

in dry woods and along road-sides all over the country. But perhaps its favorite habitats are the edges of swamps and in damp, shady places. In such situations it grows remarkably large, its leaflets sometimes attaining the size of a man's hand. It is often described in books as a "climbing shrub" or spoken of as a "vine," and sometimes it does clamber over stones or hoist itself a few feet up a tree trunk by means of its rootlets, but in this district at least the shrubby, erect form is much the commonest, and the plant is seldom found climbing. This is an important point, for those unacquainted with the plant on finding it described as a vine or a climber, naturally fail to identify the low growing erect form as the true poison ivy. Some botanists distinguish the climbing form as a "variety" and give it the cognomen "*radicans*," but both forms seem to be merely different habits of the same species.

In a recent book, Sir Ray Lankster notes several unaccountable cases of severe dermatitis that occurred in England a year or two ago, and which were finally traced to *Rhus Toxicodendron* that had been sold by nurserymen, innocently enough no doubt, instead of a kind of Virginia Creeper (*Ampelopsis Veitchii*) which the *Rhus* resembles rather closely. Such ignorance of the poison ivy is not, of course, at all surprising in Europe, where the plant is not indigenous; but in this country, if only as a matter of self-protection, everyone should be able to recognize the ominous triple leaf, and it is remarkable to discover how many people are not acquainted with it. I have seen it, when colored red in the late summer, occupying an honored place in a bouquet of wild flowers gathered by an unsuspecting camper. It is true that in the fall when the sap is drying up, it is not as dangerous as in the summer when it is lush and green, but it is an exceedingly risky thing to handle at any time.

The poisonous principle is a fixed oil which is found in all parts of the plant, and persists in the dead leaves and the wood, even after long drying. Minute dust-like particles of the plant carry it, and very slight traces of it on the clothing may cause an attack in those susceptible. The pollen blown by the wind doubtless accounts for those mysterious and not infrequent cases that occur where no actual contact with the plant has taken place. This oil has no apparent effect on animals, and it is even said that the horse, mule and goat eat the leaves with impunity and that birds feed upon the seeds. Like other oils, it is insoluble in water alone, but may be readily washed off with soap and water, and is quite soluble in alcohol. From experiments made some years ago by Mr. V. K. Chestnut, of the United States Department of Agriculture, it appears that its effect on the skin is by no means instantaneous, and if washed