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Address delivered at the semi-centennial anniversary  
of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

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# ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY,

SEPTEMBER 12, 1879.

BY

MARSHALL P. WILDER,

EX-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.



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## ADDRESS.

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MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*—Assembled as we are under the auspices of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and in its own temple, to commemorate the completion of its first half-century, it is natural to take a glance at the way over which we have travelled.

From the days when Peregrine White planted the first apple-tree, and Gov. Endicott the first pear-tree, within the limits of our State ; from the time when Gov. Winthrop planted his garden on Governor's Island, or Blackstone his orchard in Boston, — Massachusetts has been famous for her gardens. But the progress of horticulture was for a long time slow and feeble. It is eminently one of the arts of peace ; and we find, that, after the close of the Revolution, the first organized attempt in this country to advance the progress of agriculture (which includes horticulture) was made by the formation of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, which was soon followed by the formation of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture. In like manner, the close of the last war with England was followed, in 1818, by the organization of the first horticultural society in the country, — that of New York. The next society, that of Pennsylvania, was organized in November, 1827, and is therefore the oldest society in the country which has had a continued existence to the present day.

The progress and improvement of horticulture since the beginning of the present century had been more rapid than before ; and it was doubtless a perception of this fact, in connection with the belief that its advancement might be made still more rapid, and the example of other societies, which led to the formation of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The subject had been much discussed among lovers of horticulture ; and on the 24th of February, 1829, a bitterly cold day, when the streets were piled with snow, a meeting of sixteen gentlemen convened at the office of Zebedee Cook, jun., 7½ Congress Street, for the purpose of instituting a horticultural society. The Hon. John Lowell, who stood at the head of the horticulturists of the State, was chosen to preside ; and Mr. Cook was secretary. Besides these, there were present H. A. S. Dearborn, Samuel Downer, John B. Russell, Enoch Bartlett, Cheever Newhall, Robert Manning, John M. Ives, Andrews Breed, and Henry A. Breed. The names of the other five are unknown. On the 17th of March the constitution and by-laws, drawn up by Gen. Dearborn, were adopted, and officers were chosen. On the 12th of June it was “enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, that Zebedee Cook, jun., Robert L. Emmons, William Worthington, B. V. French, John B. Russell, J. R. Newell, Cheever Newhall, and Thomas G. Fessenden, their associates and successors, be, and they hereby are, incorporated under the name and by the description of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, for the purpose of encouraging and improving the science and practice of horticulture, and promoting the amelioration of the various species of trees, fruits, plants, and vegetables, and the introduction of new species and varieties.” Thus, like the morning sun, whose rays, sending forth their healthful and benign influences, light up the

landscape with crystal dews, floral gems, luscious fruits, and golden harvests, there arose a new era in the science of American horticulture, which has not only extended its influences all over our own continent, but has reached, enriched, beautified, and energized other portions of the world. Although not so early in its inception by more than a year as the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, it was the first *incorporated* horticultural society on this continent, with the exception of the New-York society before mentioned. Its first premium list was issued in June, 1829; while the first list of the Pennsylvania society was adopted in January, 1830.

Of the eleven persons who are known as having attended the meeting on the 24th of February, 1829, four — Messrs. Russell and Ives and the two Messrs. Breed — are still living; while Mr. Russell is the only survivor of the eight named in the charter.

From its first president down to the present time, the society has been fortunate in securing gentlemen to fill the chair, all of whom have been cultivators of the soil, and lovers of rural art. Dearborn, Cook, Vose, Walker, Cabot, Breck, and Stiekney have gone before us; but their works do follow them; while, thanks to a kind Providence! Hovey, Hyde, Strong, Parkman, Gray, and he who now addresses you, are still spared to labor in carrying out the beneficent designs of its noble founders. And permit me, without detracting from the enterprise and ability of other pioneers, to say that to Henry Alexander Scammel Dearborn, — the first president, whose name will ever be held in grateful remembrance, — more than to any other man, are we indebted for the prestige and popularity of the society, at home and abroad, in its early history. Others there are whose names will be gratefully remembered, and cherished as co-laborers and benefactors of the society, among whom Robert Manning of Salem, — the great

leader and reformer in American pomology, who during his lifetime collected nearly two thousand varieties of fruits, — Downer at Dorchester, ever alert on the search for new native fruits, Kenrick of Newton, the Winships at Brighton, John Prince, Enoch Bartlett, Elias Plinney, George W. Pratt, B. V. French, Aaron D. Weld, Aaron D. Williams, and David Haggerston, may be mentioned as pre-eminent.

The society immediately entered upon the work for which it was established, by opening a correspondence with leading European horticulturists, by laying the foundation of a library, and in every other way which the active mind of President Dearborn, who was foremost in every good work, could devise. And be it ever remembered that to this society the community is indebted for the foundation and consecration of Mount Auburn Cemetery, — the first rural cemetery in the country. This was combined with an Experimental Garden, some of whose products were shown at the exhibitions of the society. Although it was found expedient to relinquish the control of the cemetery to another corporation, its establishment has proved of the highest advantage to the society, in ways not anticipated when it was founded, which was but about two years from the incorporation of the society.

But the method which the society has ever found most advantageous for the promotion of its objects is the exhibition of the products of the garden in its various departments; and a glance at these exhibitions will be both appropriate and interesting.

The first exhibition of which we have any record was on the 20th of June, 1829, when there were about thirty varieties of roses on the tables. As the season advanced, the exhibitions increased in extent and beauty; that of August 1 surpassing, we are told, any preceding show. August 29, Samuel R. Johnson brought

Washington plums measuring six inches and a quarter in circumference, and weighing nearly three ounces each. The Annual Exhibition was confined to the fruits and flowers displayed on the table at the Exchange Coffee House, where the anniversary dinner was provided; but it is said "the show of fruits and flowers generally was probably never surpassed in New England." The Bloodgood and Urbaniste pears, with others once highly prized, but which have now been superseded, were shown for the first time. No prizes were awarded this year; but on the 15th of May, 1830, A. Aspinwall received the prize for the best six tulips; and George W. Pratt, the prize for the best six *Ranunculus Asiaticus*, — the first premiums ever awarded by the society. July 24, E. Phinney sent Moorpark apricots six inches in circumference, which received the premium. The Williams, Benoni, Porter, Hubbardston Nonsuch, and Gravenstein apples, made their appearance for the first time. A single specimen of the Duchesse d'Angoulême pear was produced by Samuel G. Perkins, and pronounced superior to the St. Michael. Fruit was at this time a more prominent object than flowers. The only flowers of which any considerable variety was exhibited were the geranium, rose, and chrysanthemum. Forced vegetables were shown by Mrs. Gore's gardener. Capt. Smith of Quincy presented "a kind of manure from Peru, called by the Spaniards *guano*."

The exhibitions of flowers, which had been largely of hardy herbaceous plants, began in 1831 to show a decided increase in green-house plants, such as camelias, *Musa coccinea*, *Hoya carnosa*, *Maranta zebrina*, &c. The Dearborn's Seedling pear was shown from the original tree. June 15, 1833, Messrs. Winships contributed a hundred and thirty varieties of roses.

The Annual Exhibition in 1834 was held in Faneuil

Hall, and was the first on the plan which has every year since been continued, and fulfilled the high expectations which had been formed. The *Gladiolus Natalensis*, or *psittacinus*, was shown by Samuel Sweetser, and the marrow squash by John M. Ives. March 7, 1835, the first Indian azaleas were presented by Thomas Mason of the Charlestown Vineyard. July 2, 1836, Marshall P. Wilder exhibited *Gladiolus floribundus*. The Belle Lucrative and Beurre Bosc pears were shown by Robert Manning at the Annual Exhibition. In 1837 the first orchid mentioned, *Oncidium flexuosum*, with ninety-seven expanded blooms, came from Marshall P. Wilder. The Large Yellow Bough apple, and the Rostiezer and Louise Bonne of Jersey pears, were shown for the first time. The *Phlox Drummondii* was first seen this year. June 9, 1838, W. Kenrick showed *Wistaria Consequana*, which had just been ascertained to be hardy. The *Verbena Tweediana* was extensively cultivated and greatly admired. The rhubarb and tomato were coming into general cultivation at this time. Hovey's Seedling strawberry was first shown June 29, 1839. The dahlia had been growing in popularity; and on the 23d of September, 1840, the first grand Dahlia Show commenced, and continued four days. Nearly three thousand blooms were displayed, besides asters and other flowers. August 11, 1841, *Lilium lancifolium* was shown by Marshall P. Wilder, and pronounced by the committee "a superb plant;" but its hardiness was not known until some years later.

In 1842, cultivators having learned from Mr. Haggerston's discovery, to which he was stimulated by a premium of one hundred dollars offered by the society, how to prevent the ravages of the rose-slug, the exhibition of roses was finer than ever. The Elizabeth pear was shown by R. Manning, and the Tyson by William

Oliver. In this year the anniversary of the society was celebrated by the first Triennial Festival. It was held at Concert Hall, which on this occasion presented a scene of unsurpassed beauty. The question of admitting ladies to the tables had been discussed; and objections were made on the ground, that, if we had the ladies, we could not have wine: but the better judgment prevailed, the wine being cast out, and women being kept in. And here I am reminded that when, in 1830, "women's rights" were incidentally discussed on a proposition to elect as honorary members Mrs. Gov. Gore, Mrs. Dix, and Mrs. Griffith of New Jersey, all known for their zeal in forwarding the objects of the society, some thought it of doubtful expediency, because a woman in the garden made great trouble as long ago as the days of Adam. Gen. Dearborn, however, silenced all cavillers, and the candidates were admitted; and now ladies are elected, not merely honorary, but immediate members; and not only are our discussions and other meetings graced by their presence, but their contributions to the exhibitions are among the most beautiful and attractive in the halls. The Bon Silene rose was first exhibited May 20, 1843. The Lawrence and Doyenné Boussock pears, and the Mother, Ladies' Sweet, and Northern Spy apples, were first brought before the society in the same year. August 24, 1844, sixteen dishes of Washington plums were shown by as many contributors. Some of the largest specimens averaged three ounces and one-eighth in weight. The next week there were seventy dishes of plums, in thirty varieties. The Beurre d'Anjou pear was shown by Marshall P. Wilder at the annual exhibition.

This brings us to an epoch in the history of the society, — the erection of the first horticultural hall, — which suggests a brief review of what may be called the first era in the history of the society. It was espe-

cially noted for zeal in the cultivation of fruit, and most of all of the pear. The leading cultivators sought to bring together in their collections all known varieties, to test their qualities and their adaptation to our climate. The fruit-growers of our day have but a faint idea of the vast amount of care, time, labor, and money, spent in making the collections from which has been obtained the information, now so easily accessible to all, as to the most desirable varieties for cultivation. And not only were the best varieties unknown, but there was much confusion and perplexity in the nomenclature of fruits. To clear up this confusion by careful comparison was another object in making large collections of fruit. This work, in its various branches, was so diligently begun and pursued during this first era of the society, as to form its most prominent feature. It was an era of collections.

The lovers of flowers were hardly less diligent in collecting every novelty in their branch of horticulture. The enthusiasm in the cultivation of the dahlia eclipsed even the love for the rose. Every new variety announced in European catalogues was imported, sometimes at enormous cost; and special shows were held for the display of the finest specimens. The number of varieties of roses had increased so that those who could remember when there were but from six to ten varieties, limited in their time of flowering to the month of June, could count them by hundreds; and some of them were in bloom nearly the whole year. Next in importance to the dahlia and the rose as a floral gem in the open air, came the hyacinth. The tulip was much more largely grown than it is now; and beds containing thousands of bulbs, and protected by houses built to screen them from the sun and bad weather, were shown in perfection. Among green-house plants, the collections were particularly rich in camellias. It was during this

era that ocean steam-navigation was established, giving a powerful impetus to horticulture by the facilities which it afforded for the interchange and concentration of the fruits and flowers of every climate, many of which found a place in the orchards and gardens of New England. And not only in New England, but in distant States, might be seen fruits and flowers whose existence could be traced to the influence of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

I have thus briefly summed up some of the principal events in the history of the first era of the society. Prosperous and progressive as it had been during its first fifteen years, we come now to an event which marks an epoch, and introduces a new era in its history,—the erection of the first horticultural hall, which was, so far as is known, the first building ever erected for the use of any horticultural society in the world.

The corner-stone was laid on the 14th of September, 1844, with appropriate services, in the presence of a large assembly, on the site of the old Latin schoolhouse, now covered by the east end of the Parker House. He who now addresses you performed the service of depositing the leaden casket of coins and documents, and pronouncing a brief address on the rise and progress of the society to that day. Of the fifteen members of the building committee, only Mr. C. M. Hovey and myself still live. The hall was dedicated on the 15th of May, 1845, with an address by Hon. George Lunt, and was formally opened to the public at the exhibition on the 31st of the same month. In the words of Mr. Hovey, in his address on laying the corner-stone of the present edifice in 1864, “From that time, the progress of the society has been more rapid, and the influence felt throughout the entire country. New life and fresh vitality were infused into the society. It had the sympathy, as it had the substantial aid, of the public. It

was appreciated as its founders intended it should be. Its objects seemed all at once to become apparent." The possession of a home of its own made it a permanent institution in the community. The increased taste for horticulture, which had led to the erection of a hall, was, in its turn, stimulated by the possession of this beautiful building. The amount of money appropriated for prizes—which was in 1829 only \$188, and had been gradually increased to \$460 in 1844—was in 1845 raised to \$1,200; and the exhibitions became so extensive, that it is difficult to select the objects most worthy of notice. Bouquets were exhibited in great profusion. There were on the 21st of June, 1845, no less than thirty-three, from eight contributors, and in a multiplicity of forms,—round and flat vase-bouquets, round and flat hand-bouquets, doubled-faced flat hand-bouquets, circular bouquets, &c. At the Annual Exhibition, prizes were offered for the best designs; and a floral temple, a Gothic monument, and a Chinese pagoda, each from fifteen to eighteen feet high, were exhibited, besides smaller designs, such as a harp, a plough, an eagle, and a Newfoundland dog, covered with pressed black hollyhocks and gray moss, and carrying a basket of flowers. The *Stephanotis floribunda*, "a very rare and elegant hot-house climber," was shown by J. M. Thorburn & Co. of New York.

The beginning of the next year (1846) was signalized by awards, of the value of fifty dollars each, for the production of the seedling camellias of Mr. Wilder, the Queen of the Prairies rose of Samuel Feast of Baltimore, and the Hovey's Seedling strawberry. The La Reine and Souvenir de Malmaison roses were shown. The exhibitions of fruit were stimulated by the offer of special prizes by John P. Cushing. In 1847 the Prospective Prizes were established, and medals were procured to be awarded as premiums. At this time, and for

some years previous, there was a general enthusiasm in regard to the hybridization of plants, particularly the camellia and dahlia, and also in regard to the introduction of new varieties. As an illustration of this enthusiasm, we may mention that two hundred and fifty dollars was paid for a plant of *Camellia Floyii*, and ten guineas for a plant of the Dahlia Hope. The displays of camellias were very extensive: on the 12th of February, 1848, Marshall P. Wilder exhibited thirty-three varieties; Hovey & Co., sixteen varieties; and J. L. L. F. Warren, twelve varieties. The new hall of the society having been found too small for the Annual Exhibition, it was held in Faneuil Hall. Marshall P. Wilder exhibited two hundred varieties of pears; Robert Manning, two hundred and sixty varieties of pears, and one hundred and eighteen of apples; John Fisk Allen, thirty-three varieties of foreign grapes; and Samuel W. Cole, one hundred varieties of potatoes. The first special Rose Show was held in June, 1849. The next year the Garden Committee was established. Hovey & Co. made the first of those beautiful shows of azaleas and rhododendrons which have been so much admired. John P. Cushing exhibited magnificent specimens of pears from walls and under glass. At the Annual Show the collection of one hundred and forty-one finely grown varieties of apples from B. V. French was an exhibition of itself. In 1851 the *Weigelia rosea* was introduced by Marshall P. Wilder, and the Champion of England pea by Azell Bowditch; the Jenny Lind strawberry was shown by the originator; John P. Cushing exhibited a collection of thirty-three varieties of strawberries; André Leroy of Angers, France, sent a collection of one hundred and sixteen varieties of pears, including the Doyenné du Comice, besides other fruit. In 1852 Messrs. Winship exhibited the *Dielytra spectabilis*. The Annual Exhibition was, in this and

the two succeeding years, held under a tent in the Public Garden or the Common, giving ample space for a grand display. The year 1853 was made memorable by the exhibition by John Fisk Allen, of that extraordinary plant, the *Victoria regia*. The Concord grape, and the Dana's Hovey and the Beurre Superfin pears, were first shown; and the first Prospective Prize was awarded to Hovey & Co for their seedling cherry. The interest in native plants revived under the extensive exhibitions of Dennis Murray and others. Ignatius Sargent sent several bunches of Black Hamburg grapes, weighing upwards of four pounds each, and one of seven pounds and a half. The first hybrid grape, originated by J. F. Allen, and bearing his name, was shown by him in 1854. From this time we may date the interest in the improvement of native grapes, which has resulted in adding so many new kinds to our catalogues. This year also was marked by the exhibition, from Marshall P. Wilder, of the *Cissus discolor*, one of the harbingers of the endless variety of ornamental-foliaged plants now so generally cultivated and admired. The American Pomological Society, in the formation of which our society had been primarily instrumental, met in Horticultural Hall; and the members contributed largely to the exhibition of fruits in the pavilion on the Common. The Music Hall, being completed the next year, commended itself as a most desirable place for the Annual Exhibition, which was held there for three successive years, and frequently since. In 1856 the *Clematis Jackmanni*, and other varieties, were shown by Edward S. Rand, jun. May 2, 1857, the *Deutzia gracilis* was shown by T. G. Whytal for the first time, though it had been introduced several years before. The Versaillaise currant was exhibited by W. C. Strong. Messrs. Graeff of New York sent to the Annual Exhibition the first Wardian cases. The society returned to

the old custom of an address at the Annual Show, which was delivered by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

The exhibitions through the season of 1858 were held monthly, instead of weekly, as before. Hovey & Co. exhibited at one time twenty-five varieties of summer pears, and, at another, one hundred and twenty-five varieties of verbenas. At the Annual Exhibition this year were seen the first indications of the taste for ferns and lycopods, the beautiful forms of which are now found in every green-house.

In 1859 the Wilson's Albany strawberry was shown; the committee remarking that "the specimens did not, on trial, commend themselves for their quality." August 20, Hovey & Co. displayed a hundred and thirty varieties of annuals, and, at the Annual Exhibition, the first extensive collection of variegated-leaved plants, and also of coniferous plants. Orchard-house culture was gradually becoming more general. This year was the last in the hall which had been the home of the society for fifteen years; the estate having been sold to Mr. Parker. The weekly shows were kept up at Amory Hall the next season with much interest. The hybrid perpetual roses showed the results of increased attention. June 30, Oliver Bennet exhibited fifty Crawford's Late peaches, some of which measured more than a foot in circumference. The Clapp's Favorite pear was shown for the first time. A special prize for Bartlett pears at the Annual Exhibition brought out fifty-five competitors. This year witnessed the culmination of the great collections of pears, Marshall P. Wilder and Hovey & Co., each exhibiting three hundred dishes,—a larger number than has since been shown. The dahlia was slowly going out of favor; but at the Annual Exhibition there were a "number of neat, pretty little baskets of flowers, showing in what dainty contrasts

flowers could be arranged, and what pretty effects could be produced by skilful fingers."

The season of 1861 was one of the most unfavorable ever known both for fruits and flowers; yet at the Rose Show bushels of flowers were taken away for want of room to show them. The Rogers's hybrid grapes were first shown. The *Eucharis Amazonica*, *Lapageria rosea*, and *Caladium argyrites*, were among the notabilities in plants. 1862 was as favorable for an abundance of fruits and flowers as the preceding year had been unpropitious, and was noted for the appearance of the *Lilium auratum*, and for the ninth session of the American Pomological Society. The next year came the *Coleus Verschaffelti*, and the first of those beautiful displays of seedling gladioli which now form so attractive a portion of our exhibitions. In 1864 the hybrid perpetual roses were recorded as very large and perfect. At the Annual Show there were eighteen or twenty baskets of flowers (some arranged with exquisite taste), a collection of twenty-five varieties of native grapes, and one of a hundred and two varieties of beans.

This closes what we have designated the second era in the history of the society. It will be seen, that, as respects the pear, the work of *collections* during this era culminated, and the work of *selection* had well progressed. It was during this period that two of our most valuable native pears, the Dana's Hovey and Clapp's Favorite, were originated by members of the society, and first made known through its exhibitions. A great number of varieties of strawberries had been tested, including all the European kinds of high repute, most of which had proved not to be adapted to this climate. We have noted the commencement of the excitement in regard to native grapes, and the advent of the Concord, the Allen's Hybrid, and other improved varieties, and the share of our society in the

establishment of the American Pomological Society, two of whose meetings and exhibitions were held under the auspices of the former in this era.

In the flower department we have noted the introduction of the deutzias, the weigelia, the dielytra, and the *Lilium auratum*. A period which includes the introduction of such beautiful and popular plants must be deemed a most important one; yet we might add the names of hundreds more only less conspicuous than these. Among green-house plants perhaps the most extraordinary acquisition was the *Victoria regia*; and, though not now cultivated here, such is not the case with the multitudes of variegated-leaved plants, the introduction of which took place at about the same time with the flowering of the *Victoria*, and the taste for which has been continually increasing. Among flowering plants we can only allude to the improvement in the azalea, the fuchsia, the gloxinia and other green-house plants. In the garden we notice the multiplication of beautiful roses, and especially the advent and improvement of the hybrid perpetual class. Next to the rose, the gladiolus showed most advance, but hardly more than that in hardy rhododendrons and azaleas, in tree and herbaceous pæonies, in the phlox, the astor, the petunia, and the hollyhock; while the taste for the dahlia — once next to the rose in popularity — was on the decline. Nor would we overlook the revival of interest in the exhibition of native plants. In new seedlings originated here, the greatest advance was shown in the gladiolus; but the phlox continued to be a favorite subject of improvement; and the hardy rhododendrons, Japan lilies, petunias, and many others on a smaller scale, were the subjects of successful experiments.

Closely connected with the cultivation of flowers is the growth of a better taste in regard to their arrangement

in bouquets, baskets, and other designs; for which we are largely indebted to the lady members of the society. The large designs which show the skill of the architect rather than the taste of the florist are justly banished from our halls. The establishment of the Committee on Gardens marks the progress, not only of improvement in the culture of fruit, flower, and vegetable gardens, but in the laying-out of ornamental and pleasure grounds with artistic effect. It was during this era that the Hunnewell Triennial Premiums were established by the generous patron of horticulture whose name they bear, to promote the application of science, skill, and taste to landscape-gardening.

In the kitchen-garden we have noticed the zeal of cultivators in testing large collections of potatoes, beans, squashes, and turnips, and the improved varieties introduced; while the specimens exhibited showed a marked improvement in cultivation. The tomato, in its change from a soft and wrinkled state to the smooth and solid varieties now exclusively grown, is a most striking example of improvement.

This era was especially noted for its brilliant festivals in Faneuil Hall, graced by large assemblages of ladies and gentlemen. Among those who thus met to do honor to the society were many of the most distinguished persons in our land, of whom we may remember Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, William H. Seward, Andrew Jackson Downing, Caleb Cushing, Robert C. Winthrop, Morton McMichael, and Madam Alexander Hamilton. These festivals gave great popularity to the society, and assisted in bringing to its treasury increased donations, the interest of which was to be distributed in prizes to promote the objects of the society. The mention of these generous gifts at once recalls to your minds the honored names of Appleton, Lowell, Lyman, Bradlee, Hunnewell, and French.

The twenty years of this era were years of prosperity to the society; and, though they include several of the most inauspicious seasons known since its foundation, the number of contributors to the shows was so large, that a contribution of a comparatively small portion of the products of each garden and green-house afforded, even in the most unfavorable years, an interesting and instructive exhibition. And if, in such a year, there was the appearance of retrogression, it was but temporary; and the return of a more genial season restored all that had been lost, and added much more.

And now we come to what I have termed the third or present era in our history.

The growth of the society, and its influence both at home and abroad, had been constantly increasing, so that the want of a larger and more commodious building was year by year more strongly felt. This need resulted in the purchase of the present site, and the erection of this beautiful structure, the corner-stone of which was laid on the 18th of August, 1864, the building being dedicated on the 16th of September, 1865. Appropriate addresses were delivered on both these occasions by President Charles M. Hovey, who, through all the stages of the project, had been its firm and constant friend. The erection of this building seemed to be the crowning glory in the history of the society; but few are aware of the difficulties encountered in bringing the plan to a successful issue. The incurring of a large debt was, in the minds of some of our best friends, of doubtful expediency; but, thanks to an indomitable and immutable friend, Charles O. Whitmore, this objection was overcome, and to him more than to any other man are we indebted for this temple of horticulture. Not only did he adhere with firmness and perseverance to the plan of the committee, until all its members signed the report in favor of erecting the new

hall; but he also, with Mr. Hunnewell and Mr. Cheney, presented the statues which adorn its walls.

In this third era we see the result and development — the flower and fruit — of the good seed sown through all the previous history of the society; a result so rich, that we can but glance at it: and indeed we have less need for detail here than in the earlier years, for it is within the recollection of even the younger members of the society, and, moreover, it will be found fully related in the history of the society, soon to be published.

In this era occurred the Rhododendron Show on the Common, the most successful horticultural exhibition ever held in Boston. Who that saw it does not still retain the remembrance of its surpassing beauty! And for those who saw it, as well as for those who had not that privilege, we have a memorial in the fund which accrued from it, and which was presented to the society by the generous friend, Mr. Hunnewell, who conceived and carried out the plan to encourage the cultivation of his favorite flower.

In this era, too, occurred the gift of ex-President Stickney, for the increase and benefit of the library, which has resulted in placing within reach of every member of the society the most valuable collection of books on horticulture and kindred subjects, to be found in this country, if, indeed, it can be equalled in the world. Nor must we omit in this connection the bequest of the valuable horticultural and botanical library by which that long-trying friend of the society, John Lewis Russell, who had served it so many years as professor of botany, testified his remembrance and regard.

Here, also, we may appropriately refer to the work of the society in collecting and disseminating horticultural information by the lectures and discussions inaugurated during this era, under the presidency of Mr. Strong, to

whom we are most indebted for the success attained; and by the publications of the society, which, though beginning with its foundation, have of late attained an importance, which, excepting the period from 1847 to 1852, they did not possess in any previous era. And this leads me to speak of the growth, in our country generally, of horticultural literature, which, at the organization of the society, could hardly be said to exist. In the formation of this literature the members of this society, and especially ex-President Hovey, to whose long series of volumes we point with pride, may claim to have had their full share.

To come more directly to gardening: the era which we speak of was noted for the development of carpet and ribbon gardening, which gave to our gardens a brilliancy and richness unknown before. This was rendered possible by the introduction of numbers of new varieties of pelargoniums, coleus, achyranthes, centaurea, and of other species before unknown, and at the same time stimulated the introduction and production of plants suited to the effects at which it aims. With it came sub-tropical gardening, imparting to our lawns and pleasure-grounds, by the use of palms, tree-ferns, agaves, musas, dracenas, caladiums, and similar plants, an air of refinement and distinction before unknown. It appears to me that the introduction of these and the multitude of ornamental-foliaged plants, both hardy and tender, which now enrich our gardens, is the most characteristic feature of the present era in horticulture. Our wealth in the rich forms of tropical foliage, and the skill of our cultivators, were revealed in the exhibitions of 1873, 1874, and 1875, when the spacious Music Hall appeared transformed into a tropical garden. The names of half the species which have been introduced would extend this address beyond all reasonable limits. The mention of *Bougainvillea*, *Cyanophyllum*, *Anthurium*, *Allamanda*,

Sanchezia, Dalechampia, Medinilla, Dracæna, Alocasia, Croton, Pandanus, Phormium, Phyllotænium, and Begonia, calls up at once the recollection of hundreds of others, rich in flower and foliage beyond any thing dreamed of when this society was formed. The same may be said of the curious and delicate forms of greenhouse ferns; yet these are rivalled by the species from our own woods, which have been during this era so thoroughly studied, and brought into cultivation. Hot-house orchids were hardly known here half a century ago; yet at almost every exhibition now they surprise and delight us by some new and wonderful form, or gorgeous color. In the out-door garden, the development of the hybrid perpetual roses, in their endless varieties of form and color, would alone have signalized this era; yet we have seen equal improvement in the Rhododendron, while the new Deutzias, Hydrangeas, Viburnums, the Azalea mollis, and the Aquilegias, are representatives of plants which are destined to find a place in every garden. That our cultivators have not merely introduced, but originated new plants, is witnessed by the magnificent Lilies of Mr. Hovey and Mr. Parkman, the Dracænas of Mr. Butler and Mr. Harris, the Pæonies of Mr. Richardson and Dr. Kirtland, the Carnations and Gladioli of Messrs. Hyde, Richards, Crafts, and others, and the numerous seedling Lilies, Coleus, Iris, Phloxes, Delphiniums, Pelargoniums, and other flowers almost weekly presented.

The extent of the cultivation and improvement of particular flowers is testified by the special exhibitions to which the Rose, the Rhododendron, the Pelargonium, the Indian Azalea, and the Chrysanthemum have given their names. The winter exhibitions, especially of roses, have of late grown in extent and beauty; the exhibitions and discussions having exerted a mutually beneficial effect.

It is to be noticed as another prominent characteristic of the horticulture of this era, that the enjoyment of flowers is not confined to those who cultivate them as luxuries of the green-house and conservatory. The yearly increasing market for flowers evidences a wide-spread taste for them in the community; while the multiplication of cheap glass structures for their production strikes every one who makes the slightest inquiry into the progress of horticulture. Equally striking is the fact that large quantities of forced roses, and other green-house flowers produced by the skill of our florists, are sent by them to distant parts of the country, whose natural advantages are far superior to ours. But we believe that the disadvantages under which we labor are more than counterbalanced by the stimulus which they have given to cultivators; for it is conceded that horticulture *as an art* is carried to higher perfection in Massachusetts than in any other part of our country.

“ But ever on the bleakest rock  
 We bid the brightest beacon glow,  
 And still upon the thorniest stock  
 The sweetest roses love to blow.

So, on our rude and wintry soil  
 We feed the kindling flame of art,  
 And steal the tropic's blushing spoil  
 To bloom on Nature's icy heart.”

In the fruit department we seem to have approached more nearly to the limit of improvement, and our cultivators are exacting in their requirements of a new candidate for a place in their gardens or orchards; yet we must not omit that extraordinary pear, the *Souvenir du Congrès*, the seedlings of Messrs. Clapp (particularly the fine variety named in memory of Frederick Clapp), the many seedlings by Dr. Shurtleff, Mr. Dana, and others, Mr. Fenno's Norfolk cherry; the new strawberries and

grapes originated by zealous cultivators, and the many raspberries, gooseberries, blackberries, and other small fruits introduced. The fame of the society has attracted from distant places collections of fruit to be submitted to the judgment of its committees and members, and we have had the satisfaction of examining the productions of orchards from Nova Scotia to Nebraska and California. By the exhibition and meeting of the American Pomological Society, held under the auspices of our society during the era of which we speak, and by the part taken in the pomological department of the Centennial Exposition, we may claim a share in the advancement of fruit-growing throughout the country. The advance and extension of fruit-culture are shown in the enormous and yearly increasing quantities sold in our markets, and not less is the improvement in the quality and varieties of vegetables. The exportation of fruit has also attained such proportions that I must not omit an allusion to it here, as largely due to the influence of this society.

But horticulture includes more than the finest fruits or flowers, or the neatest and most skilful cultivation. In its application to landscape-gardening it becomes a fine art. To use the words of Mr. Winthrop, "It is in its most comprehensive sense emphatically the Fine Art of common life. It is eminently a Republican Fine Art. It distributes its productions with equal hand to the rich and the poor. Its implements may be wielded by every arm, and its results appreciated by every eye. It decorates the dwelling of the humblest laborer with undoubted originals by the oldest masters, and places within his daily view fruit-pieces such as Van Huysum never painted, and landscapes such as Poussin could only copy." It was intended by the founders of the Garden and Cemetery at Mount Auburn that these grounds should ultimately offer an example of the best style of

landscape or picturesque gardening. This design has been realized not only in Mount Auburn and other cemeteries, but in such private grounds as those of Messrs. Hunnewell, Payson, Sargent, Gray, and Hayes, which as the finest specimens of art, with their beautiful lawns, and rare trees and plants, are among the strongest attractions either to our own residents, or to visitors from abroad.

And now, my friends, permit me in conclusion to say, that, among the various invitations which I have received to address my fellow-citizens, I have never been honored with one which I more readily accepted, or more highly appreciated, than the invitation to address you on this occasion, coming as it does from those with whom I have labored for so many years. Never have I more heartily joined with you than I do now in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of our society; and I am quite sure there is no one here who does not rejoice sincerely in this occasion.

I have summed up briefly, and as well as impaired health would admit, a sketch of the results of a half-century's work. To do justice to the subject would extend this address far beyond the limits of your patience; but I trust I have given you some idea of the work accomplished by this society. This is the harvest we have reaped. These are the fruits we have gathered. But many are the seeds which we have sown which have not yet germinated, and which will bless the world long after we have passed away from it. With many of us the sun is fast sinking behind the horizon of life; but the fruits of your labors will continue to enrich with golden hues and spicy odors the tables of posterity for ages after we have dropped, like the fruits of autumn, to rise no more.

One after another of us will pass away. Few of those present will attend the anniversary of this society at the

close of the half-century upon which we have entered ; but our society shall still live on and prosper. Others will rise up, and carry on the good work ; and as they come with fruits and flowers — the results of their labors — to adorn these halls, they will remember those who have gone before. Thus from generation to generation may this temple continue to stand, and honor the names of those who erected it.

Commemorating as we do by this celebration the completion of the first half-century of the existence of our society, it is natural to look forward to the future of its history. When we reflect upon what has already been accomplished, how from its small beginnings it has risen to its present usefulness and renown, who does not feel that its future is yet to be equally prosperous and glorious ?

The seed which has been sown,

“ Though it long lies buried in the dust,  
Shall not deceive our hope,”

but will continue to spring up for years to come. Much as has been accomplished, still greater results are in store for posterity ; and as time advances, still richer acquisitions in fruit and flower will gladden the eyes, and charm the senses ; and, as you and your posterity shall come up to these altars with your votive offerings, let all remember with gratitude those who laid the foundations of this society, and those who have so actively co-operated with us to advance the objects of our institution, and have brought it forward to its present prosperous condition. As the members from time to time congregate in these halls, think you not, that, if these portraits could speak from the canvas, they would bless you for your works ? Methinks they now speak to us, and rejoice with us in the good which this institution has bestowed on the world.

And now, remembering those who have gone before, let us extend a hearty welcome to those who are to succeed us.

Welcome to our homes, and the beautiful grounds which we have made and planted for your happiness! Welcome to our fruitful orchards, smiling gardens, and charming landscapes, which we shall leave to you! Welcome to these halls, whose walls have resounded so often with cordial greetings and friendly salutations; where thousands shall minister in the future at the altars of nature and of art, until perfection shall crown our tables, and gladden our sight, and we shall have exchanged the cultivation of the soil for the culture of the soul!

Welcome to its libraries and to all its privileges and pleasures! and when at last we shall relinquish our labors on earth, may we fall into the lap of mother-earth, like the ripened fruits of summer, then to be welcomed to those celestial fields, and to that richer inheritance in the better land where the flower shall never fade, the leaf never wither, the fruit never perish; to the rewards of a well-spent life on earth, that we may partake of the tree which bears immortal fruit,—its bloom on earth, its fruit in heaven.









