

Its pinnate leaves, consisting of about eleven oblong, coarsely-toothed leaflets, are downy beneath. The three upper leaflets are often confluent, the terminal one, when distinct, being attenuate at the base. The flower panicles are nearly sessile, while the drupes are covered with a red, silky pubescence.

*Rhus Diversiloba* of Torrey and Gray, or *Rhus Lobata* of Hooker, approaches very nearly to *Rhus Toxicodendron*. It is generally a shrub, but sometimes a climber, and is said to be the most poisonous of all the Rhuses. It is chiefly a native of California, where it is known by the Spanish name of "Hiedra." Its leaves consist of three, rarely five, obtuse, lobed leaflets; its flower panicles are shorter than the petioles; and its fruit is white and pubescent. With her usual generosity, Nature, according to Dr. Canfield, provides an antidote to poisoning by this species, in the shape of another Californian plant, the *Grindelia Hirsutula*, of which either the bruised plant itself, or a decoction, is applied to the parts.

*Rhus Venenata*, formerly called *Rhus Vernix*, is known by the different names of poison dogwood, poison elder, poison ash, poison sumach, swamp sumach, white sumach, and varnish tree. Affecting rich, swampy ground in shaded situations, it is a shrub or small tree usually growing from six to eighteen feet high, and one of the largest of our native species of *Rhus*. The trunk seldom exceeds three inches in diameter, and, branching at a height of three to five feet, usually makes a repeatedly two-forked ramification, the final twigs terminating in thick clusters of leaves. The smooth bark is dark gray on the trunk, lighter on the branches, and reddish on the twigs and petioles. The leaves, expanding in May, are at first dark yellow in colour, but become deep green with a paler under surface when mature, and finally, at the first touch of frost, assume a beautiful deep crimson hue, that can fairly vie with the maple for brilliancy of effect. The seven to thirteen leaflets forming the compound leaves are obovate oblong in shape, and entire. The small yellowish flowers are arranged in loose and slender axillary panicles, forming large masses of fragrant bloom, at the ends of the branches, which attract innumerable swarms of bees. Whether the honey derived from this source possesses any poisonous properties I am unable to say, but, as at various times there have been reports of poisoning by honey in particular localities, it would be a point well worthy of investigation whether this form of poison ivy does not also abound there. The berries, ripe in October, are whitish or dun-coloured, with striate stones, and look somewhat like bunches of small grapes—a similarity, however, which is immediately dissipated by the slightest glance at the

leaves, in the grape *simple*, in the *Rhus compund*. Taken altogether, this tree makes one of the handsomest shrubs imaginable when in blossom, but is, unfortunately, one of the most deadly. *Rhus Venenata* has been thought to be identical with the *Rhus Vernicifera* of Japan, and when incisions are made into its bark there is a copious flow of viscid fluid, yellowish at first, but soon changing to a deep black, which, when boiled, makes a fine varnish. The poisonous properties of this tree are said to be more powerful than those of *Rhus Toxicodendron*; persons exposed to its influence being more apt to suffer, and more severely. I have known several cases of poisoning due to this plant being mistaken for the common elder, an error which could never arise were the fact borne in mind that both varieties of elder, found in this country, have the margins of the leaves toothed, whereas in *Rhus Venenata* they are entire. In addition, the elders have dense masses of flowers, and a fruit which, when ripe, is either red or black, while this form of poison ivy has slender, scattered bunches of flowers, and a fruit whitish in colour when mature.

*Rhus Toxicodendron* may be made to include *Rhus Radicans*, as botanists are now pretty well agreed that it is merely a variety of the former; its differing form and characters, viz., more entire leaflets and high climbing stem, being dependent on the circumstances of its *habitat*. *Rhus Toxicodendron* was first described in 1635 by Cornutus, in his works on Canadian plants, as a species of ivy. The Indians were well aware of its properties, and its effects were mentioned by Kalm and other travellers in North America. Poison oak, poison ivy, poison vine, poison creeper, and sometimes poison mercury, are names applied to it. It is found within the same range of territory as the *Rhus Venenata*, and is by far the commonest form throughout Canada. It generally grows in fertile and low grounds, but will thrive in barren and elevated places, and attaches itself to any bodies in its vicinity by numerous thread-like rootlets given off from the stem. Sometimes it climbs spirally to the tops of our tallest trees, attaining a height of 40 or 50 feet, again, it is met with along the sides of fences which serve as a convenient support, or crawling over brush, or rocks, or along the ground, in which cases it never exceeds from one to three feet in height. This low form sends off many small branches, the pendulous extremities of which often give the plant a bushy appearance. The stems are from one-quarter to two inches in thickness, and covered with a grayish-brown bark. The leaves, which are said to be eaten by cattle with impunity, are trifoliate; the leaflets being