(vol. ii., 170, Paris, 1809), showing that this was well understood at the time.

But, as I have elsewhere contended, Rafinesque evidently wrote *Hicoria*. The whole of his article in the *Medical Repository* shows faulty proof-reading, or no proof-reading at all, and the word came out *Scoria*. Afterward, except in the Louisiana Flora (1817), Rafinesque wrote it *Hicoria*, and the proof that he so wrote it originally is to be found in the following statements:

In the "Good Book and Amenities of Nature," pp. 48, 49 (1840), he says: "In the continuation of these trees in the 'American Grove,' American novelties are still more numerous. . . . The monographs of new and revised sp. are *Calycanthus*, 5 sp.; *Myrica*, 12 . . . of Hickory trees or *Hicoria*, Raf., 1808, 4 subg. and 4 new sp. . ; ."

In his "Alsographia Americana" he says: "*Hicoria*, Raf., 1808. *Carya*, Nuttall, 1818, etc. As early as 1804 I proposed to separate the Hickories from the Walnuts, to which Muhlenberg objected. I did so in 1808 in my remarks on Michaux's Flora, and again in 1817 in my 'Florula Ludoviciana,' giving the almost Grecian name of *Hicoria*; yet Nuttall changed it in 1818 into *Carya*, which means merely nut. . . ."

Dr. Torrey has it *Hickoria* in his Catalogue of Plants growing within thirty miles of New York (1819), citing it as a synonym of *Carya*. There is a letter of Rafinesque extant protesting against this, and especially against the *k*. The word has also been spelled with a *k* by Le Conte and others, but there appears to be no authority for it.

It is, therefore, apparent that there is no valid choice between *Hicoria* and *Hicorius*; the only issue that can be raised is between *Hicoria*, a strictly applicable Latinized aboriginal name, and its misprint, *Scoria*, which, from what I have shown, can hardly be seriously taken up by any botanist.

Columbia College. *N. L. Britton.*

[Dr. Britton's point as to the date (1805) of the establishment of the Rafinesquian genus would seem to be well taken, as there is no doubt what the species were that Rafinesque meant to include in it, and, consequently, no ambiguity in regard to the limits of his proposed genus can exist. His view is enforced by a canon (XLII.) of the code of nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union, which affirms that "The basis of a generic or subgeneric name is either (1) a designated recognizably described species, or (2) a designated recognizable plate or figure, or (3) a published diagnosis," to which is added as remarks: "Some writers insist that a generic or subgeneric name, in order to be tenable, must be accompanied by a diagnosis. However proper such a requisition may seem theoretically, the principle is thoroughly impracticable, and if enforced would lead to hopeless confusion. The custom of naturalists has been quite otherwise, and the mere mention of a type has been found to be often a better index to an author's meaning than is frequently a diagnosis or even a long description. Either of the three alternatives given above may alone be accepted as a proper definition. In the case of a diagnosis it must, of course, give some character or characters by which the organism it is intended to designate may be unmistakably recognized."

The question is, therefore, properly between Scoria, as printed, and Hicoria. The evidence points to a misprint certainly; and as a misprint it may, according to the rigid rules in nomenclature, be corrected. ("A generic name should subsist just as it was made, although a purely typographical error may be corrected." A. De Candolle.)—Ed.]

## The Destruction of Evergreens for Christmas Decorations.

To the Editor of Garden and Forest:

Sir.—That the recent Forestry Congress in Philadelphia, which evidently had the preservation and prosperity of our forests honestly at heart, made no protest against the wholesale destruction of shapely young evergreens every year as Christmas-trees, strikes an interested onlooker as, at least, demanding comment. If this German fashion of sacrificing a tree at the Christmas-tide were a harmless fad, like the sending of holiday cards, or one likely to wear itself out before much positive hurt is done, it might pass unrebuked. But it is a growing custom, and has already reached such proportions that the yearly December slaughter of the "innocents" unquestionably amounts to 1,000,000 or over east of the Mississippi River. That such an enormous devastation cannot long continue without impoverishing the forest supply of the future must be apparent to every one. No true lover of trees or intelligent patriot can behold the slain evergreen beauties stacked in the market-place at Christmas-time and consider their ultimate fate without a pang of regret, and even of anger, at the thoughtless sentiment that is gratified through such wicked waste, to say nothing of the ruthless extermination of various evergreen growths, which, if left undisturbed, make our woods forever beautiful, but, when woven into wreaths, soon perish, and then feed the fire or the garbage gulch.

No one is necessarily any the happier for the Christmas-tree, and the children who have been reared to regard the sacrifice of a lovely young tree for a few hours' entertainment as wicked and cruel, are as happy—if not happier—than the youngsters who, through custom, think Christmas a poor thing without a tree.

It is a possible thing in many families to use Orange and Oleander trees, which are grown in tubs, for Christmas decorating. It is also possible in many localities for young evergreens to be lifted, especially from nurseries, out of the ground, and the roots so cared for that the tree may be used for planting after the Christmas use is over, to live and grow into a perennial joy, more beautiful when decorated by nature with frost and gleam than a poor, murdered tree ever was, hung with strings and tinsel.

Seriously, is it not high time for all good people to frown upon a Christmas-custom that is neither Christian nor common sense, and which is at once so unnecessary and so harmful?

Bryn Mawr, Pa. *Mary Wager-Fisher.*

[The trees which are used in the eastern states at Christmas are usually the Black Spruce and the Balsam Fir. The Hemlock, the Arbor-vitæ and the White Pine are used less commonly. These trees, where they spring up naturally, grow so close together that they are subjected, almost from the beginning of their existence, to a fierce and continuous struggle for life, in which hundreds perish where a single individual reaches maturity. The young trees in these forests would grow more quickly and with less expenditure of vital force if man would come in and help nature to destroy the weak for the benefit of the strong. This is what thinning means in forest-management. The coniferous forests of the United States can supply Christmas-trees for the whole world ten times over every year and be improved by the operation, provided they are cut with this purpose in view. The danger in this, as in every operation in the American forests, is, that the future is sacrificed for the present, and when young trees are cut for the Christmas-markets they are cut without any reference to the effect their removal will have on the future growth of the forest. This business is only a little rivulet added to the great stream which for two centuries has been slowly draining the American forests, and which is going to exterminate them unless some change takes place in the attitude of the American people toward forest-property. Nature does not recognize the infallibility of republics; nor can Americans, any more than less fortunate people, tamper with the workings of her immutable laws without incurring the penalties which follow their violation.—Ed.]

## Wanted, a Chart of Standard Colors.

To the Editor of Garden and Forest:

Sir.—Permit me to call attention to an urgent need, which I believe is felt almost universally by naturalists—a complete nomenclature of colors for field use. It is not strange, without a standard authority upon the subject, that the colors of flowers are so rarely given with anything approaching uniformity or correctness. There are many puzzling shades and tints in nature which even artists who have made a special study of colors cannot name or correctly reproduce at first trial. It is even more difficult in animal life to correctly describe color, and this is found especially true when attempting to define the life colors of certain marine forms of the lower vertebrates and invertebrates. Mr. Robert Ridgeway, of the United States National Museum, has attempted to supply this want among ornithologists in an expensive volume encumbered by a dictionary of ornithological terms and other

technical matter, of use only to ornithologists. Further, as it was primarily designed for orinthologists, only those colors which obtain in our native birds are shown, and many colors and shades of common occurrence among our flowers and in the lower ranks of life are wholly unrepresented in the colored plates. Will not some one prepare a pocket edition, adapted alike to field and study, that shall, as far as possible, show every color in nature, and state also what combinations are necessary to produce each? *C. R. Orcutt.*

San Diego, Cal.

## The Disappearance of Wild Flowers.

To the Editor of GARDEN AND FOREST:

Sir.—In addition to the causes of the disappearance of our wild flowers, as stated by Professor Beal on page 527 of GARDEN AND FOREST, I would cite another. For many years I had been in the habit of visiting a cosy nook on Long Island, New York, where the *Sanguinaria Canadensis* grew luxuriantly, the ground being completely covered with foliage and flowers, in their season. The past spring I again visited the wood, after an absence of three years, but scarcely a flower was to be seen, only here and there one in the thicket, away from the former mass. Neither were there any tree leaves on the ground, the owner of the wood having raked them all off for bedding purposes, the result of which was the loss of our favorite flowers. The removal of the leaves left the Blood Root without the winter protection it needs. I think this will account for the loss of a great many of our native plants; the clearing of our forests has removed the protection that nature afforded them. *C. L. Allen.*

Floral Park, N. Y.

## The National Flower.

To the Editor of GARDEN AND FOREST:

Sir.—The national flower should be as nearly universal in the states as possible. It should be a home flower, not imported. It should lend itself to art in form and color. It should be significant of a national sentiment and embody an American idea. Let me suggest another, yet unnamed, for the honor of representing our country, namely, the Starwort or Aster. It is more abundant in North America than elsewhere. One hundred and twenty-four species belong to our flora. It ranges from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to Central America. It is beautiful; it is hardy; it is perennial; and deserves the sentimental regard of all who see it yearly adorning our fields and woods in summer and autumn.

Let the wild Aster be our country's flower.
See how it gems with stars the glorious flag!
Onward it spreads, the symbol of our power,
"The Star of Empire," past each barrier crag;
And every blossom, many joined in one,
Presents the Union, peace and freedom won.

Cambridge, Mass. *E. S. D.*

## Recent Publications.

*A Rambler's Lease*, by Bradford Torrey. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1889.

This little book is a record of the impressions and observations of one who, in the phrase he quotes from Charles Lamb, delights to "walk about, not to and from." Such books, as we have had occasion to say more than once before, are growing to be a prominent and distinctive feature in American literature, and each new one deserves a welcome as a sign that the love for out-door life, as it means not sport, but a keen, intelligent pleasure in the beauty and significance of natural objects, is steadily on the increase among our countrymen. Perhaps certain recent volumes by other hands have been more poetical, more full of the personality of the writer than Mr. Torrey's. Nevertheless there is individuality and a touch of poetic feeling in his pages, too; and he has occasionally an epigrammatic way of putting a valuable truth which should impress it with peculiar distinctness upon the mind of the reader. When, for example, he says that he has almost written "highwayman" instead of "highway surveyor," we feel a sympathetic thrill inspired by the memory of such ravages among beautiful road-side growths as he himself is deploring.

Birds, even more than plants, have been the objects of Mr. Torrey's studies, and his chapters are pretty equally divided between the attractions of animate and of inanimate nature, thus giving his book more variety than is found in some others of its character. Few pages are pleasanter than those which, under the title of "Bashful Drummers," describe his long-thwarted efforts to see as well as hear the partridge drumming—none, unless it be those which recount his "Woodland Intimacy" with a vireo. Another very charming and more definitely instructive essay was noticed in these columns when first printed some months ago in the *Atlantic Monthly*—the one which recites the surprising number of plants which may be found blooming in November on a New England sea coast. In "Esoteric Peripateticism" we have a delightful plea for those contemplative rambles, which are too often considered a mere waste of time in this busy land. As Mr. Torrey well says, every impulse toward such a manner of spending one's hours should be sedulously encouraged because "there is little danger that the lives of any of us will be too solitary or lived at too leisurely a rate. The world grows busier and busier. Those whose passion for Nature is strongest and most deep-seated are driven to withhold from her all but the odds and ends of the day. We rebel sometimes; the yoke grows unendurable; come what may, we will be quit of it; but the existing order of things proves too strong for us, and anon we settle back into the old bondage." Mr. Torrey's "ideal plan" would include two walks a day—"one in the morning for observation, with every sense alert; the other toward night, for a mood of 'wise passiveness' wherein Nature should be left free to have her own way with the heart and the imagination." He well emphasizes the fact that really and fully to enjoy hours out-of-doors some branch of science should be studied, that the senses may be alert to good purpose and the intellect as well as the faculty of mere passive enjoyment be gratified. Of course, as he admits, there is some danger in scientific study—the danger that the receptive, emotional, beauty-loving faculties may be blunted and the mind alone be used. "One may become so zealous a botanist as almost to cease to be a man. The shifting panorama of the heavens and the earth no longer appeals to him. He is now a specialist, and, go where he will, he sees nothing but specimens." But this danger can be avoided. It is possible to "give free play to fancy and imagination without permitting ourselves to degenerate into impotent dreamers. Every walker ought to be a faithful student of at least one branch of natural history, not omitting Latin names and the very latest discoveries and theories. But, withal, let him make sure that his acquaintance with out-door life is sympathetic and not merely curious or scientific." Only by a combination or alternation of the two moods—the two attitudes—can the truest enjoyment be extracted from the natural world. And how the two may exist and develop together Mr. Torrey displays so well in his various chapters that his example should profit as well as entertain all those who are moved to make the best of that "Rambler's Lease" in the real estate of others to which they as well as he have a right.

## Recent Plant Portraits.

*Botanical Magazine*, December.

THRINAX EXCELSA, *t.* 7088; probably one of the so-called Thatch Palms of the West Indies, but described from a plant of uncertain origin long cultivated in the stove-house of the Royal Gardens.

TIGRIDIA PRINGLEI, *t.* 7089; first described and figured by Mr. Watson in GARDEN AND FOREST (i., 388, f. 61).

CABOMBA AQUATICA, *t.* 7090; an interesting aquatic plant ound in still waters from Mexico to southern Brazil; differing from the species (*C. Caroliniana*) of the southern United States by its much narrower leaves and yellow flowers (those of the North American species are white). The Cabombas are remarkable in the two forms of leaves produced on the same stem, the one form submerged and the other floating. The submerged leaves are round in outline, but are cut into narrow, thread-like divisions, while the floating leaves, with much longer petioles, are round and peltate. The small flowers are attractive, although they remain open during a single day only.

AMORPHOPHALLUS EICHLERI, *t.* 7091; a showy species from an island in the Congo River. The flowers, like those of the other species, emit a horrible odor.

CLINTONIA ANDREWSIANA, *t.* 7092; a native of the California coast-region, with showy, rose colored flowers in a dense terminal umbel.

MASDEVALLIA CHIMÆRA, *Gartenflora*, December 1st.

SALVIA SPLENDENS, var. Bruanti, *Gardeners' Chronicle*, December 7th. A variety with tall spikes of bright scarlet flowers and good habit.

SALVIA BETHELLI, *Gardeners' Chronicle*, December 7th. A form of *S. involucrata*, with very large spikes of puce-colored flowers.