



Views of nature; or, Contemplations on the sublime phenomena of creation. With scientific illustrations

Alexander Von Humboldt

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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1872 edition. Excerpt: ...are developed. In the cold North the bark of trees is covered only with dry lichens and mosses, while beneath the tropics the Cymbidium and the fragrant Vanilla adorn the trunks of the Anacardias and the gigantic Fig-tree. The fresh green of the Pothos leaves and of the Dracontias contrast with the many coloured blossoms of the Orchidese; climbing Bauhinias, Passion-flowers and golden flowered Banisterias encircle every tree of the forest, delicate blossoms unfold themselves from the roots of the Theobroma, and from the thick and rough bark of the Cre&ccentia and Gustavia (35). Amid this luxuriant abundance of flowers and foliage, amid this exuberance and tangled web of creeping plants, it is often difficult for the naturalist to recognise the stems to which the various leaves and blossoms belong. A single tree, adorned with Paullinias, Bignonias, and Dendrobias, forms a group of plants, which, separated from each other, would cover a considerable space of ground. In the tropics, plants are more succulent, of a fresher green, and have larger and more glossy leaves, than in the northern regions. Social plants, which give such a character of uniformity to European vegetation, are almost wholly absent in the equatorial zone. Trees, almost twice as high as our oaks, there bloom with flowers as large and splendid as our lilies. On the shady banks of the Magdalena River, in South America, grows a climbing Aristolochia, whose blossoms, measuring four feet in circumference, the Indian children sportively draw on their heads as caps (36). In i v. 1 the South Indian Archipelago, the flower of the Rafnesia is nearly three feet in diameter, and weighs above fourteen pounds. The extraordinary height to which not only individual mountains but...

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