

the common varieties live out of doors all the year and bloom profusely in summer.

Diseases of cacti are few, rot is about the only one, and is always caused by extreme cold, or over watering. Cut away all decayed parts at once, and dust with powdered charcoal and keep dry, though the shape of the plant will be ruined, you are likely to get off-shoots from the sound part. The only insect that is really troublesome is the mealy bug ; for this, various insecticides are used ; kerosene emulsion is effective, leave on for an hour or two, then wash with clean water, but the writer has found nothing so clean, cheap and thorough as alcohol, especially with a drop or two of fir tree oil added. With an atomizer, to be had at any druggist's, you can reach every part with a fine spray that dries

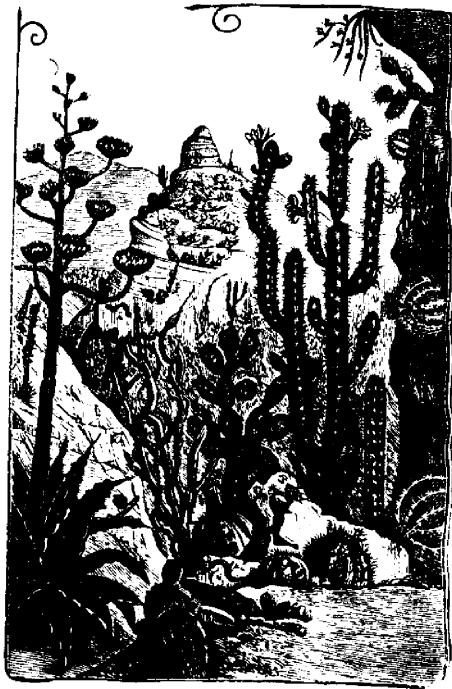


FIG. 818.

at once, nothing is wasted, but it is certain death to the insects, and no washing is necessary. Should a plant have been neglected, they may have got down to the roots, remove the plant and wash the roots thoroughly, when dry, repot ; look over your plants regularly in winter, and never allow the insects to get a start.

Those, if any, who have followed these rambling remarks, hurriedly written owing to the pressure of other work, may think the instructions elaborate, and requirements many and difficult to provide, but the reverse is the case, cacti