

THE MORALITY OF PLANTS.

(Continued from page 7.)

as take place among plants of a lower type of civilization.

Only plants of a high moral standard could attain such an outstanding position in the vegetable Kingdom, in open competition with hundreds of older families; and success is chiefly due to the care and attention bestowed, and sacrifices made, on behalf of their offspring.

The Dandelion is not so extravagant as the Orchid in the production of showy flowers. The individual flowers are beautiful, though inconspicuous on account of their small size, but by grouping themselves together they form a kind of benevolent society, each contributing a little towards the benefit of the others, and ensuring the visits of bees and other insects, who in turn approve of this economical organization, as it means a saving of time in being able to obtain nectar and pollen from a number of flowers at one visit, instead of having to fly from one flower to another.

The Dandelion's Sacrifice for its Offspring.

The Dandelion is as modest as the Daisy, immortalised by Burns. Each flower sets out to produce no more than four seeds, but before it develops very far, this number is reduced to one. A whole flower is therefore sacrificed for the production of one seed, containing a well developed embryo Dandelion. Such sacrifice would be in vain if the seeds were allowed to fall to the ground around the parent. If this happened, the area would become over populated with young dandelions, resulting in strife, struggle, starvation, and the death of a large percentage of the population, corresponding to what we occasionally find in the human race when a city or country becomes overpopulated.

But the dandelion has overcome this danger by providing each of its offspring with equipment for emigration in the form of modern aircraft of the heavier than air type. This is accomplished without extra expenditure. The bracts, which in most other plants are vestigial structures and more or less functionless, have been called to perform the work of the sepals, while the latter in each flower, are sacrificed to provide the apparatus for the transportation of one seed.

The dandelion therefore represents such members of modern society as are honest, industrious, progressive, persevering, and unselfish, ready at anytime to sacrifice their own personal pleasure and comfort to ensure the future welfare of their offspring.

Anyone whose moral character is of the dandelion or compositae standard need not be afraid of being classed as a weed in social circles.

To some people, the dandelion is nothing but a common wayside weed; to others it is a much valued plant and is eagerly sought after. The value of the root for medicinal purposes has been known for hundreds of years; it is still collected and sold for this purpose. The leaves cut in the spring, cooked, and used like spinach are recommended as a blood purifier. The flowers, during the past few years, have been extremely popular and much in demand for the relief of those seriously affected by the Prohibition Act, and who need "a little wine for their stomach's sake."

Whether or not I have succeeded in convincing you that there are different moral standards amongst plants, I hope that I have at least interested you in the presentation of a botanical topic from a new point of view.

If some fairy transferred us from the animal kingdom to our corresponding social position in the vegetable kingdom, which of the plants discussed herein would our moral standard be best suited for? Let us seek to emulate the upright character, usefulness, and beauty of the lily, for "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

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