



Annual Report 1879-1880

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY:

SIR,

I have the honor to submit the following report upon the condition and progress of the Arnold Arboretum during the year ending August 31, 1880.

The permanent planting of the collections of living plants has again been delayed. It was expected that, at least, a portion of the collections in nursery could have been arranged during the year. The negotiations, however, with the city of Boston, referred to in my last Report, for a joint occupancy of the Arboretum by the University and the City, in connection with the system of public parks, are still pending. Public opinion now seems to strongly favor such an arrangement, but as it would, if carried into effect, modify the boundaries of the Arboretum, and considerably enlarge the area to be treated, it is not practicable to begin planting the collections until this arrangement is either finally adopted or rejected.

This delay is greatly to be regretted. It postpones the real work and usefulness of the Arboretum, which, in one direction, can only begin when it is arranged and opened to the public. Many of the trees in the nurseries have reached or are fast approaching a size which will preclude their successful removal into permanent positions; so that much of the earlier work of preparation must be recommenced unless a definite decision in regard to the future of the Arboretum is soon reached.

On the other hand, such a delay is not without its advantages. The success of the Arboretum in its scientific and ornamental aspects will largely depend upon the manner in which the trees are originally arranged; for, unlike other museums an Arboretum cannot be remodeled or enlarged from time to time to make room for new additions. Specimens once planted cannot be moved again. The first arrangement cannot be tentative: it must be final, and should not only place each tree in the position, within certain limits, best suited to it, but it must provide places in the general system for all probable additions.

Too much time can hardly be given to these preliminary studies; and if the Arboretum, as a collection of trees, has lost something in time, it has gained in another direction; and those whose duty it will be to solve the problems of the final arrangement will bring to this work larger experiences and the advantage of wider observation.

During the year, the work of enlarging and improving the nurseries has been continued; and several important additions have been made to the collections. A belt containing 1,005 ornamental trees of great variety has been planted along the southern boundary of the

Arboretum; and 550 young forest-trees, principally larch, have been planted in different parts of the permanent woodlands devoted to experimental silviculture.

The thinning of the original woodlands, with the view of their improvement by the gradual substitution of young and vigorous trees of the best varieties for old and dying ones, has been continued during the year, and has produced 139 cords of wood. During the year, 522 squares of excellent peat have been dug and stacked for future use.

The interchange of plants and seeds with other botanical and horticultural establishments has been continued during the year. There have been 3,151 plants and 409 packets of seeds distributed as follows: to all parts of the United States, 1,557 plants and 205 packets of seeds; to Great Britain, 899 plants and 48 packets of seeds; to the continent of Europe, 642 plants and 139 packets of seeds; to Japan, 1 packet of seeds; to India, 4 packets of seeds; to New Zealand and Australia, 5 packets of seeds.

There have been contributed during the year 3,081 plants and 524 packets of seeds from 31 donors.

The separation of the Arboretum from the Botanic Garden, and its distance from the collections at Cambridge, have made the establishment of a separate Herbarium and Museum essential to its scientific position. The Museum is intended to illustrate the economic properties of trees both native and exotic; and the Herbarium will contain a reference set of ligneous plants to aid the determination of the living collections. A library of works on Dendrology and kindred subjects is also essential to the proper working of the Arboretum, and has been commenced.

Work in these new departments has been pushed with great energy during the year, under the immediate direction of Mr. John Robinson of Salem, who, as Assistant, has given his whole time to it without compensation. Mr. Robinson's report will be found in the Appendix (IV.). Awaiting the provision of proper accommodations within the grounds of the Arboretum, these collections, which are already of some importance and interest, have been temporarily established in a large vacant house in Brookline lent for the purpose by Mr. Ignatius Sargent. A special feature of the collection is a very full set of American woods.

C. S. SARGENT, Director.
BROOKLINE, Sept. 1, 1880.