

**TRANSACTIONS OF THE  
MASSACHUSETTS  
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY;  
FOR THE YEAR 1878, PART I-II**

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**VARIOUS**

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# TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

## Massachusetts Horticultural Society,

FOR THE YEAR 1878.

PART I.



BOSTON :  
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1878.

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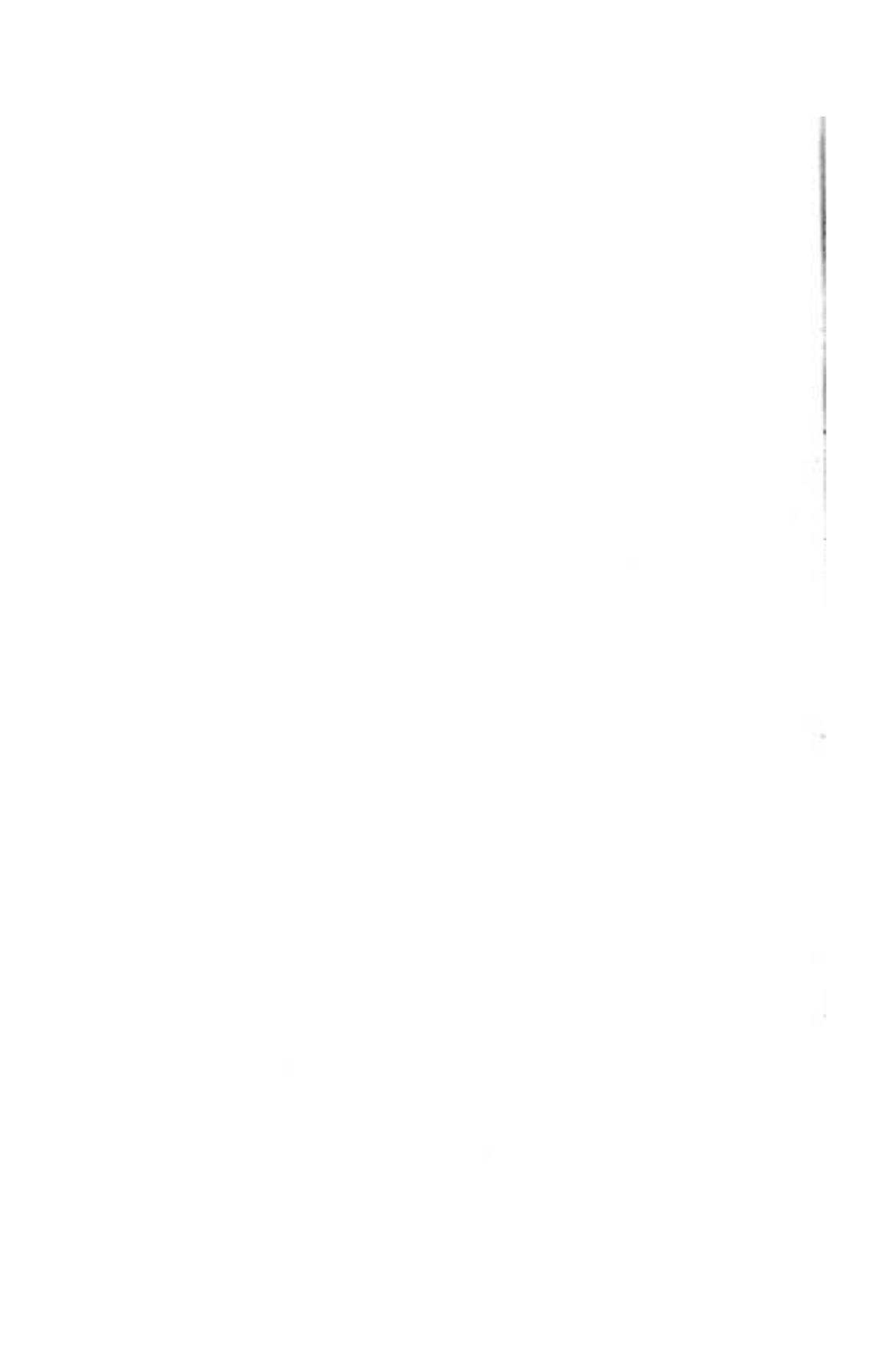
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HAPEL

1873.7

The Committee on Publication and Discussion take this opportunity to repeat what they have heretofore stated, that the Society is not to be held responsible for the certainty of the statements, or the correctness of the opinions expressed in the papers and discussions now or before published; but undertakes only to present these papers and discussions, or the substance of them, correctly. The award of a prize or gratuity for an Essay is not to be understood as implying that the Committee approve it in every particular, but only that they believe it calculated, *on the whole*, to promote the science or art of Horticulture.

WILLIAM C. STRONG, *Chairman*.





TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
**Massachusetts Horticultural Society.**

BUSINESS MEETING.

SATURDAY, January 5, 1878.

A duly notified stated meeting of the Society was holden at 11 o'clock, and was called to order by Francis Parkman, the retiring President, who reviewed the history of the Society during the three years of his administration, and introduced the President elect, William Gray, Jr., in the following address :

ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT FRANCIS PARKMAN.

*Ladies and Gentlemen :*

My official relations with you, as President of our Society, end today, though I am happy to feel that my personal relations with you will remain unaltered. During the term of my office, some changes and developments have taken place, of which it may be well to note the principal points. I spoke at our last annual meeting of the organic changes in the laws of the Society, so that it is needless to dwell on them now, farther than to observe that they have resulted in increased efficiency, harmony, and security, and have supplied what was before extremely defective, if not entirely wanting, — a means of redress to those who have grievances to complain of. In this consists one of the chief functions of the Executive Committee, as now constituted. It is its duty to give hearing to every complaint, and see that justice is done; yet every

person who may prefer to appeal directly to the Society itself, remains, as before, perfectly free to do so.

The character of our exhibitions may be taken as the best measure of our progress. In many respects they have distinctly improved. In the ornamental departments, the improvement has been, at some points, a very marked one. Such superb specimens of pot-grown plants as were seen last September in our Hall, were never seen there before. There has been great zeal, on the part of both amateur and professional cultivators, in the introduction of new and rare varieties. Much, too, has been done in the raising of seedlings. But nowhere has there been more improvement than in the show of roses, which has far surpassed that of former years, both in the perfection of single flowers, and in the specimens grown in pots. This last is a feature of our exhibitions, which till recently, could hardly be said to exist. What are known as "general displays" have held a less prominent place than formerly, and the Flower Committees have shown a just sense of the interests of high culture by rewarding quality rather than quantity.

The culture of fruits, and vegetables, being far better developed in this country than that of flowers, does not afford the same scope for improvement. In some particulars, the farthest progress seems to be reached already. In pears, for example, it would be hardly reasonable to expect any conspicuous improvement from year to year. In grapes, again, the case is different; and let us hope that our exhibitors will not rest content till they have equalled, at least under glass, the highest results of European culture.

In regard to all our exhibitions, and, in fact, all our proceedings, the great danger is of getting into ruts and staying there. We offer prizes to stimulate progress, and sometimes the purpose is very well answered. But no observing person can frequent our exhibitions without seeing that, in certain departments, there is a tiresome routine, week after week and year after year. He sees cards marked "First Prize," "Second Prize," "Gratuity," etc., placed against objects neither better nor different from those he had seen distinguished in the same way four or five years before. In these cases, and they are too numerous, the Society misses its mark and throws away the means that ought to be used to promote a true progress. He who presses onward should win the prize, and not he who follows his own tracks in a circle. If the committees will firmly withhold prizes unless there is positive merit in the object

exhibited, they will have more money left for those who deserve it, and will greatly help the Society to fulfil its mission. In cases where there has been no perceptible improvement for a long time, it might be well to suppress the prize altogether for a year or two.

The discussions on horticultural subjects have been of great service, and are, in my opinion, one of the best of the new features lately added to the Society. Much as they have done for us already, they are capable of doing far more. With us, as with all horticultural or agricultural clubs or societies, discussion is subject to the same evil that besets our exhibitions. It is apt to go round with the same persons, in the same groove, keeping all the time at about the same level of intelligence and knowledge, and so fail to gain its real object, which is to develop those habits of investigation and reflection, without which the horticulturist can never be master of his craft. Now I do not say that our discussions have been of this barren sort. On the contrary, I think that they have done real good. But, judging by former years—for during the last I have unfortunately been unable to attend them—they might be made to do a great deal more good. If members would more generally share in them, preparing themselves beforehand to do so by recalling what their own experience may have taught them about the subject announced, and then, by means of books and journals, comparing their own results with those reached by others, our discussions would become a powerful means of stimulating observation and thought.

Two other experiments have been made of late in connection with the discussions, and with similar objects. Prizes have been offered for Essays; and persons of known ability, not always members of the Society, have been invited to deliver lectures before it. Both experiments have had a good degree of success. Some of the lectures especially have been admirably suited to awaken interest and kindle a spirit of inquiry.

There has been great improvement in our printed Transactions, both in the quantity and quality of their contents, and in typographical and literary correctness.

The History of the Society, so long in preparation, is now substantially finished. It embodies a vast amount of information, and will be not only a minute record of our own history, but also an important contribution to that of American horticulture.

The Society has had its part in the financial depression of the