

REPORT OF THE BOTANICAL SECTION, 1891

(Read Jan. 28th, 1892.)

To the Council of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club :

GENTLEMEN,—The leaders in botany have pleasure in reporting that there has been continued activity in this branch during the past season. Some additional plants have been added to the local list, new localities discovered for rare species previously recorded, and interesting observations made in growing native plants from seed. In this connection the leaders would draw attention to the work now being carried on at the botanic garden on the Central Experimental Farm, where a large number of native plants have been grown from seed from various parts of the Dominion, and which are always available for study by visitors and students. A magnificent collection of seeds of prairie flowers has during the past season been presented to the botanist in charge by Mr. T. N. Willing, of Calgary, N.W.T., a member of the club. Some of these have been sown, and many others are ready for planting in the spring. All members are invited to assist with seeds and roots of rare plants. The importance of studying plants in a growing condition cannot be too strongly urged. Of particular interest to botanists are several plants, the seeds of which have been presented by Prof. Macoun, concerning which there was some doubt as to specific identity, or for the observation of other points of scientific interest. As an instance of the value of this work mention may be made of an investigation made by Mr. J. M. Macoun last spring, by which it was found that the *Camassia*, abundant around Victoria, in Vancouver Island, is not, as was supposed, *Camassia esculenta* but *C. Leichtlinii*, a fact which had previously been suggested by Prof. Macoun. The true *C. esculenta* was collected by Mr. Macoun near Sproat's Landing, and grows in low land quite close to the river, growing, in fact, in the early part of the season when discovered, in the water by the riverside. *C. Leichtlinii* has larger and darker purple flowers, with the lowest segment of the perianth conspicuously deflexed. A collection of great interest to the botanical student is the large collection of native and foreign grasses—about 150 different species—which are being cultivated at the Experimental Farm.

Sub-excursions by members of the branch to localities at some distance from the city have been made during the past season: to High Falls, on the Lièvre; to Templeton and Buckingham down the Ottawa River; to Casselman, on the Castor River; to the Chats Rapids, to be specially reported upon by Mr. R. B. Whyte, and also, as well, to less distant points. At High Falls *Epigæa repens*, the May-flower, sometimes miscalled the Trailing Arbutus, was found in magnificent profusion, and large bunches of the exquisite flowers were brought back to the city. The lovely *Calypso borealis*, a deliciously-scented but very rare orchid, was also obtained there in unusual abundance by Mr. R. B. Whyte. At Templeton Mr. W. Scott found *Spiranthes Romanzoffiana* in profusion in a hay field close to the East Templeton wharf, and between the wharf and the lighthouse keeper's house; also *Thalictrum purpurascens*. Casselman, and Moose Creek a few miles beyond that place, have again this year provided rich treasures for those who went to seek them. *Cardamine rhomboidea*, the tall erect form, with stiff and almost sessile leaves, only previously recorded from Hull, was there found in great abundance. A violet taken to be *Viola rotundifolia*, was found at Moose Creek. Perhaps the most interesting find of the year was *Flærkea proserpinacoides*, found by Prof. Macoun at Casselman early in the season. A trip to Buckingham by Prof. Macoun and Mr. Scott in October gave new localities for *Potamogeton Robinsii*, and what also is very rare here, *Polygonum dumetorum* var. *scandens*. On the mountain at the back of Old Chelsea *Carex Hitchcockiana* and *Aspidium Braunii* were discovered, while on the slope of the mountain running up from the north shore of Kingsmere, *Carex Houghtonii* was collected. This is the only locality yet found near Ottawa, and it is very rare here. Nearer home some other interesting discoveries were made. Prof. Macoun collected *Eleocharis intermedia* near Leamy's Lake, and Mr. J. M. Macoun at Hull found *Viola rostrata*, the rarest of all our violets in this locality. It has only once previously been collected here, when two plants were found growing in the Governor-General's Bay at New Edinburgh. Mr. Scott found undoubted specimens of *Ranunculus circinatus*, the stiff water crow-foot, in Patterson's Creek. *Claytonia Virginica* frequently sought for unsuccessfully in this locality, was last spring found in abundance in the woods

running from Billings Bridge to Dow's Swamp by both Mr. Fletcher and Mr. J. M. Macoun. In a field near the same place Mr. Fletcher also found this season large numbers of plants of the yellow-flowered form of *Verbascum Blattaria*, the Moth Mullein. This field he had passed through several times the previous year at the same season, but did not observe a specimen. Mr. R. H. Cowley also found a similar occurrence near Skead's Mills on the Ottawa River. Mr. Scott found several fine specimens of *Goodyera pubescens*, the Rattlesnake Plantain, at Ironsides, and in Dow's Swamp *Cypripedium arietinum* and *Microstylis monophyllos*, two of our rarest orchids. Mr. Fletcher collected at Rockcliffe true and very characteristic specimens of the Glaucous Meadow Grass, *Poa cæsia*. This resembles somewhat *Poa compressa*, the Canada Blue Grass, but the whole plant is covered with a bluish white and conspicuous bloom, and the stems are round instead of flattened. The following introduced plants have been collected in the neighbourhood of the city by Mr. W. Scott :

Sisymbrium Sophia. A fine plant of this very distinct crucifer was found on made ground near the artificial lake on Major's Hill Park.

Sisymbrium Alviaria. A colony of this European plant has established itself and spread considerably during the last few years in Beechwood.

North-West Prairie Flowers. An interesting instance of western plants having become well established is found near Capt. Cowley's house at Skead's Mills, on the banks of the Ottawa, where the following plants were found by Mr. R. H. Cowley :

Grindelia squarrosa, in large numbers, extending for about an acre in all directions from a deserted house.

Lepachys columnaris, a handsome composite of a distinctly western type, in almost as great abundance as the above.

Erysimum parviflorum. Several specimens were collected by Mr. Scott on the Canadian Pacific Railway bank near the Union station and submitted to Prof. Macoun.

Conium maculatum.—To the north of Beechwood Cemetery and between it and the lake hundreds of specimens of this intensely poisonous plant were found growing in great luxuriance. This is the true Poison Hemlock, and it would be well for all members of the Club to

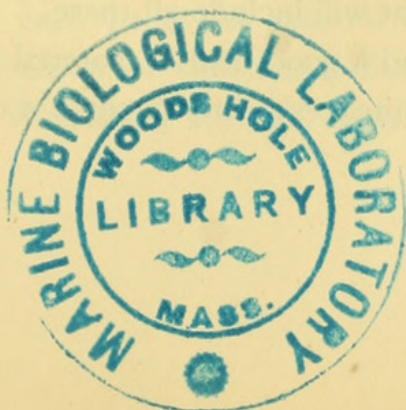
make themselves familiar with its appearance, so as to avoid it themselves and warn others against its poisonous properties.

Mr. R. H. Cowley discovered new localities for the Walking Fern (*Camptosorus rhizophyllus*) and the Maiden-hair Spleenwort (*Asplenium Trichomanes*). These were growing together on rocks to the west of the Beaver Meadow at Hull.

It will be noticed that no less than fifteen new plants have been added to the *Flora Ottawaensis* during the past season, and these were all found in localities which had been previously worked over. There are still several plants which should occur in this district, but which so far have not been discovered. The leaders would suggest the advisability of a special systematic search being made for these one by one in the most likely places.

A curious case of poisoning in the city of Hull, Province of Quebec, was traced up by the leaders to the rare introduced plant *Datura Tatula* or Purple-flowered Thorn-apple. This plant is of rare occurrence here; but when once introduced seems to be able to live and spread. This was the case in the streets of Stewarton some years ago. Specimens kindly procured for the leaders by a gentleman connected with the Ottawa DAILY CITIZEN were distinctly recognizable as this species by their purple stems. *Datura Stramonium* is not uncommon in waste places about the city, but *D. Tatula* is rare. There appears to have been a large patch growing on a piece of waste land in the city of Hull, and some five or six children ate the seeds, and all of them were made extremely ill, so that it was feared for some days that all would die. Ultimately, however, all recovered. The curious part of this case is that anyone, even children, should eat the seeds of this uninviting plant. Not only are the pods covered with sharp spines; but the whole plant has a most nauseous and sickening odour.

JAMES FLETCHER, }
WILLIAM SCOTT, } LEADERS.
R. H. COWLEY. }





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