

(*The Magic Flute*, 1791), which the author justifiably considers to contain masonic allusions without being in its entirety a ‘masonic opera’ (some passages simply do not fit into such an interpretation). It is significant that several scenes are set in gardens. In the course of a searching analysis of both music and libretto, the ambiguity of some of the symbolism is brought out, with a Christian interpretation possible in some places, but the predominant feeling is masonic. It might have been added that the reason that the Temple of Wisdom is the correct choice for Tamino when confronted by the three entrances (Wisdom, Reason, Nature) is that it is the only one which corresponds to the three ideals of Freemasonry (Wisdom, Strength and Beauty). Parody is also identified, in the form of a distorted view of Freemasonry, which the opera later shows to be wrong: the example could perhaps have been given of Papageno, whose mouth is padlocked to punish him for telling lies – the illustration from an earlier period (p. 111) shows a face with padlocked lips to signify ‘Be Silent’, part of a masonic motto.

Garden coverage is concentrated in two chapters. The first looks particularly at the eighteenth-century garden and its cultural accompaniments, such as the cult of melancholy, *fabriques* and the morbidity of the ‘Graveyard Poets’, while the second explores allusions and meanings in three case studies: Wörlitz and Schwetzingen in Germany and Arkadia in Poland. The author rightly points out the richness of, and layers of meaning and association in, many eighteenth-century gardens, though not necessarily with masonic connotations. The analysis of the chosen sites is well thought out and convincing, but it is surprising that no mention is made of the German garden that combines many of Curl’s motifs – melancholy, Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts* (1742–45), *Die Zauberflöte*, a temple used for masonic ceremonies and commemoration of the foremost German thinkers who were masons, Goethe, Herder and Wieland. This garden is Seifersdorffertal, near Dresden. Reference might also have been made to Laxenburg, Vienna, redolent with masonic associations, and Friedenstein, Gotha, with its temple entered by the requisite seven steps, used for masonic meetings.

The book is wide ranging and sometimes presents a dense read, so closely packed is the information. It is well illustrated (mainly in black and white) and written in the author’s familiar ebullient style, with trenchant personal observations and opinions. Professor Curl claims this is his final work: if so, it stands as a commanding account of its subject that will not be superseded for years to come, and a fitting climax to an illustrious and greatly productive career.

MICHAEL SYMES

Rincon, Woodcote Hall, Woodcote Avenue,  
Wallington, Surrey SM6 0QT, UK  
Email: michaelsymes@btinternet.com

Helena Gerrish, *Edwardian Country Life: The Story of H. Avray Tipping* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2011), 208 pp., illus. in colour and black-and-white, £35.00 (hbk), ISBN-978-0-7112-3223-5

Even though H. Avray Tipping (1855–1933) is not as well known among landscape historians as he should be, it is still surprising that no one had written a serious study of his life and work before Helena Gerrish produced this superb new book. Tipping created some of the most seminal gardens of the Edwardian era, all of which were featured in *Country Life* magazine and in his own books, and he counted Gertrude Jekyll, Edwin Lutyens and Harold Peto among his friends. Born into a wealthy family, and the youngest of four sons, Harry grew up at Brasted Place in Kent, an Adam house built in 1784 with magnificent interiors.

This privileged upbringing sparked Tipping’s career as an architectural writer of note. His prodigious output included 700 authoritative articles on houses for *Country Life* (in 1908 alone he wrote fifty-one articles) as well as several dozen books that he either wrote or edited. Among his seminal publications for *Country Life* are *In English Homes* (three volumes), *English Homes* (nine volumes), *Gardens Old and New* (three volumes), and *English Gardens*. He served as mentor to Christopher Hussey (his successor at *Country Life*) and Lawrence Weaver, and brought forward the careers of photographers Charles Latham and A. E. Henson, as well as furniture experts Margaret Jourdain and Percy Macquoid. His impact on gardens was of equal importance. In the conclusion to her book, Gerrish writes:

Tipping can be seen as the man behind the ‘country living’ idea, which caused wealthy people to aspire to own a country house and take an interest in their gardens. ... Tipping [through his articles for *Country Life*] made practical gardening a respected leisure pursuit.

(p. 196)

Tipping bought and fixed up three houses in Monmouthshire: Matherne Palace, Mounton House and High Glanau Manor, all of which had elaborate gardens that clearly demonstrated his knack for gardening as well as his expertise as an architectural historian. In addition to his own homes, he advised on the gardens at Chequers, Wyndcliff Court and Dartington Hall, among others, and often collaborated with the architect Eric Francis. Of all his projects, the best preserved is High Glanau, which the author calls his *pièce de résistance*. According to Gerrish, it is his simplest and most unpretentious home, nestled into a rock-strewn clearing. Gone are the elaborate flowerbeds that dominated his earlier homes and in their place are exquisite woodland gardens extending for many acres. Completing the picture are double herbaceous borders (‘ribbon parterres’), a pergola and a small greenhouse. Tipping’s tenure at High Glanau was short,

from 1923 until his death in 1933. A confirmed bachelor with no heirs, Tipping ordered his papers to be destroyed on his death and gave his considerable fortune to his gardener.

Gerrish became interested in Tipping when she and her husband bought High Glanau and sought to restore the grounds. During the course of her research she found him 'an enigma and an eccentric, a tireless worker and also a great scholar with a superb historical mind' (p. 197). Like her subject, Gerrish proved a tireless researcher and ended up acquiring copies of all his books and articles from which she was able to glean the outlines of his career. She had an unexpected bonanza when a descendant of Tipping's gardener gave her a copy of one of Tipping's diaries detailing typically gruelling workdays visiting houses for *Country Life* articles and dining with the likes of Jekyll, Lutyens and Edward Hudson.<sup>1</sup>

Gerrish's book is impeccably researched and beautifully presented; as are the restored gardens at High Glanau, now open to the public. The author has done a superb job on presenting

her subject and placing him within the context of Edwardian life and British garden history. What really comes through in the book is that *Country Life* – both the magazine and its circle of writers – was essential to Tipping's very existence and would have been much less of a publication without his contributions. In those few moments when he was not engaged with *Country Life*, Tipping was absorbed in matters relating to his homes or to his commissions. The book is illustrated throughout with vintage *Country Life* photographs as well as sketches by Tipping's friend and close associate, G. H. Kitchin, in addition to recent photographs of some of his projects.

JUDITH B. TANKARD  
1452 Beacon Street, Waban, MA 02468, USA  
Email: Judith@tankard.net

#### REFERENCE

- <sup>1</sup> Helena Gerrish, 'A diary's secret', *Country Life* (12 October 2011).