

## The Rockwood Review.

### BOTANICAL NOTES.

That the floral garbure of a district or Province is undergoing important changes, the recorded observations of many former residents in this or the adjoining counties amply testify, and the extermination of many native species of wild plants, and the usurpation of alien adventurers in their place, is a frequent theme for discussion, and of more or less regretful commentary. Perhaps one of the most obvious occurrences of this kind has been the overrunning of a number of acres of boggy, uncleared land in this neighborhood by one of the species of parasitic dodder (*cuscuta gronovii*), for 12 or 15 years past. In the area alluded to, the bright, orange colored, twining, thread-like stems of this interesting intruder have been the subject of remark, and lately, one of the occupants of a farm where the Dodder is plentifully growing, upon being shown a specimen of the plant just gathered, at once pronounced the parasite to be the ordinary Gold-thread. Of course to one claiming but a slight acquaintance with botany, this was a glaring error, as the genuine gold-thread is the running or creeping root of a species of crowfoot (*coptis trifolia*), whereas the climbing herb that we have spoken of above, is almost devoid of proper roots, or of leaves, and the pretty colored, vine-like stem bears only little bunches of minute white flowers, but for its own special nourishment sends off small above ground rootlets, which penetrate the bark, and absorb the vital juices of the supporting plant, and as soon as this stage of growth has established itself, the seedling roots wither away and direct connection with the earth no longer exists. In the fall or winter freshets, the seeds of this *Cuscuta* (*cuscuta gronovii*), fall from the capsules or pod, and are often

floated to distant parts of the bog, and seem to find rapid distribution. for the succulent stems of the wild balsam which exhibited a dense growth in the same area, were very much victimized and interfered with by the predatory Dodder. In a number of instances also the parasite was seen climbing and twining with its bright yellow stems around the tender new sprouts of the raspberry bush and of the epilobium.

The necessary process of clearing up the forest, and the pioneer's auxiliaries of fire and the axe and plough, bring about such a change of conditions that terminates the existence of a number of our native wild flowers and shrubs, and among those that were once abundant near here, but that have now nearly vanished, may be named prominent on the nearly exiled list, two species of *Hydrophyllum* claim a conspicuous notice; for of the wild herbage that occupied the surface of the ground, under the shade of the tall beeches and maples of the pioneer times, the rankest garniture of the rich earth mould was given by *Hydrophyllum Virginicum*, a native American cousin of the European Primrose. This species has leaves much cut and divided, like some of the crowfoot tribe, but the flowers are very dissimilar to the crowfoot's in arrangement and design, being bluish and in dense bunches. *H. Virginicum* was known to bush settlers as "cow cabbage," these wildings had coarse, woody, fibrous roots, which were hard to destroy, and gave some trouble to the early settlers for several years after the first clearing of the land.

There was a twin species with nearly similar flowers to the last mentioned, but with quite differently shaped leaves, this is *Hydrophyllum Canadense*, and was known as "deer cabbage," the leaves resembling those of the sugar maple