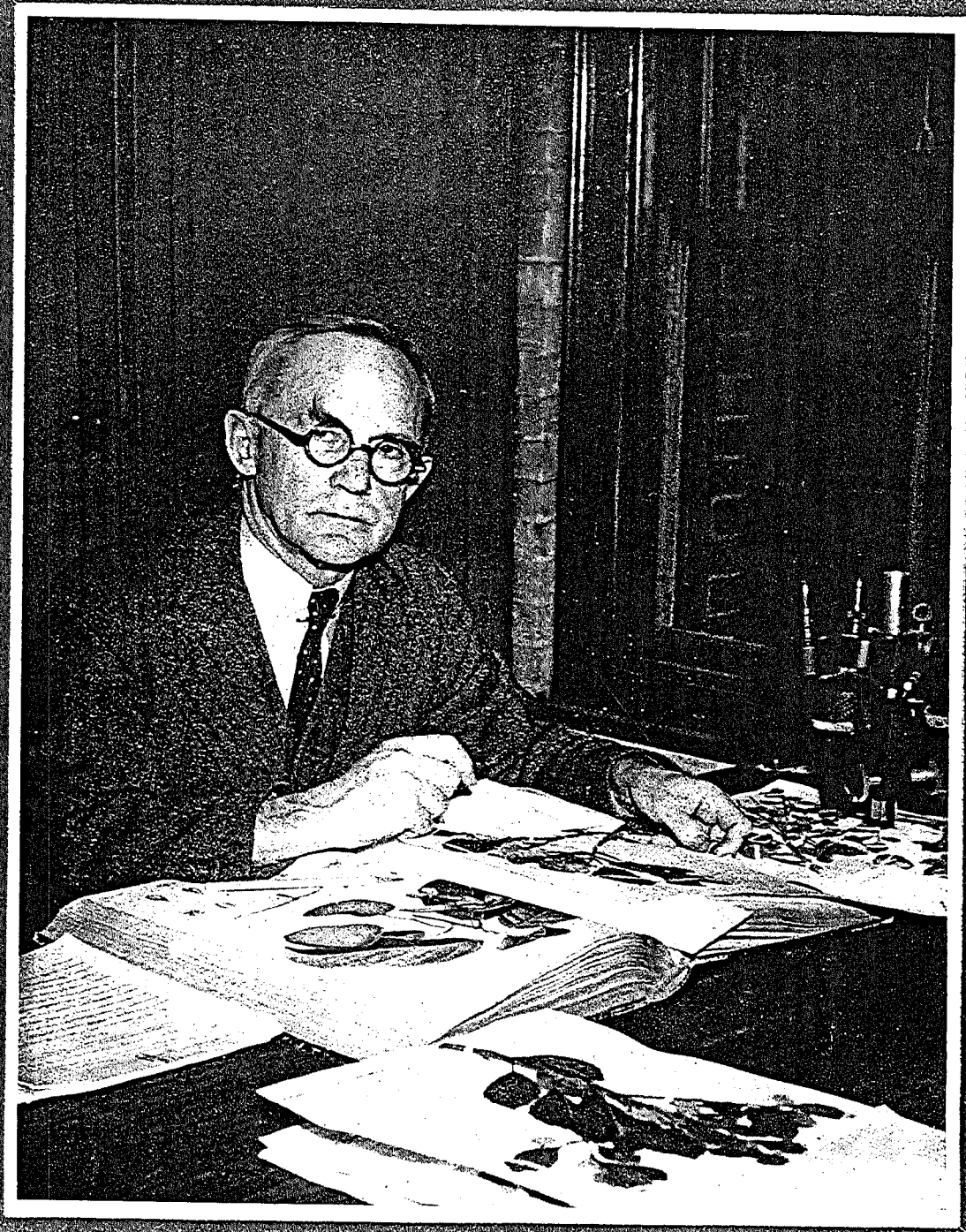


HARVARD ALUMNI BULLETIN



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HARVARD ALUMNI BULLETIN

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COVER: Elmer D. Merrill, S.D. Hon. '36, Arnold Professor of Botany and Administrator of Botanical Collections. *Photograph by William D. Tamberg.*

FRONTISPICE: Hurricane Timber on Harvard Pond, Harvard Forest, Petersham, Mass. From a photograph taken in 1939. Some 6,500,000 board feet of lumber were salvaged from the forest after the hurricane of September, 1938.

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Directors of the HARVARD BULLETIN, INC.: Joseph R. Hamlen, '04, *President*; G. Storer Baldwin, '21, *Treasurer*; Roger L. Scaife, '97; John Price Jones, '02; Nathan Perceles Jr., '04; Robert B. Choate, '20; Roy E. Larsen, '21.

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HARVARD ALUMNI BULLETIN

THE UNIVERSITY

☞ *Harvard's Botanical Empire*

FROM THE FOREST at Petersham, Mass., to the tropical gardens at Soledad, Cuba, range the nine separate institutes and collections of Harvard's botanical empire. One hundred and thirty-six years have witnessed its growth—a development from the seven acres of the Botanic Garden (1807) at the corner of Linnaean and Garden Streets, Cambridge, into a realm of more than 2,800 acres, embracing the Botanical Museum with the renowned Glass Flowers, the scenic Arnold Arboretum, three famous herbaria, and a combined botanical library second to none in the world. A staff of more than 100, supported by large endowments of the past, carries on the work. The staff's duties are 1) the guarding of some of the University's rarest scientific treasures, and 2) the extension year by year of the frontiers of knowledge in botanical fields.

The significance of these collections and stations in the world of science is sometimes forgotten, partly because the subject of botany has fewer controversial implications than in the days of Darwin, partly because much of the effort devoted to it lies outside the normal stream of University instruction. To the forgetful, the annual reports to the President of the University of the various individual directors serve as a fascinating reminder of the scope of one of Harvard's most remarkable and famous divisions.

☞ *Group Creation*

THERE ARE NINE provinces of this botanical domain: the Botanic Garden, Gray Herbarium, Harvard Forest, Farlow Herbarium, Atkins Institution, Arnold Arboretum, Bussey Institution, Maria Moors Cabot Foundation, and the Botanical Museum. Many men have studied at Harvard, scarcely aware of the

existence of more than one or two of these. To most alumni, indeed, mention of the list brings to mind primarily the unique Ware Collection of Glass Flowers, visited by 250,000 people annually. To the public the list means the Glass Flowers, Lilac Sunday at the Arnold Arboretum, and now—to increasing numbers—the ever fascinating and beautiful forest models installed in the Fisher Museum at Petersham. But to the world's botanists it is a catalogue of one of the most important collections and arrays of research institutes now in existence in this field. To botanists and followers of Harvard history it calls to mind such names as Asa Gray, Charles S. Sargent, Roland Thaxter, W. G. Farlow, B. L. Robinson, G. L. Goodale, and the glass-flower artists, Leopold and Rudolph Blaschka.

The Harvard Botanical Collections—now under the general supervision of Elmer D. Merrill, S.D. Hon. '36, Arnold Professor of Botany and Administrator of Botanical Collections—are the product of the absorbed and unremitting interest of these and other men who devoted their lives or their financial resources (and frequently both) to the field. Under their tutelage, what began as a gift of the Massachusetts Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, and was nurtured in infancy by the learning and private finances of Professor Asa Gray, stands now as a series of powerfully endowed units maintaining a unique position in the international world of science.

☞ *Effects of War*

THAT WORLD CONFLICT has curtailed but not dangerously impaired the functions of the several botanical units, the various annual reports to the President make clear. Explorations in Europe and Asia halt for the duration, card-

board substitutes for steel in storage cabinets at the herbaria, and specimen exchanges find no cargo space in lend-lease convoys; but scientific studies and organization of reference materials continue, and Harvard botanists by their important experiments with cut foliage for camouflage, serve artillery gunners in the jungles of the South Pacific and on the wooded hills before Rome.

World conflicts and heavy losses* in European collections by air bombardment have, however, affected Harvard's position. On the one hand, in the intercommunity of the botanical world, Harvard had across the Atlantic at the outbreak of the war many outstanding loans of important specimens. Some of these have been destroyed; others are threatened with destruction. On the other hand, heavy losses by various European herbaria have tended to increase the importance of collections remaining in Harvard's hands.

In noting the accession, during the year past, of 46,543 sheets of specimens at the Gray Herbarium (Garden Street, Cambridge), Dr. Merritt L. Fernald, '97, Fisher Professor of Natural History and Director of the Herbarium, renders

*The total losses of these American herbaria in the Berlin disaster are 4,393 specimens, varying from a high of 1,795 from the Gray Herbarium to a low of 164 from the Farlow Herbarium. The total number of specimens now outstanding in European centers is 30,966, with a high of 11,242 from Harvard University (Gray Herbarium, Farlow Herbarium, Arnold Arboretum), to a low of 145 specimens from the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Field Museum of Natural History outstanding loans total 1,567 sheets, the United States National Herbarium 6,807, the New York Botanical Garden, 8,750, the University of California 2,312 and the Missouri Botanical Garden 145; their Berlin loans are Farlow Herbarium 164, Gray Herbarium 1,795, Arnold Arboretum 394, New York Botanical Garden 675, U. S. National Herbarium 993, and the Field Museum of Natural History 373. [E. D. Merrill, from a note, "Destruction of the Berlin Herbarium," in *Science* for December 3, 1943.]



Hurricane Harvest at Petersham