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NOTES ON THE MAYFLOWER OF THE LOYALISTS.

*Read before the Natural History
Society by Mr. G.F. Mathew.*

It has been suggested that the delicate and modest little flower which we call the Mayflower should be adopted as the emblem of the Loyalists, because it is in full bloom at the season of the year when they landed on these rocky shores. In this connection it may not be out of place to inquire as to the use of the word "Mayflower" or "May blossom" in the past; and specially to ask what was the *Mayflower of the Loyalists*? Was their Mayflower identical with our spring favorite; or was it some other plant, to us unknown; or if known, called by some other name?

Our Mayflower has been named by botanists *Epigaea repens*, or the plant that *creeps on the ground*—a name very appropriate to its habit of growth as it forms patches of foliage, branching and spreading on the ground from a centre root. The flowers are found at and near the ends of the branches, and are almost concealed from view by the thick leathery, shining, dark-green, round-oval leaves. The Mayflower delights in a rocky and not too fertile soil. When it grows in richer

land it is apt to be choked by the surrounding plants better adapted to such situations; and in very shady places it will not blossom. It craves a well mulched surface with gravelly, or rather stony soil beneath, and seems to enjoy itself most where granite and traprocks, or quartz rocks prevail. On and around reefs or ledges of such rock, on the border of the forest, the Mayflower spreads its refreshing green, and perfumes the air with its delicate fragrance. It is as wild by nature, and as hard to tame as the savage that once roamed master of the wilderness where it still abounds; hence many attempts to cultivate it have failed, or it is easily killed by kindness or injudicious care. The Mayflower belongs to the great family of the Heaths and its nearest allies in this country are the Bearberry†, Spicy Wintergreen‡ and Tea berry*. They, like the Mayflower, have evergreen leaves, and differ in this respect from most of the American Heaths.

The barren and gravelly soils of many tracts in North Eastern North America, and its moist climate are particularly well suited to the Mayflower, and it flourishes here in abundance. Warned by the experience of many seasons on the Atlantic coast, it does not open its petals when the spring rains first remove the snow,

†Arctostaphylos. ‡Gaultheria. *Chimaphila

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