

During my sojourn at my brother's, after rendering any help that was required at my hands, and my labors I confess were very light, and probably not very efficient, I had still much leisure time at my command. Remote from any habitation—formed the furthest line of settlement in the township—there was little opportunity for visiting. The mighty forest girded in the few acres of cleared ground on three sides, while in front it was bounded and divided from the opposite township by the waters of the larger and lesser Katchawanook: the Indian name signifying alternate rapid, and still waters.

With few inducements to walk, as regarded my social position in the neighbourhood, I was thrown upon the few resources that remained open to me, and these I eagerly sought for in the natural features of the soil. Whatever I beheld had the charm of novelty to recommend it to my attention; every plant however lowly, became an object of interest.

The season of flowers, with the exception of some few autumnal ones, was over; but while roaming over the new clearing, threading my way among stumps and unburned log-heaps, I sometimes found plants that were totally new to me, with bright and tempting berries that I forbore to taste till I had shewn them to my brother, and from him learned their name and quality. Among these were the bright crimson berries of the strawberry blite, or Indian strawberry, the leaves of which I afterwards boiled as a vegetable. That elegant little trailing plant *Mitchella repens*, sometimes called partridge-berry and also twin-berry, from the scarlet fruit having the appearance of being double. The delicate fragrant jessamine-shaped flower, that terminates the long flexile leafy branch, was not then in flower; the fruit has a mealy, spicy taste and is very pretty, resembling the light bright scarlet of the holly-berry in its color.

In damp mossy spots I found the gay berries of the dwarf cornel* the herbaceous species; there also was the trailing arbutus† with its shining laurel-like leaves and scarlet fruit: and nearer to the lake on the low swampy shore grew the blue-berried‡ and the white dogwood with wild grapes (frost grapes!) that hung in tempting profusion high among the bushes, mixing its purple fruit with the transparent clusters of the high bush

cranberry,* which, stewed with maple sugar, often formed an addition to our evening meal.

Into the dark angled recesses of the forest I dared not venture unattended, unless it were just a few yards beyond the edge of the clearing, for the sake of some new fern or flower that I coveted.

One of my walks was along the irregular and winding banks of a small creek that flowed within a few feet of the house; to trace its wanderings through the cedars that fringed its banks—to mark the shrubs and vegetables, the mosses and flowers that clothed its sides—to watch its eddies and tiny rapids—to listen to its murmurings and to drink its pure cold waters—was one of my amusements.

Another of my favorite rambles was along the rivershore: the autumnal rains had not then fallen to swell its currents. The long dry ardent summer of 1832, had left the limestone bed of the Otonabee dry for many yards along its edge, so that I could walk on the smooth surface as on a pavement. This pavement was composed of numerous strata of limestone, each stratum about an inch or two in depth, every layer was distinctly marked. Between the fissures were seedling roses and vines, ferns and various small plants; the exuviae of water insects with shells and other matter, lay bleaching upon the surface of the stones. It was for want of other objects of interest that my attention was first drawn to the natural productions of my adopted country, books I had none to assist me, all I could do was to note facts, ask questions, and store up any information that I chanced to obtain. Thus did I early become a forest gleaner.

How many solitary hours have I passed upon the river bank, gazing with unwearied eyes upon its ever moving waters, hurrying along its dark bed, foaming, leaping, dashing downwards, now sweeping with resistless force against the stony walls that bounded it on the opposite side, now gliding for a space calm and slow, then with accelerated force hurling back its white spray, as if striving against the propelling force that urged its onward career.

Often did I repeat to myself Moore's lines written at the falls of the Mohiaw River,

"From rise of morn to set of sun
I've seen the mighty Mohawk run,
Rushing alike untired and wild
'Neath rocks that frowned and flowers that
smiled.

And as I watched the woods of pine
Along its surface darkling shine,
Like tall and mystic forms that pass
Before the wizard's magic glass.

* American guelder-rose, *viburnum oxyvoccus*.

* *Cornus Canadensis*, low round, dwarf dogwood.

† *Uva ursi*, bear-berry, *Kimikimick*.

‡ *Cornus sericea*, red-rod.

|| *Cornus alba*.