

Carpet-Bedding.

BY OLIVER THORNE.



MOST of the people who saw the great floral globe in Washington Park, Chicago, during the Columbian year, wondered how the thing was done. It was not easy to answer them without going into a thousand

The evolution of such a massive floral display is a work of time, great cost, and patience. First, the idea is germinated in the brain of a clever gardener. Then comes the selection of the different plants, which are carefully tended through the winter; and after that the framework is made. This takes some time, and depends, of course, upon the elaborateness of the design. Then follow days and days of manual labour, arranging the plants, nipping off ambitious blossoms in order to keep the surface smooth, and giving the work its finishing touches.

The presence of a framework is plainly visible in our illustration of "The Gates Ajar," another splendid specimen of carpet-bedding in the same park. It is perhaps needless to say that "The Gates Ajar" is another way of expressing the doors of Heaven, and it is interesting to note how such a subject appeals to the Chicago mind. The gates were certainly very beautiful, and much charm is lent to the illustration by the dainty figure of the little girl who has been asked by the photographer to stand for a moment within the gates. From



THE GLOBE, WASHINGTON PARK, CHICAGO.
From a Photo. by Underwood & Underwood, Stereoscopic View Publishers

and one details of the gardener's art, so they were usually put off with the meagre information that the globe had an interior framework covered with earth, and that the plants, drawing sustenance from this earth, were kept in position by wires.

The globe was well worthy of all the admiration bestowed upon it, for it was a masterpiece of carpet-bedding. Thousands of different coloured plants, from all parts of the world, were embedded in its surface, and arranged to represent the continents of the world. The illustration shows us that, but what it cannot show us is the gorgeous beauty and blending of colour. The oceans were portrayed in green, the land stood out dark and symmetrical from the mass of floral water, and the lines of longitude cut through the equator in strips of varied hue.



"THE GATES AJAR," WASHINGTON PARK, CHICAGO.
From a Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.



THE PRESIDENTIAL CANOE, SOUTH PARK, CHICAGO.
From a Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.

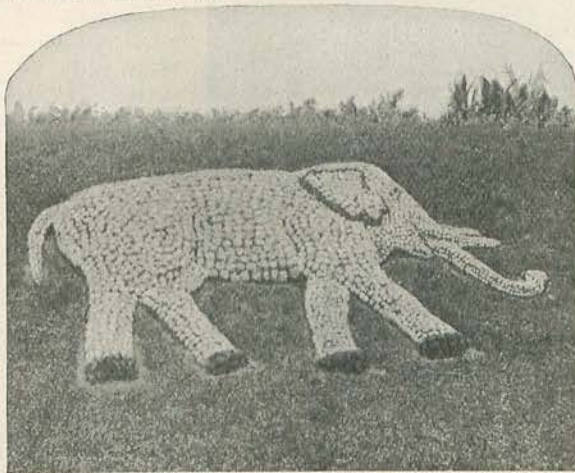
her, one can get an idea of the height of the gates. They were nearly 8ft. high from the sill of the door to the end of one of the leaves of the aloe, which adorned the top of each gate-post.

The steps leading up to the gates were walled in, as you will notice, by a striking white flower, which may also be noticed in the jacket of the man who paddles the canoe. The interesting floral elephant is also made of this plant, to which the botanists give the name of *echeveria*, and I suppose that more than a thousand of these little succulent plants were utilized in making that one huge imitation of a grand old animal. The ear was outlined in vivid colours, and each foot was padded with a cushion of costly plants.

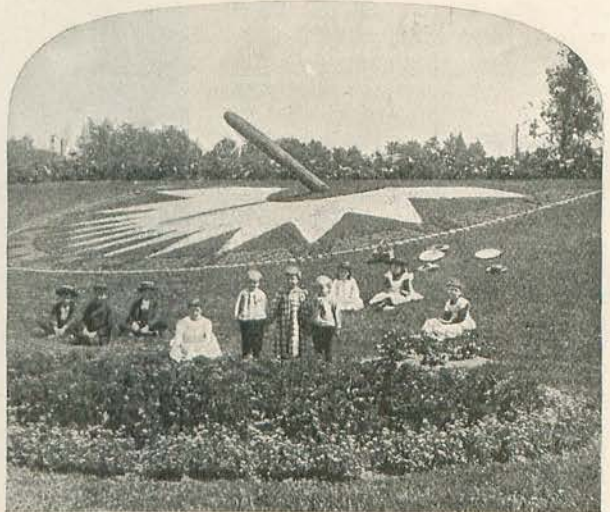
Regarding the man in the canoe, there is still a word to be said. His oar, of course, is merely a stick with the plants wired to it, and the sides of the canoe are constructed in the same way. The canoeist is not a remarkable creation, however, as the figure

is rather stiff, and the features a little unnatural. It is sometimes wonderful how closely the American gardeners can copy Nature in reproducing the human features. In some of the parks in the United States the heads and bodies of different noted men are taken as subjects for carpet-bedding, and reproduced with such skill that not a prominent line of the face is missing. The proportion between the features is skilfully maintained by constant care with the scissors, and the success of the design is proved by the readiness with which visitors recognise the subject.

In comparison with elephants, canoes, and globes, sun-dials are mere child's play. Probably no park in the world, in which carpet-bedding is carried on, is without its floral sun-dial, and the designs are very beautiful. Look for example at the sun-dials in Washington Park. They are mostly made with non-flowering bedding of different colours, and they are fairly reliable as time-keepers.



THE FLORAL ELEPHANT, SOUTH PARK, CHICAGO.
From a Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.



THE FLORAL SUN-DIAL, WASHINGTON PARK, CHICAGO.
From a Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.

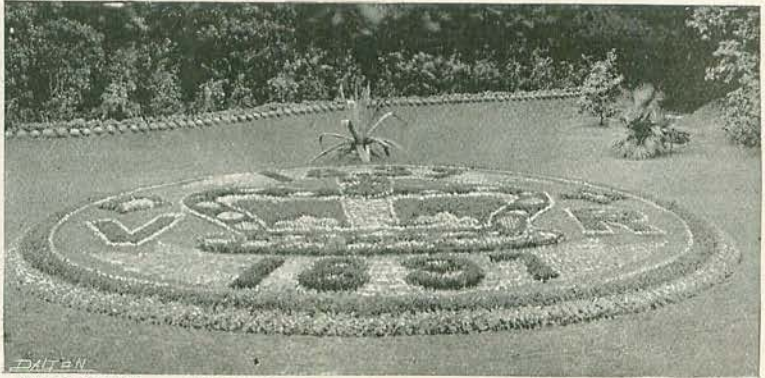
of styles which the gardener controls. He can do you Old English or Roman with ease, and his script is sometimes as neat as real penmanship. A great deal of fancy lettering was noticeable in the London parks this summer, in honour of the Diamond Jubilee. In Old St. Pancras Churchyard, the inscription "1837—VICTORIA—1897" was one of the noticeable features, and it occupied 90ft. from end to end. In Washington Park, Chicago, at the time when the globe was erected, visitors to the park were welcomed with a floral inscription which gave not only the name of the park but the day of the month and year. Every morning the date was altered, the main part of the inscription remaining, of course, the same. It was done simply by keeping the plants in boxes, instead of rooting them in the ground, and alterations in the inscription were easily made by lifting out one



FLORAL MOUND, SOLDIERS' HOME, DAYTON, OHIO.
From a Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.

Another very common form of carpet-bedding is the floral mound, a striking example of which is given at the top of this page. It stands in the grounds of the Soldiers' Home at Dayton, Ohio, and used to attract great attention on account of its size and colour.

Dates and letters are among the things easy to do with plants, and naturally there is no limit to the variety



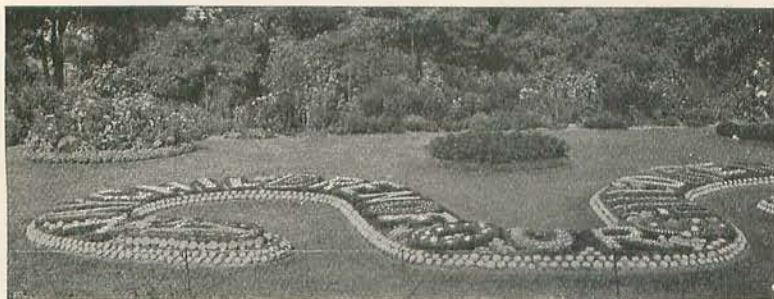
From a Photo. by] THE JUBILEE FLORAL CROWN, BATTERSEA PARK. [A. J. Johnson.

box and putting another in its place. The pride of Battersea Park during the

Jubilee was the floral crown, which is excellently illustrated on this page. It will be readily understood that great difficulty is experienced in photographing flat carpet-bedding—a difficulty that is plainly evident in our illustrations of the magnificent scroll in Victoria

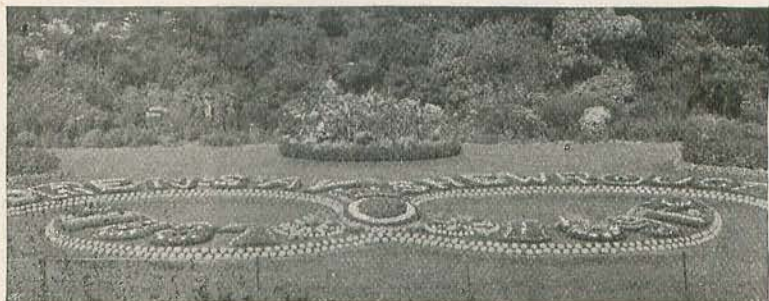


From a Photo. by] FLORAL INSCRIPTION IN OLD ST. PANCRAS CHURCHYARD. [A. J. Johnson,

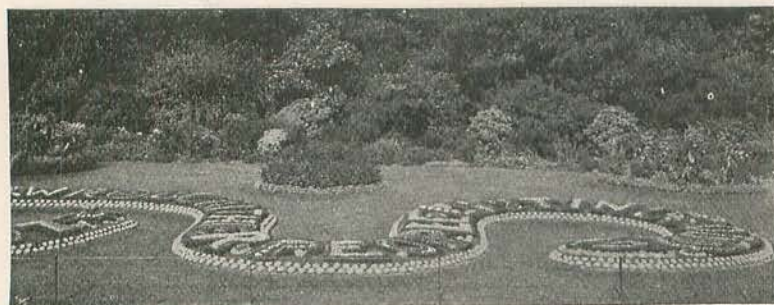


LEFT END OF THE JUBILEE SCROLL IN VICTORIA PARK.

Park — whereas such upright designs as the globe and "The Gates Ajar" can be easily photographed. The beauty of the Battersea Park crown was in its great richness of colour. Above the crown was the date "1837"; and below it, "1897."



CENTRE OF SCROLL.



RIGHT END OF SCROLL.

At the sides, the well-known letters "V.R." stood clearly out.

A very elaborate work was the Jubilee scroll

in Victoria Park, Hackney, of which we give a page-full of pictures. The bed of flowers was 85ft. in length and 22ft. in width, and the scroll, if straightened out, would measure 78yds. The inscription, which

people had to start on walking tours to read, was a quotation from Tennyson:—

May children of our children say
She wrought her people
lasting good.

The custom of thus making commemorative designs during times of celebrations is

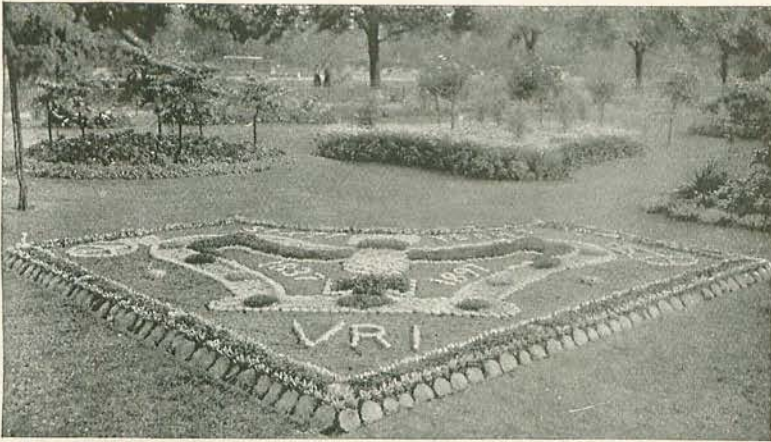
carried out in the United States to the extreme point. Thus the gardeners are constantly looking for new sensations, and



From Photos. by]

THE JUBILEE SCROLL COMPLETE.

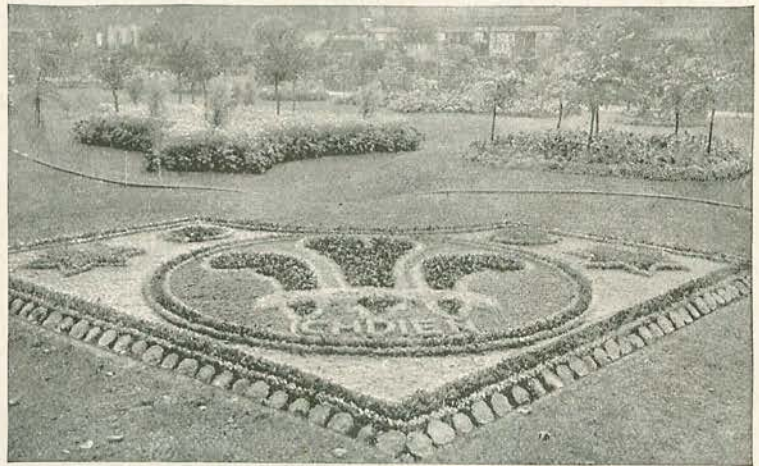
[A. J. Johnson.



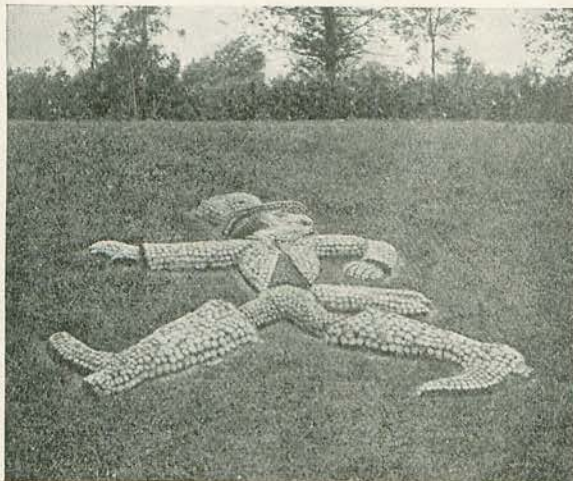
From a Photo. by] COMMEMORATIVE FLORAL CROWN, KENNINGTON PARK. [A. J. Johnson.

they are able to present a constantly changing series of designs. When the Knights Templars, a masonic organization, visited Boston some years ago, the gardens of the city were decorated with masonic designs; and lately when the Christian Endeavourers were holding their convention in San Francisco, they were delighted with the various complimentary designs in the parks, which had been prepared at great cost in honour of their visit. No doubt the trick is overdone in some cases, but it is very pretty, say what you will.

The commemorative crown in Kennington Park was an excellent Jubilee design. I may say in passing that the



THE PRINCE OF WALES'S COAT OF ARMS AT KENNINGTON PARK.
From a Photo. by A. J. Johnson.



FLEEING FROM OLD FATHER TIME, WASHINGTON PARK, CHICAGO.
From a Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.

border of such a design is made by a little plant called *Sempervivum*—which is brother-in-law to the common house-leek. You will note this same plant in the floral coat of arms of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, which lately drew much attention in Kennington Park. This was a remarkably effective design, the three

familiar plumes standing out in splendour. Contrast with this modest—yet striking—design the figure with which this article ends, and you will have an object lesson in the difference between the gardens of Great Britain and America.