The romance of the Apothecaries' garden at Chelsea

Drewitt F Dawtrey
THE ROMANCE OF
THE APOTHECARIES' GARDEN
AT CHELSEA
A Garden . . . is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man.

Francis Bacon.
THE ROMANCE OF
THE APOTHECARIERS' GARDEN
AT CHELSEA

F. DAWTREY DREWITT, M.A., M.D.
Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.

CHAPMAN AND DODD, LIMITED
LONDON AND SYDNEY. MCMXXII.
PRINTED FOR CHAPMAN AND DODD
BY CAHILL AND CO., LTD., AT DROGHEDA
1922.
PREFACE

A short time ago the writer was asked to represent the Royal College of Physicians on the Managing Committee of the Chelsea Physic Garden—now under Government control.

The request was readily complied with. It afforded an opportunity of learning the long and honourable history of the Garden, and of reading the records of its public-spirited supporters, and of its rare trees and flowers.

The story may interest some who were unaware of the existence of the Garden.

Many must have found, with the writer, an absorbing pleasure in exploring some minute fraction of the great human past—of understanding something of "Yesterday, its aim and reason." There is in it all the novelty of a journey in an unknown country.

This short journey has been exceptionally pleasant; for it has taken the writer among men of gentle and attractive lives—the old naturalists and botanists of the Physic Garden—men who lived near Nature—devoted to their dear Mother Earth.

JULY, 1922.

F. D. D.
CONTENTS

Introduction ....................................................... p. xi

CHAPTER I

Existence of Apothecaries’ Garden from time of Stuarts.—Botany closely connected with medicine.—Apothecaries break away from Grocers’ Company; become a City Company.—Grocers’ petition James I for the return of the Apothecaries.—The King’s reply.—The Company at last recognized and welcomed by Lord Mayor.—Cobham House becomes Apothecaries’ Hall.—Blackfriars’ Theatre next door.—Johnson, editor of Gerard’s Herball, tastes bananas, organizes botanical excursions, dies fighting for King Charles.—Money troubles during Civil War.—The Plague.—The Fire of London.—Apothecaries’ Hall rebuilt .................. pp. 13-23

CHAPTER II

Apothecaries take lease of Garden in Chelsea, a river-side village, bounded on east by the Westbourne.—King’s Private Road not finished; excellent site for Physic Garden.—State barges.—Origin of name “Paradise Row.”—Sir Thomas More’s “Paradise” included Chelsea Park.—Apothecaries’ Garden a “Paradise.” pp. 24-31

CHAPTER III

Plants transferred from Westminster to the Chelsea Garden.—Visit of Professor Herman of Leyden.—Cedars planted 1683, and produce cones in 1732.—Sloane’s letter to Ray on the Garden.—Evelyn’s visit to the Garden.—Cinchona trees.—Earl of Clarendon’s visit.—Proposal to abandon the Garden.—Petiver.—Natural History illustrations.—Members of the Apothecaries’ Society to be taxed to maintain Garden.—Sir Hans Sloane presents the Garden to the Apothecaries’ in February, 1722. pp. 32-44

CHAPTER IV

Sir Hans Sloane; born in North of Ireland; delicate boy; attends lectures at Apothecaries’ Hall, Chelsea Physic Garden, Paris and Montpellier; accompanies Duke of Albemarle to Jamaica; returns with large collection of Flora and Fauna; practises as a physician in Bloomsbury; created a baronet by George I; purchases the Manor of Chelsea; dies in 1753, leaving his collections (under conditions) to form a British Museum.—Horace Walpole a trustee.—Statue placed in Physic Garden.—Sloane had saved the Physic Garden, and the right of residents in Chelsea to use King’s Road.—Sloane Street represents his life .................. pp. 45-54

CHAPTER V

Year 1722 brings new life to Physic Garden.—James Sherard on Garden Committee.—Philip Miller, gardener, publishes The
CONTENTS

Gardener's Dictionary.—Cotton introduced into Georgia by the Apothecaries.—Isaac Rand, demonstrator.—All members of Apothecaries' Society taxed to maintain Garden.—Wharf built.—Hot-houses.—Further subscriptions called for.—Monument to Sir Hans Sloane by Rysbrack.—Linnaeus classifies all living Nature.—Linnaeus visits Sir Hans Sloane and the Physic Garden; is allowed by Miller to take plants and dried specimens, 1736.—Peter Kalm, pupil of Linnaeus, visits Garden and Miller, 1748; walks in footsteps of Linnaeus to Putney Heath, and sees the yellow furze; describes greenhouses in the Garden; visits Sir Hans Sloane and the museum; considers the Chelsea Garden a rival of the botanic gardens of Paris and Leyden.—William Hudson, demonstrator.—Philip Miller pensioned.—Two cedars cut down and sold in 1771. . . . pp. 55-68

CHAPTER VI

Sir Joseph Banks as a boy at Physic Garden, fishing with Lord Sandwich; at Eton and Oxford; sails with Captain Cook, 1768; collects plants in Botany Bay; typical old-world naturalist; brings back lava from Iceland for rockery in Physic Garden.—Stanesby Alchorne contributes stones from Tower of London.—Banks and Solander present seeds.—Forsyth, gardener.—Curtis, demonstrator.—The Botanical Magazine.—Additional tax on Apothecaries.—Botanical excursions.—Thomas Wheeler, demonstrator, 1835, successful teacher; long life.—“Artificial” system of Linnaeus only link in chain of attempts at a “natural system.”—Lindley’s energy.—Robert Fortune, curator, leaves Garden to introduce tea into India.—Expense of the Garden.—Professorship abolished in 1853.—Labourers discharged to reduce expenditure.—Nathaniel Ward introduces “Wardian cases”; attempts to revive Garden.—“Wardian cases” used throughout world. pp. 69-86

CHAPTER VII

Chelsea Embankment opened.—Loss of Thames water to the Garden and damage to trees.—Old Maiden-hair-tree among the survivors; extraordinary antiquity of the Maiden-hair-tree; its disappearance from among the wild trees; cultivated as a sacred tree in China and Japan.—Old Mulberry-trees, monuments to continual attempts at profitable silk-culture.—The Oriental Plane and London Planes.—Ilex.—Catalpa.—Persimmon.—Loquat.—Wistaria.—Kœlreuteria . . . . . . . . . . . . pp. 87-93

CHAPTER VIII

South wall built on Chelsea Embankment.—Thomas Moore, curator.—Garden passes to Charity Commissioners.—Trustees of London Parochial Charities undertake its management.—Rebuilding of curator’s house, laboratory, lecture room, greenhouses.—Present work on botanical research.—Teachers and students.—Importance of some knowledge of botany . . . . . . . . . . . . pp. 96-100
### ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Facing Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea Physic Garden from the River</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title Page of Gerard's &quot;Herball&quot;</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Physic Garden Looking North</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Persimmon Tree</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Hans Sloane</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue of Sir Hans Sloane</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue of Sir Hans Sloane</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Joseph Banks</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rockery</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kølreuteria Paniculata</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Chelsea Physic Garden</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>