

enquiry for the botanist and the one by means of which he comes most frequently in contact with the unscientific public. Now, there is no place where such investigations can be carried on so conveniently as at a properly equipped Botanic Garden, where plants can be grown under observation and examined, at all stages of development, by investigators specially trained to understand and make the most of what they see, and also fully equipped with the necessary apparatus and literature. Such knowledge as we have, as to the value for food of most of the more important products of the vegetable kingdom, has been derived from the aboriginal inhabitants of the countries where the plants producing them occur in a state of nature; but the scientific botanist has added very much indeed to this list of useful plants from his knowledge of other species in the same or closely allied families. On the other hand in medical botany the useful knowledge derived from aboriginal sources is comparatively small, by far the larger proportion of the valuable vegetable remedies having been discovered by the scientific chemist as a result of direct chemical analysis of plants, aided by experiment or actual knowledge of the effects produced upon the human frame by the various products obtained.

A subject of great interest to everybody and one which is frequently made an excuse by ill-informed people for not studying wild plants, is the fear of being poisoned. Strangely enough this fear never troubles them with regard to cultivated and greenhouse plants where a much larger proportion of poisonous species is to be found than is the case in the woods around us. As a matter of fact poisonous plants in Canada are exceedingly rare. The Poison Ivy (*Rhus Toxicodendron*) is the only plant in this part of Canada, which is poisonous to the touch, and even with regard to this, although it is so virulent in the southern states it is, as you all know, an extremely rare thing to find anyone affected by it here. There are, also, far fewer plants than most people think which are actually poisonous, even when taken internally; and anyone with a very small amount of knowledge and common sense is warned against these by their acrid taste or nauseous odour. This, I have no doubt, is the reason why cattle and wild animals which feed on vegetation are so seldom poisoned. The poisonous plants are distasteful to them and are not eaten in any quantity when their dangerous