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Ferdinand Reppert

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Ferdinand Reppert.

BY B. SHIMEK.

The summer of 1903 witnessed the close of the life of one of the most ardent lovers of Nature within the borders of our State. To write a truly appreciative sketch of a life like that of Ferdinand Reppert is no easy task. The ordinary chronological details of his life could not be obtained by the writer of this sketch, nor could he secure a photograph in order that the kindly features of the deceased naturalist might look from these pages upon the friends who mourn his loss. He was a native of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, a graduate of the Michigan College of Pharmacy, Ann Arbor, and since the early 70's a practicing pharmacist in Muscatine, Iowa. But long after these details, even now obscure, will have been forgotten, he will be remembered for his splendid work in his chosen field of botany, for his quiet but intense enthusiasm, and for the scientific accuracy and thorough honesty of his work. He was essentially a lover of out-of-doors. The laboratory and library invited him only as they threw additional light on the activities and habits of his beloved plants. Those who, like the writer, had the pleasure of accompanying him in his studies in the field, were deeply impressed with the keenness of his observations, the accuracy of his judgment, and the truly scientific spirit which he displayed in his work, and all have regretted that it was not possible for him to concentrate all his energies upon his favorite subject. As it was, his labors were not unproductive of results. He was for a number of years a member of this Academy, and was well known to botanists far beyond the limits of the State. He was joint author of the "Flora of Scott and Muscatine Counties," the account of the Muscatine flora being almost wholly his contribution. This paper was published in 1900, but he was then already well-known to professional botanists as a keen observer, and the discoverer of many rare and unique Iowa plants. He also left a fine collection of plants, largely Iowan, which is now in the herbarium of the State University, and which is a splendid monument to his industry and scientific acumen. The collection also includes the results of two expeditions to the west, the more productive of which extended over more than 600 miles of the Rockies in Colorado and Wyoming, and was made in 1898, in company with his old-time friend and co-laborer, Prof. F. M. Witter. These fruits of his labors will long continue to be of assistance to students of botany, while the memory of his kindly, appreciative nature, and of his gentle personality, will always remain with those who knew him best.
