

# **GERMS OF MIND IN PLANTS**

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Germes of Mind in Plants by R. H. Francé

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**R. H. FRANCÉ**

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MIND IN PLANTS**



# GERMS OF MIND IN PLANTS

BY  
*transl. by*  
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*Translated by A. M. SIMONS*

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1906

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### TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Since my boyhood days, when the great forest was my playground, I have ever been a lover of nature. Because I hoped this little book might bring a portion of this pleasure to some, who, like myself, are largely shut out from direct contact with field and forest I have turned this work into English.

There is another reason why I have done this. Science must, in the future, be made the property of all. Its structure needs the assistance of many willing hands if it is to reach that rounded perfection which is a part of any true science. This does not mean alone that the technical language of specialists should be simplified. It means far more the participation of the great mass of the people in the discovery and elaboration of scientific truths. The specialist and the philosopher must co-operate with a host of observers if the vast multitude of facts which are necessary to determine great natural laws are to be gathered and systematized.

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This same science is an instrument by which the workers can secure their emancipation from the industrial slavery amid which they now live. The essentially revolutionary character of modern science is recognized by the ruling class to-day, and but little effort is therefore made to bring these truths within the reach of those whom they would help to freedom.

Because personally I love nature, because the truths of science bring strong support to the movement for industrial and social freedom, and because science can develop to its full measure only in a world where the workers are free; because, in short, I am both a socialist and a nature lover I have done this little as a contribution to the cause of socialism and science.

A. M. SIMONS.





### GERMS OF MIND IN PLANTS

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If Paradise means a portion of the earth, as yet unpolluted by the presence of man, then it must certainly be a Paradise of nature-lovers. In the marshes of the lower Danube there are still whole square miles as untouched as if man had not yet begun his conquest of this globe. As far as the eye can reach, a wilderness of reeds, sprinkled with thickets of willow and alder, penetrated with tiny brooklets, whose golden brown or dark green waters lead to hidden laughing lakes, where water lilies bloom and a thousand strange flowers nod, and great herons gather in ancient eyries; where pelicans sit upon the trees, and countless water-fowls conduct a deafening concert,—where, also, millions of blood-thirsty insects stand guard over this Para-

## GERMS OF MIND IN PLANTS

dise to prevent intrusion. An old fisher and buffalo herder guided me there in a boat such as is no longer to be seen in Europe. He was a curious old fellow. These swamps had been his life-long home, and he knew them and their world better than any naturalist, since for fifty years he had done nothing else but observe nature,—fishing, philosophizing and watching his buffaloes. On their broad mud-bedecked shoulders he could go, as if upon a swimming island, through the most dangerous morasses, which would have been impenetrable to a boat. Such men are as silent as nature herself. But when they speak it is to say something worth while. With distrustful silence he looked upon the strange guest of his primitive world, who now pulled up plants, then fished with his net, and between times wrote mysteriously in a little book. But during the noon-day rest he thawed out somewhat. I sought to draw him into conversation, but elicited only monosyllables. Finally after a searching look—

“What use do you make, my dear nephew” (it is a beautiful trait of these men of nature to address every one as a relative), “of all those weeds? They are no good,” he concluded very scornfully.

## GERMS OF MIND IN PLANTS

This gave me the opportunity to open a conversation. "Now, Uncle Mihály," I said, "do you really have any use for the young of the grey heron? Yet you went to-day to see if they had already hatched. Why? Because you enjoyed doing it. In the same way I come to you, because I like to have the flowers, and you know well, there are flowers here that are to be found nowhere else in the world."

The appeal to local patriotism brought rich reward. With a nod the old grumbler murmured.

"Do you know all the flowers?" he asked.

"I came here in order to learn them."

Renewed silence. But he looked at me, now with satisfied condescension, then again with a certain reluctance.

"I know something that perhaps the gentlemen in the cities do not know."

"Now, Uncle Mihály, what is that?"

"I do not know whether you will believe me. There is a plant on that island that covers itself up at night. That is no fairy story, I have seen it myself."

When I agreed with him, and told him much more of the sleep of flowers and vegetables, then he began to treat me as an equal, and from then