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FLOWERS OF THE MOUNTAIN.

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WINONA BAILEY.

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The Outing Committee had promised the "botany bunch" for the Rainier trip such display of flowers as they had never dreamed of, and they kept their promise. When camp was first made in Moraine Park the snow had so recently melted in most places that only a few tiny green leaves gave promise of gardens of loveliness three weeks later. A few flowers like the fur-clad Western or Mountain anemone (*pulsatilla occidentalis*) had already ventured out from beneath their winter coverings. But even the hardy sweet colt's

foot of the higher altitudes (*petasites frigida*) wrapped in cotton as it is, seemed to shiver beside the icy stream. The little blue violet (*viola retroscabra*) was out, and nestling so close to Mother Earth as not to feel the chill winds, smiled a welcome. Wild heliotrope (*valeriana sitchensis*), so called because of her fragrance, was arrayed in her thinnest gown—possibly in her Alaska home she has become inured to cold weather and light garments—and tossing her head high, received the attention she demanded. The avalanche lily, as Mr. Curtis appropriately calls the white dog-tooth violet of the mountains (*erythronium montanum*), is also acclimated to a northern home, and to show its indifference to cold frequently pushes its head up through the edge of a retreating snow-bank.

But to go back to Fairfax and come up the trail with the flowers. The first miles were not especially interesting, leading for the most part through a burn with the fire-weed (*epilobium spicatum*), conspicuous, as it is in such places, the whole Western country over. A reminder of home were the graceful plumes of goat's beard (*aruncus aruncus*). Three weeks later this gentleman, like many a good mountaineer, had lost his blonde complexion and developed a shaggy beard, while his place in the world of beauty had been taken by the feathery ocean spray (*scizonotus discolor*). In many places the rocks were covered with the bright yellow of the stone crop (*sedum divergens*). The botanists also picked up a turtle-head (*chelone nemorosa*) and a coarse water-leaf (*hydrophyllum capitatum*) before reaching the deep forest near the borders of the National Park. Within the forest the air was sweet with the delicate fragrance of millions of the tiny, tinkling pink bells of the twin flower (*Linnaeas Americana*), the one flower the great Linnaeus wanted to bear his name. Whenever the trail came near the brook there were great hedges of beautiful lace-like leaves with spikes of

pink flowers (*capnoides scouleri*) that resembled the more modest bleeding heart (*bikukulla formosa*), called by the children Dutchman's breeches, which indeed grew near by.

But the parts of the woods the Mountaineers love best are the places where tower giant cedars and firs and hemlocks hundreds of feet into the air, shedding through their branches a mellow light on great soft beds of the most beautiful of Washington's many mosses, the lacy *hylocomium splendens*. Here are numberless dainty white flowers; the one with four white bracts set across its four green leaves is the dwarf dog-wood (*cornus canadensis*); the pure white waxy flower, like a delicate lily, between two long leaves, is the *clintonia uniflora*; while the exquisite white one growing out from the center of a circlet of leaves in a bed of moss is the rare *moneses uniflora*. The two prince's pines are in these woods side by side, the *pip-ississwa* of the Indians, one (*chimaphila umbellata*), with shiny stiff green leaves and fancy pink parasol-like blossoms; the other (*chimaphila menziesii*) with more dainty flowers, pure white, often with mottled leaves. Then there are many pyrolas, a tall pink spike (*pyrola bracteata*), a shorter, more compact one (*pyrola secunda*) and a tall stem set with creamy white flowers (*pyrola picta*). The orchid family is represented by groups of slender coral-root (*corallorhiza mertensiana*), three or four together; and the two twa-blades (*ophrys caurina* and *ophrys convallarioides*), with their delicate green spikes. Occasionally a clump of colorless Indian pipe (*hypopitys hypopitys*) is seen just pushing its head through the ground.

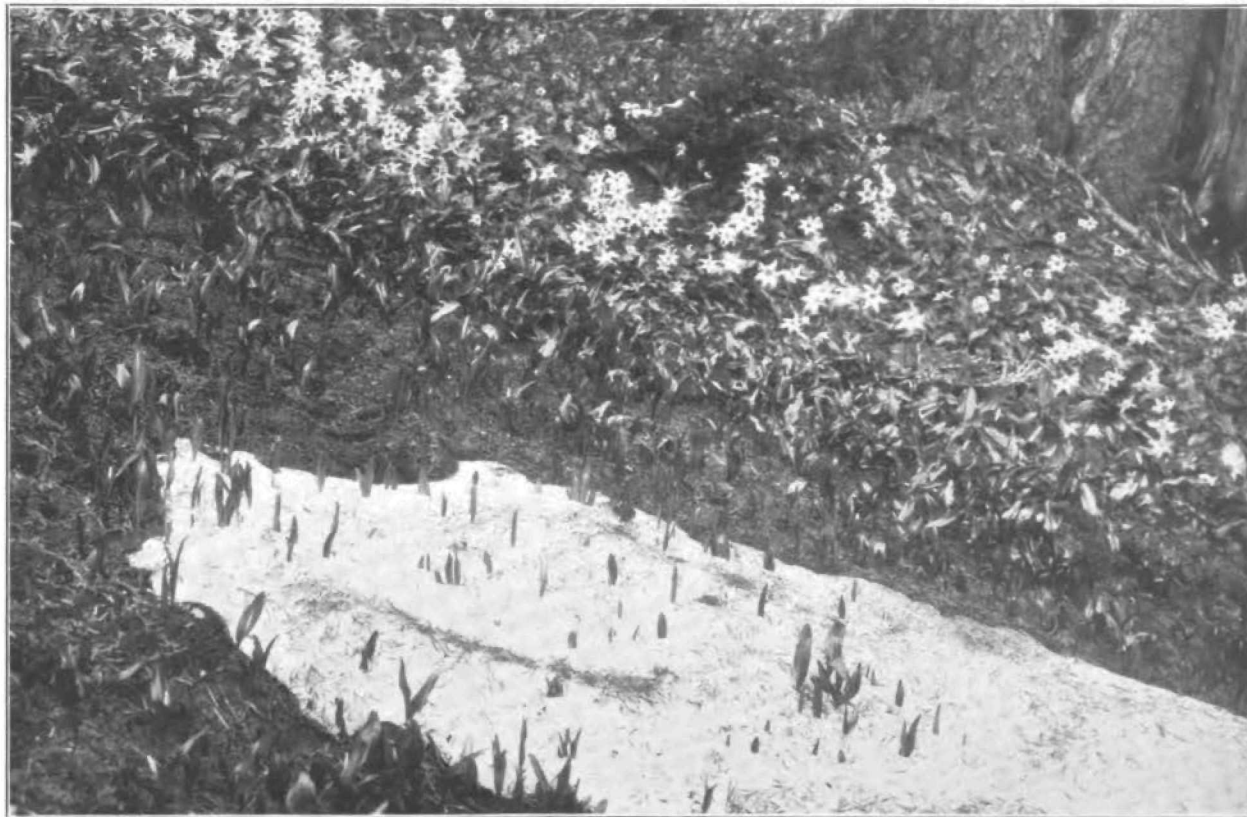
On the rocks of the moraine just below the nose of Carbon Glacier grew mats of wild foxglove (*pentstemon menziesii*), with showy purple blossoms, and clump after clump of rock fern (*cryptogramma acrostichoi-*

*des*), its plume-like fertile fronds very numerous and conspicuous among those infertile.

The practice trips from camp introduced an entirely new group of plants. On the dry, rocky ledges, high above the mountain meadows, and heathery benches, it seemed as if no flowers would care to cling. But adapting themselves to their bleak abode by such expedients as fleshy or hairy leaves or long tough roots—they are all perennials—they lifted their bright faces from the sandy slopes or gravelly beds, and from many a crevice in the rocks. At Camp Curtis the botanists took all the flowers they saw—three plants of *draba aureola* and three of a species of Jacob's ladder (*polomonium elegans*). The *draba* is a mouse-colored plant with yellow blossoms, a member of the mustard family, and probably the highest flower on Mount Rainier. The Jacob's ladder is a beautiful indigo with a bright yellow center, very sticky leaves and a disagreeable smell. Another high plant, also a member of the mustard family, is the *smelowskia calycina*, a white flower with grayish green leaves, the blossom not unlike ordinary candy-tuft.

At St. Elmo Pass were the funny little chubby heads of *phacelia sericea* settled close down in a nest of gray leaves; the silvery green gray leaves of *potentilla villosa*, as soft and silky as the finest velvet; two saxifrages, the little spotted white flowers of *saxifraga bronchialis*, and the exquisite mats of *saxifraga cespitosa* covered with smiling white blossoms. On all the trips up high on the rocks nothing was more frequently seen than Tolmei's saxifrage (*saxifraga tolmeii*), very shiny, fleshy, bright-green leaves, forming a big mat and white flowers with dark centers standing in the mat, like stickpins in a cushion.

On the trip across the Carbon Glacier, up toward Observation Rock, Mr. Curtis found a fine specimen of his favorite mountain flower, moss campion (*silene*



*ERYTHRONIUM MONTANUM*

Photo by Asahel Curtis

*acaulis*). He promised the botanists this plant a year ago on the Mount Shuksan trip, but when Shuksan was given up, moss campion was too. This specimen entire was like a little green dome twelve inches across. The leaves looked indeed like moss, but the covering of exquisite, little, pink, stemless blossoms showed that it was a flowering plant.

A wet mossy place where water trickled out from among rocks would be studded with brilliant, yellow monkey flowers (*mimulus alpinus*), a monkey head with no body, for the leaves are very, very small, but the flowers an inch long. Our Tyrolean friend, who loved to browse over the rocks, brought us one day some sage (*artemisia borealis wormskioeldii*), another day an interesting plant (*luina hypoleuca*), leaves thick grayish green on one side and woolly, almost white, on the other, feeling like felt.

On the gravel slopes above Moraine Park and overlooking the upper part of Carbon Glacier, grew two sturdy plants, one (*spraguea umbellata*), with fleshy dark red leaves and blossoms like balls of thin, pink paper, the other less beautiful but equally brave (*erigonum pyrolaefolium coryphaeum*), with brownish green, thick leaves and fine, creamy flowers.

We had learned to think of Spray Park as the paradise of flowers, and so we found it. After dropping down from heather bench to heather bench, suddenly we saw them, like Wordsworth's daffodils, "a cloud, a host," "fluttering and dancing in the breeze." But these were not all golden; they were red and white and blue and yellow. The great red masses were the painter's brush (*castilleja oreopola*), a wonderful crimson peculiar to the higher altitudes; the blue, great spikes of lupine (*lupinus subalpinus*); the white, fluffy balls of smartweed (*polygonum bistortoides*), or in damper places beds of white marsh marigold (*caltha*

*leptosepala*); the yellow, a small but very abundant yellow flower, a rare plant found so far only on Mount Rainier, and on Mount Rainier only in the vicinity of Moraine and Spray Parks. It belongs to the celery family, and has been named *hesperogenia strioklandi*. The avalanche lily was at the height of its glory, three, four, even five flowers on a stem, and of these flowers, acres and acres, countless as the snowflakes in the great banks that gave them water.

Of all the trails the Mountaineers have followed, in the Olympics, on Mount Baker, on Mount Rainier, none surpasses the one from Spray Park to Crater Lake in beauty or wealth of flora. The verdure of the undergrowth was furnished largely by the white rhododendron (*rhododendron albiflorum*), not yet in bloom, and its cousin *menziesia ferruginea*. Yet nearer the ground were the two mountain huckleberries, the red and the blue, the former with fine graceful leaves, as decorative as the fronds of a fern; while creeping along on the ground, its last year's leaves left fastened close to the earth by the weight of last year's snow, was the delicate walking raspberry (*rubus pedatus*). At a turn of the trail, where an opening in the trees revealed Spray Falls, the nature lover was forced to divide his attention between the great silvery sheet of spray across the canon and the gorgeous pink monkey flower (*mimulus lewisii*) at his feet, and the earliest heads of rose-colored mountain hard-hack (*spiraea densiflora*) just above him. Farther down the trail in the midst of great banks of wild heliotrope (*valeriana sitchensis*), already familiar at camp, were many white fringy stems of *trautvetteria grandis*, and next long beds of pink belled Solomons's seal (*streptopus roseus*), with its tiny pink bells strung along under its spreading leaves. Here and there a wake-robin (*trillium ovatum*)

grown pink or purple with age showed how spring and summer merge up among the glaciers. Where a little stream crossed the trail and leaky boots sought stepping stones or a log, the botanist dodged out of line and back again in a minute with a shooting star (*dodecatheon jeffreyi*) and two orchids, a white and a green one (*limnorchis leucostachys* and *piperia unalaschensis*).

But the time came when we must leave the spots we had learned to love, and all the flower friends we had made, and the night before camp was broken we went around to leave our adieux with each one. First, the heathers, how hard the parting was, for they had been our constant companions! And yet their vacation was nearly over, too, for their blossoms were falling. Red heather (*phyllodoce empetriformis*) had been a staunch friend, ready to give anything he possessed for our comfort—many a bed had he furnished, thanks to the kind permission of Mr. O'Farrell, the park ranger; next came yellow heather (*phyllodoce glanduliflora*), then their cousin, white heather (*cassiope mertensiana*), true and pure as any real lily of the valley, and last the treasure of the trip, little Alaska heather (*harrimanella stellariana*). Then we said good-bye to the louseworts, *pedicularis contorta*, yellow, short and stout; *pedicularis ornithorhynca*, red, also short, and inclined to be chubby; tall, graceful *pedicularis groenlandica*, that we nicknamed "red elephant" because he chooses to adorn himself with little elephants' ears and trunk; white *pedicularis racemosa*, looking fresh and sweet in her lavender pink bonnets; and last *pedicularis bracteosa*, yellow, pompous, well-to-do.

Up in the draw on the way to the mountain lived the yellow dog-tooth violet (*erythronium parviflorum*), just as beautiful as his cousin avalanche lily, but more



retiring. Farther up was *phlox diffusa*, a great mat of grayish leaves and blue, or pinkish blue, flowers hanging over a rock or down a bank, and near by a tiny golden aster (*erigeron aureus*). That unobtrusive but independent little blue fellow with Quaker gray clothes was a lupine (*lupinus lyallii*). Not one of our new friends did we respect more than him. To that marshy spot, with the bog-moss (*sphagnum*) we went for a parting word with the little pink swamp laurel of the mountains (*kalmia glauca microphylla*).

We couldn't take time to climb up to the cliff-dwellers again, but we waved at them from below, and high up on the rocks the rock-dwelling painters' brush (*castilleja rupicola*) and crimson wild foxglove (*pentstemon menziesii*) waved back at us their bright banners. That clump of lace fern (*cheilanthes gracillima*), real quality, she, shook her lace scarf at us, and we knew she had pardoned our intrusion on her quiet retreat the day before. We said good-bye to a bright yellow member of the rose family (*dasiphora fruticosa*) and purple aster and blue aster (*aster pulchellus* and *aster polyphyllus*), and to tiny blue speedwell (*veronica cusickii*), friend *polemonium coeruleum* and golden rod (*solidago corymbosa*.)

Returning to camp, we were just having a parting word with a bright yellow flower of modest behavior, a general favorite, because of her resemblance to the buttercup (*potentilla flabellifolia*), when somewhat to our surprise we found that Alaska spiraea (*lutkea pectinata*) had come all the way down to Lawrence's water-wheel by the cook tent. She looked charming in her creamy white attire, and we bade her a fond farewell.

The next morning blue violet (*viola retroscabra*) had a tear in her eye as we left, and perhaps *rhododendron albiflorum*, whom we passed on the trail, soon after saw tears in ours, but we tried to hide them as we gazed back toward the Elysian Fields and saw, high

up on the hillside, green hellebore (*veratrum viride*), gracefully waving his green ribbon pennants, apparently with no consciousness that he is the greatest fever remedy in the world, and squaw grass, or Indian basket grass (*xerophyllum tenax*), stretching high his fluffy, feathery tow-head to catch a last glimpse of his departing guests.

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