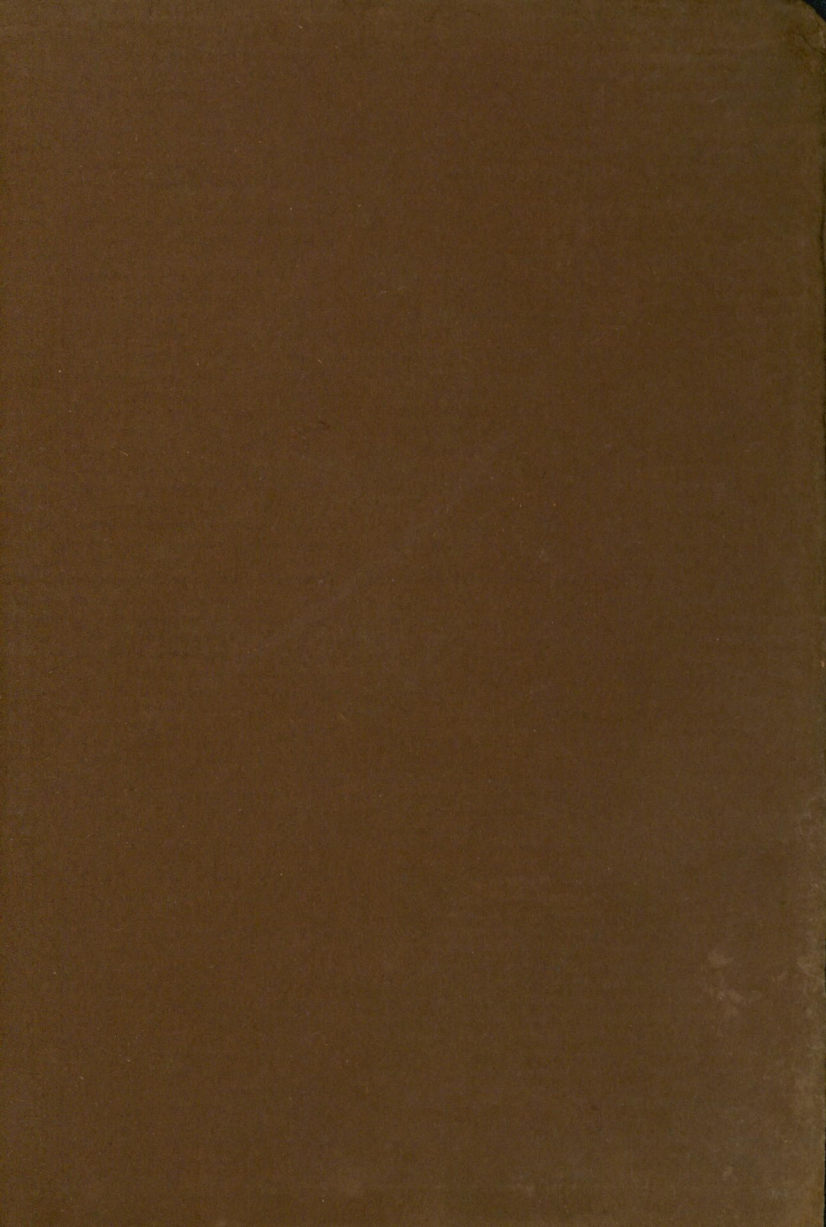


GARDEN POTTERY





GOULDSBORO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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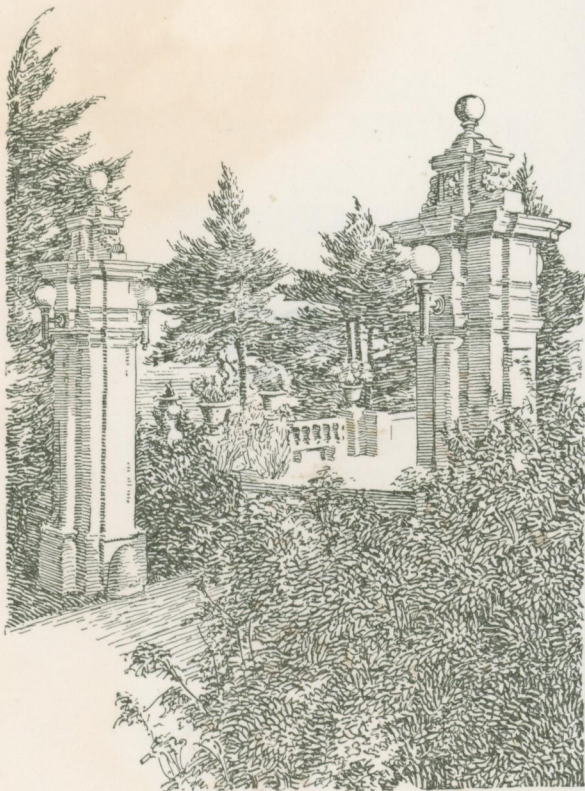
MADE IN U.S.A.

GARDEN
PATTERNS

BY J. SODEN



THE GARDEN PATTERNS
BY J. SODEN
LONDON: J. SODEN
1888



ESTATE OF FRANCIS BURTON HARRISON
BAR HARBOR

GARDEN POTTERY

BY E.E. SODERHOLTZ

West Gouldsboro, Maine.



FROM THE VERY DAWN OF CIVILIZATION, when gardens first began to receive more than the merest primitive husbandry and attempts were made at attractive massing and arrangement in them, when in the genesis of landscape architecture the hand of art began deftly to order and enhance the truant beauties of nature, the most striking feature to be introduced in them to their advantage has been pottery.

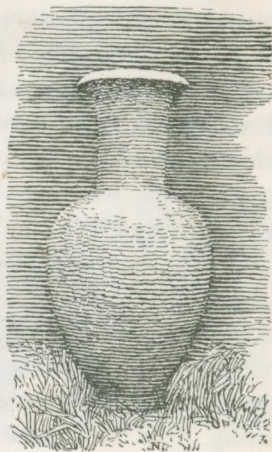
The dominant note of the world's most famous gardens has almost always been, and now always is, a choice vase of seductive lines, notable for its size, color, or texture, and for the subtle manner in which the permanent beauty of its mortal craftsmanship sets off and contrasts with the ever-changing but undying splendor of earth's product. Many an otherwise ordinary garden is lifted bodily from its mediocrity and rendered unforgetably distinctive by some notable example of the potter's art tellingly placed at a proper focal point, thus displaying to the best benefit its own charms and the charms about it.

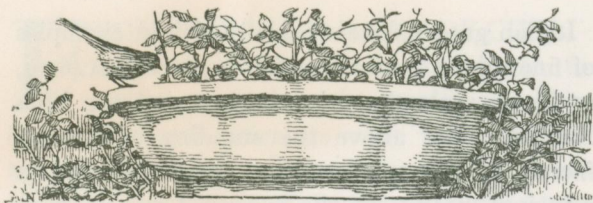
Italian gardens are especially rich in examples of fine native pottery, which in some instances, as for example the private garden of the Villa Borghese, rise above the standing of a mere factor in the enchantment and become its principal motif. In the isles of Greece,

"where burning Sappho loved and sung,"

in Phoenicia and Carthage, in ancient Babylon, in dim, mysterious Egypt, and in far-off China and Japan, a limitless wealth of ceramic form and suggestion lies fallow to the awakening touch of artistic life, ready to give again, in new times and to other lands, its grateful service of ornament and value.

French, English, and American gardens have largely begun to feel this influence; here and there the taste and knowledge of public or





private ownership afford the eye a wholesome relish of inspiring color or enlivening form. Education and the broadening facilities of travel and graphic reproduction are rapidly drawing the great aesthetic impulses of mankind into one common current, so that between the New World and the Old, in these eternal aspects, the difference grows perceptibly less marked. For, indeed, the principles of art are not only changeless but limitless, serving pine as well as palm and winding their richly fascinating thread throughout the fabric of common things and common thought.

In garden pottery, it has remained for an American artist, Mr. E. E. Soderholtz of West Gouldsboro, Maine, to take advantage of the great trend of these eternal principles and to bring, by a rare personal skill and a discerning

adaptability of method, his craft's most striking achievements into the field of practical and objective use.

The story is a simple one, but strangely simple. Mr. Soderholtz traveled for years, studying his subject first in every recognized centre of art and craftsmanship, and finally in every remote nook and corner where human conception has so far advanced as to enshrine its ideas in means of graphic utterance. Everywhere he recorded exactly and imperishably with the camera the accepted masterpieces of ceramic art, of which his collection is an inexhaustible library.

On these masterpieces he draws for reproduction and restoration, guarding their proportions with reverent care, and in their construction





rendering his restorations far more durable than their originals. Mr. Soderholtz's reproductions are of concrete, a material enduring beyond comparison with the clay of the originals, more particularly in the rigors of our northern climate, and of a permanence of color otherwise unobtainable against the vicissitudes of our fickle suns and storms.

Concrete is not a new material. In the form of cement or mortar it is practically as old as the earliest existing forms of determinate architecture. But of recent years it has found a new expression, and from this expression Mr. Soderholtz has wrought his product. His replicas are scientifically reinforced with galvanized steel, so judiciously as not to sacrifice in the least degree the distinctiveness and individuality of the original pattern or its artistic aspect, although giving it at the same time a solidity far beyond

the possibilities of the potter's art. Nor is this achievement in strength attained at an increase of weight beyond what the natural density of the material would warrant. The pieces are surprisingly light, a desirable result finally obtained after many experiments and tests. The reinforcement is not perfunctorily provided, but in each case is individually and carefully adapted to the finished form it is to serve; and each piece is made by a special process— not cast, but turned or spun as were the old clay pots on the potter's wheel. All are handmade, and no two, outside of the essential proportions necessary to render them complete works of art, are or can be exactly alike. So far from losing in the least measure the charms of the older pottery, Mr. Soderholtz's product preserves them in their entirety, possesses their identical qualities, and provides in addition a superiority over the product of mechanical casting that should not and does not require extended praise or explanation.

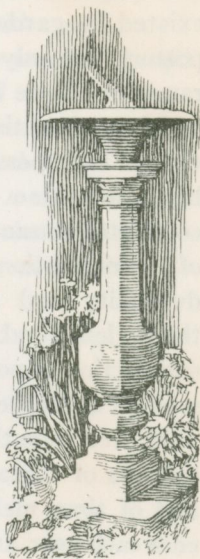
The permanent pigments employed by Mr. Soderholtz for coloring his composition, like the delicate cool and warm hues of the garden deco-

rations of the Orient, harmonize integrally with the ribbed rocks and evergreens of New England, as well as with the Poinsettias and Bougainvillias of the South. They adorn with an indefinable finesse, but with a compelling witchery, whatever they accompany. The idlest glance at them reveals them as although a unit, yet the distinguishing unit of the plan.

No form of art is for the many. Ceramic art in its delicacy and subtlety, in its individuality and refinement, is plainly for the few. Still, it may be doubted whether any other objects of as intense workmanship and taste appeal through so conservative a perfection to so wide a popular audience. If magic but for the few, at least they adorn for all. A noble vase, like nobility of character, carries its conviction even to those who cannot understand it. It identifies itself to the observer with the ideas and ideals of its owner, and bespeaks to him its owner's sense of the value and dignity of objects of purely ornamental use and being.

In the present brochure is shown a choice selection of examples of exquisite vase forms

of older, and in some sort wiser, days; of civilizations whose material wealth has gone but whose spiritual wealth, as expressed in the tongues of art and literature, still to an extent remains, for the creative works of art are the true soul of nations. Not so long ago replicas of this sort, though not indeed so precious as their originals, would have been beyond the dreams of rational investment. The means of securing them were available only with the greatest difficulty and the forms secured were not convincing. The standards of individual taste, except in the most isolated cases, did not nearly approach those of to-day but the present demand for unquestionable exactness shows amply enough that such conditions no longer exist. The pieces are, in fact, an accepted modern essential of gardens of the finer type. One need only look at these



handsome reproductions to see that both materially and æsthetically the tenets and traditions of all unquestioned works of art have been faithfully and skillfully applied and adhered to in them; that there is available among them, to the lover of the best that has existed in garden pottery, not only a range of choice in which a defective choice is impossible, but also a complete assurance of a constructional durability and of the no less durable satisfaction of possessing a faultless work free from the assaults of climate and of time, mellowing rather under their influence each year, and growing more beautiful as the



seasons pass—to be left at last to another generation as a token that the spirit of their forbears knew how to rise above the discord and commotion of their own short passage through the vale of life.

*“ O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed,
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”*

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