

**THE VEGETABLE LAMB OF TARTARY:
A CURIOUS FABLE OF THE COTTON
PLANT. TO WHICH IS ADDED A
SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF
COTTON AND THE COTTON TRADE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649470976

The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary: A Curious Fable of the Cotton Plant. To Which Is Added a Sketch of the History of Cotton and the Cotton Trade by Henry Lee

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HENRY LEE

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PLANTAS
CULTIVADAS

Planta Tartarica Boromez .



THE "BAROMETZ," OR "TARTARIAN LAMB."

After Jeanes Zehn.

THE VEGETABLE LAMB
OF
TARTARY;

A Curious Fable of the Cotton Plant.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF COTTON AND
THE COTTON TRADE.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA
BY

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ILLUSTRATED.

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

1887.

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P R E F A C E.

THE fable of the existence of a mysterious "plant-animal" variously entitled "*The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary*," "*The Scythian Lamb*," and "*The Baromets*," or "*Boramets*," is one of the curious myths of the Middle Ages with which I have been long acquainted. Until the year 1883, not having given serious thought to it, or made it a subject of critical examination, I had been content to accept as correct the explanation of it now universally adopted; namely, that it originated from certain little lamb-like toy figures ingeniously constructed by the Chinese from the rhizome and frond-stems of a tree-fern, which, from its identification with the object of the fable, has received the name of *Dicksonia Baromets*. But during my researches in the works of ancient writers when preparing the manuscript of my two books, '*Sea Monsters Unmasked*,' and '*Sea Fables Explained*,' I came upon passages of old authors which convinced me that these toy "lamb" made from ferns by the Chinese had no more connexion with the story of "*The Vegetable Lamb*" than the artificial mermaids so cleverly constructed by the Japanese were the cause and origin of the ancient and world-wide belief in mermaids. Subsequent investigations have confirmed this opinion.

I have found that all of these old myths which I have been able to trace to their source have originated in a perfectly true statement of some curious and interesting