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## **The botanic garden**

**Maund, Benjamin**

**London, 1825-1836**

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Preface.

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## P R E F A C E .

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It is with no ordinary feeling of satisfaction that, at the expiration of fourteen years, we meet as it were so wide a circle of friends—constant adherents to the object of our anxious labours. We cheerfully acknowledge a sense of the favour of their steady support, and gladly see their attachment to that science which cannot be pursued but with retrospective satisfaction, as well as present enjoyment.

The prospect before us of increased gratification is most encouraging; a rich harvest of splendid plants may be said to be at hand, to reward future exertions. Australia is disclosing her long hidden splendour, and America is daily pouring in her beauties. That so many of these are sufficiently hardy to bear the severity of our variable climate is a subject of sincere gratulation.

The increase, too, of Botanical and Horticultural Societies, and the stimulus thereby given to floricultural pursuits, is promising incalculable benefit to society. The artisan and the cottager are, by these, encouraged to meet in friendly competition, their more wealthy neighbours; and the door of communication thus opened, independently of the impulse given to a health-giving pleasurable pursuit, promises extensive moral advantages. We glance at these important changes as connected with our own labours, which it may not, we hope, be presumptuous to

affirm, have had some part in their advancement, since this little work was the first to spread a floricultural taste through various grades of society, and to give it popularity where the name of floriculture was almost unknown.

The progress of Natural Science is, indeed, leading us apace to more important views of the objects of Creation. "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." But the capacity of man's intellect has not yet enabled him to discover the whole value of the work of His hand. The light is, however, dawning, and but few are quite negligent even of the weed on which they are privileged to tread. Some there are, it is true, that will ask, "where is the good?" considering not that our food, our medicine, and our clothing, are, directly or indirectly, dependent on the vegetable kingdom. That this is the case is, however, certain; and therefore the more we know of its productions the more efficiently shall we supply ourselves with these benefits. This consideration, however, is not the whole of our aim; for although these views regarding our bodily wants are unblameable, they are not, as Sir J. E. Smith has observed, "the sole end of human existence. Is it not desirable to call the soul from the feverish agitation of worldly pursuits to the contemplation of DIVINE Wisdom in the beautiful economy of Nature? Is it not a privilege to walk with God in the garden of creation, and hold converse with His Providence? If such elevated feelings do not lead to the study of Nature, it cannot far be pursued without rewarding the student by exciting them."