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Shirley Hibberd

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The Fern Garden

James Shirley Hibberd (1825–90) was a journalist and writer on gardening, whose popular works had great influence on middle-class taste. Although not a trained horticulturalist, his many books were based on practical experience. He developed a succession of gardens in north London concentrating on particular types of plants, and his books reflected this work, with the *Rose Book* (1864) and the *Fern Garden* (1869) being particularly successful. He also wrote on garden design, flower arrangement, garden furniture and architecture, and his *Rustic Adornments* of 1856, also published in this series, is an important work of social and fashion history. He edited the magazine *Floral World* until 1875 and later the *Gardener's Magazine*, and was even consulted by the government about potato blight. His engaging and very personal style made him a popular forerunner of modern celebrity gardeners, and set a fashion for highly decorative and ornamental gardens.

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108037181

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2011

This edition first published 1869

This digitally printed version 2011

ISBN 978-1-108-03718-1 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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THE FERN GARDEN

HOW TO MAKE, KEEP, AND ENJOY IT;

OR,

FERN CULTURE MADE EASY.

BY

SHIRLEY HIBBERD,

AUTHOR OF "RUSTIC ADORNMENTS FOR HOMES OF TASTE,"
ETC. ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH EIGHT COLOURED PLATES AND
FORTY WOOD ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS,
5, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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LONDON; PRINTED BY J. E. ADLARD, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

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P R E F A C E.

BEGINNERS in Fern culture are very much perplexed by the abundance of books on the subject, and their general unfitness to afford the aid a beginner requires. Almost everybody has written a book on ferns, it having become the fashion to consider a knowledge of the subject rather a disqualification than otherwise. When the blind attempt to lead the blind the result can be safely predicated, and no doubt the myriads of bad books on ferns that swarm in the cheap book shops have done their full share of mischief. We have fortunately plenty of good books on the subject, but for the most part they are technical and elaborate, and shoot over the heads of beginners. Some of my fern-loving friends have persuaded me to

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try my hand on a small volume adapted for the induction of the unlearned and unskilled in this pursuit, and here it is. Whether it will supersede any of the bad books or take lowest rank amongst them is for me a solemn problem. But I send it forth in hope that after a quarter of a century of hard work in the practical part of the subject, I may be better qualified to make a little book than some of those who, previous to writing, had acquired only a week or so of experience, and a very dim knowledge of about half a dozen species. As almost every fern in cultivation has names enough to fill a small volume, I have in every case adopted the names by which those recommended are best known in nurseries and gardens. The fearful question of nomenclature is thus avoided, and every fern may be found by the name it bears in this epitome.

S. H.

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