Botany and Horticulture

Until the nineteenth century, the investigation of natural phenomena, plants and animals was considered either the preserve of elite scholars or a pastime for the leisureed upper classes. As increasing academic rigour and systematisation was brought to the study of ‘natural history’, its subdisciplines were adopted into university curricula, and learned societies (such as the Royal Horticultural Society, founded in 1804) were established to support research in these areas. A related development was strong enthusiasm for exotic garden plants, which resulted in plant collecting expeditions to every corner of the globe, sometimes with tragic consequences. This series includes accounts of some of those expeditions, detailed reference works on the flora of different regions, and practical advice for amateur and professional gardeners.

The Garden of Ignorance

Marion Cran (1875–1942), born in South Africa, passed most of her life in England, and, from 1910 until her death, lived and gardened in a house called ‘Coggers’ near Benenden in Kent. She was a prolific writer of books and articles on gardening, and was the first radio broadcaster on gardening in Britain. This 1913 work combines prescriptive gardening advice with autobiography: she admits that, although she had longed to live in the country, ‘I knew nothing at all of gardening; never did anyone know less.’ When she first arrived at the ‘rented three shaggy acres of ground in Surrey’ in which she made her first garden, it took her some time to decide to tame the wilderness. In an entertaining narrative, she describes her journey from ignorance of plants themselves, soil types and manures, planting aspects and pruning regimes, to hands-on expertise and wild enthusiasm.
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The Garden of Ignorance

*The Experiences of a Woman in a Garden*

Marion Cran
The Garden of Ignorance

Marion Cran

Frontmatter

More Information
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By

Mrs. CRAN GEORGE

A Woman in a Garden
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MY FATHER

TO
CONTENTS
THE GARDEN OF IGNORANCE
Marion Cran
Frontmatter
More Information
CHAINS IN THE ORIGINAL GARDEN

THE DOCTOR WORKED ON ALONE

A ROB-TAIL PUP AT TEN WEEKS

WHERE THE WINNING SWEET-PEAS GROW

WOOD AFTER SLEEPING OUT IN THE

HAMMOCKS AT BED-TIME

WHERE THE VANISHING SHAPES GO BILING TO THE

THE FINISHED WALL

THE NEW TERRACE WALL

REINFORCEMENT

WOODEN STAKES

THE FIRST TERRACE WALL „WAS OF

A BRICK-PATH

TOGETHER

TIDDY-WENNY’S FRIEND AND FELLOW

THE LOVERS HAVE LONG BEEN WED

SUNDIAL

A CHIMNEY-PORE BEING MADE INTO A

HOLLOW: BASELESS: DIAMESS: THE
The Garden of Ignorance

Marion Cran

Frontmatter

More Information