

us from its oddity, it is certainly much more beautiful in its haunts. There the paler flowers counteract the somewhat veiny quality of the deeper, and the soft browns of the hemlock-strewn ground act as a setting to the whole, together with the surrounding air of mystery making it one of the half dozen New England Orchids for which true landscape value may be claimed.

Hereabout it is the earliest comer of the tribe. Oh, no! I am forgetting that there is one of another household still earlier, the Showy Orchis, which pierces the mold with its lily-like leaves in late April or early May, in company with Wake Robin, Bloodroot, Anemones, and Yellow Violets. Even Time o' Year does not know its haunt in the deep woods beyond Lonetown on the Ridgefield road, where I cherish a few plants of it, so rare is this region, by letting them alone in the hope that they will increase, and that the seed may be borne to neighboring woods.

This Orchis is most precise in its equipments, and when in its first perfection of bloom, it seems like an artificial plant of wax from its broad leaves, sometimes six inches in length and damp to the touch, to the tip of its spike of half a dozen spurred, shaded purple flowers with broad white or violet tips. Where it is common, it often gathers in crowds like the Moccasin Flowers or Fringed Orchises, but with the few rare plants of my discovering, each kept its distance from the other, as prim as children made ready for a party, who sit perched on chair edges in constrained attitudes to keep finery untumbled until the moment for departure comes.

In common with many of the tribe the Showy Orchis has, on opening, a delicate earthy fragrance that turns to a decided muskiness after the fertilization of the flower; a perfume inseparable from leaf-mold blossoms to whatever tribe they may belong. One quality it lacks, and that is graceful-

ness. If its flower-stem grew longer before the buds opened, so as to raise them well above the leaves and give the wind a chance to sway and bend them, the primness would vanish, and the Showy Orchis be captivating indeed. At present it reminds one of a lovely woman with so short a neck that she cannot turn her head.

Another Moccasin Flower, a taller cousin of the Pink, has sent a few venturesome pioneers over the hemlock ridge to test the climate and soil on the coast side of it, for this family needs bracing air and usually keeps well away from salt water influences.

The Yellow Moccasin, or, as the French call it, *Le Soulier de Nôtre Dame*, comes in flower as the Showy Orchis passes, and precedes the exquisitely painted Showy Moccasin Flower, whose splendid rose-and-white blossoms, often two on a stem, seek high places and are seldom found in abundance south of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. It is called *Regina*, for it is queen of a princely family.

The Yellow Moccasin is a striking flower of the high shaded woodland landscape. The uncleft shoe itself is of a clear smooth yellow, veined with purple; the other two purplish petals hang as twisted strings, with a hood-like sepal arching between. The flowers, singly or often in pairs, are raised upon a stout, leafy stalk a foot or two above the ground, clearing the more woody undergrowth which serves as a background to deepen their color.

How the eye loves to linger upon yellow flowers! Of the three primary colors, yellow always seems to me the most harmonious under all conditions, from the first Marsh Marigold to the last brave wand of Golden-rod. Even after hard frosts, the same cheerful color wraps the low thickets wherever Witch Hazel blossoms, giving the landscape, through this last flower of the season, a forecast of the willow tints of early spring.

Roughly speaking, without attempting a