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Serenio Watson.

SERENIO WATSON, the Curator of the Herbarium of Harvard College, a man of high character and sound learning, and since the death of Asa Gray the foremost systematic botanist in America, died at his home in Cambridge on the 9th instant after a long and painful illness. He was born on the 1st of December, 1826, at East Windsor Hill, Connecticut, one of the youngest of a large family, and graduated in 1847 from Yale College; then, having taught school for several years in different states, he studied medicine at the University of New York, and later, with an older brother, established as a physician at Quincy, Illinois. He practiced his profession for two years, and then abandoned it to become Secretary of the Planters' Insurance Company of Greenboro', Alabama, a position which he occupied from 1856 to 1861. It was at this time that Mr. Watson began seriously to study plants, although it was not until seven years later, after a term in the Sheffield Scientific School, that he became a professional botanist. He was in California in 1868, and sought and obtained the position of botanist to the United States Geological Expedition, which, under the leadership of Clarence King, explored the territory in western America adjacent to the fortieth parallel of latitude. He was engaged in field-work principally in central Nevada and Utah during the seasons of 1868 and 1869, and published in 1871, with the aid of Professor Eaton, the results of his investigations of the flora of the Great Basin, his report forming the fifth volume of King's *Report of the Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel*. Watson was now invited by Professor Gray to become his assistant at Cambridge, and the remainder of his life has been devoted to the study of the flora of North America and to the care and improvement of the Gray Herbarium and Library.

His publications since his connection with Harvard College have been important; they consist of *The Botany of California*, in connection with Professor Wm. H. Brewer and several specialists; of eighteen numbers of *Contributions to North American Botany*, chiefly published in the

Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Science, and containing the descriptions of many new species of plants and the elaboration of various groups and genera; and of the first part of the *Bibliographical Index to North American Botany*, a most useful work of much research and learning, in which are cited the authorities for all American plants, with a chronological arrangement of their synonymy. Mr. Watson edited the unpublished work on North American Mosses of Lesquereux and James, and more recently, with Professor Coulter, a new edition of Gray's *Manual of the Botany of the United States*. He was a valued contributor to the columns of this journal, and the earlier volumes contain his descriptions of many new and interesting plants. On the death of Professor Gray, four years ago, Mr. Watson was made curator of the Gray Herbarium and Library, and the last years of his life have been spent in administering these great collections, which make Harvard one of the important centres of botanical research.

Mr. Watson was a silent man, retiring and self-contained, always genial and kind, of marvelous capacity for sustained labor, and untiring in helping others. This is not the occasion to discuss his position among the botanists of the period; and just now our thoughts are full of the man, the old and trusted friend and associate, whose death takes from us the example and inspiration of a modest and well-spent life of noble endeavor and useful labor.

The Golden-leaved Oak of California

the amount of this covering and the brightness of its color vary greatly on different individuals; it is generally common, however, on the leaves while they are young, but gradually disappears, leaving the under surface whitish or bluish white.

In the cañons of the Coast-ranges, where the Golden-leaved Oak grows at its best, it is usually a tree forty to sixty feet in height, although individuals nearly a hundred feet tall may sometimes be found, with a short trunk two to four or rarely ten feet in diameter, dividing near the ground into great branches which, spreading at right angles, touch the soil with their extremities and form a mass of foliage sometimes a hundred and fifty feet across. The bark of the trunk and of the branches is ashy gray and covered with flaky scales. The leaves, like the young shoots, as they unfold are clothed with the golden pubescence, and make a charming contrast with the mature leaves of previous years. These are usually about two inches long, oblong, pointed, obtuse or slightly heart-shaped at the base, and usually entire on old trees, although on young and very vigorous trees, and especially on suckers, they are sinuate-toothed. They are thick, firm, bright and lustrous on the upper surface at first, although in time the bright green becomes more or less shaded with yellow. The male flowers, with eight to ten stamens and a five to seven-leaved perianth, are produced in short often branched catkins, while the female flowers are borne on short stalks or are sessile on the branches.

east, where, perhaps, our summers are too moist for them; and in northern and central Europe they do not succeed, but in Australia, or in some part of the Mediterranean basin, perhaps some spot can be found where congenial conditions can be provided for these trees, and where, if they grow as they have grown in the California valleys, they will repay the care and labor needed to rear them.

Suitable Names for Country Places.

IN naming a country place there is great difficulty in hitting upon a title that shall be pleasing and suggestive without being hackneyed or savoring of sentimentality.

In an old country like England, where the language bears traces of Norse and Saxon and Roman occupation, there are a number of strong monosyllables descriptive of certain divisions of land that form effective combinations with more familiar words, or with a family name, for the designation of a country-seat or villa; so that their old titles seem particularly happy, and removed from the commonplace. Domesday Book contains a number of these ancient terms in its descriptions of the holdings of the people in the days of William the Conqueror. A toft was a grove of trees on a hill, a croft an enclosure, the meadow-lands were divided into garths and deals by great furrows plowed by eight yoke of oxen, the wavering course of which can still be recognized from some Yorkshire hill, as well as the wide sweeps made by them in turning the corners, showing the curiously unchanging character of English country life.

There were then, as now, moors, or heaths, of wide extent, wolds—which sometimes mean a wood, and again a hilly region devoid of timber, which may once have borne a forest on its rolling surface, of which only the name survives—and holms, which signify low, flat stretches of land near a stream, and also a river-islet. High ridges of land were known as rigs; isolated rocks, like towers, are still called tors; the groves were wealds, and the forest-clearings roydys; gate and forth, in Yorkshire, still mean a road. The old English name for a wild beast, *deor*, which in these combinations means a deer, survives in Darby, or Derby; in Darlands, also written Darelands and Deerlands, and in Dar-ton, which is found in old English as *deórtún* (deer-park). A map of Derby, made in 1611, contains an emblematic drawing of a deer-park surrounded by a wooden fence, with a single deer in the middle.

Also, in such names as Goat's Cliffe, Kid Tor, Lamb Hill and Hart Hill linger pastoral reminiscences of old England; Gates head means the goat's hill, and probably Gad's hill is a corruption of the same word, while the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth, bears record of a heath on which the lambs disported themselves before the town of London was built. A reminiscence of the Druids lingers in Selioke (blessed Oak), and a reminder of Christian zeal in Swinnoek (burnt Oak), where the bishops cut down and burned these relics of heathen worship.

Throughout England the rural districts in their names bear traces of its history and its religions, of its early beliefs in fairies and giants, in Norns and sprites, and of the transfer of tradition to saints and the Virgin Mary, so that the titles of towns and fields and homesteads are an unfailingly interesting study.

In our own geography we have reason to be grateful for such Indian names as have not been supplanted by honored English ones, or ugly inventions of our own, and some of these traces still linger in beautiful country-seats along the Hudson River, which are described by soft Algonquin syllables, as Algonac (hill and river), which is the name of a fine place at Newburgh. Canonchet is the Indian name of the Sprague place in Rhode Island; Nonaguacut Farm of a Rhode Island sea-shore home, and Chamcook of an estate on Passamaquoddy Bay, formerly occupied by Mr. Wilson.

There is a pleasant set of names that we often find used both in England and this country, such as Hawkswood, Crow's-nest, Oaklands, Hillside, Bellevue, Eagleswood, and the like, which have become so hackneyed from frequent use that one hesitates to employ them, no matter how appropriate they may be to the surroundings.

Other names have associations which endear them to us, like Sunnyside, which Washington Irving has made famous; Edgewood, where Ik Marvel's farm continues to interest us; Idlewild, that Willis celebrated; Elmwood, where Lowell lived and died, so that we hesitate to apply them to any less well-known place. In fact, when one begins the search for a fresh and telling name he finds the crop pretty well harvested already.



Sargent, Charles Sprague. 1892. "Sargent, Charles S. 16 Mar 1892 [S. Watson obituary]." *George Golding Kennedy correspondence*

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