

such ridiculous fables
 are the product of
 fruits which they bear.
 e pretended fruits from
 ustaceans which live at
 ertheless overloads the
 ask, which is the most
 surdities, or the public

e annals of charlatanism.
 that caused injury, and
 t of these, and we have

St. John's-wort, which,



GENUS.

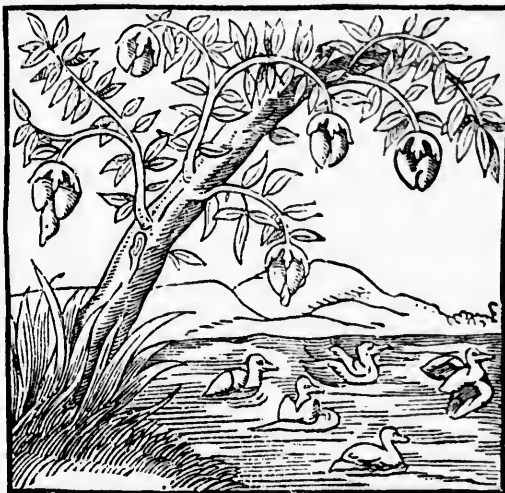
legend and hung over the
 g. On the other was a
 thorn-apple, ought to be
 ful poison which sorcerers

brity than the mandrake,
 employed by the old sor-
 o this dark road, by main-
 man form. To speak the
 credulity of the learned
 ed what was requisite to
 ions of the ancients. It
 o human likeness that the
 s, and it was also under
 and at the foot of gibbets

where, after having fed on the remains of those who had suffered punish-
 ment, they had taken on their shape. The tenants of a place so sinister
 and so dreaded could not be removed without great danger. The learned
 themselves did not attempt to destroy so many absurdities, for in their
 works they sometimes represent mandrakes which resembled men and
 women, for there were some of both sexes. They possessed the same
 power as the enchanted philtres of Circe, to which Pliny and Diosco-
 rides had given this name.

A charming little plant, all covered with hairs, which abounds on the
 slopes of Mount Ida, the dictamnus of Crete, was formerly considered

the most marvelous vul-
 nerary that nature ever
 presented to man. The
 gods themselves had re-
 vealed its omnipotence to
 him, and animals instinct-
 ively made use of it. It
 was with this dictamnus
 that Venus dressed the
 wounds of Æneas. Aris-
 totle tells us that the goats
 scattered over the cele-
 brated mountain, so soon
 as the hunter has pierced
 them with an arrow, seek
 out the plant and eat it in



order to make the arrow THE BIRD-TREE: FAC-SIMILE FROM MUNSTER'S
 drop out, and so to heal

"COSMOGRAPHY."

the wound. Half a century ago, who would have dared to deny such a
 wonderful property, when at that time a noble work on Greece contained
 a long chapter on the virtues of the divine vulnerary, and when, in ad-
 dition to this, the reader might see an engraving representing a goat
 pierced with arrows and browsing upon the salutary herb? In this
 way, unfortunately, did the authority of the learned retard and fetter the
 progress of truth.

However simple the cause of eclipses may be, now that it is known—
 and known causes are always so simple, that one asks why they were
 never known before—however easy this explanation appears, for a long
 time the human race was astonished at the passing absence of the sun's
 light during the day; for a long time it felt full of fear and disquietude