

THE GARDENER'S EXERCISE: RATIONAL RECREATION IN EARLY- NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

ROBIN VEDER

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY HARRISBURG

During the 1820s and 1830s, gardening was one of the “rational recreation” activities that landowners, manufacturers, and parish administrators promoted and subsidized for the agricultural and industrial working classes of Great Britain. This particular historical moment provides a rich opportunity to think about exercise and recreation as the reform of habit. Building on the work of popular culture and leisure historians, it is useful to consider how recreational activities are inseparable from the social contexts, and how in fact, cultural shifts are embedded in these small habits of daily life. In 1830, Scottish landlord R.C. Kirkliston wrote:

I think nothing contributes more to the sobriety, comfort, and cleanliness of a labourer, than a taste for gardening, when it can be instilled, and which, I think, a proprietor ought to promote by every means in his power. I have seldom known a labourer who was fond of and kept his garden neat, whose house and family were not so, and who did not spend his leisure hours with them, and in his garden, instead of in the ale house.¹

Elites like Kirkliston established allotment gardens adjacent to rented workers' housing (cottages) and within easy walking distance to help tenants and workers supplement their incomes and cultivate the gardening habit. They also formed horticultural societies that encouraged “industrious cottagers” by offering prizes for the best-kept gardens and best specimens of vegetables, fruits, and flowers. *The Gardener's Magazine*, *The Labourer's Friend*, and other periodicals published extensive discussions on the multiple benefits of working-class gardening. References to the ale house or pub communicated concerns about not just health and sobriety, but also about the economic status and group politics of those who frequented them.

Gardens are places of recreation, but gardening is an activity that re-creates the participant. Most previous scholarship on British early nineteenth-century working-class gardening has been concerned with the transformation of place, in particular the creation of urban green spaces, with the notable exceptions of S. Martin Gaskell's “Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasures” (1980) and Stephen Constantine's “Amateur Gardening and Popular Recreation in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” (1981). Gaskell discusses the industrial garden allotments that preceded the later garden city movement. He found garden promoters stressed active involvement. Constantine stresses the reformatory—re-creational and disciplinary—intent. For anyone who delves into the literature of early-to-mid-nineteenth century gardening, it is obvious that habits (industriousness, sobriety, domesticity) are what the gardener cultivates, and yet this angle has received very little historical examination.² Gardening is an activity that occupies the mind, strengthens the body, fills time, and, if practiced conscientiously, improves the gardener's skills and accustoms her/him to disciplined habits. The experience of gardening is physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually engaging. People do it for pleasure and for profit. It can be solitary or communal. The tasks require regularity and flexibility, attention to minute daily changes, and foresight to accommodate seasonal and long-term planning. In all of these ways, gardening is an exercise, a habitual practice that occupies one's time and leads to improvement through exerted effort.

Rational Recreation

Habits—whether good or bad—are developed through persistent repetition. Rational recreation was a nineteenth-century Protestant moral reform movement to replace bad habits with good ones. Proponents sought to eradicate and

Robin Veder teaches humanities and art history/visual culture at Penn State Harrisburg. During fall 2008, she is a research fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum studying the relationship between exercise, dance, and American modernist visual art.

replace traditional working-class amusements with new ones that fit bourgeois notions of domestic, temperate, and self-improving occupations. Reflecting the Protestant work ethic, leisure time, that might be given to sensual idleness, should be spent in productive intellectual activities like gardening, entomology, geology, mathematics, and poetry. Disciplined leisure was re-creation because it re-created a person's readiness to return to work alert and refreshed. Rational recreation was supposed to prevent idleness and promote productive leisure, but the ultimate goal was to maximize labor discipline by changing habits.

This movement grew out of the wrenching social and economic changes occurring in Great Britain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Enclosure of common lands, the Corn Laws, the rise of urban and industrial manufacturing centers, increased population, international trade, war, and a variety of other factors altered economic conditions, social relationships, and consequently recreational habits. Traditional community-based working-class recreations were characterized by group activities, carnivalesque play, and annual and seasonal events. They were attended by much drinking and often conducted in taverns and public houses (pubs for short). Under the pre-industrial traditions of noblesse oblige, elites sponsored harvest festivals and other big events that perpetuated reciprocal loyalty between landowners and tenant farmers. Some traditional recreations ceased due to lack of money and time. Others were lost as populations migrated, breaking up group traditions. Where working-class leisure spots and activities persisted, they offered venues for economic and political discussion and dissent.

Landed gentry, agricultural capitalists, industrial manufacturers, and urban reformers alike wanted to prevent dissent—large and small—by reforming working-class recreation. Their goals were to re-establish authority, secure social stability, and develop an “effective labour discipline;” thus, the rational recreation movement simultaneously looked back to feudal social relations and shared the modernizing attitude central to industrial discipline. In one of the earliest social history critiques of rational recreation, Robert Malcolmson found it was in

“the industrial villages, the textile centres, [and] the metropolis . . . that contractual relations particularly predominated and paternalist authority was least effectual, that class antagonisms were most acutely developed, that employment was the least secure, and that population density was highest; consequently it was here that the problems of social control were most keenly sensed and most closely studied.”³

However, proponents of rural garden programs—like the Society for the Encouragement of Industry and the Reduction of Poor Rates and the Labourer's Friend Society—were equally invested in changing the recreational habits of the rural poor in order to re-establish loyalty, cultivate docility, and reduce unemployment.

There were two ways to change leisure habits: introduce

new (or altered) activities or enforce constant labor. Afraid of working-class (and politically Chartist) uprisings, the quickly growing middle class proposed organized recreations and promoted labor policies to keep the poor from pubs and politics. In the 1820s, they sponsored Mechanics Institutes, which, according to Frederic Engels, gave the worker nothing more than “one long sermon on the respectful and passive obedience in the station in life to which he has been called.”⁴ At the same time, laissez-faire economists used the puritanical concepts of idleness and industry to justify lowering wages and raising prices until the poor found it necessary to work constantly in order to avoid starvation or the work-house. This malicious policy, the doctrine of the utility of poverty, prevented the working poor from engaging in the popular recreations that elites (sometimes rightly) feared doubled as incubators for working class consciousness and, consequently, insubordination.

The material exercise of gardening—its effects on gardeners' habits and lifestyles—functionally suited the ideological and economic goals of the rational recreation movement: keeping workers busy, preoccupied, and disciplined. Gardening produces food for the table and breeds loyalty to place, characteristics that served elite interests in reducing the poor rate (welfare costs) and preventing labor insurrection. Sponsored gardens and horticultural society activities were supposed to occupy workers, keeping them out of pubs where agricultural labourers, artisans, and mechanics would plan labor strikes, food riots, and other political acts of insubordination.⁵ In addition, the material characteristics of gardening made it an ideal rational recreation because caring for a garden requires regular and conscientious effort, producing disciplined habits.

Testimonies from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales show that in the 1820s and 1830s, landowners, manufacturers, and parish administrators from across Great Britain were subsidizing tenants' and workers' gardens. When John Claudius Loudon, editor of *The Gardener's Magazine* (where many of these discussions were published) introduced a series of prize-winning essays on cottagers' garden programs, he stressed the social benefits of such programs. Gardens fed tenants' families and created feelings of local attachment and community responsibility. They also importantly provided “recreation” which Loudon carefully defined as “not idleness but a change in the kind and degree of labour or occupation.” He felt “every labourer, mechanic, operative manufacturer, or small tradesman, has, or ought to have, some hours of leisure every day, for the purpose of health, recreation, and enjoyment.”⁶ In the 1820s and early 1830s, there was greater concentration of allotment programs in the southern rural counties, but sponsorship later grew in the northern manufacturing districts. Despite variations in the local environment and modes of production, sponsors of these programs shared a core vision that gardening could transform the habits of the poor, leading them from immoral dissipation to rational recreation.

Growing Income

By changing habits, allotment gardening programs served economic needs. The private and municipal provision of small garden plots for free or at a low rent is known as the allotment system. Initially, sponsored rural cottage gardens were part of the landscape improvement and cottage housing reform of Britain's rural districts. This process began with the intensified period of enclosure in the mid-1600s when landowners aggressively claimed lands that had traditionally been used as "commons" by local tenants and small-holders (owners of small properties). Between 1793 and 1816, enclosure was at its peak: during these years 3,062,121 acres were fenced in. Rural allotments were essentially replacing the earlier function of commons, with rent added.⁷ British nineteenth-century allotments can be explained first as a response to rural poverty caused by enclosure, and second as a palliative for poverty in industrial centers where thousands migrated because of enclosure's evictions.

In 1815, British parliament created the Corn Laws that instituted tariffs on imported grains, protecting the interests of domestic grain producers and merchants. Despite inflated prices and widespread starvation, farmers would hold out on threshing grain, even letting crops rot in the field, in order to charge an even higher rate. Agricultural labourers were denied both work and affordable food. Manufacturers were against the Corn Laws because they opposed paying higher workers' wages to support the inflated prices of grain. They argued the restriction of free trade crippled the country's potential for wealth which could be realized if Britain were to become the "workshop of the world." Workers were divided. Consequently some supported protection from imports while others agitated for repeal of the Corn Laws in favor of laissez-faire capitalism. The Corn Laws were repealed in 1846. During the Corn Law years, agricultural laborers and mechanics were squeezed from both ends. They paid the artificially inflated grain prices while agricultural and industrial capitalists paid them the lowest possible wages. This coincided with a population explosion that exacerbated the conditions of poverty. In first-hand accounts, people explained they had been starved into theft and rebellion.⁸

In times of unemployment or underemployment, workers could receive the "poor rate" that parishes raised by collecting property taxes. Demand for poor rates substantially increased as a result of enclosure coinciding with a substantial population increase, but local landowners didn't want to pay welfare. They considered the poor rate "the wages of idleness." Economist Thomas Malthus described the poor as no more than "surplus population," unworthy of help in the form of alms or employment because such assistance would only lead to greater increase of population. Parliamentary reforms of the preexisting Poor Law, which required each parish to contribute to the support of its' local unemployed populace, brought out a new Poor Law in 1834. This Malthusian legislation canceled all assistance except that of the workhouse, which was

so miserable as to be prison-like and a discouragement in itself. The workhouse left no doubt that in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, paupers were vicious and idle liars and thieves, society's criminals--not its victims. The make-work approach to managing the poor was also inefficient, costing more than it produced. Gardens were profitable and pleasurable, thus doubly effective.⁹

Both workers and employers wanted the former to have allotments for growing food. In rural areas, landlords started providing them in the late 1700s. In the early 1820s, the Bishop of Cambridgeshire, who later became Bishop of Bath and Wells, established allotments in both locations. Lord Braybrooke with the Gibsons, Mr. Catlin, and others sponsored a well-regarded early project in Saffron Walden, followed by related settlements in Littlebury and Wenden, all in Essex county. In Wiltshire, Thomas Estcourt established allotments at Long Newton, followed by Rev. S. Demainbray and Lord Carnarvon. In Cambridgeshire, Waterbeach and Milton hosted gardens. Industrial location allotments, generally part of a model village, include those created by Robert Owen in New Lanark; John Moggridge in the villages of Blackwood, Ynisdd, and Trelyn; and many others who followed in the 1830s through the 1850s.¹⁰

The allotment was a "method of making people grow their own poor rate," as phrased succinctly by political philosopher John Stuart Mill. The small garden plots provided a solution for the employment fluctuations created by market demand, labor competition, and the seasonal nature of some work. Traditionally, gardens had provided supplementary income for workers in artisanal trades where demand was irregular. This helped stabilize wages because someone with a productive garden did not feel compelled to take the lowest paid work as soon as it became available. Conversely, agricultural and industrial capitalists wanted the guarantee of plentiful labor willing to work on demand for the lowest wages. For them, allotments were welfare work that covered poor rate costs during periods of higher unemployment. Most agricultural and industrial capitalists wanted tenants and workers who were neither dependent nor independent but rather somewhere in between. Welfare, in the form of poor rates and workhouses, was one answer. Sponsored allotment gardens was another. The allotment garden was meant to supplement insufficient wages, prevent field and factory theft, and reduce landowners' poor rate taxes. For some allotments, only renters who did not ask for parish assistance were eligible; one had to choose.¹¹

In general, sponsors wanted allotment gardens to provide enough food to off-set the poor rate, but not enough to offer an alternative income or otherwise disrupt other full-time paid employment. Consequently, allotments were usually less than one acre in size, often in the range of one-eighth to one-quarter acre. It was assumed the male laborer's wife and children would manage the garden except during off-duty hours when he could also contribute. William Davis, a hard-nosed "philanthropist" and mem-

ber of the Bath Society for the Investigation and Relief of Occasional Distress, Encouragement of Industry, and Suppression of Vagrants, asserted cottage gardens should “be large enough to produce plenty of roots for the cottager’s family, but not so extensive as to tempt him to withdraw his attention from daily labour for his master, nor to make his produce much of an article for sale.”¹²

Keeping Busy

If supplementing the poor rate with vegetables from the allotment garden was a problem because laborers might gain a degree of independence from the labor market, why were reformers so keen on seeing workers busy in gardens? Busyness—or in the vocabulary of the day, industry—was the second most important item on the allotment societies’ agendas. Many employers and landlords wanted every minute of the workers’ spare time to be filled so they became accustomed to it and also to prevent other, less desirable practices.

Who had not observed, in the long summer evenings, groups of labourers standing idling about at the corners of the streets? Their work perhaps was finished at six o’clock—it was too early to go to bed—they had no intellectual resources—their only means of amusement was to assemble together—if they had a shilling in their pockets, it was spent in beer—and if they had not, it but too frequently happened that they resorted to poaching and pilfering to gratify their inclination.¹³

This report from the Maling Labourers’ Friend Society (in Kent) expresses a ubiquitous sentiment in the allotment garden literature, one which clearly locates such garden programs within the rational recreation agenda of replacing bad habits with good ones. It is also echoed in other comments about filling any spare hours and “broken” days (caused by rain, excess daylight, or temporary unemployment) for, “when this is not the case, these scraps of time are spent in lounging about, or else at the alehouse.”¹⁴ The garden’s produce helped to replace the poor rate, and the practice of gardening was meant to replace another threat to the economic order: idleness.

When supplied with a garden, “the labourer can employ himself on it during after-hours, instead of going to the beer house or political shop, a rendezvous more inimical to the interest of the country and wellbeing of the poor peasant’s family, than any thing that has been adopted for the last half century.” Thus argued a Welsh landowner of two hundred and thirty acres who was afraid of the trouble that would come with working-class “chattering about protocols, discussing new constitutions, troubling their heads with the affairs of Europe, or reading the slander and calumnies too often heaped on the magnates of our land . . .” Like others of his class, this landowner longed for the English peasantry who “in times of yore” were illiterate and docile.¹⁵ They explicitly idealized the cottager’s garden, representing it as the key to maintaining the mythical values of rural domesticity.

In addition to looking to the past, allotment activ-

ists saw gardening as a way to train future generations in habits of industry. The Earl of Winchilsea thought every community should have gardens, for laborers and land-owners alike benefited from the former’s industriousness. In the garden, the laborer’s children “learn to dig and weed, and their time is employed in useful industry; by which means they are likely to acquire more honest and industrious habits than those who are bred up in the poverty and laziness we often see . . .”¹⁶

In 1820, John H. Moggridge established an experimental thirty-acre village in the area of Monmouthshire, Wales, for coal miners who worked at his and other local collieries. Tenants were guaranteed leases for the duration of four lives or ninety-nine years if the latter exceeded the former. Part of Moggridge’s program was to award prizes for the best gardens. Under the auspices of local Horticultural Society shows, he gave prizes to cottagers for the best fruit, vegetables, and flowers from their gardens. In fall 1826, Moggridge reported he was pleased with the initial results, finding men and women occupied in their gardens during the after hours that had been previously spent in pubs. He commented, “Many a man that used to waste his spare time and money in public-houses is now to be seen at work in his garden, after the day’s labour is over. Several of the women, too, are conspicuously industrious in this way.”¹⁷

Some landlords, particularly tenant farmers, were against allotments, fearing “the poor labour so hard in their allotments, after their hours of work, as to be less able to do a good day’s work for the farmer on the following day.” Lord Carnarvon, happy with his own allotment experiment in Wiltshire, accused such recalcitrant agriculturalists of “forgetting how much more labour a man can perform who is well fed and clothed, and possessed of comfort and competence.” In defense of allotments at Lincolnshire and Rutlandshire, it was reported “the management of this little demesne, never, we believe, for one hour, interferes with the necessary occupations of the labourer.”¹⁸ It was generally a condition of the lease that tenants would not let maintenance of their allotment gardens interfere with their hired work. Gardening ensured continuous and, when regulated, prioritized busyness.

Staying in Place

Concern about suppressing working-class insurrection increased dramatically in the 1820s and more so in the early 1830s with the onset of the Captain Swing riots and Chartist agitation. Analysts praised cottage and allotment gardens as the domesticating answer in rural and industrial regions. For them, gardening attached the gardener in place. When the Monmouthshire colliers resisted a wage decrease in 1827 by staging a seven-week work strike, those without gardens “scoured the country . . . bludgeons in their hands, levying contributions in victuals and clothes for the support of their families.” Garden sponsor John Moggridge offered the contrast garden-holders provided:

Blackwood villagers, who had gardens, turned

their attention to them, and subsisted themselves out of them and of the resources at their command: and when it became necessary to swear in a considerable number of special constables to aid in preserving the peace of the country, and for the protection of property, none were found more ready, none more zealous, none more faithful, none more effective, than the cottage freeholders of Blackwood.¹⁹

Moggridge's narrative shows those who had productive gardens were able to support themselves during the strike and were materially interested in restoring order. Five years later, the colliers and ironworkers found themselves again out of work, and Moggridge's experiment produced new results. This time he lost some gardening tenants who simply had to abandon their homes and plots in search of work. However, among those who stayed, one had become so proficient in his garden, Moggridge emphasized, he sold ripe peaches at eight pence per dozen, a "moderate price."²⁰ In the long run, the colliers' gardens helped interests on both sides of this labor struggle.

In the 1830-31 Captain Swing riots, agricultural laborers turned to arson in the southern counties, burning the machinery that made manual labor superfluous. Landlords' interests in offering allotments and gardening prizes increased substantially directly following the outbreak of the riots in 1830. They asserted the self-sufficiency and pride that came from gardening would be a far more powerful deterrent to criminal activity than even the threats of prison or corporeal punishment. In an effort to convince the landowners and farmers of Chard, a coalition of twenty-nine clergy reported, "During the late disturbances among the peasantry in Wiltshire, for instance, *no labourer from the parishes where these plans had been adopted, joined in them.*"²¹ Material characteristics of gardening could substantially curb labor riots not only by supplementing wages but also by attaching workers to the land and isolating them from one another's company during free hours.

In 1832, an allotment advocacy group in Sussex phrased their argument in much stronger language than that used by the Somerset clergy:

If [the laborer's] sturdy independence be disagreeable to the farmer, still more disagreeable ought that mendicant disposition to be which shakes the security of his possessions, which haunts his hours of rest with terror, and gives the gathered stores of his granaries to the midnight flames."²²

John Denson, an agricultural labourer turned allotment activist, quoted this warning to the readers of *Gardener's Magazine* in 1832. Beginning in 1819, Denson published diatribes against tenant farmers' greed and pleas for allotment gardens to ease the agricultural laborers' difficulties. He had witnessed agricultural riots and retaliatory hangings in Cambridgeshire in 1816, and having benefitted himself from a post-enclosure one and a half acre allotment, vehemently and successfully convinced the local vicar, bishop, and other land-holders to establish allotment

programs to prevent similar troubles.²³

In the same period, the rising Chartist labor movement called attention to disparities between the manufacturing population and those who hired their labor. In an overview of popular gardening over two centuries, Constantine noted efforts to encourage gardening in urban and industrial settings have increased "at times of political and industrial unrest when working people seemed to many middle-class observers to be threatening the established order."²⁴ If industrialization increased class consciousness among workers, the industrial magnates hoped gardening would, conversely, economically, and socially forestall revolts. What began as a method of poor rate assistance also quickly became trade union prevention.

Gardens were an effective form of riot control because a garden kept the renter or worker in place, literally. An attachment to land would override the "natural" tendency of the poor to idleness, dissipation, and discontent, according to landlords who claimed renters who gardened were more docile, meaning less ready to steal, strike, or abandon rented property. In addition to arguing gardens eased the poor rate, pro-allotment landowners believed gardening cottagers cared about their rented property enough to avoid displeasing the landlord. Joining in labor strikes could mean eviction with one week's notice, leaving the striker jobless, homeless, and gardenless.

Visible Improvement

The garden's aesthetic value offers one explanation of why gardening was such a successful way of provoking and measuring behavioral change. Two forms of "landscape improvement" characterized the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century period of enclosure: agriculture and professional landscape gardening estate designs. Improvement signified increased monetary value, the application of scientific techniques, and participation in modern humanitarianism. The reform of tenant housing (cottages) and gardens were connected to these improvements. Gardens improved an estate's appearance and economic value; gardening improved a tenant's condition and character.

As demonstrated by John E. Crowley (1997), the improvement of tenants' cottages and development of cottage gardens was stimulated by elite interest in landscape architecture, then compounded with humanitarian reform during the last third of the eighteenth century. Landlords risked social condemnation if their tenants' housing was noticeably squalid rather than merely modest.²⁵ Sincere reformers may have replaced workers' housing with stronger, warmer, and cleaner homes, but contemporary evidence shows some landowners did not want to make the financial investment for genuine and lasting improvement. Many cottages were cheaply made buildings that lasted about forty years. Even when the cottages were reasonably made, the cottager's comfort was subordinate to the landowner's view of the ornamental farm (*ferme ornée*).²⁶ Vine-covered cottages with small front gardens masked unimproved or ugly cottages, providing a superficially effective solution for housing problems.

Landlords hoped if they put up new housing, tenants would want to reciprocate their investment by growing adjacent beautifying gardens. In the 1820s and 1830s, landowners, farmers, and other reformers debated how best to encourage cottagers to develop gardeners' tastes, skills, and habits. In 1826, William Stevenson, author of the *Agricultural Surveys of Surrey and Dorsetshire*, expressed concern about the lack of institutions, associations, and lectures dedicated to the spread of horticulture in the rural districts. Without these forms of support, Stevenson found it very difficult to interest "peasants" in gardening. He thought the only way to do so was "by proving to him, that by its proper cultivation he may benefit his health, save his money, and cheaply contribute to some of his animal gratifications."²⁷ Once the gardener found him/herself materially interested in edible gardening, enthusiasm might extend to ornamental gardening and from there, to the study of natural sciences.

Others shared Stevenson's idea gardening was a habit that, with practice, led the gardener from base material interests to aesthetic appreciation and intellectual enjoyment. In response to Stevenson's recommendations, estate manager William Buchan reported on an experiment he oversaw for Lord Cawdor at Stackpole Court in Pembrokeshire. While enlarging, repairing, and improving ventilation for farm laborers' cottages, Cawdor instructed Buchan to put in front and back gardens to promote their "comfort." Buchan established the gardens with fruit trees and ornamental plants, but found when he informed "the cottagers at the same time, that they would have to keep the whole in good order for the future . . . the information was not received with a good grace by some of them, prejudiced as they were against the introduction of anything new." Cawdor and Buchan encouraged the cottagers' cooperation by offering prizes for the "best cultivated garden" and for those with the "most flowers." Cottagers who needed to be bribed into the activity were surely aware the "improvements" promoted the estate owner's scenery and real estate value. Tenants who were originally opposed to the new gardens were soon asking for cuttings and seeds, and the prizes, Buchan reported, were eventually deemed unnecessary.²⁸

In fact, the tables turned as cottage gardens became the norm. Jeremy Burchardt's quantitative study of the allotment movement shows a significant increase between 1830 and 1845, and finds by the early 1840s "there was a consensus in upper-class circles that labourers ought to have allotments." In 1830, Kirkliston suggested when landlords provide new and attractive cottages, the inhabitant "will consider himself in honour bound" to improve the grounds by growing a garden. In response, Charles Hulbert of Shrewsbury added that landlords should be obliged to always provide gardens with cottages, which would in turn beautify and increase the rent of the property.²⁹ Aesthetic results depended upon behavioral reform, but the latter was increasingly not only a happy by-product, but actually a defined goal of garden programs.

Gardens easily served this purpose because their con-

dition provided visible evidence of the gardener's habits. Following the model offered by Stevenson, Cawdor, and others, when John Moggridge first reported on his experiment, he added: "I mean to fix a day annually for bestowing prizes and rewards publicly, which, as a general and regular inspection must then take place, will, I am sure, prove a powerful stimulus."³⁰ The garden's condition provided a concrete and visible measure of the gardener's exertion and compliance. Vine-covered cottages and cottage gardens came to signify settled and modest domesticity, while unkempt gardens signified undependable inhabitants with empty pockets and insecure morality. Gardening's built-in reporting mechanism made it an ideal rational recreation.

In the era of rational recreation, the garden was evidence of the owners' habits, and by extension, of his/her degree of dependence on the poor rate, attachment to place, and potential obedience. Houses and workshops without gardens, a small cold frame, or even just a window plant, were the sites of poverty, and by specious implication, ignorance and immorality. Allotment garden promoters believed a tenant with a well-tended garden was sure to be a good and sober tenant. The condition of house and grounds were read as the signs of a person's morality first, and secondly—only as a result of degraded or upheld morality—a sign of economic discomfort or sustenance. The condition of a cottager's garden was a measure of morality only because it was an indication of time spent at home. A well-kept garden was the garden of someone who didn't go to the pub regularly and consequently wouldn't be rioting for food, aggressively demanding hand-outs, burning equipment, or agitating for trade unions. Gardening was a substitute for other activities, and one, by developing and encouraging regular habits, re-created the gardener.

ENDNOTES

1 R.C. Kirkliston, "Labourer's Cottages," *The Gardener's Magazine, and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement* (hereafter Gard. Mag.) 6 (Feb. 1830): 109-110;

2 S. Martin Gaskell, "Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure," *Victorian Studies* 23 (summer 1980): 479-501; Stephen Constantine, "Amateur Gardening and Popular Recreation in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Social History* 14 (spring 1981): 387-406; Jeremy Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873* (G.B.: Royal Historical Society and Boydell Press, 2002), 18-19, 31-32, 166-172.

3 Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 161. See also Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885* (1978; NY: Methuen & Co., 1987 paperback edition).

4 Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. and ed. W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner (1845; NY: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 270-71; Malcolmson, 89-97.

5 Ironically, the centrality of pubs and drinking to working class botany clubs was ignored by observers who wanted to idealize artisan naturalists as role models for rational recreation, as shown by Anne Secord, "Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists

- in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire," *History of Science* 32 (1994): 269-315. Secord's book *Artisan Naturalists* is forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press. In my dissertation, I made a related argument that nineteenth-century horticultural societies were premised in part on the tradition of working-class botany and floristry clubs that usually held their meetings in taverns and pubs. Robin Veder, *How Gardening Pays: Leisure, Labor, and Luxury in Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Culture* (Ph.D. diss, The College of William and Mary, 2000).
- 6 John Claudius Loudon, "On Cottage Husbandry and Architecture," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (1830): 140-141.
- 7 Denis M. Moran, *The Allotment Movement in Britain, American University Studies*, 25th ser., vol. 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 18-19; Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 66, 96-119. See also W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969); E. L. Jones and G. E. Mingay, eds., *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967).
- 8 *The Hungry Forties: Life under the Bread Tax*, with introduction by Mrs. Cobden Unwin (1904; reprint Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971).
- 9 William Davis, *Hints to Philanthropists* (1821; reprint, Shannon, Ireland: Irish Univ. Press, 1971), 87; Engels, 309, 308-15; Peter Gaskell, *The Manufacturing Population of England: Its Moral, Social, and Physical Condition* (1833; reprint, NY: Arno Press, 1972), 216-17; J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Age of the Chartists, 1832-1854* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1967), 55-78.
- 10 The rural allotments are documented in The Labourers' Friend: A Selection of the Publications of the Labourers' Friend Society (London: Published for the Society, 1835), hereafter LF; on Moggridge's project see below. See also Burchardt, 101-107; S. M. Gaskell, 480-485.
- 11 John Stuart Mill, quoted in Moran, 29. See also Moran, 17-39; LF.
- 12 Davis, 119.
- 13 "Malling Labourers' Friend Society" LF 114.
- 14 John Denson [Sr.] of Waterbeach, "Advantages of Land to Labourers," (1821) in LF, 46-47.
- 15 H. "Cottage Gardens, and Gardens to Workhouses, Prisons, Asylums, &c.," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (June 1832): 377.
- 16 "Letter from the Earl of Winchilsea," LF, 36.
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