

acute serratures, sometimes cordate, sprinkled with hairs, panicles longer than the petioles; the lower ones mostly staminate: upper ones large and widely spreading, with very hispid branches. STERILE FLOWER, calyx 5-parted; the segments roundish, concave,—stamen short, incurved. Rudimentary ovary hemispherical. FERTILE FLOWER, calyx of two oblong concave sepals. Acheneum much compressed, smooth, very oblique, finally refracted on the short, broadly-winged pedicel; persistent style lateral. Seed ovate-lenticular. Embryo large, in the midst of thin fleshy albumen: cotyledon orbicular, flattish.

Moist, shady soils, particularly along rivers. *Fl.* July. *Fr.* September. This, like several other species of the genus, affords a strong fibre like hemp, and has been proposed to be used as a substitute for that article.—(*Torrey in Nat. Hist of New York.*)

The genus *Urtica* contains many interesting species well worth knowing, from the products which they furnish. The name is formed from *Uro*, to burn, in allusion to the stinging properties of most of the species. *U. Dioica* is found all over Europe, also in Barbary, Siberia and Japan. It grows in hedges, neglected fields, gardens and pastures. The tops of the tender shoots are sometimes used as a pot-herb early in spring. A strong decoction of the plant will coagulate milk very readily, and without any disagreeable flavor. The stalk is found to have a texture somewhat like that of hemp, and to be capable of being manufactured into cloth, ropes and paper. The leaves are the only food of three of the most beautiful butterflies—*Atalanta*, *Paphia* and *Urtica*, and the principal food of the *Io*. The caterpillars also of the *Urticata* and *Verticalis* moths feed on it; and the bases of the leaves are frequently disfigured by tubercles which contain small maggots, probably producing *Musca Urtica*.

The *Atalanta* Butterfly was probably introduced into America from Europe with the common nettle, which it inhabits.* The caterpillars of the showy butterfly, *Vanessa Milberti*, live together on the Canadian species.

Boehmeria nivea, sometimes called *Urtica nivea*, and *Urtica tenacissima* (the caloce of Sumatra), produces the fibre called rhea, or China grass, of which two, or even three, crops are obtained in its native countries in the same season. It is cultivated, and succeeds very well in the open air, in the middle of France. Numerous experiments have been made with it in England, where it is spun in large quantities, and fetches, occasionally, £100 stg. per ton.

Another species, equally useful, is designated in France by the common name of *ramie* (*Urtica utilis*). From the descriptions of different Botanists it would appear to be identical with that which

* See Harris, on "Insects injurious to vegetation."