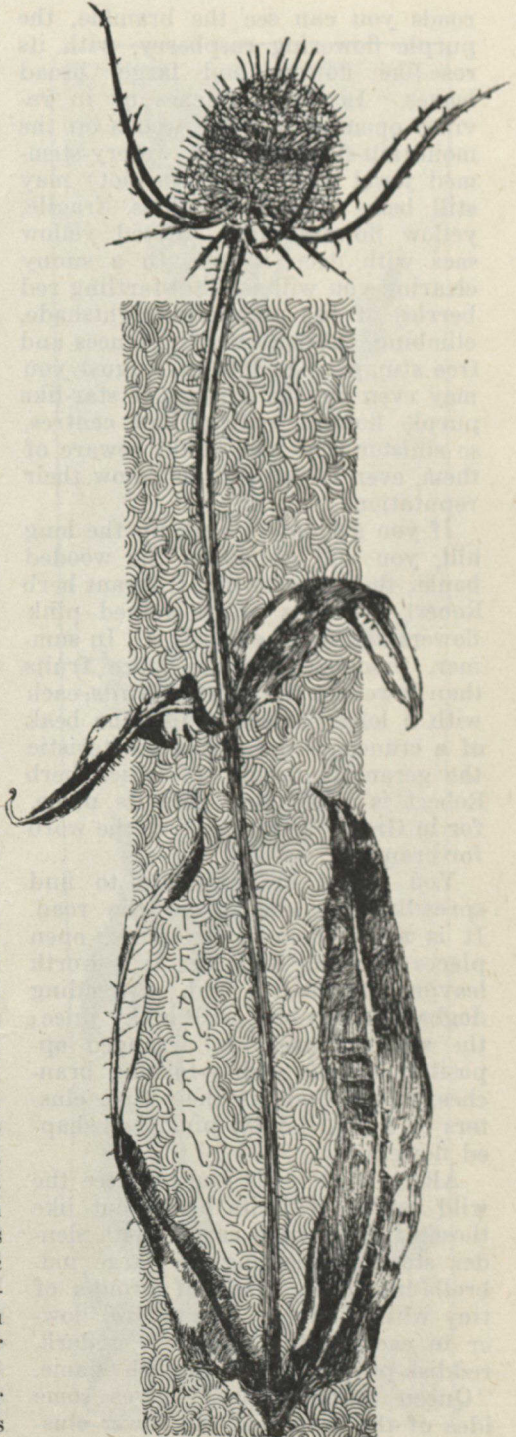


calyx and ovary, you plunged boldly and got a name for the unknown by the simple method of eliminating the genera you knew until you reached the one "it must be"?

This is not necessary with the well-known milkweed, the haunt of the monarch butterflies. With its evenly-ranked leaves and milky juice with which it ensnares the nectar-thieving ants, the plantation of milkweed bears its tassels of flowers up to the sunlight. For the student of plant physiology this plant has a fascination because, next to the orchid, it has the most wonderful means of compelling insects to visit it; and self-fertilization becomes, in the milkweed, impossible. Its family (*Asclepiadaceae*) is mostly tropical; there are in all nineteen hundred species. The family is dedicated by its name to the Greek physician Aesculapius.

The milkweed gives to our northern roadside a touch of tropical life, but the mullein, straight, tall and stiff, has a familiar European air. On gravelly banks the stem of the mullein, with its woolly, decurrent leaves, rises without branching to the familiar spikes of yellow flowers. Forty folk-names it is said to have, and its uses and properties are in keeping. The Romans called it *candelaria*, using the long spikes, dipped in oil, for torches. The Greeks used the leaves for lampwicks. The mullein, too, like so many of these plants, would cure all diseases, although it was especially beneficial to diseased lungs. It is apparently widely-spread, taking its specific name from Thapsos, where it originated, as some say, or where, at least, it is very common. Its generic title, *verbascum*, is from *barbascum* (with beards) which was given to the mullein by Pliny. One has a sort of envy for a plant so historically connected. To have been named by Pliny! Many prouder plants are not so god-fathered.

Perhaps you cannot climb over rocky hillsides, but as your car goes slowly up or down the shaded hill



TEASEL