

The alder also grows up into a tall slender tree, free from limbs, and hence useful for fencing purposes and easily cut into fire-wood. The yew, very scarce, is a hard, tough wood, resembling hickory. The Indian uses it for his bow, and the white man for pick and axe helms, it being about the only stuff found in the country suitable for these and similar purposes. The maple and ash are both of the soft varieties and fit for little else than fence and fire-wood. The bark of the birch is full of a resinous substance, which readily igniting and burning with a bright blaze, is used by the Indians for kindling fires and for torches. From the cedar rails, shingles, and even clapboards, are easily split; while the spruce and fir, the latter also called Oregon fir and Douglas pine, afford the best material for piles, spars and every species of lumber. The oak being the same as that found in California, is mostly confined to the country east of the Cascades, and even there it is not abundant. The redwood, or anything resembling it nearer than cedar, does not grow in British Columbia. Everywhere the size of the timber varies with altitude; that in the lower valleys being of gigantic dimensions, and dwindling, as we ascend the mountains, into mere shrubbery, until, at a height of five or six thousand feet, we reach the limit of vegetation—the line of eternal snow.

Although British Columbia shows great poverty in the animal kingdom, the vegetable world is sufficiently varied and prolific. Indeed, it is not often, except in tropical climates, that a richer botany is presented to the student of nature. Flowering shrubs, esculent roots, medicinal plants, wild fruits and berries are everywhere abundant. In its Flora it strongly resembles California, the prairies being covered and the woods filled in the spring with the same superfluity of gorgeous flowers, though there, owing to the more timely rains, they are not so short lived as with us. Nearly everywhere in the forests, the wild lilac and the snow-drop, and on the plains, the wormwood and cactus are seen as in the southern portions of this State. For curative and like purposes, the natives make use of a great variety of plants, though the medicine-men rely much on their powers of exorcising—being simply the mesmeric influence they are able to exert for driving away the *skookums*, or evil spirits, that are supposed to be the cause of disease and death. There are a variety of shrubs from which they make tea to be used as a beverage, and some of which, to the taste, is not unlike the drink made from the Chinese leaf. In the bark of the tender hemlock they find a remedy for diarrhoea, while the young sprouts of the raspberry, is eaten in the spring, for the purpose of correcting disorders of the blood. The leaf of the bear-berry is dried, either in the sun or over a fire, and then smoked in a pipe, being mixed with tobacco, when they have any. The effect produced, though very slight, is similar to that of tobacco, yet it does not taste at all like that substance, being in

fact quite insipid and nearly tasteless. Of roots, the Indians have the potato, introduced amongst them by the English, and a variety indigenous to the country, the most valuable of which is the carummas, resembling a small white onion. Their potatoes, of which nearly every tribe raises some, are excellent, being of the species known as lady-fingers, that never fail to be dry and solid when grown in a proper soil. The wappatoo, the root of the fern, and of certain flags, some of which are not only palatable, but highly nutritious, are also baked and eaten.

But of all the comestibles in the vegetable world, the most valuable to the Indian are the wild fruits and berries. On these, next to fish, he is morally dependant for subsistence, and fortunate for him it is, that they grow so plentiful, and last for so great a portion of the year. Of fruits, he has the wild plum and cherry, the crab-apple, the prickly-pear, and several other kinds; while of berries, there is an almost endless variety, including the strawberry and raspberry—coming earliest in the Spring—the blackberry, whortleberry, blueberry, scarlet currant, the gooseberry, bearberry, the sallal and many others; these being the kinds most common and abundant. Cranberries, also, abound in the marshy places. Of all these the sallal is perhaps the most acceptable and serviceable to the Indian, as it is easily gathered, very nourishing, readily preserved by means of drying, and lasts the latest in the season—hanging on the bushes until December. The leaves of the bearberry are dried, as above mentioned, and used as tobacco, being then called *quer-lo-chintl*. There is also a singular fruit called the Oregon grape, growing on a low bush, having serrated prickly leaves. It is worthy of mention only as a curiosity, being so sour, even when ripe, that nothing can eat it. The foregoing, by no means fill the catalogue of fruits, and berries growing wild in British Columbia, yet they serve to show that nature has been generous in this department, and prove that the Indian, thus supplied, but for his indolent and improvident habits never need want, much less perish, as he sometimes does, through sheer starvation, during the season of winter.

#### GRASSES.

The indigenous grasses of British Columbia are very similar to those found native in California. Wild timothy or prairie grass, sometimes mixed with clover, covers the rich bottoms and prairies to the south, bunch grass growing with the greatest luxuriance, even to the tops of the mountains, throughout all the open country. Swamp grass of different kinds, some being fine and nutritious, others almost as coarse as tules, abounds along the borders of the lakes and in other marshy places. On the Smass prairies about 30 miles southeast of Fort Langley, are many thousand acres covered with wild timothy and other nourishing grasses, from which hay of excellent quality could be made with the greatest facility, the growth being very thick and standing four