

dear friends, for the very cordial reception you have given me; Nothing could be more grateful to my feelings than these warm demonstrations of friendship and regard, coming as they do from those who have known me for many years, and are conversant with my many frailties and faults. Yes, the wheels of time move on and tell the story of our bygone days; and if I live to see the opening of another Sabbath morn I shall have passed the bounds of fourscore years. Most devoutly would I render thanks to the Giver of all good that he has prolonged my life, and that I am able to be here with you on this joyous occasion—here in the presence of my beloved pastor, who for thirty years has been my spiritual adviser—here with so many kind friends and co-labourers, with whom I have taken sweet counsel these many years—here to receive your friendly salutations, and, perhaps, for the last time, to enjoy the sweet melody of your voices and breathe in the still sweeter consolation which arises like incense from off the altar of sympathizing souls.

When we reflect upon our past labours, our thoughts naturally revert to the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, whose fiftieth Annual Exhibition has just closed, and for which you, Mr. President, and your good father have done so much. Well do I remember its first exhibition in the old Exchange Coffee House in this city. Well do I remember the scene, with its two small side-tables and one at the head of the hall. Well do I recollect the contribution of fruits when Robert Manning, the great pomologist of America, contributed only two baskets of fruit, and the subsequent growth of his enterprise, when he donated many hundred varieties, and afterward had in the Pomological Garden at Salem 2000 varieties of fruit trees. Thank God, his son, bearing his own name, is with us to-day. Well do I remember the dinner at which sixty gentlemen participated, and the speeches which succeeded it. The scene is before me now. There sat at the head of the table the eloquent Dearborn, there on his right and left sat his honour Lieutenant-Governor Thomas L. Winthrop (father of our beloved Robert C. Winthrop) and his honour the then mayor of the city, Harrison Gray Otis, and the accomplished statesman and orator, Daniel Webster of immortal fame. (Applause.) There, too, were Hon. John C. Gray, vice-president; Dr. Jacob Bigelow, corresponding secretary of the society, and John B. Russell, all of whom still survive, and here to-day, much to our joy, are the brothers Hovey, who were present on that occasion. Well do I remember the toast of General Dearborn—"Intelligence and industry, the only true promoters of the public good"—a sentiment which deserves to be written in letters of living gold. I thank you, Mr. President, for your kind allusion to me as one who has done something to promote the interests and welfare of my fellow men.

My friends, I have lived to see great progress and improvement in the agriculture and horticulture of our country, much of which may be primarily traced to the enterprise and labours of Massachusetts men. Suffice it to say, that from the day when Governor Endicott planted his pear tree at Salem, which still lives; from the day that Peregrine White planted his apple tree at Marshfield, Mass.; from the day when our society was formed, it has stood prominently before the world as a leader and patron of agricultural and horticultural science. How marvellous the progress in our own day! How grand the march of horticulture since the establishment of our own society! It is scarcely fifty years since the Massachusetts Horticultural Society was formed. Then there were only two horticultural and but few agricultural societies in our land; now they are counted by thousands, and are scattered over the continent, all working harmoniously for the promotion of these arts. Then there was scarcely a nursery of any note west, and only a few east of the Hudson River; now they are planted from one shore of our country to the other, and among them are many of the largest in the world. Then Mr. Hovey had not sown the seeds of his strawberry and other fruits, which have since immortalized his name, or commenced laying out his extensive grounds, and building his houses in Cambridge. Then I had not planted a seed of the camellia, the azalea, pear or grape, or even attempted the hybridization of a plant; now our American fruits and plants enrich the gardens and adorn the catalogues of foreign lands. Then we had no such splendid villas as those of Hunnewell, Parson, Gray, and others, with their broad lawns, extensive glass structures and magnificent plants, which are such an honour to our land. Then we had many old and fine homes and gardens such as Governor Gore's, Mr. Lyman's, Mr. Preble's, Mr. Cushing's, the Perkinses and others; but very little in the way of landscape gardening, or in new or rare plants or fruits. Then our exhibitions were confined to a few days of the year, and were for many years held in small rooms; now many of our