

A PLEA FOR THE PUBLICATION OF A NEW  
ILLUSTRATED FLORA OF THE  
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

In the annual report of "The Quebec Society for the Protection of Plants" for 1911-1912, the following statement appears: "Many years ago Abbé Provancher published a work entitled '*Flore du Canada*' in two volumes, which has been out of print for some years, and is now very difficult to procure. No work on systematic botany has taken its place in Quebec, consequently this phase of the study of plant life has been, to a large extent, neglected in the French schools of the province. I would, therefore, suggest that the society request the Government of the province not only to reprint a revised edition of Provancher's work, but also to publish a school edition of the same. The publication of these two editions would give a stimulus to the study of plants, and indirectly would tend to a better knowledge of weeds on the part of the rising generation."

As an admirer of Abbé Provancher, and one who, moreover, has followed closely in his footsteps for the past ten years, I beg leave to express an opinion on the matter.

There is no doubt that the name of Provancher has a prominent standing in the history of Canadian science. Under struggling circumstances, without special training or laboratory facilities, far from technical libraries, he, however, accomplished a stupendous amount of work and cleared the ground most efficiently for future workers.

The "*Flore Canadienne*" was a most extraordinary achievement for the time, and, although fifty years have passed,—fifty years of feverish activity—even though it is now largely obsolete on account of the steady advance in botanical studies, we must admit whatever our language is that no other book, as yet, has attempted to displace it.

Nevertheless, the proposal of reprinting Provancher's work is a rather sad acknowledgment of inability; to state my opinion briefly, I consider that such a reprint, if the essential features are preserved, would be a step backwards.

In the course of the last half century the systematic botany of North America has benefited by the labour of a host of serious workers. Unknown regions have been penetrated, thousands of new species established and the nomenclature more than once disturbed and subjected to new investigations.

Mentioning only the Province of Quebec, the careful survey of Prof. M. L. Fernald and his Harvard friends has shown, in the Gaspé Peninsula, the existence of an altogether unknown flora akin to that of the Rockies. Of this fact, of course, Provancher had no suspicion.