

BOTANICAL NOTICES.

By Mr. H. Ecroyd Smith.

(READ 13TH DECEMBER, 1861.)

THE following notices of some of the less common Phanerogamous or flowering native plants of this district may prove of interest to several members of the Historic Society. Although the result of excursions eliminated from a very circumscribed leisure, they yet render information additional to what is supplied either by the "Flora of Liverpool," or its "Supplement;" which, when hereafter referred to, will both receive the former title.

Monotropa Hypopitys, Bird's Nest. Crosby, near the old Warren House, is given in the "Flora;" but the plant is not confined to one spot, and may be met with at intervals among the sand hills. This leafless and otherwise most singular vegetable production is uncertain and variable in its appearance, and occasionally remains invisible for several seasons together. It is parasitical, and its normal habitat is the hanging woods of beech (but occasionally of fir) which clothe and beautify many of the hill slopes of our southern counties, as at Selborne, in Hampshire, immortalised by Gilbert White, whose notice of the plant in question led the writer to examine it on the spot, where it still flourishes. Its occurrence, however, upon open level ground is very rare, if not absolutely peculiar to this district, and there can be little reason to doubt its generative growth from decayed roots of the common willow of the sandhills (*Salix Fusca*). The unusual amount of moisture of the past summer season has been peculiarly favourable for

such production, giving its favourite localities an appearance much resembling a bed of young asparagus.

Narthecium Ossifragum, the Lancashire Bog-Asphodel, although common on the mosses on the east, is yet scarce upon the west, side of the Mersey. It grows, however, in Wirral, though very sparingly—namely, on Irby and Oxton heaths; and bordering a rivulet near Claughton village it attains greater luxuriance than the writer ever noticed, even in its peculiar native county.

Trigonella Ornitho-podioides, or Bird's Foot Fenugreek, a pretty but diminutive plant, has been supposed to be confined, as regards this neighbourhood, to a spot on the Parkgate shore and Grange hill. It is nevertheless to be found upon the summits of Bidston and Heswell hills, and probably on most of the higher eminences in Wirral.

Erythraea Pulchella, or Dwarf-tufted Centaury, grows abundantly in the moist hollows of the common at Leasowe.

Dianthus Deltoides, the Maiden Pink, occurs in hedges between Liscard village and New Brighton, occasionally attaining a height of from four to five feet; but its bright starry blossoms, occurring singly, are seldom detected.

Hesperis Matronalis, Dame's Violet, grows sparingly in several moist plantations in Wirral.

Silene Anglica, English Catchfly, is by no means uncommon in cultivated fields in Wirral; at Great and Little Meols being quite abundant.

Hypericum Elodes, or Marsh St. John's Wort, in addition to the published localities, flourishes luxuriantly in a pond on the lower edge of Oxton heath.

Viola Odorata, the Sweet Violet, except as an outcast from gardens, is a scarce plant in the sandstone districts. The purple variety is found near Upton, and the white near Great Meols and Thurstaston.

Hottonia Palustris, the Marsh Violet, vegetates in the dykes of Bidston marsh.

Hydrocharis Morsus-rane, the Frog-bit, is found in the same places as last named, as well as in numerous ponds and ditches in Wirral.

Veronica Buxbaumii, Buxbaum's Speedwell. Naturalized about Saughall-Massie.

Corydalis Claviculata, White Climbing Fumitory, grows upon Flaybrick hill; but from this unrecorded locality it is fast disappearing, through the extensive quarrying operations here effecting.

Thalictrum Minus, the least Meadow-rue, is to be met with on the "Eye," or least of the Hilbre group of Islands, as well as upon Little Hilbre.

Geum Rivale, or Water Aveus. Meadows near Woodchurch and Frankby mere.

Sedum Anglicum, White Stonecross. Great Meols and Hilbre islands.

Sambucus Ebulus, Dwarf Elder or Danewort. Near Grange.

Dipsacus Pilosus, Small Teazle. Preston brook.

Samolus Valerandi, Brookweed. Dykebanks at Leasowe.

Habenaria Viridis, Green Orchis. Liscard vale.

Asplenium Marinum, Sea-spleenwort, has been all but eradicated from its old habitats on the Mersey, and even Hilbre. The writer has found it growing sparingly upon rocks on the left bank of the river—an unrecorded locality.

Ophioglossum Vulgatum, Adder's Tongue Fern, occurs in moist meadows, near Leasowe, but the high grass in which it grows causes this plant to escape that notice its curious form would else obtain.

Lycopodium Inundatum, the Marsh Clubmoss, once abundant upon Bidston marsh, is completely banished thence.

The writer has had the pleasure of finding this scarce plant in a new locality, viz., Oxton heath, where it is of uncommonly fine growth.

Within the past twenty years several of the scarcer individuals of our local Flora have become eradicated or in other ways lost to the Mersey district, viz. :—

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| <i>Geranium Sanguineum</i> . . . | The Bloody Crane's Bill. |
| " <i>Pratense</i> . . . | Meadow ditto |
| " <i>Columbinum</i> . . . | Long-stalked ditto |
| <i>Erodium Moschatum</i> . . . | Musky Stork's Bill. |
| <i>Metilotus Vulgaris</i> . . . | Melilot (white fl. var.) |
| <i>Artemesia Absinthium</i> . . . | Wormwood. |
| <i>Campanula Latifolia</i> . . . | Broad-leaved Bell Flower. |
| <i>Convallaria Majalis</i> . . . | Lily of the Valley. |
| <i>Allium Vineale</i> . . . | Crow Garlic. |
| <i>Silene Quinquevulnera</i> . . . | Variogated Catchfly. |
| <i>Lycopodium Selago</i> . . . | Fir Clubmoss (Wirral.) |