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## THE OAKS.

Perhaps it will be interesting to the readers of our monthly to refresh their memories, and take a glance once more at the rich profusion displayed in the many varieties of this most useful tree, probably the most useful of all the trees, when we take into consideration the various purposes to which it is applied.

We are indebted to the elder Michaux for the first history of our North American oaks, who under the auspices of the French government explored the Continent from Florida to Hudson's Bay, during the years from 1785 to 1796. Subsequently the younger Michaux in 1807 visited this Continent, and traversing the country, corrected and enlarged his father's work. Mr. Nuttall arrived the same year that the younger Michaux left, and in 1834 crossed the Rocky Mountains and extended these observations to Oregon and Upper California, which were published in 1849. From these sources mainly do we derive our knowledge of the several species of American oaks.

All the oaks are monocious, that is, the flowers are unisexual, the male or pollen-bearing organs appearing in one flower, and the female or pistillate organs in another, but both flowers—those that have the stamens and those bearing the pistil—being borne upon the same tree. Usually after fructification the female blossom advances through its several stages and perfects its fruit during the same season, but in some of the oaks this is not the case. The female flower seems to remain stationary during the whole of the first summer, and develops its fruit during the second season, so that there is an interval of some eighteen months between the first appearance of the flower and the ripening of the fruit. Botanists have made this peculiarity a basis of classification, and have arranged the oaks under two divisions, those of annual fructification, and those of biennial fructification. It is claimed as a matter of observation that those species which are of