

THE DAHLIA ITS HISTORY AND CULTIVATION

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The Dahlia Its History and Cultivation by Various

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VARIOUS

**THE DAHLIA ITS
HISTORY AND
CULTIVATION**



CACTUS DAHLIA.
"MRS. J. J. CROWE."

Frontispiece.

THE DAHLIA

ITS HISTORY AND CULTIVATION

BY

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*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES AND
A VERY COMPLETE LIST OF VARIETIES
IN CULTIVATION IN 1902*

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INTRODUCTION

THE Botanist reveals to us the wonderful structure and mechanism of plants. By the aid of the microscope he leads us far into the intricacies of their nature, before which we stand in wonder and reverence.

The Florist differs from the botanist in his relation to plants. The plant *as it is* is the province of the botanist. The plant *as it can be developed* is the province of the florist. He takes advantage of its inherent susceptibilities in certain directions and profits by them; and there is no better illustration of this than the subject of this volume.

It was long considered that the botanist and the florist had little or nothing in common, but this idea, like so many other old-fashioned ones, has been given up. The light which the botanist can throw on the subject is invaluable to the raiser of new varieties of flowers, and surely he is best equipped for growing plants who best understands their structure.

But there is an equipment for Flora's service which even science cannot give, which wealth cannot buy, and which influence cannot command, and that equipment is Love—a love akin to devotion. A well-known present-day writer¹ tells us that “in the

¹ Birrell in *Obiter Dicta*.

pleasant realms of poetry no liveries are worn, no paths prescribed; you may enter where you will, stop where you like, and worship whom you love." So it is in the service of Flora; but to enjoy flowers to the full one must do even more than love them—one must grow them from the tiny seedling or cutting to the fully developed plant. An American writer,¹ after describing how he planted his seed with his own hands, goes on to say, "My garden was of precisely the right extent. An hour or two of morning labour was all that it required. But I used to visit it and revisit it a dozen times a day, and stand in deep contemplation over my vegetable progeny with a love that nobody could share or conceive of who had never taken part in the process of creation." This is the indescribable pleasure enjoyed by every true florist, and to come under its spell it is not necessary to engage in large operations. A pole of land is likely to yield a richer harvest of enjoyment than an acre!

It is one of the most gratifying features of our day that this love for flowers has become so general. Apart from the elevating and refining influences which are inseparable from a true appreciation of nature in any form, this "love for flowers" has another aspect. It creates and sustains a demand which is an important item in our home trade. Well-known firms are found devoting their whole time and entire resources to the cultivation of one or two particular classes of plants, and national societies exist for promoting the cultivation of special flowers—such as the National Rose Society, the National Chrysanthemum Society, the

¹ Hawthorne, in *Mosses from an Old Manse*.