REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR.

TJ His Excellency, William E. Smith,
Governor of the State of Wisconsin:

It is with much pleasure that, in behalf of the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society, I comply with the provisions of the legislative enactment by which the society was reorganized, in presenting to you the following report of its proceedings for the past year. The volume herewith transmitted forms the eleventh in the series of the society's published proceedings, and comprises a full statement of the financial transactions of the society during the year 1890; accounts of the meetings held; reports of the local societies and various papers on practical subjects pertaining to the Agricultural and Horticultural interests of the State.

The past year has been one of remarkable success in the products of the garden and orchard. In fact, it is generally spoken of, and will long be remembered as the 'best fruit year the State has ever seen.' The great cause of complaint was not lack of production, but excess; such an abundant yield that the prices realized were very low, not only below the rate of profitable production, but, in many parts of the State, not sufficient to repay the trifling cost of properly harvesting and marketing the crop, so that much fruit went to waste for want of a paying demand. The fruit culturists of the State have had to meet many and great difficulties in the past, but this is the first year in which they have encountered the discouragement of too great success. Such abundant yields may tend to dishearten those specialists, who by better acquaintance with the principles of culture, and by giving their whole time to the business can secure moderate crops, and consequent high prices in seasons of general failure or scarcity, but to the masses, who must depend mainly on favoring seasons and nature's care and culture, they are blessings that cannot come too often. That they may be the rule rather than the exception is an event much to be desired.

The plan adopted by the society four years since, of uniting with local societies in holding meetings for exhibition of fruits and flowers and the consideration of practical questions in horticulture, has been continued the past season and was attended with very gratifying results. Two of these meetings were held, and a number of the members of the society took part in meetings held for discussions alone. The encouragement thus given and received, the interest awakened in places where these meetings have been held in previous years is still very apparent, and induces the society to desire not only to follow up this work, but to increase their efforts in this direction, and to join in holding fall and winter meetings in various parts of the state, where
the citizens take sufficient interest in horticultural matters to make the necessary arrangements.

While the work of the society is much the same from year to year, and the subjects presented and discussed at its meetings are largely such as have been considered time and again, the experience of each season gives new light on these old questions, which is of much practical value to all. In addition to this, each season brings out new facts in regard to methods and results, new lessons in experience, which duly considered will prove valuable in advancing the interests of horticulture. Through a larger attendance at our regular meetings, and the greater numbers reached at the meetings held with local societies, and the more extended circulation of our Reports, the work of the society reaches each year many new comers and even old settlers, who are in need of information on these points, and to whom what may seem trite and common place to those longest in the field is new, and of much practical value. The members of the society are encouraged to believe that in this and other ways the beneficial influence of their labors is steadily increasing, and that it will contribute much, not only to the financial prosperity of the state, but also to the happiness and contentment of its citizens by increasing the attractiveness and comfort of their homes.

The value of the sanitary, æsthetic, educational and social influence of horticulture in its various branches has been largely overlooked, and it has been judged as a pursuit solely by the immediate pecuniary results derived from it. This is truly an important consideration, and it has been, and still is, the desire and aim of the society, as far as it is in its power, to so develop the horticultural interests of the state as to make them a source of revenue which will add material wealth to those engaged in them; but we feel that there are other important considerations which should be taken into the account; other benefits to be derived from horticulture, of greater value even than those represented by dollars and cents; that the fruit of the strawberry bed and of the orchard consumed in the producer’s family, not to the extent of necessity alone, but to the fullest desire, gives better returns than when embodied in coin or greenbacks; that money judiciously expended in beautifying the door-yard, the farm and public grounds, in adorning the home surroundings and adding to the attraction and comforts of the home life, is a safer and better investment than when risked in business speculation or put into bank deposits. On account of this conviction, more than the usual amount of space has been given in this volume to the consideration of questions calculated to draw attention to this subject, thus, we hope, adding to its interest and practical value. We trust that in this, and in all its labors, the society will continue to meet with your approval and will have your cooperation, and that of all who are interested in horticulture and the general prosperity of the State.

Respectfully submitted in behalf of the Society.

F. W. CASE, Secretary.