

This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1878 edition. Excerpt: ...order; and especially among their tropical genera. Like parasitism it is not usually confined to any genus, but is affected by members of all alike. Some genera may include more epiphytal species than others, just as among British plants the greatest number affecting parasitical habits belong to the Scrophulariaceae and Orobanchaceae. In the tropical regions the influence of physical and biological surroundings must be much more powerfully felt than in the temperate zones. The struggle for life among plants will therefore be intenser; and the abundant heat and moisture of tropical forests must favour the development of vegetation. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that there we find the epiphytal and parasitical habits most indulged in. The dense throng of woody trees, all growing upwards towards the light, and forming a dark canopy overhead which often prevents the solar rays from reaching the ground, is not encouraging to the growth of herbaceous flowering plants. There is neither light nor heat enough for them; and, as Wallace has remarked, nowhere in the world do we find the surface of the ground clad with such floral colours as are to be seen in an English meadow in June! But, although the conditions of tropical forests are not favourable to ground plants, they are peculiarly so to bush-ropes (Lianas) and other creepers, which twine themselves around the strong stems of other trees until they not unfrequently throttle them, prevent the upflow of sap, and thus EPIPHYTAL ORCHIDS. 141 1 literally strangle them to death. Upwards the persevering climbers twine, until they at length reach the sunlight, and then break forth into dense bunches or rosettes of green leaves, and clusters of the most brilliant flowers. The...

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