WAKING UP IN
BOONE

ASA GRAY

A BOTANICAL EXCURSION

to the Mountains of North Carolina
Ashe County, Grandfather Mountain, and the Roan, 1841



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First published in 1842
Abridged from the 1889 text



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The text is from Asa Gray, "Notes of a Botanical Excursion to the Mountains of North Carolina," first published in *The American Journal of Science and Arts* 42 (1842), pages 1 to 49, and reprinted in *Scientific Papers of Asa Gray*, selected by Charles Sprague Sargent, volume 2 (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1889). This edition follows the 1889 text.

The text is abridged. Passages on the classification of plants and the Latin descriptions of new species are left out, and each omission is marked […]. The section headings are new. Everything else is printed without change, including the spelling and punctuation of the 1889 text. The footnotes are from that text.

The engravings are from Wilbur G. Zeigler and Ben S. Grosscup, *The Heart of the Alleghanies; or, Western North Carolina* (Raleigh and Cleveland, 1883). Text and engravings are in the public domain in the United States.

Cover: *On the Cataluche.* Title page: *Cascades, near Warm Springs.*

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The fine and close view of the rugged Grandfather amply rewarded the toil of ascending this beetling cliff.

ASA GRAY
July 8, 1841

INTRODUCTION

In June 1841, Asa Gray left New York with two friends, John Carey and James Constable, to collect plants in the mountains of North Carolina. Gray was thirty years old and was writing the *Flora of North America* with John Torrey. The next spring Harvard appointed him professor of natural history.

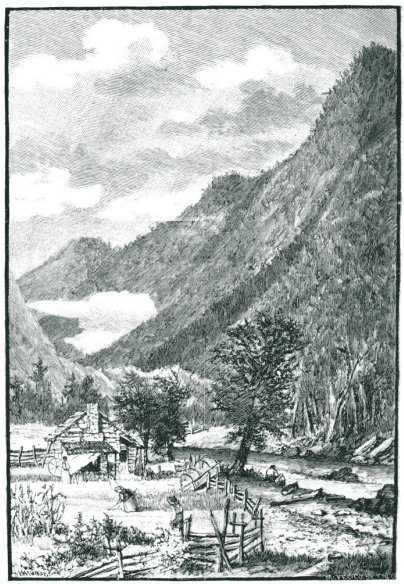
The three men came by railroad and stagecoach up the Valley of Virginia, crossed the mountains into Ashe County, and made the village of Jefferson their headquarters. From there they climbed the mountains around the town, spent a night near the top of Grandfather Mountain and another on the Roan, and made a trip to White Top in Virginia. They stayed with farm families along the way, and Gray wrote down what he learned from them about ramps, ginseng, sour milk, and snakebite.

Gray wrote the trip up as a letter to Sir William Hooker, the English botanist, and published it in 1842. He began with a history of the botanists who had come to these mountains before him, among them William Bartram, André Michaux, and John Fraser. Gray had read Michaux's journals, and he found the entry for August 30, 1794, the day Michaux reached the top of Grandfather Mountain and sang the Marseillaise with his guide.

The letter is also a scientific paper, with long passages on how plants should be classified and descriptions of new species in Latin. This edition leaves those passages out so that the account of the places, the people, and the travel can be read straight through. The text was reprinted in 1889 by Charles Sprague Sargent, who trav-

eled through these same mountains with John Muir in 1898.

Some names have changed. The Negro Mountain above Jefferson has been Mount Jefferson since 1952. Ashe Court House is the town of Jefferson, and White Top is Whitetop Mountain. Near the end, Gray writes about a plant known only from a single specimen Michaux had collected, which he hoped to name for Charles Short of Kentucky. In a footnote to this letter he gave it the name *Shortia*. No one found the living plant again until 1877, when a teenager came across it along the Catawba River in McDowell County.



Valley of the Noon-Day Sun, 1883

NOTES OF A BOTANICAL EXCURSION TO THE MOUNTAINS OF NORTH CAROLINA

The peculiar interest you[1] have long taken in North American botany, and your most important labors in its elucidation, indicate the propriety of addressing to yourself the following remarks, relating, for the most part, to the hasty collections made by Mr. John Carey, Mr. James Constable, and myself, in a recent excursion to the higher mountains of North Carolina. Before entering upon our own itinerary, it may be well to notice very briefly the travels of those who have preceded us in these comparatively unfrequented regions. The history of the botany of the Alleghany Mountains would be at once interesting and on many accounts useful to the cultivators of our science in this country; but with my present inadequate means, I can only offer a slight contribution towards that object.

So far as I can ascertain, the younger (William) Bartram was the first botanist who visited the southern portion of the Alleghany Mountains. Under the auspices of Dr. Fothergill, to whom his collections were principally sent, and with whom his then surviving father had previously corresponded, Mr. Bartram left Philadelphia in 1773, and after traveling in Florida and the lower part of Georgia for three years, he made a transient visit to the Cherokee country, in the spring of 1776. In this journey he ascended the Seneca or Keowee River, one of the principal sources of the Savannah, and crossing the

[1] Sir W. J. Hooker.

mountains which divide its waters from those of the Tennessee, continued his travels along the course of the latter to the borders of the present State of Tennessee. Finding that his researches could not safely be extended in this direction, after exploring some of the higher mountains in the neighborhood, he retraced his steps to the Savannah River, proceeding thence through Georgia and Alabama to Mobile. His well-known and very interesting volume of travels[2] contains numerous observations upon the botany of these regions, with occasional popular descriptions, and in a few cases Latin characters of some remarkable plants; as, for example, the *Rhododendron punctatum* (which he calls *R. ferrugineum*), *Stuartia pentagyna* (under the name of *S. montana*), *Azalea calendulacea* (which he terms *A. flammea*), *Trautvetteria*, which he took for a new species of *Hydrastris*, *Magnolia auriculata*, etc. He also notices the remarkable intermixture of the vegetation of the north and south, which occurs in this portion of the mountains where *Halesia*, *Styrax*, *Stuartia*, and *Gelseminum* (although the latter "is killed by a very slight frost in the open air in Pennsylvania") are seen flourishing by the side of Birches, Maples, and Firs of Canada.

I should next mention the name of André Michaux, who at an early period, amid difficulties

[2] "Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country," etc. By William Bartram. Philadelphia, 1791.

and privations of which few can now form an adequate conception, explored our country from Hudson's Bay to Florida, and westward to the Mississippi, more extensively than any subsequent botanist. A few of his plants have not yet been rediscovered, and a considerable number remain among the rarest and least known species of the United States; it may therefore be useful to give a particular account of his peregrinations, especially through the mountain region which he so diligently explored, and in which he made such important discoveries. For this purpose I am fortunately supplied with sufficient materials, having had the opportunity of consulting the original journals of Michaux, presented by his son to the American Philosophical Society. I am indebted for this privilege to the kindness of John Vaughn, Esq., the secretary of the society, who directed my attention to these manuscripts, and permitted me to extract freely whatever I deemed useful and interesting. The first fasciculus of the diary is wanting; but we learn from a chance record, as well as from published sources, that he embarked at L'Orient on the 29th of September, 1785, and arrived in New York on the 13th of November. The private journal from which the following information is derived commences in April, 1787; prior to which date he had established two gardens, or nurseries, to receive his collections of living plants until they could be conveniently transported to France: one in New Jersey, near the city of New

York; the other about ten miles from Charleston, South Carolina. Into the latter it appears he introduced some exotic trees, which he thought suitable to the climate; and the younger Michaux, who visited this garden several years afterwards, mentions two Ginkgos (*Salisburia adiantifolia*), which in seven years had attained an elevation of thirty feet; also some fine specimens of *Sterculia platanifolia*, and a large number of young plants of *Mimosa Julibrissin*, propagated from a tree which his father had brought from Europe. From this stock, probably, the latter has been disseminated throughout the southern States, and is beginning to be naturalized in many places.

I have no means of ascertaining what portions of the country Michaux had visited previously to April, 1787, when he set out from Charleston on his first journey to the Alleghany Mountains, by way of Savannah, ascending the river of that name to its sources in the Cherokee country, and following very nearly the route taken by Bartram eleven years before.[3] He reached the sources of the Keowee River on the 14th of June, and was conducted by the Indians across the mountains to the head of the Tugaloo (the other principal branch of the Savannah), and thence to the waters of the Tennessee. After suffer-

[3] In this journey he was accompanied by his son, who shortly afterwards returned to Europe. Before they reached Augusta, their horses were stolen, a misfortune which, it appears from Michaux's remarks, was of no uncommon occurrence in those days; and they were obliged to pursue their journey to that place on foot.

ing much inconvenience from unfavorable weather and the want of food, he returned to the Indian village of Seneca by way of Cane Creek, descended along the Savannah to Augusta, and arrived at Charleston on the 1st of July. His notes in this as well as in subsequent journeys to the mountains often contain remarks upon the more interesting plants he discovered; and in some cases their localities are so carefully specified that they might still be sought with confidence. On the 16th of July he embarked for Philadelphia, which he reached on the 27th; and, after visiting Mr. Bartram, traveled to New York, arriving at the garden he had established in New Jersey about the 1st of August. Returning by water to Charleston the same month, he remained in that vicinity until February, 1788, when he embarked for St. Augustine, and was busily occupied, during this spring, in exploring east Florida. His journal mentions several sub-tropical plants, now well known to be indigenous to Florida, but which are not noticed in his Flora: such as the Mangrove *Guilandina Bonduc*, *Sophora occidentalis*, two or three Ferns, and especially the Orange.[4] Leaving Florida at the beginning of June, he returned by land to Savannah and Charleston, where he was confined by sickness the remainder of the summer. Late in the autumn, however, he made a second excursion to the sources of the Savannah, chiefly to obtain the roots and seeds of the remarkable plants he had previously

[4] "Les bois etoient remplis d'oranges aigres," etc. Michaux, MSS.

discovered. He pursued the same route as before, except that he ascended the Tugaloo, instead of the Seneca or Keowee River, crossing over to the latter; and, climbing the higher mountains about its sources in the inclement month of December, when they were mostly covered with snow, he at length found some trees of *Magnolia cordata*, to obtain which was the principal object of this arduous journey. Retracing his steps, he reached Charleston at the end of December, with a large collection of living trees, roots, and seeds. The remainder of the winter Michaux passed in the Bahama Islands, returning to Charleston in the month of May. Early in June he set out upon a journey to a different portion of the mountains of North Carolina, by way of Camden, Charlotte (the county seat of Mecklenburg), and Morganton, reaching the higher mountains at "Turkey Cove, thirty miles from Burke Court House" (probably the head of Turkey Creek, a tributary of the Catawba), on the 15th of June. From this place he made an excursion to the Black Mountain, in what is now Yancey County, and afterwards to the Yellow Mountain, which Michaux at that time considered to be the highest mountain in the United States. If the Roan be included in the latter appellation, as I believe it often has been, this opinion is not far from the truth; since the Black Mountain alone exceeds it, according to Professor Mitchell's recent measurements. Descending this elevated range on the Tennessee side, and traveling for the most part

through an unbroken wilderness, near the end of June he reached the Block House on the Holston, famous in the annals of border warfare. Several persons had been killed by the Indians during the preceding week, and general alarm prevailing, Michaux abandoned his intention of penetrating into Kentucky, and resolved to botanize for a time in the mountains of Virginia. He accordingly entered that State, and arrived on the 1st of July at "Washington Court House, première ville dans la Virginie que l'on trouve sur la côte occidentale des montagnes, en sortant de la Carolinie Septentrionale." To this he adds the following note: "Première ville, si l'on peut nommer ville une Bourgade composée de douze maisons (log-houses). Dans cette ville on ne mange que de pain de Mays. Il n'y a viande fraîche, ni cidre, mais seulement du mauvais Rum." Abingdon, the county seat of Washington County, is now a flourishing town; but Michaux's remarks are still applicable to more than one première ville in this region. From this place he continued his course along the valley of Virginia throughout its whole extent, crossing New River, the Roanoke, and passing by Natural Bridge, Lexington, Staunton, and Winchester; thence by way of Frederick in Maryland, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, he arrived at Philadelphia on the 21st of July, and at New York on the 30th. In August and September he returned to Charleston by way of Baltimore, Alexandria, Richmond, and Wilmington, North Carolina. In November he revis-

ited the mountains explored early in the preceding summer, passing through Charlotte, Lincolnton, and Morganton, to his former headquarters at Turkey Cove; from whence he visited the north branch of Catawba (North Cove, between Linville Mountain and the Blue Ridge?), the Black Mountain, Toe River, etc.; and returned to Charleston in December, with two thousand five hundred young trees, shrubs, and other plants. From January until April, 1791, this indefatigable botanist remained in the vicinity of Charleston; but his memoranda for the remainder of that year are unfortunately wanting. The earliest succeeding date I have been able to find is March 22, 1792, when he sold the "Jardin du Roi" at Charleston, and going shortly afterwards by water to Philadelphia, he botanized in New Jersey and around New York until the close of May. In the beginning of June he visited Milford, Connecticut, to procure information from a Mr. Peter Pound, who had traveled far in the northwest; and at New Haven took passage in a sloop for Albany, where he arrived on the 14th of June (having botanized on the way at West Point, Poughkeepsie, etc.); on the 18th he was at Saratoga; on the 20th he embarked at Skenesborough (Whitehall), botanized more or less on the shores of Lake Champlain, reaching Montreal on the 30th of June, and Quebec on the 16th of July. The remainder of this season was devoted to an examination of the region between Quebec and Hudson's Bay, the botany of which, as is well known,

he was the first to investigate. His journal comprises a full and very interesting account of the physical geography and vegetation of that inclement district.

Leaving Quebec in October, and returning by the same route, we find our persevering traveler at Philadelphia early in December. It appears that he now meditated a most formidable journey, and made the following proposition to the American Philosophical Society: "Proposé à plusieurs membres de la Société Philosophique les avantages pour les États-Unis d'avoir des informations géographiques des pays à l'ouest de Mississippi, et demandé qu'ils aient à endosser mes traites pour la somme de £3600, si je suis disposé à voyager aux sources du Missouri, et même rechercher les rivières qui coulent vers l'océan Pacifique. Ma proposition ayant été accepté, j'ai donné à Mr. Jefferson, Secrétaire d'État, les conditions auxquels je suis disposé à entreprendre ce voyage. . . . J'offre de communiquer toutes les connoisances et informations géographiques à la Société Philosophique; et je réserve à mon profit toutes les connoisances en histoire naturelle que j'acquirerai dans ce voyage." Remaining in Philadelphia and its vicinity until the following summer, he set out for Kentucky in July, 1793, with the object of exploring the western States (which no botanist had yet visited), and also of conferring with General Clarke (at Mr. Jefferson's request) on the subject of his contemplated journey to the Rocky Mountains. He crossed the Alleghanies

in Pennsylvania, descended the Ohio to Louisville, Kentucky, traversed that State and western Virginia to Abingdon, and again traveled through the valley of Virginia to Winchester, Harper's Ferry, etc., arriving at Philadelphia on the 12th of December of the same year. Conferences respecting his projected expedition were now renewed, in which Mr. Genet, the envoy from the French republic, took prominent part; but here the matter seems to have dropped, since no further reference is made to the subject in the journal; and Michaux left Philadelphia in February, 1794, on another tour to the southern States. In July of that year he again visited the mountains of North Carolina, traveling from Charleston to Turkey Cove by his old route. On this occasion he ascended the Linville Mountain, and the other mountains in the neighborhood; but having "differé à cause du manque des provisions," he left his old quarters (at Ainsworth's), crossed the Blue Ridge, and established himself at Crab Orchard on Doe River. From this place he revisited the Black Mountain, and, accompanied by his new guide, Davenport, explored the Yellow Mountain, the Roan, and finally the Grandfather, the summit of which he attained on the 30th of August.[5] Returning

[5]His earlier journals are full of expressions of loyalty to the king under whose patronage his travels were undertaken; but now transformed into a republican: "Monté au sommet de la plus haute montagne de toute l'Amérique Septentrionale, chanté avec mon compagnon-guide l'hymne de Marseillois, et crié, 'Vive la Liberté et la République Française.'" If this enthusiasm were called forth by mere

to the house of his guide, he visited Table Mountain on the 5th of September, and proceeded (by way of Morganton, Lincolnton, Salisbury, and Fayetteville, North Carolina) to Charleston, where he passed the winter.

On the nineteenth day of April, 1795, our indefatigable traveler again set out, reached the Santee River at Nelson's Ferry, ascended the Wateree, or Catawba, to Flat Rock Creek, visited Flat Rock, crossed Hanging-Rock Creek, and ascended the Little Catawba to Lincolnton. In the early part of May he revisited Linville Mountain, the Yellow Mountain, the Roan, and some others, and then descended Doe River and the Holston to Knoxville, Tennessee. Thence, crossing the Cumberland Mountains, and a wilderness one hundred and twenty miles in extent, he arrived at Nashville on the 16th of June, at Danville, Kentucky, on the 27th, and at Louisville on the 20th of July. In August he ascended the Wabash to Vincennes, crossed the country to the Illinois River, and devoted the months of September, October, and November to diligent herborizations along the course of that river, the Mississippi, the lower part of the Ohio, and throughout the country included by these rivers. In December he descended the Mississippi in a small boat to the mouth of the Ohio, and ascended the latter and the Cumberland to Clarksville, which he

elevation, he should have chanted his pæans on the Black Mountain and the Roan, both of which are higher than the Grandfather.

reached on the 10th of January, 1796, after a perilous voyage in the most inclement weather. Leaving that place on the 16th, he arrived at Nashville on the 19th of January; and after making a journey to Louisville and back again, he started for Carolina at the close of February, crossed the Cumberland Mountains early in March, reached Knoxville on the 8th, Greenville on the 18th, Jonesborough on the 19th, and on the 22d crossed the Iron Mountains into North Carolina, descended Cane Creek (which rises in the Roan), and spent several days in exploring the mountains in the vicinity, with his former guide, Davenport. In April he returned to Charleston by his usual route; and on the 13th of August embarked for Amsterdam in the ship Ophir. This vessel was wrecked on the coast of Holland, on the 10th of October, and Michaux lost a part of the collections he had with him; on the 23d of December, 1796, he arrived at Paris with the portion he had saved. This notice of the travels of Michaux on this continent will suffice to show with what untiring zeal and assiduity his laborious researches were prosecuted; it should, however, be remarked, that greater facilities were afforded him, in some important respects, than any subsequent botanist has enjoyed; the expenses of his journey having been entirely defrayed by the French government, under whose auspices and direction they were undertaken.

The name of Fraser, so familiar in the annals of North American botany, ought, perhaps, to have

preceded that of Michaux in our brief sketch; since the elder Mr. Fraser, who had visited Newfoundland previous to the year 1784, commenced his researches in the southern States as early as 1785; and Michaux, on his first expedition to the mountains in 1787, speaks as having traveled in his company for several days. We believe, however, that he did not explore the Alleghany Mountains until 1789. Under the patronage of the Russian government, he returned to this country in 1799, accompanied by his eldest son, and revisited the mountains, ascending the beautiful Roan, where, "on a spot which commands a view of five States, namely, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina, the eye ranging to a distance of seventy or eighty miles when the air is clear, it was Mr. Fraser's good fortune to discover and collect living specimens of the new and splendid *Rhododendron Catawbiense*, from which so many beautiful hybrid varieties have since been obtained by skilful cultivators."[6] The father and son revisited the southern States in 1807; and the latter, after the decease of the father in 1811, returned to this country, and continued his indefatigable researches until 1817.

Many of the rarest plants of these mountains were made known especially to English gardens and

[6] "Biographical Sketch of John Fraser, the Botanical Collector," in Hooker's "Companion to the Botanical Magazine," vol. ii. p. 300: an article from which I have derived nearly all the information I possess respecting the researches of the Frasers in this country, and to which the reader is referred for more particular information.

collections, by Mr. John Lyon, whose indefatigable researches are highly spoken of by Pursh, Nuttall, and Elliott. It is very probable that he had visited the mountains previous to his assuming the charge of Mr. Hamilton's collections near Philadelphia, which he resigned to Pursh in 1802. At a later period, however, he assiduously explored this region, from Georgia as far north at least as the Grandfather Mountain; and died at Asheville in Buncombe County, North Carolina, some time between 1814 and 1818. I am informed by my friend, the Rev. Mr. Curtis, that his journals and a portion of his herbarium were preserved at Asheville for many years, and that it is probable that they may yet be found.

Michaux the younger, author of the "Sylva Americana," who accompanied his father in some of his earlier journeys, returned to this country in 1801, and crossed the Alleghany Mountains twice; first in Pennsylvania on his way to the western States, and the next year in North Carolina on his return to the seaboard. In crossing from Jonesboro', Tennessee, to Morganton, by way of Toe River (not Doe River as is stated in his Travels), he accidentally stopped at the house of Davenport, his father's guide in these mountains. The observations of the younger Michaux on this part of the Alleghany Mountains, in a chapter of his Travels devoted to that subject, are mainly accurate.

"In the beginning of 1805," Pursh, as he states in the preface to his Flora, "set out for the mountains

and western territories of the southern States, beginning at Maryland and extending to the Carolinas (in which tract the interesting high mountains of Virginia and Carolina took my particular attention), and returning late in the autumn through the lower countries along the seacoast to Philadelphia." This plan, however, was not fully carried out, since he does not appear to have crossed the Alleghanies into the great western valley, nor to have botanized along these mountains farther south than where the New River crosses the valley of Virginia. At any rate, it is certain that the original tickets of his specimens in the herbarium of the late Professor Barton, under whose patronage he traveled, as well as those in Mr. Lambert's herbarium, furnish no evidence that he extended his researches into the mountainous portion of North Carolina; but it appears probable (from some labels marked Halifax or Mecklenburg, Virginia) that he followed the course of the Roanoke into the former State. His most interesting collections were made at Harper's Ferry, Natural Bridge, the Peaked Mountains (which separate the two principal branches of the Shenandoah), the Peaks of Otter, in the Blue Ridge; also, Cove Mountain, Salt Pond Mountain, and Parnell's Knob (with the situation of which I am unacquainted), the region around the Warm Sulphur Springs, Capon Springs, the Sweet Springs, and the mountains of Monroe and Greenbrier counties.

Early in the present century, Mr. Kin, a German nurseryman and collector, resident at Philadelphia, traveled somewhat extensively among the Alleghany Mountains, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining living plants and seeds. He also collected many interesting specimens, which may be found in the herbaria of Muhlenberg and Willdenow, where his tickets may be recognized by the orthography, and the amusing mixture of bad English and German (with occasionally some very singular Latin) in which his observations are written.

In the winter of 1816, Mr. Nuttall crossed the mountains of North Carolina from the west, ascending the French Broad River (along the banks of which he obtained his *Philadelphus hirsutus*, etc.) to Asheville, passing the Blue Ridge, and exploring the Table Mountain, where he discovered *Hudsonia montana*, etc., and collected many other rare and interesting plants.[7]

As early as 1817, the mountains at the sources of the Saluda River were visited by the late Dr. MacBride, the friend and correspondent of Elliott; who, in the preface to the second volume of his "Sketch," renders an affecting and deserved tribute to his memory, and acknowledges the important

[7]The spur of the Blue Ridge from which the picturesque Table Mountain rises like a tower, is called by Mr. Nuttall the Catawba Ridge. I am informed, however, by my friend Mr. Curtis, who is intimately acquainted with this interesting region, that it is not known by that name, but is called the Table Mountain Ridge. Its base is not washed by the Catawba River, but by its tributary the Linville.

services which he had rendered to that work during its progress.

The name of Rafinesque should also be mentioned in this connection; since that botanist crossed the Alleghanies four or five times between 1818 and 1833 (in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the north of Virginia), and also explored the Cumberland Mountains.

A few years since, the Peaks of Otter, in Virginia, were visited by Mr. S. B. Buckley; and still more recently the same botanist has explored the mountains in the upper part of Alabama and Georgia, and the adjacent borders of North Carolina. Among the interesting contributions which the authors of the "Flora of North America" have received from this source, I may here mention the *Coreopsis latifolia* of Michaux, which had not been found by any subsequent botanist until it was observed by Mr. Buckley in the autumn of 1840.

No living botanist, however, is so well acquainted with the vegetation of the southern Alleghany Mountains, or has explored those of North Carolina so extensively, as the Rev. Mr. M. A. Curtis; who, when resident for a short time in their vicinity, visited, as opportunity occurred, the Table Mountain, Grandfather, the Yellow Mountain, the Roan, the Black Mountain, etc., and subsequently (although prevented by infirm health from making large collections) extended his researches through the counties of Haywood, Macon, and Cherokee, which form

the narrow southwestern extremity of North Carolina. To him we are indebted for local information which greatly facilitated our recent journey, and, indeed, for a complete itinerarium of the region south of Ashe County. But, as the latter county had not been visited by Mr. Curtis, nor so far as we are aware by any other botanist, and being from its situation the most accessible to the traveler from the north, we determined to devote to its examination the principal part of the time allotted to our own excursion.

◊

THE JOURNEY

Intending to reach this remote region by the way of the Valley of Virginia, we left New York on the evening of the 22d of June, and traveling by railroad, reached Winchester, a distance of three hundred miles, before sunset of the following day. At Harper's Ferry, where the Potomac, joined by the Shenandoah, forces its way through the Blue Ridge, in the midst of some of the most picturesque scenery in the United States, we merely stopped to dine, and were therefore disappointed in our hope of collecting *Sedum telephoides*, *S. pulchellum*, *Paronychia dichotoma*, and *Draba ramosissima*, all of which grow here upon the rocks. We observed the first in passing, but it was not yet in flower. On the rocky banks of the Potomac below Harper's Ferry, we saw for the first time the common Locust-

tree (*Robinia Pseudacacia*) decidedly indigenous. It probably extends to the southern confines of Pennsylvania; and from this point south it is everywhere abundant, but we did not meet with it east of the Blue Ridge. From Winchester, the shiretown of Frederick County, we proceeded by stage-coach directly up the Valley of Virginia, as that portion of the State is called which lies between the unbroken Blue Ridge and the most easterly ranges of the Alleghanies. From the Potomac to the sources of the Shenandoah it is, strictly speaking, a valley, from twenty to thirty miles in width, with a strong, chiefly limestone soil of great fertility. It is scarcely interrupted, indeed, up to where the Roanoke rises; but a branch of the Alleghanies intervenes between the latter and New River, as the upper part of the Great Kenawha is termed, from which point it loses its character in some degree, and is exclusively traversed by the western waters. The same valley extends to the north and east through Maryland and Pennsylvania, and even into the State of New York, preserving throughout the same geological character and fertile soil. Our first day's ride was to Harrisonburg, in Rockingham County, a distance of sixty-nine miles from Winchester. From the moment we entered the valley, we observed such immense quantities of *Echium vulgare*, that we were no longer surprised at the doubt expressed by Pursh whether it was really an introduced plant. This "vile foreign weed," as Dr. Darlington, agriculturally

speaking, terms this showy plant, is occasionally seen along the roadside in the northern States; but here, for the distance of more than a hundred miles, it has taken complete possession even of many cultivated fields, especially where the limestone approaches the surface, presenting a broad expanse of brilliant blue. It is surprising that the farmers should allow a biennial like this so completely to overrun the land. […] During the day's ride we observed that the bearded wheat was almost exclusively cultivated, and were informed that it had been found less subject to the ravages of the "Fly" than the ordinary varieties; which may be owing to recent introduction of the seed of the bearded variety from districts unmolested by this insect.

The following day we traveled only sixteen miles on our route, but from Mount Sidney made an interesting excursion on foot to Weyer's Cave, one of the largest, and certainly the most remarkable grotto in the United States. It has been so often described as to render any account on our part superfluous. Near the cave we saw some trees of *Tilia heterophylla*, Vent. (*T. alba*, Michx. f.), and collected a few specimens with unopened flower-buds. It appears to be the most abundant species along the mountains.

Our ride next day offered nothing of interest. Near Staunton, we saw some patches of *Delphinium consolida*, where it was pretty thoroughly naturalized in the time of Pursh. We did not observe *Spiræa lobata*, which Michaux first met with in this

vicinity, and which Pursh, as well as later botanists, found in various parts of the valley. Passing the town of Lexington in the evening, we arrived at the Natural Bridge towards morning, where we remained until Monday, and had an opportunity of botanizing for a short time before we left. On the rocks we found plenty of *Asplenium Ruta-muraria*, *Sedum ternatum*, and *Draba ramosissima* with ripe fruit. In the bottom of the ravine, directly under the stupendous natural arch (the point which affords the most impressive view of this vast chasm), we collected specimens of *Heuchera villosa*, Michx., in fine flower on the 28th of June; although, in the higher mountains of North Carolina, where it also abounds, the flowers did not appear until near the end of July. […]

On Tuesday, the 29th of June, we crossed the New River, arrived at Wytheville, or Wythe Court House, towards evening; and at Marion, or Smythe Court House, on the Middle Fork of the Holston, early the next morning. The vegetation of this elevated region is almost entirely similar to that of the northern States. The only herbaceous plants we noticed, as we passed rapidly along, which we had not seen growing before, were *Galax aphylla*, and *Silene Virginica*: the showy, deep-red flowers of the latter, no less than the different habitus, caused us to wonder how it could ever have been confounded with the northern *S. Pennsylvanica*. The only forest tree with which we were not previously familiar was

the large Buckeye, *Æsculus flava*, which abounds in this region, and attains the height of sixty to ninety feet, and the diameter of two or three feet or more at the base.

At Marion we determined to leave the valley road, and to cross the mountains into Ashe County, North Carolina; the morning was occupied in seeking a conveyance for this purpose. With considerable difficulty we at length procured a carry-all (a light, covered wagon with springs, drawn by a single horse), capable of conveying our luggage and a single person besides the driver, a simple shoemaker who had never before undertaken so formidable a journey, and who accordingly proved entirely wanting in the skill and tact necessary for conducting so frail a vehicle over such difficult mountain tracks, for roads they can scarcely be called. We had first to ascend the steep ridge interposed between the middle and south Forks of the Holston, called Brushy Mountain, during the ascent of which we commenced botanizing in earnest. […] The banks of the shady and cool rivulets, which we crossed every few minutes during our ascent, were in many places covered by the prostrate or creeping *Hedyotis serpyllifolia*, Torr. & Gray (*Houstonia serpyllifolia*, Michx.), which continues to flower sparingly throughout the summer. […] Towards the summit of this ridge we first met with the *Magnolia Fraseri* (*M. auriculata*, Bart.), which resembles the Umbrella-tree (*Magnolia Umbrella*) in the disposition of its leaves at the extremity of the

branches. This, as well as *M. acuminata* (the only other species of Magnolia that we observed), is occasionally termed Cucumber-tree; but the people of the country almost uniformly called the former Wahoo, a name which in the lower part of the southern States is applied to *Ulmus alata*, or often to all the Elms indifferently. The bitter and somewhat aromatic infusion of the green cones of both these Magnolias in whiskey or apple-brandy is very extensively employed as a preventive against intermittent fevers; a use which, as the younger Michaux remarks, would doubtless be much less frequent, if, with the same medical properties, the aqueous infusion were substituted.

Nearly at the top of this mountain we overtook our awkward driver, awaiting our arrival in perfect helplessness, having contrived to break his carriage upon a heap of stones, and to overthrow his horse into the boughs of a prostrate tree. So much time was occupied in extricating the poor animal and in temporary repairs to the wagon, that we had barely time to descend the mountain on the opposite side, and to seek lodgings for the night in the secluded valley of the South Fork of the Holston. In moist, shady places along the descent of this mountain, and in similar situations throughout the mountains of North Carolina, we found plenty of the northern *Listera convallarioides*, in fine state, entirely similar to the plant from Vermont, Canada, Newfoundland,

and the Northwest Coast. [. . .] The Rev. Mr. Curtis, I believe, first detected the plant in these mountains.

The next day (July 1) we crossed the Iron Mountains (the great chain which divides the States of North Carolina and Tennessee, and which here forms the northwestern boundary of Grayson County, Virginia) by Fox-Creek Gap, and traversing the numerous tributaries of the North Fork of the New River, which abundantly water this sequestered region, we slept a few miles beyond the boundary of North Carolina, after a journey of nearly thirty miles. It must not be imagined that we found hotels or taverns for our accommodation; as, except at Ashe Court House, we saw no house of public entertainment from the time we left the valley of Virginia until we finally crossed the Blue Ridge and quitted the mountain region. Yet we suffered little inconvenience on this account, as we were cordially received at the farm-houses along the road, and entertained according to the means and ability of the owners; who seldom hesitated either to make a moderate charge, or to accept a proper compensation for their hospitality, which we therefore did not hesitate to solicit from time to time. On the Iron Mountains we met with nearly all the species we had collected during the previous day, and with a single additional plant of much interest, namely, the *Boykinia aconitifolia*, Nutt. We found it in the greatest abundance and luxuriance on the southern side of the mountain, near the summit,

along the rocky margins of a small brook, which for a short distance were completely covered with the plant. […]

While descending the mountain on the opposite side, we met with *Clethra acuminata*, a very distinct and almost arborescent species, which is well characterized by Michaux. […] Towards the base of the mountain we saw for the first time the *Pyrularia* of Michaux (Oil-nut, Buffalo-tree, etc.; *Hamiltonia oleifera*, Muhl.): a low shrub which is not of unfrequent occurrence in rich, shady soil. Its geographical range extends from the Cherokee country on the confines of Georgia (where the elder Michaux discovered it on his earliest visit to the mountains, and where Mr. Curtis has recently observed it), to the western ranges of the Alleghanies of Pennsylvania in lat. 40°, where it was found by the younger Michaux. It flowers early in the season, and the oleaginous fruit in the specimens we collected had attained the size of a musket-ball.

In wet places, on the very borders of North Carolina, but still within Virginia, we first met with *Trautvetteria palmata* and *Diphylleia cymosa*; the former in full flower, the latter in fruit. […] The *Diphylleia* is confined to springy places, and the margins of the shaded mountain brooks, and the rich and deep alluvial soil which is so general throughout these mountains, never occurring perhaps at a lower elevation than three thousand feet above the level of the sea. It is a more striking plant than we

had supposed; the cauline leaves (generally two, but sometimes three in number) being often two feet in diameter, and the radicle, which is obicular and centrally peltate as in *Podophyllum*, frequently still larger; so that it is not easy (at this season) to obtain manageable specimens. The branches of the cymes are usually reddish or purple, and the gibbous deep blue and glaucous berries are almost dry when ripe. […] Along the roadside we shortly afterwards collected the equivocal *Vaccinium erythrocarpum* of Michaux, or *Oxycoccus erectus* of Pursh; a low, erect, dichotomously branched shrub, with the habit, foliage, and fruit of *Vaccinium*, but the flowers of *Oxycoccus*. It here occurred at a lower elevation than usual, scarcely more than three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and in a dwarfish state (about a foot high): subsequently we only met with it on the summit of the Grandfather and other mountains which exceed the altitude of five thousand feet, where it is commonly three or four feet high. We were too early for the fruit, a small, red or purplish berry, which does not ripen until August or September. It has an exquisite flavor, according to Pursh, who found the plant on the mountains of Virginia; but our friend Mr. Curtis informs us that it is rather insipid, and entirely destitute of the fine acidity of the cranberry.

On the 2d of July we continued our journey (eleven miles) to Jefferson or Ashe Court House, a hamlet of twenty or thirty houses, and the only

village in the county. Intending to make this place our headquarters while we remained in the region, we had the good fortune to find excellent accommodations at the house of Colonel Bower, who evinced every disposition to further our inquiries, and afforded us very important assistance. We may remark indeed, that during our residence amongst the mountains we were uniformly received with courtesy by the inhabitants; who for the most part lacked the general intelligence of our obliging host at Jefferson, and could scarcely be made to comprehend the object of our visit, or why we should come from a distance of seven hundred miles to toil over the mountains in quest of their common and disregarded herbs. Curiosities as we were to these good folks, their endless queries had no air of impertinence, and they entertained us to the best of their ability, never attempting to make unreasonable charges. A very fastidious palate might occasionally be at a loss; but good corn-bread and milk are everywhere abundant; the latter being used from preference quite sour, or even curdled. Sweet milk appears to be very generally disliked, being thought less wholesome, and more likely to produce the "milk sickness," which is prevalent in some very circumscribed districts; so that our dislike of sour and fondness for sweet milk was regarded by this simple people as one of our very many oddities. Nearly every farmer has a small dairy-house built over a cold brook or spring, by which the milk

and butter are kept cool and sweet in the warmest weather.

We botanized for several days upon the mountains in the immediate neighborhood of Jefferson, especially the Negro Mountain, which rises abruptly on one side of the village, the Phœnix Mountain, a sharp ridge on the other side, and the Bluff, a few miles distant in a westerly direction. The altitude of the former is probably between four and five thousand feet above the sea; the latter is apparently somewhat higher. They are all composed of Mica-slate; and we should remark that we entered upon a primitive region immediately upon leaving the Valley of Virginia. The mountain sides, though steep or precipitous, are covered with a rich and deep vegetable mould, and are heavily timbered, chiefly with Chestnut, White Oak, the Tulip-tree, the Cucumber-tree, and sometimes the Sugar Maple. Their vegetation presents so little diversity, that it is for the most part unnecessary to distinguish particular localities. Besides many of the plants already mentioned, and a very considerable number of northern species which we have not room to enumerate, we collected or observed on the mountain sides, *Clematis Viorna* in great abundance; *Tradescantia Virginica*; *Iris cristata* in fruit; *Hedyotis* (*Amphiotis*) *purpurea*, which scarcely deserves the name, since the flowers are commonly almost white; *Phlox paniculata*? *Aristolochia Sipho*, without flowers or fruit; *Ribes Cynosbati*, *rotundifolium*, Michx. (*R. triflorum*,

Willd.) and *prostratum*, L'Her.; *Allium cernuum* and *tricoccum*;[8] *Galax aphylla*; *Ligusticum actæifolium*, the strong-scented roots of which are eagerly sought and eaten by boys and hogs;[9] The Ginseng, here called "sang" (the roots of which are largely collected, and sold to the country merchants when fresh for about twelve cents per pound, or when dry for triple that price); *Menziesia globularis*, mostly in fruit; and the showy *Azalea calendulacea*, which was also out of flower, except in deep shade.[10] […]

[8]The latter is known throughout this region by the name of "Ramps"; doubtless a corruption of "Ramsons," the popular appellation of *A. ursinum* in England.

[9]It is here termed "Angelico"; while in Virginia it is called "Nondo." Bartram (Travels, p. 45, and p. 367), who found it in Georgia, notices it under the name of *Angelica lucida*, or "White-root" of the Creek and Cherokee traders. "Its aromatic carminative root is in taste much like that of ginseng, though more of the taste and scent of anise-seed: it is in high estimation with the Indians as well as white inhabitants, and sells at a great price to the southern Indians of Florida, who dwell near the sea-coast, where this never grows spontaneously." (Bartram, l. c.)

[10]Bartram well describes this species, under the name of *Azalea flammea*, or fiery Azalea. "The epithet fiery I annex to this most celebrated species of Azalea, as being expressive of the appearance of its flowers; which are in general of the color of the finest red-lead, orange and bright gold, as well as yellow and cream-color. These various splendid colors are not only in separate plants, but frequently all the varieties and shades are seen in separate branches on the same plant; and the clusters of the blossoms cover the shrubs in such incredible profusion on the hillsides, that suddenly opening to view from dark shades, we are alarmed with apprehension of the woods being set on fire. This is certainly the most gay and brilliant flowering shrub yet known; they grow in little copses or clumps, in open forests as well as dark groves, with other shrubs, and about the bases of hills, especially where brooks and rivulets wind about them; the bushes seldom rise above six or seven feet in height, and generally but three, four, or five, but branch and spread their tops greatly; the young leaves are but very small whilst the shrubs are in bloom, from which circumstance the plant exhibits a greater show of splendor." (Bartram's Travels, p. 323.)

The rocky summits of the mountains afforded us *Sedum telephoides*; *Heuchera villosa*; *Paronychia argyrocoma*, which forms dense silvery tufts on the highest and most exposed peaks; *Veronica officinalis*, *serpyllifolia*, and *agrestis* (all certainly native); *Lycopodium rupestre*, in a very beautiful state, and on the Phœnix Mountain we found a solitary specimen of *L. Selago*; *Arabis lyrata*, with perfectly accumbent cotyledons; *Potentilla tridentata*, which we only saw on the Bluff Mountain; *Woodsia Ilvensis*; *Saxifraga leucanthemifolia*, which not unfrequently attains the height of two feet, with a large and slender effuse panicle; *Diervilla trifida*, entirely resembling the northern plant; *Pyrus melanocarpa*; *Sorbus Americana*, β *microcarpa*; *Rhododendron Catawbiense*, just out of flower, while *R. maximum*, extremely abundant along the streams and mountain sides, was only beginning to expand its blossoms.[11] […] The *Amianthium muscœtoxicum*, which is common in the low country of the southern States, we here found only in the rich open woods of the Bluff Mountain, and in similar places further south. The flowers are pure white or cream-color, in a dense and very showy raceme, at length changing to green. The cattle which roam in the woods for a great part of the year are sometimes poisoned by feeding, as is supposed, on the foliage of this plant during the autumn: hence its name of "Fall-poison." The wild

[11] These shrubs bear the name of "Laurel"; while the *Kalmia latifolia* is universally called "Ivy," or "Ivy-bush."

Pea-vine, which is so highly prized as an autumnal feed for cattle, is the *Amphicarpæa*.[12] The Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*), which we occasionally met with in fruit, appears to be identical with the European plant. It extends from the mountains of Virginia to Georgia, where it was long ago noticed by the younger Bartram. […]

In a cool, sequestered brook, we found the true *Cardamine rotundifolia*, Michx., growing like the Water-cress (for which it might be substituted, as its leaves have exactly the same taste), but producing numerous stolons two or three or more feet in length. […]

On the 7th of July we started for the high mountains farther south, having hired a cumbrous and unsightly, but convenient tilted wagon, with a pair of horses and a driver (who rode one of the horses, according to the usual custom of this region), for the conveyance of our luggage, and which afforded us, at intervals, the luxury of reposing on straw at the bottom, while we were dragged along at the rate of two or three miles an hour.

Our first day's journey of about twenty-four miles was somewhat tedious, as we found no new plants of any interest. […] The following morning we reached the Watauga River (a tributary of the Holston); and

[12] "In the large woods the surface of the soil is covered with a species of wild peas, which rise three feet above the earth, and of which the cattle are very greedy. They prefer this pasture to every other, and when removed from it they fall away, or make their escape to return to it." (Michaux, F. A., Travels, p. 316.)

leaving our driver to follow up the banks of the stream to the termination of the road at the foot of the Grandfather, we ascended an adjacent mountain, called Hanging-rock, and reached our quarters for the night by a different route. The fine and close view of the rugged Grandfather amply rewarded the toil of ascending this beetling cliff, where we also obtained the *Geum* (*Sieversia*) *radiatum*, probably the most showy species of the genus. The brilliant golden flowers have a disposition to double, even in the wild state, in which we often found as many as eight or nine petals. This tendency would doubtless be fully developed by cultivation. […]

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THE GRANDFATHER

The next day (July 9th) we ascended the Grandfather, the highest as well as the most rugged and savage mountain we had yet attempted; although by no means the most elevated in North Carolina, as has generally been supposed.[13] It is a sharp and craggy ridge, lying within Ashe and Burke counties, very near the northeast corner of Yancey, and cutting across the chain to which it belongs (the Blue Ridge) nearly at right angles. It is entirely covered

[13] According to Professor Mitchel's barometrical measurements, the Grandfather attains the altitude of five thousand five hundred and fifty-six feet above the level of the sea; the Roan, six thousand and thirty-eight feet; and the highest peak of the Black Mountain, six thousand four hundred and seventy-six feet, which exceeds Mount Washington in New Hampshire (hitherto accounted the highest mountain in the United States) by more than two hundred feet.

with trees except where the rocks are absolutely perpendicular; and towards the summit, the Balsam Fir of these mountains, *Abies balsamifera*, partly, of Michaux's Flora (but not of the younger Michaux's Sylva), the *A. Fraseri*, Pursh, prevails, accompanied by the *Abies nigra* or Black Spruce. The earth, rocks, and prostrate decaying trunks, in the shade of these trees, are carpeted with mosses and lichens; and the whole present the most perfect resemblance to the dark and sombre forests of the northern parts of New York and Vermont, except that the trees are here much smaller. The resemblance extends to the whole vegetation; and a list of the shrubs and herbaceous plants of this mountain would be found to include a large portion of the common plants of the extreme northern States and Canada. Indeed the vegetation is essentially Canadian, with a considerable number of peculiar species intermixed. Under the guidance of Mr. Levi Moody we followed the Watauga, here a mere creek, for four or five miles along the base of the Grandfather, until we reached a ridge which promised a comparatively easy ascent. In the rich soil of this ridge, at an elevation of about four hundred feet above the Watauga, we found one of the plants which of all others we were desirous of obtaining, namely, *Carex Fraseriana*. Mr. Curtis had made diligent but ineffectual search for this most singular and rarest of Carices, "along the Catawba near Morganton," and "near Table Mountain," where Fraser is said to have discovered it; and we believe

that no subsequent botanist has ever met with it, except Mr. Kin, whose specimen in Muhlenberg's herbarium is merely ticketed "Deigher walli in der Wilternus." Muhlenberg assigns the habitat, "Tiger Valley, Pennsylvania;" but Kin probably obtained his plant in Tygart's Valley, Virginia, a secluded vale among the western ranges of the Alleghanies (in Randolph County), not far from Greenbrier Mountains, and other localities visited by this collector, as his tickets prove. Kin cultivated the plant for some time at Philadelphia, where it was seen by several botanists, and among them by Pursh, who took it for the *Mapania sylvatica* of Aublet; a mistake which he did not discover whilst writing his Flora in Europe, although he had the cultivated *Carex Fraseriana* before him. We were too late for good specimens, but succeeded in obtaining a considerable number with the fruit still adherent. The plant grows in tufts, after the manner of *C. plantaginea*; the evergreen leaves are a foot or more in length, and often an inch and a half in width, with singularly undulate margins; the slender scapes are naked except towards the root, where they are sheathed by the convulate bases of the leaves. To the description of the spike, fruit, etc., we have nothing of any consequence to add.

Long before we reached the summit we again met with the new *Saxifraga*, which we had previously gathered on the mountains near Jefferson; but we now found it in great abundance, both in flower and with mature fruit. It grew in the greatest profu-

sion on the dripping face of a rocky precipice near our encampment for the night, on the northwestern side of the mountain, five or six hundred feet beneath the highest summit. The vegetation here is so backward that the *Saxifraga leucanthemifolia* growing on the brow of this precipice was not yet in blossom, and the *Saxifraga erosa*, Pursh, in the wet soil at its base was scarcely out of flower, while at the foot of the mountain it had long since shed its seeds. […] Under the name of Lettuce the leaves are eaten by the inhabitants as a salad. […]

The only unwooded portion of the ridge which we ascended, an exposed rock a few yards in extent, presents a truly Alpine aspect, being clothed with lichens and mosses, and with a dense mat of the mountain *Leiophyllum*, a stunted and much branched shrub (five to ten inches high), with small coriaceous leaves greatly resembling *Azalea procumbens*. […] We were too late to obtain the plant in blossom, excepting one or two straggling specimens; but we were so fortunate as to obtain a few flowering specimens of *Rhododendron Catawbiense*.

I should have remarked, that so much time was occupied in the ascent of this mountain as nearly to prevent us from herborizing around the summit for that day; since we had to descend some distance to the nearest spring of water, and prepare our encampment for the night. The branches of the Balsam afforded excellent materials for the construction of our lodge; the smaller twigs with large

mats of moss stripped from the rocks furnished our bed, and the dead trees supplied us with fuel for cooking our supper and for the large fire we were obliged to keep up during the night. We re-ascended the summit the next morning, and devoted several hours to its examination; but the threatening state of the weather prevented us from visiting the adjacent ridges, or the southern and eastern faces of the mountain, and we were constrained to descend towards evening to the humble dwelling of our guide, which we reached before the impending storm commenced.

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THE ROAN

Our next excursion was to the Roan Mountain, a portion of the elevated range which forms the boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee, distant nearly thirty miles southwest from our quarters at the foot of Grandfather by the most direct path, but at least sixty by the nearest carriage road. We traveled for the most part on foot, loading the horses with our portfolios, paper, and some necessary luggage, crossed the Hanging-rock Mountain to Elk Creek, and thence over a steep ridge to Cranberry Forge, on the sources of Doe River, where we passed the night. On our way we cut down a Service-tree (as the *Amelanchier Canadensis* is here called), and feasted upon the ripe fruit, which throughout this region is highly, and indeed justly prized, being

sweet with a very agreeable flavor; while in the northern States, so far as our experience goes, this fruit, even if it may be said to be edible, is not worth eating. As "Sarvices" are here greedily sought after, and are generally procured by cutting down the trees, the latter are becoming scarce in the vicinity of the "plantations," as the mountain settlements are universally called. […]

Hitherto we had searched in vain for the *Astilbe decandra*; but we first met with this very interesting plant in the rich and moist mountain woods between Elk Creek and Cranberry Forge, and subsequently in similar situations, particularly along the steep banks of streams, quite to the base of the Roan. […]

Our next day's journey was from Cranberry Forge to Crab Orchard on Doe River, in Tennessee, and up Little Doe River to Squire Hampton's, where we took a guide and ascended the Roan. While ascending the Little Doe River, about three miles from the junction with the large stream of that name, at one of the numerous places where the road crosses this rivulet, we again met with *Carex Fraseriana*. The plant did not appear to be so abundant in this Tennessee locality as at the Grandfather, but it is doubtless plentiful on the mountain side just above. We ascended the north side of the Roan, through the heavy timbered woods and rank herbage with which it is covered; but found nothing new to us excepting *Streptopus lanuginosus*, in fruit,

and among the grove of *Rhododendron maximum* towards the summit, we also collected *Diphyscium foliosum*, a moss which we had not before seen in a living state. In more open moist places near the summit, we found the *Hedyotis* (*Houstonia*) *serpyllifolia*, still beautifully in flower, and the *Geum geniculatum*, which we have already noticed. It was just sunset when we reached the bald and grassy summit of this noble mountain, and after enjoying for a moment the magnificent view it affords, had barely time to prepare our encampment between two dense clumps of *Rhododendron Catawbiense*, to collect fuel, and make ready our supper. The night was so fine that our slight shelter of Balsam boughs proved amply sufficient; the thermometer, at this elevation of about six thousand feet above the level of the sea, being 64° Fahr. at midnight, and 60° at sunrise. The temperature of a spring just under the brow of the mountain below our encampment we found to be 47° Fahr. The Roan is well characterized by Professor Mitchell as the easiest of access and the most beautiful of all the high mountains of that region. "With the exception of a body of (granitic) rocks, looking like the ruins of an old castle, near its southwestern extremity, the top of the Roan may be described as a vast meadow (about nine miles in length, with some interruptions, and with a maximum elevation of six thousand and thirty-eight feet), without a tree to obstruct the prospect; where a person may gallop his horse for a mile or two, with

Carolina at his feet on one side, and Tennessee on the other, with a great ocean of mountain raised into tremendous billows immediately about him. It is the pasture ground for the young horses of the whole country about it during the summer. We found the strawberry here in the greatest abundance and of the finest quality, in regard to both size and flavor, on the 30th of July."[14]

At sunrise we had fine weather and a most extensive view of the surrounding country. In one direction we could count from eight to twelve successive ranges of mountains, and nearly all the higher peaks of this whole region were distinctly visible. Soon, however, we were enveloped in a dense fog which continued for several hours, during which time we traversed the southwestern summit and made a list of the plants we saw. […] We made a hasty visit to the other principal summit, where we found nothing that we had not already collected, excepting *Arenaria glabra*, Michx., and descended partly by way of the contiguous Yellow Mountain.

Retracing our steps, we returned the next day to the foot of Grandfather, and reached our quarters at Jefferson the second day after. We had frequently been told of an antidote to the bite of the Rattlesnake and Copperhead (not unfrequent throughout this region), which is thought to possess

[14]Professor Mitchell of the Chapel Hill University, in the "Raleigh Register" of November 3, 1835, and in the "American Journal of Science and Arts" for January, 1839.

wonderful efficacy, called Thurman's Snake-root after an "Indian Doctor," who first employed it; the plant was brought to us by a man who was ready to attest its virtues from his personal knowledge, and proved to be the *Silene stellata*! Its use was suggested by the markings of the root beneath the bark, in which these people find a fancied resemblance to the skin of the Rattlesnake. Nearly all the reputed antidotes are equally inert; such herbs as *Impatiens pallida*, etc., being sometimes employed; so that we are led to conclude that the bite of these reptiles is seldom fatal, or even very dangerous, in these cooler portions of the country.

[…] We also made an excursion to the White Top in Virginia, twenty miles northwest from Jefferson; a mountain of the same character as the Roan, but on a smaller scale, and with the pasturage of its summit more closely fed. We were not rewarded, however, with any new plants, and the cloudy weather obscured the prospect, which is said to be very extensive. […]

We were too early in the season for several interesting plants, especially Compositæ, and did not extend our researches far enough south to obtain many others; such as *Hudsonia montana*, which appears to be confined to Table Mountain, *Rhododendron punctatum*, *Stuartia pentagyna*, *Philadelphus hirsutus*, *Silene ovata* (which Mr. Curtis found in Buncombe and Haywood counties), *Berberis Canadensis* (which, however, Pursh collected on

the mountains of Greenbrier in Virginia), *Parnassia asarifolia* (which according to Mr. Curtis first appears in Yancey County, but Pursh procured it from "mountain runs on the Salt Pond Mountain, Virginia, and on the top of the Alleghanies near Christiansburg"), and, above all, the new *Thermopsis* (*T. Caroliniana*, M. A. Curtis, MSS.) recently discovered by our friend Mr. Curtis, in Haywood and Cherokee counties. We were likewise unsuccessful in our search for a remarkable undescribed plant, with a habit of *Pyrola* and the foliage of *Galax*, which was obtained by Michaux in the high mountains of Carolina. The only specimen extant is among the "Plantæ incognitæ" of the Michauxian herbarium, in fruit only; and we were anxious to obtain flowering specimens, that we might complete its history; as I have long wished to dedicate the plant to Professor Short of Kentucky, whose attainments and eminent services in North American botany are well known and appreciated both at home and abroad.

We left this interesting region near the end of July, returning to New York by way of Raleigh, Richmond, etc.; and found a marked change in the vegetation immediately on crossing the Blue Ridge. […]

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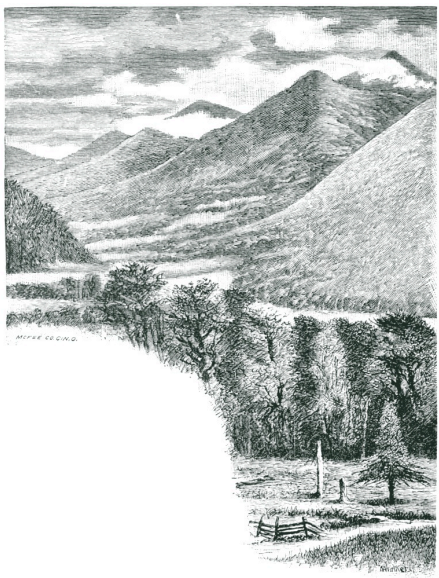

The Junaluskas, 1883

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