

## P R E F A C E.

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AMONG the various improvements for which the present age will hereafter be distinguished, there is none of more importance to society than the facility with which almost every species of learning is now taught; not only as relates to those exercises adapted to the improvement and employment of youth, but also in the acquirement of the arts and sciences; and for which, to the honour of the various professors of the present day, we have, as a nation, become eminently distinguished. For as the minds of men have become enlightened, prejudices have been thrown aside, and new paths traced out, leading more directly to the objects in view.

As the practice of horticulture and agriculture on an extensive scale has been the employment of my life, in which I have had occasion to investigate minutely the useful and noxious qualities of plants of every description, as

well as their distinguishing characters; and having of course had more opportunity of acquiring this knowledge than usually falls to the lot of most men; I trust it will not be presumed altogether improper in me to attempt to instruct persons by a comparatively easy method in attaining a knowledge of the science of Botany. And without meaning in the least to derogate from the merits of the learned and highly respected professors who of late years have taught this science, I beg leave to observe, that the lectures usually delivered for this purpose have in great measure failed of the intended object. For although the first principles may be in that manner explained, yet a perfect and useful acquaintance with this delightful part of natural history can be acquired only by reading in the book of nature, by paying proper attention to the different plants in their native habitats, and by having their true characters demonstrated, in the regular progress of their growth to maturity.

Having taken upon me this task in a method peculiar to myself, I found it necessary to have a small work which might contain the principles of classification according to Linnæus, the terminology, and at the same time a concise arrangement of all the plants according to those principles, with their discriminating characters, and the various uses to which each is applicable. The want of such a work has been so often expressed by those who have honoured me with their attendance in my botanical excursions, that it will require but little apology on my part for intruding this small work on the public. Should it

chance to fall under the notice of those whose business it is to investigate critically the merits of such productions, I must intreat of them to reflect that it was written for the purpose of instructing persons who are ignorant of, and desirous of obtaining a knowledge of, the subjects it treats on; and no one, perhaps, who has not taken upon himself the task of learning this science, or of teaching others, will at first be capable of estimating its utility.

It is, in fact, only by considering what are the wants of a student, that its fitness for the purpose of teaching Botany can be estimated; and those who have attempted to study the science with our present helps will, I trust, acknowledge the utility of this work in forwarding their pursuit. In the several arrangements it will be observed that I have departed from the modes usually adopted; and this has been done chiefly for the purpose of rendering it the more concise, it being intended chiefly as a pocket compendium.

The great improvements in our agriculture and the arts have rendered a knowledge of Plants a necessary qualification to all who may be engaged in such pursuits; and a recent act of the legislature having made it indispensable to all the younger branches of the medical profession, I have been induced to form the following regular School. I shall therefore take the present opportunity of stating the outlines of that establishment. *i. e.* The London Botanic Garden is situate in Sloane Street, about one mile from Hyde Park Corner; it consists of six acres of ground, in which

are arranged, in different compartments, such plants as will best illustrate any part of the science the student may wish to consult, agreeably with the annexed Plan. Hot and Green Houses are also erected to preserve such as are too tender to bear the open air of our climate; and there is also a Library, in which is kept an extensive collection of the best books on botany and other subjects in natural history.

Here also will be delivered every Summer, Lectures on Botany on certain days in each week; and also, for the purpose of giving each pupil a practical knowledge of the science, Excursions are occasionally made to such places near to London as are known to produce the greatest number of plants; where the student may collect specimens of each kind, and at the same time is instructed how to preserve them in a Hortus Siccus, so as to form a work for future reference. Thus, whilst by the lectures and the assistance of the garden and library, he is enabled to obtain a perfect knowledge of the principles of the science, he also becomes personally acquainted with all the plants growing near London, in a manner that will cause him to retain them constantly on his memory.

The admission to the Garden and Library is by subscription, and persons paying One Guinea each are allowed to visit the Garden and Library for twelve months, under certain regulations which are laid down for the purpose. An extra charge is made for attending the Excursions. These generally take up twelve weeks, one day in each; so that two courses are intended to be given every season, one

in spring and the other in summer. Thus the Farmer, the Artist, or the Medical Student, may with comparatively little expense and trouble make themselves masters of this interesting and useful department of Natural History.

The species of plants are therefore, for the sake of easy reference, put into alphabetical order, and in this book set up in tables on a similar plan to those in Graffer's Catalogue, and Galpine's Compendium, a small and very useful work, which has been some time out of print, of which it will be seen I have availed myself in the present undertaking. I have not gone further into the Class Cryptogamia than to the Order *Filices*; as the plants of the other orders of this class form almost a distinct department in Botanic Science. Should this treatise, however, meet the approbation of the public, those will probably engage my attention as an useful addition to the present volumes. In its present state I now offer it to the public, and my own students in particular, who can best appreciate its value, hoping on a perusal that their suffrages may be in its favour.

BOTANIC GARDEN,  
*Sloane-Street, July 1816.*