

**WONDERS OF THE PLANT-
WORLD: OR, CURIOSITIES OF
VEGETABLE LIFE, WITH NOTICES
OF REMARKABLE PLANTS, TREES,
AND FLOWERS**

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Wonders of the Plant-World: Or, Curiosities of Vegetable Life, with Notices of Remarkable Plants, Trees, and Flowers by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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A FOREST IN MADAGASCAR

Page 124.



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"If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget,
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods."


L. GOSSETT, C. W.

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EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1870.

191. k. 50.

PREFACE

N old botanist very justly says, "Among the manifold creatures of God that have all, in all ages, diversely entertained many excellent wits, and drawn them to the contemplation of the divine wisdom, none have provoked men's studies more, or satisfied their desires so much, as plants have done, and that upon just and worthy causes; for what greater delight is there than to behold the Earth appavelled with plants as with a robe of embroidered velvet, set with orient pearls, and garnished with great diversity of rare and costly jewels? But the principal delight is in the mind, singularly enriched with the knowledge of these visible things, setting forth to us the invisible wisdom and admirable workmanship of Almighty God."

Yet fascinating as is this study, and well adapted as it is to refine the taste, and to occupy in an entertaining and

useful fashion the leisure of the student, it cannot be said to receive in Great Britain the attention to which it is entitled. Botany is assuredly one of the least popular of the sciences. Something of this may be due to the forbidding character of the technology which meets the scholar on the very threshold. The first pages of a treatise or manual of botany are no very pleasant reading for youthful readers, and it is to be feared that many are debarred from going further by their portentous aspect. Yet the study is so easily pursued—its appliances and instruments are so simple, its literature is so readily comprehended—that it needs but to be better known to be more generally cultivated. The botanist does not require any extensive library or colossal museum. The nearest field, or hedge-row, or brook-side—the garden, or the coppice—the running stream, or the marshy pool—offers him a book whose pages are full of interest, and from which he may transfer to his herbarium such specimens as may be necessary for after-consultation. It is a study for in-doors and out-of-doors, for winter as well as spring, for the mountain district or the sea-side. It may be pursued at all times and in all places, and is within the reach of the poor no less than of the wealthy.

The object of the present volume is to bring before the reader, in a small compass, some of the most attractive features of botanical study, to show wherein its admirable

interest lies; to illustrate its general value and particular uses. It is hoped that by this means the young reader may be induced to apply himself to its scientific acquisition, and, from a knowledge of special plants and flowers, be led to a knowledge of their mutual relations, their likenesses, and their differences. Technical terms have been very sparingly introduced, and never without an explanation. In the preliminary chapters various illustrations have been brought together of the properties, organization, and peculiarities of the Leaf, the Blossom, and the Root; and it is believed that enough has been said upon these points to stimulate the imagination of the youthful student. The bulk of the volume is necessarily devoted to what, in a more limited sense, are generally understood to be the *Wonders* of the Plant-World; but a considerable space has also been allotted to a consideration of those members of the Vegetable Kingdom which minister to the wants or luxuries of man.

November 1909

