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The Gardens and Landscape of Rothamsted Manor - an Historical Report - Volume 2 - Appendices and Figures

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Extracts from Published Material

Rothamsted Research

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Extracts from published material

The extracts below were of interest during the preparation of this report, but may be of greater use to a future study of the later periods of the gardens' development. Their greatest value is to evoke something of the character of the gardens from the mid-19th Century to the early 20th Century, but there is also some information of use for historical analysis. A good number of other contemporary descriptions may still be in existence.

From 'The Poor Man and his Beer' by Charles Dickens, written in response to a visit to Rothamsted Research Station, and published in 'All the Year Round' No.1 April 30th 1859. [quoted in 'Records of the Rothamsted Staff' No.3, Nov 1931]

... we walked on the trim garden terrace before dinner, among the early leaves and blossoms; two peacocks, apparently in very tight new boots, occasionally crossing the gravel at a distance.

Gardeners Chronicle June 5, 1875.

The name of this estate has become, as it were, a household word with agriculturists and men of science all the world over. Its reputation is modern, and wholly due to the ability, zeal, and munificence of the present proprietor, J. B. Lawes Esq. Though, as our engraving shows, the mansion is a large and pictural example of Elizabethan architecture; though its contents comprise much which forms the admiration of connoisseurs; though it stands in a park with many noble trees – Sycamores, Limes, Beeches, &c. – yet it is little known for any of these things. It has somehow almost entirely escaped the notice of compilers of county histories and guide books. This is certainly somewhat surprising, as among a hundred that would appreciate the charm of this fine mansion and its surroundings, there would probably be not more than one who could appreciate at anything like their value the extensive series of experimental researches which have made Rothamsted famous.

Our illustrations tell their own tale; there is the old gabled mansion with its finely-kept sward in front, a pictural bit of architecture, to describe which would demand the pen of a Dickens, and there, hard by, a glorious row of Limes, whose arching branches rooting in the soil, and then uprising in a dense tangle of young shoots, form leafy corridors, the charm of which is best appreciated on a hot and sunny summer day when the air is heavy with the perfume of the blossoms.

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From an undated press cutting from ' The Advertiser and Times' that appears to have been copied from a hand-written account dated 1905. [F101]

At this period of the year it is delightful to walk on the velvety lawns of Rothamsted, and study the creeper-covered gables that rise along its front. The gay flower-beds, neatly inlaid in a huge carpet of green turf and sheltered by a belt of massive trees, appeal to the artistic senses and carry the imagination away from the hurly-burly of commercial life into a land where all is peace, rest, and beauty.

From an article 'Nearly Forty Years Ago', by T. S. Dymond, describing his time at the Rothamsted Research Station in the late 19th Century [Records of the Rothamsted Staff No. 3, Nov.1931]

From the grass plots we would proceed by 'Unter den Linden' to the small red clover plot in the garden of the Manor House.