A SLAUGHTERED GIANT.

Our illustration shows a Sequoia gigantea with choppers at work inside the cleft cutting their way through the trunk. This is not a tree of the first size, being less than twenty-five feet in diameter and about twenty at the point where it was cut. In point of beauty and symmetry it was one of the best of the surviving Big Trees. It stood until a year ago in the Tule River forest, Tulare County, California, and was sold by the private owner of the land to certain persons who wished to exhibit it. The plan was to take a section of the trunk, hollow it out to a shell and then divide it into convenient and portable pieces, so that it could be carried about and set up as a show. The project fell through, however, for lack of funds, and the section of the slaughtered tree never got beyond Visalia, in the county where it stood. It is now stored in that city. Let us hope that the original owner of the tree and its destroyers may some day realize that it will never again make such an exhibition of grandeur and grace as it did while towering above the spot where it began life as a seedling a thousand years ago.

[Garden and Forest (1890) 3: 570]
culture or landscape design or forestry were not just reporting on the latest discoveries in their respective fields, but were also participating in a larger cultural debate about the appropriate role of expertise in scientific research and in shaping public policy. This debate had profound national consequences, eventually broadening the responsibilities of the federal government and influencing the intellectual contours of modern America.

Contributors to Garden and Forest, for example, used the journal to boldly propose a new agenda for political action in the United States. Nowhere was this more evident than in the magazine’s advocacy of the emerging science of forestry, of which Sargent was a staunch supporter. Editorials calling for the preservation of the nation’s forested estate and editor Stiles’ aggressive solicitation of articles by foresters who shared these sympathies established Garden and Forest as the voice of those who sought closer federal supervision of public woodlands.

This demand was a tough sell, as its staff and writers recognized: Americans had little interest in federal land management, and no taste at all for the regulation of resource exploitation by a powerful bureaucracy, especially during a period when the Industrial Revolution was consuming vast quantities of timber. To change public opinion, they would have to disseminate counterarguments, a task that Garden and Forest supported with evident enthusiasm. In its ten volumes, the journal published an astonishing number of articles related to forestry—more than 450; together, they helped educate a populace that hitherto was ignorant about this science and its social significance.

Europeans, by contrast, knew a lot about the subject, benefitting from political cultures—either monarchical or republican—that assumed considerable power over public and private property: they had long experimented with forest management and had developed professional schools to promote research and educate forest managers. Americans who worried about the rapid disappearance of their forests were encouraged to study European models, first by George Perkins Marsh’s pathbreaking Man and Nature: The Earth as Modified by Human Action (1864), and later by Garden and Forest. In looking eastward, they resembled reformers in other fields who over the next seventy years would participate in a vibrant transatlantic exchange of ideas; these Americans—whether concerned about urban social services or devastated landscapes—

from THE AXE IN ITS RELATION TO ORNAMENTAL TREES.

It is a curious fact that Americans, who have destroyed more trees wastefully and foolishly than the people of any other country, and have stood and seen their forests, the envy of the rest of the world, swept away with hardly a voice raised in protest, are more unwilling than other people to use the axe in cases where the cutting of trees is really essential. A hundred square miles of forest may be swept by fire from some mountain range through the carelessness of an idle hunter, a mountain stream may be ruined, and the fertility of a smiling valley threatened. It is all taken as a matter of course, and is looked on as one of those unfortunate occurrences which the community is powerless to prevent. The forests of the national domain are robbed of their timber, and the public is satisfied with the simple acknowledgment of the general government that it has not the power or authority to protect its own property against the organized bands of plunderers who have been preying on it for a quarter of a century or longer. This indifference to trees when they are composing elements of the forest is a marked feature in American character, and is all the more marked from its contrast with our feelings about trees individually, especially trees which we have planted ourselves or have seen planted. When a tree is cut in one of the parks of this city there is a protest raised against the so-called barbarity of the act by a hundred voices which are silent about the destruction of the Adirondack forests. The protest in the one case is as much the result of ignorance and indifference as the silence in the other, and it is as necessary to use the axe, if the beauty and value of ornamental plantations are to be maintained, as it is to save the forests on the headwaters of important streams.

[Editorial. Garden and Forest 3 (1890): 545]