Marcet

Conversations on Vegetable Physiology

Volume 2: Comprehending the Elements of Botany, with Their Application to Agriculture

Jane Haldimand Marcet (1769–1858) wrote across a range of topics, from natural philosophy to political economy. Her educational books were especially intended for female students, to combat the prevalent idea that science and economics were unsuitable for women, but they found broader popularity: Michael Faraday, as a young bookbinder's apprentice, credited Marcet with introducing him to electrochemistry. This two-volume work, first published in 1829, is a beginner's guide to botany. Since the chief aim was accessibility, Marcet does not dwell on the often burdensome process of plant classification, but focuses on plant forms and botany's practical applications. She presents the facts in the form of simple conversations between two students and their teacher. Based on the lectures of the Swiss botanist Candolle, Volume 2 considers agriculture and plant diseases, the cultivation of trees and culinary vegetables, and the effects of humans on flora.

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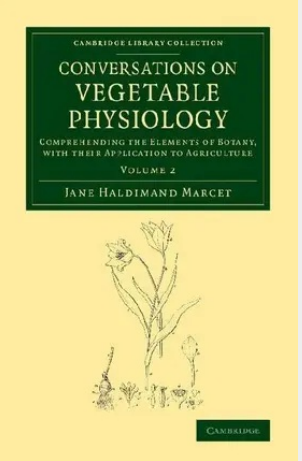

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