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The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman, Judith B Tankard, 1996. Sagapress/Harry Abrams, 8 × 10½ inches, 250 pages including index, \$39.95

Ellen Shipman (1869-1950) was a landscape architect who built a considerable reputation during a career that included hundreds of projects in states as widespread as New York, Maine, Louisiana, and Washington. An obituary in the *New York Times* described her as one of the leading landscape architects of the United States.

Because of her collaboration with prominent architects and landscape architects, especially her mentor, Charles Platt, where her main function was softening severely geometric designs with well chosen plants, her reputation has suffered. Judith Tankard sets out to correct the false impression left by Warren Manning's description of Shipman as "one of the best, if not the very best, flower garden maker in America." And she has made a splendid job of it.

In a text that carefully deploys the facts of Shipman's life along with descriptions of her projects and a great many beautifully reproduced photographs and plans, we learn of her marriage to Louis Shipman and their life in the Cornish community of artists, their divorce and her professional life energized to some degree by the need to support three children.

Without partiality Tankard provides thorough and illuminating descriptions of Shipman's gardens. The influence of other designers, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and foreign travel is effectively introduced:

an early project of Shipman's, that for Samuel Salvage in 1926, employs small buildings inspired by Cotswold originals; what was then thought of as a wild garden created for Mrs Henry Greenough with exotic plants as well as natives; the garden for Edith Stern, whose enthusiasm for native plants entailed the digging of thousands of them from the Louisiana wilderness. Shipman's one project in the West, for the Merrills in Seattle, has unfortunately been reworked, but the story of it, to be found elsewhere in this issue of *Pacific Horticulture*, helps complete the picture of this talented woman's remarkable career. It is a handsome book, valuable not only to historians and garden designers, but also to every garden maker. The details and explanations offered by Tankard reveal much of the garden designer's art, and from them even the tyro may benefit.

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Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood, Judith B Tankard and Martin Wood, 1996. Sagapress, 10 × 7 inches, 214 pages including index, \$34.95

A Genius Undeclared: the Life, Works and Times of William John Caparne, Robin A Fenner, 1994. Robin A Fenner, 12 × 8¼ inches, 102 pages, £12.50

These books belong together because both are about gardeners who studied painting. They were also contemporaries—Jekyll, 1843-1932, Caparne, 1855-1940—but had little else in common. Jekyll, until the First World War at least, enjoyed a comfortable life and influential friends, and is now deified; Caparne persevered with landscape painting but was not successful and turned to flower painting and hybridizing irises. For plant breeding his name

is known to some irisarians, but few others.

Tankard and Wood introduce us to lesser known aspects of Jekyll's life—her finances, interest in photography, domestic architecture, and rural crafts—and take us through house and garden at Munstead Wood with a detailed account of her day and domestic arrangements. It is not a conventional biography, nor a book about gardening; it is an examination of character and accoutrements that forms a picture of Edwardian life and brings their subject to life.

Inflation during the First World War so reduced Jekyll's income that she was almost unable to pay her bills. This is where influential friends make a difference; the Garden Club of America made Jekyll a special award of \$10,000 "in token of appreciation of her work and friendship." This generous help came, it is thought, through the good offices of an American heiress who frequently visited Munstead Wood.

Tankard and Wood question the idea, circulated along with inflated figures for the number of gardeners she employed, that in maintaining her garden Jekyll may have been guilty of extravagance. If this were so, she would have been in company with her friend Ellen Willmott, whose gardens in Essex and France consumed her fortune almost completely. It is said that money is the best manure, and some gardeners' reputations seem to depend more on the speed with which dead plants are replaced than on horticultural acumen. But Jekyll's extravagance, if there were any, was not on the scale of Willmott's. At worst, she may have overpaid her few employees a little; she was benevolent rather than prodigal.

Income from her writing was probably not great. Although Jekyll's books were successful, buyers of them then were fewer than would be the case today. It seems possible, such is the popularity of gardening, and such the growth in her reputa-