

in time to come, many now present would rejoice that they had assisted in laying the foundation of the Botanical Society of Canada.

The following papers were read:—

### ON THE CORNUS FLORIDA OF THE U. S.

By PROFESSOR GEORGE S. BLACKIE, M. D., NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

Common throughout all our forests, conspicuous in Spring time by its festoons of large white blossoms, and equally so during the Fall months from its clusters of scarlet berries, a handsome little tree, usually about fifteen to twenty feet high, is the *Cornus florida*, L. of the U. S. I have brought this plant before your notice for no particular reason, but that it this morning attracted my attention as I walked in the neighborhood of my home, and I conceive that much service may be done to the existing state of the botanical knowledge of our country, should each member of the Society take up, meeting after meeting, some individual plant, no matter how common, and state all that he knows of that plant, whether such information be gleaned from his own studies or those of others. On my first visit to the United States, one of the first objects which attracted my attention on travelling down the Mississippi, from the snows of Canada to the balmy spring of Louisiana, was this plant, and its extreme beauty, contrasted with the gloominess of the scenery from which I had just emerged, made so strong an impression on me that I have ever since looked on it with a peculiar interest.

*Cornus florida* is probably the most generally distributed species of its genus in this country. In this genus, which is a member of the family of *Cornaceæ*, there are about twenty species, of which America has, north of Mexico, eleven, two are peculiar to Mexico, three are found in Nepal, two in Japan, two are found in both Asia and Europe, and one is found in the north of both hemispheres. They are all shrubs, with entire, deciduous leaves, covered with adpressed hairs, the calyx four-toothed, minute, adhering to the ovary; the petals few, distinct, oblong, inserted with the calyx into an epigynous disk, drupes baccate; flowers in cymes. In this State (Tenn.) we have at least five species, viz., *C. paniculata*, *C. stricta*, *C. asperifolia*, *C. sericea*, and the subject of my present paper. In addition to these, in the north there are found the species *C. Canadensis*, *C. circinata*, *C. alba*, *C. alternifolia*, and *C. sanguinea*. The bark of all these has very bitter and tonic properties. Some of them have underground stems, dying annually down; others again have fine permanent stems, the wood of which is exceedingly hard, a fact which has given rise to the name, from *cornu*, a horn, the wood being believed to be as hard and durable as a horn. Hence the ancient Romans constructed spear shafts and other warlike implements from it, and Virgil alludes to it as *bona bello*