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HOW GARDENING PAYS:

LEISURE, LABOR AND LUXURY

IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRANSATLANTIC CULTURE

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the

American Studies Program

The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

---

by

Robin Maremant Veder

2000

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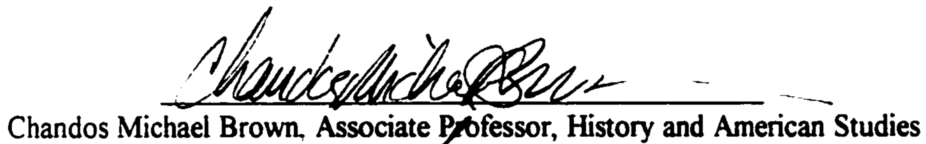
This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Robin Maremant Veder

Approved, October 2000



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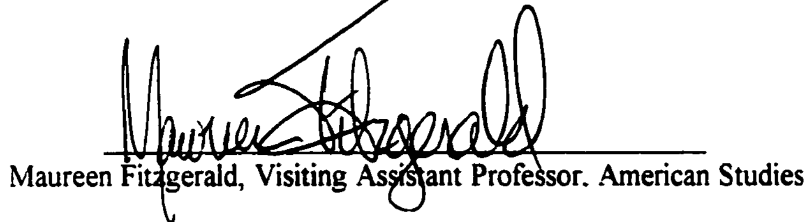

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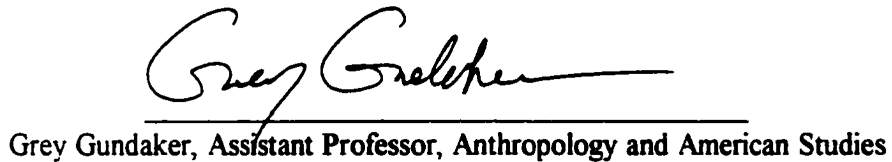

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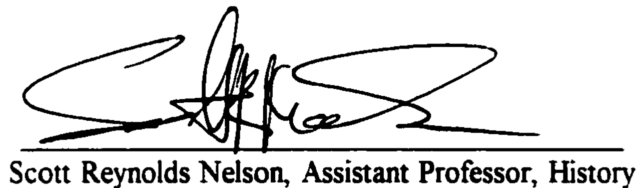

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ABSTRACT

"How Gardening Pays" is a case study of the formation and transmission of cultural practices and interpretations of flower-gardening as profitable leisure, idealized labor, and luxury consumption in nineteenth-century transatlantic culture. Mid-nineteenth-century cant about American flower-gardening as an anti-materialistic and morally improving occupation was premised upon the multiple functions of flower gardening in British working-class culture. Methodologically, this dissertation is unlike most intellectual histories of the ideological significance of nature in American culture, or formal studies of the physical attributes of horticultural history, because it demonstrates how ideologies and material practices were interrelated.

The first half of this dissertation focuses on early-nineteenth-century British working-class flower gardening for profitable leisure and labor reform. British urban Protestant weavers, particularly the militant silk-weavers of Spitalfields, London, practiced floristry as an integral and profitable part of workshop culture. When artisanal floristry declined with the onset of industrialization, agricultural and industrial capitalists reinterpreted and revived flower-gardening as a rational recreation that prevented labor riots and the formation of trade unions. Their efforts were often thwarted by surviving traditions of working-class floristry and the elite interest in flowers as fashionable luxuries.

These conflicting circumstances materially and ideologically shaped the development of commercial horticulture in the northeastern United States, thanks to the overwhelming number and influence of imported horticultural texts and immigrant horticulturists who promoted parlor gardening. When material practices crossed the boundaries of class, geography and gender, parlor gardening emerged as a bourgeois translation of both the techniques of artisan florists and the rhetoric of flower gardening as rational recreation.

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HOW GARDENING PAYS:

LEISURE, LABOR AND LUXURY

IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRANSATLANTIC CULTURE

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Introduction: Rethinking Flower Gardening: Leisure, Labor or Luxury?

Photographs, paintings, and graphic illustrations of nineteenth-century homes suggest the popularity of house plants for those who had the money and time to cultivate them. The effusive rhetoric used to describe house plants during this period was similar to that applied to suburbs, public parks, vacant lot gardens, and other forms of cultivated nature: gardening in the urban home united people of every class, provided a taste of the country, encouraged interest in natural history, fostered a pious appreciation for nature, cured illness and intemperance, taught habits of regularity, responsibility, fondness for dependents, commitment to home and family, frugality, etc. In short, gardening provided physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social health. Nature as cure-all.

In his essay on Frederick Law Olmsted's selection of trees for Golden Gate Park, Terence Young points out that analysis of specific elements within phenomena like urban parks should and "can be deciphered to reveal unexpected significance."[1] My aim as I began this study was in this spirit; I wanted to understand the details of urban indoor gardening in nineteenth-century America as a case study of how ideas about nature and the city were interpreted or recreated in lived experience. Tending a potted plant is gardening on the smallest possible scale. It was the closest to any interactive relationship with a form of nature that many people had, especially for people who lived in cities. Instead of assuming that urban flower gardening had

[1] Terence Young, "Trees, the Park and Moral Order: The Significance of Golden Gate Park's First Plantings," *Journal of Garden History* (July-Sept. 1994): 158, 168.

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essentially the same meanings as a walk in the park, I wanted to connect and compare the ephemeral, idealistic language about nature as urban panacea to concrete habits and specific justifications and even particular people.

The story that emerged reveals urban flower gardening as a transatlantic, cross-class, and cross-gender occupation. The practices and ideology of ornamental horticulture in and for domestic settings in the nineteenth-century northeastern United States originated in the intersecting British cultures of luxury flower production and consumption, and gardening as occupational reform of the working poor and idle rich. In Britain during the early 1800s, flower gardening was 1) a source of supplementary income for silk weavers, 2) a rational recreation technique for preventing trade unions, 3) a fashionable luxury. These circumstances combined into the growth of a commercial flower industry. Professional florists increased, and urban bourgeois women provided a market niche. Rational reformers, who emphasized the Romantic elements of gardening in order to camouflage its disciplinary intent, unwittingly underwrote this commercial exchange.

By examining the multiple perspectives of participants and observers, this case study demonstrates how specific material practices and related interpretations of gardening's value developed in Britain and later influenced American culture. British publications and immigrant gardeners were essential to the growth of commercial horticulture and the dispersion of British influence in the northeastern U.S. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, parlor gardening emerged as a rational recreation, refigured as health reform, for bourgeois women. As consumers of horticultural products, these "ladies of leisure" replicated practices from British working-class flower gardening with modifications that virtually erased the productive

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elements of the occupation. Instead, parlor gardeners often became dependent upon the same commercial suppliers that made gardening seem like productive leisure instead of idle luxury or manual labor.

The economic values associated with flower gardening were a problematic attribute throughout the situations that I describe. In order to reconcile class-based motives and conflicting measures of value, a rhetoric of urban flower-gardening as morally productive leisure and an ideal, anti-materialistic kind of labor emerged. One consequence was the urban panacea claim that so mystified me. Another result has been that historians interested in pastoral constructions of labor have never given flower gardening serious consideration; it seems benign, a simple nostalgia for rural life, or a "natural" love of nature. Understanding how gardening paid—practically and symbolically— opens a more complex mode of evaluating the instrumental as well as metaphoric uses of nature in transatlantic urban culture.

The meaning of gardening as an activity is mutable. The experience is described as physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually engaging. People do it for pleasure and for profit. It may be an act of frugality or conspicuous consumption. It can be solitary or communal. Its tasks require regularity and flexibility. The result may be ornamental and useful. While all of these meanings are possible, this study does not address all of them. Because of the long-standing false opposition of nature appreciation and materialism, my concentration on the latter may be perceived as a disputation of the former. I do not intend to imply that gardeners of all classes, amateurs and professionals, did not find genuine pleasure in nature, whatever form their interaction took. Instead, I show how other documentable material and social forces contributed to the creation of specific modes and interpretations of gardening as

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profitable leisure, ideal labor, and idle luxury. It is only because it seemed so peculiar to me that late-nineteenth-century American window gardening manuals for urban bourgeois women should be making comparisons between the gardening skills of ladies and cottagers that I came to question the evolution of this particular aspect of gardening.

***Garden* is a verb and a noun**

Plants are unlike most commodities because they are living organic objects that require maintenance. If owned by a skilled gardener, plants may last several years, and be reproduced through seed cultivation or propagation of cuttings. Alternately, consumers may repeatedly buy plants only in their prime condition, and subsequently ignore them, allowing the plants to perish quickly. When plants are sold in dormant form, as seeds, bulbs, corms, or tubers, the outcome can be estimated but not guaranteed. This range of possibility also means that varieties can be invented and become extinct, thus creating diversity in the range of possible goods and their pricing in response to supply and demand.

Whether paid or voluntary, gardening is skilled labor that combines mental and manual tasks. It is not difficult to recognize the difference between a healthy blooming plant and one that is dead, but diagnosing a plant's needs can require extensive knowledge and skill. The condition of a plant is a direct measure of its caretaker's knowledge, skill, and means. Consequently, the work of gardening is inseparable from its products, whether that of an individual plant or the maintenance of an entire garden. Money can buy skilled labor, but money can't buy skill. It must not be forgotten that garden is both a verb and a noun; gardening requires an interactive relationship with

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organic objects.

Terminology

The term *horticulturist* is used in this study to describe anyone who was significantly involved in the cultivation of plants for ornamental use, including nursery and seed growers, gardeners, and florists. Nurseries and seedhouses were always business enterprises that produced goods to be sold on location, or by mail, agents or distributors. In the early nineteenth century, gardeners and florists could be amateur or professional horticulturists. Professional gardeners sometimes designed and installed gardens, but it was the job of maintaining plants regardless of setting, that defined the role of the gardener.

Floristry is a sub-group of floriculture that will be of particular concern in this study. *Floriculture* may be used to describe the full range of flower gardening within the broader category of ornamental horticulture. *Floristry* is the cultivation of "florists' flowers" by a specialist who experiments with hybridizing, the artificial mixing of species to create cultivars: cultivated varieties. Over time, the narrow category of florists' flowers expanded from fewer than ten species to include others that were similarly altered through hybridization. With the growth of commercial floristry, *florist* came to describe one who makes a business of selling cut flowers and fancy potted plants.

Winter gardening, *window gardening*, *parlor gardening*, and *indoor gardening* are overlapping terms that were used in the nineteenth century in reference to what are now called house plants. It was the enjoyment and maintenance of plants in the home that constituted the activity of gardening in nineteenth-century parlance; a garden

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didn't have to be an outdoor space. *House* formerly referred to greenhouse plants, with *plants for rooms* used to designate potted plants for indoor living spaces. I have here used the term *domestic horticulture* to encompass the use of cut flowers, potted flowers and potted ornamental foliage plants inside human living spaces.

Nature is an extremely problematic term. Any form of the garden is automatically artificial, if natural is defined as that which is both organic and unmodified by humans. House plants may have reminded people of the country, but they were entirely urban objects. Having a house plant was not analogous to picking up a wild animal and bringing it home as a pet. Most of the plants cultivated in the circumstances I describe were sterile cultivars or "exotic" imports from South America, Australia, and Africa. Keeping one of these plants was like breeding a pet show bird until it fit a morphological ideal that physiologically made it impossible for the animal to survive independent of human care.[2] In the nineteenth century, plants and flowers in urban homes were objects that had been divorced from their organic origins, making their status as *natural* objects inherently questionable. When the term *nature* is used here, it should be understood that I am using it to describe those things, places, or conditions that have been culturally defined as natural, rather than indicating nature or the natural as an undisputed essence.

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[2] For explorations of plants as pets, see Marc Treib, "Power Plays: The Garden as Pet," in Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester, Jr., eds., *The Meaning of Gardens: idea, place and action* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984). The example of the show bird unable to feed itself comes from Katherine C. Grier, "'The Beautiful Objects in their Care': Middle-Class Masculinity and the Pigeon Fancy, 1850-1910," American Studies Association Conference, Washington, D.C. (1 Nov. 1997); Grier's conference paper was part of her forthcoming volume on pets in the nineteenth-century middle-class home.

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Methodology

The perishability of plants and of gardens as places creates a dilemma for the historian who seeks physical evidence. The potted plant leaves no archaeological remains. Some pots, plant stands, and related objects survive from the later nineteenth century, and these I have studied for evidence of intention and use. After this, one must turn to the written and visual record where it becomes difficult to distinguish intention from action and inherited ideology from individual faith. However, published discourse on gardening, particularly the exchanges found in horticultural periodicals, are rich sources for charting the introduction, repetition, and normalization of ideologically inflected beliefs about gardening. Consequently, most of my primary materials are published texts. In order to interpret these sources, I have cross-referenced garden literature with other materials from the histories of textiles, agriculture, industrialization, urbanization, medicine, aesthetics, decorative arts, business, science, and immigration.

This combination of sources has resulted in surprising verifications of that which seemed purely mythological, like that the preindustrial silk weavers were expert florists, and conversely, the revelation that behind the domestic ideology of bourgeois women as flower lovers, in practice many were indifferent at best. With these findings, I then returned to question the development and transmission of ideas about gardening from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries. In the end, the product offered here is ultimately a study of interrelated cultural interpretations of the material experience of gardening that concentrates on the 1820s through the 1880s.

I organized my findings by isolating habits and beliefs into moments of interaction where human conditions and social relationships change because of the

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conflict or confluence of other habits and beliefs. I am interested in how people understand their own activities, and how they interpret, and then replicate, alter or avoid the activities of others. Habitual behaviors can take on new meanings, just as old meanings are applied to new habits. Continuity of material habit and belief systems are equally important to this process. The study of ritualized behavior has been central to the work of anthropologists and pragmatic social psychologists. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz and sociologist Erving Goffman both analyzed ritual as performance in ways that had influence far beyond each of their respective fields.[3] My use of habit and ritual as organizing tools for the material presented here was influenced by these fields, but should also be credited to my personal connections to the worlds of theater and occupational therapy. The former makes insistent the question of how gestures have both functional and symbolic content. The latter--a field intellectually shaped by both rational recreation and pragmatism--has made me sensitive to the importance of assessing sensory experience, and to the idea that habit can be physically and mentally both beneficial and detrimental to a person's survival under difficult circumstances.

Methodologically and historiographically, this study owes much to British cultural studies and to the Annales school of historical study which focuses on social history, the analysis of everyday life and social relations as they relate to economic conditions. Implicit in these traditions is the critique of industrial capitalism's

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[3] Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus* 101 (winter 1972): 1-37; Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956). Both are cited as influences for Rhys Isaac, "Ethnographic Method in History: An Action Approach," *Historical Methods* 13 (1980): 43-61.

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objectification of social relations. Unlike the traditional history of famous events and people, social history focuses on the economic underclass and forms of popular culture. Lead by E. P. Thompson, historian of the English working class, and Robert W. Malcolmson and Peter Bailey, historians of working-class leisure, the study of working-class life has increased substantially since the 1960s.[4]

Material life and consumerism are two approaches that evolved from cultural studies, and that are also relevant to this study. Fernand Braudel defined "material life" as the basic routines and conditions of everyday life. Since Braudel's formulation in the mid-1970s, studies of material life have multiplied. Similarly, once Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb posited a consumer revolution, defined by demand, as the necessary counterpart to the late-eighteenth-century industrial revolution, studies of consumer behavior and the objects of consumption increased. These studies include themes of social emulation of the rich by the middle class, and the middle class by the poor, but also evidence of consumer resistance to dominant culture by retaining or subverting traditions. Anthropology has helped to temper the tendency of consumer studies to reduce everything to its commodity value, but some anthropological approaches like structuralism have also invited reduction of complex

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[4]E. P. (Edward Palmer) Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964); Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York: The New Press, 1991). On leisure studies, see Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (1978; New York: Methuen & Co., 1987 paperback edition); Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: c. 1780 - c. 1880* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); *Leisure Sciences* 19 (1997): 239-89.

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and changing patterns into binary symbolic systems.[5]

The application of semiotics, the study of signs, to material culture has sometimes resulted in an unfortunately inflexible interpretation of symbolic content, but this need not be so. Charles Sanders Peirce and Roland Barthes both provide the apparatus for understanding the mutability of meaning. In Ferdinand de Saussure's original formulation, the signified is an idea or physical entity, let's say tulip, and the signifier, the arbitrary combination of letters and sounds into the word *tulip*, are united as a sign. Barthes added that each sign may be united with another signified object or idea that is selected according to the interpreter's knowledge of cultural codes, in turn

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[5] John Storey, An *Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 2nd ed. (Athens, Ga.: The University of Georgia Press, 1998); Fernand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1600*, trans. Miriam Kochan (New York: Harper and Row, 1973). On American topics, see James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977); Robert Blair St. George, ed., *Material Life in America, 1600-1800* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988); Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). On consumerism, see Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1982); Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville and London: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994); Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); Dick Hebdige, *Subculture, the Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979); Lizabeth Cohen, "Embellishing a Life of Labor" *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, eds. Dell Upton and John Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 261-78. On anthropology and consumerism, see Henry Glassie, "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifact's Place in American Studies, *Prospects* 3 (1977): 1-49; Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: commodities and the politics of value," and Igor Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process," in Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-91.

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creating a new sign which he called myth. In *Mythologies*, Barthes offers "passionified roses" as an example of sign raised to the level of myth when the two signs of passion and rose are united in the gift of roses to signify passion. While *Mythologies* inspired other historians to explore semiotic interpretations of material culture, Barthes' predecessor, C. S. Peirce, actually provided a more effective model. Peirce had freed semiotics from linguistics, and stressed the relationship between representamen (roughly equivalent to Saussure's sign) and interpretant which is the projection of meaning by the interpreter. As the interpretant changes, so too can the representamen. Consequently meaning accrues and erodes.[9]

I have introduced here more theory than will explicitly appear in the pages to come. It is relevant, however, in order to position my approach in this study as one which blends several traditions: anthropology, pragmatic social psychology, social history, consumerism, and semiotics. I identify with the relativist end of this spectrum, for I believe that meaning is socially constructed in context, by which I mean the associated participants, circumstances and related objects and ideas. Within each setting, experience is categorized by preexisting multiple frames of interpretation. When experience and its interpretive frame are at odds, something has to give. Sensory experience contributes to cognitive reframing or practical recontextualizing.

Historiography

This dissertation draws upon secondary sources from many fields, so in each

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[9] Robert E. Innis, ed., *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 96-115; Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers, trans. (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972), 113.

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chapter I will review the evidence and arguments presented by previous historians as they support or differ from my own. As a whole, the contribution of my project is best defined as an effort to dismantle the myth of anti-materialism that was applied to popular forms of urban gardening in nineteenth-century Britain and the United States. The importance of nature as an "escape" from the problems of urban and industrial life has been widely studied through cultural representations in literature and art. There has also been a great deal of work on the creation, preservation, and use of natural environments. In these works, the activity of gardening as something that demonstrates conflicts between idealized pastoral representations and specific material conditions is not addressed except in the context of agricultural labor. The data offered here provides new insight into nineteenth-century interpretations of gardening as ideal labor and profitable leisure, flowers as luxury commodities, and the British influence on American horticulture.

American ornamental gardening has been previously interpreted as a manifestation of American pastoralism and agrarian republicanism. Both are ideas about the relationship between city and country, in which the latter is idealized. The pastoral is an artistic device, used in painting and literature, to idealize the countryside as a place of peace, plenty, and pleasure, in comparison to the city as a place of competition, corruption, want, and toil. Agrarian republicanism, Thomas Jefferson's vision of a country of independent land-owning farmers, was a political application of pastoralism to the American economy.

In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams identifies shifting interpretations of country and city in English literature as "identifying positions" and "structures of feeling" that respond to the development of agrarian and industrial

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capitalism. The "pastoral" literary convention has used images of the country as a Golden Age of laborless prosperity that is firmly in the past, in the process of erosion, or holds the promise of a future Utopia. In each of these situations, social relationships are imagined as those of a peaceful and knowable community, whether the "natural order" of noblesse oblige between lord and peasant, or a republic of small-holders, or equally landless sharers in commonly held lands.[7]

Erwin Panofsky's "Et in Arcadia Ego" identified conventions of representing the pastoral in visual imagery as essentially elegiac, a melancholic reflection on paradise lost. It has only been in the last twenty years that art historians have looked more closely at pastoral images as conservative representations of social relations. In *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, John Barrell revealed the erasure of rural labor in pastoral English landscape painting. Art historians Sarah Burns and Alan Wallach have questioned the fictions implicit in nineteenth-century landscape painting and rural genre scenes that were executed in the United States during periods of rural poverty, environmental destruction, industrial development, and class strife.[8]

In *The Machine in the Garden*, Leo Marx proposed the realization of the pastoral as a central goal in the history of American national identity. Marx labeled the

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[7] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[8] Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1953); John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1989); Alan Wallach, "Thomas Cole: Landscape and the Course of American Empire," in William H. Truettner and Alan Wallach, eds., *Thomas Cole: Landscape into History* (New Haven: Yale University Press and Washington, D. C.: National Museum of American Art, 1994), 23-111.

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perception that land in America was an unlimited provision for human consumption as the "progressive" mentality that also favors industrial growth whereas the "primitivist" approach understands the country's wilderness as a place and metaphor for political freedom. Marx formulated two versions of the pastoral in American culture: a simplistic, popular and sentimental dichotomy of the immoral city and restorative countryside, or a "complex" dialectical "middle ground" that achieves harmony between and because of the opposition of wilderness and civilization. Agrarian republicanism and gardening are both relegated to the popular and sentimental category of pastoralism.

Marx's complex pastoralism has been very influential for studies of the relationship of naturalistic landscapes to urban and industrial development. As Thomas Bender explains in an essay on the Mount Auburn "rural cemetery" in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the appreciation of a landscaped park as nature was in part dependent upon its proximity to the city. Landscaped urban parks, rural cemeteries, and early Romantic suburbs all provided a pastoral counterpoint to the noise, pollution, and crowding of the urban environment. All borrowed from the English picturesque landscape design aesthetics that mimicked pastoral imagery. These places have been studied at length by Blanche Linden-Ward, David Schuyler, John Stilgoe,

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and others.[9]

Within this tradition of interpretation, gardening is seen as a pastoral escape from industrial and urban vices, a return or escape to nature, to the idealized rural, preindustrial life of Jefferson's independent yeoman. It is also linked to the application of other rational leisure activities as a redemptive solution for middle class materialism or urban moral decay. Luxury consumption without productive labor, a result of urban and industrial development, produced some moral discomfort, leading the rich and middle classes to valorize manual labor. Manual hobbies like gardening and outmoded artisanal crafts emerged as a moral antidote that would simultaneously reinforce middle-class identity because the product of the hobby was ornamental or functional, but not commercial.[10] Gardening seemed to ease physical discomfort with the urban environment, and provide moral absolution. Similarly, gardening reinserted morally productive value into bourgeois female home life. When gardening is a reform activity for the urban working-classes, it is seen as an extension of industrial labor

[9] Thomas Bender, "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement: Urban Travail and the Appeal of Nature," *New England Quarterly* 47 (1974): 196-211; Blanche Linden-Ward, *Silent City on a Hill: Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989); John Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988); David Schuyler, "The Evolution of the Anglo-American Rural Cemetery: Landscape Architecture as Social and Cultural History," *Journal of Garden History* 4 (July-Sept. 1984): 291-304; Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1987); Lee Hall, *Olmsted's America: An "Unpractical" Man and His Vision of Civilization* (Boston: A Bulfinch Press Book, 1995); Susan Henderson, "Llewellyn Park, Suburban Idyll," *Journal of Garden History* 7 (July-Sept. 1987): 221-243.

[10] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983); Steven Gelber, *Hobbies: Leisure and the Culture of Work in America* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1999).

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discipline, the enforced dispersion of middle-class leisure values, and a form of nostalgia for rural life. In these historical analyses, the gardener imagines him or herself, or is imagined by others as returning to the virtues of republican agrarianism.

Under this formulation, historical analysis of gardening as leisure is especially problematic because in the 1800s it had not only the allure of idealized labor, but also the mantle of Romanticized nature to obscure signs of resistance among its practitioners. Flower gardening did not, in actuality, fit the pastoral mode. As practiced in the nineteenth century, it was inseparable from urban commercial interests, and the activity of gardening did not match the pastoral ideal of bountiful produce without effort. While the inconsistency between romanticized nature and agricultural life has been noted by previous historians, the problem of fitting urban ornamental gardening into the pastoral straitjacket is still generally overlooked. Floristry especially was an urban phenomenon. When collapsed into the pastoral binary of country and city, floristry seems merely symbolic of the rural, but in fact it had closer ties to the lives of preindustrial urban labor.[11]

From the seventeenth century, gardening treatises regularly described gardening as a democratic pastime. In 1864, Edward Sprague Rand's introduction to *Flowers for the Parlor and Garden* sports a familiar refrain: "We see [flowers] alike in the dwellings of the rich and the poor; in the workman's shop, in the window of the busy

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[11] Examples of Transcendentalists shunning or mocking agricultural labor can be found in R. Jackson Wilson, *Figures of Speech* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 182-3; Richard N. Masteller and Jean Carwile Masteller, "Rural Architecture in Andrew Jackson Downing and Henry David Thoreau: Pattern Book Parody in *Walden*," *The New England Quarterly* 57 (Dec. 1984), 483-510; Robert A. Gross, "The Great Bean Field Hoax: Thoreau and the Agricultural Reformers," in Joel Myerson, ed., *Critical Essays on Henry David Thoreau's Walden* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), 193-202.

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factory, peeping into the poor man's window, and trellised round the abode of the rich."[12] Some form of gardening may have been available to most people, but most were not able gardeners. During the 1800s, wealthy female gardeners were often described as inept and wasteful in comparison to talented working-class men, upon whom the former depended for potted plants, cut flowers, related accessories, and advice. From at least the beginning of the 1800s, rich women and working-class men shared a consumer/provider and student/teacher relationship that was acknowledged in popular culture.

Even historians of the "vernacular" garden have interpreted claims of trans-class gardening as genuinely democratic or as evidence of cultural diffusion from the rich to the poor rather than as efforts to obscure class inequities. The problematic class dimensions of the rich taking up a hobby identified with the poor is almost never addressed. Tovah Martin's popular book *Once Upon a Windowsill* does touch on several of the points that I elaborate in this study. Martin notes window gardening as cultural transmission from poor to rich, the difficulties experienced by unskilled bourgeois gardeners, and the use of romantic descriptions of nature as a sales technique. In general, this work is more detailed than mine from a horticultural perspective, but inadequate as a historical critique. Anne Secord's work on the "artisan botanists" of Lancashire provides the only elaboration that I have seen of elite nineteenth-century nature study as cultural appropriation of working class practice. Secord asserts that it is "the middle-class portrayal" of botanizing artisans that

[12] John Dixon Hunt and Joachim Wolschke-Bulman, "Introduction: Discovering the Vernacular Garden," in *The Vernacular Garden*, Hunt & Bulman, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1993), 6-7; Edward Sprague Rand, *Flowers for the Parlor and Garden* (Boston: J.E. Tilton & Co., 1864), 9.

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incorrectly makes "them look as if they had absorbed the bourgeois credo of individual self-improvement."[13]

Citations of the failure of gardening as an anti-materialist hobby are similarly rare, and appear as subtheses rather than primary arguments. In *Cultivating Gentlemen*, Tamara Plakins Thornton asserts that materially successful antebellum Massachusetts elites formed the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in order to pursue the restorative powers of an economically disinterested form of nature. Horticulture required and cultivated an appreciation of non-materialistic interests. "Horticulture as an antidote to the moral diseases endemic among America's upper classes, the afflictions of greed and ambition" was a new ideological contribution by American elites, according to Thornton. By mid-century, it had become clear that the Horticultural Society was trying to manipulate the Massachusetts rural voter demographics, and was more interested in horse breeding and racing than improving strains of corn.[14] While Thornton's work brings a refreshing seriousness to the topic of horticultural history, the claim that Americans initiated the idea of horticultural pursuits as a redemption or prevention for elite materialism does not hold up in light of British horticultural texts published in the early nineteenth century.

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[13] Hunt and Wolschke-Bulman, "Introduction," 5-6; Tovah Martin, *Once Upon a Windowsill* (Portland, Ore.: Timber Press, 1988); Anne Secord. "Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire," *History of Science* 32 (1994): 295-6.

[14] Tamara Plakins Thornton, "Horticulture and American Character" in Walter T. Punch, ed., *Keeping Eden* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1992), 194; Thornton, "The Moral Dimensions of Horticulture in Antebellum America," *The New England Quarterly* 57 (March 1984): 3-24; Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen: the Meaning of Country Life among the Boston Elite, 1785-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

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Michael Newbury argues that by the 1850s earlier middle-class borrowings of traditional labor for exercise had been transformed into "exercise as labor's substitute." At the same time, authors like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau were experimenting with farm life, and using farm work as a metaphor for writing as labor. Newbury finds that authors and the middle-class exercisers who had once idealized agricultural labor "came to recognize certain modes of manual labor as having most crucially a figurative rather than a materially necessary value." In other words, it isn't necessary actually to garden to reap its benefits for one's health, and it is more useful not to garden if one wants to continue idealizing such labor.[15]

Twentieth-century promoters of horticultural therapy have shown that gardens can be used as rehabilitation for prisoners, hospital patients, and residents of impoverished neighborhoods. Beyond the immediate effects of whether or not gardens are created, maintained, and enjoyed, there has been little meditation on the social and economic agendas that have historically determined gardening as a method of rehabilitation at particular points in time. Within this field, the more sophisticated analyses of how gardening works therapeutically are grounded in neurology, physiology, and psychology. The sociological element is often lost in popular but controversial arguments like Edward O. Wilson's "savannah gestalt" that posits the origins of human life in the African savannah as an explanation for why humans today enjoy open park landscaping. Anyone conversant with the history of landscape architecture will recognize such as the "naturalistic" style that was introduced in

[15] Michael Newbury, "Healthful Employment: Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Middle-Class Fitness," *American Quarterly* 47 (Dec. 1995): 692, 707.

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eighteenth-century England.[16]

Although previous historians have briefly noted the inconsistency between extravagant floral displays and claims of anti-materialism, the appearance of this conflict in American culture has not been connected to the place of flowers in the European consumer revolution as I do here. Many descriptive studies of domestic furnishings, like Peter Thornton's *Authentic Decor* and Louise Belden's *Festive Tradition*, note the inclusion of plants and flowers as decorative items in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European and American settings. How plants resembled or differed from other goods because of the modes of production and marketing, and the importance of maintenance after purchase, does not generally enter into these discussions.[17] However, European historians Jack Goody, Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, J. H. Plumb, and Keith Thomas have all written that flowers should be recognized as part of the consumer revolution of the early nineteenth century.

In his vast historical review of *The Culture of Flowers*, anthropologist Jack Goody puts florists' flowers at the center of seventeenth-century European elite luxury consumption. From there, he asserts, interest spread to middling folk and peasantry, with this group eventually becoming responsible for the professional

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[16] Nancy Gerlach-Spriggs, Richard Enoch Kaufman, and Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *Restorative Gardens: The Healing Landscape* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998). For a broad spectrum of work on horticultural therapy, see Diane Relf, ed., *The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-Being and Social Development: A National Symposium* (Portland, Ore.: Timber Press, 1992).

[17] Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor: The Domestic Interior 1620-1920* (New York: Crescent Books, 1985), 220-21, 229; Louise Conway Belden, *Festive Tradition, Table Decoration & Desserts in America, 1650-1900: Two Hundred Years of American Party Tables* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), 79-90.

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florists' trade, and for the spread of flowers as an urban commodity. The transition from "cultures of luxury into cultures of mass consumption" Goody asserts, "happened with cotton cloth at the outset of industrialization, which made possible mass production for mass consumption. It happened with flowers at the beginning of the nineteenth century . . .."[18]

McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, co-authors of *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, each invited recognition of the similarities between flower gardening and other consumer goods in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Novelty flowers were marketed very much like the ceramics sold by Josiah Wedgwood in record numbers with tactics that became essential to modern commercial promotion. Customers voraciously bought new and rare plants, gardening tools and decorative accessories, and illustrative and instructional texts; thus gardening emerged as one aspect of the "commercialization of leisure."[19]

In a small section of *Man and the Natural World*, Keith Thomas labels the period between the mid-1600s and mid-1800s as a "Gardening Revolution." Thomas asserts that in early-nineteenth-century England the interests of professional and amateur gardeners alike were motivated by followers of a floral fashion system much like that stimulated by Wedgwood for porcelain products; city dwellers wanted flowers as relief from urban visual and environmental pollution; gardens stimulated spiritual reflection; and gardeners experienced great personal satisfaction. While each

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[18] Jack Goody, *The Culture of Flowers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 166, 183-5.

[19] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1982), 273, 66, 249, 323-6.

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of Thomas's points has merit, I cannot agree with his conclusion that the flower garden was "fundamentally opposed" to the use of "nature as a means of subsistence," and that the gardeners "showed a respect for the welfare of the species they cultivated." Hybridizing flowers for show may have been a very enjoyable pastime, but it was also an extremely artificial manipulation of plant material that became highly lucrative, thanks to the floral fashion system.[20]

The influence of European, particularly British, horticulture on practices in the United States is widely acknowledged in terms of landscape design, botanical study, and early horticultural texts.[21] However, the importance of immigrant gardeners to American horticultural history has been almost entirely overlooked by previous historians, despite plentiful evidence that at mid-century it was widely acknowledged that almost all professional gardeners were English, Irish and Scottish immigrants. While historical surveys of American horticulture include biographies of immigrants who became prominent nurserymen, landscape gardeners, and horticultural authors, there has been little research on the causes or results of their migration as a group,

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[20] Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 224-240.

[21] For example, European influence is acknowledged in Judith K. Major, *To Live in the New World: A. J. Downing and American Landscape Gardening* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1997); Therese O'Malley, "The Lawn in Early American Landscape and Garden Design," in Georges Teyssot, ed., *The American Lawn: Surface of Everyday Life* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 65-87; and Margaret Welch, *The Book of Nature: Natural History in the United States, 1825-1875* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 3, 137.

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other than to note that they were especially successful with seed and nursery trades.[22] The professional preferences and strategies of immigrant nurserymen and florists demonstrate transatlantic continuity and adaptation rather than radical innovation in gardening practices.

In conclusion, in the course of this research I have found many intellectual histories of nature, practical histories of gardening, and parallel studies of leisure as symbolic labor or of the introduction of natural spaces and organic materials into urban environments. Many of the subtopics in this dissertation--like the history of floristry among weavers or botany in women's education--have been explored by other specialists. I am indebted to their fine work. This study measures the language and agendas of flower gardening as rational reform against specific material practices and conditions, and consequently asserts that the commodity value of ornamental horticulture and the class implications of gardening as labor significantly shaped popular notions about the social, moral, and monetary value of flower gardening in

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[22] Immigrant gardeners are mentioned briefly in George B. Tatum, "Nature's Gardener," in George B. Tatum and Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, eds., *Prophet with Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, 11, Philadelphia: Athenaeum of Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989), 44; Major, 2, 146, 187, 213. On immigrant gardeners in the floristry, nursery, and seed businesses, see Ulysses P. Hedrick, *A History of Horticulture in America to 1860*, with an addendum of Books Published from 1861-1920 by Elizabeth Woodburn (1950; reprint, Portland, Ore.: Timber Press, 1988), 220, 247-8, 480; Ann Leighton, *American Gardens of the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst, Mass: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 71-82; Liberty Hyde Bailey, *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), 2: 1563-1603. For a well-developed discussion of immigrant horticulturists in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake, see Barbara Wells Sarudy, *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake, 1700-1805* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 65-91.

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nineteenth-century transatlantic culture. Within the circumstances described here, pastoralism failed to conceal class interests as it did so effectively in contemporary literature and imagery. The material qualities and needs of the plants themselves are an important factor in the ideological failure.

The Chapters

The first chapter, "Sons of Flora: Weavers' Profitable Leisure," argues that textile work and floristry were interrelated occupations in British working-class culture. Particularly among the the militant lower-middle-class silk weavers of the Spitalfields district just outside of London, floristry was a leisure activity that combined the conditions of preindustrial work with sociability and supplemental income. Industrialization of the textile trades undermined this tradition, but the legend of weaving florists had persistent symbolic strength as an icon of self-discipline and self-determination.

The second chapter, "Gardening as Labor Reform," explains why landowners and manufacturers subsidized flower gardening as rational recreation for the working classes of Britain, and how the reformers' intentions were partially thwarted by the surviving traditions of working-class floristry. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, elites idealized the tradition of floristry among textile workers and reinterpreted gardening as rational recreation for the laboring poor. They established allotment garden programs, and sponsored cottage garden competitions and flower shows as incentive for renters and workers to garden. Cottage gardens served elite interests in landscape improvement, reducing the poor rate, and most importantly, preventing class insurrection; the material characteristics of gardening made it an ideal

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rational recreation. The cottage garden also served the interests of the working poor because it provided a situation wherein one's work could be self-determined and independent of industrial market fluctuation. The flower shows similarly served conflicting interests; these events combined traditions from working-class culture with the agendas of horticultural reform and commercial profit. Flower shows unmasked the rhetoric of economic disinterestedness for working class and elite participants because both were interested in plants as a luxury commodity, either to sell or to buy. The first two chapters of the dissertation focus on British horticulture because the practices and associated beliefs are essential for understanding how thoroughly the American interpretation of flower-gardening as an anti-materialistic occupation was a false representation based in class-motivated interests.

Commercial horticulture in the United States was profoundly influenced by the traditions of gardening as profitable leisure and rational recreation in British working-class culture, influences that shaped how business was done and how goods were marketed to consumers. When a large number of English, Irish, and Scottish gardeners immigrated to Philadelphia during the antebellum period, they successfully used familiar techniques of plant cultivation, professional organization, and marketing through publications to create a national flower industry. This story is told in Chapter Three: "Transplanting the Business of Floriculture from Britain to the United States." Those who specialized in the cultivation of florists' flowers and greenhouse exotics were not hampered by having to learn new methods of cultivation for new climates. Instead, their special talents easily translated into products and publications tailored to urban consumers. This was supported by a concurrent increase in instructional texts on floristry and parlor gardening that were in the main either American editions of

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British publications, or written by British immigrants to the United States.

The dissertation closes with a chapter called "From Weavers' Floristry to Ladies' Parlor Gardening" that looks at how parlor gardening from the 1830s through 1900 in Britain and the United States was shaped by the multiple phenomena described in the preceding three chapters. Flowers were fashionable luxury goods by the early nineteenth century. Over time, women became identified as the targeted consumers for cut and potted flowers and ornamental plants for domestic use. In addition to borrowing the techniques and accessories of professional florists, parlor gardening was a cultural practice that mirrored, if not imitated, the practices of urban (predominantly male) artisan florists as well as horticultural reform for the laboring poor. References to the urban weaving florists and cottage gardens were used as anecdotes to explain how parlor gardening could be an urban version of the picturesque; parlor gardeners were thus encouraged to imitate working class gardening practices.

The application of horticulture as rational recreation for the working classes was similarly used to encourage elite and bourgeois women to garden. For leisured women, parlor gardening was supposed to remedy the vices and afflictions of a confined, sedentary, and luxuriously unproductive lifestyle. However, while owning indoor plants could be fashionable, genteel, romantic, and artistic, tending to them meant doing the manual labor of the working-class gardener. Fortunately, there were practical and interpretive solutions. Florists, nurserymen and horticultural authors provided products and services that allowed, and even encouraged parlor gardeners to leave the work to them. Environmental psychology and concerns about plant effluvia helped to justify a Romantic interpretation of horticulture's healing power as visual,

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rather than occupational. In conclusion, the practice of domestic ornamental horticulture is shown to have been at once conspicuous consumption and idle leisure, and a cure for the same. Rather than the ultimate cure for materialism, nature was the ideal facade for interactions shaped by economic relations and class identity.

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Chapter One: Sons of Flora: Weavers' Profitable Leisure

> In several parts, and especially the north of England, and generally in Scotland, the gardens of artisans differ from those of the cottager in being held on a long building-lease, and in being situated in or around large towns. The most remarkable gardens of this description, for riches, order, and beauty, are at Norwich, where they first originated; at Spitalfields, London, among the residences of the silk-weavers; at Manchester, and other Lancashire and Cheshire towns; and at Paisley and Glasgow. The occupiers are generally their own masters, having their looms or other implements of trade within their dwellings, and being employed by merchant-manufacturers, or taking their goods to a common market. They are generally an intelligent industrious class of men, who take great delight in their gardens, and the point of practice in which they excel is in the production of florists' flowers.[1]

When agricultural reformer John Claudius Loudon described the weavers of Britain as holders of long-term leases and masters of their own home-based workshops, he made explicit the conditions that allowed the weavers also to be flower gardeners. Most contemporary observers, and the historians that have since described them, praised the weavers who raised florists' flowers for being intelligent and industrious. In this chapter, I focus on the auricula-growing silk weavers in East London's Spitalfields and Bethnal Green parishes during the period when both silk-weaving and floristry among silk weavers were in decline. It is at this time that it becomes evident how flower-gardening was interpreted as a measure of the weaver's resistance to, or reproduction of, industrial capitalism's transformation of the textile

[1] John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1830), 1044-45.

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trades. Uncovering these meanings is essential to an understanding of how gardening functioned for artisans as supplemental income embedded in preindustrial modes of work. and how gardening was reconfigured by elites as rational recreation for the working class.

Tales of British weavers cultivating ornamental "florists' flowers" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reliably appear in accounts of the histories of textiles, floristry, Huguenot migration, and East London. As these several contexts suggest, the reasons why and how textile work and floristry were interrelated occupations in British working class culture are multiple. Gardening and weaving were part of the culture of Huguenot (French Protestant) refugees who created concentrated settlements in Britain during the seventeenth century. Weavers may have grown florists' flowers so that they could have models for the creation of woven floral designs. The kinds of flowers popular with the weavers required close supervision, which the preindustrial workshop architecture and work patterns could accommodate. The weaving florists formed clubs, held competitions, won prizes, and sold the specimens in town for extra income. The hobby became an integral part of the weavers' culture, bearing social and economic functions that were retained as weavers migrated.

Between 1760 and 1860, textile production dramatically changed. Due to industrialization and market competition, most textile workers suffered a severe loss of income and independence unless they were engaged in a highly skilled area of production that had not yet been simplified by mechanization. Many migrated in search of work. In most circumstances, weavers had to give up floristry because of the change in fortune. However, as supplemental or alternative income, floristry

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simultaneously functioned as a potentially subversive response to capitalists' manipulation of textile labor. As this was happening, the weaver's garden or flowerpot was becoming a mutable symbol for industriousness, lost prosperity, and the potential for self-sufficiency.

Origin of Floristry in British Weavers' Culture

The origin of floristry in British weavers' culture is attributed to practices retained and reproduced by Protestant immigrants from France and the Netherlands. Beginning in the early 1500s, Walloons and French-speaking Protestants came to England from the low counties of the Netherlands (now Belgium and northern France) in order to escape religious persecution. Any French-speaking Protestant may be called a "Huguenot," but the term is primarily used in reference to French Calvinists. A mass exodus of Calvinists from France occurred after 1685 when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had been established in 1598 to protect Protestants' religious, social, economic, and educational rights. Between 1670 and 1810, 40.000 to 50,000 Huguenots settled in England. Refugees flooded London in the 1600s and 1700s, forming ghettos like Leicester Fields and Soho in the western parts of the city, and the suburb of Spitalfields which lay just east of the city limits of London.[2] In the late 1600s. 16,000 to 20,000 Huguenot artisans settled in Spitalfields, a parish where other non-conformists and artisans were already established. In the early nineteenth

[2] Before the extensive development of middle-class, community-managed and romantically-landscaped suburbs in the 1800s, "suburb" was a term for areas outside of the city where work and residence were combined. A suburb was a "peripheral slum" and "place of inferior, debased, and especially licentious habits of life." Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1987), 6-7, 20-22.

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century, half of all Spitalfields weavers were descendants of the Huguenots.[3]

Huguenot residents of Spitalfields retained a community culture that was distinct from their host nation, but that had a substantial influence on the nation's trades and tastes. Silk weaving and gardening were two of the community's most noted occupations. The silk district extended to the northeast, into Bethnal Green and Shoreditch. Huguenots were important members of the London Weavers' Company, successful designers and master weavers, and trade protection advocates. It was characteristic for family members to continue the trade, and for business associates to cement trade relationships by inter-marriage. Among the original immigrants, some were poor, but a notable number of middle-class silk merchants and master-weavers may be counted. While most residents of Spitalfields lived in overcrowded tenements, those middle-class proprietors with secure incomes owned dwellings with back gardens. In these gardens, they cultivated florists' flowers.[4]

Huguenots and Quakers had established a number of market gardens and

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[3] Robin D. Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); Gwynn, *The Huguenots of London* (Brighton: The Alpha Press, 1998), 35-39; Anne Kershen, "Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields and the Spirit of Capitalism," in *London: the promised land?*, ed., Kershen (Aldershot, Eng.: Avebury, published on behalf of the Centre for the Study of Migration, 1997), 69-73.

[4] Gwynn, *Huguenots of London*, 15, 17, 35-8, 43; Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage*, 60-71; Nathalie Rothstein, *Silk Designs of the Eighteenth Century: In the Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London* (Boston: Bullfinch Press, 1990), 18-20; Margaret Cox, *Life and Death in Spitalfields, 1700-1850* (Walmgate, York, UK: Council for British Archaeology, 1996), 42; Kershen, 72-73; W.H. Manchee, "Memories of Spitalfields," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London* 10 (1913): 308, 331, 345; Theya Molleson and Margaret Cox with H.A. Waldron and D.K. Whittaker, *The Spitalfields Project: The Middling Sort* (Walmgate, York, UK: Council for British Archaeology, 1993) 2: 107-110.

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professional nurseries in the suburbs of London, as early as the sixteenth century. Around 1800, Bethnal Green was considered a "garden suburb, inherited principally by farmers and weavers" according to local historian A.K. Sabin of the Bethnal Green Museum. An 1827 map confirms the presence of nurseries in the northeastern suburbs of London. Although refugees may have retained trade connections, it is suggested that the techniques of floristry--not necessarily the actual plants--were brought to England by the migrants. Like the sophisticated silk-weaving skills that the Huguenots brought to Britain, floristry was a talent that was carried by immigrants in their heads and hands, and that was passed on by each generation training the next.[5]

As middle-class Protestant artisans, the master weavers of Spitalfields were socially positioned both to sell and buy the goods that characterized the consumer revolution in eighteenth-century London. Anne J. Kershen describes the Huguenot immigrants to Spitalfields as an embodiment of Weber's thesis that Protestantism was responsible for the rise of capitalism.[6] Max Weber's landmark *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Capitalism* posited the Puritan work ethic as the source of modern capitalism. Colin Campbell suggested that consumer demand, the counterpart to the industrial revolution, was premised on the Romantic internalized emotionality of

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[5] Ronald Webber, *The Early Horticulturists* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1968), 18-20; John Hooper Harvey, *Early Nurserymen* (London: Phillimore & Co., Ltd., 1974), 12, 30-31; Gwynn, *Huguenots of London*, 22; Jack Goody, *The Culture of Flowers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 184-85, 189, 207-8; A. K. Sabin, *Catalogue of Drawings and Prints relating to Hackney and Bethnal Green* (London: Published under the authority of the Board of Education, 1925), 7; Christopher Greenwood, "Greenwood's Map of London," 1827, available on Bath Spa University College website: http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/greenwood.

[6] Kershen, 70.

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Protestantism. To illustrate the sobriety of Calvinist anti-hedonist doctrine. Campbell—as Weber before him—cited gardening among Quaker Robert Barclay's seventeenth-century list of acceptable occupations (which later came to be called "rational recreation"). Barclay's original passage reads:

> Now if any will plead, that for relaxation of mind, there may be a liberty allowed beyond these things, which are of absolute need to the sustenance of the outward man, I shall not much contend against it; provided these things be not such as are wholly superfluous, or in their proper nature and tendency lead the mind into lust, vanity, and wantonness, as being chiefly contrived and framed for that end, or generally experienced to produce these effects, or being the common engines of such as are so minded to feed one another therein, and to propagate their wickedness, to the impoisoning of others; seeing there are other innocent divertisements which may sufficiently serve for relaxation of the mind, such as for friends to visit one another; to hear or read history; to speak soberly of the present or past transactions; *to follow after gardening*; to use geometrical and mathematical experiments, and such other things of this nature. In all which things we are not so to forget God, in whom we both live and are moved, Acts xvii. 28, as not to have always some secret reserve to him, and sense of his fear and presence; which also frequently exerts itself in the midst of these things by some short aspiration and breathings.[7]

As the following chapters will show, many others also considered gardening to be a rational recreation. Loudon, however, was of the opinion that gardening was less likely to be followed by religions whose days of rest were "to be spent in a devotion founded in fear, and consequently gloomy and austere in its offices."[8]

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[7] Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the Christian Divinity* (1675; Philadelphia: John Fagan, 1869), 499-500. This passage is referenced by both Max Weber and Colin Campbell in discussions of leisure and Protestantism, as cited by Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, Mass: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 101-103.

[8] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 111.

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How may one understand floristry, which was both sensual and intimately linked to luxury production and consumption, as characteristic of a Huguenot community? According to Simon Schama, it was the Calvinists who were the most disapproving of tulip mania. Jack Goody suggests that the combination of Protestantism and capitalism was responsible for the extensive use of flowers as household decoration: Protestant iconoclasm moved flowers off religious altars and into bourgeois homes. Without attempting to address the larger conundrum of Protestant consumerism, but only considering the case of the Huguenot weaver florists of Spitalfields, I propose that the Protestant acceptance of gardening as a "rational recreation" may have justified participation in floristry. Floristry was a luxury expenditure that could be and was justified as rational recreation. The master weavers paid for their flower gardens by fully exploiting others' labor; the garden was configured as a reward for hard work. At the same time, the work of the garden justified the expense of the garden.[9]

The co-occupation of weaving and floristry may have begun with the Huguenot immigrants, but it was eventually ingrained amongst the weavers' occupational group. Floristry survived as a custom of the trade thanks to intergenerational training, oral and written transmission of information, social rituals, and geographic mobility.[10] The Huguenots are often credited with introducing floristry in sixteenth-century Norwich, a center for worsted weaving, where members of the local florists' society called

[9] Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), 354; Goody, 169-70, 186-90; Kershen, 67, 69-71.

[10] On the idea of custom as culture, see E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York: The New Press, 1991).

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themselves the "Sons of Flora," a name that gained widespread use by the mid-eighteenth century. From Norwich, according to one account, floristry spread to Spitalfields, Bolton, Manchester, and other places of textile manufacture.[11] Spitalfields was also described as a point of dispersion for the practice of floristry. In one of many examples, the 1846 *Annals of Horticulture* reported

> Wherever the trade of weaving flourished, there also flourished the cultivation of flowers, as the Spitalfields artisans were dispersed, they carried their favourite fancy with them, and hence we find the same love of flowers pervading that class in all our leading manufacturing towns. . . . we are told that Manchester, Paisley, Birmingham, Derby, and many other places, would give us pretty nearly the same results in proportion to the number of individuals engaged in the manufactures of cotton, woollen, or silk.[12]

Around 1795, when John Holt observed the Lancaster mechanics engaged in floristry, he stated that dispersion of the practice had started in Lancaster. There were these several claims to point of origin because weavers' floristry was looked on with so much

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[11] Ruth Duthie, *Florists' Flowers and Societies* (U.K.: Shire Publications, Ltd., 1988), 27; J. H. Plumb, "The Acceptance of Modernity," in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1982), 324; John J. Murray, "The Cultural Impact of the Flemish Low Countries on Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England," *American Historical Review* 62 (July 1957): 851-3; W. J. C. Moens' *The Walloons and their Church at Norwich* (London: Huguenot Society, 1887-8), 84, is an example of how the legend has been sustained. Moens cited Norwich as the home of weavers' floristry, based on information in *Norfolk Tour* (n.p., n.d.), xlv, which in turn relied upon Gaye, *Hengrave* (n.p., n.d.), 17, and Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 84.

[12] "Cottage Gardening," *The Annals of Horticulture* (hereafter *An. Hort.*) 1 (1846): 411.

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pride and approval.[13]

In the early nineteenth century, (the period under investigation here) floristry was most prevalent among the weavers in Paisley, Spitalfields, and in the counties of Yorkshire, Cheshire and Lancashire. Floristry had become part of the group culture. George Caley was a Middleton farrier (veterinarian, or one who shoes horses) who was active in a botanical society in the 1790s. During this time, he changed his trade to weaving, which Anne Secord suggests was done "in order to have more time to spend with the botanical companions he had sought out." By the end of the eighteenth century, a substantial minority of the Spitalfields weavers were Irish immigrants, a population also prevalent in the Northern textile manufacturing districts as the nineteenth century progressed. From the 1820s through the 1840s, the weaver florists that I discuss here would have been of French, Irish, English, and German lineage, both first generation immigrants and their descendants. Huguenots may have introduced floristry to Britain, but by the nineteenth century, floristry was part of a lifestyle defined by one's trade.[14]

When the social significance of weavers' floristry has been previously discussed by historians interested in the relationship between humans and nature, the degree to which weaving and floristry were materially interrelated has never been explored in depth. Publications on the history of florists' flowers, written by practicing

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[13] John Holt, *General View of the Agriculture in the County of Lancaster*,(c.1795), quoted in Jack Wemyss-Cooke, *Primulas, Old and New* (Newton Abbot, GB: David & Charles, 1985), 19.

[14] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 84-87, 1088-89; Anne Secord, "Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire," *History of Science* 32 (1994): 277.

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enthusiasts, usually include a brief history of cultivation methods and the introduction of varieties. In these books, particularly if they focus on the auricula (thought to be the weavers' favorite flower), Huguenot immigrants and British weaving communities are recognized for significant contributions to floristry. Ruth Duthie is the greatest specialist on the florists' societies and feasts in Britain; this author concentrates on documenting the introduction and pricing of floral varieties from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. Duthie's recognition of changes in the professional and economic status of florists' societies' membership between the late 1700s and mid-1800s led me to several sources that contribute here to my analysis of the conditions that fostered and led to the decline of floristry among weavers.[15]

In histories of flower-gardening, facile theories of social emulation or innate love of nature are frequently offered by authors whose work is otherwise thorough and astute. The authors usually uncritically repeat the claims by nineteenth-century elites that the working classes gardened because they were imitating, or benefiting from the assistance and example of the rich. Another typical explanation glorifies florists' flowers as an expression of love for nature and disdain for industry: pure escapism. For example, Roy Genders describes the weaver florists as "cottage craftsmen who worked at home on contract and who wished, in an age of rapidly growing industrial ugliness, to cherish the most exquisite examples of nature's works." The binary of

[15] Sir Rowland Harry Biffen, *The Auricula: The Story of a Florist's Flower* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1951); David Tarver, *Auricula History* (National Auricula and Primula Society, 1985); Ruth Duthie, "English Florists' Societies and Feasts in the Seventeenth and First Half of the Eighteenth Centuries," *Garden History* 10 (spring 1982): 17-35; Duthie, "Florists' Societies and Feasts after 1750," *Garden History* 12 (spring 1984): 8-38; Duthie, *Florists' Flowers*.

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industry and nature is a familiar one, but it seems peculiar to insist that floristry and industry were fundamentally opposed as both were urban arts.[16] Genders' characterization of the weaving florists demonstrates how floristry was a key to conceptually abstract a critique of changes in labor into one of physical environment.

In *Man and the Natural World*, Keith Thomas asserts that in the eighteenth century lower-middle-class artisans grew florists' flowers for show because they were imitating the fashions of the rich and because they enjoyed the gambling that occurred at flower shows. This class of gardeners was able to produce prize-winning flowers "because perfect blooms needed constant attention and industrious artisans had the habit of regular application." By the late 1700s, florists' flowers were no longer fashionable, but had gained a different value: "flower-gardening had emerged as a means by which humble men could prove their respectability. Gardening, it was believed, had a civilizing effect upon the poor."[17] The transition that Thomas so briefly described warrants a more complex analysis of flower gardening within the economic process of industrialization, and the social systems of fashion, emulation, and respectability beyond the end of the eighteenth century.

While the authors cited above contributed to my original curiosity about the weaver florists, my understanding of the social significance of floristry among artisans has only been substantially enhanced by the work of science historian Anne Secord. Secord has addressed how the class consciousness of early-nineteenth-century

[16] Nicolette Scourse, *Victorians and their Flowers* (Portland, Ore: Timber Press, 1983), 19-23; Roy Genders, *The Cottage Garden and the Old-Fashioned Flowers* (London: Pelham Books, 1983), 14.

[17] Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, (NY: Pantheon Books, 1983), 229-234.

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Lancashire artisan botanists influenced their pride in learning botanical nomenclature, their distrust of plant dealers and gentlemen botanists, and the significance of botany clubs' sociological make-up and pub meeting locations. Despite a focus on botany rather than floristry, Secord's important application of John Rule's analysis of artisanal "property of skill" to the botanical activities of artisans confirmed and clarified my own findings on floristry among the same, and related populations.[18]

My contribution to this historiography is to clarify how weavers' preindustrial working conditions supported their floristry, and how the floristry may have in turn enabled the weavers to continue in their traditional trades. The story of the weaver florists discussed in this chapter is significant for understanding how gardening was idealized as classless occupational reform, and how working-class consciousness informed commercial horticulture in nineteenth-century transatlantic culture.

Practicing Floristry

Floristry differs from other kinds of flower gardening in the degree of specialization exercised by cultivators, and in its emphasis on appearance over all other qualities. The designation of "florists' flower" was traditionally limited to carnation, tulip, anemone, ranunculus, auricula, hyacinth, polyanthus, and pink until the early nineteenth century, when the category expanded to include other flowers popular for bouquets, potting, and bedding, like pansy, dahlia, camellia, rose, mignonette, and verbena. By mid-century, any flower that had undergone significant changes and

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[18] Secord, "Science in the Pub," 291-293; Secord, "Corresponding Interests: Artisans and Gentlemen in Nineteenth-Century Natural History," *British Journal for the History of Science* 27 (1994): 383-408.

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produced numerous varieties by artificial hybridization might be considered a florists' flower. A florist was a person who specialized in the collection and cultivation of a certain favorite type of flower. For this reason, sometimes florists were called flower fanciers, and florists' flowers were also described as fancy flowers.

According to Loudon, the artisans of Norwich specialized in carnations, while all competition flowers, but "especially tulips and auriculas" were grown by Spitalfields silk-weavers. In the northern textile counties of Lancashire and Cheshire, the Lancashire weavers were successful in every branch of floristry. At Manchester, they specialized in auriculas, polyanthuses, and the introduction of new varieties. In Paisley and Glasgow, the weavers excelled in production of pinks.[10]

Floristry revolved around novelty and connoisseurship. Introducing a new variety by hybridization, and being able to assess finely the flower in relation to preexisting standards of quality was the florist's pride. Flower shows, sponsored by florists' societies, provided an opportunity for florists to examine one another's specimens, to display their own, and to buy or sell. Horticultural historian Ruth Duthie has documented the existence of florists' societies in Norwich, York, Worcester, Gloucester, Ipswich, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Canterbury, England, also in Dublin, Ireland and Paisley, Scotland from as early as 1631. It is believed that there was also a floricultural society in Spitalfields. Landed gentlemen, professional gardeners and nurserymen, merchants and artisans, including skilled weavers and framework knitters, all participated in the societies, sometimes in concert and at other times segregated by occupation and class. At the flower shows, they drank and feasted, bet on the flowers, and carried home prizes in cash or goods like copper kettles and silver tea

[10] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 1045, 1080.

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spoons. The meetings were social gatherings characterized by erudite exchanges on horticultural techniques amidst raucous drinking and gambling.[20]

The success of florists' flowers as commercial goods also depended upon novelty to catch fashion, and upon the prestige (as much as the skills) of connoisseurship to inspire collectors to buy the flowers. The most remarkable example of a florists' flower serving as a novelty commodity is the seventeenth-century "tulipomania." In the 1620s and 1630s, western Europe, especially the Netherlands, embraced tulips as a speculative commodity. First, wealthy botanical collectors and amateur gardeners sought bulbs as an exotic rarity, but by the 1630s middling status merchants and artisans were buying tulips purely for the opportunity to resell them at a higher price. Buying tulip bulbs was like buying a lottery ticket. After Dutch magistrates shut down the trade in 1637, one of many satires on the tulip craze represented a weaver who had mortgaged his house in order to buy tulips, on the hope that fortune and retirement would soon follow. Economic historian N.W. Posthumus found that the weavers were "very conspicuous" tulip traders:

> The weavers were passing through economic difficulties and their position as independent masters was threatened. This was the main reason for their greedy reaching out towards this favorable opportunity. They had a few possessions, not only looms, but often also small houses; this made it easier for them than for other laborers to take part in the tulip trade.[21]

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[20] Duthie, "English Florists' Societies," 17-35; Duthie, "Florists' Societies and Feasts," 8-38; Duthie, *Florists' Flowers*, 14-21; Harvey, *Early Nurserymen*, 38; Thomas, 229. On Spitalfields, see Samuel Smiles, *The Huguenots: Their Settlements, Churches, & Industries in England and Ireland* (London: John Murray, 1867), 413; Manchee, 331, 345.

[21] N.W. Posthumus, "The Tulip Mania in Holland in the years 1636 and 1637," *Journal of Economic and Business History* 1 (Aug. 1929): 442.

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Posthumus's analysis foreshadows the situation of the Spitalfields weaver florists that I describe here.

Later flower trends included auriculas in the 1680s and hyacinths in the 1730s, although none reached the financial extremes of the tulip craze. In the nineteenth century, when florists were criticized as greedy and irreligious, reference was sometimes made to the tulip mania. In the early 1800s, tulips were still costly. London florist Samuel Curtis sold single bulbs of new tulip varieties for "fifty to eighty pounds sterling," according to American correspondent Bernard M'Mahon who called these prices evidence of a tulip "*rage*."[22]

As I will show here, florists were also perceived as diligent and industrious people. In part, this was a generalization based on the work of floristry, which actually was labor-intensive. Loudon described floristry as "one of the most delicate and difficult branches of gardening and is only successfully pursued by such as devote their exclusive attention to it." For example, forcing is the process of stimulating plants to bloom out of season by simulating their seasonal cycle; florists forced bulbs like tulips and hyacinths for indoor winter decoration. The grower must create an appropriately cold, dry and dark environment to induce dormancy, and then gradually expose the plants to greater light and warmth. Loudon believed that forcing required such "vigilance . . . that it is almost impossible that the operator should be otherwise

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[22] Schama, 350-65; Thomas, 231-3; Hericart de Thury, "Horticulturists not Florimaniacs," *Magazine of Horticulture* 5 (Apr. 1839): 145-46; Bernard M'Mahon, *The American Gardener's Calendar*, 2nd ed. (1806; Philadelphia: Published by Thomas P. M'Mahon, 1819), 344.

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than sober and attentive."[23]

Floral-patterned silks

One of the most logical explanations for why textile workers engaged in floristry is the flowers provided design inspiration for floral-patterned ("figured") fabrics. Where horticultural historians tend to mention the florists' textile work peripherally, those interested in textile history have similarly overlooked the full import of this occupational pairing. Textile historians J. F. Flanagan, Nathalie Rothstein and Deborah Kraak have all studied the flowered silks woven in Spitalfields during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but none of them have explicitly acknowledged that the Spitalfields weavers were well known as practicing florists. In the textile historians' accounts, the relationship between flowers and flowered fabrics was always mediated by a designer who interacted with both gardeners and weavers. In Rothstein's extensive study, *Silk Designs of the Eighteenth Century*, she identifies a number of Spitalfields designers including naturalist Joseph Dandridge and the well-born botanical illustrator Anna Maria Garthwaite.[24]

Florists did create and distribute pattern books for artisans. Artisans did have

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[23] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 1055; Loudon, "Neglect of Practical Gardeners by the Provincial Horticultural Society," *The Gardener's Magazine, and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement* (hereafter *Gard. Mag.)* 5 (Feb. 1829): 102.

[24] J. F. Flanagan, *Spitalfields Silks of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Leigh-on-Sea, England: F. Lewis, Publishers Ltd., 1954); Deborah Kraak, "Eighteenth-Century English Floral Silks," *The Magazine Antiques* 153 (June 1998): 842-49; Nathalie Rothstein, *Spitalfields Silks* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1975); Rothstein, *Silk Designs.*

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access to illustrated herbals that would have both provided designs and botanical information.[25] Because some workshops had resident designers as well as specialty figured weavers, there is also clearly reason to think that even when a designer was employed, the specimens cultivated by weavers provided object studies. This is true not only of the silk weavers, for the convergence of flowered fabrics and floristry appears elsewhere. Around 1800, a contemporary remarked of the Paisley muslin weavers:

> The attention to flowers which is so conspicuous there, is in a considerable degree an effect of the peculiar manufacturing habits of the people. It is well known, that not only for the execution of the most delicate ornamental muslins, but for the invention of patterns. the operative manufacturers of Paisley stand unrivaled. Their ingenuity is continually in exertion for new and pleasing elegance to diversify their fabrics. Now, where such habits obtain, the rearing of beautiful flowers, which is an object very congenial to them, will easily be adopted and pursued as a favourite amusement. On the other hand, it seems highly probable that the rearing of flowers, by a re-action, must tend to

[25] For example, Kensington nurseryman Robert Furber published a book of hand-colored prints of flowers with descriptions and cultural instructions that were written by Richard Bradley. The subtitle indicates that the book was for "*Painters, Carvers, Japaners*, &c. also for The *Ladies*, as Patterns for Working, and Painting in Water-Colours, or Furniture for the Closet." Furber, *The Flower-Garden Display'd* (London: for R. Montagu, J. Brindley, and C. Corbett, 1734). This book was a reprint of engravings originally created to illustrate Furber's *Twelve Months of Flowers* (1730), a "deluxe seed catalogue" according to Wilfred Blunt, *The Art of Botanical Illustration* (London: Collins, 1967), 134-5. Blunt also mentions William Kilburn (1745-1818) who was apprenticed to a Dublin calico printer, and later to London nurseryman, botanical illustrator, and editor of the *Botanical Magazine* William Curtis, before returning to the calico pattern trade. (Blunt, 189) In 1834, Loudon suggested that the hand-colored prints of flowers in the new *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* "will be very useful" to cotton-printers, porcelain manufacturers, paper-hanging manufacturers, &c" in "Paxton's Magazine of Botany and Register of Flowering Plants," *Gard. Mag.* 10 (1834): 232. On herbals, see Ronald Rees, *Interior Landscapes: Gardens and the Domestic Environment* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 55-59; Secord, "Science in the Pub," 276.

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improve the genius for invention in elegant muslins."[26]

As noted by Loudon and other contemporaries, Paisley ranked with Spitalfields and Lancashire in its reputation for weaving florists.

Concentrating on the naturalistic floral designs seen in rococo Spitalfields silks of 1742 to 1753, textile historian Deborah Kraak has found florists' flowers to have been "the core of a tasteful vocabulary of motifs used in disproportionate numbers." Kraak attributes both horticultural publications and life drawings from botanical specimens as points of departure for the creation of floral patterns. However, in Kraak's brief *Antiques* article, the question of why naturalistic depictions of florists' flowers were concentrated in Spitalfields is only partially answered by turning from the specific conditions of the textile workers to the general influence of landscape aesthetics; Kraak connects the naturalistic style of floral representation in Spitalfields silks to the contemporary introduction of naturalistic landscape architecture. In *Spitalfields Silks of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Flanagan attributed the eighteenth-century naturalism in Spitalfields silks to the influence of seventeenth-century Dutch flower painting which implied three-dimensional form by using "realistic light and shade effects." Flanagan convincingly showed that similar visual techniques were used in the fabrics. Both authors are probably correct in connecting use of shade, color, and pattern in flowered silks to the aesthetics of landscape gardening and flower paintings, for there are many historical precedents for shared

[26] Reverend William Ferrier, quoted in *Appendix to the General Report of the Agricultural State, and Political Circumstances of Scotland*, ed. John Sinclair (Edinburgh: Printed by Abernathy & Walker, 1814), 3: 423.

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aesthetics between the "sister arts" of weaving and gardening.[27] However. weavers' floristry would seem to offer a more specific and concrete explanation.

Flowered silks and florists' flowers were both luxury goods whose value was determined by fashion, fashion being the stimulation of production and consumption of goods based on a desire for novelty. Rothstein notes that in eighteenth-century Spitalfields, weavers who specialized in flowered silks were "some of the richest men in the industry."[28] As bourgeois or petit-bourgeois consumers in their own right, the silk weavers may have participated in horticultural fashions by buying florists' flowers. As practicing florists interested in hybridizing new varieties, the weavers would have been perfectly positioned both to introduce new varieties of flowers and to incorporate those new flowers into their floral-patterned silks. It was the variation of floral patterns more than any other quality that determined the fashion value of silk fabrics.

The interrelationship of floristry and weaving as work

The workshop architecture and work patterns of the Spitalfields weavers offer material explanations for why and how weavers were able to pursue floristry. The occupations were unusually well-suited as they required similar working conditions, and in the case of figured silk-weaving, floristry was more than convenient; it was a complementary vocation. Like other flower fanciers, artisan florists in Spitalfields and in the northern textile counties usually raised plants in small enclosed yards, generally

[27] Kraak, 847-848, 844; Flanagan, 20. Ronald Rees explores the idea of gardening and textiles as sister arts from a design perspective in *Interior Landscapes*.

[28] Rothstein, *Silk Designs*, 19.

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located behind the house. Some weavers also rented an allotment, which was a garden space separate from living quarters, often further out of town. Although they raised a number of florists' flowers, the weavers in Spitalfields and Lancashire were famous for their auriculas (fig. 1). Auriculas were best grown in strongly fertilized soil where drainage was good, ventilation plentiful, and sun exposure mild. Often the plants were protected under glass by cold frames or bell jars (fig. 2). These plants were potted and brought inside for protection during the blooming period, and in preparation for show. As space became increasingly limited with urban development, the plants were moved to rooftops and workshop windowsills. In an early example from 1688, John Worlidge reported window-boxes and potted plants as standard practice among those who were "by his confinement to a Shop, being denied the priviledge of having a real Garden." Later observers also associated the increase of window plants with decrease of yard space due to urban architectural crowding.[29]

Workshop architecture supported the transition of flower gardens to window boxes and potted plants, whether out of necessity or by choice. Textile workshops of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were usually housed in top floor rooms built with long windows, to provide the light required for many kinds of textile work. "The house in which I was born in Bethnal Green was one of a row built specially for the refugee weavers," recalled the son of a journeyman weaver in the early 1930s. "They are double fronted houses with a room each side of the front door. Over both of these

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[29] Wemyss-Cooke, *Primulas*, 16; Genders, *The Cottage Garden*, 15; John Worlidge, *Systema Horti-culturae* (1688) quoted in John Dixon Hunt and Joachim Wolschke-Bulman, "Introduction: Discovering the Vernacular Garden," in *The Vernacular Garden*, eds., Hunt and Bulman (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1993), 6.

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rooms ran a 'long room,' a very light room with a long window right along. This contained the looms . . . The house had a lovely little garden and I knew every flower by name, smell and taste" (figs. 3-4).[30]

Good light was especially important for those working in silks that were figured, the term for the flower-patterned fabrics in which the Spitalfields weavers specialized. Loomshops kept the windows closed to keep in moisture, so that the silk wouldn't become brittle. This created a "thick and damp" atmosphere that would have been conducive to plant growth so long as the temperature wasn't too warm, and the plants were given some ventilation on a regular basis. Even in the best circumstances, plants that are continually cultivated indoors become weakened. A photograph of a Coventry hand-loom weaver's shop, taken sometime before 1921, shows potted window plants that have become spindly, a condition resulting from too little light (fig. 5).[31]

Floristry was inseparable from the flexible patterns of artisanal time-management. Independent weavers set their own hours, according to work orders measured by the piece. They tended to work a compressed or elastic week, claiming

[30] Hurlin letters quoted in Cox, *Life and Death*, 47; "Pelham Street, Spitalfields" and "House in Booth Street, Spitalfields" (woodcuts), Knight's *History of London*, 1842. In Sir Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development* (London: Drane's Danegeld House, 1921): Plate VIII; Mayhew, 105; George R. Sims, "In Bethnal Green," *Off the track in London* (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1911), n.p. Sims citation provided by the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives website "THHOL" at http://www.davidric.dircon.co.uk.

[31] Colum Giles and Ian H. Goodall, *Yorkshire Textile Mills: The Buildings of the Yorkshire Textile Industry, 1770-1930* (London: HMSO, 1992), 19-22, 124; Rothstein, *Spitalfields Silks*, 6-7; Peter Searsby, *Weavers and Outworkers in Victorian Times* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1980), 8; Manchee, 330-331; "Weavers' Houses in Menotti Street, Bethnal Green," in Warner, Plate X.

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Monday as the partial or full holiday of "St. Monday." In 1811, Alexander Wadsworth complained that London's artisans "religiously" observed St. Monday, "in general followed by a Saint Tuesday also." St. Monday was often spent nursing a hangover from a drinking binge the previous evening, or making progress towards a new headache for Tuesday morning. Weavers also enjoyed floristry or other hobbies like pigeon-breeding (for which they were also well-known throughout the nineteenth century) as their St. Monday leisure. Edward Church, a Spitalfields resident, said of his neighbor silk weavers, "Monday was generally a day of rest; Tuesday was not severe labour; Saturday was a day to go to the warehouse, and was an easy day for the weaver.[32]

"Hybridising is a game of chance played between man and plants. It is in some respects a matter of hazard; and we all know how much more excitement is produced by uncertain than certain results," wrote botanist John Lindley.[33] Much of the fun of floristry was experimental hybridizing; in order for this to work, the plant breeder had to have the freedom to attend to the plants when the plants were ready for fertilization. The auricula is a species of the genus Primulaceae, which also includes

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[32] Report of the trial of Alexander Wadsworth against Peter Laurie (1811), quoted in Thompson, *Customs in Common*, 374; Testimony of Edward Church, *Reports from Hand-Loom Weavers' Commissioners* (Parliamentary Papers, 1840) 8: 218, cited in George J. Stigler, *Five Lectures on Economic Problems* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1949), 26; Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 263; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), 143. On St. Monday see: Thompson, *Customs in Common*, 373-8; Douglas A. Reid, "The Decline of St. Monday 1776-1876," *Past and Present* 71 (1976): 76-101.

[33] Prof. John Lindley, "Remarks on Hybridising Plants," *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* 2 (1847-48): 114.

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primula, primrose, polyanthus, oxlip, and cowslip. Some primulas, including the auricula, will only bear seed through cross-pollination between a pin-eyed and thrum-eyed flower; these differ in the length of the style, which is part of the flower's female organ. When plants can self-pollinate, consistency of plant form is reliable, but when plants must cross-pollinate, the seeds will manifest genetic variability. When the seeds are grown, the plant breeder may be rewarded with a new variety that has the desired characteristics, but the chances are that most of the seedlings will not exhibit those traits. Auricula growers have estimated that only one or two plants out of two hundred will meet the desired criteria; the rest are thrown out. If the breeder is trying to make minute improvements on a variety, some consistency can be achieved if the pin and thrum plants have been bred with very similar plants for a few generations, thus reducing the genetic variability. Some cross-pollinating plants can be self-pollinated by hand, but the seeds are frequently sterile or if fertile, the offspring is weaker, yielding less growth and fewer flowers.

Florists tried to maximize control over hybridization. As the seedlings began to grow, offshoots with the wrong characteristics were discarded. When the plants began to flower, the florist put the best specimens together either at a great distance from other plants of the genus, or under a glass bell jar. "Carboys," glass containers for bleaches and dyes, were efficiently reused as bell jars to prevent accidental fertilization. Some florists performed the hybridization by hand, brushing pollen from one flower's anthers onto another's stigma.[34]

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[34] Richard Gorer, *The Development of Garden Flowers* (Great Britain: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1970), 224-231; Lys de Bray, *Manual of Old-Fashioned Flowers* (Sparkford, England: The Oxford Illustrated Press, 1984), 37-38; Tarver, *Auricula History*, 40-42; Wemyss-Cooke, *Primulas*, 81.

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When the florist has effectively produced the desired hybrid, that plant can be asexually reproduced by vegetative propagation. Vegetative propagation is the process of growing new plants by rooting cuttings, or by division of plants that grow from bulbs and corms. In the late 1700s, nurseryman James Lee propagated and sold three hundred fuchsias grown from the cuttings of one plant. At a guinea each, he quickly made three hundred guineas on his eight guinea investment for the original plant. Because the seeds of hybrids tend to be infertile or will revert to the attributes of one of the parent species, increasing and preserving an artificially created hybrid could be more difficult and demanding than the original experiment. Vegetative propagation was a good solution.[35]

During the blooming stage, plants had to be closely watched if the flower was to be show-worthy. Auriculas, the weavers' favorite flower, could only take eastern exposure, with northern exposure in the summer, and southern only in the winter. Too much heat or light was as damaging as too little. For ideal even growth, the plants had to be turned, shaded, pinched back, and trained on wire supports, requiring attention at least once a day. Once the plant began to "blow" (bloom), it was removed to a dimmer spot, resulting in a prolonged bloom with intensified color. According to an 1824 article on auricula cultivation in *Paxton's Magazine of Botany*, "Many experienced

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[35] *Lincoln Herald*, 4 Nov. 1831, cited in Webber, *Early Horticulturists*, 98-99. Webber speculates that Lee's parents may have been amateur florists because it is known that they were linen weavers, 91. Lee's story was one of the more popular legends that was repeated through the century as evidence of florists' ingenuity; see Shepherd, "Introduction of the Fuchsia," *Philadelphia Florist* 1 (Jan 1853): 276; "Cultivation of Fuchsia," *Magazine of Horticulture* 26 (1860): 269, first published in *Gardener's Chronicle*; An Ear Drop, "My Fuchsia Secrets," *Gard. Mon.* 5 (1863): 11; On the "industrious florist" propagating hybrids see "Nature's Hints to Florists," *An. Hort.* (1848): 477-78.

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florists place the flowers in perfect darkness for two or three days previous to their being shown, and usually in a cellar . . .. This is found to improve their colours wonderfully." Illustrations survive of at least two techniques for shading a small collection or a single flower (fig. 6).[1]

The work of floristry wasn't necessarily difficult, but it required diligence because the plants were frequently "miffy," the florists' slang for a plant that was touchy, or easily mismanaged. A gardener who had to be away from the flowers for any length of time risked failure. If water touched the blooms directly, this destroyed the powdery farina that is also called meal. If it rained, and no-one was home to put a protective bell jar over the auricula (again, the carboys came in handy), the flower was

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[1] "Culture of the Auricula," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 1 (1824): 11-12; M. Saul, "Packing Florists' Flowers, and the Advantage of keeping them in the Dark for two or three Days previous to exhibiting them for Competition," *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Dec. 1831): 716-17. Primary sources on raising auriculas for show include James [Isaac] Emmerton, *A Plain and Practical Treatise on the Culture and Management of the Auricula* (1815/1816; 2nd ed. 1819); James Maddock, *Florist's Directory* (1792); and Thomas Hogg, *Treatise on the Growth and Culture of the Carnation, Pink, Auricula, etc.* (1820; supplement 1833). For illustrations, see Robert Sweet, *The Florist's Guide* (1827-32). Of particular interest is a book by George W. Johnson and J. Slater that compiles and compares history and cultivation remarks by Emmerton, Maddock, Hogg, and others. George W. Johnson and J. Slater, *The Gardener's Monthly Volume: The Auricula; Its Culture and History* 5 (London: R. Baldwin, Paternoster Row, 1847). For secondary sources on the history of the cultivation methods for auriculas, see Peter Coats, *Flowers in History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 145-59; Duthie; Tarver; Biffen. For second illustration, see Antoine Borel, *Gardener Showing His Tulips*, pen and ink, grey wash and watercolor, c.1800. Collection of the Musee du Louvre. Reproduction can be seen in Madeleine Pinault, *The Painter as Naturalist*, trans. Philip Sturgess (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), n.p.

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likely miffed.[2] It should not be surprising then. that florists' flowers were so successfully raised by weavers who could provide plentiful light and an appropriate atmosphere, while constantly keeping one eye on the flowers as they wove.

Weaving and floristry were different occupations that required similar skills. "Weaving, though not ranked as a real science, is certainly a business that requires much study," wrote a contributor to the 1819 *Weavers' Magazine*. The author elaborated: "To devise the possible ways into which yarn may be disposed; the various effects that such combinations will produce; to arrange colours in all their tasteful variety in damask and figured silks, and muslins, gives a pleasure to the minds of those that are capable of accomplishing it." Manual dexterity, mental attentiveness, aesthetic sensitivity, and as Peter Linebaugh correctly notes "patience, intricacy [and] concentration" were the necessary characteristics for both types of activity.[3]

Artisans valued skill. Whether manual or intellectual, the "property of skill," as John Rule calls it, was the most significant source of respect in the artisanal community; it was fundamental to the "artisan mentality." In Anne Secord's studies of artisan naturalists in early-nineteenth-century Lancashire, she describes the how the class consciousness of weavers influenced their botanical hobbies. Applying Rule's theory, Secord asserts that the skill of knowing botanical nomenclature "served to

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[2] F.H.S., "Florists' Flowers," *An. Hort.* 1 (1846): 180; "Glenny on the Calceolaria," *An. Hort.* 3 (1848): 98; William Hanbury, *The Whole Body of Planting and Gardening* (1770-71) 2 vols., 1: 285-315, quoted by Duthie, "Florists' Societies and Feasts after 1750," 10.

[3] Ed io anche son Pittore, "Essay on Weaving and How far has the invention of Weaving contributed to promote the happiness, and improve the condition of Man?" *The Weavers' Magazine and Literary Companion* (Paisley: Printed by John Neilson, 1819) 1: 243; Linebaugh, 263.

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restore a sense of status and respectability" for handloom weavers who became "deskilled" as their product's commodity value was undermined by merchants and unskilled laborers. Botany clubs may have excluded women because of trade resentment: unskilled female workers were replacing the male handloom weavers' labor. Noting the artisan botanists' reluctance to share their findings, Secord draws analogies between information and commodity exchange to explain artisan distrust of "middlemen."[4] Among the same population, the related specialization of floristry was also a valued skill practiced mainly by male weavers who were sometimes secretive about their methods for growing flowers.

Decline of Textile Labor and Florists' Leisure

A moderate degree of prosperity was necessary for the integrated occupations of weaving and floristry to coexist. In 1865, local historian William Tallack remarked that fifty years prior:

> the Spitalfields weavers were at intervals in a state of comparative comfort and prosperity, but always liable to be overtaken by severe trial and poverty through enforced idleness. The more industrious and steady amongst them were famed for their love of flowers, which they cultivated abundantly in window boxes at home, and on a more extensive scale in numerous small plots of land (on the allotment system) at Hoxton and the City Road, then a suburban district of gardens and brick-fields . . ..[5]

Loudon similarly linked weavers' floristry to their unstable working conditions.

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[4] Secord, "Science in the Pub," 291-93, 295.

[5] William Tallack, *Peter Bedford, The Spitalfields Philanthropist* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1865), 13.

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Floristry was "the most precarious branch of commercial gardening as a means of subsistence," asserted Loudon, "since the purchasers are . . . the tradesman and middling class. The income of these being temporary, that is, depending in a great measure on personal exertion, and the current demand for their produce, is, of course, easily affected by political changes . . . ."[9] The fluctuating income that Loudon describes is the key to understanding the trajectory of weavers' floristry, if one considers weavers as both buyers and sellers of florists' flowers.

As the eighteenth century came to a close, many artisans who were engaged in traditional home-based craft industries suffered unemployment and eventually obsolescence because of technological development, foreign competition, and an overburdened labor market. The influx of displaced agricultural and textile workers from Ireland and throughout England intensified competition for factory jobs and the related outwork industries. These workers could maintain their crafts as underpaid outwork, or join the industrial forces for slightly better wages. Or, following the path of escape, move to the next location where preindustrial workshops still survived. As the prices for finished goods were driven down, the wages for out-work also diminished, and the weavers found themselves competing for lower and lower wages. For weavers who enjoyed floristry as a form of luxury consumption, activity declined unless they could become both consumers and producers who turned a profit on their

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[9] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 1055.

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hobby.[7]

Silk weavers were the first group of textile workers to experience the dire poverty that accompanied industrial exploitation of outwork. Intensive deterioration of the Spitalfields silk-weaving industry began in the 1760s. In 1763, the Seven Years War came to an end, which meant that restricted French imports were again allowed to be sold in Britain and its colonies. In the same decade, mechanical innovations like the spinning jenny and drop-box fly shuttle reduced the number of workers and the degree of skill required for textile work. The spinning jenny was introduced in 1764. With this hand-operated machine, one spinner could do the work of sixteen or eighteen people, for the jenny had that many spindles whereas the conventional spinning wheel had only one. Later, the spinner would be replaced by steam power. In the short run, the consequence was an increase in availability of yarn at much lower prices, leading to decreased labor for spinners, but increased labor for weavers. These crafts had previously been conducted within a single workshop, but the jenny separated the spinner from the weaver. Consequently, one unskilled worker could take the jobs of several skilled artisans. At the same time, another aggravation came into play: figured silks were going out of fashion.[8] Prices dropped, wages dropped, and unemployment increased.

Many "outside" workers who owned their looms and set their own hours were

[7] General information on the legislation and industrialization of the textile industry and Spitalfields silks presented in this section comes from work by J. H. Clapham, "The Spitalfields Acts, 1773-1824," *Economic Journal* 26 (1916): 459-471; Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. and ed. W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner (1845; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958); Flanagan, Linebaugh, Kershen, Rothstein, and Thompson.

[8] Engels, 41-42; Rothstein, *Silk Designs*, 23-25.

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forced into becoming "inside" workers who worked at a factory for the manufacturer who owned it. Although reputed to be both industrious and philanthropic, Kershen shows that the Huguenot silk merchants and master-weavers engaged in "exploitation of migrant by migrant." Labor and wealth were divided by the ranks of merchant/importer, throwster, master-weaver, journeyman weaver, and mercer, a merchant who specialized in fancy textiles. Lower in the economic hierarchy were the throwsters, winders, dyers, warpers, and quillers who prepared the raw silk.

In response to this crisis, Spitalfields textile workers attempted to organize themselves into "combinations" (labor unions) to protect wage rates, secure prices, set standard piece work measurements, prevent women and unskilled workers from entering the trades, and curtail the increase of working hours. When undercut by other workers, merchants, and manufacturers, the Spitalfields workers staged violent protests or undermined the inequity by stealing materials customarily allowed them by prior traditions. Out of fear mixed with sympathy, Parliament responded in 1766 by prohibiting French imports, an act that Rothstein describes as "irrelevant . . . for Italian silks could be legally imported."[9]

In 1773, Parliament passed the first of the Spitalfields Acts; it outlawed combinations, restricted growth of the skilled weavers' work force, and put magistrates in control of setting uniform wage and price rates for the locality. Later Spitalfields Acts were mostly rate adjustments. Ostensibly, journeymen weavers were being protected by the acts, but depression in the trade only increased. There was either work at the full rate, or no work. At the end of the eighteenth century, there was extreme unemployment among the Spitalfields hand-workers. In 1810, a survey of the

[9] Rothstein, *Silk Designs*, 23.

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10,000 silk looms in Spitalfields showed that 2852 of the looms lacked employment.[10]

In response to these circumstances, both manufacturers and artisans left London for textile manufacturing districts in Lancashire, Cheshire, Macclesfield, Dublin, Glasgow, and Paisley. The deskilling of textile work (by simplification of spinning and weaving technology) made it relatively easy for manufacturers to relocate in areas where workers would accept lower wages. It was this process that made a Spitalfields observer remark in 1768 that Glasgow was replacing London as the silk capital. The Acts "gave the opportunity to the provincial manufacturers for the offering of lower wages to their workers, than were being paid in the London district. With the prospect of steadier employment, at lower wages, many of the London weavers migrated to the provinces." The 1773 Spitalfields Act virtually pushed hand loom weavers into mill towns.[11]

This combination of circumstances divided the formerly broad contingency of middling artisans into two opposed ranks, the proletariat and the capitalists. Frederick Engels explained:

> For, though the rising manufacture first attained importance by transforming tools into machines, work-rooms into factories, and consequently, the toiling lower middle-class into the toiling proletariat, and the former large merchants into manufacturers, though the lower middle-class was thus early crushed out, and the population reduced to the two opposing elements, workers and capitalists, this happened outside of the domain of manufacture proper, in the province of handicraft and retail trade as well. In the place of the former masters and apprentices, came great capitalists and working-men who had no

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[10] Kershen, 69-73; Tallack, 12-13.

[11] Linebaugh, 274; Flanagan, 22-23; Clapham, 459-471.

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prospect of rising above their class.[12]

Industrial innovation and the manipulation of labor as a market commodity were the undeniable new rulers of textile production. Power looms were introduced in the first years of the new century. The Jacquard loom came into general use in the 1820s. The Spitalfields Acts and prohibition of French silk imports were both revoked in 1826. This was essentially the end of the hand loom weavers' livelihood. Those who specialized in fancy goods were able to hold out the longest, for their work was highly skilled, and difficult to convincingly replicate by machinery. From the time of the 1860 Cobden Free Trade Agreement, foreign silks were no longer subject to import duties. Hand loom silk weaving survived only as practiced by a few specialists.

Floristry Declines in Practice and Rises as an Iconic Ideal

Industrialization resulted in greater leisure for the bourgeois, and less for the working class. Between the last half of the 1700s and the first half of the 1800s, the economic status of the weavers changed dramatically, and with it their flower-gardening also changed. If floristry encouraged weavers to exercise greater industriousness, the resulting diligence facilitated floristry only so long as certain characteristics of the work were retained. When the weaver had to work every day all day, or had to work away from his garden, the flowers suffered from lack of attention. Weavers whose industriousness led to accumulated wealth and a change in status from master weaver to the solidly bourgeois ranks of merchants and manufactory owners, moved to suburban landscaped villas where hired gardeners did the work. Or, in the

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[12] Engels, 51.

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more common story, the harder the weaver had to work, the less he could afford to keep flowers.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact period when weavers' floristry went into decline because this activity was such an easy target for nostalgia for past ways of life and condemnation of the present. In 1795 John Thelwall, son of a Spitalfields silk mercer, recalled local weavers' tulip gardens as a thing of past Mondays' leisure. As noted by E.P. Thompson, Thelwall's remembrance was embedded in a criticism of current conditions of poverty in Spitalfields, and designed to excite "deep sources of feeling in the memories of Jacobin journeymen and artisans." According to economic historian Gregory Claeys, at a time when other radical republicans criticized all forms of luxury as antithetical to the "natural" rights of laborers to make a living wage, Thelwall formulated a pro-commercial republican theory of labor and property. Thelwall supported free trade, even of luxuries, with the stipulation that goods and profits ought to be proportionately distributed throughout society.[13] In terms of the silk weavers' floristry, Thelwall's position is significant in pointing to weavers' floristry as an icon that could serve arguments both against industry and in favor of free trade.

In 1849, Henry Mayhew visited silk-weavers in their home-based workshops in the Spitalfields district of London to assess their working and living conditions, and to collect the weavers' own opinions on the "cause of the depreciation in the value of their labour." In a shop with spinning wheels and three looms still in operation, he

[13] Thompson, *English Working Class*, 143; Gregory Claeys, "The Origins of Rights of Labor: Republicanism, Commerce, and the Construction of Modern Social Theory in Britain, 1796-1805," *The Journal of Modern History* 66 (June 1994): 263-74.

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noted, "Along the windows, on each side, were ranged small pots of fuchsias, with their long scarlet drops swinging gently backwards and forwards, as the room shook with the clatter of the looms." In contrast, Mayhew also found an old weaver hungry, sick, and struggling to compete in the market for cheap silks. The weaver recalled the more comfortable times that preceded the abolition of import silk tariffs in 1826, "I could live by my labour then, but now, why it's wretched in the extreme. Then I'd a nice little garden and some nice tulips for my hobby, when my work was done. There they lay, up in my old hat now."[14]

"Anybody whose acquaintance with Bethnal-Green commenced more than a quarter of a century ago," reported *The Illustrated London News* in 1863,

> will remember that some of these names of streets and rows which now seem to have such a grimly sarcastic meaning expressed not inaptly the places to which they originally referred. Hollybush-place, Green-street, Pleasant-place, and other neighborhoods, which now consist of ruinous tenements reeking with abominations, were outlying, decent cottages, standing on or near plots of garden ground, where the inmates reared prize tulips and rare dahlias in their scanty leisure, and where some of the last of the old French refugees dozed away the evenings of their lives in pretty summer-houses, amidst flower-beds gay with virginia stocks and creeping plants.

Those gardens had since become trash heaps. In the winter of 1871, another visitor to Bethnal Green described old houses with small gardens "quite trodden upon and denuded at this season." Although many were only used as waste receptacles, the

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[14] Henry Mayhew, "The Spitalfields Silk-Weavers, Letter II--23 October, 1849," (1854), republished in E.P. Thompson and Eileen Yeo, eds., *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the* Morning Chronicle, *1849-1850* (London: Merlin Press, 1971), 105, 108-9, 114.

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author dared to hope that in the summertime the gardens might show improvement.[15]

Reverend Francis D'Altry Horner, himself an auricula cultivator, kept the traditions and tales of the weaving florists alive through the end of the 1800s. In 1879, he wrote nostalgically,

> There stands many an old house, now deeply embedded in a town, that used to have its garden, oft-times a florist's. Here is the very window, curiously long and lightsome at which the hand-loom weaver worked behind his loom, able to watch his flowers (in their pots) as closely as his work, his labour and his pleasure intermingled, interwoven as intimately as his silken threads.

Horner saw the end of this tradition as the direct result of mills replacing hand-operated machinery in small home workshops, and the consequent changes in population, architecture, and most significantly, labor conditions.[16]

During the course of the nineteenth century, the gardening weaver became a sometimes hopeful, but more often nostalgic icon of the weaver who was able to maintain a sufficient income. This idealization was evoked by the workers themselves as much as by ostensibly benevolent observers. Verbal and visual descriptions of textile workers often included starving or thriving cottage gardens and window plants as commentary on the poverty or self-sufficiency and the idleness or diligence of the worker. An 1861 image showed a family of silk-weavers working late into the night. Potted plants and a bird-cage line the characteristic long windows of the shop (fig. 7).

[15] "Dwellings of the Poor in Bethnal-Green," *The Illustrated London News*, 24 Oct. 1863; "Homes in the east of London. A fresh visit to Bethnal-Green," *The Builder*, 28 Jan 1871. Both articles provided by Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives website.

[16] Francis D'Altry Horner, introduction to James Douglas, *Hardy Florists' Flowers* (1879) quoted in Roy Genders, *Collecting Antique Plants: The History and Culture of the Old Florists' Flowers* (London: Pelham, 1971), 16-17, 35.

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As textile outwork came to be done predominantly by women, the iconography shifted to seamstresses and their potted plants. T. J. Edelstein has looked at this imagery in "They Sang 'The Song of the Shirt': The Visual Iconography of the Seamstress." Linking a popular iconologic image to Thomas Hood's 1843 ode to the overworked seamstress, "Song of the Shirt," Edelstein interprets the frequent inclusion of potted plants as nostalgia for the countryside as well as a metaphor for want of light and nourishment. Edelstein was not aware of the long-standing connection of male weavers with urban floristry, and the implications of floristry as leisure resulting from a healthy income, but the lineage should be clear: an overworked and underfed seamstress with her iconologic twin, a shriveled spindly potted plant, is the occupational daughter of the weaving florists of Spitalfields. Samuel Smiles wrote several tracts on self-help that utilized the biographies of artisan naturalists. In his study of the Huguenot refugees, he cites Reverend Isaac Taylor of Bethnal Green on the impoverished silk-weavers who lived there. The weavers, according to Taylor, maintained a "relic . . . of their former prosperity and gentle nurture [sic:nature?]" by keeping flowers and birds in their workshops. "Few rooms, however wretched, are destitute either of a sickly plant, struggling, like its sickly owner, for bare life; or a caged bird warbling the songs of heaven to the poor imprisoned weaver as he plies his weary labour."[17]

The weaver's potted plant became a symbol for the artisan's last vestiges of property ownership. Loudon wrote:

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[17] T. J. Edelstein, "They Sang 'The Song of the Shirt': The Visual Iconography of the Seamstress," *Victorian Studies* 23 (winter 1980):183-210; Smiles, *Huguenot*, 426, 413. On nineteenth-century idealization of eighteenth-century textile working conditions, see also Thompson, *English Working Class*, 269-70.

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> The laborious journeyman mechanic, whose residence, in large cities, is often in the air, rather than on the earth, decorates his garret-window with a garden of pots. The debtor deprived of personal liberty, and the pauper in the workhouse, divested of all property in external things, and without any fixed object on which to place their affections, sometimes resort to this symbol of territorial appropriation and enjoyment. So natural it is for all to fancy they have an inherent right in the soil; and so necessary to happiness to exercise the affections, by having some object on which to place them.[18]

Profitable Leisure

Floristry appears to have been the by-product of disposable income and flexible working conditions, yet floristry was slow to decline. As described above, even though the silk trade began to erode in the 1760s, leading to the crisis of widespread unemployment by 1800, at mid-nineteenth century some Spitalfields weavers still kept flowers while others recalled having done so only until the mid-1820s. The textile and floristry work that was once intricately connected became with industrialization radically separated, and radically different in the quality of work experience. When weavers could still spare the time and income, floristry provided an opportunity to engage in unalienated and profitable labor, that might in turn provide enough supplementary income so that the artisan could continue in his chosen trade despite depressed wages.

Where the vocabulary of weaving intersects with the language of floristry, a subtext of economic value emerges. In the silk putting-out industry of eighteenth-century London, the "unwoven threads that attached the warp to the beam," called "thrum" were part of the waste customarily claimed by the weavers for their own re-use or re-sale. At Rag Fair, the market for textile waste and used clothes, "thrums"

[18] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 94.

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was also the word used for three pence, an amount of "considerable takings." At the florists' shows, "thrum-eye" (anthers projecting above stigma) was the essential characteristic for a winning auricula, the specialty flower of the silk weavers. Floral thrum and silk thrum were sources of supplementary income for the silk weavers.[19]

Weavers protested the Parliamentary efforts to criminalize their customary rights to keep silk thrum. This, in addition to other labor protests, resulted in the silk weavers of Spitalfields being a hangman's favorite in eighteenth-century London. In comparison with other parts of London, Peter Linebaugh has found that there were far more hangings than indictments (involving non-lethal punishment) in the suburbs where the silk weavers were concentrated. Linebaugh concludes, "authorities were more prone to use hangings to intimidate the textile suburbs than the parishes of central London." Peter Bedford and William Allen, associates in the ownership and management of a Spitalfields silk manufactory, joined with several other Quaker residents of Spitalfields to protest capital punishment in the 1810s and 1820s. At that time, the British magistrates were hanging even juveniles for minor offenses like stealing shoes.[20]

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[19] Linebaugh, 264-65, 268; William Chorlton, "The Primrose, Cowslip and Polyanthus," *The [Philadelphia] Florist and Horticultural Journal* 3 (March 1854): 71-76; Biffen, 14-16. "Pink" also crosses occupations, possibly from as early as the sixteenth century. The term referred both to punctured or cut jagged edging for fabrics (pinking shears are the most familiar modern form), and to plants of the species dianthus that have similarly jagged edges, and which were popular as florists' flowers. In addition, in the eighteenth-century, pink was being used to describe "The 'flower,' or finest example of excellence," like that of a show flower, and "The most perfect condition or degree of something," often health, wealth, or other condition of livelihood. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, preparers, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 11: 869-874.

[20] Linebaugh, 258, 256-287; Tallack, 7-8, 15-17, 91-2.

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Flower shows held by florists' and horticultural societies provided opportunities for profit. The outcome of the hybridizing was always a gamble, but as in the seventeenth-century tulip speculation, risk for profit was as interesting as the floral product itself. A 1777 nursery catalogue lists auriculas, polyanthuses and carnations as selling for prices ranging from one shilling, to two pounds, two shillings. In the same year, Joseph Partington's first prize auricula at the Eccles show won him twenty-one shillings. Around 1815, prices for a single auricula ranged from seven shillings, six pence to two and one-half pounds. In the 1830s, hand-loom weavers were making a weekly wage of about seven shillings, whereas in 1824 the average weekly had been fourteen shillings, 6d.[21] These scattered samplings can only indicate the fluctuating extremes of high prizes and prices awarded for florists' flowers in contrast to the low wages for textile work. Of course, it is very difficult to estimate how many people worked together, and how many hours they worked to earn the documented weekly wage. Nevertheless, the contrast, combined with comments by contemporaries indicate that floristry could be more profitable use of time than weaving.

Loudon wrote in 1829 that it was "no uncommon thing for a working man who earns, perhaps, from 18s. to 30s. per week, to give two guineas for a new variety of auricula, with a view to crossing it with some other, and raising seedlings of new

[21] Richard Weston, *The Universal Botanist and Nurseryman* (1777), quoted in Duthie, *Florists' Flowers*, 21; Johnson and Slater, 6; Biffen, 40; Mayhew, 107, 112; James Kay-Shuttleworth, *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (1832; reprint, Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971), 27; Rothstein, *Spitalfields Silks*, 18. A pound was divided into twenty shillings each worth twelve pence. A guinea was equal to twenty-one shillings.

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properties." About the same time, horticulture societies began offering prizes of up to ten guineas for the best collection of auriculas. In the context of flower show earnings, one can see how floristry worked as an economic supplement or alternative to textile labor. Flower shows provided opportunities to sell flowers as well as to win cash prizes. The prize-winning specimens could always bring a higher price either at the show or in later sales generated by reports of the flower show awards.[22]

Elite sponsorship and regulation of flower shows may have been a way to keep track of the unregulated income that had traditionally come from prizes, and the sales of winning specimens. George Crabbe's poem to the weaving florist points out the economic advantages of hobby floristry as beyond the law: "He fears no bailiff's wrath, no baron's blame,/His is untaxed, and undisputed game." These lines are situated between two stanzas, each implying a different meaning. The first describes nature appreciation, implying that the free "game" is the noting of botanical species and appreciation of natural beauty. The stanza that follows "He fears no bailiff's wrath . . . " concerns the winning flower at a flower show.[23]

Like his father, Isaac Emmerton of Barnet was a nurseryman who invested in auriculas for show. In 1788, Emmerton senior bought one specimen of the winning "Lancashire Hero" auricula for two guineas. Emmerton junior, who became well-

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[22] Loudon, (1829) quoted without full citation in Ray Desmond, "British Nineteenth-Century Gardening Periodicals: A Chronological List" in *John Claudius Loudon and the Early Nineteenth Century in Great Britain* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1980), 87-88.

[23] George Crabbe, *The Borough: a poem, in 24 letters*, rev. 2nd ed. (London: J. Hatchard, 1810), 109-111. Crabbe's reference to the weaver florist is quoted in William Howitt, *Rural Life of England* (1844, 3rd. Rev. ed.; reprint facsimile Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971), 549.

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known for his successful show auriculas, claimed in 1815 that the flowers weren't grown for sale, despite evidence to the contrary. This claim may have been based in resentment over debt, perhaps caused or compounded by unfair taxation, twenty years earlier. In 1795, Emmerton borrowed £800 against his nursery and stock, but in 1800 had to raise £315 more by "deed poll." In the same year, the nurseryman was prosecuted for drawing and building an effigy of the chairman of the local tax commissioners, Reverend C. J. Cottrell, JP., the Rector of Handley (fig. 8). Cottrell was represented hanging from a gibbet with entrails and genitals exposed, confessing his sins with his dying words:

> Brethren. Brethren behold my exalted Station. Planted amongst elegant trees. Shrubs and sweet flowers, but all appear to me Piss a beds. Nettles and Brambles. I feel the Sting of my Consience. O yea I repent from ever been Parson Just Ass and so forth. O what a miserable Shitting. Stinking Dogmatick Prig of an April fool I do appear, all over Filth. from such filth of Body and Consience Good Lord diliver Me. and from this high Promotion I beseech thee to encline my Heart to do Justice that I may walk in Peace before all Men. Women and Children, Aman.

Emmerton was imprisoned for one year on the charge of libel, and later, perhaps as a consequence of these problems, he relocated to London. Emmerton's book *Plain and Practical Treatise on the Culture and Management of the Auricula* was published in three editions, and considered the most important guide to the auricula. However, at his death, Emmerton had very little money, and was hardly an example of the docile and comfortable florist idealized by horticultural reformers. Moreover, he seems to be accusing Cottrell of insensitivity to nature. Elegant trees, shrubs, and sweet flowers surround Cottrell, but he can't appreciate them, seeing only piss-a-beds, nettles, and brambles. The questionable legality of certain kinds of profit from florists' flowers

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may have led other working-class florists to similarly claim that they were only growing flowers for pleasure and for show, not for profit.[24]

Some artisans, like John Mellor of Oldham, Lancashire, turned their hobby floristry into a successful, full-time business, thus avoiding both mechanization and exploitative outwork. Mellor (1767-1848) had been a hand-loom weaver and cotton spinner. In the course of his life he developed four nursery gardens, acted as President of the Roynton Botanical Society for thirty years, and was described as "Father of working men botanists of Lancashire."[25]

The textile workers weren't the only artisans who turned a profit on floristry as supplemental income. There were other tradesmen florists like cutlers and miners whose work either had short or flexible working hours, and/or were conducted in or near the home. In Sheffield, the skilled metalworkers were known for keeping gardens where they raised specialty items for supplementary income. Loudon recalled in 1831,

> I once knew an old nailer in Staffordshire, a great florist, who appropriated a considerable portion of his garden to the cultivation of gooseberries, by which he made a surprising sum of money in the year,--more, indeed, than he liked to acknowledge,--selling the fruit by the pennyworth to people who came to the garden for the purpose of eating it.

Gooseberries were cultivated, like florists' flowers, as a specialty that was constantly

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[24] Jim Gould, "Isaac Emmerton, Thomas Hogg and their Composts," *Garden History* 17 (autumn 1989): 181-7; Thompson, *Customs in Common*, Plate VI, 481-2; Biffen, 36-40; Ray Desmond, *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists : including plant collectors, flower painters, and garden designers* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 233.

[25] Desmond, *Dictionary*, 481-82; Secord, "Science in the Pub, 277. Incidentally, Oldham is next to Middleton, which was a center for auricula cultivation from the 1720s. Tarver, 11.

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being altered by competitive hybridizers. Loudon's nailer florist hybridized gooseberries for their size even though this weakened the berries' flavor, because larger berries took less time to pick in preparation for sale.[26]

Benjamin Ely, a master blacksmith at Rothwell, began growing carnations for pleasure in 1803. Finding success in introducing new strains, he eventually purchased more land for cultivation, and opened his own florist's shop in 1826. Ely apprenticed his seventh son in both blacksmithing and floristry; the son continued the business after his father's death in 1843. Ely senior was clearly conscientious about the financial risk of both trades; he provided his son with occupational options by giving him more than one profitable skill. John Harvey, author of a impressively detailed study of the nursery business in England before 1760, describes Ely as an "odd-man-out" in the field of professional floristry.[27]

Although Harvey considers Ely's case unusual, he also finds that professional horticulturists "made an important contribution to the phenomenon of the rise of the middle classes from the ranks of the lesser rural yeomanry and the urban artisans" at the end of the eighteenth century. It is my assertion that there were many like Ely who used floristry as a bridge from pre-industrial middling status to anti-industrial middle-class status. These histories have simply been buried as inexplicable anecdotes. For example, economist John Maynard Keynes could never figure out how his

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[26] On gooseberries in Lancashire, see Review of Anon, *An Account of the different Floral and Horticultural Exhibitions held in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, and other Parts of the Kingdom, in the Year 1830* in *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Apr. 1831): 213; Loudon, Editorial Footnote to "On providing a Succession of the best-flavoured Gooseberries," *Gard. Mag.* 7 (June 1831): 331.

[27] Harvey, 37.

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grandfather John Keynes had become a wealthy man by his death in 1878. Born the son of a middling brush manufacturer, grandfather Keynes gave his brother control of the factory when it became plausible to make a full-time business of his hobby of experimental floristry. According to Maynard Keynes's biographer, John Keynes "pawned his watch to buy his first precious plants. He built up in Salisbury a large and flourishing nursery garden . . .he bred and exhibited many new varieties, and sold his prize dahlias and roses, and later his vines, to the big houses that then abounded in the west country."[28] Keynes's nursery may have been instrumental to his increase in economic prosperity, and thus part of a pattern of artisans and manufacturers turned professional gardeners by investing in prize flowers.

I have argued here that weaving and floristry could be economically complementary activities that promoted a conservative, preindustrial work ethic. Addressing the history of the British working class, E. P. Thompson and Peter Linebaugh have each briefly observed that floristry was integral to textile workers' culture, in the context of control over leisure activities as a measure of control over one's own labor conditions. Historians in the field of leisure studies define leisure as activity that is voluntary and pleasurable. It complements labor by either providing different stimulus and requiring different skills, or by replicating in another form the skills that constitute one's work. When the former is true, leisure can be the change that refreshes; when the latter occurs, leisure may be said to uphold or inculcate work values, according to critiques of capitalist labor reform via reform of leisure. Weavers' floristry seems to fit all of these categories, for weaving and floristry involved some

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[28] Harvey, 132; Austin Robinson, "John Maynard Keynes 1883-1946," *The Economic Journal* 57 (Mar. 1947): 3.

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similar skills while also providing variability in materials and setting. More importantly, as a mode of activity, growing florists' flowers was a multi-faceted, long-term process that required individual expertise and discrimination, like the work of weaving a complex figured cloth before the onset of industrialization fractured workshops into alienated task stations. Weavers' leisure of choice does appear to have ideologically reproduced as well as economically facilitated a work culture devoted to resist industrialism, but not fundamentally opposed to capitalism.[29]

The Didactic Value of Weavers' Floristry

Weavers' floristry should be understood as a means to achieve prosperity without suffering the indignities of entering the deskilled and industrialized labor force, or as an aspect of middle-class prosperity enjoyed by master-weavers who exploited others' labor. Instead, floristry was usually described as evidence of the character traits of intelligence, industriousness, and humility. In turn, these traits were given as the explanation for why some weavers could afford to continue hand-loom weaving while others starved or succumbed to factory employment.

The historiographic journey of one account of the Spitalfields weaver florists

[29] Thompson, *English Working Class*, 143, 269-270, 276, 291-2, 306; Linebaugh, 263. Leisure studies developed out of social historians' interest in the relationship between work and play. Historiographic surveys of the field of leisure history, and its relationship to leisure sciences and labor history include the historiographic theme issue of *Leisure Sciences* 19 (1997): 239-289; Hart Cantelon and Robert Hollands, "Leisure, History and Theory: Some Preliminary Points of Departure for Studies of Working-Class Cultures," in *Leisure, Sport and Working-Class Cultures: Theory and History*, eds. Cantelon and Hollands (Toronto, Ontario: Garamond Press, 1988), 11-16; Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo, "Ways of Seeing: Control and Leisure versus Class and Struggle," *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914*, eds. Yeo and Yeo (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981), 128-86.

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demonstrates the malleability of their legend. After living for thirty years amongst the master weavers of Spital Square, solicitor Edward Church described gardening as one of the several talents held by Spitalfields weavers in days past. In addition to having societies for mathematics, history, entomology, music, poetry recitation, and fancy bird breeding, "There was a Floricultural Society, very numerously attended, but now extinct. The weavers were almost the only botanists of their day in the metropolis. They passed their leisure hours, and generally the whole family dined on Sundays, at the little gardens in the environs of London, now mostly built upon, in small rooms about the size of modern omnibuses with a fireplace at the end." Church's account was recorded in the Reports from Assistant Hand-Loom Weavers' Commissioners, a study of the conditions of the hand-loom weavers conducted between 1835 and 1839. Almost a decade later, in 1849, Henry Mayhew paraphrased Church, concluding,

> Such were the Spitalfields weavers at the beginning of the present century; possessing tastes and following pursuits the refinement and intelligence of which would be an honour and a grace to the artisan even of the present day, but which shone out with a double lustre at a time when the amusements of society were almost all of a gross and brutalizing kind. The weaver of our own time, however, though still far above the ordinary artisan, both in refinement and intellect, falls far short of the weaver of former years.[30]

When weavers' floristry has been recognized as the result of prosperity, it is assumed that the weaver was an ambitious, or at least a tolerant participant in the capitalist economic order. Economist George Stigler used the exact same passage from Church to open his synopsis of the report of the Commissioners on the Hand-Loom Weavers. Calling Church's recollection "no doubt too pretty," Stigler uses it to illustrate the

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[30] Mayhew, 105-106.

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conditions enjoyed at the end of the 1700s by the most skilled weavers: "the aristocracy of the labour force."[31] "Without accepting every touch from this amiable Pickwickian *laudator temporis acti*, one does get an attractive impression" of the Spitalfields weavers in days of prosperity, commented historian John H. Clapham as he too cited Church in his study of the Spitalfields Acts of 1773-1824. The hobbies held by Spitalfields weavers during times of prosperity demonstrated "social virtues" and "intellectual vigor." In an equation of virtue and intelligence with docility that is a motif in interpretations of the weavers' floristry, Clapham cites the weavers' florists' societies to support his assertion that in the main "the silk weavers as a class were [not] revolutionaries or enemies of order."[32]

The other common perspective on weavers' floristry recognizes the activity as part of an innocent working-class culture, overlooking its history as an urban art exercised competitively for commercial gain. For example, the "idyllic picture" painted by Church was in actuality "a veritable tragedy," according to socialist educator Edmond Holmes. In 1923, Holmes used Church's description of the Spitalfields weavers as evidence against "the wicked superstition that the working-classes have a congenital disinclination and incapacity for self-improvement." According to Holmes, the enclosure of rural commons, the industrial revolution, the political economists' justifications of the commodification of labor, and the wholesale condemnation of popular recreations by puritanical evangelicalism are the four forces that "robbed" the English working classes of their leisure. Members of the upper class "must bear the blame" for having perpetrated the theft or "acquiesced--with pious resignation." The

[31] Stigler, 26.

[32] Clapham, 465-66.

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Spitalfields weavers are Holmes's poster-children for the possibility of working-class "self-education and rational recreation" without the interference of "well-meaning but fussy and over-officious philanthropy which postulates the helplessness of the lower classes and then does its best to make them helpless."[33]

The evidence presented here suggests that most weavers who practiced floristry were of middling status until the early nineteenth century. Under the best possible circumstances, they owned their own home-based workshops and the necessary trade equipment. They worked by the piece, and earned enough money to take some leisure within a flexible working schedule. Some were master weavers who were able eventually to attain a firmly bourgeois status by exploiting the labor of other textile workers. As the economic status of the weavers declined, competitive and commercial floristry could also sometimes sustain a weaver during the periods of "enforced idleness," as Tallack accurately described trade fluctuation.[34] This practice was a remnant of former prosperity, and held the possibility of freedom from industrial labor. The weavers' floristry was part of the legacy of Spitalfields silk weavers' resistance to industrial capitalism's decimation of the artisan class. It was an exploration of another form of market competition.

In retrospect, floristry was not described as evidence of either the master weaver's exploitation of others that resulted in a middle-class lifestyle, or as a form of subversive resistance by artisans who were trying to avoid a change in their working

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[33] Edmond Holmes, *Freedom and Growth* (London and Toronto: J.M Dent & Sons Ltd., and New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1923), 266-71. Thompson also recognizes that the weavers' garden was part of the nineteenth-century idealization of eighteenth-century life in *English Working Class*, 269.

[34] Tallack, 13.

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conditions. The political undercurrent was gradually erased from the written record of weaver florists. In Loudon's 1830 edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, the politics of Paisley's weaver florists were explicitly described: "The artisans of Paisley are, perhaps, the most intelligent of their order in the world; even the speeches of what were called the radical reformers of this town, astonished by their argument and style; and the success of the florists, and the laws of their association, are not less surprising." Five years later, that specific sentence was excised from the new edition. Instead, weavers' floristry was idealized as the hobby of industrious working-class men who had an innocent love of nature. A love of nature, it is implied, is the mark of refinement and humility. As the following chapters will explain, promoters of rational recreation relied upon this characterization to justify promotion of horticulture as a remedy for idleness, which was, as Linebaugh has astutely discovered, both "a moral category and an economic one: it is the refusal to accept exploitation."[1]

[1] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 1045; Loudon *Encyclopaedia* (1835), 1227; Linebaugh, 428.

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Chapter Two: Gardening as Labor Reform

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Nottingham became one of the centers of the rapidly growing British textile industry. The Nottingham lace makers and framework knitters were known to have been flower gardeners in their spare time, a hobby shared by many other textile workers. Like the legends of Spitalfields' weaver florists, public memory of Nottingham and Leicester framework-knitters maintained that prior to 1800 those who owned their own knitting frames lived in idyllic ease, taking pleasure in their gardens. And, like the reports by Henry Mayhew and Reverend Francis D'Altry Horner about the Spitalfields silk weavers whose floristry was sacrificed with the decline of independent workshops,[1] William Howitt recognized industrialization's work discipline as the greatest threat to weavers' cottage gardens. In 1835, Howitt wrote about Nottingham:

> Where steam-engines abound, and are at the foundation of all the labours of a place, as in Manchester, for instance, there you will find few gardens in the possession of the mechanics. The steam-engine is a never-resting, unweariable, unpersuadable giant and despot; and will go on thumping and setting thousands of wheels and spindles in motion; and men must stand, as it were, the slaves of its unsleeping energies. . . . the slave of the steam-engine must be at the beck of his tyrant night or

[1] Thomas [William] Gardiner, *Music and Friends* (1838), quoted in Sir Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development* (London: Drane's Danegeld House, 1921), 212-23; Henry Mayhew, "The Spitalfields Silk-Weavers, Letter II--23 October, 1849," (1854), in E. P. Thompson and Eileen Yeo, eds. *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the* Morning Chronicle, *1849-1850* (London: Merlin Press, 1971), 105-115; Francis D'Altry Horner, introduction to James Douglas, *Hardy Florists' Flowers* (1879) quoted in Roy Genders, *Collecting Antique Plants: The History and Culture of the Old Florists' Flowers* (London: Pelham, 1971), 16-17, 35.

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> day, with only such intervals as barely suffice to restore his wearied strength and faculties: therefore you shall not see gardens flourish and summer-houses rise in the vicinity of this hurrying and tremendous power. But where it is not, or but partially predominates, there may the mechanic enjoy the real pleasures of a garden.

In the same report, Howitt noted that the benevolent elites of Nottingham had lately encouraged gardening, evinced by thousands of weavers' gardens. In the 1840s, there were between five and ten thousand plots rented at low rates as allotment gardens for the poor of Nottingham.[2]

Other observers reported atrocious conditions in the same locations. When Frederick Engels studied the conditions in Nottingham and the neighboring counties of Derby and Leicester in 1844, he found that the industries of framework knitting, lace making, and lace embroidery operated under dire circumstances. Whole families worked night and day, and yet still had no beds to sleep on nor meat or bread to eat.[3] How could these people have had the time and resources to grow flowers? Why would the landowners and manufacturers who allowed such conditions care whether or not the workers gardened?

This chapter explains why landowners and manufacturers subsidized flower gardening as rational recreation for the working classes of Britain, and how the reformers' intentions were partially thwarted by the surviving traditions of working-

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[2] William Howitt, *Tait's Magazine* (1835) reprinted in Howitt, *The Rural Life of England*, 3rd. ed., rev.(1844; reprint, Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971), 550-54; "Cottage Gardening," *The Annals of Horticulture* (hereafter *An. Hort.*) 1 (1846): 411; A Correspondent, "Land Occupied by Manufacturing Workmen," in *The Labourers' Friend: A Selection of the Publications of the Labourers' Friend Society* (London: Published for the Society, 1835), 55-56.

[3] Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. and ed. W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner (1845; NY: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 213-18.

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class floristry. The first half of this chapter describes how cottage gardens served elite interests in rational recreation, landscape improvement, reducing the poor rate, and most importantly, preventing working-class insurrection and formation of trade unions. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, elites idealized the tradition of floristry among textile workers and reinterpreted gardening as rational recreation for the laboring poor. They established allotment garden programs as incentive for renters and workers to garden. Horticultural societies formed to encourage "industrious cottagers" to garden by offering prizes for the best-kept gardens and best specimens of vegetables. Magazines like the *Annals of Horticulture* published editorials that acknowledged the precedent of working-class gardening while congratulating "the higher classes on the habits of the multitude so employed."[4] These activities were perceived as beneficial to sponsor and gardener, and are here designated under the umbrella term of "horticultural reform."

The bourgeois Protestant moral reform movement for "rational recreation" sought to replace traditional working-class amusements with domestic, temperate, and self-improving occupations. Historians have overlooked the unusual circumstances of working-class flower gardening as an oppositional practice because flower gardening seems to fit perfectly the Protestant ideal of rational recreation, and because of the way that gardening is imagined as inherently pleasurable because of human love of "nature." Historians tend to see the preindustrial integration of work and play divorced by the early nineteenth century. What followed, according to this frame of analysis, were conditions where workers were motivated purely by economic necessity and disciplined according to the routine of industrial work. In contrast to

[4] "Cottage Gardening," 411.

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work, leisure was characterized as wasteful idleness or as an economically disinterested, domestically oriented, and self-improving activity. Each of these three categories had a distinct location and schedule, unlike the home-based workshop where work and play intermingled at all hours. Rational recreation was supposed to prevent idleness and promote productive leisure, but the ultimate goal was to maximize labor discipline and productivity. The material characteristics of gardening made it an ideal rational recreation, and the guise of benevolent moral reform perfectly masked economic interests.

For horticultural reform to work, gardening had to seem voluntary, pleasurable, and compatible with the maintenance of a submissive labor force. Weavers' floristry had to be recast as nature appreciation so that the devastation of preindustrial modes of labor could be more gently regretted as environmental change rather than starkly recognized as class warfare. E. P. Thompson asserts that the urban working class was influenced by "rural memories" of land signifying status, security, and rights--associations "more profound than the value of the crop."[5] Land, and consequently gardening, meant independence, which workers longed for and capitalist manufacturers and landowners feared. Horticultural reform reinterpreted the economic and political meanings of gardening--urban and rural--into love of nature and domesticity. Unless the urban weaver florists could be interpreted as nature lovers sentimental for an inaccessible rural past, their flower pots might signal profitable resistance to entering the factory workforce.

The second half of this chapter examines the expression of class conflict at

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[5] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), 229-30.

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horticultural society shows, during florists' meetings, and in discussions of the relationship of floristry to botany. Horticultural reform was only partially effective as rational recreation because the idealization of gardening did not completely match the actual results. The cottage garden also served the interests of the working poor because it provided a situation wherein one's work could be self-determined and independent of fluctuation in the labor market. Over time, the practical benefits of vegetable gardening were emphasized less than flower gardening, seemingly in order to lessen the potential for self-sufficiency. However, the flower shows served conflicting interests; these events combined traditions and interests of floristry in working-class culture, scientific associations, horticultural reform, and commercial horticulture. Flower shows unmasked the rhetoric of economic disinterestedness for working class and elite participants because ultimately both were interested in plants as a luxury commodity, either to sell or to buy. In this development, once again floristry could signify docility and simultaneously help workers resist industrialized labor even though they were still participating in capitalist free trade.

Gardening as Rational Recreation

In *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850*, Robert W. Malcolmson argued that during this period traditional community-based working-class recreations were attacked by elites who wanted to impose a neo-Puritanical labor discipline. Popular working-class recreations were characterized by group activities, carnivalesque play, and annual and seasonal events. They were attended by much drinking and often conducted in the pubs. According to Malcolmson, the reform of working-class recreation was motivated by gentry/capitalist desire for an "effective labour discipline"

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among the manufacturing and urban poor

> for it was in these areas (the industrial villages, the textile centres, the metropolis) that contractual relations particularly predominated and paternalist authority was least effectual, that class antagonisms were most acutely developed, that employment was the least secure, and that population density was highest; consequently it was here that the problems of social control were most keenly sensed and most closely studied.

Reformers used the puritanical concepts of idleness and industry to justify lowering wages and raising prices until the poor found it necessary to work constantly in order to avoid starvation or the work-house. This malicious policy, "the doctrine of the utility of poverty," prevented the working poor from engaging in the popular recreations that elites rightly feared doubled as incubators for working-class consciousness and consequently, insubordination.[6]

Peter Bailey has argued that nineteenth-century rational recreation was a reform movement that tried to replace, not just erase, working-class recreations. Afraid of Chartist uprisings in urban settings, the quickly growing middle class proposed organized recreations that would distract the poor from pubs and politics. Reflecting a typically Protestant way of thinking, leisure time that might be given to sensual idleness should instead be spent in productive intellectual activities. Disciplined leisure was re-creation because it re-created a person's readiness to return to work. Play resembled work and recreated the worker. Rational recreation was typically described as a path to domesticity, temperance, and self-improvement.[7]

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[6] Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 89, 161, 89-97.

[7] Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885* (1978; NY: Methuen & Co., 1987 paperback edition).

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Rational recreation has been discussed in terms of social control exerted through enforced change, or alternatively, as contestation through resistance to change and adherence to traditional forms of popular leisure. Some historians, including Malcolmson, have asserted that in the 1830s and 1840s labor reformers destroyed the remaining vestiges of preindustrial popular culture. Others, like Bailey, document the rise of new forms of leisure created by workers and reformers in response to urban industrial life. My analysis of gardening in working-class culture is informed by work from both perspectives, but most closely resembles Thompson's arguments for cultural continuity in *Customs in Common*.[8] Throughout the dissertation, I am charting the tenacity as well as the metamorphosis of material practices and cultural beliefs about flower gardening.

Elites wanted workers to garden because gardens contributed to economic and aesthetic landscape improvement, and reduced poor rates. Furthermore, by attaching workers to land and preventing them from meeting in pubs, gardening reduced the risk of labor unions and rioting. Working-class educational clubs, like naturalists' societies, were sometimes a front for illegal political meetings. Landscape gardener Humphrey Repton described the clubs formed by isolated (non-manufacturing) working men in remarkably frank terms that foreshadow later attacks on the pubs as sites for labor organizing. He called working-class clubs "the birth-place and cradle of equality, discontent and dissatisfaction." When such clubs were created by elites, they could be a means of distracting workers from the class struggle. The Mechanics Institutes, according to Engels, gave the worker nothing more than "one long sermon on the respectful and passive obedience in the station in life to which he has been called."

[8] E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York: The New Press, 1991).

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Richard Drayton asserts that elites especially encouraged workers to study natural history because they thought it would help to ideologically justify economic inequality as a "natural" phenomenon, and simultaneously distract them from the materialist longings that could result in malcontent.[9]

Rational recreation was the moral reform gloss that made all this seem benevolent instead of manipulative and self-interested. The published discourse about horticulture as rational recreation shows how gardening was reinterpreted as anti-materialistic in service of the materialistic ends described above. The posturing repetitively used legends, like the Spitalfields and Lancashire weaving florists; equations, like the substitution of the garden for the pub; and theories of improvement, such as the progression of interests from vegetables to flowers to botanical study to depoliticize gardening. The study of horticulture as art and science was represented as non-political, non-controversial, and unlimited by restraints of class. Some of the material attributes of gardening and horticultural society activities justify this interpretation, while others show that the opposite was in fact the case.

Previous historical analyses of horticultural reforms, specifically elite sponsorship of allotment or cottage gardens, horticultural societies, garden competitions, and flower shows, have mostly based their interpretations upon definitions of rational recreation as labor discipline or upon the history of urban public parks. While the rise of rational recreation does provide an important context for

[9] Humphrey Repton, *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the late Humphrey Repton, Esq*, ed. John Claudius Loudon (London: Printed for the editor and sold by Longman & Co., 1840), 578; Engels, 270-71; Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and "Improvement" of the World* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2000), 150, 152; Anne Secord, "Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire," *History of Science* 32 (1994): 291.

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interpreting horticultural reform and the rise of commercial horticulture, the back story of working-class floristry and the material attributes and advantages of gardening make it significantly different from other forms of rational recreation like reading and music appreciation. Likewise, the history of parks as part of urban sanitary reform is also relevant but does not illuminate the underlying issue of labor. When working-class precedents to the reforms are acknowledged, it is usually with a nod to the activity of artisans. Some historians even recognize that there was a working-class precedent for leisure gardening which inspired reformers to encourage it as a rational recreation.[10] However, neither the idea that flower gardening was emphasized over vegetable gardening for political reasons, nor the working-class disruption of horticultural reforms has ever been articulated.

Stephen Constantine's article on "Amateur Gardening and Popular Recreation in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" (1981) is one of the only attempts by historians to address horticultural reform from the perspective of both gentlemen reformers and working-class reformees. Constantine's brief survey of nineteenth-century efforts to encourage gardening in urban and industrial settings results in his conclusion that "attempts to make gardening the 'rational recreation' of the urban masses were doomed to failure" because industrialization actually resulted in less time or space for working-class gardening. Bailey's brief analysis of horticultural reform similarly cites the problem of lack of open space for private and public gardens.[11]

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[10] Bailey describes the Lancashire artisans' botany and floristry as intellectual, rational recreation that preceded the reforms in *Leisure and Class*, 24, 55; Stephen Constantine, "Amateur Gardening and Popular Recreation in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Social History* 14 (spring 1981): 393.

[11] Constantine, 392-95; Bailey, 27.

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In "Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure," S. Martin Gaskell analyzes horticulture reforms from the perspective of middle-class reform of the working-class built environment. As argued by Gaskell, horticultural reform was originally part of the landscape improvement and cottage housing reform of the rural districts. Success inspired industrialists to provide allotment gardens and park-like landscaping around factory villages. From there, urban reformers took up the idea of "breathing spaces" created by parks and vacant lot gardens. Building on the work by Malcolmson and Bailey about rational recreation, Gaskell identifies the horticultural reform techniques as similarly aimed at inculcating an industrial work discipline. However, because he focuses on the reformers' perspective, Gaskell interprets the horticulture reforms as successful in transforming the garden "from a passive to an active agent in the recreative process; it was no longer sufficient to contemplate through it the beauties of nature; one had to be directly engaged in the creation of that beauty and its attendant benefits." This conclusion actually collapses the very different traditions of working-class floristry and the bourgeois and elite aesthetic appreciation of nature, traditions in which active or passive involvement were alternately encouraged by commercially interested parties. In fact, over time proponents of rational recreation directed working-class gardeners towards less practical, and consequently less lucrative forms of involvement with nature.[12]

Secord asserts that elites used the rational recreation approach to the natural sciences to appropriate working-class popular culture "as the cultural property of the educated and leisured classes." This resonates well with the gentlemen amateurs'

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[12] S. Martin Gaskell, "Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure," *Victorian Studies* 23 (summer 1980): 479.

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claims to be encouraging, not imitating, working-class flower gardening. In the previous chapter, "Sons of Flora," I argued that floristry was part of textile workers' culture before the introduction of industrial labor, and before wealthy sponsors organized gardening activities as reform. Social emulation may have stimulated interest in the seventeenth century, but by the period examined here, weavers had engaged in hobby floristry, formed floral societies, and held competitions for at least a century.[13] There was certainly a history of mixed-class interaction at flower society shows; gentry had participated as members or as patrons, but in a much more passive way than in the nineteenth century. Industrialization was undermining the feasibility of floristry in weavers' culture, so the sponsored horticulture reforms constituted an adaptation of this cultural form. In the 1830s, when elites were rapidly forming horticultural societies to encourage working-class gardening, a professional horticulturist suggested that it was the poor who were reforming the idle rich with flower gardening:

> Floriculture is making rapid progress; and, instead of being confined almost exclusively to the humble in life, as was the case some few years back, the taste for florists' flowers has extended to many in the higher ranks. Let us hope, therefore, that, in a little time, the love of plants will become fashionable; and that a collection, at the seat of every nobleman, will form an indispensable appendage to the place. If the nobility would but turn their minds to the innocent, and, at the same time, rational, amusement of superintending the cultivation of their gardens, and enter into the spirit of the thing with the same enthusiasm as they do into many other less wise, and sometimes less justifiable

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[13] In the 17th century, tulip exchange happened in pubs where tulip "clubs" met. The influence of French and Dutch immigrants on British floristry, including the formation of florists' clubs in the early 18th century, provides more than a suggestion of lineage.

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pursuits, how soon would they feel the benefit of the change.[14]

Enclosure's Improvements

Paternalist horticultural reforms originated with allotment gardens as a response to the problems caused by enclosure. Enclosure dates back to at least the 1200s, with notable acceleration in the mid-1600s when landowners more aggressively claimed lands that had traditionally been used as "commons" by local tenants and small-holders (owners of small properties). Paths, fields for grazing cows and growing crops, and forests where villagers had gathered timber and hunted animals were now designated the exclusive property of the landowner, who was legally entitled to prosecute trespassers and poachers. The mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries marks the second major period of enclosure. Between 1793 and 1816, enclosure was at its peak: during these years 3,062,121 acres were enclosed. By 1860, almost ten million acres had been enclosed.[15]

Two forms of "landscape improvement" characterized the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century period of enclosure: agriculture and landscape gardening. The reform of cottage architecture and gardens was a component of both kinds of improvement. "Improvement" signified increased monetary value, the application of

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[14] E., "Depressed State of the Nursery Business," *The Gardener's Magazine, and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement* (hereafter *Gard. Mag.)* 10 (Oct. 1834): 521-2.

[15] Denis M. Moran, *The Allotment Movement in Britain,* American University Studies, 25th ser., (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 1: 18-19; Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 66, 96-119. See also W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969); E. L. Jones and G. E. Mingay, eds., *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967).

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scientific techniques, and participation in modern humanitarianism.

Agricultural Improvement

Enclosure gave landowners the necessary control over land to engage in speculative agricultural improvements. Speculative investment is a key characteristic of the transition from feudalism to agricultural capitalism. Landowners united in experimental agricultural societies that conducted experiments on drainage, soil, and crop rotation. These experiments required a greater economic risk than a small-holder could have afforded. Under enclosure, small-holding subsistence farmers became tenant farmers whose work was overseen by an estate steward or manager. When the tenant farmer successfully employed the new methods, there was a greater crop yield but there was also a higher rent to pay. The land was more productive, but the gain was unevenly distributed as landowners claimed the profits in both rent and the return on goods sold.[10]

Agricultural experimentation was an act of patriotic noblesse oblige, finds Kenneth Hudson, historian of the British agricultural societies: "The ownership of land carried with it a duty and a responsibility to experiment on behalf of the nation." Experimentation and dissemination of information for mutual improvement was the stated agenda of groups that began forming in the late 1700s. The topics studied and discussed covered a broad range, including husbandry, beekeeping, chemistry, mineralogy, and theories of the physical sciences. Such societies amassed lending

[10] J.V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914*, (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 170-76; Kenneth Hudson, *Patriotism with Profit: British Agricultural Societies in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Hugh Evelyn, 1972), 97; Williams, 60-2, 65-67, 82, 96-116.

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libraries, participated in extensive correspondence with individuals and other groups, conducted county surveys, and published their findings. Some funded agricultural schools and allotment programs. The members were mostly landed gentry whose real agenda was profit. These societies provided an aristocratic model for the horticultural societies of the 1830s and 1840s.[17]

Landowners also united in parliamentary protection of their crops from foreign import competition. In 1815, British Parliament created the Corn Laws that instituted tariffs on imported grains, thus protecting the interests of domestic grain producers and merchants. (At this time "corn" was a generic term used for all grains.) Despite the inflated prices and widespread starvation, farmers would hold out on threshing grain, even letting crops rot in the field, in order to charge an even higher rate. Manufacturers were against the Corn Laws because they opposed paying higher workers' wages to support the inflated prices of grain. They argued that the restriction of free trade crippled the country's potential for wealth which could be realized if Britain were to become the "workshop of the world." Workers were of divided opinion, and consequently some supported "protection" from imports while others agitated for repeal of the Corn Laws in favor of "laissez-faire" or "free trade" capitalism. The Corn Laws were repealed in 1846.[18]

During the Corn Law years, working farmers and mechanics were squeezed from both ends. They paid the artificially inflated grain prices while agricultural and

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[17] Hudson, *Patriotism with Profit*; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 217-18.

[18] Jellinger Cookson Symons, *Arts and Artisans at Home and Abroad* (Edinburgh, London, and Dublin, 1839), 257. Engels used Symons's report as a resource for *Condition of the Working Class*, wherein he described Symons's position as that of a "fanatical" pro-manufacturing and anti-labor Liberal. Engels, 45.

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industrial capitalists in turn paid them the lowest possible wages. This coincided with a population explosion that exacerbated the conditions of poverty. During this period, many people ate bread that was made with so little grain that it was gray in color and had to be eaten with a spoon. Hot water poured over a burnt crust of toast was the closest many came to tea. Conditions worsened during "the Hungry '40s," but many who lived during the three decades of the Corn Laws knew no better diet. In first-hand accounts, people explained that they had been starved into theft and rebellion.[19]

Improving Landscapes, Cottages, and Cottage Gardens

The corollary to agricultural improvement was the introduction of a new form of landscape design. In the newly defined profession of "landscape gardening," designers like William Kent, Lancelot "Capability" Brown, and Humphrey Repton borrowed aesthetic formulas from seventeenth-century French and Dutch landscape painters to create landscape plans for enclosed estates. All aspects of the grounds became part of the scenery. The expansive and framed vistas characteristic of the new "naturalistic" style of landscaping could only be created with very large tracts of land, which enclosure provided. And, unlike the previous "formal" style of gardening that used carefully tended flower beds and hedges, the naturalistic style was economically feasible on a grand scale. Historians of British landscape design and landscape painting have noted that in the naturalistic landscape, labor was carefully excluded from view unless it served a picturesque (picture-like) purpose. Repton's projections of estates before and after improvement show how working areas were transformed into scenery

[19] *The Hungry Forties: Life under the Bread Tax*, with introduction by Mrs. Cobden Unwin (1904; reprint Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971).

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(fig. 9).[20]

As part of the landscape, tenant farmers' cottages were often improved for the economic and aesthetic benefit of the landowner. Dilapidated labourer's housing marred the picturesque scenery of gentlemen's estates (fig. 10). Repton's plan for improving the view from Blaize Castle featured the introduction of a cottage:

> Some object was wanting to enliven the scenery: a temple, or a pavilion, in this situation, would have reflected light, and formed a contrast with the dark woods; but such a building would not have appeared to be inhabited; this cottage, therefore, derives its chief beauty from that which cannot easily be expressed by painting--the ideas of motion, animation, and inhabitancy, contrasted with those of stillness and solitude. Its form is meant to be humble, without meanness; it is, and appears, the habitation of a labourer who has the care of the neighboring woods; its simplicity is the effect of art, not of neglect or accident . . ..

The figures shown here come from John Claudius Loudon's edited presentation of Repton's works, originally created at the turn of the century. Thus, Loudon brought his predecessor's work into the hands of his own mid-nineteenth-century readers. It should be noted that Repton's original watercolor illustration enhanced the appearance of habitation by showing a smoking chimney, a man and woman standing before the cottage, a few shrubs and what looks like a round flower bed ornamenting the cottage, details that were not thoroughly reproduced for Loudon's hand-tinted prints. As part of an aesthetically crafted landscape, cottages were a form of "folly," an architectural eye-catcher that stimulated the imagination by stylistically referring to other places and times. Ruins, Chinese pagodas, and Roman temples were popular landscape follies that provided visual variety, another attribute that defined the picturesque (fig.

[20] Tom Williamson, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Repton, *Landscape Gardening*, 305.

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Architectural historian John E. Crowley argues that the improvement of tenants' cottages was stimulated by elite interest in landscape architecture, then compounded with humanitarian reform during the last third of the eighteenth century. Although the "associations" provoked by landscape follies might be frightening or melancholy, Crowley argues that there was limited tolerance for squalor. Landlords risked social condemnation if their tenants' housing was miserable rather than merely modest. Concern for cottagers was provoked by extensive visceral descriptions of unsanitary conditions, a technique of voyeuristic titillation that endowed physical comfort or misery with Romantic emotional sensibilities.[22]

Sincere reformers may have replaced workers' housing with stronger, warmer, and cleaner homes. However, contemporary evidence such as Frederick Engels' report on *The Condition of the Working Class in England* shows that manufacturing landowners did not want to make the financial investment for genuine and lasting improvement. Instead, many cottages were cheaply made buildings that lasted only about forty years. Even when the cottages appeared to be reasonably made, the cottager's comfort continued to be less important than the landowner's view. "In all

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[21] Repton, *Landscape Gardening*, 255-6; Humphrey Repton, *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1803) as published in *The Art of Landscape Gardening*, ed. John Nolen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1907), plate 16; John Dixon Hunt, "Emblem and Expression in the Eighteenth-Century Landscape Garden," in *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992), 75-102.

[22] John E. Crowley, "'In Happier Mansions, Warm, and Dry': The Invention of the Cottage as the Comfortable Anglo-American House," *Winterthur Portfolio* 32 (summer/autumn 1997): 179-82.

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extensive estates the beauty of the prospect is greatly augmented by the erection of neat ornamental cottages in suitable situations; which, besides the beauty of their appearance, furnish comfortable habitations for the labouring classes," opened an article illustrated by plans for duplex and quadruplex dwellings. Instructions included locating cottages where the roof would harmonize with the trees, painting exterior wooden window dressing slate gray, and adding trellises for ornamental vines. The aesthetic exterior might also include brick walls that were filled in with sand or gravel to minimize the cost of a solid brick wall (figs. 12-13).[23]

The cottage garden could be either a mask for unimproved or ugly cottages, or the reciprocation that landlords hoped to get for putting up new housing. Unsightly, run-down cottages, potentially a blight in the elite spectator's view, were aesthetically improved in a number of ways. They could be blocked out of the view with a strategically placed stand of trees. Or, they could be planted with ornamental gardens featuring ivy, honeysuckle, and other vines encouraged to climb over the building. In addition to the aesthetic benefits, it was believed that vines drew moisture out of the walls, shielded the house from rain, and acted as temperature insulation. Cottage gardens were a superficially effective solution for housing problems. Vine-covered cottages with small front gardens made poverty and plainness into something quaint and ornamental. Over time, vines came to signify settled and modest domesticity.

In 1830, R.C. Kirkliston of Scotland suggested that when landlords provide new and attractive cottages, the inhabitant "will consider himself in honour bound" to improve the grounds by growing a garden. In response, Charles Hulbert of

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[23] Engels, 69-70; "Designs for the Erection of Ornamental Cottages, on Gentlemen's Estates," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* (hereafter *Paxton's)* 1 (1834): 251-57.

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Shrewsbury added that landlords should in turn be obliged to always provide gardens with cottages. It would pay, for "among the few cottage tenants I have here," Hulbert wrote, "those with a garden pay the best and the most rent."[24] Cottage gardens were a less expensive and less permanent type of estate improvement, but like new structures, if the garden raised the value of the property then rent could also go up.

There was some debate about how best to encourage cottagers to tend ornamental cottage gardens. William Stevenson, author of the *Agricultural Surveys of Surrey and Dorsetshire*, expressed concern about the lack of institutions, associations, and lectures dedicated to the spread of horticulture in the rural districts. Without these forms of support, Stevenson found it very difficult to interest peasants in gardening. He thought the only way to do so was: "by proving to him, that by its proper cultivation he may benefit his health, save his money, and cheaply contribute to some of his animal gratifications." In response to Stevenson's comments, William Buchan, gardener to Lord Cawdor at Stackpole Court in Pembrokeshire, reported on an experiment at that estate. Cawdor instructed Buchan to put in front and back gardens around the dependents' cottages in order to promote their "comfort." Buchan found that when he established the gardens, informing "the cottagers at the same time, that they would have to keep the whole in good order for the future; and I must here

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[24] R.C. Kirkliston, "Labourer's Cottages," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Feb. 1830): 109-110; Charles Hulbert, "Cottage Gardens" *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Oct. 1830): 598-99. In the same article Kirkliston writes: "I think nothing contributes more to the sobriety, comfort, and cleanliness of a labourer, than a taste for gardening, when it can be instilled, and which, I think, a proprietor ought to promote by every means in his power. I have seldom known a labourer who was fond of and kept his garden neat, whose house and family were not so, and who did not spend his leisure hours with them, and in his garden, instead of in the ale house."

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observe, that the information was not received with a good grace by some of them, prejudiced as they were against the introduction of any thing new." The cottagers' cooperation was encouraged by premiums, which, Buchan reported, were eventually deemed unnecessary.[25] Cottagers who needed to be bribed into the activity were surely aware that the "improvements" promoted the estate owner's scenery and real estate value as much, if not more than the cottagers' own quality of life.

Landowners and manufacturers who were interested in promoting cottagers' gardens joined together in horticultural societies. The organization and activities of horticultural societies combined traditions from the agricultural societies, seasonal fairs, urban societies of "scientific" plant collectors, and working-class florists's clubs. Prizes were awarded to cottagers for the best gardens, best fruit, flower, and vegetable specimens, and to cottagers with the cleanest homes and most impressive character references from their local clergy.[26] Why horticultural societies were monitoring cottagers' morality can be explained by a closer look at the value of gardens and gardening in the British political economy of the 1830s and 1840s.

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[25] William Stevenson, "On the Benefits to be derived by the Country Labourer from a Garden, and the Means of teaching him how to acquire those Benefits," *Gard. Mag.* 1 (Apr. 1826): 101-105; William Buchan, "On improving the Gardens of Cottages, as practised by the late Lord Cawdor at Stackpole Court, in Pembrokeshire," *Gard. Mag.* 1 (July 1826): 275-6. For description of Stackpole Court, see John Preston Neale, *Views of Seats* (1822).

[26] "Provincial Horticultural Societies," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Feb. 1830): 122; "Provincial Horticultural Societies," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (Oct. 1832): 630-35; "Provincial Horticultural Societies," *Gard. Mag.* 10 (Dec. 1834): 594-5, 601, 611.

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Poor Rate Allotment Gardens

The private and municipal provision of small garden plots for free or at a low rent is known as the allotment system. Allotments have existed in conjunction with urban development since the early modern period. British nineteenth-century allotments can be explained foremost as a response to rural poverty caused by enclosure, and secondarily as a palliative for poverty in industrial centers where thousands migrated because of enclosure's evictions. According to urban historian S. Martin Gaskell, the disciplinary value of ornamental gardens sponsored by English landed gentry for their tenant farmers seemed to work so well that elites in other districts encouraged the same interest among the population of mechanics. With good intentions to help supplement their workers' wages, utopian textile industrialists Robert Owen, William Allen and Titus Salt included allotment gardens in the manufacturing villages they constructed, beginning as early as 1815.[27] In this dissertation, the workers' use of gardening for economic independence, and the elites' idealization of workers' gardens as a disciplinary measure is more significant than the minor successes achieved by utopian planners.

In either an agricultural or industrial setting, allotments addressed the problems of structural unemployment, which ensures that there will always be more workers than jobs. Both workers and capitalists wanted allotments as a solution for the employment fluctuations created by market demand, labor competition, and the seasonal nature of some work. Traditionally, gardens had provided supplementary income for workers in artisanal trades where demand was irregular. Consequently,

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[27] S. M. Gaskell, 485; William Allen's allotments at Linfield in Sussex were discussed by R. S., "Divisional System of Occupation," *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Apr. 1831): 223.

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someone with a productive garden might not feel compelled to take the lowest paid work as soon as it became available. Capitalists wanted the guarantee of plentiful labor willing to work on demand for the lowest wages; for them allotments were welfare work that covered poor rate costs during periods of higher unemployment. However, these same allotment-granting agricultural and industrial capitalists were not willing to give workers flexible hours to accommodate seasonal garden maintenance.

In times of unemployment or underemployment, workers could receive the poor rate (from poor's rate), which parishes raised by collecting property taxes. Demand for poor rates substantially increased as a result of enclosure coinciding with a substantial population increase, but local landowners didn't want to pay welfare. Gilbert Rotton, an agent in the manufacturing town of From, expressed a popular opinion when he called the poor rate "the wages of idleness." Economist Thomas Malthus described the poor as no more than "surplus population," unworthy of help in the form of alms or employment because such assistance would only lead to greater increase of population. Instead, the population of the poor should be restrained. If by starvation, so be it. Malthus's morally bankrupt Law of Population served the capitalist agenda so well that Engels called it "the pet theory of all genuine English bourgeois." Parliamentary reforms of the preexisting Poor Law, which required each parish to contribute to the support of its local unemployed populace, brought out a new Poor Law in 1833. This Malthusian legislation canceled all assistance except that of the workhouse, which was so miserable as to be prison-like and a discouragement in itself. The workhouse left no doubt that in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, paupers were vicious and idle liars and thieves, society's criminals--not its victims. In 1844, a new poor law in England made parishes provide for both local and transient poor but with

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the same restrictions.[28]

Most agricultural and industrial capitalists wanted tenants and workers who were neither dependent nor independent, rather somewhere in between. Welfare, in the form of poor rates and workhouses, was one answer. Sponsored allotment gardens was another. According to political philosopher John Stuart Mill, the allotment was a "method of making people grow their own poor rate."[29] The allotment garden was meant to supplement insufficient wages, prevent field and factory theft, and reduce landowners' poor rate taxes.

However, from the perspective of the agricultural or industrial employer, the allotment garden was *not* to provide alternative labor. Consequently, allotments were usually less than one acre in size, often in the range of one-eighth to one-quarter acre. Ideally, the male laborer's wife and children would manage the garden except during the off-duty hours when he might also contribute. William Davis was a hard-nosed "philanthropist" and member of The Bath Society for the Investigation and Relief of Occasional Distress, Encouragement of Industry, and Suppression of Vagrants. Davis asserted that cottage gardens should "be large enough to produce plenty of roots for the cottager's family, but not so extensive as to tempt him to withdraw his attention from daily labour for his master, nor to make his produce much of an article for sale." Some landlords were against allotments, fearing that "the poor labour so hard in their

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[28] William Davis, *Hints to Philanthropists* (1821; reprint, Shannon, Ireland: Irish Univ. Press, 1971), 87; Engels, 309, 308-15; Peter Gaskell, *The Manufacturing Population of England: Its Moral, Social, and Physical Condition* (1833; reprint, NY: Arno Press, 1972), 216-17; J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Age of the Chartists, 1832-1854* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1967), 55-78.

[29] John Stuart Mill, quoted in Moran, 17-39, 29.

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allotments, after their hours of work, as to be less able to do a good day's work for the farmer on the following day." Lord Carnarvon, happy with his own allotment experiment, accused such landlords of "forgetting how much more labour a man can perform who is well fed and clothed, and possessed of comfort and competence." In defense of allotments at Lincolnshire and Rutlandshire, it was reported that "The management of this little demesne [domain], never, we believe, for one hour, interferes with the necessary occupations of the labourer." Sometimes it was a condition of the lease that tenants would not let maintenance of their allotment gardens interfere with their hired work, even during the busiest seasons. Other agricultural employers forbade their workers even to participate in horticultural competitions.[30]

Allotments had a disadvantage for the workers. Land possession meant that one could not receive, and in fact, had to contribute to parish charity. Because the poor rates were distributed according to the number of mouths to feed, a large family might do better to give up the property. For some, eligibility for allotments required that the renter would not ask for parish assistance. Sometimes landowners would forgive tenant's contribution to tithe or poor rates.[31]

Flower gardens would seem to be at odds with the goal of allotments as a substitute for poor rates, but they resolved the labor discipline problems that came with vegetable gardens. When landowners individually or cooperatively (under the

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[30] Davis, 119; *Labourers' Friend*, 63, 3, 98; "Provincial Horticultural Societies," *Gard. Mag.* 10 (Dec. 1834): 601; J. Densen, "Cottages and Cottage Gardens, Workhouse Gardens, and Gardens of Prisons and Lunatic Asylums," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (Feb. 1832): 99-101; Selim, "On Gardens for the labouring Poor," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (Oct. 1832): 529-32; Thompson, 219-220.

[31] *Labourers' Friend*, 252, 15, 9-10, 110.

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guise of horticultural societies) offered prizes for the best flowers grown in allotment gardens, the prize money became a supplement upon which competing cottagers could not depend. A potato crop offered more financial security than a collection of tulips or pinks. This way of thinking did not allow for cottagers hitting the floricultural and financial jackpot by hybridizing a new pink.

If supplementing the poor rate with vegetables from the allotment garden was problematic because of the laborers' potential to gain a degree of independence from the labor market, why were reformers and their horticultural societies so keen on seeing workers busy in gardens? There was a great fear of what happened when workers gathered to drink and discuss their troubles. Gardening, it was proposed, could make a worker or renter feel attached to property and the hours spent in this activity created a degree of social isolation during leisure hours.

How Gardening Prevented Riots and Trade Unions

"During the late disturbances among the peasantry in Wiltshire, for instance, *no labourer from the parishes where these plans had been adopted, joined in them,*" a coalition of twenty-nine clergymen told the landowners and farmers of Chard in Somerset, in an effort to convince them to sponsor allotments. Agricultural and manufacturing capitalists realized that the material characteristics of gardening could substantially curb labor riots not only by supplementing wages but also by attaching workers to the land and isolating them from one another's company during free hours. Landlords' interests in offering allotments and gardening prizes increased substantially directly following the outbreak of "Captain Swing" riots by agricultural workers in

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1830.[32] It was asserted that the self-sufficiency and pride that came from gardening would be a far more powerful deterrent to criminal activity than even the threat of prison or hanging. In 1832, an allotment advocacy group in Sussex phrased their argument in much stronger language than that used by the Somerset clergy:

> If he [the labourer] be not so cringing and servile to the farmer in outward appearance, neither will he conceal the dark malignant purpose of revenge within. If his sturdy independence be disagreeable to the farmer, still more disagreeable ought that mendicant disposition to be which shakes the security of his possessions, which haunts his hours of rest with terror, and gives the gathered stores of his granaries to the midnight flames.[33]

Food and labor riots through the 1830s and 1840s provided continued incentive for sponsorship of labor reform via gardening.

The motive of suppressing working-class insurrection has been noted as part of rational recreation as an entire movement, but this has very rarely been pointed out in connection with the horticultural reforms. Stephen Constantine noted (without elaboration) that efforts to encourage gardening in urban and industrial settings increased in the 1840s and 1880s "at times of political and industrial unrest when working people seemed to many middle-class observers to be threatening the established order."[34] If industrialization increased class consciousness among workers, the capitalists hoped that gardening would, conversely, economically and socially

[32] *Labourers' Friend*, 262; On failure of horticultural societies to prevent riots at Kent, see author of *Peasant's Voice*, quoted in R.S., "Divisional System of Occupation," 223.

[33] J. Densen, 101. Densen identified himself as "*but* a labourer," and yet one who could by experience confirm the importance of allotments, in *Labourers' Friend*, 101-3.

[34] Constantine, 391.

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forestall revolts. The gardens of non-agricultural laborers had greater didactic potential as a reform tool because landowners didn't perceive an explicit risk of conflicting economic interests. What began as a method of poor rate assistance quickly became also trade union prevention. By the 1840s, the goal of suppressing class insurrection was generally submerged within the rhetoric of gardening as rational recreation and nature appreciation. In the previous two decades, this goal was more explicitly expressed.

Attachment and Dependence

Gardens were an effective form of riot control because a garden kept the renter or worker in place, literally. An attachment to land would override the "natural" tendency of the poor to idleness, dissipation, and discontent, according to landlords who claimed that renters who gardened were more docile, meaning less ready to steal, strike or abandon rented property. Sir Egerton Brydges's recommendation of gardens as a sure way to "raise the character of the labourer" is one of many that spells out how allotments were supposed to prevent class solidarity and revolution of the propertyless laborers.

> The labourer who has property, however small, has an interest in the welfare and tranquility of his country, and in the good order of society. He who has no property, is always ready for novelty and experiment; and though gibbets and halters may for a time deter him from criminal and atrocious acts, yet no motive exists to fix him in virtuous habits, or to attach him to that national prosperity in which he has no part, and to that constituted order of property which excludes him from all possession.[35]

[35] *Labourers Friend*, 138-9.

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In addition to the argument that gardens eased the poor rate, landowners argued that gardening cottagers cared about their rented property enough to avoid displeasing the landlord. Joining in labor strikes could mean eviction with one week's notice, leaving the striker jobless and homeless.[36]

In 1820, John Moggridge established experimental villages in the area of Monmouthshire, Wales. Tenants were guaranteed leases for the duration of four lives or ninety-nine years, if the latter exceeded the former. This assurance addressed a central problem among the British peasantry. Part of Moggridge's program was to award prizes for the best gardens. Under the auspices of the local Horticultural Society shows, he gave prizes to cottagers for the best fruit, vegetables and flowers from their gardens. In 1826, Moggridge was pleased with the initial results, finding men and women "conspicuously industrious" in their gardens during the after hours that had been previously wasted away in pubs. When the Monmouthshire colliers resisted a wage decrease in 1827 with a seven-week work strike, those with gardens, asserted Moggridge, were the most docile, self-reliant, and peace-keeping of the lot.

> Whilst the unmarried colliers rambled into other mining districts in search of work; and whilst the great mass of the married men scoured the country for fifteen miles round in parties of from ten to twenty in each, with wallets over their shoulders, and bludgeons in their hands, levying contributions in victuals and clothes for the support of their families, the Blackwood villagers, who had gardens, turned their attention to them, and subsisted themselves out of them and of the resources at their command: and when it became necessary to swear in a considerable number of special constables to aid in preserving the peace of the country, and for the protection of property, none were found more ready, none more zealous, none more faithful, none more effective, than the cottage freeholders of Blackwood.

[36] Engels, 207.

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Although Moggridge thought the wage reduction that started the strike "reasonable" according to "the circumstances of the trade," his narrative also indicates that those who had productive gardens were able to support themselves without breaking the strike. In the long run, the colliers' gardens helped interests on both sides of this labor struggle.[37]

Isolation and Domesticity

A productive garden might also help an artisan or industrial worker to maintain families without accepting lowered wages, according to speculations by Frederic Engels and E.P. Thompson. In the preindustrial period, many rural and suburban weavers were smallholders who worked outside jobs, including farming, on clear days and inside on the loom in dreary weather. Engels described the conditions in terms that mirror the accounts of the weaver florists of Spitalfields: "They were not forced to work excessive hours; they themselves fixed the length of their working day and still earned enough for their needs. They had time for healthy work in their gardens or smallholdings and such labour was in itself a recreation." British historian E.P. Thompson described the farming weavers as having economic security in this daily and

[37] John H. Moggridge, Esq., "An Account of a successful Experiment made by John H. Moggridge, Esq. in Monmouthshire, with a View to ameliorate the Condition of Country Labourers," *Gard. Mag.* 2 (Jan. 1827): 19-24; Moggridge, "Further Particulars of an Experiment made with a View of bettering the Condition of the Laboring Classes," *Gard. Mag.* 3 (Apr. 1828): 162-167; Moggridge, "Some Account of the Progress of an Experiment going on in Monmouthshire, for bettering the Condition of the Labouring Classes," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Oct. 1830): 533-536; Moggridge, "On the Subject of an Experiment made for bettering the Condition of the Labouring Classes," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Oct. 1830): 536-8. For reports on Glamorgan and Monmouthshire Horticultural Society, see "Glamorgan and Monmouthshire Horticultural Society," *The Floricultural Cabinet, and Florist's Magazine* (hereafter *Flori. Cab.*) 1 (1833): 56-7.

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seasonal variety of work. As the introduction of machinery divided labor, the demand and competition for weaving outwork grew. Consequently, according to Thompson, "many farming weavers abandoned their smallholding to concentrate on the loom."[38]

Rural isolation deadened both competition and solidarity. The end of the idyllic lifestyle of weaving and farming also marked the end of the temperate, devout, deferential, and apolitical behavior that Engels saw as that of "beasts of the field" and "human machines" without class consciousness. Engels's analysis of the farming weavers drew directly from Peter Gaskell's study of the influence of steam power on the manufacturing classes. Gaskell's stated primary concern was the debasement of working-class domesticity, explaining that the condition of the poor "has arisen from the separation of families, the breaking up of households, the disruption of all those ties which link man's heart to the better portion of his nature . . .." The days of the weaver who owned a small garden were idyllic, according to Gaskell, because gardening was a better leisure activity than visiting the pub. Gaskell did not describe the garden as a source of alternative income. In fact, he said that most weavers were poor farmers. It was in the isolation of the worker in the domestic environment, and the substitution of gardening for discussing labor conditions with one's co-workers in the pubs that Gaskell found reason to admire the farming weavers.[39]

Attachment to property and dependence on patriarchal relations with the local elite were part of the problem. When textile workers moved into cities where manufacturers owned the machinery and thus controlled labor, consolidation of the work force resulted in heightened awareness of class oppression and consequently

[38] Engels, 10; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 270, 276.

[39] P. Gaskell, 7-8, 16-17, 34-48.

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efforts towards labor solidarity. Factory villages were designed to benefit manufacturers by ensuring competition while reducing solidarity. Establishing a village of cottages adjacent to new factories helped to guarantee a fixed work force, especially when wages were paid by the "truck system"--the nineteenth-century equivalent to credit at the company store. Factory cottages were usually held in monopoly by the manufacturer, who consequently reclaimed profits paid out as wages by charging exorbitant rents. Gathering the workers together this way created opportunities for disciplinary surveillance.[40]

Conservative analysts praised gardens for precisely this reason: while in the garden, the laborer was isolated and satisfied rather than among company where dissatisfaction might brew. When supplied with a garden, "the labourer can employ himself on it during after-hours, instead of going to the beer house or political shop, a rendezvous more inimical to the interest of the country and wellbeing of the poor peasant's family, than any thing that has been adopted for the last half century." Thus argued a Welsh landowner of two hundred and thirty acres who was afraid of the trouble that would come with working-class "chattering about protocols, discussing new constitutions, troubling their heads with the affairs of Europe, or reading the slander and calumnies too often heaped on the magnates of our land . . . ." Like others of his class, this landowner longed for the English peasantry who "in times of yore" were illiterate and docile.[41] The cottager's garden was idealized as the key to maintaining the mythical values of rural domesticity.

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[40] Engels, 10, 12; P. Gaskell, 342-361.

[41] H. "Cottage Gardens, and Gardens to Workhouses, Prisons, Asylums, &c.," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (June 1832): 377.

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It was during this period of change in the 1820s through the 1840s that Lancashire ranked with Spitalfields' earlier glory days for the fame of its florist weavers. Just as the practice of floriculture extended to many textile workers, the symbolism of the silk weavers' floristry was applied generally to textile workers' gardens. In 1830, weavers' gardens were simultaneously being remembered as a thing of the past--and evidence of labor discipline in the present.

> Thirty years ago, when a Lancashire weaver could live by his honest labour, the neighborhood of Eccles and Barton, and indeed the entire vicinity of Manchester, were celebrated for neat gardens and clean houses in the occupation of the above class of mechanics. It was, indeed, a most delightful treat to visit the tulip beds, the gooseberry gardens, or the auricula and polyanthus sheds of some of these intelligent and ingenious men.

Where the gardens could still be found, Charles Hulbert continued, the cost of living was met by reasonable wages earned by rational workers. Houses and workshops without gardens, a small cold frame, or even just a window plant, were the sites of poverty, and by specious implication, ignorance and immorality. A tenant with a well-tended garden was sure to be a good tenant and a sober tenant.[42] The condition of house and grounds were read as the signs of a person's morality first, and secondly--only as a result of degraded or upheld morality--a sign of economic discomfort or sustenance. The context that I have provided for horticultural reform should make it clear that the condition of a cottager's garden was a measure of morality only because it an indication of time spent at home. A well-kept garden was the garden of someone who didn't go to the pub regularly and consequently wouldn't be rioting or agitating for trade unions. A nice garden could also be the means of gaining a modicum of

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[42] Hulbert, "Cottage Gardens," 598-99.

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independence, at the landlord's or employer's expense.

Horticultural Societies

> In Horticultural Societies the proceedings are fraught with good: the loose idler is led to healthful recreation; the drunkard is insensibly led to an amusing occupation, and everybody engaged is improved in the knowledge and practice of gardening. That village, then, which has not its Horticultural Society . . . loses a great means of improving the morals and habits of the inhabitants. Whatever can induce the wealthy classes to institute such means, does enormous good for society at large; and nobody need be told that nothing stimulates men so much as the knowledge that people less powerful, less influential, are doing something that they, the more powerful and more influential, have not done. This fact alone has been frequently the cause of many a good institution, benevolent as well as scientific.[43]

Second to the allotment, horticultural society competitions were the surest means of promoting gardening on a local level. These annual and seasonal meetings combined several traditions: inter-class county fairs; the elite agricultural improvement societies mentioned above; professional meetings of organized gardeners, nurserymen, and florists; and clubs of artisan botanists and florists. In organized horticultural reform, judging was based either on an evaluation of the cottage garden as a whole, or by quality and quantity of products displayed at annual, seasonal, and monthly shows. The societies' competitions differed from allotments in that elites, professional horticulturists, and cottagers all competed in the same setting, although participants were often categorized by rank and occupation. Cottagers could not be receiving parish relief, and sometimes had to bring notes to that effect from their local rector in order to be allowed to participate.

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[43] "Horticultural Societies," *An. Hort.* 3 (1848): 503.

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In the early 1800s, it was typical for elites to maintain forms of inter-class popular culture that served their own interests while shutting down other traditions that were very similar but dominated by working-class culture, like annual fairs. Robert Malcolmson asserts that traditional recreations were more likely to survive if they were popular with the elite as well as the poor. The examples he gives are hunting and blood sports. However, there was also a tradition of elites supporting popular recreations with patronage in the forms of food, drink, and prize money which was more likely to occur if the event afforded an opportunity for betting. Horticultural society shows were a form of gambling, and they were typically followed by a feast that resembled the harvest feast given by lords for their farming peasants as an act of paternalism or noblesse oblige. "Reviving the character of the good old English peasantry" was, according to Edward Lombe, Esq., president of the Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society, one of the society's greatest hopes and "most legitimate objects."[44]

Gentry behavior at the flower shows demonstrates how rational recreation wasn't only to reform the poor. According to the middle class, the rich needed it too. In *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, Peter Bailey explained: "in a work-oriented value system leisure represented the irresponsible preoccupations of a parasitic ruling class or the reckless carousing of an irrational working class." Although intended to provide rational recreation for the poor, observers also described horticulture as reform for the idle rich. Horticultural interests supposedly attracted gentlemen away from

[44] Malcolmson, 53-57, 151-7; *General Report of the Agricultural State, and Political Circumstances of Scotland*, ed. John Sinclair (Edinburgh: Printed by Abernathy & Walker, 1814), 3: 428; "Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society," *Gard. Mag*. 6 (Feb. 1830): 124.

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hunting, horseracing, and drinking; ladies left their card tables and dice games for the pleasures of the conservatory and flower show. Gentlemen and ladies were known to behave immodestly at the horticultural exhibitions, enjoying them as opportunities for sensual pleasure, one-upmanship, and extravagant spending.[45]

It was not surprising but nevertheless problematic for wealthy men to be involved in horticultural competitions in any capacity other than benevolent sponsor. Some gentlemen participants wanted only to compete, not to interact in either a sociable or benevolently patronizing manner. At the Ipswich Horticultural Society, a complaint was registered in 1830 that some "have ostentatiously exhibited their fruit, and then selfishly ordered its return back to their own homes, instead of leaving it to promote the general enjoyment of the dinner party of subscribers."[46] However, Loudon's comments on the Herefordshire Horticultural Society's exhibition in 1830 point out that the contemporary trend of horticultural reform for ladies exempted moneyed, idle women from the same requirements for personal involvement that were expected of men.

> A good many of the prizes are awarded to ladies, and this we are delighted to see, whether their gardeners are named or not. The cares of gardening are worthy of, and suitable for, ladies of every rank, from the cottage to the palace. There is nothing unfeminine in them, and as the resources for enjoyment of ladies residing in the country is limited compared with those of men under the same circumstances, we are happy to see that they avail themselves of such as are within their reach. We cannot, however, so easily enter into the idea of a country

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[45] Bailey, 76; Thomas Clark, "On Gardening Recreations, as a Substitute for Fox-hunting, Horse-racing, and other brutalising Sports," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (Apr. 1832): 140-141; William Cobbett, *The American Gardener* (London: Published by C Clement, I, Clement's Inn, 1821), no. 99, 100, 122, 123.

[46] "Ipswich Horticultural Society," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Aug. 1830): 516, first published in *Suffolk Chronicle*, 24 April 1830.

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> gentleman of property competing for prizes of fruits and flowers, when there are so many important duties and elevated recreations to which he is called upon to attend and might enjoy. Still less can we conceive what inward satisfaction it can be to a man to receive a prize for a production which, personally, he has had no hand whatever in producing. If prize shows of fruits and flowers are to be considered in the light of prize cock-fights or boxing-matches, and merely criticized like any other species of gambling amusement, that is another matter; and in that case we certainly greatly prefer gambling in fruits and flowers to any other species of gambling . . . .[47]

It was, claimed Loudon here, acceptable for women of the country gentry to claim credit for plants they had not personally grown, because their resources for entertainment were so limited compared to those for men.

"Lady amateurs" of the country and city did successfully compete for prizes in flower cultivation, arrangement, illustration, and simulacra--such as flowers made of wax. As a group, they also became known for spending huge sums; at mid-century it was reputed that London women would spend "£500 for a few plants" to enter in flower shows, and thousands to decorate their conservatories. This expenditure on novelty flowers was, like other luxuries, justified as benevolently creating employment for thousands.[48]

Rich ladies' appetite for novelty flowers resulted in rough behavior that inverted the usual prejudices about the gentility of the wealthy and criminality of the poor. "Ladies of fashion" were known to grab up fruit and flowers at the end of shows, and even to steal specimens. At the June 1833 exhibition of the London

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[47] Loudon, "Herefordshire Horticultural Society," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Apr. 1830): 255.

[48] "Floricultural Perfection," *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* (hereafter *Hort.*) 6 (Sept. 1851): 418; R. Buist, "Horticultural Societies," *Hort.* 7 (Mar. 1852): 146.

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Horticultural Society,

> Large groups of belles actrices, in the persons of fashionably dressed ladies, with longing eyes and watering mouths, were hovering round the tables, ready to take part in the concluding burletta, farce, and scramble. They soon commenced, "sans grace and sans ceremonie," a fierce and desperate attack upon the remaining fruits and flowers. This excited at once the merriment and the surprise and disgust of the less aristocratic and better behaved part of the company.

The following spring "young and elegant females" attending the Tauton Horticultural Society were found "pilfering from the rarest plants" on display. The *Bristol Mirror* commented, "As the aristocracy thus appear to steal now and then for amusement, it seems but just that they should show a little fellow-feeling to the mobocracy, when they steal from necessity."[49]

Pubs and Clubs

In a frequently repeated equation, one that persisted in gardening and reform literature through the 1800s, the amusements of the garden could successfully replace those found at the pub, tavern, or gin shop. Reformers suggested gardening as a "rational and humanizing amusement" that, when substituted for drinking alcohol, made the degraded poor into good workers and tenants.[50] At the South Devon and East Cornwall Botanical and Horticultural Society's meeting on February 4, 1830, Dr.

[49] "Exhibition of Fruits and Flowers at the London Horticultural Society's Gardens," *Flori. Cab.* 1 (1833): 189-191; "Taunton Horticultural Exhibition," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (Dec. 1834): 634, first published in *Bristol Mirror*.

[50] William Spence, "Remarks on the Education and Amusements of the Lower Classes," *Gard. Mag.* 5 (Apr. 1829): 126; A Practical Gardener, "On the Extent and Culture of Cottage Gardens," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Apr. 1830): 170-71.

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Hamilton addressed how gardening could replace drinking to the benefit of the poor and the wealthy.

> In every point of view, the garden must be admitted to be a more pure as well as more salubrious school of morality than the purlieus of the public-house; and the diversified productions of bounteous Nature, springing into life and beauty from the bosom of the earth, infinitely more instructive and far less contaminating, companions than the noisy inmates of the gin-shop, or the drunken revellers of the tap. While the pursuits of the garden elevate the mind and purify the soul, invigorate the health and replenish the purse, the orgies of the alehouse have a diametrically opposite effect, degrading the mind, corrupting the heart, impairing the health, and impoverishing the purse. Hence, by promoting the innocent and salutary effects of gardening among their poorer tenantry; by contributing, in the names of the most deserving, to the cottager's fund, and stimulating them to become competitors for the cottager's prizes, gentlemen will not only promote the welfare of their tenantry, but, by awakening a taste for the innocent and healthful recreations of gardening among the neighboring peasantry, reform their habits, elevate their morals, and improve their condition: teaching them to become independent of the soul-debasing, spirit-breaking aid of parochial charity, and thus relieve our parishes of one of their most oppressive burdens, the poor's rate."[51]

Clearly, the opposition of gardening to pubs was both practical and ideological. Gardening helped workers to save money instead of spending their earnings at the pub. While habitual drunkenness contributed to higher poor rates and a work force weakened health problems, these issues were minor compared to the dangerous social atmosphere of the pubs. Some tracts on improving cottagers' conditions said explicitly that there was no prejudice against beer, only against the pubs: "those sinks of

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[51] Dr. Hamilton, "Address to the South Devon and East Cornwall Botanical and Horticultural Society Meeting, 4 Feb. 1830," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Apr. 1830): 256.

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iniquity, those haunts of immorality."[52]

Cottage gardens and horticultural society activities were supposed to keep workers out of the pubs. Ironically, horticultural societies were premised in part on the tradition of working-class botany and floristry clubs that usually held their meetings in taverns and public houses (pubs for short). In "Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire," Anne Secord makes an important contribution by emphasizing how the centrality of pubs and drinking to working-class botany clubs was completely ignored by observers who wanted to idealize artisan naturalists as a role model for rational recreation.[53] I completely agree with Secord, and can corroborate by giving the florists' side of the story, for florist's clubs also traditionally met in pubs. Their ritualized activities and forms of organization were very similar. In fact, floristry and botany were interrelated fields of interest that became estranged during the late 1830s and 1840s in great part because elites wanted rational recreations to help prevent working-class participants from gaining economic independence.

In Anne Secord's account of "artisan botanists in early nineteenth-century

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[52] *Labourers' Friend*, 143; H., "Cottage Gardens," 377. Beer was generally considered a nutritious beverage, and cottagers were encouraged to brew their own beer for use at home. Gin, on the other hand, was not socially accepted as part of the domestic diet.

[53] David Tarver, *Auricula History* (National Auricula and Primula Society, 1985), 50; Lys de Bray, *Manual of Old-Fashioned Flowers* (Sparkford, England: The Oxford Illustrated Press, 1984), 37; Secord, "Science in the Pub," 296, 272-3; Secord, "Corresponding Interests: Artisans and Gentlemen in Nineteenth-century Natural History," *British Journal for the History of Science* 27 (1994): 383-408. Secord does not address the economic significance of floristry in weavers' culture, nor the use of horticulture as labor reform.

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Lancashire," she emphasizes that artisans' botanical clubs met in a distinctly working-class location: the pub. This environment, during the first half of the nineteenth century, increasingly excluded all but working-class men. While some women did attend botanical meetings in pubs, they appear to have been passive observers, and none are known to have held office in the clubs. Club fees covered the cost of books and liquor, the latter colloquially known as "wet rent" for the pub owner. Four pence for drink and two pence. for books was the average cost. In return, pub owners usually contributed prize money for flower shows held in their pubs. Secord concludes that the pub owner "no doubt recouped his outlay in the amount of liquor he sold." Ruth Duthie reports that in the late 1790s several florists' clubs folded because drinking during the feasts had become too raucous. When it is brought to memory that these clubs were primarily attended by artisans, the closures sound suspiciously similar to the shut-down of other working-class, pub-centered social activities, described by Malcolmson as a political move.[54]

Set among Brick Lane's middling houses where East London's famous weaver florists kept back gardens and congregated in taverns to show their flowers, there was a Bethnal Green pub called The Flower Pot. In Norwich and Sudbury, florists' clubs met at taverns that shared virtually the same name: the Pot-o'-Flowers and Flower-Pot

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[54] Secord, "Science in the Pub," 276; Ruth Duthie, *Florists' Flowers and Societies* (UK: Shire Publications, Ltd., 1988), 22.

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Inn, respectively.[55] An early-nineteenth-century song set in Brick-Lane (a street that traverses Spitalfields and Bethnal Green) and in nearby Hackney, tells the love story of Miss Shuttle, a prosperous silk-weaver, and Master Guineapig, a pigeon-fancier. When, after much pleading and promising on Shuttle's part Guineapig finally agrees to marry her, the bride-to-be dies in an accident. Guineapig retires to their favorite Hackney pub, the Three Colts and "He drank six quarts of porter there, and bathed, with tears, the flowers." George and Robert Cruikshank employ the Three Colts' flowers so unassumingly within the setting of the poem that one can only think flowers were a common attribute of urban pubs. In the 1830s, some commercial gardens in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania attached taverns to their nursery greenhouses and hot houses for the enjoyment of the visiting public, clearly seeing the two trades as complementary ventures..[56]

Holding flower shows in pubs was much more common in the northern villages than in the south where nurseries and private residences often hosted local flower shows.[57] The southern settings put the meetings on the territory of professionals and

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[55] Theya Molleson and Margaret Cox with H.A. Waldron and D.K. Whittaker. *The Spitalfields Project: The Middling Sort* (Walmgate, York, UK: Council for British Archaeology, 1993) 2: 108, 110; Duthie, 27; "East London Amateur Florist Society," *Flori. Cab.* 1 (1833): 163, 188-9; "List of Floricultural and Horticultural Meetings," *Flori. Cab.* 4 (1836): 139. Of course, there is also the tradition of the beer garden to consider, but that does not appear to be essential to a discussion of the pub as a setting for competitive or commercial floristry.

[56] "Master Guineapig and Miss Shuttle," in *George and Robert Cruikshank* (London, 1925) 1: 31; William Wynne, "Some Account of the Nursery Gardens and the State of Horticulture in the Neighborhood of Philadelphia, with Remarks on the Subject of Emigration of British Gardeners to the United States," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (June 1832): 272.

[57] Brenda Hyatt, *Auriculas: Their Care and Cultivation* (London: Cassell, 1996), 12.

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gentlemen. Soon after several florists split from the London Horticultural Society to form the Metropolitan Society of Florists and Amateurs in 1833, a member of the former group commented that the Metropolitan Society's meetings "have been hitherto always held in some tavern, either in Gray's Inn lane, Cornhill, or Billingsgate." With this comment, the respectability of the Metropolitan Society was maligned. In defense, a member rebutted, asserting that the club "has never once met at one of those places, nor at any tavern near there; the only two tavern meetings in London being their shows at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand, and twelve out of the fourteen business meetings they have had having been held at private houses, not near one of those places." Professionals and gentlemen amateurs were both anxious to distance themselves from the tradition of flower shows in working-class pubs.[58]

Horticultural society competitions and cottage gardening were widely described as temperance measures, but communities of artisan florists traditionally held their flower shows and club meetings at local pubs. Horticultural societies formed by local landholders and manufacturers met under circumstances that were supposed to prevent a society of auricula-fanciers from entering into dissatisfied discussion of social iniquities.

Floristry and Botany, Social and Scientific Hybridization

Historian of science Anne Secord uses Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer's theory of the intersection of communities of scientific knowledge to

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[58] An old F. H. S. [Fellow of the Horticultural Society], "Miscellaneous Intelligence," *Flori. Cab.* 1 (1833): 166; "Remarks on the statements of 'An Old F. H. S.'," *Flori. Cab.* 1 (1833): 211; William May, "Metropolitan Society," *Flori. Cab.* 1 (1833): 213-14; "Metropolitan Society of Florists and Amateurs," *Gard. Mag.* 10 (Feb. 1834): 89.

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explain how the presence of florists, professional gardeners, plant dealers and gentlemen botanists at botany club meetings required a "translation" of plants as "boundary objects." Boundary objects, as formulated by Star and Griesemer, are "those scientific objects which inhabit several intersecting social worlds . . . and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them." Secord asserts that when artisans met in clubs, they shared books and orally transmitted knowledge about plants in order to identify specimens in Linnean nomenclature, primarily because of an interest in herbal medicine. In these circumstances, information was not always openly shared because the participants measured the value of the plants differently, according to interest and motive. Botanists correctly feared that plant dealers would unscrupulously collect every available specimen that could be sold without concern for species preservation. Gentlemen botanists published the findings of working-class botanists as their own, effectively writing the latter out of the public records. Botanists saw the florists in their midst as exclusively interested in flowers, particularly those with commodity value, and less attentive to botany as a scientific endeavor.[59]

Florists had to be practical botanists, but not all theoretical botanists had the skill of the practicing florists. Generally, botanists are identified as those people who are interested in botanical anatomy, and who concentrate on identifying, categorizing,

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[59] Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "Institutional ecology, 'translations' and boundary objects: Amateurs and professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39," *Social Studies of Science* 19 (1989): 387-420, quoted in Secord, "Science in the Pub," 285; Secord, "Science in the Pub," 279, 285-9. For a first hand account of a gardener unscrupulously, and perhaps illegally, collecting wild orchids, see "Cypripedium Calceolus," *Paxton's* 3 (1837): 247-48. In recollection of the previous chapter, it should be noted here that weavers and other artisans did use botanical illustrations in herbals as a design resource.

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and collecting specimens. The specimens are pressed and dried for future reference. Florists manipulate growing and fertilization conditions in order to breed hybrid flowers with the desired morphology. Floristry couldn't be accomplished without a strong working knowledge of botany. Botanists of all classes, according to Secord, cultivated an appearance of disinterestedness in early nineteenth-century England.[60] While a disinterested affect characterized other forms of nature appreciation as well, like landscape painting and landscape tourism, florists were much more likely to be frank about having an economic as well as aesthetic interest in plants.

John Horsefield is remembered by historian of science Anne Secord as a botanist; horticultural historian Ruth Duthie describes him as a florist. Both are correct. In 1829, Loudon identified the Lancashire textile operatives as living in a "dreadful state of degradation," that precluded gardening because "ignorance, and the necessity of continual hard labour, both of parents and children, seldom allow the English mechanics to have more than two ideas, getting and expending." John Horsefield was a handloom weaver who had participated in radical labor politics in the late 1810s. When responding to Loudon's charge, Horsefield identified himself as a "Lancashire operative manufacturer," and a representative of the Prestwich Botanical Society. Horsefield replied that although the mechanics were "destitute," Loudon was wrong to call them "degraded." First Horsefield debunked the claims of economic disinterestedness: "The intricate paths of science are seldom sought for by any man, whatever his station in life may be, except he thinks that they will lead him to some post of pecuniary gratification . . .." Moreover, he reminded Loudon, the legacy of the weaving florists survived, to the extent that "It is no uncommon circumstance in this

[60] Secord, "Corresponding Interests," 394.

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neighborhood for a gardener to ask a weaver the names of plants; botany being a favourite pursuit amongst us . . . ."[61]

Floristry was a favorite and successful pursuit for the Lancashire mechanics and for Horsefield himself. By hand-fertilising *Tigridia conchiflora* with pollen from *Tigridia pavonia*, Horsefield introduced a hybrid day lily around 1837. Joseph Paxton named the lily *T. conchiflora Watkinsoni* in honor of Manchester nurseryman Thomas Watkinson who provided a botanical illustration of Horsefield's creation in 1848 (fig. 14).[62] At the end of the century, Horsefield was still remembered for his contributions to floriculture. *Garden and Forest* described the hybrid bulb *Narcissus Horsefieldii* as one of the old varieties

> which have never yet been equaled, and for which we are indebted to a Lancashire weaver. John Horsfield[sic], whose name will be perpetuated for many a year by this striking flower, with its creamy white perianth and its rich yellow trumpet. *N. Horsfieldii* will never be cheap, although it is a kind which every one wants and ought to have.[63]

It is difficult to say if Horsefield enjoyed any great profit from floristry, as he was notably impoverished at the end of his life. For now, it is sufficient to note that the fields of botany and floristry overlapped substantially, and that the botanist-florist

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[61] John Claudius Loudon, "Notes and Reflections during a Tour through France," *Gard. Mag.* 5 (Apr. 1829): 123; John Horsefield, "Notice of the Prestwich Botanical Society, and the Bury Botanical and Entomological Society, preceded by some Critical Remarks on a Passage in the Account of the Conductor's Tour in France," *Gard. Mag* 6 (Aug. 1830): 392-5; Secord, "Science in the Pub," 278, 280-82; Duthie, 30; Ray Desmond, *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists : including plant collectors, flower painters, and garden designers* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 356.

[62] "Trigridia[sic] conchiflora Watkinsoni," *Paxton's* 14 (1848): 51-52.

[63] E. O. Orpet, "Planting Hardy Bulbs," *Garden and Forest* 4 (7 Oct. 1891): 476.

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John Horsefield openly disclaimed that artisans and gentlemen alike had pecuniary interests and intellectual talents.

It was during the late 1830s and early 1840s that floristry and botany were forced into the oppositional relationship that continues to this day. Scientists who had enthusiastically supported hybridization turned to attack hybridizers for introducing "mongrel and debased varieties." Monstrosity was the favorite expression used by botanists to criticize florists' hybrids. Hybridisers "have been accused of attempting to subvert the whole order of Nature, by monstrous practices," wrote botanist John Lindley, as he explained that hybrids were a natural occurrence, even though their preservation through vegetative propagation was artificial. However, Lindley put hybrids last in his botanical taxonomy in order not to confuse artificial forms with legitimate species. Botanists spat at florists, calling them opportunistic and thick-headed makers of sterile monstrosities, in comparison to the botanists' own self-image as disinterested, highly educated lovers of native species. It appears to have been only in counter-attack that florists represented themselves as progressive improvers of useful and beautiful plants who were superior to curiosity-collectors and purely theoretical botanists. Practicing horticulturists were far less concerned with this distinction than paper botanists, at least until they began feeling the sting of criticism. *Paxton's Magazine of Botany*, for example, was almost exclusively focused on the cultivation of greenhouse and hothouse hybrids, exotics, and traditional florist's

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flowers for ornament, flower show competition, and sale.[64]

Hybridizing could transform a native wildflower or an exotic import into a useful and commercially profitable novelty. For example, the *Loasa lateritia* (fig. 15) was collected in Tucuman, South America, and consequently raised in the Glasgow Botanic Garden and Young's nursery in Epsom. The half-hardy climber was popular for the first few years following its introduction to Great Britain but, according to *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* "was not calculated to continue long in popular favour, owning to its straggling nature, the dull green colour of its leaves, and the paleness and diminutiveness of its blossoms in some situations." About five years later *L. lateritia* was crossed with the Peruvian *Loasa Pentlandica* (fig. 16). The latter boasted a showier flower and denser growth more appropriate to a flower bed than an arbor. The offspring had the larger and brighter flower of *L. Pentlandica*, and the leaves had the smoother texture of *L. lateritia* while retaining *L. Pentlandica*'s form and deep green color. The hybrid was called *Loasa Herbertii* (fig. 17). It combined the growth patterns of the two *Loasas* into a climbing vine appropriate for the winter greenhouse

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[64] "On the Cultivation of *Brugmansia suaveolens*," *Paxton's* 3 (1837): 105; Prof. John Lindley, "Remarks on Hybridising Plants," *Hort.* 2 (Sept. 1847): 114; "Metropolitan Nurseries," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (Feb. 1832): 102. Hybrid monstrosities resonate with other contemporary cultural concerns, particularly sexuality, race, and colonialism, that are beyond my topic here, but are addressed elsewhere. Also, in the period under discussion here, biological theories about humans and other animals were being extrapolated from botanical science more than vice versa, including the fact that vegetable hybrids produce sterile offspring. For an analysis of vegetable hybridization applied to humans in fiction, see Charles Boewe, "Rappaccini's Daughter," *American Literature* 30 (Mar 1958): 37-49. On scientific analysis, see Francois Delaporte, *Nature's Second Kingdom: Explorations of Vegetality in the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1982).

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and summer garden.[65]

The improved *Loasa Herbertii* was named for William Herbert, the Dean of Manchester, who took a gentleman's interest in hybridization without the typical gentleman's disdain for the potential profit. During the 1840s, his publications included a recommendation that "it is desirable to call the attention of the humblest cultivators, of every labourer indeed, or operative, who has a spot of garden, or a ledge in his window, to the infinite variety of Narcissi that may be thus raised, and most easily in pots at his window, if not too much exposed to sun and wind; offering him a source of harmless and interesting amusement, and *perhaps a little profit and celebrity* [my emphasis]."[66]

Gentlemen botanists wanted to be taken seriously as men of science, but felt their status debased by the extensive participation of amateur collectors, commercial horticulturists, and working-class florists. The disdain of "professional botanists" for ornamental horticulturists, and the masculinization of botany in opposition to the plethora of female amateurs have been addressed by historians of science Richard

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[65] "Loasa lateritia," *Paxton's* 5 (1839): 77-79; "Loasa Pentlandica," *Paxton's* 9 (1843): 7-8; "Loasa Herbertii," *Paxton's* 9 (1843): 269-70; An Amateur Florist, N.Y., "Pretty Annual Climbing Plants," *Hort.* 1 (Sept. 1846): 130-31.

[66] William Herbert, *Botanical Register* (1843):38, quoted in "Floricultural Notices," *Paxton's* 10 (1843): 187; "Death of the Dean of Manchester," *Paxton's* 14 (1848): 144; M.D. Beaton, "Hybridization," *Paxton's* 16 (1849): 13. Herbert was respected by botanists like John Lindley, who called herbert "the greatest of all authorities" on the subject of hybridization. Lindley, "Remarks on Hybridizing Plants," 115.

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Drayton and Ann Shteir, respectively.[67] What is generally overlooked is the deep ambivalence about materialism that the "serious botanists" betray when floriculture was mocked as "a mere idle amusement, a pleasure, or toy, unconnected with scientific acquirements of any kind" or reduced to "little less than drudgery."[68] When flower-gardening was trivialized by sentimental association with preindustrial cottagers and ladies of leisure, such conceits indirectly acknowledged that artisans and leisured women were at the forefront of high-priced experiments in botanical cultivation. Simultaneously, the sentimental ties between cottagers and lady gardeners helped to obscure gardening's usefulness as labor discipline.

How Flower-Gardening failed as Labor Reform

Horticultural activities for improvement of the working class were ranked by the values of profit, aesthetics, and intellectual growth. Garden produce for the table was the first priority, as a money-saving measure. Once proficiency was attained with vegetables and fruits, flower gardening would be introduced. In this, the gardener developed an aesthetic sensibility and an appreciation for gardening as a pleasurable pastime. In time, the gardener's direct observation of soil conditions, plant growth, insect activity would ideally lead to an interest in the sciences of botany and entomology. These three stages were interpreted as increasingly less concerned with

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[67] Drayton, 128-169; Ann B. Shteir, *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science: Flora's Daughters--Botany in England, 1760-1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996). On parallels between botanical taxonomy and gender identity, see Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 11-39.

[68] Mr. Dixon, Florist of Brixton Hill, "Floriculture," *Paxton's* 16 (1850): 7-8.

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financial gain, and more with the disinterested pursuit of beauty and knowledge.[69]

Although florists' flowers and specialty fruits like gooseberries required great skill and perseverance, they were sometimes criticized as for having been so far removed from their original characteristics. An appreciation for species, rather than hybridized varieties, was described by one author as indicating greater intellectual capacity despite the advantages of floristry as a time-consuming occupation.

> The constant attention and great nicety required to bring florists' flowers to perfection are excellent things for engrossing the whole of the leisure time of a labourer or a tradesman of very limited reading, and filling it up in an innocent manner: but, as this labourer or tradesman becomes more generally enlightened, his taste will take a wider range, and he will not only desire to know something of other plants besides florists' flowers, but to study other subjects besides botany and gardening; to engage in other pursuits, and to possess other things. Natural history will then begin to attract his attention . . ..

The author then pointed to Lancashire weaver and florist-botanist John Horsefield as evidence of this progression.[70]

For the purposes of rational recreation, floristry seemed ideal because it required so much time and attention that the dedicated florist became domestic and disciplined out of necessity. However, floristry could also be so profitable as to free workers from the harness of structural unemployment that allotments and flower shows were originally intended to ensure. These attributes were directly related, for the more difficult it was to cultivate a plant, the more certain it was that the plant

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[69]Stevenson, "On Benefits," 101-105.

[70] "On providing a Succession of the best-flavoured Gooseberries," *Gard. Mag.* 7 (June 1831): 331; Review of *An Account of the different Floral and Horticultural Exhibitions held in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, and other Parts of the Kingdom, in the Year 1830* in *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Apr. 1831): 213.

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would receive a high market value.

In the 1830s and 1840s, flowers were both praised and criticized for being ornamental rather than useful items. Why should cottagers be encouraged to grow plants that had no intrinsic usefulness, only an unpredictable financial value? Perhaps for that very reason--so that the horticultural societies could modulate the economic independence that garden produce could provide--because flowers did have financial value.

Prizes at flower shows ranged from cash to gardening tools to household items like a tea cup or serving spoon to medals.

> In 1832, people almost smiled at the idea of giving good prizes for the best collections of cut flowers, and when, in a year or two, a ten-guinea gold medal was given monthly for the best basket of cut flowers, to be afterwards presented to the Queen, half the Sir Fretfuls of the age protested against the monstrous folly. Yet what has been the effect? First, the example of giving prizes for cut flowers has been followed everywhere. Secondly, it has caused thousands to devote their attention to flowers who never devoted an hour to them before.

In the early 1830s, the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society was known to give away five to six hundred pounds in prizes per year. At the end of the decade, the Norwich Horticultural Society decided to start offering medals because they were afraid that the competitors were motivated only by pecuniary gain, which the society had hoped would excite interest but not be the sole source of it. Anticipating complaints, the society allowed prizewinners to defer claiming their awards until the end of the season "when he may receive a piece of plate of their aggregate value."[71]

[71] "Flowers of the Matin and Evening Song," *An. Hort.* 1 (1846): 374; "The Norwich Horticultural Society," *Gard. Mag.* (Dec. 1839):681, first published in *Norwich Mercury*;"Floral and Horticultural Exhibitions" *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Aug. 1831): 416.

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In retrospect, it was also revealed that offering high prizes for flowers led cottagers to spend their money improvidently and to commit crimes, the very things that gardening was supposed to prevent. "Cottagers, with not a shilling beforehand, have, notwithstanding, shown half-guinea dahlias, and seven and sixpenny roses, and two-guinea geraniums, and ten-shilling tulips. These things are highly improper." The author of this critique could only surmise that the flowers were stolen, or bought with money that was borrowed, or that should have been spent on necessities for the cottager's family. The urge to gamble and to imitate the rich was a waste of time and an invitation to immorality. It wasn't that sponsors were against cottagers growing flowers for their own amusement, but apparently, there was the risk that flower competitions would undo the humbleness, docility, industriousness, and sufficiency that gardening was intended to provide.[72]

Dr. Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward, a physician and amateur naturalist, invented a closed terrarium that he called the Wardian Case. Ward's invention, an accidental creation, was marketed as effective for protecting plants from polluted urban environments, creating artificial climates, and preserving exotic species during overseas journeys. In his treatise, "On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases," Ward described the polluted urban environment as noxious to plants. The advantage of Wardian cases was that it shielded plants from those fumes, allowing urban industrial workers to grow flowers, herbs, and even small greens. The Wardian case was a miniature allotment: it could provide food, entertainment and even auxiliary income. Ward predicted, "As these cases become more general among the higher and middle

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[72] "Effect of Gardening on the Rural Population," *An. Hort.* 3 (1848): 437-8; "Hints for Cottagers' Shows," *An. Hort.* 1 (1846): 223-4.

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classes, a new field of healthful industry will thus be opened to the poor, who might not only be employed in procuring plants for these cases from the country" but also in building models of follies to place in the cases, not to mention the building the cases themselves. There was only one use of the case of which Ward disapproved: growing florists' flowers, "things which this year are rewarded with gold medals, and the next are thrown on the dunghill." Invoking the dangers of tulipmania, Ward criticized florists for valuing "everything in proportion as it is removed from Nature, and unattainable by the rest of mankind." Instead of wasting their attention on this illegitimate occupation, the poor should use Wardian cases to find moral sustenance in studying natural history.[73]

Conclusion

The vegetable allotment garden is an explicit economic solution for poverty. The capitalist sponsors of allotment gardens and horticultural shows masked their own interests with talk of benevolent cultural dispersion while trying to guide working-class gardeners towards the least lucrative and most easily controlled forms of rational recreation. Any garden, but especially the flower garden, was idealized as an implicit guarantee of a dependent and disciplined labor force. The political and economic implications of flower-gardening were submerged into attributes of sentimental morality and nature appreciation. A cottager's flowerpot on the windowsill became an icon of temperance and docility thanks to the efforts and rhetoric of organized horticultural reform.

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[73] Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward, *On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases* (London: John Van Voorst, 1842), 61.

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The economic value of flowers seemed insignificant until cottagers proved themselves serious competitors against professional and amateur gentlemen gardeners. The conflict of interests when working-class and elite traditions merged at the horticultural society events was not confined to cottagers and their horticultural patrons. Professional nurserymen, florists, and gardeners were also responsible for establishing clubs that combined mutual instruction, commercial promotion and labor cooperation. Like the artisans' clubs, gardeners' cooperatives preceded, influenced, and disrupted the horticultural reform movement of the early nineteenth century. As the following chapter will show, these same conflicts over organized labor, scientific knowledge, and the commercial value of plants were brought to the United States by British texts and immigrant gardeners.

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Chapter Three:
Transplanting the Business of Floriculture from Britain to the United States

Commercial horticulture in the United States was profoundly influenced by the traditions of gardening as profitable leisure and idealized labor in British working-class culture, traditions that shaped how business was done and how goods were marketed to consumers. In the United States during the antebellum period, almost all of the professional horticulturists were first- and second-generation immigrants. Most came from England, Ireland, and Scotland. The influence of immigrant gardeners from other countries is outside the bounds of this study. In commercial horticulture, some French and German immigrants made important contributions, but as a group the British are by far the most significant population for the issue of flower-gardening's labor value that is under discussion here.

Among this population there were many whose previously developed skills in the cultivation of florists' flowers and greenhouse exotics would have a tremendous effect on the direction of commercial horticulture. The immigrants successfully furthered their interests by creating professional networks, taking advantage of horticultural exhibitions as commercial platforms, and becoming active authors and publishers. The professional strategies and occupational preferences of immigrant gardeners demonstrate transatlantic continuity and adaptation in gardening practices, labor organization, commercial promotion, and ways of interpreting the social value of gardening. These would directly influence not just horticultural practices in the northeastern United States, but more broadly, would shape the conceptions of human

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interaction with nature that circulated through American popular culture via gardening communications.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Philadelphia was the most important location for commercial horticulture in the United States. It was the national center for seed distribution, horticultural publications, and the import and cultivation of nursery exotics. Philadelphians, particularly Quakers, showed an active interest in gardening and botany from the last decades of the 1600s. In the antebellum period, the old Germantown settlement was revived as a garden suburb, and as the home to nurseries, florists, landscape architects, and horticultural writers, including the immigrant gardeners discussed in this chapter. Reed L. Engle has documented the establishment of almost thirty nursery and greenhouse facilities in Germantown between 1837 and 1860. The influx of immigrant gardeners at mid-century constituted a whole new generation of Philadelphia horticulturists who eventually influenced national practice.[1] Thus, this chapter focuses on the activities of Philadelphia's immigrant horticulturists.

Antebellum Philadelphia was the new home for many British immigrants. Throughout the nineteenth century, but especially during the 1840s through 1860s, many textile workers and gardeners left Britain for the United States, settling in

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[1] Peggy Cornett Newcomb, "Popular Annuals 1865-1914," *The Longwood Program Seminars* 13 (1981): 59; Elizabeth McLean, "Town and Country Gardens in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," in *British and American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert P. Maccubbin and Peter Martin (Williamsburg: Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1984): 136-147; Dr. Margaret Tinkcom, "Eighteenth Century Germantown Gardens," and Reed L. Engle, "Germantown: The Victorian Suburb," in *Germantown Green: A Living Legacy of Gardens, Orchards, and Pleasure Grounds* (Germantown, Pa.: A Publication of The Wyck Association, The Germantown Historical Society and The Maxwell Mansion, 1982), 5-8, 9-17.

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Philadelphia, Paterson, New Jersey, and the surrounding areas. In both fields of work, previous habits were maintained. Studies by nineteenth-century census taker Lorin Blodgett and modern textile historian Phillip Scranton show that Philadelphia had a concentrated population of hand-loom weavers, framework knitters and lace makers from Lancashire, Nottingham, Leicester and other British textile centers. Like their horticultural counterparts, they preferred continuity, and thus established small workshops where outmoded techniques of production (handlooms) survived until as late as the 1880s. Aside from some coincidences in neighborhood settlement patterns, without additional research, it is premature to identify floristry among the textile workers or immigrant florists who were previously artisans or mechanics in areas of Britain marked by this occupational convergence.[2]

The immigrant horticulturists demonstrated a definite awareness of the legacy of the British artisan florists and their contributions to horticulture. William Chorlton, called by *The Philadelphia Florist* an "old Lancashire Florist Americanised," wrote many articles during the 1840s and 1850s on the cultivation of florists' flowers and other plants for urban window gardens. Chorlton pointed to the work of "humble" rural cottagers and mechanics in cultivating the "Dahlia, Pink, Carnation, Polyanthus, Auricula, Pansy and many others" as "ample proof of the benefit that this class has assisted in conferring on our more wealthy lovers of flowers, who have been reposing on their beds of down, while [the mechanic's] coarse (and often only) fabric of a

[2] On British immigrant textile workers who maintained their crafts in Philadelphia, see Lorin Blodgett, *The Textile Industries of Philadelphia* (1880); Philip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1855* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), 86-87, 138; Rowland Tappan Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950* (1968 reissue; New York: Russell & Russell, 1953), 39-46.

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coverlet has frequently been protecting his treasured pots, to his own discomfiture." When an anonymous correspondent to *The Philadelphia Florist* praised the horticultural hobbies of European matrons, maids, children, and factory workers, "and this in England, and in Lancashire, 'where pallid fingers ply the loom'," another author responded knowingly that the same interests, among the same variety of socioeconomic classes, existed in Philadelphia.[3]

Emigration from Britain

As discussed in the previous chapters, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, floristry was a long-established British working-class hobby that combined the conditions of preindustrial work with a grass roots economic defense. Economically motivated social reformers interpreted gardening as a rational recreation that produced habits of industry, sobriety, domesticity, and political docility in impoverished farmers and mechanics. Combined with the cottage garden competitions and sponsored flower shows, the rise of middle-class suburban demand for gardeners and nursery produce contributed to the popularity and viability of commercial gardening as a supplement or alternative to industrial or agricultural work. Occupational reform thus dovetailed into the growth of commercial horticulture. The

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[3] "To Correspondents," *The Philadelphia Florist and Horticultural Journal* (hereafter *Phila. Florist*) 1 (Oct 1852): 192; William Chorlton. "Floriculture–'The Lancashire Heroes'" *Phila. Florist* 1 (Nov 1852): 209; "Gardens of Industrial Institutions, Colleges, &c." *Phila. Florist* 1 (Sept. 1852): 146. For the same story of a mechanic florist giving up his blanket to insulate flower pots within an article about horticultural societies, see Duthie, *Florists' Flowers and Societies*, 1988, 28, citing *An. Hort.* (1848): n.p. Also mentioned by Tyler Whittle, *The Plant Hunters: Tales of the Botanist-Explorers Who Enriched our Gardens* with foreward by Charles Elliott (New York: Lyons & Burford, Publishers), 8.

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idealization of gardening as rational recreation bled into an idealization of professional horticulturists which was both a help and a hindrance to the trade.

The spreading interest in horticulture, assisted by elite sponsorship, ironically led to an economic recession among British professional gardeners by the 1830s. With the rise of horticultural societies and publications like John Claudius Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine*, specialized methods of cultivation became more generally known. While this helped amateurs to become professional gardeners, competition also increased as gardeners on private estates cut into the domain of commercial nurserymen by propagating and dispersing specimens. In the late 1840s, the drop in corn and timber prices, and the pressures of primogeniture and entailment (preventing division of land) resulted in the embarrassment of large estates in Great Britain. Consequently, some noted private gardens were being sold and the gardeners let go.[4]

The glut in the horticultural labor market contributed to the debasement of gardener's wages during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Even though many gardeners were literate skilled workers, their wages in England at the end of the 1820s were significantly less than that of an illiterate bricklayer. The prospects of English gardeners for rising within their profession were limited by the Poor Law settlement rules that prevented unemployed workers from getting apprenticeships and jobs outside of their home parish. The Scottish, who were also experiencing an overabundance of gardeners and nurserymen, were not geographically limited in this way. Consequently, Scots were free to travel in search of better apprenticeships,

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[4] Melanie Simo, *Loudon and the Landscape: From Country Seat to Metropolis, 1783-1843* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 148, 161-2.

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some eventually taking better jobs at English gardens.[5]

In addition to the gardeners' employment problems, there was the greater long-standing difficulty--shared by all renters--of getting land at a reasonable rate and on a long enough lease to make the financial and labor investment in land and buildings worthwhile. For gardeners who aspired to hold independent nurseries, uncertain or short leases might make them hesitate to build greenhouses. Greenhouses were necessary, but could also lead to a higher rent: they were considered improvement. Because of these conditions, Loudon advised: "we have no hesitation in saying, that, were we an active young labourer, gardener, or mechanic, without property, we should greatly prefer emigrating to America or Australia, where we could get land in perpetuity, to building here on any shorter lease."[6]

For gardeners, there was not just opportunity but also demand. The establishment of landscaped suburban retreats brought substantial business to nurseries and landscape gardeners in the U.S. as well as abroad. Americans of means were establishing suburban "country" estates, reading accounts of the progress in continental landscape architecture, and hungering for the reputed expertise of Scottish, English, and Irish gardeners (generally in that order of preference for country of origin).

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[5] Simo, 156; J. G., "Remarks on the depressed State of the Nursery and Gardening Profession, more especially in Scotland," *The Gardener's Magazine, and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement* (hereafter *Gard. Mag.*) 8 (Apr. 1832): 134-137; J. Wighton, Gardener to the Earl of Stafford, Cossey Hall, "On the Preference for Scotch Gardeners" *Gard. Mag.*, n.s., 6 (1840): 244-6. For more on apprenticeships, see R. S. E., "Remarks on the Conduct of some Master-Gardeners to their Journeymen," *Gard. Mag.* 5 (Feb. 1829): 18-19; A. B. C., "Discussion relative to the Wages of Gardeners," *Gard. Mag.* 5 (Feb. 1829): 100-101; Neutral, "Conduct of Head-Gardeners towards Journeymen," *Gard. Mag.* 5 (Feb. 1829): 101.

[6] Loudon, "On Cottage Husbandry and Architecture," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Apr. 1830): 166.

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The labor shortage in the U.S. meant that, by the 1850s, the per diem was two or three times greater than that in the home countries; in dollars this translated to 80 cents or one dollar per day, although many gardeners preferred to be paid by the job.[7]

Emigrants, warned those who had already made the transition, should not hope to find permanent year-round positions at gentlemen's estates, due to the reduced scale of land-ownership in the U.S. But, they added, the field for private enterprise in the nursery, seed and floristry lines was flourishing. Young uneducated gardeners or older gardeners set in their ways were especially urged to emigrate rather than attempt to compete with the growing class of young, educated and "scientific" professionals in the old world. If they were willing to take the available opportunities without egotistical fuss, Benjamin Poore of New York advised those considering emigration, "I can safely say, I never knew a single instance of any person wishing employment in the agricultural or gardening way, that could not readily find it."[8]

In 1832, one of Loudon's hired gardeners at Bayswater took his advice and

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[7] Andrew Jackson Downing, "The Management of Large Country Places," *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* (hereafter *Hort.*) 6 (Mar. 1851): 106; Downing, "Economy in Gardening," *Hort.* 3 (May 1849): 497-98; Berthoff, 84; John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, enl. ed. (London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1835), 413.

[8] Loudon, "General Results of a Gardening Tour," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (Apr. 1832): 131-2; Benjamin Poore, "On the Emigration of Gardeners to the United States of America," *Gard. Mag.* 9 (Feb. 1833): 29-32; William Wynne, "Some Account of the Nursery Gardens and the State of Horticulture in the Neighborhood of Philadelphia, with Remarks on the Subject of Emigration of British Gardeners to the United States," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (June 1832): 275; Alexander Gordon, "Notices of the principal Nurseries and private Gardens in the United States of America, made during a Tour through the Country, in the Summer of 1831; with some Hints on Emigration," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (June 1832): 277-289; G. Thorburn, "Hints to Gardeners wishing to emigrate to the United States of America," *Gard. Mag.* 9 (Feb. 1833): 32-34.

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sailed for Philadelphia. The Irish "journeyman gardener" wrote to Loudon that his new position with a "respectable nurseryman" was a success. "I have been very well received here, and have been well treated ever since. I live in the house, and sit at my employer's own table; I have access to a very good library; and, upon the whole, I anticipate a very good situation." Within two months of arrival, the gardener was voted into the membership of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in recognition of his written contribution to horticultural knowledge. Loudon later heard from the Philadelphia employer that he had been pleased with the gardener until the latter "fell in with some old acquaintances from Ireland, and became very intemperate." Ashamed of his behavior after being arrested for public drunkenness, the gardener enlisted in the army, and was assumed to have died of cholera before reaching the northwestern territory.[9]

"There are no American gardeners"

The importance of immigrant gardeners to American horticultural history has been almost entirely overlooked by previous historians. In part this is due to the perception that the economic situation was so different in the United States from that in Britain that landscape gardening was a comparatively minor phenomenon. American country estates certainly were much smaller, requiring adaptations in landscape architecture design. Consequently, it shouldn't be surprising that the best-known horticulturists of the nineteenth-century U.S. are the American-born landscape architects Andrew Jackson (A. J.) Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted. Influenced

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[9] "Extract from a Letter lately received from North America," *Gard. Mag.* 8 (June 1832): 360; "Philadelphia, July 7" *Gard. Mag.* 10 (Nov. 1834): 570-71.

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by British landscape aesthetics, each formulated designs appropriate to public spaces and to the much smaller country estates created in the U.S. Both left substantial paper documentation of their designs. Frederick Law Olmsted is particularly beloved for his designs for urban parks, most notably New York's Central Park. Many of Olmsted's landscapes survive, providing ample materials for landscape historians. What is often overlooked is Downing's acknowledgment that most gardeners in mid-century America were immigrants, and that the Olmsted firm preferred to hire immigrant British and Scottish gardeners to oversee the installation and maintenance of the landscapes they designed.[10]

While historical surveys of American horticulture include biographies of British immigrants who became prominent nurserymen, landscape gardeners, and horticultural authors, there has been very little previous research on the causes or results of their migration as a group, other than to note that they were especially successful with seed,

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[10] In relation to Downing, immigrant gardeners are mentioned briefly by George B. Tatum, "Nature's Gardener," in *Prophet with Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852*, eds. George B. Tatum and Elisabeth Blair MacDougall (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989), 44; and Judith K. Major, *To Live in the New World: A.J. Downing and American Landscape Gardening* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1997), 2, 146, 187, 213. On Olmsted, see Lee Hall, *Olmsted's America: An "Unpractical" Man and His Vision of Civilization* (Boston: A Bulfinch Press Book, 1995); Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Scriber, 1999); Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1982).

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nursery, and florist trades.[11] This oversight should be at least partially attributed to the inclusion of landscape architecture in the academic arenas of architectural and art history. Landscape architects are envisioned as artists while florists, nurseries, seed houses, and practical gardeners are marginalized as uninspired commercial players or labor grunts. Even historians of science, abiding the divorce of botany and horticulture, have little interest in the history of cultivators, despite plentiful evidence from authorities like Loudon who wrote in 1835 that "Horticultural science in America is in a great measure confined to the nurserymen, the botanists, and the professional gardeners who have emigrated from Britain."[12] The story of immigrant gardeners in the U.S. has been relegated to the specializations of garden and business history.

In 1832, a recent immigrant reported that "there are no American gardeners except amateurs." Gardeners who were native-born Americans of European descent tended to be amateurs of means who were interested in experimental horticulture, botanical study, and the aesthetics of picturesque landscape design. Twenty years later, native and immigrant commentators agreed that it was still true that most Americans preferred farming to gardening. Even among the sons of native-born

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[11] Ulysses P. Hedrick, *A History of Horticulture in America to 1860*, with an addendum of Books Published from 1861-1920 by Elizabeth Woodburn (1950; reprint, Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1988), 220, 247-8, 480; Ann Leighton, *American Gardens of the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst, Mass: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 71-82; Liberty Hyde Bailey, *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture* (NY: The Macmillan Company, 1937), 2: 1563-1603. For a more developed discussion of immigrant horticulturists in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake, see Barbara Wells Sarudy, *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake, 1700-1805* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 65-91.

[12] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1835), 413.

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gardeners, few continued the trade.[13] After eighteen years in the business, Downing could not

> remember an instance of an American offering himself as a professional gardener. Our own rural workmen confine themselves wholly to the farm, knowing nothing, or next to nothing of the more refined and careful operations of the garden. We may, therefore, thank foreigners for nearly all the gardening skill that we have in the country, and we are by no means inclined to underrate the value of their labors.[14]

What did the immigrant gardeners make of this? Robert Robinson Scott, a recent Irish immigrant and editor of the upstart *Philadelphia Florist*, responded to Downing's commentary:

> Why are there not more American gardeners? Because it would seem to them an occupation unworthy their high intellectual character and elevated ideas of human excellence. Why do we foreigners [bear] all the drudgery? This is a question of political as well as moral bearing. I shall leave its solution to more deep thinkers, those who tell us that almost all our gardeners are Irish or English, with a few Scotch; or transpose it, Scotch and English, with a few Irish--always put the Irish last, for if you let them at the head they will make a fuss; but here I have placed them in their comparative position.--There are more gardeners from Scotland than from either England or Ireland. We wish there were more natives [Americans] among us, for the credit of our profession."[15]

Scott's response points to problems that arose because of the perceived predominance of Irish gardeners, and the general prejudice against Irish immigrants. Irish gardeners were particularly accused of laziness and undercutting wages, the latter in the spirit of

[13] Wynne, 275; Patrick Barry, Editor's note to William Chorlton, "The Qualifications of a Good Gardener," Hort. (Apr. 1853): 180; H., New York, "Horticultural Conservatism," *The Gardener's Monthly* (hereafter *Gard. Mon.)* 2 (Apr. 1860): 101-2.

[14] Downing, "American versus British Horticulture, " *Hort.* 7 (June 1852): 249.

[15] Robert Robinson Scott, *Phila. Florist* 1 (Aug. 1852): 121-22.

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jealous competition of "fardowners" and "corkonians."[16] These terms refer to Irish locales. Fardowner is a disparaging term for someone from the North of Ireland; a Corkonian is a resident of Cork, Ireland. Scott himself was an Irish patriot of middling background who had participated in the unsuccessful "Young Irelanders" insurrection against the British Parliament's oppression of the Irish peasantry. In the spirit of that rebellion, characterized by cooperation between the landed Protestants and landless Catholics of Ireland, he urged his fellow immigrants to cooperate, or at least to conceal their national and sectional resentments from the Americans.[17]

Many immigrant gardeners were accused of being frauds, or unable to adapt to American cultivation, both by American nativists and by their fellow immigrant countrymen. In 1834, Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* published a Philadelphia gardener's warning that Americans hated the pretensions of young English gardeners who came to America "with an impression that, although they know but little, they can easily impose themselves as 'finished hands' on the Americans, who have not yet reached that high pitch of refinement which the British have." These accusations incited resentful defenses that the "real" gardeners were finding their wages and their

[16] Jeffreys, "The Improvement of Gardeners," *Hort.* (Apr. 1852): 176; R. Robinson Scott responds directly to Jeffreys in "Gardeners and Association," *Phila. Florist* 1 (June 1852): 56. On prejudice against Irish immigrants in nineteenth-century Philadelphia, see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[17] "Robert Robinson Scott," *The Chronicles of Germantown* (n.p., n.d.): 26, R. Robinson Scott File, Germantown Historical Society; R. Robinson Scott, *Phila. Florist*, 1 (Aug 1852): 121-22. On the Young Ireland movement, see Sir Charles Gavin Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840-1850* (NY: Appleton and Company, 1881); John Francis Kavanagh, *William Smith O'Brien and Young Ireland, 1843-1848* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maine, 1973); Richard Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1988).

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independence debased by the bad reputation created by impudent "pretenders."[18] Although the demand for gardeners was great, the transition to American climate and consequent conditions of cultivation, took time to learn, which should surely explain some of the charges of fraud.

Professional horticulture is skilled labor that was and is often regarded as unskilled physical labor. In the U.S., those who had in their home countries held relatively self-determined hours and task patterns, or who had been accustomed to planning as well as planting and tending the gardens, now found themselves reduced to the status of heavy laborers or "treated like a mere machine." In one case, the objectification was combined with an ethnic slur, when the employer referred to her gardener as "Mr. O'Shovelem." Skilled gardeners found their work so frequently questioned by employers who were interested amateurs, that the feeling was more of "interference" than "encouragement." This in turn made some skilled gardeners reluctant to immigrate to the U.S.[19]

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[18] Wynne, 274-5; William Chorlton, "Education of Gardeners," *Hort.* 6 (May 1851):245-6.

[19] Horticola, "A Chapter on Gardeners," *Hort.* 9 (Apr. 1854): 178-82; Sophia Johnson, *Every Woman Her Own Flower Gardener* (New York: Henry Wiliams, 1847), quoted in Dianne Harris, "Cultivating Power: The Language of Feminism in Women's Garden Literature, 1870-1920," *Landscape Journal* 13 (fall 1994):120, 122; "Progress of American Horticulture," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 272-73; "Foreign Horticultural Establishments," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 274-275; Downing, "American versus British Horticulture"; Jeffreys, "Critique on the June *Horticulturist*," *Hort.* 7 (Aug 1852): 366-67; P.B.M., "Suburban Gardening," *Hort.* 7 (Oct. 1852): 448; Anthrophilus, "Foreign Horticultural Establishments," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 245; F. N., "To the Editor of the Philadelphia Florist," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 341; H.C. H., *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 342.

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Patterns of Professional Achievement

Immigrant gardener Thomas Meehan (1826-1901) was one of the most important horticulturists in nineteenth-century America (fig. 18). In addition to running a successful nursery and participating in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Meehan taught botany and corresponded with prominent botanists, including Charles Darwin; he successfully advocated the establishment of local public parks; and he edited the most prominent American horticultural magazine of the second half of the nineteenth century: *Gardener's Monthly*.[20] Meehan's historical importance has received meager attention in comparison to native-born contemporaries Downing and Olmsted.

The path of Meehan's career is both typical and exemplary of patterns of professional development as practiced in Britain and replicated in the United States. Like other skilled trades, horticulture had internally regulated stratifications of skill and management. Unlike other manual workers, a day laborer could advance into a position of independence and middle-class prosperity. The key was to amass the skills, savings, contacts, and reputation to establish oneself in a nursery.

Like many nineteenth-century nurserymen, Meehan was a second-generation

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[20] The biographical information on Meehan provided in this section comes primarily from Simon Mendelson Meehan, "A Brief Sketch of the Life of Thomas Meehan," *Meehan's Monthly* 14 (Jan. 1902): 13-19; Anna Hazen Howell, Minutes of the Germantown Botany Club, 1884-1888, 116-122, Anna Hazen Howell Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; and autobiographical remarks by Meehan published in the *Horticulturist*, *Gardener's Monthly*, or *Meehan's Monthly*. Secondary sources consulted include Stephanie Ginsberg Oberle, "The Influence of Thomas Meehan on Horticulture in the United States," *Germantown Crier* 49 (spring 1999): 4-25; and several unidentified newspaper clippings in the Thomas Meehan File, Germantown Historical Society.

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horticulturist who personally benefited from the landscape improvements of the early nineteenth century. His father Edward Meehan was head gardener to Sir Francis Vernon Harcourt and Lady Catherine Harcourt at St. Clare Castle on the Isle of Wight. Harcourt was closely connected to people who invested in agricultural improvement and experimental villages.[21]

Meehan's path to botanical knowledge resembles that of the Lancashire artisan botanists studied by Anne Secord because Meehan started with Linnean identification of native plants, participated in an educational club formed of his peers, and was encouraged by a gentleman botanist who introduced him to other scientists. In his youth, Meehan was educated for two years in a Lancastrian school located in Ryde, but he also belonged to a cooperative comprised of young men who were interested in studying languages and sciences. In both settings, the student with the most advanced knowledge of a topic tutored the others. In the 1880s, one of Meehan's botany students (fig. 19) transcribed a conversation with Meehan about his early education, including a description of the club.

> At this period there was in the place where Thomas lived a groupe of young men & lads who used to meet nightly at the tavern (there being no other place for their [meetings] open to them.) The leader of this set was a young fellow of about twenty years old who was a strong character with a decided oratorical talent, who they called their Captain. Fifty years ago in the rural districts of England tea & coffee were unknown luxuries & the people determined never to touch beer. The young fellows talked it all over & decided to not only hold to their promise but use their influence towards making others better & trying to learn more. So almost nightly they met (not at the tavern but in one of the homes of the boys) & started a real study club.[22]

[21] [Thomas Meehan], "A Long Term of Service," *Gard. Mon.* 22 (Apr. 1880): 127.

[22] Howell, 121-122.

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Meehan's son was not alone in believing that the Mechanics' Institutes that organized rational recreations grew out of working-class clubs like his father's educational cooperative.[23] However, the shared methodology should suggest that the autodidacts also borrowed from the Lancastrian educational system in which Meehan and perhaps the others were raised.

Meehan first trained as a gardener under his father at St. Clare. He was apprenticed at a few other estates before landing a position at the Kew Gardens where he honed his botanical knowledge. In British practice, to become a "master-gardener" or "tradesman-gardener," one had to have served an apprenticeship, usually two or three years working in a private garden. A person could only be apprenticed up to age twenty-one, making it difficult to rise above the status of garden laborer without this training, despite experience gained later in life. Ideally, the apprenticeship was followed by appointments as a journeyman gardener in a public botanic garden and at a commercial nursery, one year in each place. Many journeyman gardeners put in a couple of years at Kew Gardens. Having a Kew pedigree was a distinct professional advantage. However, as the operations of the more than fifty gardeners at Kew were so extremely subdivided, the practical knowledge gained had the strength of specificity but suffered lack of breadth.[24]

Ambitious journeymen sought better positions in either private or commercial gardens until achieving the position of head-gardener in the former, or tradesman-

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[23] S. M. Meehan, 14.

[24] [Robert Robinson Scott], "Foreign Horticultural Establishments," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Nov 1852): 193-4.

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gardener in the latter. Head-gardeners supervised apprentices, journeymen and laborers. Master-gardener was a rank allowed a gardener who had worked at least one year as the manager of a garden, either alone or as head-gardener; the title of master-gardener was portable, like an educational degree. Tradesman-gardeners appear to have had more independence than "serving gardeners" who worked at private gardens. Many head- and master-gardeners aspired to have their own market or nursery gardens once they had amassed some capital. Most categories of tradesman-gardener cultivated, collected, or sold seeds, plants, fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Jobbing gardeners (who worked by the job) earned lower pay but had the flexibility of an independent contractor. Jobbing gardeners established and maintained gardens, and supplied gardens with plants grown elsewhere. Day laborers and weeders were at the bottom of the gardeners' hierarchy. Unless trained and employed by family members who owned a nursery, women only appear in this labor hierarchy as weeders.[25]

Professional gardeners did experience exploitation and division of labor, and did fight back with unions. In Britain, John Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* (1826-44) and Robert Marnock's *Floricultural Magazine* from (1836-42) were known for representing the interests of working gardeners. These papers created a forum. John Lindley's *Gardener's Chronicle*, on the other hand, would not allow exchanges on labor conditions, or much debate between practitioners and theorists. Despite having himself risen from modest beginnings as a nurseryman's son to become an internationally known professor of botany, Lindley was not sympathetic to others in the trade. In 1852, Robert Robinson Scott, then editor of *The Philadelphia Florist*

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[25] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1830), 1040-43.

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accused Lindley of being a "horticultural Hercules" with whom working gardeners had no chance of advocacy, for "alas! capital has always got the upper hand of labor."[20] Some gardeners were so intent upon the possibilities for career advancement that they wouldn't be associated with any working-class critique of society, not even gardeners' labor. This hesitancy does not appear to have been true of R. Robinson Scott or Thomas Meehan.

In their careers as editors of American horticultural magazines, both Scott and Meehan encouraged fair exchange between contributors interested in the conditions of professional gardeners. Scott and Meehan were not only sensitive to labor struggles within their own trade, but also the larger political implications. The time these young gardeners spent at Kew coincided with the Chartist and Young Ireland uprisings; these were working-class movements for universal suffrage and public education. Riots and public demonstrations were necessary to get the attention of Parliament because the interests of property-less laborers were not sufficiently represented through official channels. As mentioned above, Scott was an active participant in the Young Ireland movement. When asked to serve as a "special constable" during the Chartist riots, Thomas Meehan was one of a few Kew gardeners who refused to accept the duty except in protection of the garden itself. At the same time, Meehan published several articles that were, according to his son, not only related to botany or horticulture, "but of affairs that were holding the attention of men in various lines." During the almost twenty years that Meehan served on the Philadelphia Common Councils, he was

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[20] Scott, "Foreign Horticultural Establishments," 192; Ray Desmond, *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists: Including Plant Collectors, Flower Painters, and Garden Designers* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 468.

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dedicated to protecting his constituents against legislation that favored the interests of private corporations.[27]

Meehan aspired to independence. The young gardener--educated and scientific--immigrated to Philadelphia in 1848 where he first worked for nurseryman Robert Buist, and then at Bartram's Botanic Garden under Andrew Eastwick. During this time, Meehan became an exhibitor at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Soon after, Caleb Cope, the Society's president, hired Meehan as his own head gardener. In 1853, only five years after his arrival in Philadelphia, Meehan was able to establish his own nursery. The nursery was a lifelong success for Meehan, and was continued by his sons after his death.

Gardeners' Nurseries

The British system of career development for horticulturists was replicated in the U.S., complete with transatlantic professional networks. Settled immigrant horticulturists acted as protectors, teachers, and employment agents to many newcomers. A few years spent under the wing of a seasoned horticulturist could ease this transition, and could obviously be of benefit to the professional reputation of

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[27] S. M. Meehan, 14-15, 19. Edwin Costley Jellett, local historian of gardening in Germantown, was personally acquainted with Meehan, and went so far as to say that Meehan had to leave England *because* of his Chartist activities. Jellett, *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners* (Germantown, Pa.: Horace F. McCann, Publisher, 1914), 48. Richard Drayton provides confirmation of gardeners being sworn in as riot constables in *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and "Improvement" of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 181. Professor Larry Mai kindly advised me that Meehan's relatives disagreed about Meehan's alleged Chartism. Regardless of the extent of his involvement in Chartism, I am convinced that throughout his life, Meehan's political ethics were pro-labor. Mai, Email to author, 9 Sept 1998.

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immigrant horticulturists as a group. In this manner, plant nurseries were also nurseries for raising gardeners.

In Britain, it was part of a nurseryman's duties not only to recommend gardeners to owners of private gardens, but also to ensure continued quality of service. If employers had problems with their gardeners, they were supposed to call upon the referring nurseryman who could help both parties by mediating the disagreement and its solution. Loudon recommended that nurserymen should "act with impartiality" but "leaning towards the [gardener], in all doubtful cases, as the weaker party, according to the common consent and practice of all mankind."[28] If this program for conflict resolution also occurred in the U.S. has yet to be determined, but American garden-owners in search of help did turn to local nurserymen for referrals.

In each wave of immigrants, some were able to develop private nurseries after spending a few years of service at already established private estates and commercial gardens, such as Bartram's Botanic Garden in Philadelphia. Individuals in this group provided a way station for arriving immigrant gardeners, hiring even when they didn't need the help. In America, Philadelphia was the most condensed location for this support system, leading to the city's status in the second half of the nineteenth century as a center for horticultural commerce.

In memorial, horticulturist Robert Buist (1805-1880) was remembered as having "not only introduced rare plants, but rare men,--he did a double service" (fig. 20). This Edinburgh native came to Philadelphia in 1828, where he found work at David Landreth's nursery. Landreth himself had come to Philadelphia from Northumberland via Canada around 1786. In time, Buist became partners with the

[28] Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1835), 1236, 1229, 1237-38, 1242.

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city's first florist, Thomas Hibbert, taking over the business on Hibbert's death (fig. 21). Just as Landreth had taken in Buist, Buist became a patron of the immigrant gardeners. Meehan, whom Buist had recruited from Kew, recalled Buist's contribution to American horticulture as "marked by the encouragement he was always willing to give to the better class of European gardeners who desired to emigrate to America."[29]

Thomas Meehan was a key figure in the immigrant gardeners' support network during the second half of the century. The back pages of Meehan's *Gardener's Monthly* were never without advertisements by English, Irish, and Scottish gardeners looking for placements, references available from Meehan himself. The ads typically identified the gardener by country of origin, marital status, age, and areas of skill.

Many gardeners identified with other American cities, like Peter Henderson who was originally from Edinburgh but is known for his nursery in Jersey City, worked for a while in Philadelphia upon arrival in the states. It took Henderson three years saving money as a working-gardener before he had five hundred dollars to start his own nursery in Jersey City. Henderson too reproduced the transatlantic networking traditions by sponsoring able gardeners like David Rust, whose career mirrors that of so many other immigrant horticulturists. Born in 1861 at Gloucestershire, England, Rust was the son of an estate manager. He was educated through college level, but received much practical training from his father. After several years of apprenticeship and progressive responsibility at four other estates, he was persuaded by his family and Peter Henderson to immigrate to the United States.

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[29] Thomas Meehan, "Editorial Notes," *Gard. Mon.* 22 (Dec. 1880): 372-4; "Robert Robinson Scott," 26; Desmond, *Dictionary*, 411; Wilhelm Miller, "Robert Buist," in Bailey, 2: 1567.

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Henderson started Rust in the familiar work of the greenhouse, taught him about American cultivation, and helped him to find a position at a private estate. Later in life, Rust became an associate of Henry A. Dreer's seed operation, and served as secretary of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society from 1896-1927.[30]

The network of British gardeners was responsible for introducing, as Meehan noted in Buist's memorial, both rare men and rare plants. Greenhouse-grown exotics, florist's flowers, and bedding plants were rare among Philadelphia's commercial establishments in the 1820s. This would radically change in the 1830s and 1840s as plants like the verbena and poinsettia were introduced and cultivated by gardeners whose skills in greenhouse management were not compromised by adjustment to American climate. When Downing described Boston and Philadelphia as far above New York or other U.S. locations in "horticultural zeal," he pointed out Philadelphia's significant talent in cultivation of greenhouse exotics. This was somewhat retarded by difficulties in shipping the flowers overseas, a problem that would soon be assuaged by faster ships and the introduction of the sealed glass Wardian case for transport of delicate bulbs, tubers, and plants.[31] Nursery cultivation was a form of horticulture

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[30] John Harvey, *Early Nurserymen*, (London: Phillimore & Co., Ltd., 1974), 130; Hansen, "Garden Memoranda," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 317-18; Wilhelm Miller, "Peter Henderson," in Bailey, 2: 1578-79; Peter Henderson, *Gardening for Profit* (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1883), 12-13; James Boyd, *The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1827-1927* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1929), 350, 396-7.

[31]Downing, ""Notes on the Progress of Gardening in the United States during the Year 1840," *Gard. Mag.* n.s. 6 (Dec. 1840): 643-5; Thomas Meehan, "Editorial Notes," *Gard. Mon.* 22 (Dec. 1880): 373. In the first 8 years of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Thomas Hibbert, C. & D. Landreth, Alexander Parker, Robert Buist, and John McArann were most responsible for the introduction of tropical and semi-tropical flowers. Boyd, 36.

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that, as opposed to the landscaping of estate grounds, could be replicated by gardeners who were unfamiliar with American plants and climate conditions. When plants and flowers were raised in greenhouses, and sold for potted and cut indoor decoration, the cultivation and installation techniques didn't require the climatic or spatial translations necessary for landscape design. Nursery work was also year-round employment whereas in the United States garden installation and maintenance was seasonal. Unlike the British climate, winters in the northeastern United States left gardeners without steady work. The strategies of immigrant horticulturists demonstrate transatlantic continuity and adaptation rather than radical innovation in gardening practices.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Immigrant gardeners who received employment at Philadelphia nurseries or estates, and membership into the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) found that their background predisposed them to skills and expectations that were not always matched by those of their horticultural society co-members, particularly the gentleman employers who fashioned themselves amateur gardeners. When the immigrant gardeners preferred to show florists' flowers and cultivated exotics, as had been the familiar precedent, some amateurs balked at the commercial implications. During the 1840s and 1850s, commercial interests influenced, and gradually dominated the activities of the PHS. This power struggle at the exhibitions and meetings of the PHS was part of a larger negotiation of labor value between the amateurs who hired the immigrant gardeners to work on their estates, and among the occupational ranks of the professional gardeners. It was also the result of conflicting expectations for the function of the PHS, based upon knowledge of other horticultural societies in the

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United States and abroad. Florists' flowers, and similarly cultivated greenhouse plants were central to these conflicts.

The PHS was founded in 1827 as an extension of the local tradition of organized botanical study begun in eighteenth-century Philadelphia with the American Philosophical Society. Monthly and annual exhibitions were organized for the display and exchange of information about exotic and native plants. Several members had substantial grounds where they experimented with flower gardens, landscape gardening, and agricultural techniques, including viniculture and pomology for making wines and liqueurs. In the interest of botanical experimentation, the PHS corresponded with botanists and discussed establishing a trial garden, without successful implementation.[32]

The members were from the start identified by the categories of "gentlemen amateurs and professional cultivators"; it was the latter who created award-winning specimen displays for the PHS exhibitions. The actual activity of the PHS amateurs in the antebellum period appears to have been minimal, mostly taking bureaucratic and pecuniary forms. For example, in 1842, the Committee for the distribution of seeds lamented that during the last two years, 591 kinds of seeds had been given to seventy members, and yet there was no evidence that even one seed had been germinated. This sluggishness is contrary to what one would expect from the city widely known for its scientific sophistication, but can perhaps be explained by the passivity of gentlemen

[32] Boyd; Edwin A. Peeples, *Summary for a Sesqui* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1977). James Boyd's *The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1827-1927* is composed of extracts from the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), much of it transcribed verbatim, which I have verified by comparison with the original manuscripts in the holdings of the PHS Library for the discussion that follows.

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amateurs.[33]

PHS was part of the transatlantic community of horticulturists from the start. The society's first acquisition for the library was a subscription to Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine*, and they publicized their own activities in the local, national. and international horticultural press. Like their British predecessors, the PHS saw its work as contributing to the moral improvement of the community. In addition to supporting the introduction, cultivation, and improvement of plants, flowers, fruits, and vegetables, the Society aimed to educate and assist professionals and amateurs in the spread of horticultural activity generally. The advantages resulting from such work "will manifest themselves in improved moral and intellectual culture; in industrial, temperate and time-saving habits: in healthful, rational and delightful amusements; in improving, softening and rendering more pure the dispositions, tempers, and affections and in contributing largely to make our residences the home of taste, beauty, fragrance, contentment and social enjoyment."[34] In Britain, these sentiments were motivated by the idea of gardening as welfare work and occupational training to reduce the gentry's burden of paying the poor rate. From this perspective, the actual labor of gardening was essential to its usefulness as a rational recreation that inculcated habits thought conducive to the capitalist work discipline.

American horticultural societies borrowed the rhetoric and traditions of the British, but partially reinterpreted the benefits of gardening. In her study of the antebellum activities of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society (MHS), Tamara

[33] Minutes of the Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 15 Nov. 1842, Library of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society; Boyd, 35, 46.

[34] Boyd, 35, 115.

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Plakins Thornton finds that its gentlemen amateurs, many of them members of Boston's social and economic elite, were more interested in horticulture as self-refinement than in its function as communal benevolence. Influenced by the Puritan work ethic and the republican ideology of agrarian morality, these elites were uneasy with the materialist implications of wealth earned from commerce and industry, according to Thornton. Horticultural hobbies were proposed as an antidote for materialism, but during the antebellum period, emphasis on the practical value of experimental agriculture and pomology gave way to spending money on the cultivation and purchase of ornamentals. Expensive flowers were interpreted in this context as evidence of anti-materialism, spending for the sake of ornament rather than practical gain.[35]

This transposition in the metaphorical value of horticulture undoubtedly had material roots in the reality of who was actually growing the flowers, as I argue throughout this dissertation. Elites in both Boston and Philadelphia funded and superintended the work of practical gardeners who specialized in ornamental cultivation. Both organizations suffered power struggles between amateurs and professionals in the 1840s through the 1860s. Conflict was publicly expressed in debates over whether awards should be given to the gardener or the gardener's employer, if the awards should be made in cash or decorative medals, and if novelty flowers (essential to the commercial horticultural trade) should be encouraged or

[35] Tamara Plakins Thornton, "The Moral Dimensions of Horticulture in Antebellum America," *The New England Quarterly* 62 (March 1984): 3-24; Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen: The Meaning of Country Life among the Boston Elite, 1785-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

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discouraged at the shows.[36]

Financial support from wealthy amateur gentlemen members certainly influenced the outcome of this conflict at both the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania Horticultural Societies. In 1850, PHS President Caleb Cope addressed the financial problems of the Society to its professional members.

> That it was the interest of the professional cultivator to do all in his power to sustain the Society was sufficiently manifest when the fact was taken into consideration, that his business was materially promoted thereby and that he was almost exclusively the recipient of the premiums awarded by the Society, which have since its organization amounted to no less a sum than $11,600. The public displays of horticultural objects conducted by the Society at a heavy cost to the amateur, no less than to the professional gardener, tended to his pecuniary benefit alone, the former desiring no other return for his outlay and mutilated or impaired contributions [than] that emanating from an improved character of the community in which he was situated, and which reflected back upon him some portion of the good which his labors and sacrifices produced.

Where were the large donations, asked Cope, who jealously compared the Society's bank account to that of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The latter had received more than $20,000 in donations, and had successfully established a meeting hall and Mount Auburn Cemetery.[37] The PHS amateurs clearly wanted to maintain the impression that they were committed to benevolence, probably for reasons that combined local Quaker ethics, the Puritan and agrarian republican ideologies shared by the MHS, and the British precedents of horticulture as occupational reform. Protests against pecuniary interests were equally framed by the abstract morality attributed to

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[36] Albert Emerson Benson, *History of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society* (Boston: Massachusetts Horticultural Society, 1929), 80-128, 136-39; Boyd, 71-189.

[37] Boyd, 109-110.

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horticulture and the material reality that professional horticulturists were taking advantage of their employers and the association for personal gain. The gentlemen amateurs of the PHS, like their British counterparts, preferred to imagine a downward pattern of dispersal. When this competition of skill and influence was played out at the exhibitions, the victors were undeniably the immigrant gardeners.

Just as the rhetoric of rational improvement crossed the Atlantic, so did the socioeconomic subtext of horticultural societies, as interpreted by its beneficiaries. As immigrants from England, Ireland,and Scotland, the mid-century Philadelphia gardeners would have been familiar with, if not the products of, horticultural (reform) societies, florists' clubs, and leagues for professional horticulturists. Their expectations about the function of such societies contributed to conflicts and misunderstandings between the amateurs and professionals.

Immigrant gardeners expected the horticultural societies to provide professional support. They urged U.S. horticultural societies to provide lending libraries, trial gardens, and programs of certification for American trained gardeners, all approaches that were successful on the continent. When the most prominent American horticultural societies failed to take this lead, the gardeners devised other means of mutual support. In Philadelphia during the early 1850s, the Gardeners' Society formed to provide insurance "for the relief of sick and infirm gardeners and their families." The Progressive Gardeners' Society also formed for mutual instruction in the latest

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scientific horticulture.[38] At the same time, local professionals worked to gain status within the PHS, planning to turn that society's activities to greater benefit for their brethren.

For the professional horticulturists at every occupational strata, horticultural society exhibitions were a way to raise immediate money from prizes, excite potential patrons, and legitimate their status as skilled workers. By showing plants at the PHS exhibitions, under the auspices of either a host nursery or as gardener to a gentleman amateur, horticulturists could attract attention to their skills, leading to other and better engagements or clientele. This was expected at the British shows; Loudon himself said, "the true value of Horticultural Societies to practical gardeners . . . is to make their professional merits publicly known . . .."[39]

This aim was undermined by some of the society's practices. Often the prize-winners weren't credited by name, only as "gardener to" their employers, who were named. Under what conditions the gardeners had the funds and facilities to grow the

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[38] "The Gardeners' Society," *Phila. Florist* 2 (May 1853): 160; "Of the Association of Free and Independent Gardeners," *Phila. Florist* 1 (May 1852): 26; Scott, "Our Apology," *Phila. Florist* 1 (May 1852): 23; "Progressive Gardeners' Society," *Magazine of Horticulture* (hereafter *Mag. Hort.*) 26 (1860): 141, 330, 450-59. On horticultural societies, acclimitization, and the education of gardeners, see "A Look About Us," *Hort.* 4 (Apr. 1850): 443; William Chorlton, "Education of Gardeners"; Downing, "The State and Prospects of Horticulture," *Hort.* 6 (Dec. 1851): 539-40; Thomas Paxton, "The Improvement of Gardeners," *Hort.* 7 (Feb. 1852): 100-101; Hansen, "Editorial," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 277-280. On British gardeners' unions, see Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1830), 1131-33; Simo, 168-9; Berthoff, 179-80.

[39] Thomas Meehan, "Condition and Prospects of Gardeners in the United States," *Hort.* 6 (May 1851): 217-220; Simo, 147; James Rollins, "Neglect of Practical Gardeners by the Provincial Horticultural Societies," *Gard. Mag.* 5 (Feb. 1829): 101-2; Loudon, Response to Rollins, "Neglect," 102.

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entries credited to them as individuals is unclear, but one commentator confirmed that professional gardeners were not happy with the society's policies for awarding prizes. Gardeners, asserted one immigrant,

> become dissatisfied, demoralized, when they see that, besides getting no premiums or mean ones, they get no credit, no publicity being given to the awards of prizes, exept[sic] in a few of the political papers; the two or three horticultural magazines they subscribe to, and which ought to publish all the proceedings of the horticultural societies, never mention a word of such, or if they do, it is in such a partial way, that it is still worse."[40]

In the 1840s, the PHS exhibitions drew more public interest than ever before, thanks to the contributions by working gardeners and florists. The recording secretary praised their efforts in 1842, and added that he hoped "they may be rewarded by an increasing demand for the beautiful and useful objects which they cultivate." Others thought that interest in financial gain was acceptable only as a muted subtext, or as a by-product of the exhibitions. New exhibitors were frequently reminded through the 1840s that they should wait until the exhibition was over before selling the plants or flowers on display.[41]

The official doctrine of the PHS was that it didn't want to support commercial horticulture, regardless of the benefits to the professionals or amateurs. Instead, the PHS insisted in 1852, as the change was underway, that its primary goal in wanting to increase public interest in horticulture was the social, moral, and physical good it did people, not the economic good. This rhetoric was a pose familiar to British immigrant

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[40] Anthrophilus, "Horticultural Societies," The *Phila. Florist* 2 (Jan. 1853): 15. Anthrophilus is identified as "a gardener and a foreigner" by H. C. Hansen, editor of in an editorial *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 342.
[41] Boyd, 80, 84; PHS Minutes, 18 April 1843, 154.

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gardeners, and one that they disputed as self-contradictory. Thomas Meehan, an active competitor, found it laughable that members of his profession should, unlike workers in other fields, be expected to "inquire whether their profession is to the increase of the pleasures or happiness of mankind, or not." Instead he boldly confessed, "I strive, and have ever strove, to advance the interests of gardeners and gardening; but I do not, nor have I ever done so, from any mere feeling of philanthropy, but from a firm faith in the belief that, by furthering the interests of gardening, I am contributing to my own."[42]

Floristry and Botany: The Battle over Economic Subtext Continued

Horticultural societies raised public interest in gardening only when the flower shows were so exciting and fashionable that they drew people away from other sensual entertainments. As in Britain, in the U.S. during the 1840s florists erected fantastical displays to attract attendance at the horticultural exhibitions. Admission tickets did help to defray costs, but more importantly, the floral designs (also called devices) attracted attention from the press and potential customers. The devices were floral versions of landscape follies: every possible combination of style (rustic, oriental, classical, gothic, etc.) and form (cottages, pagodas, temples, triumphal arch, ruin, etc.) appeared in miniature and life-sized versions made entirely out of flowers and other vegetation (fig. 22). There were also designs of floral furniture, animals, and not just monograms but entire phrases spelled out in zinnias and chrysanthemums. Competing florists not only received attention from the press and potential consumers in this way, but they could also win substantial prizes. Floral designs, like hybridized

[42] Meehan, "Condition and Prospects," 217.

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florist's flowers, were decried as "monstrosities," and were a focal point for the power struggle between amateurs and professionals.

Florist's flowers did retain a significant interest even as the category had broadened from the classic bulbs and corms to include any flowers that were improved by hybridization. Some of the newly designated florists' flowers also met the traditional morphological qualifications of a florists' flower: round shape, smooth glossy petals, and a striking contrast in the color and markings. Taking into consideration the errors and exaggeration possible with hand-drawn and tinted botanical illustrations, a comparison of Buist's 1862 pelargonium (fig. 23) with the varieties featured in the 1835 *Floricultural Cabinet* (fig. 24) should illustrate how much a species could evolve through hybridized varieties. Thirty-four years earlier, when Rembrandt Peale painted his portrait of Rubens Peale with a geranium, the plant was a newly discovered import from Mexico. In comparison to later varieties, the comparatively small flowers and flaccid leaves of Peale's geranium look inferior.[43]

The gentlemen amateurs of the PHS tried to discredit the professionals by debasing their achievements in floristry. As discussed in the previous chapter, scientific botanists debased commercial florists' achievements in hybridization, setting up a false dichotomy and a firm wall between some branches of botany and floristry. Some members of the PHS felt that the club's reputation was declining because more attention was being paid to the advance of "practical" (commercial) gardening than to scientific endeavors. Horace Binney, a gentleman amateur who was president of the

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[43] Edgar Sanders, "On the Culture of the Pelargonium," *Phila. Florist* 3 (1854): 260; Rembrandt Peale, ***Rubens Peale with a Geranium***, oil on canvas, 1801. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

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PHS from 1836 to 1841, reported in 1842 that he was not alone in fearing this trend would lead to a decline in the Society's reputation. Binney pointed an attack at professional nurserymen and florists in particular,

> It is quite natural, that while lovers will spend more than the superflux of their money in purchasing bouquets for their mistresses, or while the elegant embellishment of flowers is preferred before all others in the ball or supper room, the requisite supply should be found in the professional gardens of the city. It is not surprising that it should be so; and yet it is clear that all this may continue and become more and more profitable to the gardener, while the Society is declining in reputation, and going gradually out of existence without a name.

Binney recommended a decrease in attention to the exhibition of hybrid florists' flowers by commercial growers as the appropriate solution. New plants were to be sought after, but not on the basis of their popularity with the public. Instead, thought Binney and other members of the Committee on New Plants, Flowers, Fruits and Vegetables, foreign plants of an unfamiliar genus should be the first priority, followed by those new in species, and lastly the varieties produced locally by hybridization.[44]

The amateurs unsuccessfully tried to shift attention and premiums towards introduction of newly discovered native and exotic plants instead of greenhouse hybrids, thus focusing on the activities of the botanical collector rather than those of the cultivator. However, just as the members were slow to try seeds sent from other locales, their collecting efforts were weak. In 1844, it was reported that despite the inducement of extra premiums for "the introduction and propagation of new plants, flowers, fruits [and] vegetables," very little progress had been made in this area. While local nurserymen continued to import exotic species, Americans were internationally

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[44] Boyd, 86-87.

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mocked for their disinterest in native (wild) plants at a time when American plants were in high demand in Europe.[45]

An incident that occurred in the winter of 1851-1852 reveals mutual antagonism between employer and gardener over submissions to the horticultural society. J. F. Knorr's gardener, Robert Robinson Scott (an immigrant with the same name as the editor of the *Philadelphia Florist*), had been awarded a premium in December for the display of six unusual plants: Drimys Winterii, Centropogon fastuosum, Illicium religiosum, Franciscea eximia, Veronica Andersonii, and Hibiscus. Note this peculiar retraction offered by Scott a few weeks later:

> I desire to state that it was not Mr. Knorr's wish to place those plants in competition nor indeed did he think them worthy of exhibition in any way. The specimens possessed no merit as regards skill in cultivation, nor any striking beauty in appearance, their whole merit depended on their novelty and intrinsic value in the market. Placed as they were on your table unrelieved by any other plants, they seemed to me a miserable display for so exclusive a society. I determined however to leave them in the hands of the Committee. I am inclined to offer a few remarks as to the propriety of such an award I am not in the first place entitled to premium as I did not cultivate the specimens in question they having been under the care of two or three Gardeners during the three months previous to their exhibition. . . . It is Mr. Knorr's wish that your committee shall recall the award as it would perhaps be an act of injustice to the society to make an award to the person who had not had the plants under his care during the time specified in in your regulations. I hope at some future time to present the same specimens under more favorable circumstances. It was my intention to have offered some remarks as to the cultivation of rare and new plants accompanied with suggestions as to the treatment of plants, little known, after their importation--as well as a history of a number of rare

[45] Boyd, 95; Downing, "The Neglected American Plants," *Hort.* 6 (May 1851): 201-203; Philarvnsis, Letter to the Editor, *Phila. Florist* 1 (Nov. 1852): 206-7; Mark Laird, *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds, 1720-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 61-98.

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> plants introduced to this neighbourhood by my employer (hitherto unknown in the United States even to nurserymen) but a more fitting opportunity will perhaps present itself. . ..

Scott and Knorr cannot have been in agreement over this retraction, for Scott had been prepared to lecture on cultivation methods and botanical rarity. It must then have been Knorr's opinion that Scott begins with, the statement that the only value of these plants were their market value as novelties. The minutes show that nevertheless, the committee preferred to award the premium to the "contributor," presumably Scott, as the minutes listed the entry under his name originally.[46] This struggle over what was to be grown, and what shown at the exhibitions, particularly the opposition here of botanical rarity versus novelty and market value, has within it coded negotiations having to do with occupational status, country of origin, and as the result of these two conditions, the purpose of the horticultural society.

Meehan's own interests in botany and floristry provide an example of the political subtext. As a teenager, he introduced the first hybrid fuchsia, a flower that at the time was a coveted exotic. About the same time, he began publishing scientific papers on fertilization and hybridization that would eventually lead to a controversial assertion regarding Darwin's doctrine of evolution through natural selection. Meehan's review of *Origin of Species* in 1860 used evidence from florists' hybridization of pansies as proof of his own argument against Darwin. Meehan pointed out that when florists' flowers are improved to maximum size, their seed productivity decreases as the "vigor and luxuriance" of the parent plant increases. However, at a certain point, pansies, geraniums, and other flowers will grow no larger, argued Meehan, because the

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[46] PHS Minutes, 16 Dec 1851, 20 Jan 1852.

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principle of reproduction was opposed to that of self-preservation. If a flower would sacrifice its own strength in favor of making seeds, self-preservation was not the only rule of evolution.[47]

As articulated in "An Address before the American Association for the Advancement of Science" in 1882, the socialist underpinnings of Meehan's argument must be recognized, particularly in contrast to the (Malthusian) sociological evolutionary theories that preceded and later derived strength from Darwin's assertion of "survival of the fittest" in the *Origin of Species*.[48]

> Self-sacrifice and not self-interest is nature's demand on us all. We are here as Nature's invited guests; to do her work; to assist in this work of developing the future. She makes our stay as pleasant to us as possible; we should not do her work willingly unless she did, but she ruthlessly removes us the moment we are no longer of use to her in her plans of development. All nature is at work; but all this work would be vanity if it were merely for individual good, and utility ended with individual life. Look at some poor mother toiling for her children, perhaps in poverty, and with but the barest necessaries of life to eat, -- without rest or sleep that they may be fed and clothed; watching over them day by day in sickness and suffering, till her own health gives away, and she becomes a human wreck. She takes pleasure of course in this sacrifice; her lot would be truly unbearable if she did not. But wherein is the individual benefit? No! her struggle is not for life. It is self-sacrifice. She is aiding Nature in her great law of development. Her work is for posterity.[49]

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[47] [Thomas Meehan], review of *Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin, *Gard. Mon.* 2 (May 1860): 153.

[48] Robert M. Young, *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[49] Thomas Meehan, *"Variations in Nature: A Contribution to the Doctrine of Evolution, and the Theory of Natural Selection," An Address before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Montreal Meeting, August 1882* (Salem, Mass: Salem Press, 1883), 6-7. For other scientific works by Meehan, see his series of articles in *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences*, 1889-1901.

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Meehan corresponded with prominent scientists including Charles Darwin and Asa Gray; he held membership in several scientific societies including the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia; he was given many honors in recognition of his contributions to botanical science, including the title of Professor of Botany and the appointment of State Botanist; he published and lectured widely on botanical topics. Nevertheless, as an "amateur" who lacked a university degree and raised plants for commercial rather than purely scientific "disinterested" use, his place in the history of science in the U.S. is almost entirely overlooked.[50]

The Survival of Floristry

Even among those horticulturists who had created a community of support for recent immigrants, there was professional stratification within their activities at the PHS. It was early determined that the PHS "Council" or "Acting Committee" should be composed of twelve members, one-third "practical gardeners." This group was barely active in 1830s, and disbanded around 1840. In 1852, a recent immigrant who identified himself as a "working gardener" launched a criticism of the PHS in the nationally distributed *Horticulturist*, claiming that among other problems, the practical gardener had no voice in the PHS, which is why he was addressing them in print, a common practice among the British gardeners. The rebuttals and counter-rebuttals that followed the 1852 critique revealed that the complaint was valid because distinctions

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[50] Professor Larry Mai is rectifying this oversight. In a work in progress, Mai asserts that Meehan felt "that he was being excluded by the 'Cambridge circle' (as in Mass.) because of his differences with Darwin." Correspondence with the author. Email, 9 Sept 1998.

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were drawn between independent commercial gardeners and "jobbing," "working" or "practical" gardeners (all terms applied to those who worked for hire by the day or by the job). While immigrants like Buist, Meehan, and Scott, who had quickly become independent nurserymen and landscapers, were by that time PHS officers and committee members, the jobbing gardeners did not have much say in the organization.[51]

The wave of immigrant gardeners coming from Kew and thereabouts at the end of the 1840s included a number of highly skilled florists who would become successful nurserymen and horticultural authors. When floristry was deaccentuated at the PHS shows, its advocates raised money to offer special premiums for florists' flowers. Yet, the debates in the early 1850s show that as horticulturists became accustomed to American cultivation, the old florists' flowers were sometimes left behind, with interest renewed only at the insistence of newcomers who expected to use the PHS flower shows as a commercial platform.[52]

Dissent over the place of florists' flowers at horticultural shows reveals advantages shared by the independent nurserymen and greenhouse gardeners at large estates over jobbing gardeners and small-scale florists. Partisanship was in play when the prizes were offered for only very large collections, like forty Dahlias; or for small but unspecified "best collections," wherein an exotic plant like an orchid could be slipped in amongst more ordinary plants and completely upset the chances of other

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[51] Boyd, 35, 71; A Working Gardener, Philadelphia, "On the Prizes at our Horticultural Shows," *Hort.* 7 (Jan. 1852): 22-24; Robert Buist, "Horticultural Societies," *Hort.* 7 (Mar. 1852):146; A Working Gardener, "Practical Gardeners and Horticultural Societies," *Hort.* 7 (Apr. 1852): 191; T. Meehan, "The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society," *Phila. Florist* 1 (May 1852): 15-17.

[52] Jellett, *Germantown Gardens*, 48.

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collections; or for all exotic plants like Cacti, when it was generally known that only a couple of gardeners or maybe even just one person even grew them locally. The jobbing gardener or small florist who kept a small cold frame at his own cost preferred to compete for a specific type of plant in a small collection, for instance six pelargoniums in eight-inch diameter pots. Not only would this limit the unexpected orchid or accommodate those with limited disposable income, but exhibitions of this type of florists' flower particularly favored the British immigrant who was more likely to be skilled with this type of cultivation. Competitors who fit this latter category wanted more favorable odds at the flower shows, and they requested that the premium schedule be adjusted. Finally, someone offered special prizes to supplement those awarded by PHS.[53] This was a short-lived solution. Although during the 1860s the PHS opened its competitions to non-members, the most prominent local professionals regularly won most of the prizes.

In 1858 the annual exhibitions were shut down due to lack of funds and interest. A committee formed to investigate the cause of the Society's decline forwarded new initiatives in 1861 that revitalized the PHS by making membership, educational programs, and exhibitions open to far more participants. During the 1860s, professional horticulturists essentially took control of the Society. Greenhouse plants raised for bedding, cut flower arrangements, and potted plants for house decoration received particular attention and encouragement from female visitors, to whom the flower shows especially pandered. Parlor ornaments for showcasing the

[53] Boyd, 153; A Working Gardener, "On the Prizes,"; A Working Gardener, "Practical Gardeners," 191; A Lover of Flowers, and a Working Man, too, "Prizes in Horticultural Societies," *Hort.* 7 (Apr. 1852): 196-197; Editorial, *Phila. Florist* 1 (Dec. 1852): 312-313.

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plants became part of the exhibits. When Henry A. Dreer exhibited decorative ceramic baskets and vases at the 1862 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Exhibition, it was predicted that the lady amateurs would buy Dreer's goods for that use (fig. 25).[54] Specific flowers went in and out of style, but the predominance of commercial interests based in greenhouse products was well established.

Instructional Catalogues

Publications were important to the relationship between commercial cultivators and their customers. Florists and nurserymen produced instructional flower gardening guides that were simultaneously sales catalogues. Early instructional catalogues like Robert Sweet's series *The Florist's Guide*, published in the late 1820s and early 1830s, focused on specific flowers. Eventually, these publications gave a variety of data, including the English and Latin names for a plant, identification by Linnean and Natural orders, description of appearance, and cultivation instructions. John Cree's goal in printing a catalogue of plants in his nursery was explicitly commercial. He hoped to increase "the taste for horticulture among ladies and gentlemen, by making them acquainted with the nature and qualities of those plants and fruits which they may already possess, or may in future wish to acquire."[55]

In the catalogues, illustrations were important for demonstrating what bulbs,

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[54] "The first Annual Exhibition of the Columbian Horticultural Society," *Gard. Mag.* 10 (Nov. 1834): 569-70; "Pennsylvania Horticultural Society," *Gard. Mon.* 4 (Mar. 1862): 93; "Window Gardening," *Gard. Mon.* 4 (May 1862): 131.

[55] John Cree, *Hortus Addlestonensis*, quoted in review of *Hortus Addlestonensis*, *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Jan. 1830): 87.

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corms, tubers, seeds, and seedlings would become. Illustrated books were a detriment to scams. When Robert Sweet discontinued his run of *The Florist's Guide*, a critic suggested, "It may be a question whether it is not owing to the trickery of florists; for figuring the flowers certainly tends to establish their names, and prevent the same flower being sold under three or four different names." Some illustrations were drawn from dried specimens, but most were drawn from life. Direct observation provided the best opportunity for making accurate representations. Both daughters and sons of gardeners and nurserymen produced illustrated volumes of fruits, flowers, trees and shrubs. Noted botanical illustrators in this line include Elizabeth Ronalds who was the daughter of a nurseryman in Brentford, and the Misses Rollinsons, who were part of the family nursery called Tooting Nursery.[50] Original drawings were made into plates that could be sold to nurseries for catalogues, and to horticultural periodicals. Prints from the plates were often hand-tinted by watercolor artists (figs. 14-17, 24).

Practical gardeners and young female art students copied and applied watercolor tints to the botanical illustrations in floral catalogues. Charles M'Intosh's book on gardening and botany for amateurs even included instruction on drawing and coloring, and readers of the *Floricultural Cabinet* debated the quality of the hand-tinting. Although illustrated books could be very expensive, it was recommended that young gardeners try to buy at least one of the illustrated sections to use as an instructional drawing-book. Some flower books were no more than several illustrations

[50] An Amateur, "The Florist's Guide," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Dec. 1830): 722; Review of *A First Supplement to the Plants of New Holland*, by Robert Brown, *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Apr. 1831): 212; "To be able to draw Flowers botanically, and Fruit horticulturally," *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Feb. 1831): 95; "Tooting Nursery," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Nov. 1830): 622; Review of *Illustrations and Descriptions of the Plants which compare the Natural Order Camellieae*, *Gard. Mag.* 6 (May 1830): 291

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bound into a folio, useful for both study and display.[57]

The taste for botanical illustration during the second quarter of the nineteenth century contributed to the trend of young ladies becoming plant collectors. Botanical illustration was considered "one of the most useful accomplishments of young ladies of leisure." Lessons could be had in the country and the city from amateur and professional florists, and it was recommended that students combine lessons in botany and cultivation, because keeping plants for life-study required some knowledge of plant culture. This in turn stimulated continued sales of instructional catalogues as well as nursery goods.[58]

In 1839, Boston nurseryman and editor of *The Magazine of Horticulture* Charles Hovey predicted the rise of instructional texts on indoor gardening. It seemed, according to Hovey, that

> . . . with a majority of those who grow plants, particularly in rooms, it has been supposed that there was but very little necessity to consult books, to learn how to propagate and manage plants so universally cultivated; but within a short time those who have been inclined to such ideas have been convinced that they were in error, and that pelargoniums, though seen in nearly every collection of plants--whether decorating the cottage window, or blooming in the parlor of the wealthy,--are found only in their highest perfection, where care and skill have alike been exercised in the treatment of the plants.[59]

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[57] Review of *Practical Gardener and Modern Horticulturist*, *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Oct. 1830): 581.

[58] "To be able to draw Flowers botanically, and Fruit horticulturally," 95; Loudon, "Lessons on Botany," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Aug. 1830): 487.

[59] Charles M. Hovey, "On the propagation, cultivation, and general treatment of Pelargoniums (Geraniums)," *Mag. Hort.* 5 (June 1839): 204.

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Books that focused on parlor gardening began to appear in the 1840s, and were well established as a genre by the 1860s. At the same time, there was a general increase in publications on this topic and a growing assumption that the readers were women. It is certainly not a sure thing that men weren't parlor gardeners, but there is evidence that women were. In the early 1850s, female amateurs from across the country wrote to Joseph Breck, nurseryman and author of *The Flower Garden*, asking him to add this topic to the second edition of his book. Breck was glad to oblige.[60]

Between 1870 and 1910, there was a marked growth in the number of horticultural and domestic life publications in circulation. In both genres, there was an increased interest in flower gardening, especially indoor gardening for female amateur gardeners. In fact, some of the new genre of domestic economy periodicals, like *Ladies' Home Journal*, grew out of horticulture or agriculture publications that were trying to reach a female audience by including articles on domestic economy and arts. In quick succession the following magazines were founded: *Park's Floral Magazine* (1871), *Ladies' Floral Cabinet* (1872), *Flower Garden* (1872), and *Vick's* (1878). At its founding, *Ladies' Floral Cabinet* was edited by Henry T. Williams, then owner of the *Horticulturist*, and an author and publisher of numerous books on domestic arts, including an edited volume of advice on window gardening. In these publications, wintering and winter gardens were treated under the somewhat interchangeable headings of window gardening, indoor gardening and parlor gardening.

[60] Joseph Breck, *The Flower Garden*, new. ed., rev. and enl. (Boston: Published by John P. Jewett & Company, 1856), vi. The first edition was released in 1851.

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British influence on American garden publications

Just as the immigrants' talents in greenhouse cultivation weren't hampered by climatic differences in the U.S., British instructional texts on flower gardening for the related situations of greenhouse, conservatory, and parlor also smoothly translated into products for an American audience. When C. B. Miller of New York published E. A. Maling's *In-door Plants, and How to Grow Them*, the book reviewer for *Gardener's Monthly* commented on the appropriateness of British texts for American gardeners.

> Mr. Miller has done good service to ladies and amateur horticulturists generally, by the introduction of this little book. It is precisely what has long been wanted. As a rule, practical works by foreign authors are ill adapted to our peculiar climate; but this does not so much apply to "in-door plants" which are in an artificial climate, and under artificial rules.[91]

Maling's book featured florists' flowers, new exotics, and hybridized annuals appropriate for parlor decoration. (fig. 26).

Works reprinted from British publications and created by British immigrant horticulturists contributed substantially to the dispersion and replication of cultivation techniques, flower fashion trends, and cultural interpretations of the social and moral values associated with flower gardening. In *The Book of Nature: Natural History in the United States, 1825-1875*, Margaret Welch demonstrates the importance of published texts and imagery "in the transmission of natural history practice and discourse." During this period of technological growth and freedom from copyright restrictions, publishers of books and periodicals freely reproduced, adapted, and distributed

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[91] Review of *In-Door Plants, and How to Grow Them*, by Miss. E. A. Maling, *Gard. Mon.* 4 (March, 1862): 91.

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previously published works of natural history. Welch notes that in the United States, much of the text and imagery came from European, particularly British texts, a practice that thereby "ensured transatlantic influence."[62] The same was true for gardening texts. As in the field of natural history, many American practitioners were British immigrants whose work was influenced by their national origins. The multiple editions of gardening texts or reprints of periodical articles demonstrate both continuity and adaptation. Alterations by editors and authors were often minor, but nevertheless indicative of changing tastes and opinions. British publications about gardening under glass or in the living rooms were far more likely to be adapted for an American audience than other horticultural topics by British authors.

U.S. publishers sold reprints and new editions of British flower gardening books throughout the nineteenth century. In the 1700s, books with sections on outdoor flower gardening were released in America but they offered limited practical application. During the antebellum period, William Cobbett's 1821 *The American Gardener* and Downing's American edition of Jane Webb Loudon's *Gardening for Ladies* in 1843 offered advice on both outdoor and indoor gardening. Throughout the century, English publications on indoor gardening came out in American editions. The revisions were usually spare, as seen in Annie Hassard's *Floral Decorations for the*

[62] Margaret Welch, *The Book of Nature: Natural History in the United States, 1825-1875* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 3, 137.

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Dwelling House, published in the U.S. in 1876.[63]

American gardening authors freely borrowed from the British texts, not always with citation. Joseph Breck's *The Flower Garden* recited recent English publications by Loudon, Lindley, Cobbett and Sweet as sources. Louisa Johnson, in *Every Lady her Own Flower Gardener* acknowledged Charles M'Intosh's (also spelled as Mackintosh and McIntosh)*The greenhouse, hot house, and stove* as her direct source for a chapter on "On House and Window Gardening." Shirley Hibberd, author of the very popular English *Rustic Adornments*, accused American author Edward Sprague Rand, Jr. of plagiarism in the latter's 1863 Boston publication *Flowers for the Parlor and Garden.*

Henry T. Williams' *Window Gardening* can truly be called the mutt of American indoor gardening texts. Williams at least honestly described himself as an editor rather than the author of gardening books that borrowed heavily from other authors. The book is pieced together from works by William Robinson, H. Jager, Shirley Hibberd, Edward S. Rand, Jr., Peter Henderson, Robert T. Fish, Miss E. A. Maling. The books by Jager (German) and Rand (American) were the only ones not authored by a British national or immigrant, although the originality of Rand's contribution cannot truly be counted. *Window Gardening* also took excerpts from London periodicals *The Floral World* and *The Gardener's Magazine*, and U.S. magazines *Hearth and Home*, *American Agriculturist*, *Horticulturist*, and *Northeast*

[63] William Cobbett, *The American Gardener* (London: Published by C. Clement, 1821); Mrs. [Jane Webb] Loudon, *Gardening for Ladies, and Companion to the Flower-Garden*, ed., A. J. Downing, 1st American ed., from the 3rd London ed., (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1843); Annie Hassard, *Floral Decorations for the Dwelling House: A Practical Guide to the Home Arrangement of Plants and Flowers*, 1st American ed., (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1876).

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Farmer. Original contributions were also solicited from figures like Professor Robert Demcker of New York Central Park Gardens, and Daisy Eyebright who wrote lots of flower gardening articles for American periodicals.[64]

British immigrant horticulturists published instructional catalogues that became popular in their own right. In her article about the influence of English gardening texts upon early American publications, Therese O'Malley calls Bernard M'Mahon's book, *American Gardener's Calendar*, "the first truly comprehensive manual for gardening published in America." M'Mahon was an Irish immigrant who was at the center of Philadelphia's local and transatlantic exchange of botanical goods and information. This book came out in eleven editions between 1806 and 1857. Philadelphian nurserymen and florists Robert Buist (originally from Scotland) and Thomas Hibbert co-published *The Amateur Flower Garden Directory* in 1832. Another success, the book was being reprinted in its sixth edition in 1861. Another significant antebellum gardening text was written by Thomas Bridgeman, a gardener, seedsman and florist originally from Berkshire, England who came to New York in 1824. Bridgeman published several editions of *The Florist's Guide* to publicize his business in New York. The 1840 edition listed double dahlias with symbols that indicated if the plant was an American variety, if the variety had won prizes at American and British flower shows, and if the seedlings were acquired by Grant Thorburn during his 1838-39 trip to England. The

[64] Henry T. Williams, ed., *Window Gardening: Devoted Specially to the Culture of Flowers and Ornamental Plants for In Door Use and Parlor Decoration*, 13th ed. (New York: Henry T. Williams, Publisher, 1877): 302.

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list stretched over more than ten pages.[65]

In addition to recommending British gardening publications for the American reader. American horticulture periodicals regularly featured articles originally published in British journals. Native Massachusetts nurseryman Charles Hovey committed the flattery of imitation when he created the *American Gardener's Magazine* (after Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine*) in 1835, changing the name to *The Magazine of Horticulture* two years later. Until Downing started the *Horticulturist* in 1846, Hovey's was the only purely horticultural periodical in the U.S. The paper did cover local and national news like horticultural society meetings and the Strawberry Controversy, a debate over fertilization in hermaphrodite strawberries. However, many of Hovey's articles were clipped from English magazines like the *Gardener's Magazine*, *Paxton's Magazine of Botany*, and the *Gardener's Chronicle*. Downing's *Horticulturist* likewise reprinted many articles originally published in British periodicals. For the most part, the pinched articles concentrated on the cultivation of flowers and fruit in artificial environments.

British authors and editors dominated the American periodical horticultural press after mid-century. When Andrew Jackson Downing suddenly died in 1852, *The Horticulturist* was taken over by James Vick, a 34-year-old printer from Chichester, Sussex, England who ran it with Belfast-native Patrick Barry's editorial assistance.

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[65] Therese O'Malley, "Appropriation and Adaptation: Early Gardening Literature in America," in *An English Arcadia: Landscape and Architecture in Britain and America* , ed. Guilland Sutherland (San Marino, Ca: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1992), 425-6; Sarah Pattee Stetson, "American Garden Books Transplanted and Native,Before 1807," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., vol. 3 (July 1946), 361-9; Thomas Bridgeman, *The Florist's Guide*, 3rd ed., enl. and rev. (1829; New York, 1840), 70-80; Bailey, 2: 1566.

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From July of 1855 until January of 1860, the magazine was owned and edited by John Jay Smith, a gentleman farmer active in the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society. Twenty years later, Meehan wrote that Smith had accomplished gardeners like William Saunders and R. Robinson Scott write on the "more practical details" while "he reserved for himself the task of throwing around horticulture those intellectual charms, which in all ages have commended it to the love of the good and great."[66] The men named here were British immigrants who were central to nationwide horticultural press activity.

Irish immigrant R. Robinson Scott initiated *The Philadelphia Florist* in 1852. Scott's journal combined attributes of expensive botanical and floricultural journals, such as hand-tinted prints of the most recently introduced floral novelties (fig. 27), with an egalitarian commitment to give the urban window and yard gardeners practical advice instead of the "second-hand . . . statistics of English noblemen's conservatories." Surprisingly, given its focus on horticulture for the Philadelphia region, florists across the country subscribed and contributed to, as well as distributed Scott's paper to their local customers. After one year, during which the paper proved itself popular among readers who couldn't pay the subscription rates, H. C. Hanson took over the paper for the remaining two years of its run.[67]

Meehan, who had been an active contributor and promoter of *The Florist*

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[66] [Meehan], "John Jay Smith," *Gard. Mon.* 23 (Dec 1881): 378 cited in Jellett, *Germantown Gardens*, 71. Smith wrote under the name "Jacques" in *Gard. Mon.* according to Judith Callard, in footnote to Jellett, "A Visit to Meehan's Nurseries, August 31, 1901" *Germantown Crier* 49 (Spring 1999): 29.

[67] Scott, "Our Apology," 22; "To Correspondents," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Oct. 1852): 192; Editorial, *Phila. Florist* 3 (Apr. 1854): 128.

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through its run, opened *Gardener's Monthly* in 1859 (fig. 28). Hovey's *Magazine of Horticulture* folded in 1868, and the *Horticulturist* was sold to Meehan for consolidation with his *Monthly* in 1875. In 1888, *Gardener's Monthly* was absorbed by *American Gardening*, a periodical published out of New York. Ever active, Meehan established a new paper three years later. *Meehan's Monthly* ran from 1891 until Meehan's death in 1902.

Within a year of its commencement, *Gardener's Monthly* had nationwide circulation of several thousand readers. Meehan's journal was the least expensive horticultural periodical available, selling at a one-dollar annual subscription rate when other leading papers charged as much as four dollars. The *Monthly*'s backer, Daniel Rodney King, had specifically wanted to create a paper that would be cheap enough to be accessible to readers of every class from across the country. The price never went above two dollars. Unlike Hovey's *Magazine of Horticulture* and *The Horticulturist*, the *Monthly* appealed to amateurs and professionals who gardened on a modest budget.[08]

"At the close of the Civil War, the Philadelphia *Gardener's Monthly* was the leading horticultural and floral journal," according to historian of American journalism Frank Luther Mott. It had retained a neutral political stance that appealed to readers as a respite from the pervasive reminders of the sectional conflict. References to the

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[08] "Death of the Founder of the *Gardener's Monthly*, Daniel Rodney King," *Gard. Mon.* 22 (Feb. 1880): 61-2; Review of *The Native Flowers and Ferns of the United States*, by Thomas Meehan, *Gard. Mon.* 20 (July 1878): 221; "To Nurserymen," *Gard. Mon.* 2 (Aug. 1860): 243; "The *Gardener's Monthly*," *Gard. Mon.* 2 (Sept. 1860): 276.

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war described horticulture as a universal interest that united regions.[69] During the war years, the *Gardener's Monthly* took up the responsibility of publishing the proceedings of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. The paper had always printed abbreviated reports of meetings and exhibitions, but in addition now included transcripts of lectures and discussions conducted at the Society, thus bringing more public attention to its professional members.

In the *Gardener's Monthly*, Meehan, Saunders and Scott, joined by other immigrant nurserymen, notably Walter Elder, Robert Buist, William Chorlton, and Henry A. Dreer (a second-generation German immigrant) provided most of the articles on flower-gardening as they had in both Hovey's *Magazine of Horticulture*, Downing's *Horticulturist*, and Scott's short-lived *Philadelphia Florist*. This group of authors instructed readers in the cultivation of traditional florists flowers and recently introduced and improved exotics for greenhouse, parlor, and window cultivation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the pervasive influence of British horticulturists on the business of flower-gardening in the nineteenth-century United States. With the transfer of horticultural practices from working-class artisan florists and professional nurserymen to bourgeois female parlor gardeners, there was a simultaneous invocation of the cultural legends and moral applications of flower gardening. In addition to the British-authored or British-influenced texts described

[69] Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1938-68) 3:161; M. C. B., "Gardening and the War," *Gard. Mon.* 4 (Sept. 1862): 264-5; "The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the President's Murder," *Gard. Mon.* (June 1865): 176.

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above, American gardeners--professional and amateur, immigrant and native--read many of the same British horticultural publications, such as Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine*, that have contributed so substantially to my evidence in the preceding chapters. They read about weavers' floristry, horticultural reform for cottagers, and of the well-off ladies of leisure who bought parlor plants according to fashion. The British-influenced connections between working-class floristry, professional nurseries, and amateur lady parlor gardeners is explained in the following chapter, "From Weavers' Floristry to Ladies' Parlor Gardening."

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Chapter Four: From Weavers' Floristry to Ladies' Parlor Gardening

It is difficult to find any nineteenth-century publication on floristry or parlor gardening that does not refer to the cottager's windowsill flowerpots in tandem with the decoration of ladies' parlors. The pairing of these seemingly disparate circumstances is more than a motif; it is a mantra of the genre. A typical version reads, "Every rank of people, from the humble cottager with his favourite auriculas and polyanthuses, to the lady of fashion with her more tender exotics, equally enjoys flowers . . . Indeed, of all luxurious indulgences, that of the cultivation of flowers is the most innocent."[1] This comment from the report of an English horticultural society in 1830 can be easily compared to remarks by Walter Elder, a British immigrant working as a professional gardener in the Philadelphia area at mid-century: "If we should have no land attached to our dwellings, we can have a garden in our windows with pot plants; and they grow as well in an old tea-pot, in the humble, cottage window, as in the richest vase, in the parlor or conservatory of the mansion." Elder firmly believed in the moral values accrued from gardening, whether temperance from alcohol or achievement of bourgeois domestic bliss.[2]

This rhetorical device comparing ladies and cottagers evolved because the

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[1] "Stockport Floral and Horticultural Society," *The Gardener's Magazine, and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement* (hereafter *Gard. Mag.*) 6 (Oct. 1830): 598, first published in *Stockport Advertiser*.

[2] Walter Elder, *The Cottage Garden of America* (Philadelphia: Moss & Brother, 1849), 75, 222-232.

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physical forms of parlor gardening replicated attributes of working-class floristry. Potted hybrids and exotics served as "boundary objects" for an ideological translation. The objects, and related maintenance activities, retained connotations of anti-materialism and industriousness even though in this new setting flower-gardening was clearly part of the pattern of luxury consumption. Floristry was recommended as a suitable occupation for idle ladies for reasons similar to those used to encourage cottagers to garden. John Claudius Loudon, who wrote extensively about the valuable self-discipline that working-class florists could learn from their hobby, also addressed the benefits of floristry for idle ladies:

> The care and watering of neat little alpine plants in pots is what most ladies are very fond of; and one of the principal enjoyments of city ladies, who know plants only or chiefly as pictures, consists in performing this operation. The plants to be presented to such amateurs ought to be plants that require water at least once a day, and that grow fast to require tying up, and make frequent dead leaves to require picking and dressing. The principle is, something to be taken care of, and to care for and depend on us; something that requires labour, the beginning and ending of all improvement and enjoyment.[3]

The material demands of floristry could keep a person busy at home, occupied with something other than his or her own troubles.

Thomas Bridgeman's *Florist's Guide*, written to help amateur female gardeners to fill their leisure hours with a pleasant and useful occupation, was prefaced thus:

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[3] John Claudius Loudon, "Garden Operations fit for Ladies," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (June 1830): 314. The alpine plants referred to here are members of the genus Primulaceae, of which the auricula was the most highly cultivated species.

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> It is a fact, which cannot be controverted, that the want of mental and manual employment, often proves an incentive to vice, which will infallibly produce misery; and as surely as the earth will bring forth noxious weeds, when left uncultivated, so surely will one vice beget another; which, if not eradicated, will multiply to an alarming extent, until its victims become a pest to civil society, and a disgrace to mankind.

The instructional catalogue (for Bridgeman was advertising his seeds) included an original allegory, "The Matrimonial Garden." If a woman gardens, Bridgeman advised, she will be a virtuous, compliant, industrious, modest and sympathetic wife and mother. Because "Marriage is to a woman at once the happiest and the saddest event of her life . . . the promise of future bliss raised on the death of all present enjoyment," it was essential that men should give their young wives moral discipline. The moral guidance provided by parents and husband were likened to the "props and stays" that help young plants to grow. Without this backbone, the young wife could easily become like a weed instead of a flower in the matrimonial garden.[4]

A shrewish or invalid woman disrupted domestic tranquility in much the same way that unruly workers undermined industrial capitalism's work discipline. Flower gardening texts produced in the first half of the nineteenth century for transatlantic audiences were explicit in this equation. Ladies of fashion and humble cottagers were constantly compared for their susceptibility to the vices of idleness and intemperate behavior. The docility, domestic attachment, and intellectual and aesthetic refinement that floristry supposedly gave British cottagers, thereby keeping them from labor unions and riots, was simultaneously grafted onto early-nineteenth-century

[4] Thomas Bridgeman, *The Florist's Guide*, 3rd ed., enl. and rev. (New York, 1840), iii-vii, 142-46. "The Matrimonial Garden" was first published in the *New-York Farmer and American Gardener's Magazine* (Feb. 1833), n.p.

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stereotypes of the bourgeois woman's role as the emotional and moral backbone of the family. With time, and the horticultural publications' frequent quotation of material out of context, the analogy became somewhat watered down into what has since been taken to be claims for gardening as a democratic pastime, or expressions of the universal love of nature, or merely Victorian purple prose: a simplistic and banal form of the pastoral. The history I have traced and the evidence presented in this chapter show that the mid-to-late nineteenth-century rhetoric used to praise flower gardening as a morally improving leisure for bourgeois women in American cities had its basis in British working-class weavers' floristry and horticultural reforms.

Flower gardening was a fashionable pastime popular with women of disposable income from the late 1700s until the end of the nineteenth century, in the United States, Britain, and Europe. In addition to patronizing florists and nurseries for party decorations, women of means became regular customers for potted plants. Through flower shows, horticultural publications, and botanical illustration, elite and bourgeois women entered the world of commercial horticulture as consumers, observers, and producers. "Parlor gardening" consequently developed out of the fashion for floral decorations, combined with the horticultural practices of forcing florist's flowers and wintering exotics, and the limitations on garden space experienced by urbanites. In addition to borrowing the techniques and accessories of professional florists, parlor gardening was a cultural practice that mirrored, if not imitated, the practices of urban (predominantly male) artisan florists as well as horticultural reform for the laboring poor. However, many parlor gardeners could not handle the work of gardening, either because of lack of knowledge and skill, or because they were inhibited by the working-class implications of manual labor. This problem of gardening as labor was implicit,

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and oftentimes explicit, in the frequent comparisons of ladies and cottagers. Ladies who persisted with parlor gardening found ways to distinguish themselves from the poor, including a reinterpretation of horticultural reform from holistic occupation into mental health achieved through visual appreciation of nature. This was a transatlantic phenomenon that wouldn't have occurred as it did in the United States without the availability of products and services from immigrant florists and nurserymen.

When an urban elite desire for fresh bouquets and flower arrangements coincided with horticultural activities organized as welfare reform of the working classes in early-nineteenth-century Britain, an intersection of interests was predictable. As discussed in the previous chapters, one result was the professionalization of floristry among working-class hobby gardeners; they profited from elite demand for flowers, and from elite sponsorship of flower competitions. An interpretation and application of horticulture as occupational reform of urban elite women also grew from this hybridization. The typical language of horticultural reform, specifically gardening as cure for idleness, was retained, but with variations in connotation. Most notably, instead of poverty it was physical illness or emotional ill temper resulting from unemployment that was to be prevented, contained, and treated. Aided by concurrent philosophies of mental and physical health, the horticultural reform rhetoric that had been applied to the working classes in the first three decades of the nineteenth century was increasingly used to advocate parlor gardening as appropriate for the growing class of urban women who had an excess of time and money to spend on leisure activities.

In this chapter, I focus on a different constituency in this history of flower gardening's significance as idealized labor and productive leisure: idle women. Whether rich or middle class, the women discussed here were united in their freedom from the

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economic necessity of labor; many had domestic slaves or servants who lightened the burdens of child care and housekeeping. Their spending habits also went beyond household necessity, for parlor gardeners bought plants and decorative gardening accessories, items that were considered luxuries of fashion.

In deference to nineteenth-century usage that distinguished working-class women from middle-class or wealthy leisured ladies, it seems appropriate and economical to use the term "ladies" to define the socioeconomic status of the female population discussed here. To do so undeniably privileges the cultural representations (of female gardeners as idle ladies) above an historical investigation of practices. Within the context of tracing how material practices carry translatable meanings, this suits my intention. Like earlier chapters' discussions of how the material conditions of weavers' workshops were conducive to floristry; how the labor-intensive nature of breeding hybrid florists' flowers met the qualifications of rational recreation; and how greenhouse skills facilitated British immigrants' commercial success in the U.S.; in this chapter I look to the physical attributes of parlor gardening for indications of why bourgeois female parlor gardeners were described as idle, inept, wasteful, and in need of the reform that gardening might provide. Consequently, the evidence presented in this chapter is relevant to an understanding of one trajectory of class-modulated interpretations of flower gardening as leisure, labor and luxury.

A Fashionable Luxury

Like other fashion trends in the early nineteenth century, consumers who were concerned with social status used floral goods to emulate or to distinguish themselves from others. Flowers fit well into this system because horticulturists were constantly

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producing novelties, as discussed in the previous chapters. Because new varieties were introduced in limited amounts, and because making more of a best-selling plant through vegetative propagation or seed was an uncertain process, true followers of floral fashion were voracious collectors willing to pay high prices. Although species and varieties frequently changed with fashion, there was a consistent interest in new introductions (whether an imported exotic or a hybridized variety of a classic florist's flower) and in plants that were labor intensive. The growth of commercial horticulture did enable larger nurseries to sell plants at prices accessible to the middle class. This was only possible because elite private patrons and horticultural societies subsidized experiments in hybridization.[5]

Potted ornamental plants and cut flowers were purchased primarily by comfortable urbanites for display in conservatories and parlors during the winter. This practice was concentrated in urban areas due to the limited garden space around dwellings, and the ready availability of ornamental plants from suburban nurseries to instead create an indoor garden. On country estates, parlor gardening was less common except in the winter when tender exotics were rotated from protective greenhouses into

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[5] Important sources on consumerism include Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899; New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1953); Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1982); Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1990); Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994). Please note that I do not characterize all floral consumers according to theories of emulation and differentiation, but only those who were particularly concerned with social status.

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an ornamental conservatory or drawing-room for short stints. However, English and American elites who lived in the country often came to the city for the winter social season. There, forced flowers were used to decorate urban homes and also constituted a kind of winter entertainment in itself. Potted plants were documented in the homes of European royalty and aristocracy in the 1790s and early 1800s, and in urban middle-class homes by the 1840s. While the decorative style was international, the social interpretations of flower gardening are addressed here only in reference to British and American practice.[6]

When flowers became an essential domestic and personal decoration for the entertainments of the wealthy, money flowed to florists. In place by the 1820s, this fashion only increased through the century until the introduction of more spartan styles of interior decoration such as Colonial Revival around the turn of the century. The rental and arrangement of plants for party decoration was one of the surest means of income for the British florist. Potential consumers could visit nurseries' ornamental grounds, combining business and pleasure in this precursor to the public park (fig. 21). Small-scale florists, like those discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, also provided door-to-door service, as documented in London genre scenes by Thomas

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[6] Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor: The Domestic Interior 1620-1920* (New York: Crescent Books, 1985), 157, 229, plates 226, 253, 323, 354, 378, 386. On commercial floristry as an urban phenomenon, see John Harvey, *Early Nurserymen* (Chichester, Sussex, England: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1974).

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Rowlandson and George Cruikshank (fig. 29).[7]

Examples from Philadelphia include testimonials of American extravagance that equal European luxury. Nurserymen Robert Buist and Thomas Hibbert noted in the early 1830s that Philadelphia ladies were botanical collectors: "Some of them have got above eight kinds of Camellias in their collections, which afford a continual beauty through the winter." A visitor to Philadelphia remarked on the pride that people took in their "little parlor green-houses. Each fair lady seems trying to rival the other in the taste and beauty of her gay wintry companions; they seem striving to cheat the gay summer and autumn flower into showing their fine colors in mid winter, and the effect is pleasing to the passer-by." R. Robinson Scott reported that on April 15, 1852 "at an entertainment given by a lady, one of the brightest ornaments of elegant and refined society, her drawing-room conservatory presented the most admirable spectacle of at least eight thousand dollars worth of flowers in full and perfect bloom."[8]

Whether in the U.S. or abroad, ladies' interest in floristry was characterized by collecting, competing, and spectacle-making. The more rare, expensive, and labor-intensive a plant was, the more desirable it seemed to be. In 1831, Loudon described "a sort of diseased feeling in favour of possessing thousands of house plants in pots"

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[7] John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1830), 1055; M., "Foreign Correspondence," *The Gardener's Monthly* (hereafter *Gard. Mon.)* 3 (Apr. 1861): 126; Thomas Rowlandson, *The Plant and Flower Seller*, plate VI of "Cries of London" series, aquatint, 1799.

[8] Robert Buist and Thomas Hibbert, *The American Flower Garden Directory* (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey & A. Hart, 1834), 215; L'ami, "Leaves from my note book," *Horticultural Register* 2 (June 1836): 234; R. Robinson Scott, "Our Apology," *The Philadelphia Florist and Horticultural Journal* (hereafter *Phila. Florist)* 1 (May 1852): 21.

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as one of the current trends for petty, temporary, and wasteful improvements. He was "disgusted . . . at seeing so much labour thrown away on what can have no effect but that of creating a demand for more labour." In a description of potted pelargoniums and other plants in Warwick Castle greenhouse, Loudon complained, "In the whole world of gardening there is not a sight more disagreeable to us, than that of great numbers of sickly little plants in pots. The gardener is continually labouring at them, and his labour never tells . . .. "[9] Twenty years later, recommending the petunia for growth in parlor windows, Professor Charles G. Page commented,

> Flowers of easy culture are not so apt to be prized by the amateur or florist as those whose culture is attended with difficulty. The florist is influenced chiefly by pecuniary considerations, while the appreciation by the amateur is determined by circumstances which appeal to his taste, love of novelties, and excitement and emulation.[10]

The flowers were clearly part of a fashion system in which pure desire for novelty goods outweighed necessity as the motive for acquisition. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries florists used modern marketing techniques akin to those Josiah Wedgwood employed to sell ceramics, according to Neil McKendrck and J. H. Plumb.[11] Florists' flowers, like the auriculas hybridized from alpine flowers, were famous for their demanding cultivation requirements, and for the unnatural artistic qualities, like perfect symmetry, that such manipulation produced. Exotics were likewise beautiful, unusual, and fussy plants. Professional florists mastered growing and marketing

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[9] J. C. Loudon, "Preface," *Gard. Mag.* 7 (1831): iv; J. C. Loudon, "General Results of a Gardening Tour," *Gard. Mag.* 7 (Aug. 1831): 389-90.

[10] Professor Charles G. Page, "The Petunia," *Phila. Florist* 3 (Apr. 1854): 98.

[11] McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, 273, 66, 323-6.

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techniques, selling the plants as a transient commodity.

Once home, this very quality of intense cultivation requirements made the plants a labor problem. It was a stereotype that rich idle ladies bought their plants ready-grown or to be grown under glass, enjoying them as art, and forgetting to tend them. Unless owned by an amateur with a connoisseur's dedication, plants were subject to the neglect or over-attention of owners or tended by servants with similarly uneven results. This would in turn justify another purchase from the florist. "To those who, with well-filled purses, the making of a room a bower of blooming beauty, is but to 'order and the thing is done,'" dismissively remarked the author of an article on "Winter Window Gardens," "it is but a simple matter to send to the florist and have baskets and vases, jardinieres and Wardian cases, filled and arranged with artistic taste. . . ."[12] Home horticulture manuals and magazine columns indicate that every year, or periodically throughout the year, most female amateurs bought new plants from the local professionals. In the ideal commercial situation, the plants would be purchased in flower or about to flower, maintained briefly, and discarded. Amateurs might force the plants into a second bloom, but they didn't usually grow their own plants from seed. Repeat business for the florists was thereby assured.

The selection of beautiful and fashionable flowering or ornamental foliage plants, arrangement of plant groupings, and placement within rooms all drew on or evidenced a person's artistic sensibility. Instruction manuals made explicit references to contemporary color theory, the aesthetics of flower painting and landscape tourism,

[12] Mrs. E. S. Jones, "Winter Window Gardens," *Germantown Telegraph*, 6 Sept. 1876, n.p. The author's name is probably a misprint of Mrs. C. S. Jones who published similar articles in other periodicals, and collaborated with Henry T. Williams.

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and the integrity of plant choice to a room's decorative scheme. Authors on these subjects generally assumed a female audience versed in contemporary style and ready to spend, but horticulturally inexperienced, or even reluctant participants. From this perspective, house plants were no more than pretty things to pseudo-gardeners.

Labor-intensive gardening

While horticultural authors frequently stereotyped genteel women gardeners as inept, this characterization may have been a self-fulfilling prophesy when one considers the diligence required to keep the most popular kinds of plants. The predominant cultural images of genteel women gardeners were that they either ignored or over-tended their parlor plants. Edward Sprague Rand, author of the successful *Flowers for the Parlor and Garden* commented, "We have often heard wonder expressed at the beauty of some plant grown in the poor man's parlor--a beauty which those of his wealthy neighbor do not attain. The reason is simple: in the one case the wants are well provided for; in the other they are neglected or oversupplied." The comparison of cottage and parlor flower-pot gardeners was often made in disparagement of the latter. [13]

For most of the nineteenth century , exotic flowering and ornamental foliage plants, hardy or half-hardy greenhouse shrubs, and "florists' flowers" were the most common types of plants for indoor gardening. Wintering and forcing, important to the cultivation of exotics and florists' flowers, required an artificially regulated environment. Cold frames, hothouses, and greenhouses provided forcing environments

[13] Edward Sprague Rand, Jr., *Flowers for the Parlor and Garden* (Boston: J. E. Tilton & Co.. 1863), 10.

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and winter protection. Plants raised under glass were transplanted into flower beds or potted for decorative use in the conservatory, drawing-room, or parlor. Consequently, these topics were merged in instructional texts, as documented in Chapter Three.

Exotic plants from warmer climates had to be "wintered" in protected environments if it, or its progeny, was to survive from fall to spring. As greenhouse exotics and florists' flowers became popular, conservatories were frequently added to the south side of large homes, often directly adjacent to the sitting room, parlor or library that was already designated as the space for women's daytime activities. Technically, a greenhouse is for growing or wintering plants; a conservatory is used for display of plants that have been raised elsewhere. Glass structures attached to houses may have served both functions, depending upon the owner's resources. The plants could have been supplied by another greenhouse where the plants were raised by hired gardeners, or it could have served as both an indoor garden and as a growing space for plants that were brought further into the house when in bloom. Lacking a greenhouse or conservatory did not stop amateur gardeners from seeking ways of wintering their prized plants. Spare unheated rooms, bay windows situated away from fireplaces, "Belgian window-gardens" (glass cases attached to the parlor window's outer pane), Wardian cases (glass terrariums), and ordinary window sills could all work, if other

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conditions for wintering were met.[14]

Winter gardens are a related phenomenon requiring different conditions and management. Plants were installed on window ledges, shelves, or plant stands in the brightest room for day use. Parlor gardeners bought florist's flowers that had already been forced, or that would be forced for winter decoration. Bulbs like hyacinth and narcissus were forced in decorative glasses placed on fireplaces after undergoing a false early winter in the basement and then gradually being brought into lighter and warmer environments. Geranium, fuchsia, cyclamen, and other perennials could be similarly forced into blooming during the winter months if they had been given a proper period of dormancy.

Wintering plants and keeping winter gardens were not equivalent activities, but--much to the disgust of skilled gardeners--these two goals were often "improperly united." This was a major source of confusion for amateur gardeners. It became a cliche that lady parlor gardeners flippantly tried to combine these functions without

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[14] Humphrey Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816; reprint, with introduction by John Dixon Hunt, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 52-3, fig. "Interiors" facing p. 58; William Cobbett, *The American Gardener* (London: Published by C. Clement, I, Clement's Inn, 1821), no. 99; Jane Webb Loudon, *The Ladies Magazine of Gardening* (hereafter *Ladies' Mag.*) 1 (London: William Smith, 1842), 3, 203; Elder, 85; Colman, quoted in review of *European Agriculture,* 424-5; Mrs. Glover, "On the Management of Plants in Rooms," *Ladies' Mag.* 1 (1842): 44; Peter Henderson, *Practical Floriculture: A Guide to the Successful Cultivation of Florists' Plants, for the Amateur and Professional Florist* (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1869), 167-70; "Plant-Houses, Pits, and Frames," *Gard. Mon.* 3 (Nov. 1861): 321-2; John Lindley, "The Belgian Window Garden," printed in *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* (hereafter *Hort.*) 3 (Mar. 1849): 427-30, first published in *Gardener's Chronicle.* Excerpts and paraphrase of Lindley's article later appeared in *McIntosh's Book of the Garden*, as cited in "Window Gardening and Plant Cases," *Hort.* 8 (Sept. 1853): 399-405.

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the proper procedures, and consequently killed their plants without having the slightest idea why.[15]

Florists and nurserymen raised plants under conditions that would make them quickly grow and come into flower quickly. Maintenance required both change and continuity. Pots and potting soil had to be changed. New owners needed to be sensitive to the changes in humidity, air circulation, and exposure to light that could damage a plant. Bourgeois amateurs had enough money and interest to buy large collections of plants, but didn't usually hire professional help to tend a collection of parlor plants. Deterioration was almost certain if the plants were in the care of an inexperienced or nonchalant amateur gardener or housekeeper. When plants were considered part of the furnishings of an upscale home, their care might be left to servants. Amongst the gardener's enemies, stewards, housekeepers, and ladies' maids were called "the most insidious."[16]

The conditions for quickly growing blooming plants included use of very rich soils. Made of bone meal, feces, dried blood, and decayed vegetable matter, Isaac Emmerton's soil mixture was disgusting, very successful, and although extreme, not entirely unusual for trade practice. In addition to the difficulty of gathering the necessary materials, it is hard to think that pots of heavily enriched soil didn't bring an

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[15] Henderson, *Practical Floriculture*, 167-68; Hibberd, *The Fern Garden*, 124; "Parlor Plants in Winter," *Hort.* 1 (Mar. 1847): 436-7, first published in *Western Farmer and Gardener*.

[16] H. John Newington, "On the Management of the Peach Tree," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Feb. 1830): 57; James Housman, Gardener, "Mr. Newington's Remarks on Training the Peach Tree," *Gard. Mag.* 6 (Apr. 1830): 221; [Thomas Meehan], "Gardening is not Agriculture," *Gard. Mon.* 3 (Apr. 1861): 118.

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unpleasant smell into the drawing room or parlor. Still, amateurs were intimidated by nursery practice and weren't always confident about changing the soil in the potted plants that they bought. "I always hoard and cherish [the nursery soil] as old gold," one gardening novice admitted. Over time, the enriched soils could exhaust plants. Soil was also a problem because when plants are watered, some soil usually escapes the pot, and in the parlor soil is dirt. (Flower pot saucers weren't consistently used.) Moss was a good alternative to soil for this reason. Also, moss made the potted plant lighter to carry, and nourished the plant as the moss turned to vegetable mould.[17]

When gardeners move plants from the greenhouse into garden beds or into warmer rooms for forced blooms, the plants do best if the change in temperature is made gradually, a process called hardening. Florists with regular customers were conscientious about hardening plants before delivery, but did not always take this precaution when the plants were simply "sent to market."[18] Gas light and heaters did not support the decorative use of indoor plants. Actually, gas fumes, coal dust and dry heat were detrimental to house plants. It was remembered, in 1880, that at

> One time window gardening was universally popular. Then came heaters and illuminating gas, instead of open grates and candles, and the pretty room flowers were banished to the houses of the poor. In almost all our large cities we had to go to the poor quarters to see the window flowers, and even to this day in the large Paris hotels, it is

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[17] W. W. J., "Query," *The Floricultural Cabinet, and Florist's Magazine* (hereafter *Flori. Cab.*) 1 (1833): 114-15; Jim Gould, "Isaac Emmerton, Thomas Hogg and their Composts," *Garden History* 17 (autumn 1989): 181-7; A Cincinnati Correspondent, "Plant Growing," *Gard. Mon.* 7 (Apr. 1865): 115; "Flower Pots for Rooms," *Horticultural Register* 2 (Nov. 1836): 411, first published in *London News of Literature.*

[18] "Flower-garden and Pleasure-ground," *Gard. Mon.* 7 (Apr. 1865): 97.

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> chiefly in the fourth stories where the chamber-maids have their sleeping-places, that the floral adornments of streets are seen."[19]

Botanist John Lindley was disgusted with the "darkness, dust, heat, want of ventilation, and all the other calamities to which plants in sitting rooms are subject," particularly dryness. "What makes the evil greater is, that the plants which are purchased for sitting-rooms are invariably brought into high condition by being grown in a damp atmosphere. They are transferred from the hands of skillful [sic] gardeners, armed with the most perfectly constructed forcing-houses, into the care of inexperienced amateurs, whose means of maintaining a plant in health are something considerably less than nothing." One of the reasons why the poor neighbor's plants were typically better than those belonging to bourgeois parlor gardeners was because wood-stoves and candles didn't produce the fumes that came from gas heaters and lights, and rarely had furnace heat at 60 degrees or higher. Some people who were successful indoor gardeners when poor, found that when personal fortunes improved and they could afford to heat their homes with gas, their indoor gardens suffered.[20]

More than anything else, the large collections amassed by parlor gardeners were their downfall. Too many plants many requiring different modes of treatment, were grouped together and indiscriminantly watered or ignored by the amateur.[21] Here, it became obvious how the old-time florist succeeded: specialization. The more exotic

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[19] "Greenhouse and House Gardening" *Gard. Mon.* 22 (Jan. 1880): 5-7

[20] Lindley, "The Belgian Window Garden," 429; "Injurious Effect of Gas on Window Plants," *Gard. Mon.* 22 (Apr. 1880): 106; "Window Plants," *Gard. Mon.* 9 (Jan. 1867): 3.

[21] "Plants for Adornment," *Gard. Mon.* 2 (Oct. 1860): 315-318.

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and miffy plants a person had, the more difficult it was to take care of them. For parlor gardeners who did their own work, there was a choice to be made between plant collecting and plant cultivating.

Floristry in the Parlor

Evolutionary links in flower gardening practices from floristry in weavers' workshops to ladies' parlor gardening are not difficult to understand when one considers that flower shows and other sales venues linked two populations that both had home-bound sedentary lifestyles as well as an interest in floral novelties. Both used glass enclosures to create protected artificial environments: weavers grew plants under bell jars on workshop windows, and ladies had window boxes in their parlors. Tiered plant stands for growing and display stages were familiar to both artisan florist and the female parlor gardener. Parlor gardeners also imitated the aesthetics of cottage gardening, namely with rustic ornaments and picturesque ornamental vines. With each horticultural application, there was a modification that facilitated class differentiation by the lady parlor gardeners. The variations are noticeable in the aesthetic and functional qualities of the plants and their decorative settings, and reveal the desires and intentions of both producers and consumers.

Decorative versions of florists' display stands and glass cases were parlor furnishings that catered to and called for the use of certain kinds of flowers, creating a cycle of demand, distribution, and dependence of amateurs upon professional gardeners. Nurserymen like Matthias Saul in Lancashire and James Daniels of Philadelphia sold these goods as gardening accessories. They could also be purchased by mail order from seedsmen and purveyors of fancy goods who advertised in the back

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pages of books and magazines that featured discussions of parlor gardening.[22]

The function and form of mid-nineteenth-century parlor plant stands shows a direct lineage from the "blooming stages" used by competitive florists in eighteenth-century Britain. Ruth Duthie, David Tarver, and Mark Laird have presented evidence on the tiered stages used by eighteenth-century florists. Movable elements on the stages helped to protect flowers from heat and rain during the period of cultivation. The elevated and graduated shelves made it easier for flower show judges and potential customers to examine flowers thus displayed at exhibitions and nurseries (fig. 30).[23]

Parlor stands also had movable parts to accommodate cultivation and display. Some varieties were collapsible, which resulted from exhibitors' need for a portable stand to take to flower shows (fig. 31). Most plant stands had wheel castors so that the whole stand could be moved closer to or further away from sources of heat and light. Suppliers experimented with wooden, iron and brass castors, the last deemed the most reliable. With this feature, one might roll the plant stand from the sun porch or attached conservatory into the living rooms during the day, and out again at night. Iron wire plant stands, which varied from big frothy affairs six feet tall and four feet in circumference, outfitted with a bird cage hook and fish bowl shelf, were built on castors, as were more modest plant stands (fig. 32). Made of wood, wicker, cast iron, and iron wire, the stands could be very heavy or quite light, and consequently sturdy

[22] M[atthias] Saul, "Description of a Stand for Flowers," *Flori. Cab.* 3 (1835): 105; "Window Plants," *Phila. Florist* 1 (Oct. 1852): 192; Shirley Hibberd, *The Fern Garden*, 43; A Correspondent from Peoria, Ill., "Plant Cases," *Gard. Mon.* (Nov. 1862): 338.

[23] Ruth Duthie; David Tarver, *Auricula History*, 44-50; Mark Laird, "James Maddock's 'Blooming Stage' as a Microcosm of Eighteenth-century Planting," *Garden History* 24 (summer 1996): 70-81.

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but difficult to move, or easy to push but flimsy when loaded with plants.[24]

Surviving artifacts and catalogues suggest that in the second half of the nineteenth century, plant stands built on castors were more likely to be made of iron wire, or a combination of cast iron and iron wire. The only surviving wooden plant stand on castors that I was able to discover was made in New York around 1800. This was a time when fine furniture was generally being made in light and slim styles with adjustable features like tilt-tops, folding leaves, and castors. It should also be noted that in general, wire plant stands were preferable later in the century because they were thought less likely to harbor insects. While perhaps easier to move when new, as iron wire rusts and ages, it can be very brittle and thus difficult to move without damage to the stand itself.[25]

Matthias Saul of Lancaster invented several ornamental cast iron plant stands for holding flower pots or containers of cut flowers. In 1835, Saul wrote that his flower-stand with mobile brackets was "very useful for every florist's room." The next year, a variation of the same model was an "elegant" ornament "fit for the drawing room or any other place" (fig. 33).[26] Surviving examples of this type of plant stand vary from the ornate to the utilitarian, suitable for nursery or parlor (figs. 34-35). This

[24] Peter Henderson, *Gardening for Pleasure* (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1887), 157; Shirley Hibberd, *The Fern Garden*, 2nd ed., (1870):51-2.

[25] The assertion that it was more likely for iron stands than wooden stands to have castors is based on a wide survey of furnishings catalogues and artifacts in the collections of Winterthur Museum and Library and the Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division and Horticulture Library.

[26] M[atthias] Saul, "Description of a Stand for Flowers," *Flori. Cab.* 3 (1835): 105; "Figure and Description of an Ornamental Flower-Stand," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* (hereafter *Paxton's*) 2 (1836): 89; "Window Gardening and Plant Cases," *Hort.* 8 (Oct. 1853):457, article first published in *McIntosh's Book of the Garden*.

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model provided ease of adjustment with saucer brackets that rotated horizontally and vertically. The brackets were detachable for times when there weren't enough plants to fill the stand. Similarly-hinged wall brackets were attached to window frames.

When stocked with smaller plants on the lower shelves and taller plants on the higher ones, tiered plant stands created the pyramidal effect popular with flower exhibitors (figs. 36-39). The shelf depth or saucer diameter of plant stands and brackets varied from two to six inches. The consequence of this attribute was that most shelves and saucers could hold only small pots like those used by florists for forcing flowers or for selling young plants in their first bloom. This characteristic not only mirrored the display furniture used by professional florists, it also encouraged business from customers who owned the plant stands with this size limitation.

Ladies' Vices

For leisured women, gardening remedied the vices and afflictions of a lifestyle that was confined, sedentary, and luxuriously unproductive; a condition that was believed to lead to nervous disorders and bad temper. For women who indulged excessively in urban luxuries like gambling at cards or dice, gardening promised a more domestically oriented, modest, and pious influence. This cyclical reasoning mirrored the working-class horticultural reforms that promised to ease poverty while keeping cottagers and mechanics dependent on local patronage. Gardening addressed the physical and mental limitations of women's activities while attempting to reorient their attention to domestic concerns. Framed as an interest in botany or artistic design, horticultural activities could be made to fit into preexisting templates for women's leisure, but the match was an uneasy one because of the working-class implications of

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gardening as manual labor.

Like the horticultural reforms for the intemperate working classes, reform of idle ladies was phrased as filling an entertainment void, and as a substitution of time and money spent on habits considered less desirable. For the family economy, a greenhouse, asserted William Cobbett, was as useful and reasonable as the cost of household luxuries like fine linens or the expenses associated with male sports: horses, sporting dogs, and guns. To afford a greenhouse attached to the dwelling, "may demand some deduction in the expenditure for the bottle" by the men of the house, but the resulting amusement was of benefit to the entire family. "How much better, during a long and dreary winter," promised Cobbett, "for daughters and even sons, to assist, or attend, their mother in a green-house, than to be seated with her at *cards*, or at any other amusement that can be conceived! How much more innocent, more pleasant, more free from temptation to evil, this amusement to *any other!*" Although writing here for an American audience in 1821, Cobbett had been personally involved in British social and agricultural reforms as an anti-Chartist, pro-allotment agitator. He was very familiar with the rhetoric of horticultural reform for the British working classes when he made this recommendation. Henry Colman made a similar remark in *European Agriculture and Rural Economy*, a publication that included remarks on allotments and similar horticultural reform projects. Colman thought that conservatories attached to drawing rooms furnished "besides the most beautiful objects of sight, an attractive recreation and delight to the female members of the household, and a refreshing retreat from the dissipations of society, or the harassing cares of

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domestic life."[27]

Stereotypes of leisured women suggested that they were plagued by ennui and domestic irritations. Gardening was a potential cure, according to Mary Jackson Henry, Jane Webb Loudon, and others. Henry specified that flower gardening could inspire a calming reverie, a "more certain panacea to the daily chagrins of human life than all that the dissipation of the gilded hours of indiscriminate society has ever been able to afford." An 1840 review of Jane Webb Loudon's *Instructions in Gardening for Ladies* specified the problem to be treated: "The grand and all-pervading evil among ladies of independent fortune is ennui, which, everyone knows, is brought on from a want of rational and active occupation." A lack of enjoyable labor led to ill health, and without health, "there can neither be good temper, nor any kind of enjoyment whatever, mental or corporal." The reviewer, anticipating class-based bias against gardening as ladies' reform insisted, "what we propose is just as suitable and necessary for ladies of the highest rank, as it is for those without rank; provided they are equally without rational and active occupation of some other kind."[28]

Instructions in Gardening for Ladies perfectly illustrates the ambivalence about women and gardening work that simultaneously advocated hands-on gardening and

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[27] William Cobbett, *The American Gardener* (London: Published by C Clement, I, Clement's Inn, 1821), no. 99, 100, 122, 123; Ray Desmond, *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists: including plant collectors, flower painters, and garden designers* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 155; Henry Colman, *European Agriculture and Rural Economy*, quoted in review of *European Agriculture*, *Magazine of Horticulture* (hereafter *Mag. Hort.*) 11 (Nov. 1845): 425.

[28] Mary Jackson Henry, *The Florist's Manual*, 2nd ed., enl. (London: Printed for Henry Colburn & Co., 1822), 55-6; Review of *Instructions in Gardening, for Ladies*, by Jane Webb Loudon, *Gard. Mag.* n.s., 6 (July 1840): 351-2.

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stimulated consumers for the florists' industry. Throughout the book, the author promises her female readership that the tasks she describes may seem unladylike, but are not actually so. Like her husband, Jane Webb Loudon was clearly advocating gardening as a rational recreation that one must actively do in order to reap its benefits: "The great point is to exercise our own skill and ingenuity; for we all feel so much more interested in what we do for ourselves than in what is done for us, that no lady is likely to become fond of gardening, who does not do a great deal with her own hands." However, Loudon's entries on herbaceous flowers for the garden are all florists' flowers, and lean much more towards the descriptive than instructive. The author even told her readers where to buy carnations in London. The difference between parlor gardening as indulgence in luxury or as a cure for the same was in the possibility that the owner of a collection of potted plants might tend to them herself, a possibility that was easily undermined by the availability of horticultural goods and services for sale.[29]

Floral sentimentalists preferred to think of plants as neither works of art nor as specimens of nature, but as pets. Plants were likened to children and domesticated animals, both in the affection they excited and the attention they received. Like animals and children, plant pets were welcome company when well-behaved and charming in appearance. A plant not yet flowering was too immature to be seen, and when past its blooming peak, going to seed, or drying out was not just unkempt, but possibly even rude. The tendency to anthropomorphism went to extremes like describing dehydrated plants as hung over; a shriveled plant was explained as having been "at a party last night or the night before." Plant stands were equated with

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[29] Mrs. [Jane Webb] Loudon, *Instructions in Gardening for Ladies* (London: John Murray, 1840), 344, 267-8.

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theatrical stages, where plants were to appear only after dress and demeanor were polished to perfection in the greenhouse dressing room. A constantly well-stocked parlor plant stand required either attention and diligence on the part of the parlor gardener, or an active relationship with a local nursery or florist's shop.[1]

The sentimental anthropomorphizing attitude was consistently associated with lonely women. The stereotype of lonely women doting on plants as substitutes for children peppers nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century fiction. When the characters were working-class women, like the title character in *Jennie Gebhardt*, and the retired dressmaker Miss Baker in *McTeague*, they are described as tending plants from start to finish, in what art critic and social reformer John Ruskin would have praised as a love for plants as individuals, unlike the generic sentimental attachment of those that preferred to see plants only at their peak, an attitude more typical of the well-off owners of decorative plant stands. In fiction, wealthy widows and old maids were characteristically interested in parlor gardening as an artistic diversion. This latter stereotype can be found in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* where the widowed Mrs. Archer and her unmarried daughter Janey keep "cultivated ferns in Wardian cases," as one of several meaningless fancywork activities. Archer's daughter-in-law

[1] E. A. Maling, *The Indoor Gardener* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1863), 171. For other anthropomorphic remarks, see "Notes on Gardens and Nurseries," *Mag. Hort.* 5 (Jan. 1839): 28; "Ornamental Flower-Stand," *Hort.* 12 (Feb. 1857): 146. For explorations of plants personified, anthropomorphized, and treated like pets, see Nicolette Scourse, *The Victorians and their Flowers* (Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1983), 58-65; Beverly Seaton, "Towards a Historical Semiotics of Literary Flower Personification," *Poetics Today* 10 (winter 1989): 679-701; Marc Treib, "Power Plays: The Garden as Pet," in Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester, Jr., eds., *The Meaning of Gardens: idea, place and action* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

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May, a young wife and mother, likes to have her rooms filled with flowers for social events, but the jardiniere with its primulas and cinerarias is supplied solely by the florist.[2]

Although treating plants like babies was supposed to help young women to learn to be mothers, doting on plants could be as harmful as neglect. Plant mothers often had too many "children" with different needs, and failed to take the individualized Pestalozzian approach to rearing. Also, seeking constant blooms like daily affection from human children, the mothers forgot that indoor plants, like their neighbors outside, need dormancy too. Amateurs were advised, "If all work and no play don't suit Jack, all work and no rest will kill plants."[3] The moral implication became that inability or unwillingness to care correctly for pet plants equaled a lack of maternal instincts in addition to sheer laziness. The implication of idleness was equally, if not more significant in the city where florists were at the ready to serve, and thereby cover-up.

Moral Treatment: Fancywork and Parlor Gardening

During the nineteenth century, gardening came to be frequently recommended as prevention, cure, and diversion for female invalids. From the late 1700s forward,

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[2] On flowers as obliging "friends," see Edward Sprague Rand, *Window Gardener* (Boston: Shepard & Gill, 1872), 2-3; Theodore Dreiser, *Jennie Gerhardt* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1911); Frank Norris, *McTeague* (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1899); Brent Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* (1986), 151-52; Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence* (1920; New York: Collier Books, 1993), 33-34, 193, 332.

[3] "Repose of Plants," *The Philadelphia Florist* 1 (March 1853): 330; Mr. Fortune, "Plants Suited for Growing in Windows, and the Mode of Managing Them" *The Ladies Magazine of Gardening* 1 (1842): 194-6.

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physicians and alienists (mental health practitioners) suggested that modern urban life invited nervous exhaustion, especially in bourgeois and elite women who were endangering their health by spending too much time at home engaged in sedentary activities. The benefits attributed to gardening, when applied to this population, clearly link the prescription to faculty psychology. Faculty psychology, formulated by Scottish Common Sense moral philosophers, was premised on a hierarchy of mind, emotion and body. Like other variations of constitutional pathology, imbalance of these parts through over-exertion or neglect could result in illness. Throughout the nineteenth century, nervous exhaustion was interpreted as the primary cause of mental illness.

Rebalancing the faculties was the goal of mental health practitioners in England, France, and the United States who were working in the new "moral reform/treatment" mode. "Moral treatment" regarded mental patients as temporarily deranged and able to regain rationality if s/he were treated with respect and given activities that would help to strengthen self-control. Purposeful, goal-directed activities that exercised the body while diverting the mind were central to this kind of treatment. This was a radical change from the previous norm of externally administered restraint or enforced cure. This approach to mental health was introduced simultaneously in England by Quaker William Tuke at his "Retreat" in York, and by Phillipe Pinel in France. American Quakers took the lead in creating similar treatment facilities in the United States, the first being the Friends' Asylum in Frankford, Pennsylvania, which was established in

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1817.[4]

Moral treatment shared the approach and language of rational recreation reforms. In retrospect, modern historians from the medical field of occupational therapy have described moral treatment's holistic, individualized, and activity-oriented mode of treatment as its own precursor. As a medical specialty dedicated to rehabilitation of the mentally and physically injured or disabled, occupational therapy was formally established in the 1910s by medical professionals who shared a deep interest in the contemporary Arts and Crafts movement. The patient's functional restoration was both a goal in itself, and a path to economic self-sufficiency. The activities prescribed by both nineteenth-century moral treatment practitioners and early-twentieth-century occupational therapists included weaving, knitting, and other technologically obsolete hand-crafts documented by Davis as ways to keep Britain's idle poor busy: "fancy work" (artistic hand-crafts for household decoration), and gardening.[5]

During the course of the nineteenth century, parlor gardening and fancywork were framed as competitive or complementary occupational replacements for the

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[4] Anne Digby, *Madness, Morality and Medicine: A Study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Stephen Blair Hawkins, "The Therapeutic Landscape: Nature, Architecture, and Mind in Nineteenth-Century America," (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1991); Andrew Scull, ed., *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen: The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

[5] Rita P. Fleming Cottrell, ed., *Perspectives on Purposeful Activity: Foundation and Future of Occupational Therapy* (Bethesda, Md.: The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., 1996); Nancy Gerlach-Spriggs, Richard Enoch Kaufman, and Sam Bass Warner, *Restorative Gardens: The Healing Landscape* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), 19-21, 28-30; William Davis, *Hints to Philanthropists* (1821; reprint, Shannon, Ireland: Irish Univ. Press, 1971), 152-55.

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dangers of too much textile work. The mid-to-late nineteenth century is generally seen by historians of occupational therapy as a period of inactivity, following the decline of effective moral treatment and the rise of occupational therapy early in the twentieth century. While medical professionals may not have been promoting occupational reform during this era, public figures in the fields of horticulture and fancywork did advocate this approach to holistic health.

In *Hobbies*, historian Steven Gelber describes fancywork as a form of handicraft that simultaneously replicated and resisted the labor values of industrial capitalism. Fancywork replicated work values by promoting productive activity rather than idleness; it resisted capitalism by recreating preindustrial, artisanal working conditions. Gardening shared with fancy work many of its benefits and points of ambivalence, like process versus product. Jackson Lears makes a similar argument about rational recreations for both the working class and idle rich in *No Place of Grace*.[6] Unlike these authors' assertions that rational recreation was an ideology dispersed from the top down, the evolution of bourgeois parlor gardening shows a basis in working-class modes of achieving labor independence and working-class utilization of rational recreation's rhetoric to maintain independence through the business of commercial horticulture.

In an interesting counterpart to the lives of weaver florists, the cramped, repetitive nature of needlework was criticized foremost among the dulling domestic occupations of leisured women. In 1810, a British author remarked, "It is impossible

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[6] Steven M. Gelber, ***Hobbies: Leisure and the Culture of Work in America*** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 157-80; T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 91.

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to congratulate our fair countrywomen too warmly on the revolution which has of late years taken place, when drawing and fancy-work of endless variety have been raised on the ruins of that heavy, unhealthy, and stupefying occupation, needlework." Needlework was still specifically targeted as an evil at mid-century, by Americans as well as the British. The *Horticulturist*'s review of Jane Loudon's *Ladies Flower Garden* called hobby gardening essential in "a successful war against perpetual stitchery" that would ideally "draw, at least for a little while, all the needles out of the many fair hands whose possessors think them the only befitting implements of occupation." While Downing, possibly the author of this book review, elsewhere emphasized outdoor gardening for women, others also explicitly regarded indoor gardening as a desirable substitute for needlework. An article in the *Gardener's Monthly*, praised the parlor water garden, fernery, Wardian case, and hanging basket for providing variety from the crochet hook and knitting needles, "which, if indulged in to excess, keep our wives and sisters in-doors, in a sitting posture, during hours which might be profitably spent in active and healthful exercise."[7]

The benefits of indoor gardening as supplement or substitute for textile work crossed class because the physiological and psychological conditions of the work were consistently damaging. In the late nineteenth century, the term "occupation neurosis" was introduced to describe muscular fatigue and cramping resulting from the repetition of specific movements, specifically those performed in the context of work. This

[7] Mavis Batey, *Jane Austen and the English Landscape* (London: Barn Elms Publishing, 1996), 116; Review of *The Ladies' Flower Garden of Ornamental Perennials* and *The Ladies' Flower Garden of Ornamental Annuals*, by Mrs. [Jane Webb] Loudon, *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* (hereafter *Hort.*) 1 (Feb. 1847): 384-85; "On 'Skeletonizing," *Gard. Mon.* 3 (July 1861): 216-7, first published in *Friend's Intelligencer*.

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diagnosis was applicable to those involved in industrial work, and to those who spent their hours doing repetitive hand crafts. Reverend Charles Kingsley proposed window and parlor gardens as beneficial for anyone whose time was spent inside unaired rooms, with limited physical activity. "Tens of thousands--Who knows it not?--lead sedentary and unwholesome lives, stooping, asphyxiated, employing as small a fraction of their bodies as of their minds." Sharing this category were schoolchildren, shop girls, milliners, mechanics and elite young women, all potential beneficiaries of indoor gardening. Mental and physical variety could be found, asserted Kingsley, in the naturalist's hobbies.[8]

In 1874, American fancy work editor Henry T. Williams reprinted William Robinson's citation of Kingsley's 1855 recommendation of indoor gardening as a substitute for fancy work,

> your daughters find an enjoyment in it, and are more active, more cheerful, more self-forgetful over it, than they would have been over novels and gossip, crochet and Berlin wool. At least you will confess that the abomination of 'fancy work'--that standing cloak for dreamy idleness--has all but vanished from your drawing rooms since the 'Lady Ferns' and Venus Hair Ferns appeared.[9]

Williams' quote from Kingsley on fancy work as "dreamy idleness" has to be seen as somewhat hypocritical because Williams wrote, edited, and published several books of fancy work instruction. The development of indoor gardening as a publishing genre in

[8] J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, preparers., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) vol.: 682; Charles Kingsley, "The Science of Health," and "The Tree of Knowledge" in *Health and Education* (London: W. Isbister & Co., 1874), 6, 62-63.

[9] Charles Kingsley, *Glaucus* (1855), 3-4, quoted by William Robinson, quoted by Henry T. Williams, ed., *Window Gardening* 7th ed., (NY: Henry T. Williams, Publisher, Office of *The Horticulturist*, 1874), 248.

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the 1870s and 1880s was consistently linked to fancy work, implying a shared audience.

American commentators on the home life of bourgeois women championed gardening against other forms of diversion, including fancy work. In 1860, "Primrose" of New Bedford, Massachusetts concluded her remarks on the benefits of gardening for women with this criticism,

> For you these mental and physical qualities are now demanded to choose your worsted for crochet or embroidery, and to finger the keys of your piano forte. The same long bony fingers which now sprawl claw-like over the ivory keys in vain efforts to create a concord of sweet sounds; or the same fair plump hands that delicately work the glowing Berlin into more or less creditable imitations of roses, camellias, and so forth; may almost create the living, fragrant realities by your gentle manipulation and watchful ministry, and this to the great advantage of your health and spirits.[10]

Henry Ward Beecher and Andrew Jackson Downing were among the prominent American domestic reformers who similarly recommended gardening for idle women.[11] Their broad readership helped to promote indoor gardening beyond the scope of those who read the horticulture periodicals and manuals.

Visual Abstraction: Environmental Psychology and Vegetable Effluvia

Parlor gardening's usefulness as occupational reform of idle women was

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[10] Primrose, New Bedford, Mass., "Gardening for Ladies," *Gard. Mon.* 2 (May 1860): 135.

[11] Henry Ward Beecher, *Plain and Pleasant Talk about Fruit, Flowers, and Farming* (1859), 117-120; Andrew Jackson Downing, "On Feminine Taste in Rural Affairs" *Hort.* 3 (April 1849): 449-455.

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subverted into hands-off aesthetic appreciation because gardening could be too much like labor for the comfort of idle ladies. It was in the growing that occupational reform of leisured women could occur, according to the tenets of moral treatment and rational recreation. Environmental psychology and concerns about plant effluvia contributed to a reinterpretation of horticulture's healing power as vested primarily in visual distraction.

At the Friends' Asylum, and later at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, all patients were encouraged to garden as a way to avoid physical and mental stagnation from staid indoor activities. Not surprisingly, the effectiveness of gardening as occupational therapy was hampered for some patients by concerns about the affiliation of manual labor with social class. While working-class patients seemed to thrive on the gardening, more wealthy clients, unused to and prejudiced against physical work, shied away.[12]

As a substitute, asylum directors encouraged activities that were premised more on Lockean environmental psychology than on faculty psychology. To briefly describe a complicated philosophy: Lockean environmental psychology asserted that the mental associations provoked by the material world and mediated by the senses could replace morbid thoughts with pleasant ones. "Associationist" philosopher Archibald Alison explained, "When any object, either of sublimity or beauty, is presented to the mind . . . every man is conscious of a train of thought being immediately awakened in his imagination, analogous to the character or expression in

[12] Norman Dain and Eric T. Carlson, "Milieu Therapy in the Nineteenth Century: Patient Care at the Friend's Asylum, Frankford, Pennsylvania, 1817-1861," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 131 (Oct. 1960): 280-81.

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the original object." Landscape designers working in the picturesque mode at the end of the eighteenth century were deeply influenced by associationist philosophy, as briefly mentioned in Chapter Two. In the nineteenth century, landscape gardens, architecture, and furnishings were all being designed with the associationist philosophy in mind. Accordingly, asylum grounds were landscaped to provide visual, and thereby mental health.[13] As mental therapy, this alternative to gardening was essentially landscape tourism, a practice characterized by aestheticization of labor through an almost exclusively visual interaction with the natural environment.

The question of air quality--whether plants purified or poisoned air for humans or vice versa--was another medical concern whose material forms would contribute to labor avoidance and visual abstraction in horticultural reform for leisured women. Scented plants and flowers were traditionally believed to work as disinfectants against disease traveling in the form of smells, which is why women carried nosegays and men wore boutonnieres in city streets. In the 1770s and 1780s, British scientists interested in photosynthesis and air chemistry made studies of plants in urban interiors, leading to debates over the malevolent qualities of plant effluvia (fumes with or without odor). Public anxiety was aroused by John Ingenhousz's warning that although plants provided oxygen by daylight, at night they were poisonous sources of carbon dioxide, more commonly referred to as carbonic acid. The idea that plants exhaled carbonic acid either all the time or only when not exposed to the sun, resulted in the warning that plants, whether scented or not, should not be in closed rooms, especially not in sick

[13] Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, quoted in J. Mordaunt Crook, *The Dilemma of Style* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1987, 17; Hawkins, 46-47.

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rooms or sleeping rooms. Although the scientific community seems to have been, for the most part, settled against this warning by the nineteenth century, speculations on the dangers of floral effluvia continued to appear in popular horticultural publications throughout the century.[14]

The Wardian case, first used to protect plants from harmful urban pollution or sea air during importation from foreign countries, was also appropriate for use in dry and hot parlors where bell jars, also in this context called shades, domes, or cloches, were used over potted, cut, and artificial flowers to control dessication and dust. Following the logic of vegetality, which sought to understand human biological processes through similiarities to vegetable life, Dr. Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward (inventor of the Wardian case) suggested that a similarly enclosed space could serve as a sanatorium for consumptives, an idea shared by Joseph Paxton, architect of the Crystal Palace and editor of the floriculturally inclined *Paxton's Magazine of Botany*. "The difficulty to be overcome," Ward noted, "would be the removal or neutralization of the carbonic acid given out by animals; but this in the present state of science could easily be effected, either by ventilators, or by the growth of plants in connexion with the air of the room, so that the animal and vegetable respirations might counterbalance each other." People who subscribed to this theory were more likely to help invalids by giving plants and cut flowers, constructing window gardens, and devising sick beds

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[14] R. Todd Longstaffe Gowan, "Changing notions of the effects of plant exhalations on human health in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" *Journal of Garden History* 7 (April-June 1987): 176-185; James Meschter Anders, *House-Plants as Sanitary Agents* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1887).

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in conservatories.[15]

Despite Ward's understanding of the vegetable respiratory process as beneficial to humans, he also gave tacit agreement to another doctor's account of using the Wardian case to shield a patient from plant effluvia. There was a young female invalid who took great pleasure in her potted plants whose doctor, fearing the plants to be deleterious to the patient's recovery, replaced them with a tiny fern under a bell-glass. Ward summed up the advantages of this situation, "Every day witnessing some change, keeps the mind continuously interested in their progress, and their very restriction from the open air, while it renders the chamber wholesome to the invalid; provides at the same time an undisturbed atmosphere more suited to the development of their own tender frames."[16] The Wardian case resolved the ambiguous qualities of plant effluvia--plants were protected from human contagion and vice versa. Authors of indoor gardening texts took up the recommendation that invalids might find diversion in watching plants in glass cases.

Wardian cases provided a labor-free diversion for invalids and other parlor gardeners; the cases conveniently combined environmental psychology's visual stimulation with plant effluvia containment. Parlor gardeners who bought imported plants, and either wanted to have them in the house, or didn't have an external greenhouse pounced on the Wardian case as a way to solve their own problems with atmospheric control. Tinkers, glaziers, and nurserymen made glass cases to fit multiple functions, styles, and incomes (figs. 40-42). The cases themselves came to

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[15] Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward, *On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases*. 2nd. ed. (London: John Van Voorst, 1852), 110, viii-ix, 134-5.

[16] Ward, 140-141.

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resemble miniature landscapes that contained or were framed in folly-like architectural designs based on famous buildings and conservatories. Ward himself had a case designed after Tintern Abbey.[17]

The Wardian case (a terrarium that could be plain glass and tin, or made in mahogany to match the parlor furniture) accomplished two goals for the parlor gardener who preferred to think of plants as collectible objet d'art. This decorative furnishing provided a microclimate suited to cultivation of exotic plants, *and* was advertised as requiring minimal care. The indoor gardening books that targeted a bourgeois female audience emphasized the minimal attention required to keep Wardian cases. "I only watered the case once after planting," ran one testimonial. Furthermore, the hands-off gardener continued "[I] only opened it a few times in the seven months from November 1st to June 1st--and then to remove dead fronds." Seymour Joseph Guy's 1866 painting of the family of Robert Gordon, a founder and trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shows a Wardian case set in a dining room covered with small paintings. To keep plants under glass is analogous to viewing still life paintings; visual appreciation trumps interactive touch. Unlike paintings of flowers, plants in glass cases could not promise continual unblemished bloom without some upkeep. It was not actually true that a glass case could be sealed and left untouched for months. The plants need some air circulation, at the least.[18]

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[17] Ward, frontispiece, 6; "Domestic Gardening," *Annals of Horticulture* 1 (1846): 66.

[18] Williams, 168; Elisabeth Donaghy Garrett, *At Home: the American Family, 1750-1870* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1989), 83; Susan Stewart, *On Longing : Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 68.

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Rustic Luxuries

Despite the help that nurseries and florists provided to inept parlor gardeners, and the medical justifications for enjoying parlor plants in a purely visual, non-interactive way, the fact that gardening required some manual labor continued to evoke working-class associations with which the stereotypical parlor gardener was uncomfortable. They were afraid, according to Downing, "that there is something rustic, unfeminine and unrefined about an interest in country out-of-doors matters."[19] Portable plant stands and Wardian cases, both derived from working-class floristry, could serve the class-defined position that parlor gardening should have sentimental or artistic value. Other forms of parlor gardening similarly show assertions of class status through expensive materials and plants.

There were ways to demonstrate that a taste for the rustic, a subset of the picturesque idealization of rural poverty, was "the result of intention" rather than the necessity for economic compromise. Plain earthenware flower pots were too modest and pedestrian for the bourgeois parlor. Fancy ceramic pots or pot covers looked good but could be detrimental to the health of the plant. Clay pots provided a porous barrier that retained and released moisture. Placing clay pots within ornamental containers was a moderately successful solution. Photographs from two Baltimore houses circa 1910 show faux pas that would have plagued earlier parlor gardeners as well. In one, a large ceramic jardiniere awkwardly holds two palms, each potted in a clay pot. These should have been at least concealed with a sphagnum moss to produce an even cover (fig. 43). In J. B. Noel Wyatt's library, a white latticed ornamental

[19] Andrew Jackson Downing, "On Feminine Taste in Rural Affairs," *Hort.* 3 (Apr. 1849): 454.

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container is too low to cover more than half of the clay pot placed within it. These ineffectual attempts to dress up potted plants demonstrate a lack of real interest in gardening.[20]

In Jane Webb Loudon's monograph on parlor gardening, the same that sent readers to London florist's shops while advocating gardening as occupational reform, she recommended that "rustic" baskets made of rough tree roots might be filled with exotic stove flowers like orchids, or "florists' flowers" like the auricula (fig. 44).[21] These flowers were carefully cultivated for specimen perfection; they were meant to be looked at closely. Rustic plant accessories, when built with artificial materials, often reveal painstaking symmetry of design, as seen on a turn-of-the-century ceramic terrarium/aquarium embellished with faux knots (fig. 45). One concerned about social status set an expensive plant in an ornate and regularized rustic planter to insure the appearance of refinement and expense while simultaneously referencing picturesque rusticity.

Vines were explicitly described as sharing the picturesque aesthetic of the English cottage. Like ornamental vines trained to grow over the ramshackle cottages in

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[20] For photograph of two earthenware pots in ceramic jardiniere, see Wayne Gibson, photographer, Brooklandwood/Emerson House, Baltimore County, Maryland, c.1910; For photograph of earthenware pot in latticed jardiniere, see Wayne Gibson, photographer, J. B. Noel Wyatt House, Baltimore, Maryland, c.1910. Both images from reference collection "Decorative Arts Photographic Collection," Winterthur Museum.

[21] Jane Webb Loudon, *Ladies' Mag.* 1 (London: William Smith, 1842): 98- 101, 147-48; For the same sentiment, see also An Amateur, New York, "A Few Words on Rustic Arbours," *Hort.* 4 (Jan. 1850): 320-21. Loudon's *Gardening for Ladies* and *Companion to the Flower Garden* were edited for an American audience by Andrew Jackson Downing, (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1843).

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England, parlor vines shared the function of concealing views of poverty. Trained to grow like window drapes, ornamental vines shielded unwanted views of backlots, brick walls, and poorer neighbors. By 1869 Catharine Beecher, addressing a middle-class readership, noticed that ivy's usefulness as room decoration was "beginning to be generally acknowledged" (figs. 45). In the 1870s, another author explained that hanging baskets, often used for growing vines, "were in fashion in 1860, but after a year or two they were as common in the tenement of the mechanic as in the palaces of Fifth Avenue. They gave way to the more expensive rustic stand or Wardian case, which being less readily imitated by people of limited means, is likely to continue longer in fashion."[22] It should not be surprising that the people of means didn't like to be bested by their poorer neighbors, who may have preceded them in this horticultural fashion.

Unlike the previous chapters in this dissertation, "From Weavers' Floristry to Ladies' Parlor Gardening" has spanned the last three-quarters of the 1800s and freely jumped between British and American references. The footnotes will show that many of the books and periodical articles were first published in Britain, and then quoted, reprinted, or edited for U.S. readers. It was by noticing the consequent repetition of concerns, practices, and interpretations that led me first to question parlor gardening's claims of anti-materialistic moral value.

An investigation of urban parlor gardening acquainted me with the

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[22] C. Beecher and H. B. Stowe, *American Woman's Home*, 96; Unidentified author, quoted in Frances Lichten, *Decorative Art of Victoria's Era* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), 160; William Seale, *The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917*, 2nd. ed., rev. and enl. (Walnut Creek, Ca.: AltaMira Press, 1995), 36-9; E. A. Maling, *The Indoor Gardener* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863), 238-9.

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predominance of British horticulturists and horticultural texts in the United States gardening community, and it quickly became clear that their significant influence on American gardening practices and ideas about nature had never really been acknowledged. The parlor gardening mantra, pairing and comparing cottager and lady gardeners, soon came to a dead end if cottagers were understood to be the early generations of American suburbanites with their Downing-inspired cottages. The cottagers in question were British cottagers whose gardening was encouraged by horticultural societies and allotment programs. Finally, the economic underpinnings of the floristry engaged in by Lancashire and Spitalfields weavers revealed itself to be as much a claim for artisanal independence as it was fodder for the long-lasting idealization of flower-gardening as profitable leisure and an ideal form of labor.

Parlor gardening borrowed many physical and rhetorical characteristics attributed to weavers' floristry, but urban ladies of leisure became known as terrible gardeners because they didn't understand, couldn't or wouldn't do the work. Exotics and florists' flowers were difficult to grow and maintain, which made them fashionable, an appropriate rational recreation, and far too difficult for most amateurs. The taint of labor and poverty associated with gardening made the hobby problematic unless it could happen within the frames of aesthetic appreciation and luxury consumption. Unlike working-class florists who had to master cultivation or go without flowers, when fashionable ladies found the floristry too difficult, they could turn to nurseries and florists, who profited from this failed variation of horticulture as labor reform. Eben E. Rexford, the garden columnist for *Ladies Home Journal* advised his readers in 1886: "It never 'pays' to try to grow exotics in an ordinary living room. By that, I mean that it is never satisfactory. The attempt is pretty sure to end in failure.

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Confine yourself to such kinds as you know can be grown there, and let the florists who have all the conveniences for plant-growing grow the exacting kinds."[23]

[23] Eben E. Rexford, "Talks about Flowers," *Ladies Home Journal* 3 (July 1886): 9.

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Conclusion: How Gardening Pays

In nineteenth-century transatlantic culture, high-maintenance floral displays were interpreted as wasteful or conversely as a healthy disregard for utility and financial profit. The latter could be twisted into a statement of anti-materialism, frequently phrased explicitly as a trade of cash for social, mental, moral and physical health; these were the ways in which flower gardening "paid."[1] This sentiment spanned the continents and the century, taking on new connotations for multiple audiences but always retaining an underlying interest in actual financial profit.

English agricultural reformer and nurseryman William Cobbett wrote in his 1821 *The American Gardener*, "For my part, as a thing to keep and not to sell; as a thing, the possession of which is to give me pleasure, I hesitate not a moment to prefer the plant of a fine carnation to a gold watch set with diamonds." In response, a reader was moved to write in the margins of his copy: "doubtful."[2] Being a nurseryman, it was possibly true that Cobbett would prize a carnation plant (one of the florists' flowers) above all else. In addition to the effort that might have gone into hybridizing, raising, maintaining, and propagating the flower, at the right moment, a carnation might even be as monetarily valuable as a gold watch. Labor-intensive plants could be very

[1] Thomas Meehan, "How Horticulture Pays," *The Gardener's Monthly* 2 (Feb 1860): 51-52; "Window Green-House," *Hort.* 4 (Jan. 1850): 303-4, first published in *Beck's Florist* (London).

[2] William Cobbett, *The American Gardener* (London: Published by C. Clement, 1821), paragraph #6. Marginalia by "Mansfield."

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expensive. Did the reader know this, or were his doubts directed towards the comparison of durable portable property to an evanescent product of nature?

The multiple meanings implied by Cobbett's statement and his reader's response would have also been typical of British weavers' floristry. Observers and horticultural reform sponsors wanted to believe that a worker happy in his garden, tending flowers only for his own amusement, wouldn't fight for independence from oppressive wage labor. From the weavers' perspective, the two desires could be complementary; tending flowers could be the way to earn money and sustain independence outside of the oppressive industrial system. It is no coincidence that the Spitalfields silkweavers who excelled at floristry were also some of the most violent agitators against change in the textile trade. For the weavers, cultivating florists' flowers was never about nostalgia for a rural past. It was a functional part of the working-class desire to hold on to an urban pre-industrial lifestyle. The extensive claims that gardening was a cure for materialism were created by British landowners and manufacturers who, themselves longing for the vanishing feudal institutions of cottagers' deference and gentrys' noblesse oblige, hoped horticultural reform would quell labor disruptions.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the business of horticulture increased substantially. Hobbyist gardeners interested in going professional found support and connections to potential consumers through the horticultural press, societies, and flower shows. Professional horticulture allowed for the possibility of independence in determining one's working conditions. That this was a goal is demonstrated by the common career pattern of estate gardeners and flower show

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competitors who aspired to own their own nurseries. Rather than become factory workers, artisans with obsolete skills turned to floristry, making a full-time business of their profitable leisure.

At the end of the century, American sociologist Thorstein Veblen compared house plants to furniture and clothing that were considered beautiful because they were expensive. Plants that could be "cultivated with relative ease . . . are rejected as vulgar by those people who are better able to pay for expensive flowers. . . ."[26] True throughout the 1800s, this preference intersected with contemporary ideas of social, mental, and physical health in such a way that idle lady plant collectors were frequently paired with and compared to skillful cottager florists. By exploiting the idleness and acquisitiveness of rich women who ineffectively imagined themselves picturesquely reformed via parlor gardening, professional horticulturists did secure work that paid, in money and in the satisfaction of independence. Representing women gardeners as "idle ladies" was in itself a marketing device that was reproduced by the difficulties of tending exotics and hybrids combined with the ways that Wardian cases and plant stands physically influenced the relationship of plant and gardener.

In all of these circumstances, there are signs that flower gardening's most valuable quality was its power to structure how a person (one's self or another) spent his or her time. The physical characteristics and demands of the plants themselves were integral to the formation and transmission of their cultural functions and meanings. Whether gardening was one's leisure or labor, or both intertwined, the

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[26] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899; NY: Viking Press, Inc., 1953), 98.

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gardener was in an interactive relationship with a dynamic organic object that couldn't be mechanically processed or forced to conform to an industrial schedule.

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Fig. 1 Pancrace Bessa, *Pot of Auriculas*, watercolor with traces of pencil, 1817. Collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. PD.199-1973

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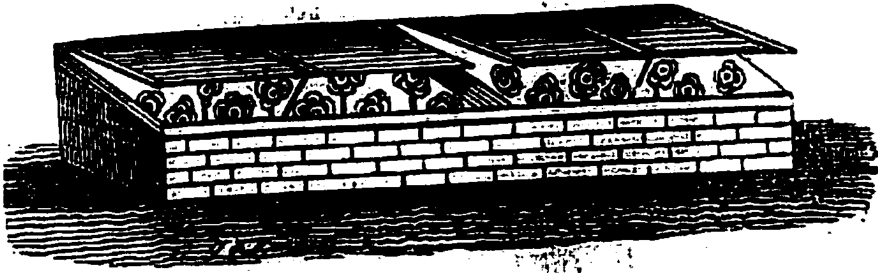

Fig. 2 *Pit for Sheltering Auriculas*, from "Culture of the Auricula," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 1 (1834): 10.

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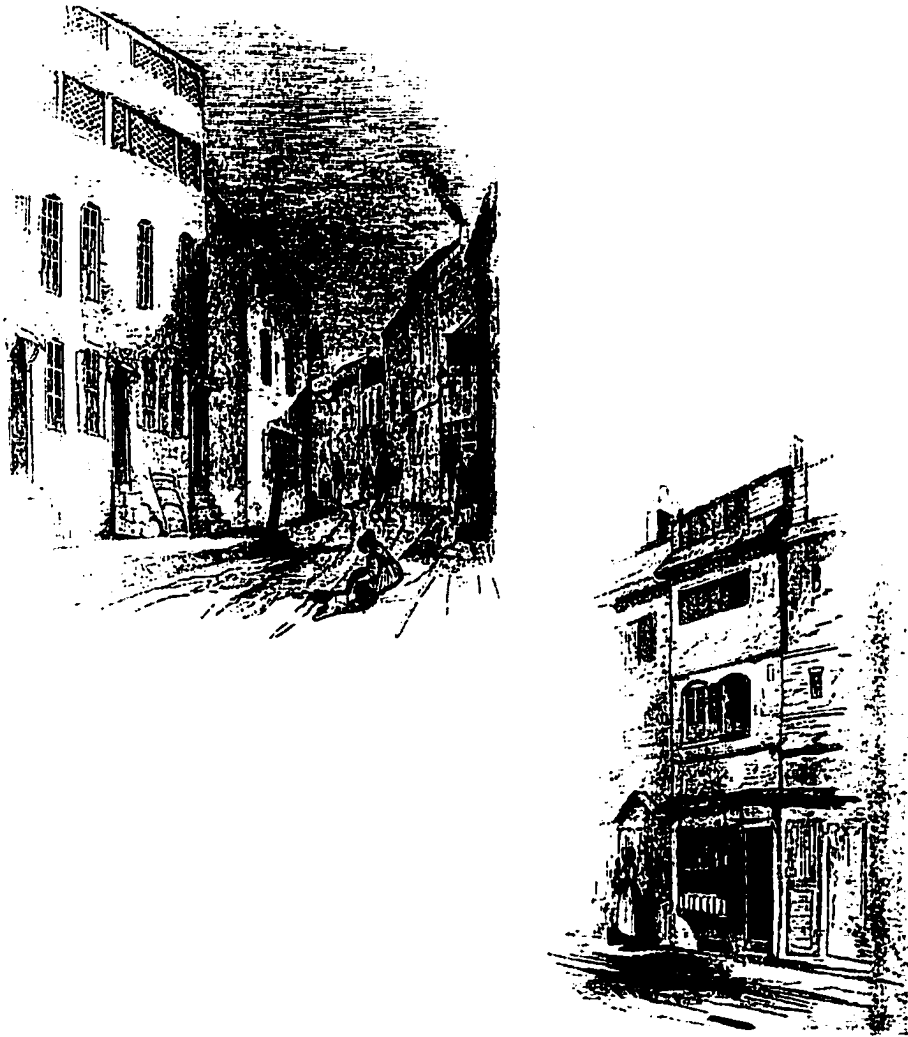

Fig. 3 *Pelham Street, Spitalfields* and *House in Booth Street, Spitalfields*, woodcuts, from Knight's *History of London*, 1842. Reprinted from Sir Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development* (London: Drane's Danegeld House, 1921): Plate VIII.

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Fig. 4 *Weavers' Houses in Menotti Street, Bethnal Green*, photograph, from Sir Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development* (London: Drane's Danegeld House, 1921): Plate X.

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Fig. 5 *Hand Loom Workshop at Foleshill, Coventry*, photograph, from Sir Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development* (London: Drane's Danegeld House, 1921): Plate XV.

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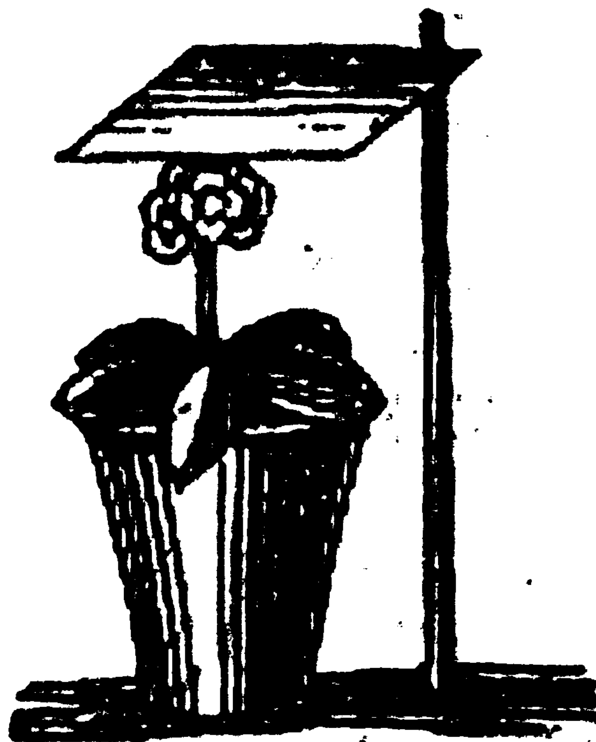

Fig. 6 *Shade used by Florists for Auriculas and Polyanthuses*, from "Culture of the Auricula," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 1 (1834): 10.

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Fig. 7 *Spitalfields Silk-weavers*, 1861. By permission of The British Newspaper Library.

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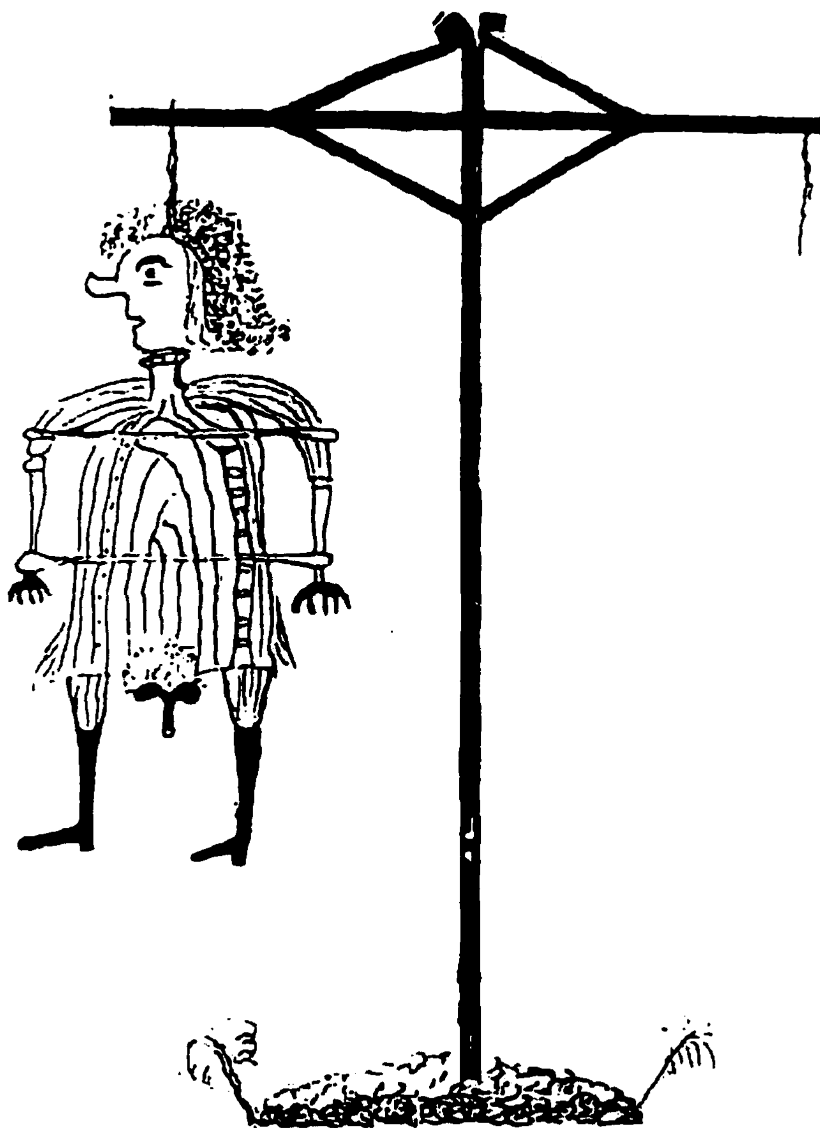

Fig. 8 Isaac Emmerton, *Effigy of Reverend C.J. Cottrell, JP*, drawing, 1800. Collection of Public Record Office, King's Bench (KB) 1.30, Part Two, 41 Geo. III, no. 1, enclosed with affadavit of the Reverend Thomas Lane, JP, 17 November 1800.

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Fig. 9 *Panoramic view, shewing the situation intended for the mansion at Bayham,* and *View, shewing Bayham Abbey as proposed to be built.* Hand-tinted prints based on watercolors by Humphrey Repton in Repton's Red Book for Bayham Abbey, from *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the late Humphrey Repton*, John Claudius Loudon, ed., (London: Printed for the editor and sold by Longman & Co., 1840), 305. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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Fig. 10 ***Principal view from the house at Blaize Castle,*** "which is considered too somber for the character of a villa," and the same view "as enlivened by a cottage in the distance." Hand-tinted prints based on watercolors by Humphrey Repton, from ***The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the late Humphrey Repton,*** John Claudius Loudon, ed., (London: Printed for the editor and sold by Longman & Co., 1840), 256-7. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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ore judged, that the best rule for the dimensions of the
olumns was rather less than the diameter of the oak; and this,

description, from the villa to the pigsty, with little point
arches, or battlements, to look like Gothic; and a Goth
dairy is now become as common an appendage to a place,
were formerly the hermitage, the grotto, or the Chine
pavilion. Why the dairy should be Gothic, when the hou
is not so, I cannot understand, unless it arises from that gre
source of bad taste, to introduce what is called a pretty thin
without any reference to its character, situation, or use
Even in old Gothic cottages we never see the sharp-pointe
arch, but often the flat arch of Henry VIII., and perha
there is no form more picturesque for a cottage than buildin
of that date, especially as their lofty perforated chimneys n
only contribute to the beauty of the outline, but tend
remedy the curse of the poor man's fire-side, a smoky hou
[see fig. 90].

There are few situations in which any building, wheth
of rude materials or highly-finished architecture, can be pr
perly introduced without some trees near it. Yet the summ
of a naked brow, commanding views in every direction, m

Fig. 11 *Doric portico*, *Gothic cottage*, and *Rustic thatched hovel*, hand-tinted prints, from *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the late Humphrey Repton*, John Claudius Loudon, ed., (London: Printed for the editor and sold by Longman & Co., 1840), 254-5. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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Fig. 12 O. Jewett, sculptor [illustrator], *Duplex cottage* with square roof placed amongst trees to maximize scenic effect, from "Designs for the Erection of Ornamental Cottages, on Gentlemen's Estates," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 1 (1834): 253.

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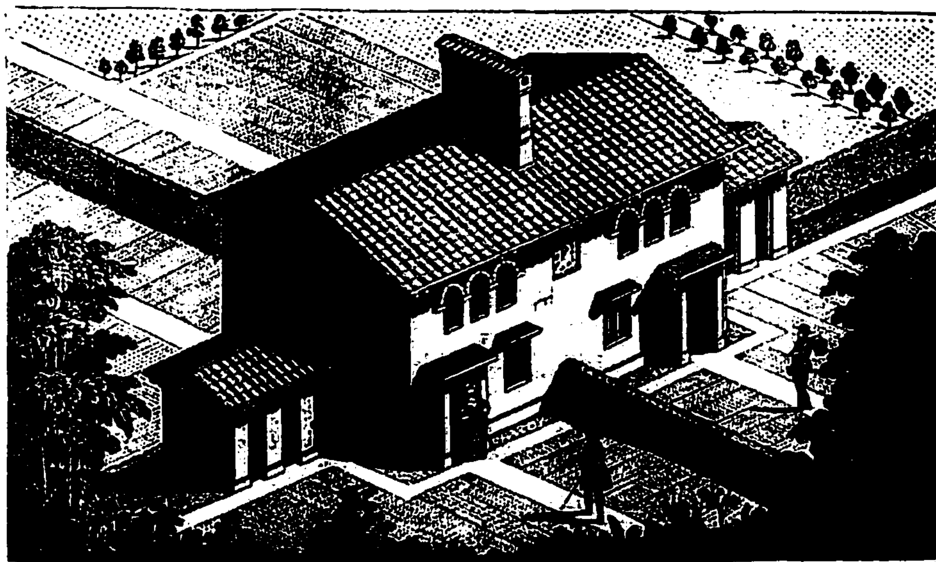

Fig. 13 C. J. Fleming, illustrator, *Quadruplex cottage*, from "Designs for the Erection of Ornamental Cottages, on Gentlemen's Estates," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 1 (1834): 254.

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Fig. 14 Thomas Watkinson, illustrator, and S. Holden, lithographer, *Tigridia conchiflora Watkinsoni,* hand-tinted lithograph, from *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 14 (1848): facing page 51. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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Fig. 15 *Loasa lateritia*, hand-tinted lithograph, from *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 5 (1838): facing page 77. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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Fig. 16 S. Holden, delineator and lithographer, *Loasa Pentlandica*, hand-tinted lithograph, from *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 9 (1843): facing page 7. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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Fig. 17 S. Holden, delineator and lithographer, *Loasa Herbertii*, hand-tinted lithograph, from *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 9 (1843): facing page 269. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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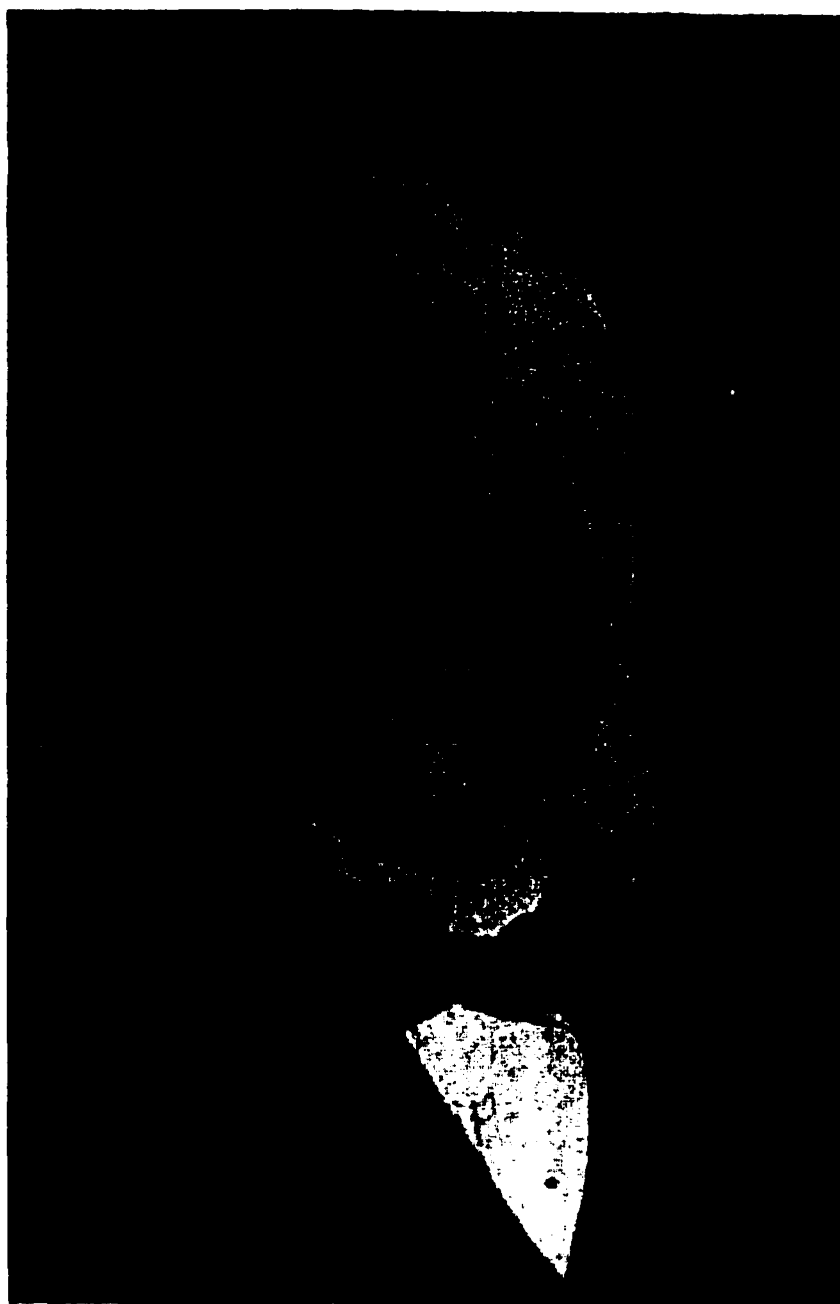

Fig. 18 *Thomas Meehan*, photograph. Reprinted from James Boyd, *A History of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1827-1927* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Society, 1929), facing page 396. Courtesy of The McLean Library, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia.

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Fig. 19 Miss Chase, photographer, *Part of [Germantown] Botany Club*, June 1884. Collection of Germantown Historical Society. Anna Hazen Howell is seated on the right side of the second step, facing left and holding her hat in her lap.

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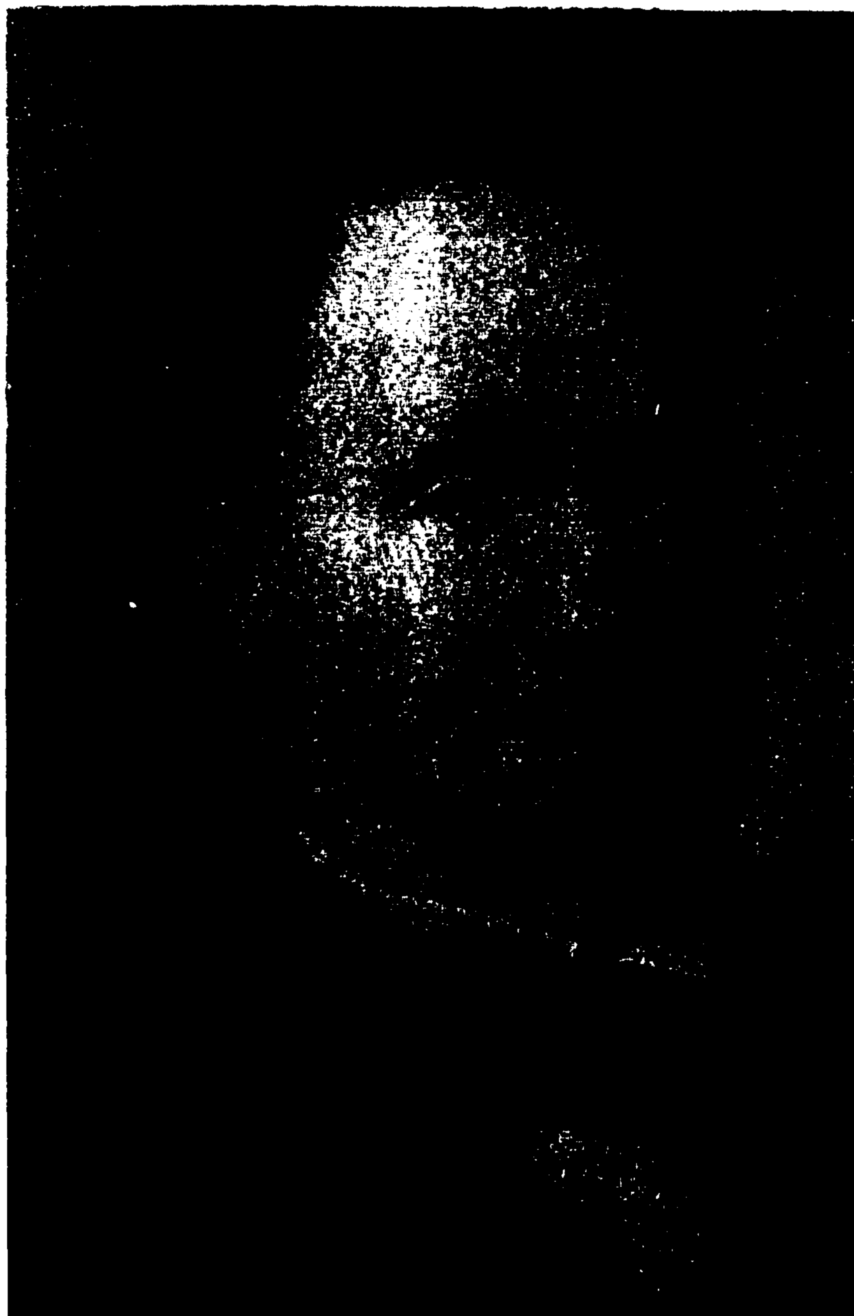

Fig. 20 *Robert Buist*, photograph. Reprinted from James Boyd, *A History of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1827-1927* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Society, 1929), facing page 396. Courtesy of The McLean Library, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia.

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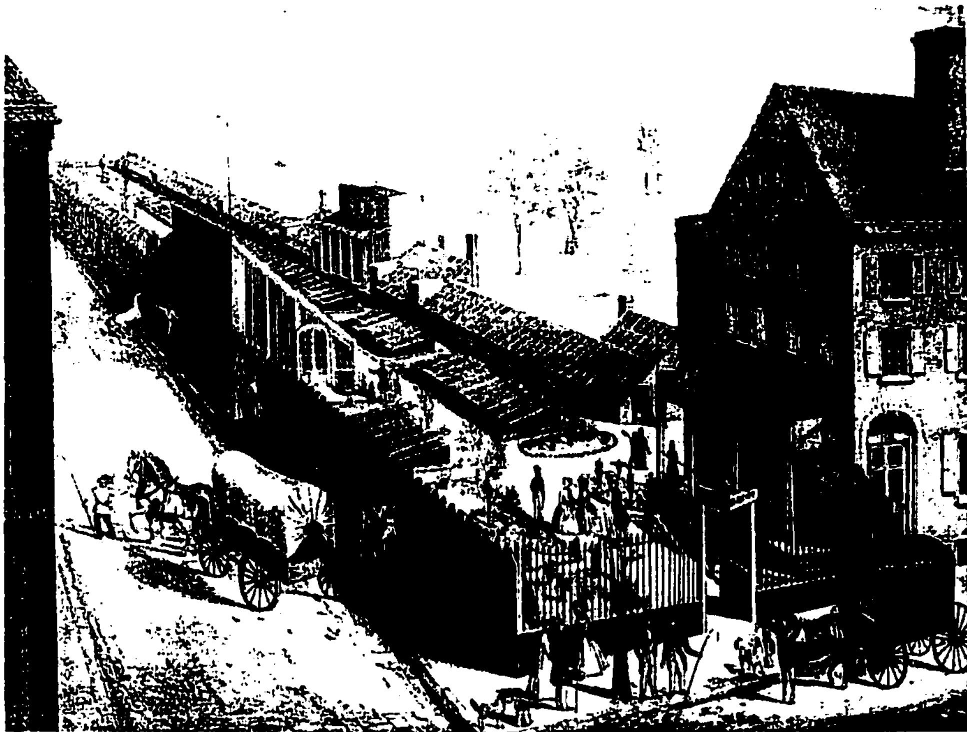

Fig. 21 Alfred Hoffy, artist, and Wagner and McGuigan, printers, *View of Robert Buist's City Nursery and Greenhouses*, 1846. Courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia.

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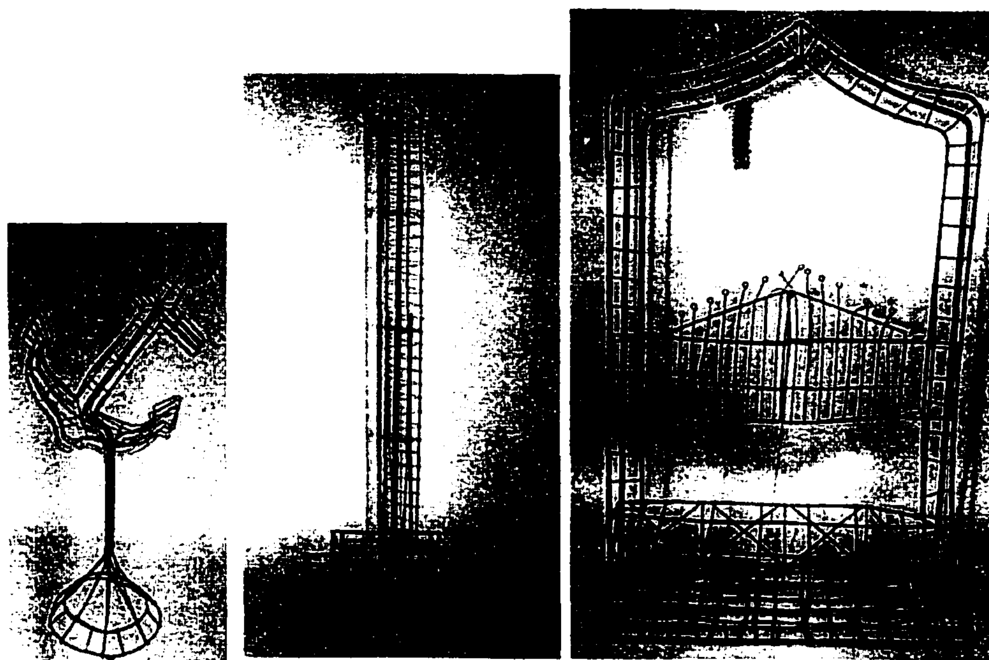

Fig. 22 *Florists' frames*, metal wire, c. 1900. a. *Anchor on stand*, 24"H x 11" 71/2"W, (HSD 11A); b. *Broken Column*, 48"H x 17" x 17"W (HSD #12); c. *Gates Ajar*, 30"H x 15"W (HSD OH.GF.WC.1979.24), Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division. Florist's frames from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century give an indication of how the floral devices at horticultural shows looked. The designs seen here would all have been intended for funereal use. Like the picturesque landscaped nineteenth-century "rural cemeteries," these devices, and their flower show predecessors referenced eighteenth-century landscape aesthetics, specifically allegory, literary reference, and folly. The broken column is a folly tradition used for cemetery monuments; the anchor is an icon for faith; *Gates Ajar* refers to the popular novel by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps of the same name, wherein heaven resembles the bourgeois domestic ideal.

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Fig. 23 *Pelargonium* with the qualifications of a florist's flower, as cultivated by Robert Buist, from "Florist's Flowers," *Gardener's Monthly* 4 (1862): 177.

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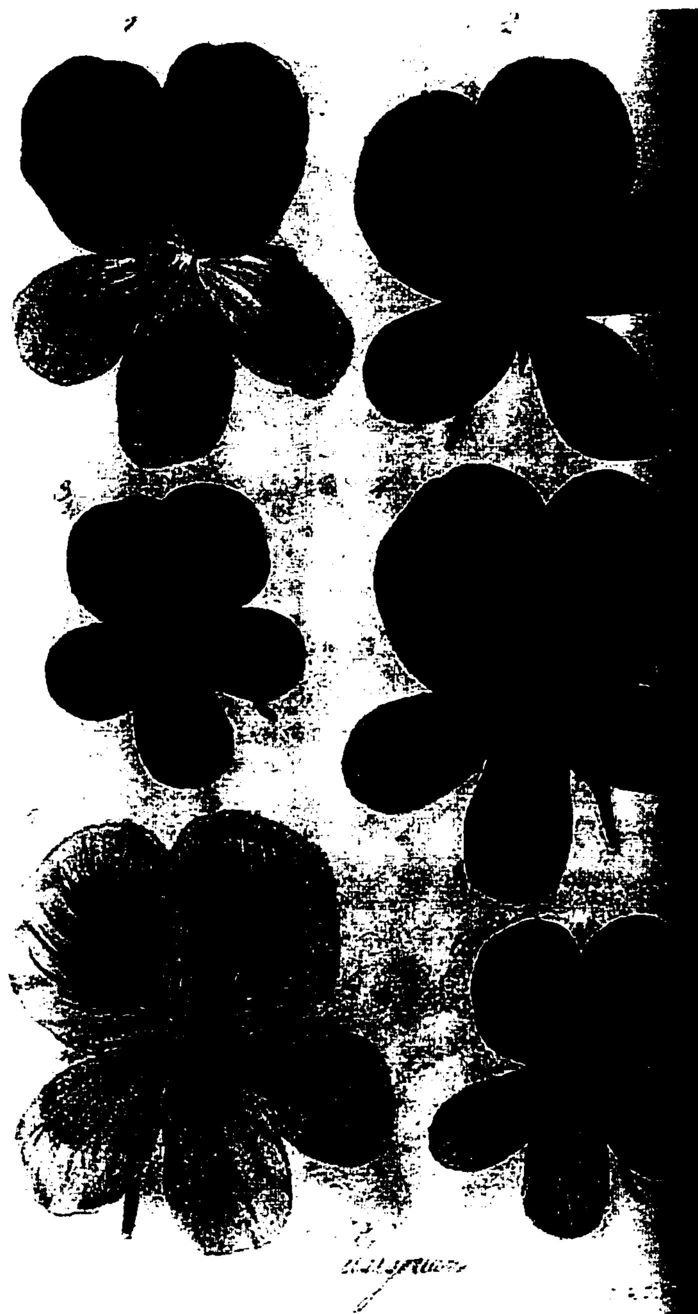

Fig. 24 *Pelargonium hybrids*: 1. *Rosa mundi*; 2. *Magnum Bonum*; 3. *Dennis's Queen Adelaide*; 4. *Bancho*; 5. *Habranthum*; 6. *Smut*. Hand-tinted lithograph by J. & J. Parkin, sculptors, after original life drawing provided by William Denis & Co., nurserymen of Chelsea, from *The Floricultural Cabinet* 3 (June 1835): plate 34. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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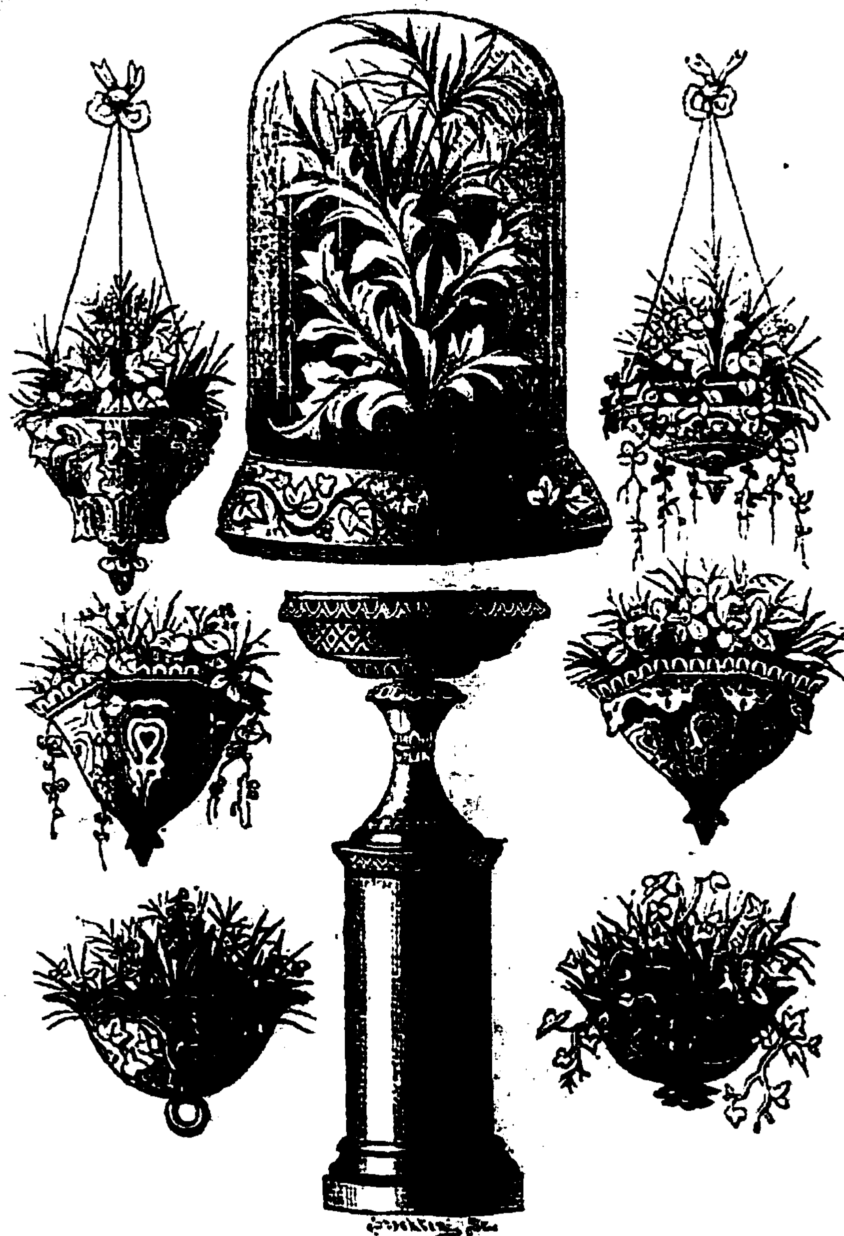

Fig. 25 Stockton, illustrator, ***Patterns of ornamental porcelain baskets and vases for trailing plants*** selected from collection exhibited by Henry A. Dreer at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society on March 18, 1862. *Gardener's Monthly* 4 (May 1862): 131.

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Fig. 26 *Flowers for rooms and window-cases* including azaleas, tulips, hyacinths, cinerarias, camellias, orchids, and arum. Hand-tinted lithograph based on Noel Humphreys' original life drawings of flowers at Veitch's nursery in Chelsea, March 1863. Frontispiece from Miss E. A. Maling, *The Indoor Gardener* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1863). Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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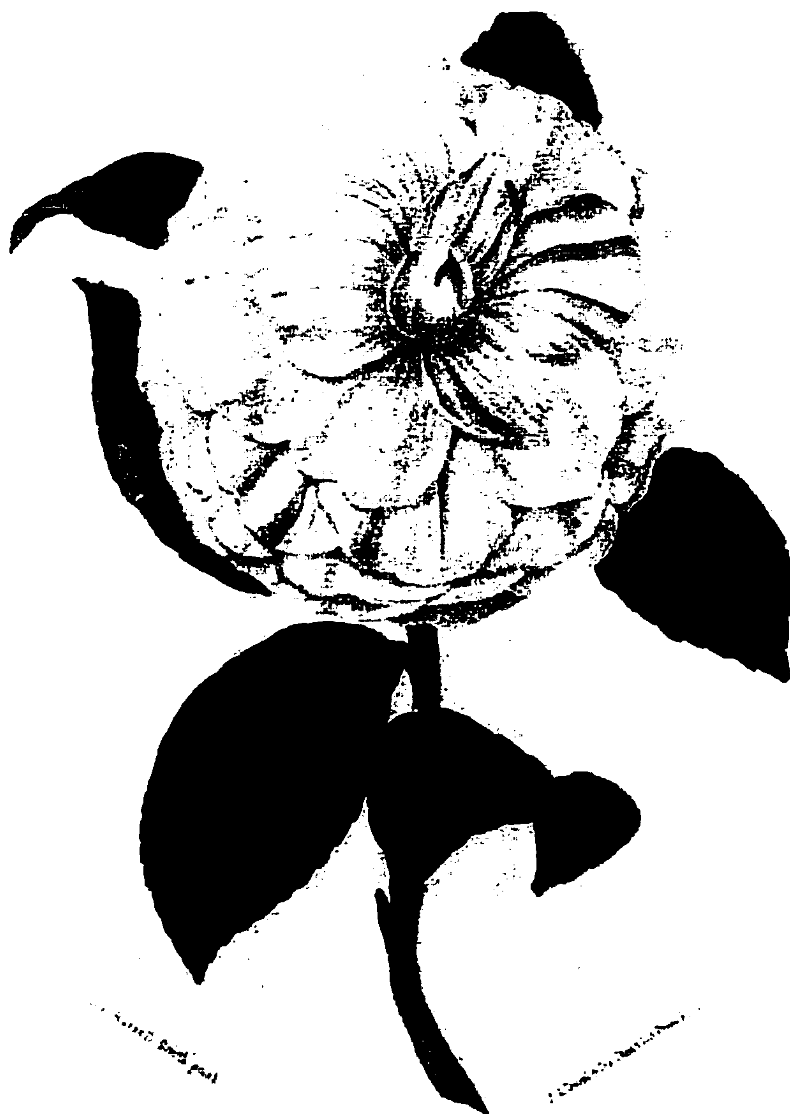

Fig. 27 *"Mrs. Cope" Camellia* raised from seed by John Sherwood, for sale in Philadelphia by Robert Buist and Mr. Ritchie of Kensington. Hand-tinted lithograph printed and colored by Peter S. Duval & Cos. steam lithograph press of Philadelphia, after original painting by Mrs. Russell Smith, from H.C.H., "Camellia--Mrs. Cope," *The Florist and Horticultural Journal* 2 (Jan 1853): facing page 1. Additional documentation from "Editorial Note," *The Florist and Horticultural Journal* 2 (Jan 1853): 23. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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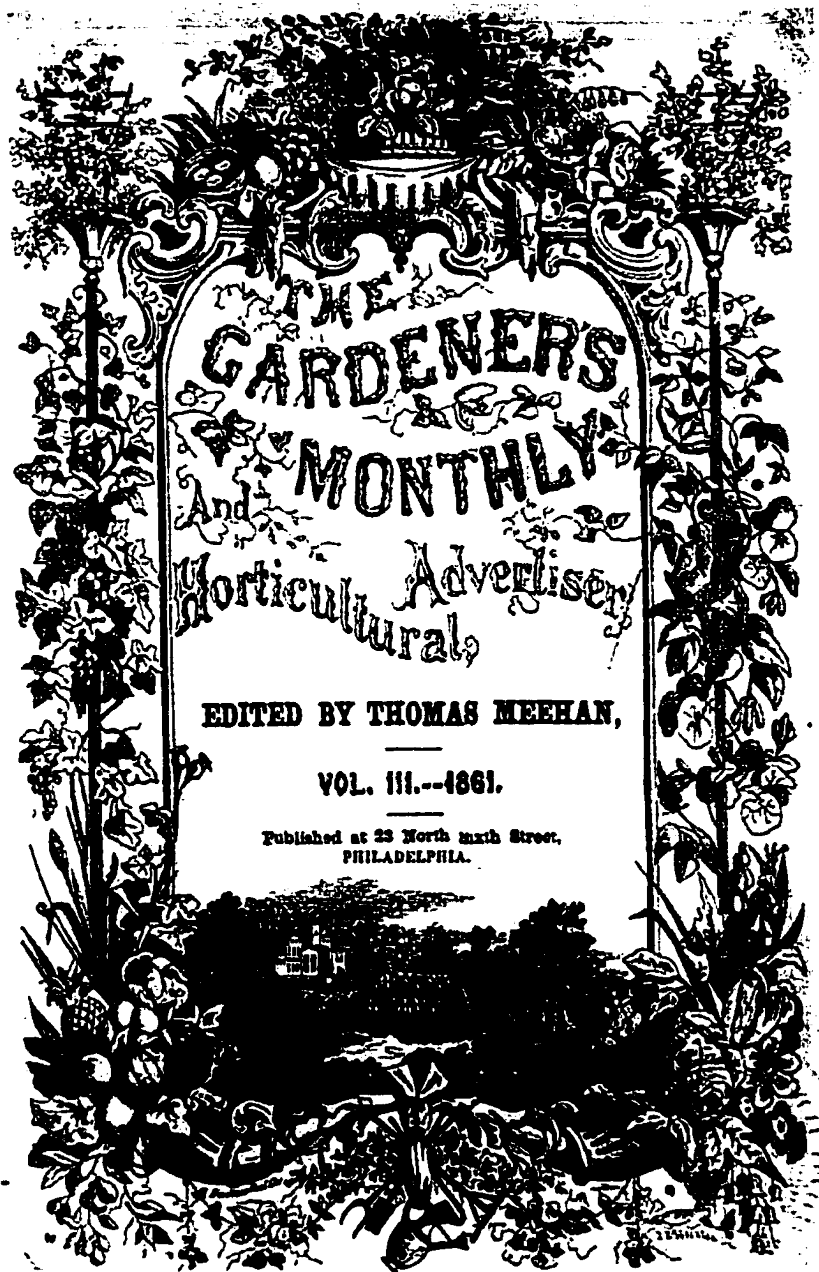

Fig. 28 *Frontispiece* from *Gardener's Monthly*, 3 (1861). Embossment in lower right corner shows that this volume was previously owned by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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Fig. 29 George Cruikshank, *May--'All A-Growing!'*, etching from *The Comic Almanack*, 1835-43.

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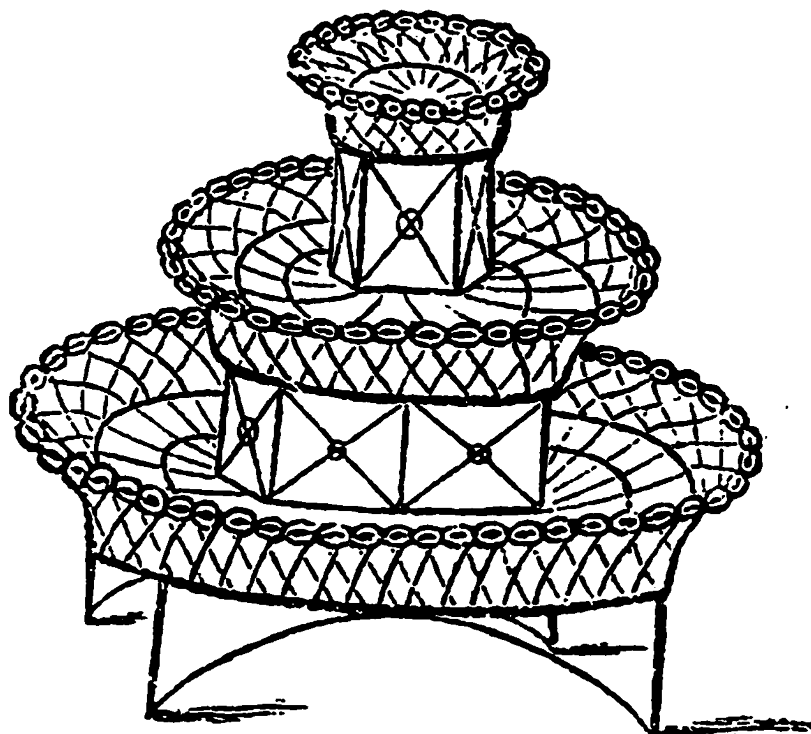

Fig. 30 *Wire Flower-Stand*, from Mrs.[Jane Webb] Loudon, *Gardening for ladies, and Companion to the flower-garden*, A. J. Downing, ed., 1st American ed., from the 3rd London ed., (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1843), 212, fig. 21.

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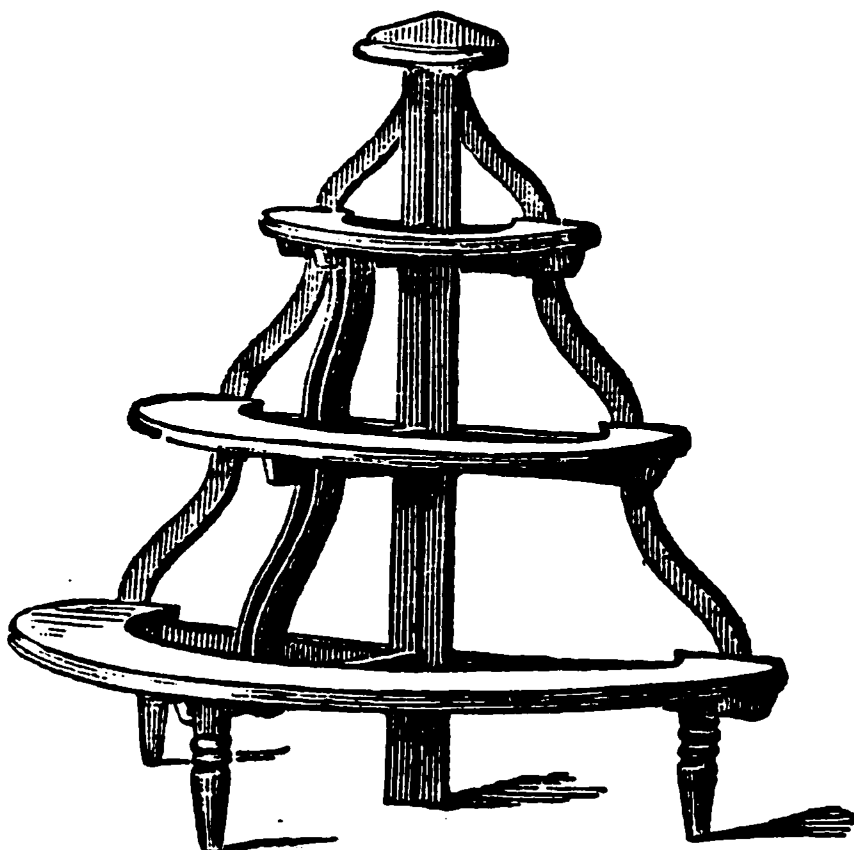

Fig. 31 *Folding Plant Stand*, from Peter Henderson, *Gardening for Pleasure* (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1887), 157, fig. 47.

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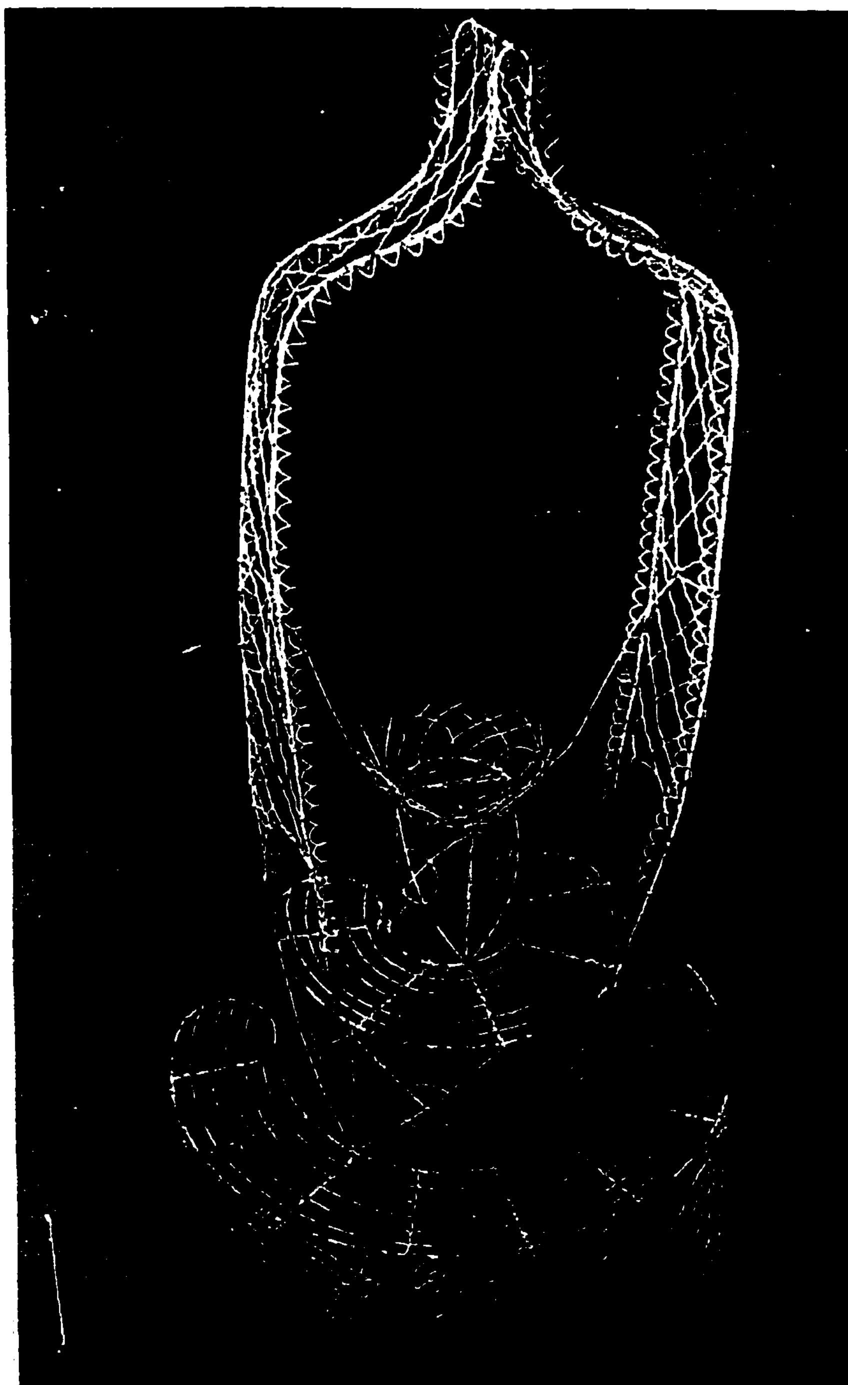

Fig. 32 *Wire Plant Stand*, Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division, OH.GF.1988.4

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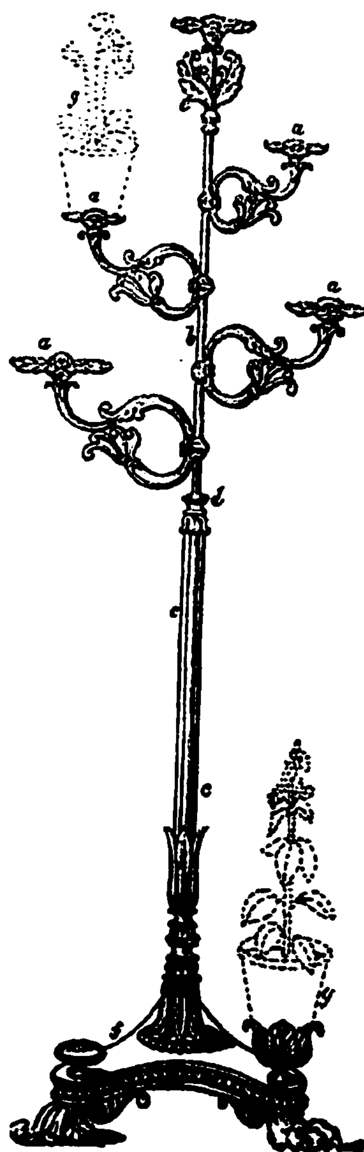

Fig. 33 Matthias Saul of Lancaster, designer, *Ornamental Flower-Stand*, from "Figure and Description of an Ornamental Flower-Stand," *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 2 (1836): 89.

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Fig. 34 *Plant Stand* with eight mobile arms, cast iron, 53" H. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division, 1984.2.

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Fig. 35 *Plant Stand* with nine mobile arms, cast iron, 45" H. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division, 1980.5.

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Fig. 36 *Wooden Plant Stand.* Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division, OH.GF.1983.13. Although this artifact bears a resemblance to Henderson's design (fig. 31), it is not collapsible.

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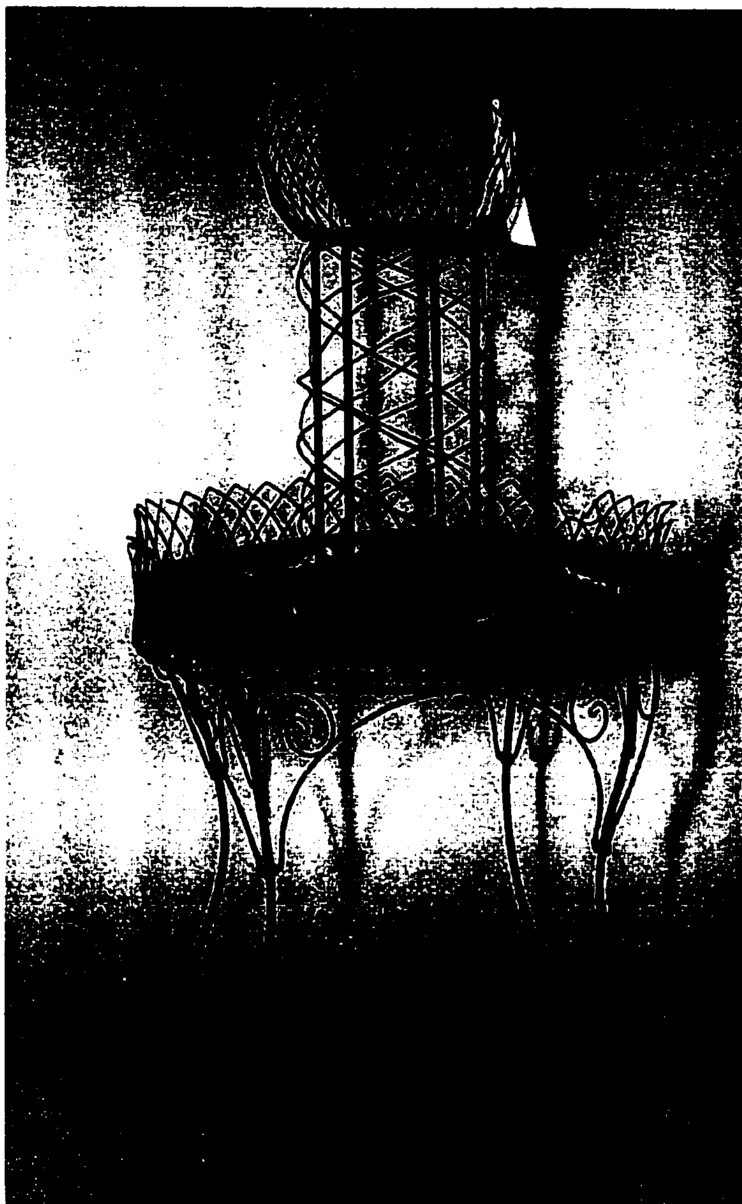

Fig. 37 *Wire Plant Stand*, Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division, 1979.34.

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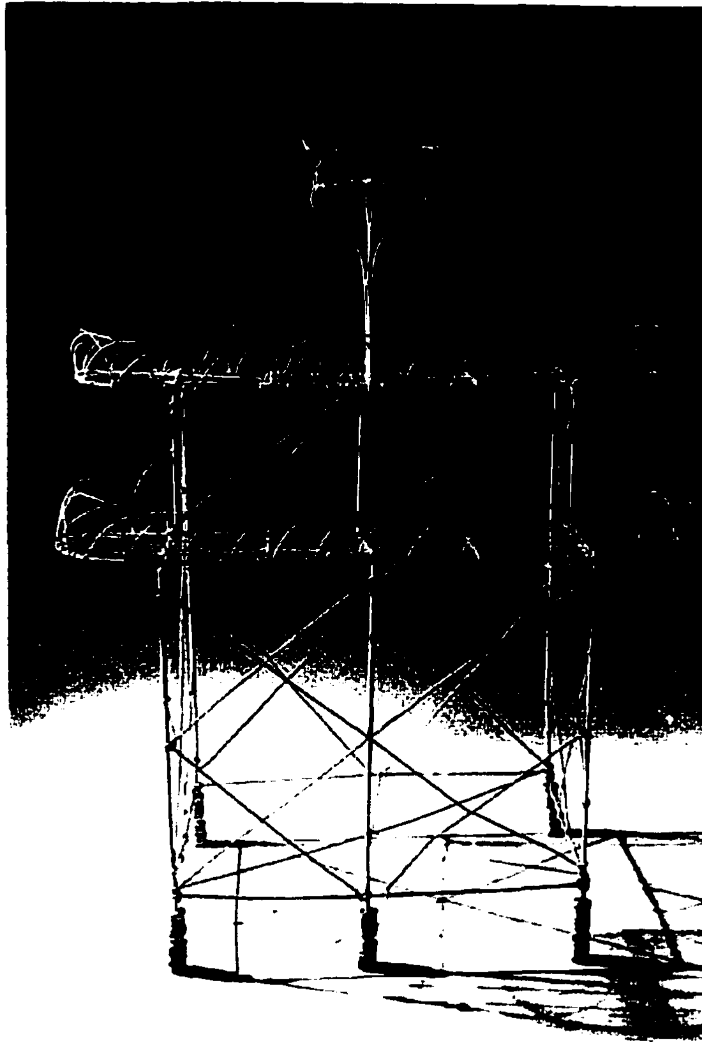

Fig. 38 *Wire Plant Stand*, **Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services**

Division,1979.15.

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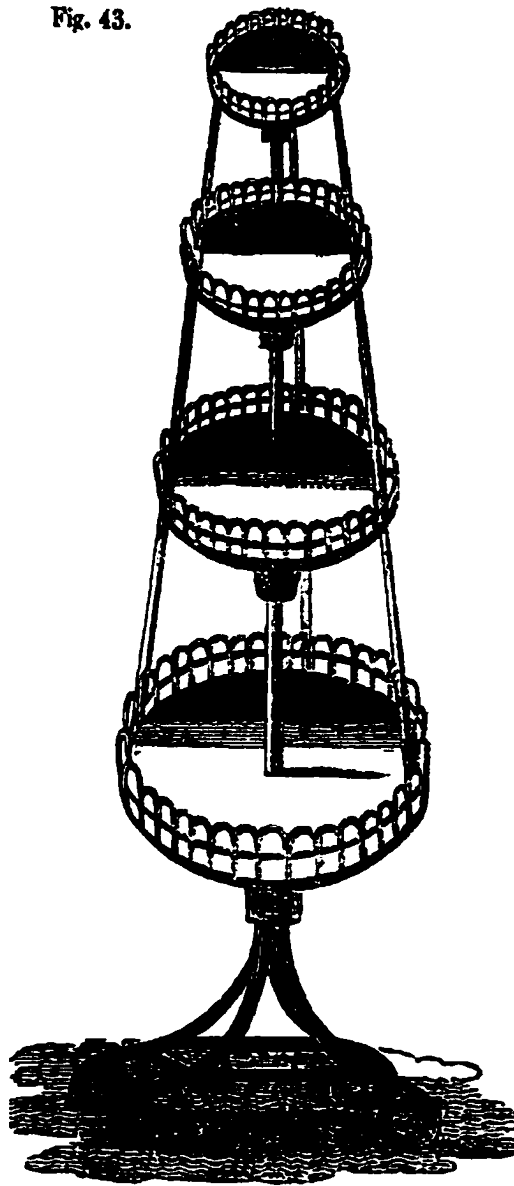

Fig. 39 *Rotating Flower-Stand*, from Mrs.[Jane Webb] Loudon, *Gardening for ladies, and Companion to the flower-garden*, A. J. Downing, ed., 1st American ed., from the3rd London ed., (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1843), 153, fig. 43.

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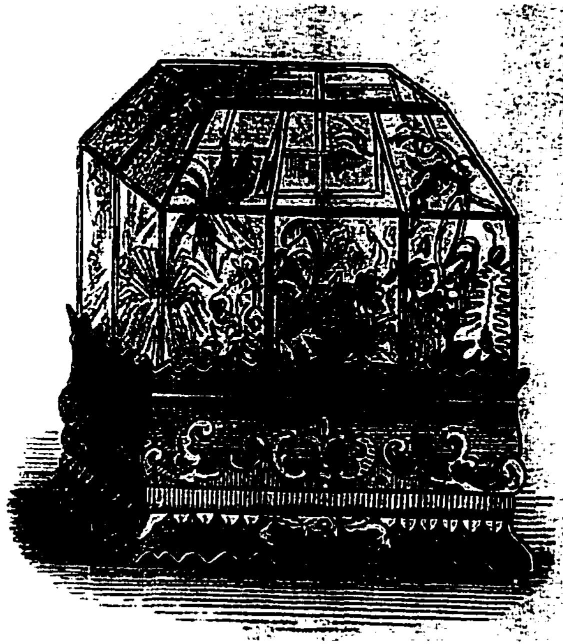

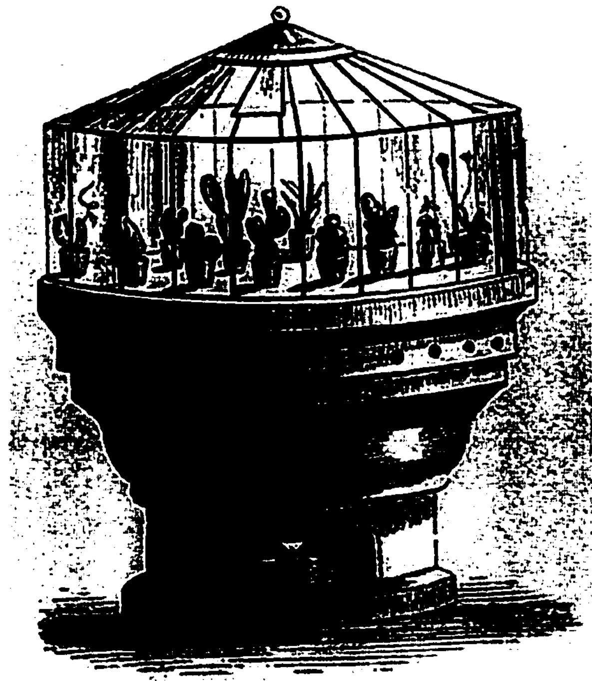

Fig. 40 *Cold Portable Greenhouse* and *Hot Portable Greenhouse,* from Cornelia J. Randolph, trans. and ed., *The Parlor Gardener: A Treatise on the House Culture of Ornamental Plants* (Boston, J. E. Tilton & Company, 1861), figs. 4-5.

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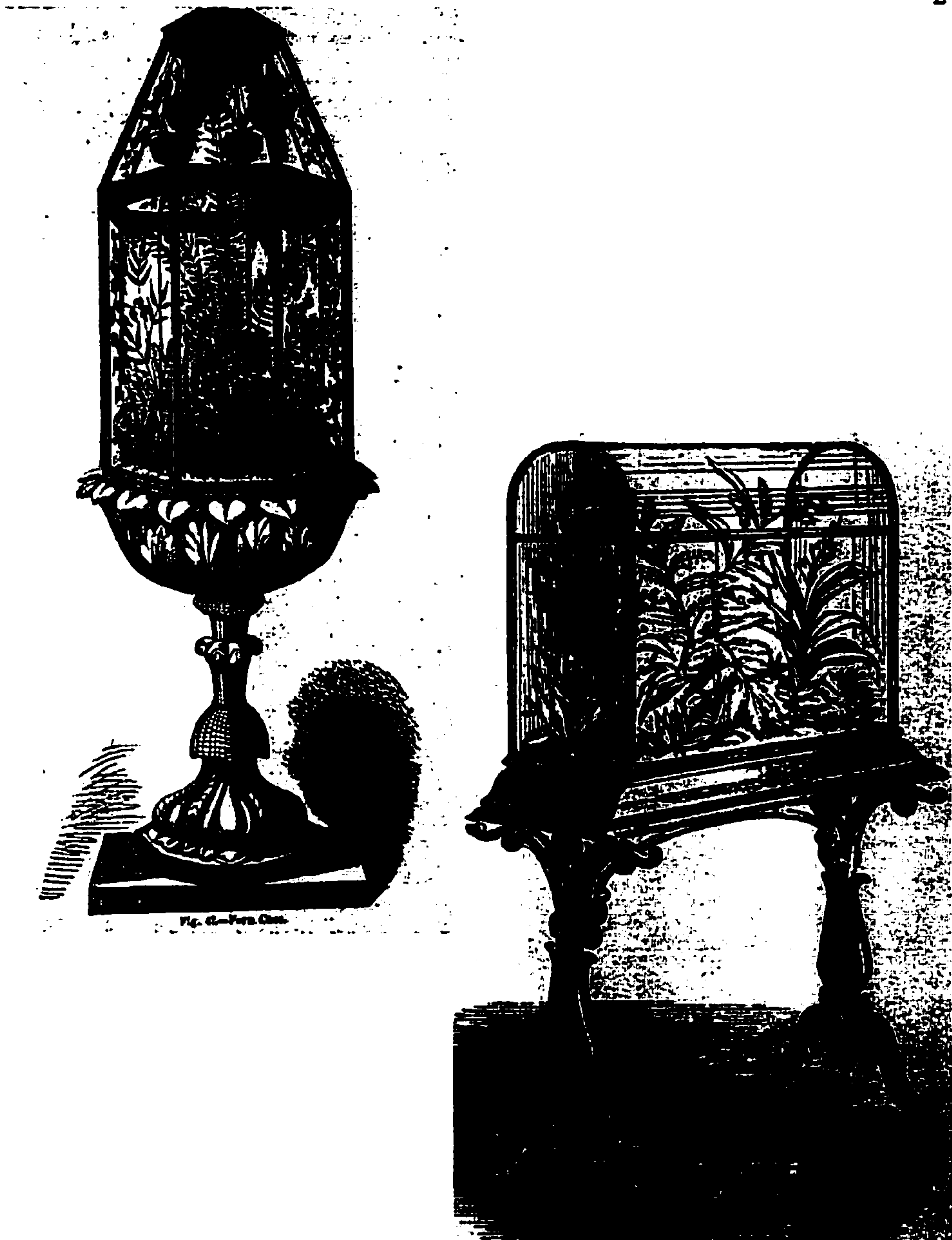

Fig. 41 *Fern Case* and ***Ornamental Fern Case with Stand***, from Henry T. Williams, ed., *Window Gardening: Devoted specially to the Culture of Flowers and Ornamental Plants for Indoor Use and Parlor Decoration*, 7th ed. (New York: H. T. Williams, 1874), 167, 172..

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Fig 42 *Wardian Case*, c.1900, 8 1/2"H x 21 1.2"L x 13 1/4"W. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division, OH.GF.1978.6.

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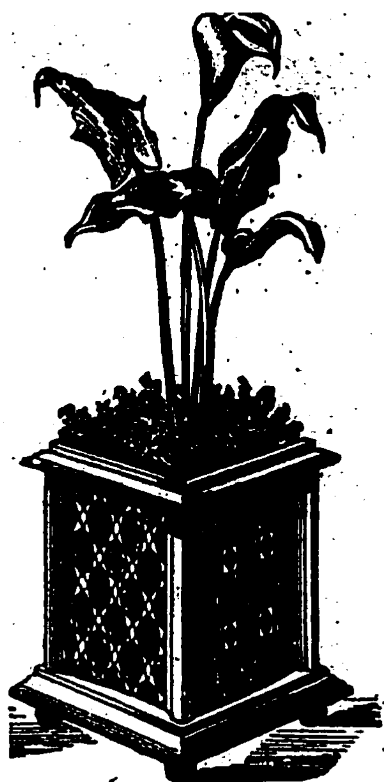

Fig. 29.

Fig. 30.

Fig. 43 *Jardinieres with sphagnum moss*, from Henry T. Williams, ed., *Window Gardening: Devoted specially to the Culture of Flowers and Ornamental Plants for Indoor Use and Parlor Decoration*, 7th ed., (New York: H. T. Williams, 1874), 60.

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Fig. 44 Stockton, illustrator, *Rustic Plant Stands*, from *Gardener's Monthly* 3 (1861).

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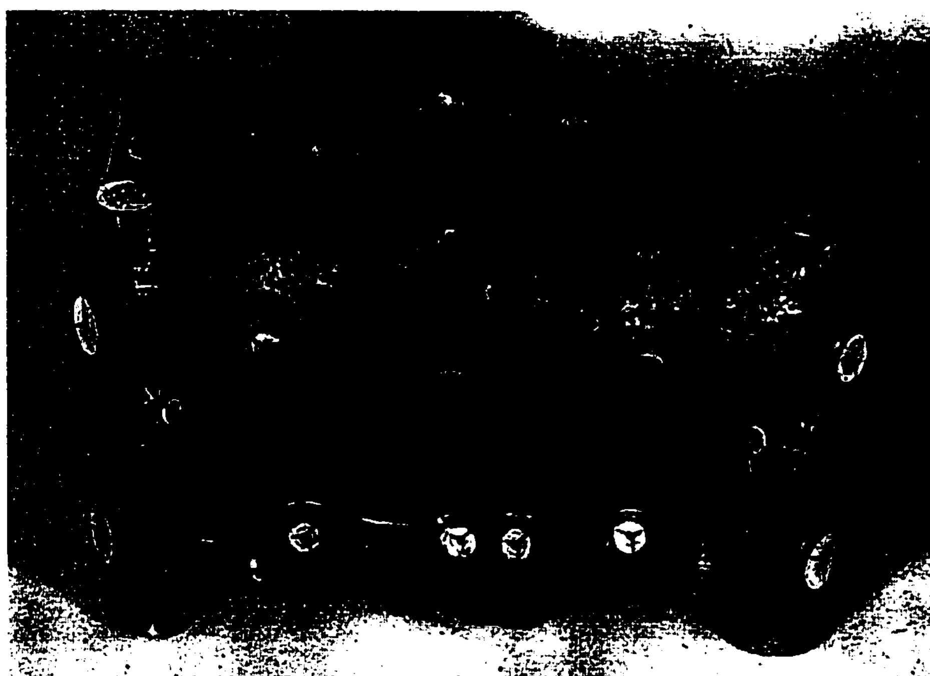

Fig. 45 *Rustic Aquarium/Terrarium*, glass and ceramic. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Horticulture Services Division, 1981.1.

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Fig. 46 *Window Garden*, from Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American woman's home: or, Principles of Domestic Science* (New York: J. B. Ford and Company, 1869), fig. 45.

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Abbreviations:

An. Hort.	*The Annals of Horticulture*
Flori. Cab.	*The Floricultural Cabinet, and Florist's Magazine*
Gard. Mag.	*The Gardener's Magazine, and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement*
Gard. Mon.	*The Gardener's Monthly*
Hort.	*The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*
Ladies' Mag.	*The Ladies Magazine of Gardening*
Mag. Hort.	*Magazine of Horticulture*
Paxton's	*Paxton's Magazine of Botany*
Phila. Florist.	*The Philadelphia Florist and Horticultural Journal.* The name of the periodical was changed to *The Florist and Horticultural Journal* after volume 1. For clarity, this magazine, under either title, is referenced as *Phila. Florist.*

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