

## CANADIAN SPECIES OF THALICTRUM.—I.

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The Dominion of Canada being a northern country, at least when compared with Mexico, or even the United States, our census of *Thalictrum* species may as well begin with that northernmost member of the genus *T. alpinum*.

That familiar books and lists are correct in attributing this North-European species to Canada is a proposition that must, first of all, be put to the usual test. An end ought to be made of the practice of merely subscribing to, and reiterating the opinions of past generations about the identity of our native plants.

What is that Old World plant like which first obtained the appellation *Thalictrum alpinum*? That is the first question; and the next is: Have we in Canada anywhere any plant which as to essential marks, responds to the original description of that Old World type? Queries like these send us back in search of the first beginnings of the history of *Thalictrum alpinum*; and the excursion will prove an interesting and instructive one.

Although the name now in vogue for the type dates from Linnaeus, the thing itself was better known and had been better described before that nomenclator was born than it ever was by him. The earliest records I have been able to find of the plant show it to have been discovered originally in the mountains of the northern part of Wales. The discoverer was an Oxford student, native of Wales, Edward Lloyd by name, the same to whom Salisbury, more than two centuries after Lloyd's death, dedicated the liliaceous genus *Lloydia*.

The discoverer brought roots of the plant to Oxford, where they were said to be flourishing at the time when the first description of the species was published, that is, in the year 1699.\* Lloyd himself had named his new plant *Thalictrum montanum minimum praecox foliis splendentibus*; and it is hardly possible to indicate the essential peculiarities of the species more clearly than was thus done by Lloyd more than two centuries since in those six words. As compared with all other members of the genus as then known, this was alpine, was diminutive, very early flowering, and had a polished or shining green foliage. Bobart, in the place of Morison's *Historia* cited below, in a very full and admirable description (containing about a hundred words), says that the leaves are as shining as if oil had run over the surface of them. This, however, only of the upper face, the lower being pale and dull, he says.

\*Bobart, in Moris. Hist. Pl. III, 325.