

plant, when sufficiently dried, exhibits all the properties of *Ga-outchouc*, or India rubber; and its roots are used as a cure for dyspepsia and dropsy. The *Apocynum* is common, and is in bloom from June to September.

In July the celebrated *Frasera Walteri* (Columboe root) comes into flower. It is one of the noblest of our Canadian plants, growing from six to eight feet in height. The stem looks like a column of polished ebony, with circles of leaves and green flowers, rising at regular intervals from the bottom, till they terminate in point at the top. The roots of the *Frasera* are extensively used in medicine, and they are said to be a tonic no way inferior to the *Gentiana lutea*. The genus of this interesting plant is peculiar to the United States and to Canada.

On the banks of our rivers, and on our rocky wilds the hardy *Epilobium Augustifolium* (French, or rose hay willow) spreads out its rosy blossoms to the breezes of summer. The genus of this common herb extends from Greenland to the Cape of Good Hope, and in no country does the *E. Augustifolium* flourish more than in Lapland. Dr. Clarke says that it there attains a magnificence, compared with which, in other lands it seems but a stunted plant. The same traveller remarks, that it may be called the garland of Lapland. The Kamschatdales are very fond of an intoxicating liquor, which is made from some species of it; they also prepare vinegar from it, and eat the young shoots as food. The silky down of its long pods is sometimes mixed with fur or cotton, and made into articles of wearing apparel.

From July to September two remarkable weeds are in flower,—the stately *Verbascum thapsus*, (Mullein,) and the deadly *Datura stramonium*, (thorn apple). The *Verbascum* was famed in the days of superstition as a safeguard against the power of witches, and of the light-footed beings "that rode on the beams of the moon." Its velvety leaves are now used to rub the rheumatic limbs of the aged, and its soft yellow blossoms, when made into tea, are said to ease cramps and coughs, and to induce "balmy sleep." The people of Kent, England, call the Mullein "flannel-flower," and its down has been recommended by some writers for purposes of manufacture. The *D. stramonium* is remarkable, as the plant which poisoned so many immigrants at Brantford, in the beginning of this summer. It is a large, common and branching plant, emitting a foul, lurid odor, almost as disagreeable as that of the *Pothos portida*, or skunk cabbage. The smell of it often produces sickness at the stomach and headache. The flowers are of a white or blueish color, and open about sunset. The fruit is a large, fleshy pericarp, thickly covered with spines. It has four cells filled with seeds, which are extremely poisonous. The whole plant is narcotic, and the roots, when dried and smoked as tobacco, are said to afford relief in cases of spasmodic asthma. The extract of the *Datura* acts specifically upon the optic nerve, causing a remarkable dilation of the pupil of the eye. It is used by surgeons before operating for cataracts.

In August many plants of the genus *Lobelia* are in bloom. The first is the slender *L. gracilis*, and after it comes the far-famed *L. inflata*, (wild tobacco) about which so much has been said in the *Materia Medica*. Doses of this plant were formerly used by the Indian orators, to clear their heads before engaging in the great councils of their nation. From its effects upon horses, the farmers give it the name of Blubber-weed. The splendid *Lobelia cardinalis* (cardinal flower) is now abundant by the sides of stagnant creeks and in low swampy ground. Its flowers of bright scarlet, are said to have reminded Lohel, the originator of its name, of the scarlet cloth of Rome, and to have been named from its fanciful resemblance to a cardinal's cap. In similar localities the beautiful *L. siphilitica* shoots up its long spike of blue blossoms. Nearly the whole species are regarded as poisonous.

Many of the *Rudbeckias*, which have so long braved the heat of the noonday sun, and adorned our sandy pine forests and plains with their yellow rays and brown discs, are now beginning to fade. They were named in honor of Olaus Rudbeck, an enthusiastic botanist of Sweden, who died of grief, on account of the destruction by fire of his favorite work, called "The Elysian Fields," which he had just finished. During his last days, his son

labored diligently to rewrite it, and it was published in 1702. It was he who was so well pleased with the flowers of his native land, that he discovered that at least one part of Sweden had certainly been the scene of the original Paradise.

In our gardens the Indian and Chinese Balsamines are now greatly admired, while our Canadian one, *Impatiens noli-tangere*, (touch me not) with its bright yellow flowers, and almost translucent stems, is passed by unheeded. In spite of all neglect, it will flourish without the aid of man, till it is cut down by the frosts of September.

Ayr, August, 1848.

PHILANTHOS.

From Dr. Corson's "Loiterings in Europe."

The Calliopean by Moonlight.

ONE night or morning I was suddenly awakened by a furious rain, and as it died away, I saw by the light in my window, that there was a small moon. It was a joyful discovery. I had been repining at my not having made the famous trip to the Coliseum by moonlight some time previously, and I could not remain another month. I sprang eagerly out of bed, and thrust my head out of the window. It was a singular, wild-looking night, presenting the aspect of black clouds fringed with narrow strips of moonshine, and the glimmer of a few stars through the crevices contrasting with the gloom like the light in a picture of Rembrandt; the sort of nocturnal weather in fact that makes one think of child-stories of conjurors and evil spirits—such as one would fancy should have succeeded the storm in which the hero of Burns escaped from the witches. My watch was paralytic; the Roman clocks, with dial plates of twenty-four hours, commencing and changing with Ave Maria or twilight, are a complete puzzle to a stranger; and in blissful ignorance of the hour, I hastily equipped, and succeeded in waking the porter. He rubbed his eyes, then stared at me as if to detect insanity, muttered some very significant words about robbers, as if to give fair warning, and seeing me resolute, at length unbarred the street-door. Assassinations, though much diminished, are not even yet so rare as they might be in Italy. By our joint calculations it was somewhere between midnight and daylight, and though I knew that since the poet's famous description this moon excursion had become quite fashionable, yet the adventure all alone, at so very late an hour, when I came to reflect upon it, in the cool street, seemed to have about it something of danger as well as romance, and I comforted myself with the companionship of a respectable stick, my tried friend in the Alps. I turned for a moment for one earnest gaze at the Column of Trajan, then by a winding way escaped from the houses of the modern city into a kind of common, surrounded with ruins—the site of the ancient Roman Forum, and passing beneath the Arch of Titus along the edge of the Palatine Hill and the Palace of the Cæsars, I presently reached the Arch of Constantine, when just before me, like some immense towering fortress, more impressive in the stillness and gloom of night, was the Coliseum.

By this time the moon shone out, and there remained but a few flitting clouds, that seemed determined to rain, and floating in mid air, like spirits, filled the earth beneath with changing lights and shadows. It seemed more impressive, and less like day than the glare of a full moon in a cloudless sky. I appeal to all poets, and tender people too, if moonlight is not improved by being a little damp? The face of nature, like the human face, is, doubtless, more interesting after weeping.

The world is already familiar with the ordinary daylight description of this wonderful structure, and most are likely aware that it is a slightly oval amphitheatre, more than a hundred and fifty feet high, and estimated to have originally covered about six acres of ground, and to have been furnished with seats to accommodate more than eighty thousand spectators—that it was commenced by Vespasian and finished by Titus, in the latter part of the first century, by the labor of Jewish captives; and that for four succeeding centuries it was the scene of gladiatorial combats, and other bloody spectacles indicative of the taste of a warlike and cruel people. To the modern visitor, one of