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Vegetable

Kingdom, comprehends every thing that has life, but neither motion
 nor feeling—from the lowly mushroom, the fern and the moss to the
 towering oak, and the cedar of Lebanon—from the microscopic
 plant to the majestic Baobab with its diameter of thirty feet. In
 duration they are as remarkable, some flourishing for a few days,
 others for thousands of years. The *Olea fragrans* reserves its
 sweetness for the midnight hour, and the night-flowering *Cereus*
 turns night into day. It begins to expand its sweet-scented
 blossoms at twilight, it is full-blown at midnight, and closes with
 the dawn of the morning, never to open again. The variety of
 plants is also very great. One hundred thousand distinct species
 have already been described, and every day accessions are made
 to that number. The adaptation of living structures to the va-
 rieties of soil and climate, and the relation of plants to each other,
 render the study of Botany (*Botany* a plant) interesting to all,
 especially to the young as furnishing continued proofs of Divine
 goodness and wisdom. The laws by which the vegetable creation
 is regulated, are simple and easily comprehended. Economy of
 causes and exuberance of effects,—simplicity of laws and com-
 plexity of results,—order, harmony and beauty—are everywhere
 manifested in all branches of Natural History. How noiselessly
 do the flowers exhale their rich perfume, or the trees of the
 forest rear their majestic heads. Every plant has its place.
 Monopolies obtain not among them; colours of every hue adorn
 them, not merely for ornament but for use. Different shades of
 colour absorb varying degrees of heat. Different plants require
 different degrees of heat to bring their seeds to perfection.
 Though latent heat is evolved by the various transmutations that
 take place in the interior of plants,—they, like animals, having a
 tendency to a temperature of their own, independent of external
 circumstances,—yet they receive nearly all their heat from the
 same source, the sun. The exact amount of caloric requisite for
 each plant is thus supplied, while God has so adapted our per-
 ception of the beautiful that the varied hues of plants no less than
 the blending colours of the “bow of promise,” increase our
 happiness and deepen our veneration. The language of the heart
 is “There’s not a flower or shrub that grows, but shows its
 Maker God.” Many curious phenomena are presented in the
 vegetable kingdom. The sunflower turns instinctively towards
 the sun: the barberry folds its stamens over the pistil, if the latter
 be pricked with a pin: the *hedysarum gyrans*, found only on the