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THE LIBRARY

WHEN one thinks of the library of the Arnold Arboretum the question naturally arises what is it? How large is it? What sort of books does it contain, and who may use it? Is it open to the public?

First, what is it? It is essentially a botanical library rather than a horticultural one, although it contains many horticultural works. While it has been developed primarily as an adjunct to the study of woody plants, yet it is so catholic in its scope that books on many allied subjects are to be found in it. It was begun in 1873 when Professor C. S. Sargent, the Arboretum's first director, obtained a few standard works needed in planning the Arboretum and arranging its collections.

How large is it? It now includes approximately 43,000 bound volumes, 18,000 photographs, 12,000 pamphlets and several thousand nursery catalogues, thus ranking as one of the three or four largest and most important botanical libraries in America. In 1892 when the library had increased to six thousand volumes Professor Sargent presented it to Harvard University and until his death in 1927 when it numbered more than 37,000 volumes, it was almost entirely his contribution and that of a few of his friends. Since Professor Sargent's death, growth has of necessity been slower, partly because of limited funds. Fortunately through his foresightedness a large proportion of the older important and rare works were procured during his life time, a collection the value of which cannot be overestimated, for it could not be duplicated today, containing as it does thousands of out-of-print works. It is believed to be the largest dendrological library in the world.

Who may use it and how? It is not a circulating library, but primarily a reference collection for the use of the Arboretum staff; however, research workers and others interested in the study of botany are welcomed to the use of the books within the building. Inter-library loans are often made to other universities and to botanical institutions. When loans cannot be made, the library can and does give much help in other ways; it aids visiting students in looking up needed material, and upon request sends out lists of the best books on a certain subject,

verifies references, types short references when the inquirer cannot visit the library, and while there are no facilities for photostat work at the Arboretum, arranges to have it done at the standard price for this service.

The photographs, mounted, catalogued and filed in steel cabinets are also available for consultation. They embrace all the photographs taken by Mr. E. H. Wilson on his trips of exploration undertaken for the Arboretum in eastern Asia, Australasia, India and Africa, and many obtained in the botanical gardens visited by him. A very large number have been acquired by gift, by purchase, and by the later work of Mr. Wilson and other members of the staff. They include photographs of trees and shrubs in the Arboretum and of famous trees in New England, and are arranged in four groups: photographs of men prominent in the botanical and horticultural world, famous gardens, single specimens or groups of specimens, and views taken in the countries explored and in parts of our own country. Where negatives are in possession of the library prints may be made for purchase upon request.

The scope of the library. In the words of Professor Sargent, "Particular attention has been paid to books relating to dendrology, general descriptive botany, the cultivation of trees, the works of travelers in which appear descriptions of trees and of general features of vegetation, and in obtaining complete sets of the periodicals in all languages relating to botany, forestry and allied subjects." Special attention has also been given to acquiring books relating to the history and cultivation of trees and shrubs valued for their economic products, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, oranges and their allies, cinchona, olive, and the mulberry in its relation to silk, since it seemed highly desirable that an arboretum library should contain all possible books on woody plants. Works on paleobotany, plant pathology, physiology and entomology are also included.

The Arboretum takes pride in its comprehensive collections of floras, periodicals and monographs from nearly every nation of the world, more than thirty-five languages being represented. Here the student may find nearly every reference pertinent to his studies. The Russian literature is particularly extensive, probably equaled in America only in the library of the United States Department of Agriculture. The works on Chinese and Japanese botany have attracted students from China and Japan to study the flora of their own country, as in few places is there to be found so complete a collection. The books on economic botany have proved of distinct value to various commercial firms.

The Arboretum owns a nearly complete set of the botanical works of the celebrated Swedish botanist Linnaeus and is fortunate in possessing many of the original Linnaean dissertations which are usually rare items in reference libraries. It has also the "Viridarium Cliffortianum," believed to be the only copy in the United States, since the one in San Francisco was destroyed in the earthquake of 1906. For twenty-five years Professor Sargent sought to obtain this small book, which has, perhaps, more of human interest than intrinsic value. Linnaeus, whose "Species plantarum," 1753, revolutionized botanical nomenclature, and from which all botanical nomenclature of today dates, was sent to the University of Lund in 1727 to study medicine. Here his inclination for natural history was



PLATE VII

Title-page of Jacquin's "Selectarum stirpium americanarum historia" (cir. 1780).

favored by Professor Strobæus, and he passed three years, 1735-1738, in the house of George Clifort, a rich Dutch gentleman living between Leyden and Haarlem, who employed him to arrange his fine gardens and museum. It was out of a desire to express his gratitude to his benefactor that he honored his memory by a work entitled, "Hortus Clifortianus," of which the "Viridarium" is an abridgement.

The collection of Pre-Linnean books comprises more than 1600 volumes. These are the greatest bibliographical treasures in the library, twenty-six items falling into the group "Incunabula" (cradle books), printed before 1500 when printing was in its infancy. Of these "cradle books" the first acquired by the Arboretum was "Opus ruralium commodorum" by Piero Crescenzi, a book on agriculture; the date is unknown, but was probably soon after 1471. Written before the art of printing was developed, it was, because of its importance, one of the first to be put upon the press. Konrad von Megenberg, "Das pũch der natur," 1475, is our earliest and perhaps our most valuable work. A later edition of "Das pũch der natur," 1478; Apuleius Platonicus (or Barbarus), "Herbarium," 1484; Columella, "De cultura hortorum," 1480? and Columella, "Hortuli commentarium," 1488-90? are not known to be in any other library in this country.

Other incunabula include Barbaro, "Castigationes Plinii," 1492-93; Bartholomæus Anglicus, "De proprietatibus rerum," 1480 and 1491; "Libri de re rustica," n. d.; "Herbolarium seu de virtutibus herbarum," 1491; "Ortus sanitatus," 1490 or 1497, 1496 or 1487, and 1491; "Gart der gesundheit," 1485; Macer Floridus, "De viribus herbarum," date unknown; "Opera agricolationum," 1482 and 1496; Matthæus Sylvaticus, "Liber pandectarum medicine," cir. 1470 and 1480; Plinius Secundus, "Historia naturalis," 1483 and 1496; Theophrastus Eresios, "De historia plantarum," 148-?; Vincentius Bellocensis, "Speculum naturale," 2 vol. 1479?, and 3 vol. 1486?; and Lucretius, "De rerum natura," 1486.*

Many editions of these fifteenth century books were published in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it has been the practice of the library to obtain as many editions of them as possible. It has, therefore, eight editions of Macer Floridus, 1506-1588, with one of 1832; three of Columella's Husbandry, 1551-1745, with one of 1824; seven of Pliny's "Historia naturalis," 1507-1685, with one of 1855-57; sixteen of Theophrastus, 1529-1644, and later, and nine of Crescentius' "Opus," 1534-1745, with one 18—? Of Prospero Alpino there are ten titles and editions, 1592-1745; five editions of Francis Bacon's "Silva sylvarum," 1627-1670; seven of Bauhin's "Pinax theatri botanici," 1596-1671; nine of Bonnefon's "Jardinier françois," 1653-1684; seven of Van Oosten's "Nederlandse bloemhof," 1700-1749; twenty-one titles and editions of Richard Bradley on husbandry and gardening, 1716-1757; Brunfels' "Herbarum vivae eicones," of 1530 and 1532, and editions 1532 and 1536 of a second volume; numerous titles and editions by Charles Estienne, 1537-1622; fourteen works and editions by Olfert Dapper, 1668-1703; full collections of the works of

*A fuller description of the incunabula in the library is given in the Arboretum *Journal*, vol. iv. pp. 56-60. 1923.

Dioscorides, Mattioli, Ray, Evelyn's "Sylva," Miller's "Gardener's dictionary" and other gardening books; twenty-one editions of Dodoens' "Cruydeboeck" and other works, 1521-1644; twenty-five works and editions by Leonhard Fuchs' 1531-1572; nine of Herrera's "Obra de agricultura," 1513-1608, and 1819; eleven of Huerto, 1567-1616; sixteen of La Quintinye's "Instruction pour les jardins fruitiers," 1690-1756; eleven of Liger's "Jardinier fleuriste," 1706-1792; six of Tabernaemontanus' "Eicones plantarum," 1588-1731; Ptolemy's "Geographia," 1562; four editions of Manwood's "Treatise and discourse of the lawes of the forest," 1598, 1616, 1665, 1717, and Aristoteles' "Problemata quae ad stirpium genus & oleracea pertinent," 1539. A fine opportunity is thus afforded for the comparison of different issues.

Other books in this group of more than usual interest are Boym's "Flora sinensis," 1556, the first book on Chinese botany published in Europe; Bock's "Kreüterbüch," 1546; Hernandez, "Nova plantarum. . . mexicanorum historia," 1651, the first natural history of the New World; Blake's "Compleat gardener's practice," 1664; Gerard's "Herbal," 1597, containing a manuscript note dating from the time of Shakespeare; "Le grant herbier," cir. 1520; "The greate herball," 1561, and many others. Many of these books are curiously or beautifully bound, and very rare.

The two folios of Dioscorides' "Codex" (1905) in heavy board covers reproduce in facsimile the pages and plates of the famous "Codex" prepared in 512 A.D. for the Princess Anicia Juliana, daughter of the Emperor of the Eastern Empire, which is now preserved in the Hofbibliothek at Vienna. The original is the oldest known manuscript of a botanical work. It was written in the first century of the Christian era. For sixteen centuries this book was considered the highest medical and botanical authority, and was the precursor of modern treatises on botany. There are in the library fourteen editions of works by this Greek botanist.

The period immediately following the 15th century produced many books of special interest which also are to be found in the Arboretum library. Among these are Wagenheim's "Beschreibung einiger nordamerikanischen Holz und Buscharten," 1781, the first book on American trees by a German; Belon's "De arboribus coniferis," 1553, the first book on conifers; a copy of Humphrey Marshall's "Arbustrum americanum," 1785, the first book on American trees written by an American. The most valuable work of Jacquin, an Austrian botanist, is his "Selectarum stirpium americanarum historia," cir. 1780, with hand colored plates. But eighteen (according to some authorities twelve) copies of this work were issued and at the time the Arboretum copy was obtained it was the only one in this country; there are now copies in the library of the New York Botanical Garden and in the Congressional Library in Washington.

A large group of books on roses numbers among its items several of outstanding interest. The earliest work, now very rare, is "Collection of Roses from Nature," by Mary Lawrance, published in London in 1799. There are, with the frontispiece, ninety-one exquisite plates apparently colored by hand. The only other copy known to be in this country is in the New York Public Library. Little

is known of Miss Lawrance except that she was a teacher of drawing, but her book, the first entirely devoted to the rose, will remain always one of the most interesting. In 1802? appeared the second monograph on the rose, "Die Rosen" by K.G. Rössig, published in Leipzig and having fifty colored plates. The Arboretum copy was purchased at the Castlecraig sale in England. H. C. Andrews' "Roses," 2 vols. 1805-28, also with colored plates, is the third of these early monographs and is apparently rare. Two editions of Redouté's "Roses" and all other works known to have been illustrated by this famous artist are among the Arboretum's treasured possessions. A recent work on "the queen of flowers" is the beautiful two volume "Genus Rosa" by Ellen Willmott, with exquisite colored drawings by Alfred Parsons, 1914.

There are 132 shelves filled with works devoted to the study of special families and genera, 36 to economic botany, 21 to medical botany and several to cryptogamic botany.

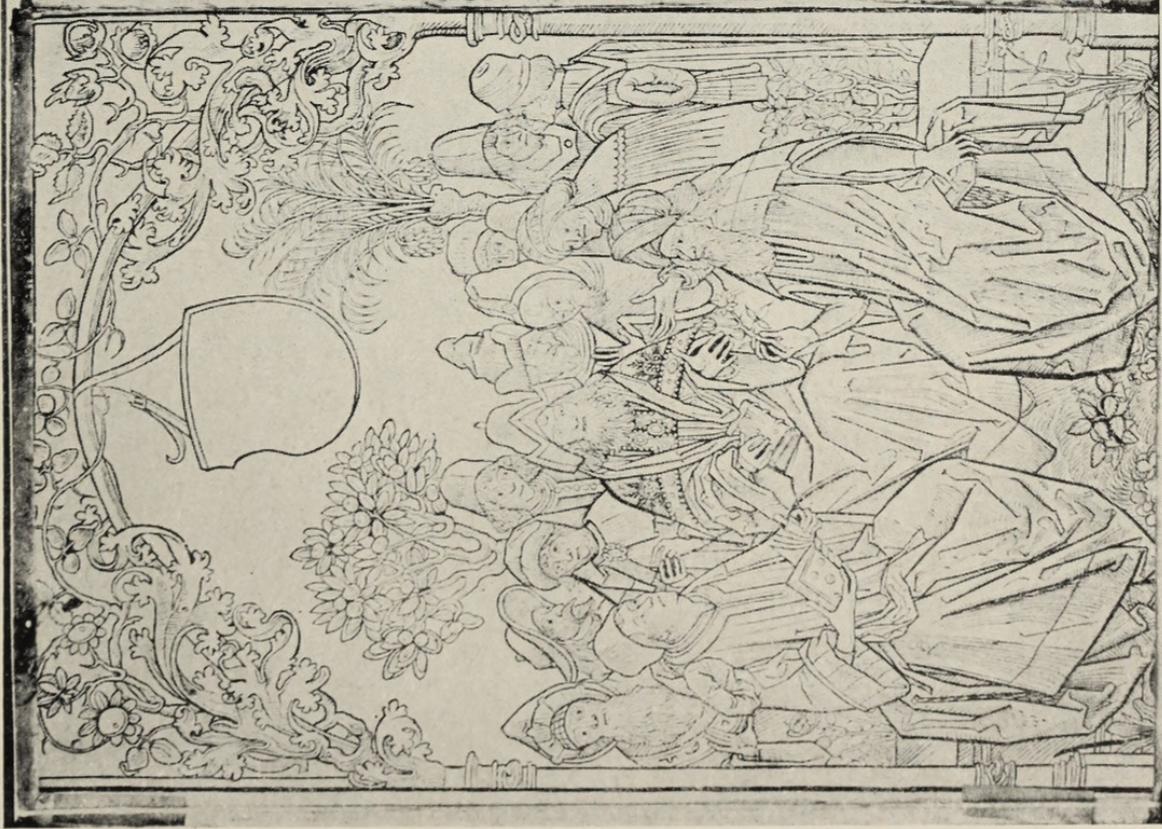
Of the hundreds of illustrated folios, many of them exceedingly rare and exquisitely illustrated, some have already been mentioned, a few others may be especially noted: Redouté, "Les Liliacees," 1802-16, and "Choix des plus belles fleurs," 1827; Millais' "Rhododendrons," in two series, 1917 and 1924; two editions of Lambert's "Genus Pinus," 1803-37 and 1828; Martius "Flora brasiliensis," 1840-96; Duhamel du Monceau, "Traité des arbres et arbustes," (1800-19); Bonelli, "Hortus romanus," 1772-93; Humboldt, Bonpland, and Kunth, "Nova genera et species plantarum," 1815-25; Sibthorp, "Flora graeca," 1806-40; Curtis, "Flora londinensis," 1777-98; Oeder, "Flora danica," 1761-83; Riocreux, [Collection of 87 original water color botanical drawings], bound in crushed Levant, beautifully tooled, no date; and Palisot de Beauvois' "Flore d'Oware et de Benin en Afrique," 1804-07-[21], excessively rare, the second volume being one of the scarcest botanical works in existence.

A work in seven volumes of very special interest is "The Trees of Great Britain and Ireland" with 419 plates, by H. J. Elwes and Augustine Henry. These volumes were the gift of Professor Sargent's English friends and are autographed by the donors. Each volume is bound in a different wood, the binding of volume one (beech) being taken from a portion of the foundation in Winchester Cathedral in the 13th century, which was removed when repairs were made some years ago. The 740 original drawings made by C. E. Faxon for Professor Sargent's "Silva of North America" are also replete with interest.

More than seven hundred colored plates of Chinese plants executed by native artists more than one hundred years ago form an interesting collection of original paintings. The colors are well preserved and the drawings have an oriental charm. Over six hundred of these plates were the gift of one man.* Some of the plates represent well known plants that have been introduced into this country but many of them are very rare.

One of the most important items in the library from the point of view of the working botanist is the tremendous collection of periodical literature from every country of the world, containing as it does tens of thousands of original papers

*For fuller account see the *Arboretum Journal*, Vol. 11. pp. 131-132. 1930.



ste vnd vil haße ich by mir selbst betrachte die widerstand
 wech des schäfers der natur wie eram anbequeme da bye
 med hat beschaffen vnd getretet mit seinen feuchenden
 sternen den er zu insulsen in alle das vnder dem hymel
 sit krafft vnd macht geben hat. Auch wie er hat nach
 die vier element beschaffen hat. Das feuer brennet vnd dricket die
 luft heß vnd feucht das wasser kalt vnd feucht das erdtich trocken
 vnd hart vngleich sein natur geben. Auch wie der seß groß meiste
 der natur darnach getretet mancherley natur vnd allerley geschle
 chter vñ zu löse den menschen vnder alle creature das edelst gemade
 hat vnd beschaffen hat. Darmit vrsach mir die widerstand ordnung die
 der schöpfer den selbstigen sein creaturen hat geben also das alles das
 vnder dem hymel wachen hat sein natur von vñ durch die stern ent
 pfer vnd kalt. Auch das ymne eym vngleich hat in den obgenel
 ten vier element entprunges wechler lebt oder frohet of sey ers ge
 liche getreut oder schier. sein vernünftiger die vier natur der elemente
 bringe felt feuchter vñ drickete. Vnd also zu vernemen ist die
 naturen vier natur auch vñ mischlichen byper vernicht oder ver
 mörget seyn in eymet maß vñ temperament bi queme da menschen
 leben vñ natur. In welcher maß proposition oder temperament die
 wechler mensch seet ist er frisch vñ gesund. So er alter tridt oder felt
 vñ dem temperament oder maß der vier natur das dan geschicht so
 die big gung wechler natur trumpt vñ ansey die felt zu dem phen oder wa
 dend die felt die hirt anker zu vnterdrucken. oder der mensch vof
 kalter feuchter vñ oder feuer feuchter oder die maß entree
 selte der mensch vñ norege in trageit vñ nekt der roe. Dyrach aber
 solliche eymelien brude der vier natur temperament. vñ wellhen
 der menschen gesundt vñ leben seet. sein vil vñit des hymels
 gung vñ voreigen insulsen vñ der menschen natur. dan der vñit
 stehende luft vnter vñit vñ voreigen. In vñit queme seß
 oder druck. Ober die queme aler mit in rechet maß aber der geno
 men. Fürwar als lacht ich die seken die bleiter vñ den darmit
 oder die sanckmer vñ mer als ich die erden vñ erliche felt alle die
 gung die eym vrsach sein abfals vñ temperament der vier natur
 vñ ein anfang des menschen frucht. Darmit so vñit seck
 menschen trucht vñ aler trucht fertel vñ fertelich sein angere
 klich ist er stner gesundt oder seckns gung seker. Do ich solliche se
 trachten wage sel mit auch vñ wie der schöpfer der natur der vñit vñ
 solliche frucht seker bar wider mit eim andern gnediglich ver
 seken hat. Das ist mit allerley geslede treuter dören vñ ander crea
 turen. dan er krafft vñ macht geben hat die oberkeit vier natur
 vñ drängen wachen vñ dämpfer. In hat brennet. Das

PLATE VIII



Tucker, Ethelyn Maria. 1937. "The Library." *Bulletin of popular information - Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University* 5(7), 33–40.

<https://doi.org/10.5962/p.250063>.

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