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CHAPTER IV

PLANT SOCIETIES

IN the long course of time in which plants have been accommodating themselves to the varying conditions in which they are obliged to grow, *they have become adapted to every different environment.* Certain plants, therefore, may live together or near each other, all enjoying the same general conditions and surroundings. These aggregations of plants that are adapted to similar general conditions are known as **plant societies.**

Moisture and temperature are the leading factors in determining plant societies. The great geographical societies or aggregations of the plant world may conveniently be associated chiefly with the moisture supply, as: *wet-region societies*, comprising aquatic and bog vegetation (Fig. 8); *arid-region societies*, comprising desert and most sand-region vegetation; *mid-region societies*, comprising the mixed vegetation in intermediate regions (Fig. 9), this being the commonest type. Much of the characteristic scenery of any place is due to its plant societies. Arid-region plants usually have small and hard leaves, apparently preventing too rapid loss of water. Usually, also, they are characterized by stiff growth, hairy covering, spines, or a much-contracted plant-body, and often by large underground parts for the storage of water.

Plant societies may also be distinguished with reference to latitude and temperature. There are *tropical societies*, *temperate-region societies*, *boreal* or *cold-region societies.*