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ON SO-CALLED *SILENE MENZIESII*.

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The original specimens of what Sir William Hooker in his *Flora Boreali-Americana*, published as a rather dubious member of the genus *Silene*, under the name *S. Menziesii*, were from the shores of Puget Sound. Within the hundred years and more that have passed since Menzies gathered this, plants of just this type have been collected from almost every part of the western half of North America, and all the way from the humid seaboard woods and hills to the banks of little streams coursing down the slopes of desert mountains in the remote and arid interior of the continent; from the level of the sea to near the alpine summits of the Rocky Mountains and a thousand miles inland. No type of higher plant life remains specifically one and the same throughout so vast a range, and so great a diversity of geological and climatic conditions; and, quite as we should expect, these inland plants from one region and another, differ both from the original type, and from one another so widely and variedly that no unbiased mind would ever regard them as being all one *Silene Menziesii*. A low almost matted one from Idaho, at a point 8,000 feet above the sea, looks like Chickweed; another from 11,000 feet in Colorado, looks more like *Arenaria lateriflora*, while a third away up in Assiniboia resembles one of the most upright and delicate of *Stellarias*. A prolonged and careful study of the material of this kind now extant in the larger herbaria has made the distinguishing of eighteen species of this aggregate a necessity; and the characters of them have lately been given in Volume One of my *Leaflets*. The group is out of all harmony with *Silene*, as even Hooker felt, when he had but the one species in hand. It is every way more like either