

largely among cattle. Many report a swelling on the throats of cattle during the winter months, but these all disappear as soon as they are turned on the grass. A few cattle have died from anthrax, lumps on the throat and bad management. Among young pigs several have died, but no satisfactory causes could be given, although one correspondent gave as his opinion the feeding of too much wheat to the sows. A sort of paralysis prevailed among hogs in a few localities with some fatal results. The disease seemed to attack them first in the legs and finally extended to their backs. No disease is reported among sheep, but several young lambs have died. This is an occurrence that must always be expected.

The operations of the Veterinary Sanitary Service of the Department have been confined entirely to horses and mules, no cases of infectious or contagious diseases among cattle having been reported to district veterinarians. During the five months ended May 31, 1884, district veterinarians paid eighty-five visits of inspection, sixty-six being first visits and nineteen periodical. The time occupied in these inspections was 75 6-8 days, 2,728 miles being travelled, 1,936 by road and 792 by rail. The number of animals inspected was 309, of which 208 were horses and 101 mules. Fifty horses were condemned as glandered and destroyed, and ten horses and eight mules were placed in quarantine to be treated for mange. Of the fifty cases of glanders Portage la Prairie and Manchester counties each had nine; Brandon and Selkirk eight each; Dufferin, seven; Lisgar, Russell, Marquette and Souris River, two each, and Rock Lake, one.

NOTE ON COMPTONIA ASPLENIFOLIA AND MYRICA CERIFERA.

(From the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, London.)

Next to the pleasure of working up the botany of plants in their native country, is that of seeing or hearing what is being done with them in other lands. English gardeners do treat some of our Canadian and American plants unmercifully, stewing in stove houses, between 60° and 80°, *Pontederias*, *Sarracenias*, *Water Lilies*, and *Brasenias*, whose whole winters are spent at home in a temperature ranging between the freezing temperatures of water and mercury. But, then, we are grateful that the same gardens succeed so well in rendering attractive, as ornamental plants, so many species that, in their native haunts, are rather plain and monotonous. I am often tempted by your notices, happily not infrequent of late, to hunt up the past history and early introduction to Europe of our plants, and have thus been led to collect some interesting facts.

One of the latest American plants you referred to is *Comptonia asplenifolia*. It is one of our common dwarf shrubs, often hid by the taller growth of other shrubs, but becomes conspicuous on Blueberry barrens (where the vegetation consists mostly of dwarf *Vaccinia*), and in cleared spaces in the woods where the soil is dry enough, and not too rich for taller plants. In old clearings it may be seen monopolising spaces of several acres in extent, forming a crop that might be mown for its tannic acid. Its distinctive form and mimicry always ensure attention from the botanist, and the city wanderer picks it and enjoys its fragrance; but the rural resident's interest in it is too often limited in range to its use for the bedding of cattle. That notice in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* (n. s., xxi., p. 182), from *Hortus Collinsonianus*, of the "Gale with Spleenwort leaves," which "makes a fine tea and gives a good flavour to beer," introduces the plant to us here in a new role. You properly object to Loudon's "English" name (as it has become customary to call translations of botanical names), as cumbrous, and, while approving of the one given in Gray's *Manual*, viz., "Sweet Fern," you add, with a delicately mingled touch of dubiety and reservation, "only the plant is by no means a Fern." The benevolent object of my writing now is to ease the editorial conscience on this matter. (I feel also that a note ought to be here interpolated to the effect that if there are some of Loudon's English names that we do not care to use now, it is not because we have forgotten the great services which he rendered to natural science in the way of promoting its study at a time when its students were comparatively few and far between, by the attention which he gave to English names and the accentuation of Latin ones in the *Magazines*, of *Natural History*, and of *Gardening*, as well as in his stereotyped works.) It is no doubt unknown in England that *Comptonia* is familiarly recognised wherever it grows in America as "Sweet Fern." This is the true Anglo-American name of the shrub, long established and in common use in the country, not a "popular" name given by a writer on plants, but one that has originated with the people themselves. In Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* (ed. 1865), we find: "Sweet Fern, *n.* (Bot.) A small North American shrub, having sweet-scented or aromatic leaves resembling Fern leaves." Whether the *Dictionary* took the name from Gray, or Gray from the *Dictionary*, I cannot tell, not having the first edition at hand, but both are correct. I ought to add, however, that "Sweet Fern" sounded oddly enough to me when I first heard it in this country, just as Christmas Rose sounds oddly to

an American or Canadian as the name of an unfamiliar Ranunculaceous plant. Such names are cherished when they are suggestive of pleasant ideas; when we first hear them we are apt to interpret them in a too exact and literal sense; as we become familiar with the plants intended the names cease to convey false notions. The use of the word "rose" as applied to the "Christmas" *Helleboro* we condone and rather like to use as a recognition of the plant's beauty, and as a pleasing reminder of the summer Roses that have come and gone; so the name "Sweet Fern" imposes upon no one who is familiar with the plant, but simply suggests a fragrant shrub, whose closely and regularly set leaves resemble the pinnæ of Ferns. The only inconvenience is that a botanical professor has often, in the course of one excursion, to explain half a dozen times that *Comptonia* is not a vascular Cryptogam, but an angiospermous Phanogam!

Referring to *Hortus Kewensis*, ed. 2, vol. v., p. 254, I find that *Comptonia* was cultivated in 1714 by Her Grace the Duchess of Beaufort, *Br. Mus. H. S.*, 141, fol. 37, which (according to preface) "signifies the Sloanean *Hortus Siccus* kept in the British Museum, from whence much information, principally concerning the plants cultivated by the Duchess of Beaufort, has been obtained." I am not aware whether anything more has been published regarding Her Grace's botanical labours than the scattered notices in *Hort. Kew.*; neither can I quite make out whether the name *Comptonia* was first used in *Hortus Kewensis*. Aiton, Banks, Solander, are severally given as authorities for it in different works.

A nearly allied plant, and a frequent associate of the Sweet Fern along our Atlantic shores, is the fragrant *Myrica cerifera*, which has the corresponding names "Sweet Laurel" and "Sweet Bay." These names have no doubt been given originally by English people, who were reminded by its long, broad, shining leaves of the Laurels and Bays of English gardens. Dr. Gray, however, gives "Bayberry" and "Wax Myrtle," which, together with "Candleberry-tree," are given in Webster. It has no resemblance in foliage to *Myrtus communis*. In Quebec Province (formerly known as Lower Canada) the names are "Arbre à la cire" and "Cirier de la Caroline." In English books the plant is often called "Candleberry Myrtle," in allusion probably to the tradition of the wax having been used by the early missionaries for candles. (Small candles of this wax were sent from Nova Scotia to the London Exhibition of, I think, 1862.) I gave some account of this plant in the *Edinburgh Botanical Society's Transactions*, in 1864. *Myrica cerifera* was