

## Wild Life Sanctuaries

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*Ravinia, Illinois*

It was my good fortune to make a discovery last summer. Just outside the city limits of Chicago, the prehistoric Glenwood beach, a reminder of the early history of Lake Michigan, rises quite conspicuously over the prairies. Very little is left of its original tree cover in the way of oaks and maples and other plants usually found on sandy or gravelly lands in this region. Much of this growth was noted by early botanists, but one grove near the city of Niles Center apparently escaped their attention. Here last summer a colony of pepperage (*Nyssa multiflora*) was found. Some of the trees measured about eighteen inches in diameter. There must be a dozen good sized trees, quite a few smaller ones, and hundreds of saplings. The undergrowth consists of blueberries, choke berries, and other plants usually associated with these trees. On investigation to the west of the old beach quite a depression was found which years ago must have been a swamp that supplied the trees with moisture. The swamp has been drained by real estate speculators, but on its margin grew remnants of several varieties of dogwood, meadow sweet, sedges, and other swamp plants. This grove, or what is left of it, represents a bit of landscape strange to this region. The pepperage and some of the other plants are pioneers that have marched westward from their original home, and as far as the writer knows, with the exception of a few scattered plants in south Evanston which are dying, and a group reported by Dr. Pepoon in Rogers Park, destroyed long ago, there is no other record of these trees anywhere else in this region. In other words, they are on the western rim of their natural habitat.

The few remaining tamarack bogs in the Fox Lake area were also explored last summer. One of them was found to contain several groups of yellow birch (*Betula lutea*) so rare in Illinois, but still more surprising was a section of this bog with mountain ash in all stages of growth. The older trees were suffering from scarcity of moisture. Perhaps too their vitality is poorer in this southern home. These two varieties, yellow birch and mountain ash, as far as the writer knows, are on the southern rim of their natural habitat. The undergrowth consists largely of grey dogwood, *Hieracium verticillata*, *Vaccinium arborum*, and numerous ferns. This bog is located a few miles east of Antioch.

Of the other bogs, one especially has become familiar to botanists and teachers because of its unusual character and its northern flora. The pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) is quite numerous, also several varieties of the orchid family and other plants rare in Illinois. There were a few scattered yellow birch saplings and one was puzzled to know where they had come from. Poison sumac (*Rhus vernix*) is also plentiful. Years ago this bog had quite a pool of water in the center; an old boat hidden in the rushes told the story of its former depth. Last season it was a mud flat with a few turtles plowing through it in search of water. This open center is surrounded by rushes, cattails, and other bog plants, followed by tamarack and plants associated with them. It is the most complete tamarack bog the writer has seen.

The problem of chief interest is what is to become of these plant sanctuaries which teach us the natural migration of plants, the struggle for the survival of the fittest, and give us an understanding and knowledge not to be found anywhere else and therefore most essential to our intellectual growth. Their destruction, and this is on the way, is due to our failure to understand that all life is part of the same creation, linked together into a wholesome growth in the evolution of things.

My suggestion is that such sanctuaries, wherever found, should be preserved and become part of our educational system rather than our political system. They should be accessible, to a degree consistent with their preservation, to all centers of learning. They might come under the supervision and belong to more than one school district in the vicinity of which they are found, so that the expense of guarding them from exploitation would not fall on one district alone. The State should also share in the purchase of these tracts and in their upkeep.