row across the bed consisting of one variety, those with white flowers at one end, and then all the intermediate shades to the dark blues and purples at the other end. The bed is sunk eight or ten inches below the surface of the surrounding lawn, and is furnished on one side with a perforated water-pipe so that the plants can be irrigated during the growing season. It is eighteen inches deep and consists of a rich compost of loam and thoroughly rotten cow-manure, and every year it gets a good top dressing of manure. Every pleasant morning after the middle of May the water is turned on at nine o’clock and allowed to run till three or four o’clock in the afternoon, by that time the bed is thoroughly saturated and covered to a depth of two or three inches with water; the supply is then shut off until the next morning. Some of the varieties, under this generous treatment, grow to a height of five or six feet, and have produced flowers fully ten inches across, and surprising in their profusion and beauty. While irrigation is doubtless necessary to develop the greatest perfection of the Japanese Iris, it can be successfully grown in this country in ordinary seasons in any good garden soil and without artificial watering. Very fine flowers have been produced without special treatment by Mr. [Francis] Parkman and other American growers, who have raised good seedling varieties of this plant without giving to it more care than is required by other Irises . . . The flowers are hardly surpassed in delicacy of texture or in beauty of color, but they do not appear here until July, and the hot sun soon fades them. The blooming season may be prolonged by the use of an awning placed over the beds during the day, but it cannot be denied that this plant flowers too late here, and that its period of beauty is too short in this climate ever to make it a great popular favorite . . .

[Garden and Forest 1 (1888): 259-260]

NEW OR LITTLE-KNOWN PLANTS.

XANTHOCERAS SORBIFOLIA.

To Mr. Paul Dana we are indebted for the opportunity of publishing in this issue the portrait of a remarkably fine specimen of the rare Xanthoceras sorbifolia in Mr. Dana’s collection at Dosoris [Long Island, New York].

Xanthoceras sorbifolia is a small tree of northern China, related to the Bladder-nuts [Staphlea] and Horse-chestnuts, and interesting as the only representation of the genus to which it belongs, and which owes its name to the presence between the petals of curious yellow horn-shaped glands. It is one of the most attractive of the hardy plants which our gardens owe to northern China, the region from which many of the most beautiful trees and shrubs in cultivation have been brought. It is a leafy, glabrous or puberulous plant with opposite pinnate leaves eight to twelve inches in length; the leaflets are alternate, linear-oblong, acute, coarsely serrate, dark green and glossy on the upper surface and pale on the lower. The flowers are white, handsomely marked with red streaks at the base of the petals, and are produced in great profusion in lateral racemes eight or twelve inches long, appearing as the leaves are unfolding. The fruit, which is a globose or pear-shaped capsule, not unlike that of some of the smooth-fruited Horse-chestnuts in general appearance, finally splits into three valves, and contains a number of globose, nearly black, shining seeds half an inch in diameter.
Xanthoceras was discovered nearly sixty years ago by the German botanist Bunge, who accompanied a Russian mission which traveled overland from St. Petersburg to Pekin; it was not, however, introduced into our gardens until nearly forty years later, when the French missionary David sent it to the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris, where the original plant may still be seen.

In spite of its hardiness and the beauty of its flowers, Xanthoceras is still rare in American and European gardens. This is, perhaps, due to the fact that,
although it is hardy against cold, it is evidently fastidious and does not grow well in all soils and situations. Most of the plants which have been tried in this country have perished sooner or later, and it is unusual to find either here or in Europe so large, vigorous and healthy a specimen as the one at Dosoris.

From the Abbe David's notes we learn that Xanthoceras is a tree fifteen to eighteen feet high, and exceedingly rare in those parts of China and Mongolia which he visited; that it is cultivated in the gardens of Pekin; and that the seeds are eaten by the Chinese.

At our request, Mr. Dana has sent us for the benefit of our readers the following note upon his method of cultivating Xanthoceras, which we hope will now become a more common object in our gardens:

"I first saw a plant of Xanthoceras at Baden-Baden on the grounds of Herr Max Leichtlin about the year 1884. I admired it, and Herr Leichtlin spoke of it as a new plant of great promise, which he felt sure would be an acquisition to horticulture. I secured two plants, and have been cultivating them now for eight or ten years. They are six feet high, and grow in rich warm loam. They have no protection whatever, and yet they have never lost a branch in winter, and they endure our dry summers perfectly. They are not strong-growing shrubs, but they bear flowers in great profusion, and are more beautiful when in bloom than at any other season. They ripen seeds every year, and I would be glad to furnish some of them to any one who cares to test the plant."

[Garden and Forest 6 (1893): 284–286]

CLIMBING PLANTS ON BOSTON BUILDINGS.

PROBABLY nowhere else in this country does the service performed by climbing and clinging plants in clothing and adorning the walls of buildings receive such good illustration as in and around Boston. Ampelopsis tricuspidata [now Parthenocissus tricuspidata] was first domesticated here, and has so long been a striking feature of this city as to gain for it throughout the country the familiar name of "Boston Ivy." This name, however, is seldom heard here, where it is most commonly known as the "Japanese Ivy" or the "Japanese Ampelopsis."

Ampelopsis tricuspidata had probably been cultivated hereabout for several years before it became particularly noticeable, but its popularity dates back to the Centennial year of 1876. Although for years familiar with all parts of the city and a close observer of such things, I had never noticed this plant until my return in 1877, after an absence of a year or so, when I was at once struck by its prevalence. It did not become remarkably common hereabout until about 1880. Now, however, it is seen everywhere, and is even more prevalent than its cousin, our beautiful native Virginia Creeper. It has become as characteristic of our city and suburban scenes as the White Pine is of our rural New England landscape, and one of our foremost authorities once told me that he regarded it as the greatest horticultural acquisition of the century.

Occasionally its use is excessive, but its luxuriant habit is seldom encouraged to an undesirable extent. This is probably due to the fact that one of its most conspicuous services consists in the concealment, or the amelioration, of architectural ugliness, and, fortunately, the people most liable to employ it to excess are generally the ones most responsible for bad architecture. Ugly objects are so