction .....	54
Wayne Street .....	55
Weeping Willow .....	69, 92
Weightman, William .....	38
Weiss, Charles .....	26
Weiss, George .....	59
Welsh, John .....	37, 42, 53
Welsh, Samuel .....	36
Wescott, Thompson .....	25
West-Chester .....	90
Wharton, Joseph .....	39
Wheat .....	21
Wheel-Pump .....	49
White-Cottage .....	48, 53
White-Pine .....	26, 29, 37, 39, 42, 47, 83, 87
"Widow Seymour" .....	32
Wild Garden .....	56, 66
Williams, Alfred .....	38
Willits, Dr. I. P. ....	37
Willow Avenue .....	25
Willow, Kilmarnock .....	88
Willow, Weeping .....	22, 25, 26, 77
Willow, White .....	25
Wingohocken Creek .....	32, 45, 52
Wingohocken Valley .....	34
Wissahickon, 50, 51, 52, 60, 64, 67, 68, 69, 74, 87, 91, 93	
Wissahickon Avenue, 17, 29, 33, 36, 38, 42, 44, 45, 47, 51	
Wistar, Dillwyn .....	55
Wister .....	23
Wisteria .....	77
Wister's Coral Plant .....	67
Wister, Charles J. ....	57, 58, 59, 67
Wister, Jr., Charles J. ....	42, 56, 57, 59, 59
Wister, Daniel .....	34
Wister, John .....	33 69
Wister, Lowry .....	34
Wister Memorial Tree .....	34
Wister Street .....	42, 55, 56, 62, 83

---

---

INDEX

---

Wister, William Rotch .....	29, 61, 76
Wister, William Wynne .....	47
Wister's Wood .....	33, 34
Witt, Dr. Christopher .....	23, 70
Wood, Miss A. R. ....	74
Woodlands .....	57
Woodside .....	50
Wootten .....	90
Wright, James A. ....	44, 74
Wyck .....	23, 26, 54, 58, 72, 73, 88, 93
Y	
Ye Roebuck Inn .....	41
Yellow Fever .....	65
Yew, American .....	83
Yew, Creeping .....	56, 82
Yew, English .....	13, 78, 79, 83
Yew, Irish .....	84, 87
Yew, Pomona .....	78
York Farm .....	27, 36
York Road .....	17, 26, 28, 30, 37, 47





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