

## THE LOTUS LILY OF SAINT WILLIAMS.

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It was August the twenty-fourth of the present year that I first made the acquaintance of this rare plant. I had waited purposely until I knew the flowers would be open to the sun in order that I might have a first and lasting memory picture of the blossoms at their best.

The bed occupies a part of Long Point Bay, Lake Erie, a few hundred feet west of where the village road of Saint Williams descends the cliff to the beach, and is about ten acres in extent.

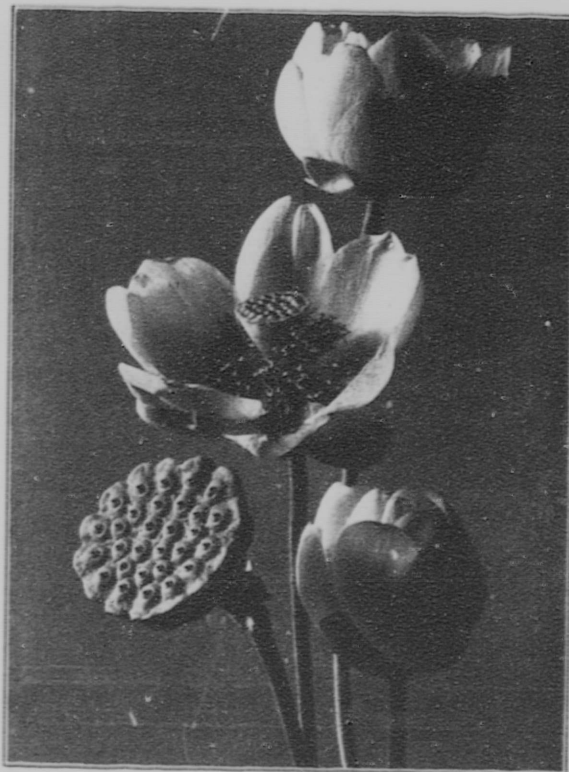
The Lotus Lily, *Nelumbo lutea*, (Willd.) Pers. is a native of American and not introduced as some have thought. And one may well wonder how a plant of such rare occurrence has acquired so many different names, for it is known in different parts of the United States as: Sacred Bean, Yellow Nelumbo, Water Chinquapin, American Lotus or Nelumbo, Great Yellow Water Lily, Wankapin or Yankapin, Duck-acorn and Rattle-or Water-nut.

The flowers are pale yellow in color and vary from five to ten inches in width. Before they open, the buds are the shape and size formed by the two hands placed slightly curved so that the wrists and finger-tips meet. The leaves vary in size from three to four inches to two feet in diameter. They are nearly orbicular and often have the centre slightly depressed or cupped. Unlike the flowers of the Sweet Scented Water Lily or the Yellow Pond Lily which float on the surface of the water, the flowers of the Lotus Lily stand high above the surface. Occasionally too, the leaves do likewise, but the majority of them float on the surface of the water in the same manner as the leaves of the other two lilies but are easily distinguished from these by the absence of a deeply-cordate cleft at the base.

The fruit is an inverted cone which dries when ripe, enclosing the hard seeds in little cavities. Because of the rattling sound made by them, the plant has received (in some localities), the name of Rattle-nut.

From the information I have been able to gather about this plant, its occurrence in Canada seems to be

very uncommon. Gray's Manual of Botany includes Lake Erie and Lake Ontario in a general way as its range but mentions no specific place. Britton and Brown's Flora does not mention it from Canada at all. Macoun's Catalogue of Canadian Plants 1883, reports it in the Detroit River and near the mouth of the Welland Canal. Dodge's Catalogue of the Flora of Point Pelee, mentions only the Ohio shore, and Spotton, in compiling his Ontario Botany, either did not know of its existence, or did not consider its occurrence common enough to mention. From the foregoing, therefore, one may well conclude that unless the plants in the Detroit River and the Welland Can-



THE LOTUS FLOWER.

(Photo by P. A. Taverner, from The Canada Year Book, 1915.)

al mentioned by Macoun in 1883 are still there, Saint Williams, as far as is known, is the only place in Canada where the Lotus Lily grows.

The bed of plants at Saint Williams is in a sheltered place and unless something extraordinary happens there is little fear of its being exterminated. Someone has erected a wire fence a few hundred feet in length along the shore side of the bed, whether for protection or not I am unable to say. When I visited the place in August, there were hundreds of lilies in flower. No one—except a fifteen-inch snapping turtle, which made a pass at my bare ankle—prevented me from taking all I wanted.