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POISONING BY CYPRIPEDIUM.

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Working botanists have so often been poisoned by *Rhus Toxicodendron* that many of them have come to regard it as their special bane.

In the five seasons commencing with 1868, I was particularly careful not to touch this poisonous plant, not to pluck a specimen growing in its immediate vicinity, nor to receive from the hands of another person a freshly-gathered plant, for fear it might have come in contact with *Rhus*. In spite of these precautions, in the latter part of May or first of June in each year, I was poisoned so severely as to be confined to my room for several days. In June, 1872, after gathering many specimens of *Cypripedium spectabile*, I observed that my hands were stained with the purplish secretion of the glandular hairs with which its stem and leaves are densely clothed, and shortly after experienced a peculiar irritation about my eyes. The next day my whole face presented the appearance of a severe case of *Rhus* poisoning. On reviewing my notes of the previous years, I found that in each season the poisoning had appeared on the day after I had collected *Cypripedium spectabile* or *C. pubescens*. In 1873 and 1874, I collected more extensively than ever before, but suspecting that my previous sufferings had been caused by these two species of *Cypripedium* rather than the *Rhus*, took no unusual pains to avoid the latter, but refrained from touching either of the former with the bare hand. The result was what I had expected, for I escaped entirely the poisoning that I had begun to regard as inevitable, and am now convinced that upon myself, at least, *Cypripedium spectabile* and *C. pubescens* are capable of producing effects similar to those caused by *Rhus Toxicodendron*. Is it not possible that others, also, have wrongly attributed to *Rhus* the annoyance caused by these plants hitherto considered inoffensive? A decisive answer, either affirmative or negative, must depend upon the results of future experiment. Who will undertake it?

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