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CHAPTER XXV.

BOTANY AND ZOÖLOGY.¹

[*I. Botany.*²]

AMONG the vegetable productions of the country, which furnish a large proportion of the food of the Indians, are the roots of a species of thistle, the fern, the rush, the liquorice, and a small cylindric root resembling in flavor and consistency the sweet potato.

1. The thistle,³ called by the natives shanatanque, is a plant which grows in a deep, rich, dry loam, with a considerable mixture of sand. The stem is simple, ascending, cylindric and hispid, rising to the height of three or four feet. The cauline life [leaf], which, as well as the stem of the last season, is dead, is simple, crenate, and oblong; rather more obtuse at its apex than at its insertion, which is decurrent; its position is declining; its margin is armed with prickles, and its disk is hairy. The flower is dry and mutilated, but

¹ The notices of plants and animals relate more particularly to the region where the explorers then were, and to the course of the Columbia river; but also refer to various species found in the mountains between the Columbia and the Missouri, and on the upper portions of the latter river.

² The botany of this chapter begins with Clark P 89, at date of Jan. 20th, 1806.

³ The edible thistle is *Cnicus edulis* of Gray, a large and well-known plant of the order *Compositæ*. "The root of the thistle called by the natives *chan ne tak que*," etc., Clark P 87, where the printed description follows, in substance; also shawnatâhque, Clark I 37; shanatœqua, I 66; shannatahque, I 77; shawnatakwe, I 99. The name is usually printed shanataque. The statement in the text that the cauline life (leaf), etc., is *dead*, means simply that it had died down at the date of the entry, Jan. 20th. So with the "dry and mutilated" flower; and for "pericarp" read the set of bracts forming the involucre of the head. "Sagamity" is from an Algonkin word for a preparation of Indian corn we should now call hominy, boiled to the consistency of gruel. Gayarré (Hist. Louisiana, I. p. 317) renders *sagamité*, as a favorite dish of the old French population. L. and C. probably picked up this word at St. Louis.