

The Mountain Wild Flowers of Western Canada

BY JULIA W. HENSHAW



WESTERN ANEMONE (*ANEMONE OCCIDENTALIS*)

The Mountain Wild Flowers of Western Canada.

There is a region in Western Canada where the most exquisite wild flowers in the whole world bloom above the clouds: not singly, or in groups, but in beds and banks, these blossoms of every hue and size and form, flourish with a rich luxuriance in the alpine meadows of the Rocky and Selkirk ranges, the snow-calls these tropical gardens only found on the irrigated fringe of the desert. Yet how much more ethereal in texture and coloring are these hardy alpine plants, growing at an altitude of from 3,000 to 8,000 feet above the level of the sea, than their fellow flowers which grace the sultry lands of the orient.

In the western mountains lies the real garden of nature in Canada. It is a wild garden and wild are its surroundings, a beautiful wilderness of wilding bloom, fragrant with the breath of heliotropes and violets, and glorified by the sheen of scarlet Indian paint-brushes, yellow arnicas, and purple phacelias.

Among the mountains there the plants peculiar to each particular locality, though there are also hundreds of species which abound equally in all the various districts. At Banff, in the Rockies, the wild flowers are within the reach of all, for there they grow in the low-lying meadows in every direction, are found in the thick forests, and out upon the dry stony slopes of the hillsides. At this spot, it is quite unnecessary to climb in search of them, as in more or less the case at Lake Louise and Glacier, for they seem to cover the whole locality with a richly colored profusion which rivals the flower-beds in cultivated gardens.

The Banff hotel stands on the cliff, high above the confluence of the Spray and the Bow rivers; steep down from its wide terraces to the boiling torrents below, and here in sheltered nooks and crannies grow the curiously-branched coral-roots (*Corallorhiza innata*), while the tendrils of the white and purple vetches trail over the stones, and the wild clematis (*Clematis columbiana*) winds its leafy stalks around the branches of adjacent bushes. Lower down you will find huge clumps of the serviceberry (*Ameioberry*), an attractive shrub bearing many clusters of snow-white blossoms amid its pale green foliage, and farther on the fireweed's flare and flash like torches burning in the long grass.

Along the banks of the Bow river stretch flat meadows, where conifers grow sparsely, and the pungent scent of pine and balsam fills the air with subtle sweetness. The ground is covered with dry moss and a tangle of soft green growths, above which tower tasselled rushes. Here flourish the exquisite white blossoms of the one-flowered wintergreen (*Moneses uniflora*), which has been so aptly named the "single daylight," its waxen-petaled cups bent downwards close to the soil, and its delicate fragrance floating forth on the July breeze.

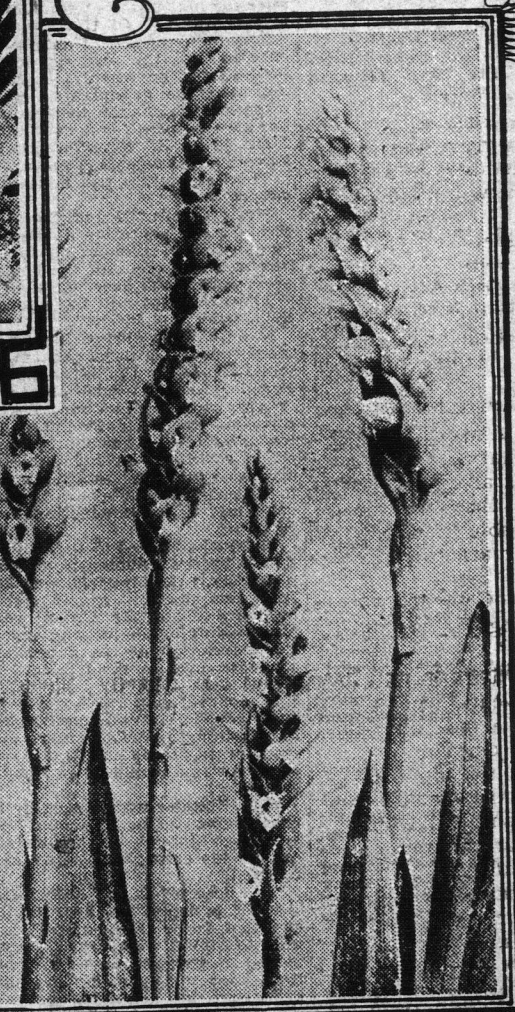
The roads which thread the forests and lead to those hot sulphur springs which gush forth out of the mountain-sides in copious streams, are fringed by the small plant-like shrubs of the birch-leaved spiraea (*Spiraea lucida*), crowned in August by big clusters of creamy blossoms, faintly tinged with pink, which smell extremely sweet, and are particularly attractive to the eye of the traveller. Just where the road ends and the trail, which leads to the crest of Sulphur mountain, surmounted by the government observatory, begins, you will find vast beds of the white dryas (*Dryas octopetala*) growing in dry soil and exposed to the full glare of the sun, its silver-backed foliage carpeting the earth, and each large white corolla, holding up a heart of gold.

Then, should you leave the open road and seek to follow the narrow trail as it winds upward towards the eternal snows, what a wealth of bloom you will encounter on every side. Great orange lilies flaming from a bank of ferns, the yellow-flecked magenta calypso (*Calypso borealis*) growing in its solitary bushy form from a single bulb, with a single leaf at the base of its slender stem, columbines, garlics, monkshoods, anemones—there is no end to the floral treasures that spring to life at every step. Or should a happy inspiration seize you to visit the Cave and Basin, where one of the hot sulphur springs has been utilized to supply the magnificent swimming baths, and an ancient geyser, now extinct, has hollowed out a marvellous cave of eccentric formation, you will be rewarded by the sight of quite a different set of flowers: for there the warm overflow of the water gushing down the hillside nourishes wonderful clumps of bright blue lobelia, huge azure gentians, purple sunflowers, purple mints, butterworts, and sweetest and most fascinating of all, the large, showy spikes of the ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes romanowskyi*) and the pale pink clusters of the fly-spotted orchis (*Orchis rotundifolia*).

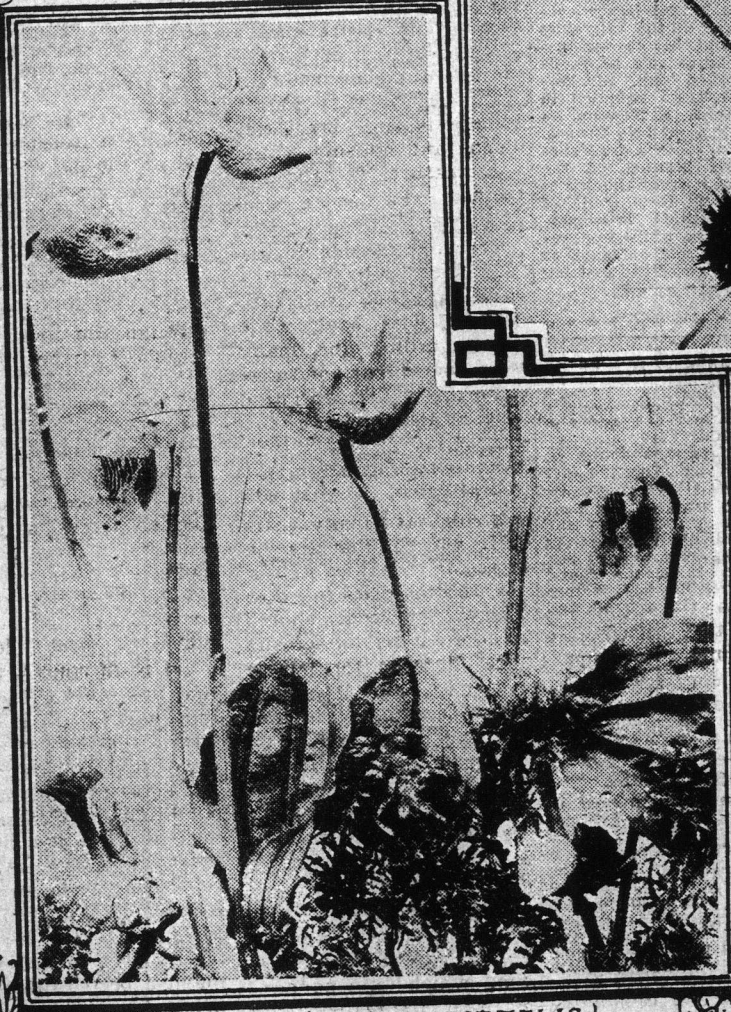
Banff is by no means the only locality in the Rocky mountains where flowers abound. In the vicinity of Lake Louise, the Western anemone (*Anemone occidentalis*), with its white translucent cups, veined and tinged with purple, covers the higher slopes of the hills, following up the retreating line of the melting snows in springtime, and, later on, decorating the mountains with its fine feathery seed-heads. Here, too, the wild heliotrope (*Valeriana sitchensis*) grows in profusion, the pink swamp laurel (*Kalmia glauca*), and the white mountain rhododendron, heaths and heathers, red, rose and white, carpet the earth be-



MRS. HENSHAW GATHERING WILD FLOWERS IN THE CANADIAN ROCKY MOUNTAINS



LADIES TRESSES (*SPIRANTHES ROMANOWSKYI*)



CALYPSO (*CALYPSO BOREALIS*)



GREAT-FLOWERED GALLARDIA (*GALLARDIA PRISTATA*)

tint of the sky is stretched out over stony bastions, rising above the tall green conifers, and the alpine streams, ice-born to the heart of the sparkling glaciers, form a silvery network enmeshing myriads of bright-hued blossoms, which bud and bloom at the bidding of the summer sun. Such is the garden of nature, where the mountain wild flowers of Canada grow—"Twixt the green and the azure sphere."

When you leave the Chalet Hotel, at Lake Louise, to follow the trail which leads into the Valley of the Ten Peaks, you begin the long slow ascent that ends on the shoulder of Mount Temple, from whence you obtain an exquisite view of the entire range, and enter the wonderful flower-fields of the valley, where blossoms of every hue sweep in great waves of color from "tree-line" down into the depths 3,000 feet below. Here the Indian paint-brushes (*Castilleja septentrionalis*) and painted-cups (*Castilleja minima*) are to be found in all their glory, scarlet, red, pink, white, yellow and orange, they abound on every hand, mingled with them grow golden-silvery hairy hawk-weeds (*Hieracium aculeatum*), harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*), phacelias (*Phacelia sericea*), cherry-eyed speedwells (*Veronica alpina*), and a dozen different species of vetch, saxifrage and rock-creas.

An alpine meadow is a spot of supreme beauty, where the wild clematis (*Clematis columbiana*) and Macoun's gentians (*Gentiana Macounii*) are blue as the sky overhead, while the yellow columbines (*Aquilegia flavescens*) toss their heads in the passing breeze, and a thousand flowers spangle the grass. Their star-like faces upturned to meet the smile of the sun. These alpine gardens, held close in the curved arms of the hills, or set like jewels on the bare breast of the stone bastions, are one of the great marvels wrought by nature, the recesses of the western mountains, the contrast between the beauty of the blossoms and their surroundings being as vivid as it is enchanting.

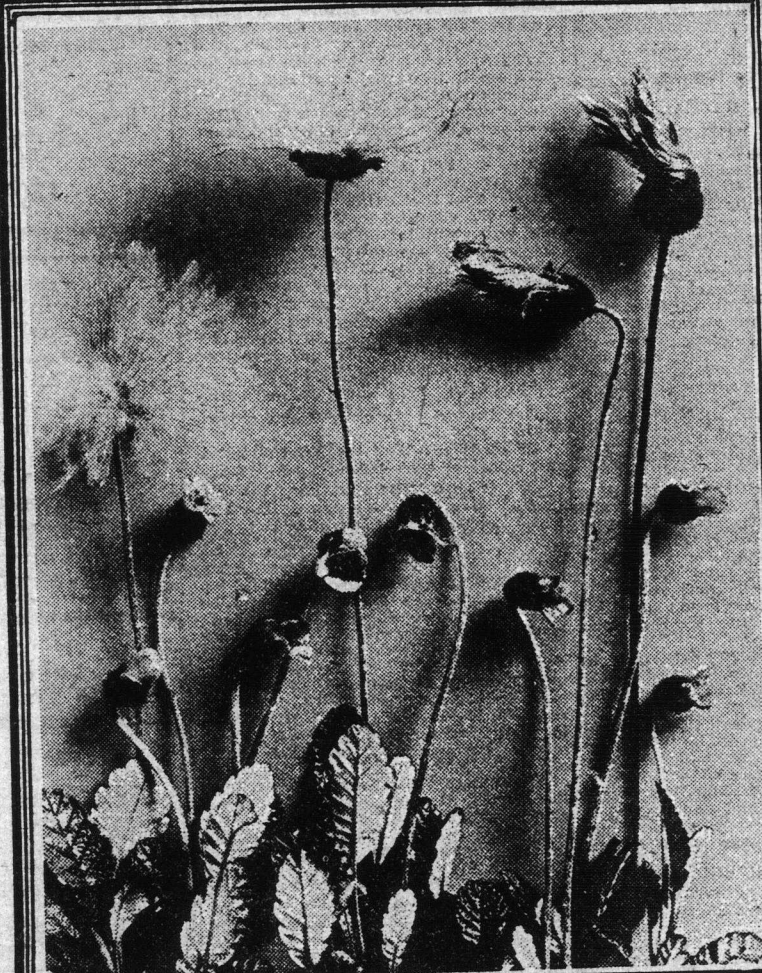
The bunch-berry (*Cornus canadensis*) is a dweller in the dense forests, where its white cruciform flowers and scarlet fruits are familiar to travellers. It is with queen-cup (*Clintonia uniflora*), so named by me in English in 1903, the name being now adopted in the Canadian nomenclature of plants, for certainly it is all the loveliest flower-cups which grow in the mountain valleys, its pure white petals forming a chalice fit for the First Lady in our land, and its large pale green leaves constituting a fitting background for ethereal bloom.

On the dry, sunny flats, at an elevation of from 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, the giant sunflowers (*Helianthus giganteus*), great-flowered gallardias (*Gallardia aristata*), full-tinged golden-rod (*Solidago canadensis*, a *decumbens*) and heart-leaf arnicas (*Arnica cordifolia*) flaunt their gay golden petals; tall and handsome plants they are, and very attractive. Close beside them grows the frail little wild fax (*Linum lewisii*), which droops so gracefully as it is gathered, and withers a touch, the humble narrow-leaved pocomon (*Lithospermum angustifolium*), the yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus crista-galli*), tall linsprort (*Mertensia paniculata*), and loco-weed (*Oxytropis Lambertii*), bushes covered with sooty-blushing prickly roses (*Rosa acicularis*), flanked by docks of pink everlasting (*Antennaria parvifolia* var. *rosea*) and warm-scented clovers (*Trifolium pratense*), realms of rose where the calm of green things growing temper the lure of the coral and carmine, and the grasses are gossiping as the migrant hosts of the dandelions march on through summer's wide-set door, with all their golden banners unfurled to the southern wind.

Close beside the alpine lakes, upon whose bosoms float flat lily-pads, and along the margins of those streams where wet-loving water-weeds wind their tendrils about the drooping, dripping willow wanders and blue-eyed grasses (*Saxifraga angustifolia*) twinkle like azure stars in the green firmament of the moss, the pale globular blossoms of the wintergreen (*Moneses uniflora*) hang in tufts upon each juicy stalk, and myriads of red monkey-flowers (*Mimulus lewisii*) glimmer like lamps in the gloom of the chicklets.

Very early in the spring the pasque flowers (*Anemone Nuttalliana*) appear in the land, their purple cups with silvery linings opening long before the fringed fern-like foliage develops about the thick downy stems. Very high up on some tiny plateau held in a hollow amongst the hills, some playground of the sun, where a patch of verdure is laid in the earth's brown lap, dew-drenched at dusk, ripened to sapphire by the sun at noon, wind-wrinkled by the gales that blow crisply off the glaciers, these large leaf-whorled pasque flowers spread in purple waves across the waste, and turn the plateau into a paradise of flowers, from whose violet rim runs the warm wine of loveliness.

To the traveller, the wild flowers of the Rocky and Selkirk mountains are a wonderful revelation of the prodigality and color-painting of Nature in these alpine regions; while to the botanist they are a constant source of interest and delight. There is no more beautiful, rich or varied alpine flora in the world than that of the British Empire, and it is the proud boast of Canada that within her Western borders grow the choicest specimens of many mountain wild flowers.



DRUMMOND'S DRYAS (*DRYAS DRUMMONDI*)



LARGE YELLOW LADIES SLIPPER (*CYPRIPEDIUM PUBESCENS*)

neath the Lyall's larches, and are amongst the last vegetation seen at "tree-line," the globe flower (*Trollius laxus*), a great white bloom with a yellow centre, pushes its way up through the icy coverlet of winter, and the romanoffia, with its petals of pure velvet, nestles in the crevices of the rocks at an elevation of 8,000 feet.

Field is the place where you will find the large yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium pubescens*) in all its rare perfection. On a long moraine which stretches up from Emerald lake to the foot of the Yoho Valley, these huge orchids grow in thick clumps in the month of July. They are weird, uncanny flowers,

with big yellow pouches and long spiral petals, and very strange does it seem to find there, flourishing on alpine heights, these plants which we are accustomed to associate with South African jungles and tropical surroundings.

As if in contradistinction to the exotic growth of these giant orchids, you will also find at Field the hardy ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), the white Canada violet, the ragwort, the honey-suckles, the cow parsnips, and the harebells, rioting all over the meadows, and clothing the earth with a coat of many colors.

At Glacier the yellow adder's tongue (*Erythronium*

giganteum), is perhaps, the most attractive plant to travellers. I have seen these pale yellow blossoms, amid their pallid green leaves, glimmer at dusk with a lambent light, beneath the star-stown mountains of heaven, and at dawn have seen the whole mountain-side break into bloom with exquisite odorous flowers, as if a mantle had been flung about the shoulders of the slopes, while at each step one had perforce to crush them under foot, so clustered did they grow among their smooth spear-like shoots.

To the true lover of nature there is no pleasure greater than to stand where the snow-crowned mountains tower up to heaven, where the thin blue



THE COUNCIL OF WOMEN IS AND WHAT IT

The value of any organization lies in what it does. It aspires to be in a community which cannot be attempted, if not accomplished, to commend itself to the public eye or sympathy.

This, we believe, is one of the great world-wide organizations. The Council of Women is so many and so little appreciated, even at the present time, that it does not yet quite understand of Women is, and who, if as an intelligent or satisfactory existence even, perhaps a what this valuable body of not be out of place.

The true greatness of an organization is not to be estimated, not by the means it attains, but by the loftiness of the purity of its aims and the nobility of those ideals are of the Council of Women, founded on the Law of Love, aims and objects based on the noblest and most noble in life. We may safely predict that if the principles prevail, its work will be abiding, for while it is good, either as an individual without being good, it is good without doing good, already achieved by the Council, substantial in its character and effects.

The Council itself consists of men and women workers of the latter, who are divided into cities, representing religious, social reform, literature, and education in all spheres, and pledged to unite on one platform and protect all that is noble in the Home, pure in the State and just in the world.

It cannot be called sect or party, political for it has no party, for it is world-wide, and its qualification for membership is to serve and help others, and to be a happier and a brighter person.

Owing to its representation, it has "no axe to grind," and its actions, in the case of secret societies, and in many of the devoted women who have freely and generously, act with spirit of love, service and self-sacrifice.

This Utopian condition of an age of gain, greed and glory, with suspicion by many, is reprehensible that a large body meet periodically for the purpose of "the union of all forces, irrespective of creed and color, in a thought of self-interest of the moment, but when, in addition to their own expense many have conferred with one another relating to the well-being of the State, involving the duty of generations, the or the pathos with such altruistic full meaning of such.

The Council of Women is a chinery plant, having always work on hand to keep it clogged or useless, and at the same time, in reserve sufficient to enable it, when required, to act in a vigorous and proper manner, the least expenditure of money.

The work which has been done by the Council of Women is not therefore very much undervalued, it is to initiate work, nor undertake any work which the Society can do better than the Council of Women can do.

The executive of the Council of Women is not a standing committee, but a strong central body typified for on this committee are interests, who differ widely and work, but who can operate a body in that it is strength, and without which, to redress wrong, the greatest good for the greatest number, to look around in a what is needed to be done, what is being overdone at energy. They cannot act or endow churches or orphanages, the cause of our federated organization, but it is the conclusion of another, but it help all. Not indeed financial, but has no funds excepting by societies, patrons, life members, which just meet in but by suggestion and aid, and by bringing to the attention of the public, or any pressing need in our interest and sympathy, and readiness to respond to the organization strong active funds for any urgent cause, the Executive as a whole, the Council cannot interfere any of its federated Societies.