

**HERBALS, THEIR ORIGIN
AND EVOLUTION; A
CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY
OF BOTANY, 1470-1670**

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Herbals, Their Origin and Evolution; A Chapter in the History of Botany, 1470-1670 by Agnes Arber

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1470—1670

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TO MY FATHER

H. R. ROBERTSON

"Wherefore it maye please your...gentlenes to take these my labours in good worthe, not according unto their unworthines, but accordinge unto my good mind and will, offering and gevinge them unto you."

WILLIAM TURNER'S *Herbal*, 1568.

PREFACE

TO add a volume such as the present to the existing multitude of books about books calls for some apology. My excuse must be that many of the best herbals, especially the earlier ones, are not easily accessible, and after experiencing keen delight from them myself, I have felt that some account of these works, in connection with reproductions of typical illustrations, might be of interest to others. In the words of Henry Lyte, the translator of Dodoens, "I thinke it sufficient for any, whom reason may satisfie, by way of answere to alleage this action and sententious position: *Bonum, quo communius, eo melius et præstantius*: a good thing the more common it is, the better it is."

The main object of the present book is to trace in outline the evolution of the *printed herbal* in Europe between the years 1470 and 1670, primarily from a botanical, and secondarily from an artistic standpoint. The medical aspect, which could only be dealt with satisfactorily by a specialist in that science, I have practically left untouched, as also the gardening literature of the period. Bibliographical information is not given in detail, except in so far as it subserves the main objects of the book. Even within these limitations, the present account is far from being an exhaustive monograph. It aims merely at presenting a general sketch of the history of the herbal during a period of two hundred years. The titles of the principal botanical works, which were published between 1470 and 1670, are given in Appendix I.