

ON THE GENUS WOODSIA.

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This genus of ferns was established by the learned ROBERT BROWN in 1812, for the two species *Woodsia Ilvensis* and *W. hyperborea*; afterwards he added a third, *W. glabella*. These species all have a minute pateriform involucre, covered by the sporangia, and divided into numerous elongated ciliæ. The genus has since been extended so as to include species having a more manifest involucre, at first globose or irregularly hemispherical, the margin commonly ciliated or irregularly laciniated. The genus thus extended embraces twelve or fifteen species, several of them occurring in the north-temperate and sub-arctic zones, and others following the Cordilleras and the Andes, from Mexico to Chile, or inhabiting the mountains of Northern India. All the species are small ferns, growing in tufts, mostly in crevices of exposed rocks, the stipes commonly very brittle, and remaining after the fronds have fallen away.

The species of this genus I propose to arrange as follows:

§ 1. Stipes articulated, the withered fronds falling away at the joint. Involucre beneath the sorus, pateriform, deeply divided into elongated ciliæ which are inflexed over the sporangia.—

W. alpina and *Ilvensis*.

§ 2. Stipes not articulated.

A. Involucre as in § 1, but smaller, the ciliæ scarcely visible among the sporangia.—*W. Oregana*, *scopulina*, and *Mexicana*.

B. Involucre cyathiform or globose, enveloping the sporangia, afterwards laciniately cleft into irregular lobes. (Physematium, Kaulf.)—*W. incisa*, *obtusa*, *mollis*, *Guatemalensis*, *Peruviana*, *Cumingiana*, and *elongata*.*

C. Indusium irregularly sub-globose, cystiform, divided into 4-6 ciliate lobes, which are imbricated over the sporangia.—*W. polystichoides*.

* *W. Caucasica* probably belongs here, but I have not had an opportunity of examining it. *Hypoderris Brownii* Wallich, also almost unknown to me, is referred to this genus by Mettenius:—it would constitute a third section, characterized by reticulated venation.