CURIOSITIES AND USES OF THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM.*

Prof. Day, in opening, said his object was not so much to offer instruction as to interest his hearers with something in the vegetable world, which perhaps might not be very familiar to them. He had prepared a number of large illustrations of some curious and interesting plants, and his remarks were by way of explaining these illustrations.

After stating the difficulty of defining the line of demarcation between the vegetable and animal kingdoms, he said it was due rather to our own knowledge than to any real confusion of the essential characteristics of the two classes. As our means of observation are perfected, doubtful points clear up. Perhaps the power of spontaneous motion, either with or without an apparent object, we are most inclined to ascribe to an *animal*. Behind this motion we recognize a mind, and we respect it.

Plants are usually deficient in the power to move, but to this there are some interesting exceptions. Prof. Day then explained an illustration of the "*Vaucheria geminata*," giving much pleasing information regarding the peculiar motions shown in its efforts to reproduce itself.

The motions of *Oscillaria spiralis*, *Protuccus nivalis*, *closterium*, and other microscopical plants were explained, as were also the movements of various sensitive plants.

The "*Desmodium gyrans*" or "Telegraph Plant," was shown by illustration, and its singular motions described in detail.

The fly-catchers were illustrated, the selections being the "Venus' fly-trap," and some specimens of the Sundew family, and the peculiar method of entrapping and disposing of their victims was related.

The motions of flowers in expanding and closing, their regularity of habit, and its causes, were explained; the habits of the *Victoria Regia* were also alluded to.

Climbing plants seek to rise higher and obtain a fuller exposure to the light. Some climb by means of roots, like the ivy; their stems, as they grow, press against their support, and adhere by means of little rootlets which they throw out. Others grow by twining; the hop and many of the honey-suckle family twine with the sun, from right to left, while the morning-glory, and most of its family, turn against the sun, *i. e.*, from left to right. When the stem has grown beyond its support, it is seen to be outstretched and thrown over to one side horizontally. If you find it pointing to the

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