

IVY POISONING AND ITS TREATMENT.

Nine years ago the writer was severely poisoned by handling *Rhus toxicodendron* and though he has since taken great care when in its vicinity few seasons have passed in which he has escaped. In his own case many remedies have been tried, that which has proved most efficacious being lead acetate and alcohol. In a paper published in *Rhodora*, (Vol. IV., pp. 43-45). Dr. Franz Pfoff gives the results of a very thorough study of *Rhus toxicodendron* and *R. venenata*. He discovered that the active principal was an oil which he named "Toxicodendrol" which he found in all parts of the plant at all seasons. A sample of the oil kept in an open porcelain dish for over thirteen months proved to be as active as ever before. Dr. Pfoff also found lead acetate to be the best remedy, and as cases of ivy poisoning are very frequent here, his directions for removing the poison and keeping it from spreading may well be reprinted. He says:

"This can be done by vigorously washing the affected exposed parts with soap and water and a scrubbing brush; that is to say by mechanically removing the oil. As the active principle is very soluble in alcohol and gives with lead acetate a precipitate which is nearly insoluble in alcohol, other processes may be employed to remove the oil. The exposed parts may be washed repeatedly with fresh quantities of alcohol and a scrubbing brush. The poisonous oil may be thus removed in alcoholic solution of lead acetate; in this case the poisonous principle would be first transformed in its insoluble lead compound and then washed away with alcohol.

"The washing must be done thoroughly when alcohol is employed, as otherwise the alcohol might only serve to distribute the oil more widely over the skin. The finger nails should be cut short and also perfectly cleaned with the scrubbing brush. Oily preparations, or anything which dissolves the poisonous oil, if used, should be immediately removed, as they may only spread the poison, giving it a larger area on which to work.

"The treatment above outlined can not cure the already inflamed parts which must heal by the usual process of repair, but it does prevent the spreading of the inflammation and may serve to remove the poison before it has had time to produce its characteristic effects upon the skin."

In a later number of *Rhodora*, (Vol. IV, p. 106) Mr. L.E. Am-