

NEWS OF WOMEN

MAY WILD FLOWERS.

WOODLAND TRIP WITH A NATURALIST—INTERESTING GOSSIP ABOUT FAMILIAR WEEDS.

Within a half hour of this city there is a stretch of unspoiled woods rich in thick carpetings of mosses and spring flowers and vibrant with the song of birds. It was to this fragrant spot that the Normal College Alumnae Class, led by Mrs. John I. Northrop, took its regular outing last week. The party, which comprised a score of mothers, kindergartners and students, all armed with botanical books and tools, met at the Fort Lee ferry, one-hundred-and-thirty-foot. From the landing on the Jersey shore a trolley ride of ten or fifteen minutes was taken to the Palisade Park Road, where the company alighted and followed its leader in quest of "material." The roadside at this point and for some distance was bordered with swamp and low meadow and huckleberry bushes which were in full bloom. Mrs. Northrop pointed out the distinctive features of each, and blueberries and huckleberries, leaf and flower, will never be mistaken for each other again by members of the class.

The foliage of the blueberry has a bluish cast and resembles that of cranberry, while the leaves of the huckleberry are a yellowish green. The flowers of the blueberry, like those of the huckleberry, grow in short clusters, but the tiny shells of the blueberry are larger than those of the huckleberry and are faintly tinted white, while the flowers of the huckleberry are a brilliant red. Along one side of the road a tiny stream flows a quiet brook of clear spring water. A mile below it makes a mighty leap and rushes to the river. From its sparkling depths a variety of snails were brought to shore by the small boy of the party for his aquarium. The clay bottom of the stream was hailed with delight by one of the teachers whose youngsters are making certain mineral collections. A dainty island of white violets gleamed amid the ripples of the water, and marsh buttercups glittered on the banks. From the bottom of the pretty brook a quantity of forget-me-not plants are preparing for their long season of azure bloom.

On a wild cherry tree just inside the woods an energetic family of cent caterpillars had made long strides in its architectural task, and the youthful members of the community were fast devouring the foliage of the tree. The ground was covered with pansies and spring beauties, but the latter, mistaking the cloudy sky for evening, were falling asleep.

After goodly collections had been accumulated by the party a picnic was made at a heap of nature piled stones, and upon it the members seated themselves, while Mrs. Northrop examined their treasures and described interesting traits and characteristics.

An unexpected and delightful incident of this period of the trip was the appearance of an apparent parasite in the form of a rose breasted grosbeak, which alighted on an elm branch over the heads of the group and devoted itself to its meal of young fruit. The rose breasted grosbeak is a migrant in this vicinity, only remaining two or three weeks at its time. Its beak is too large for beauty, but its gorgeous plumage is a bright blue and black and white. Another bird seen was the oven bird, or golden crowned thrush, which is, in reality, no thrush at all, but a warbler. It was this bird that greeted the visitors as they entered the woods with its "teacher, teacher, teacher." This call is delivered on the ground, for the bird is one of the few that sing in the air. A wood thrush, a gentler, less mannered bird, perched on a low bush and sang still for several minutes, regarding the party.

Several of Pickering's tree frogs still little fellows, not over a half inch in length, were captured, and will spend the rest of their lives in terraria. The path through the woods was thick with them. The little creatures are also known as tree toads. They make the high shrill sound that emanates from ponds in March and April. There were wood frogs, too. They are a little larger, and can always be told by the dark marks over their eyes and back of their ears. They live in damp woods. A grasshopper was overtaken, but was allowed to live, it is a rare of the class, strictly confined to the woods, and no needless loss of life either animal or vegetable, shall result from the outing.

When a brilliant columbine was discovered growing from the cleft in a rock near where the party rested, one of the members quoted from Emerson:

A quest of river grapes, a woodland walk, A wild rose or rock loving columbine, A wild rose or rock loving columbine, A wild rose or rock loving columbine.

In the boxes in addition to the flowers mentioned, were Solomon's seals, wood betony, ginseng, Jack-in-the-pulpit, bellworts, wild geranium, pussy toots, rue anemone and dogwood. A number of interesting facts regarding them were brought to light.

The Solomon's seal derived its name from the seal-like appearance of the root stock, which accumulates a scab for every year of its life. Its generic title, polygatum, signifies "many knees," and was suggested by the same characteristic.

The wood betony, which bears a beautiful spring flower, but has a drugged seed pod familiar on road sides, is one of the weeds to which great medicinal virtues are ascribed in certain parts of the world. The Roman saying, "sell your cat's paw betony," would imply that in ancient Italy it was so common that it would cure forty different ailments. Whether the American variety is identical with the Italian one is a question. The spring betony is often discarded by people who gather it because its bells are closed and it is thought to be a weed, when as a fact it is only asleep. It can usually be revived by putting its stems into fresh water and standing the vase in the strong sunlight, which will cause the buds to open, immersing the stems in very hot water will often accomplish the purpose.

The striking delicate flowers described by William Hamilton Gibson as "one feathery ball of bloom," is a relative of the true ginseng, the root of which is used as a medicine and which brings high price. The name is a corruption of the Chinese name, Jenchen, meaning "like a man," derived from the form of the roots. In China ginseng is believed to be an antidote for old age and fatigue, and it can only be gathered by order of the Emperor.

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THE HEALTH OF HAVANA.

WONDERFUL RESULTS ACHIEVED UNDER AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION.

Washington, May 11.—Havana, the healthiest city in the world, for its size, at least, made so largely by the extermination of the mosquito, is the amazing result of four years of modern sanitation administered by American army officers. This distinction, achieved in a city which for half a century was one of the worst pestholes under civilized government and the chief source of scourges which compelled the United States to maintain expensive quarantine establishments, is verified by more accurate vital statistics than are presented by other municipalities. The statement of Havana's improvement is warranted by the latest report, covering March of this year, made by Major N. C. Gorgas, surgeon, U. S. A., the chief sanitary officer, which has just come to the War Department. He says:

The report shows since the smallest number of deaths for any March since 1883. The minimum number for this month in 1883 was 200, when there were 50 deaths; the maximum, in 1888, when we had 1,515 deaths. The death rate in any part of the city of Havana is smaller than in any other part of the world. From the table appended, which shows the death rate of cities in the United States, Europe and other parts of the world, it will be seen that Havana's death rate is smaller than that of Baltimore, New Orleans, New York, San Francisco, Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh, Barcelona, Madrid and many other American and European cities.

YELLOW FEVER PRACTICALLY ERADICATED. Another month has passed without yellow fever, making six months since Havana had a single case. The table in the body of the report goes back to 1883, and if it went back 100 years, the character of the record would be the same. A reference to this table will show that in the years before 1900 yellow fever was a constant pest of Havana, and in 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 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