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SOME INTERESTING RHODE ISLAND BOGS.

J. FRANKLIN COLLINS.

IN January, 1904, the Rev. Mr. Cheney of Pascoag, Rhode Island, visited a pond several miles from his home for the double purpose of fishing through the ice and of obtaining a winter outing. During the day his botanical interest, which is always very great, overbalanced for a time his piscatorial enthusiasm and he left the fishing holes to investigate the winter remnants of plants projecting above the ice and snow on one of the so-called floating bogs in the pond. One plant having evergreen leaves with revolute margins interested and puzzled him. He took home several twigs and a few days later showed them to the writer who confirmed his suspicions that the plant was what has long passed as *Andromeda polifolia*, L. (really *A. glaucophylla*, Link) — new to the flora of Rhode Island.

On the 19th of May, Messrs. Cheney, H. W. Preston and the writer visited the locality for the purpose of obtaining flowering specimens of the plant. We could not have timed our visit better for flowering specimens as the plants were in their prime—both buds and fully open flowers being found on almost every plant. Not one of the party ever dreamed of such a sight of *Andromeda* as was there revealed, for the plants could be counted by the thousands, partially covering and fringing all the floating bogs, each with scores of the beautiful pink or white corollas and similarly colored pedicels. It is safe to say that none of the party will ever forget the sight. Mixed with, or between, the patches of *Andromeda* were hundreds of plants of *Kalmia glauca*, Ait., another plant new to the state. Here also was found *Eriophorum vaginatum*, L., a third plant unrecorded for Rhode Island. Upon the bogs grew many Black Spruces, in fact many more than all the others that the writer has seen anywhere

else in the state combined. *Arceuthobium pusillum*, Peck—a fourth plant new to the state—was found to be covering many of these trees. The party returned happy botanically although somewhat uncomfortable as the result of a persistent and penetrating rain.

The retrospective view of an excursion of this sort often reveals vistas of thought and speculation which are sometimes of considerable interest. In this particular case at least two such have been opened to the writer.

First, it is impossible to believe that this section of the state could ever have been visited by such well known sharp-eyed older Rhode Island collectors as S. T. Olney, G. Thurber, J. W. Bailey, A. L. Calder, G. Hunt and J. W. Congdon, or some of these plants would long ago have been added to the known flora of our state.

Second, the speculation as to the origin and survival of such unique plant formations is of extreme interest. The writer has not fully satisfied himself as to the origin of these characteristically northern plants at this station, but probably it is not unlike that of other plants growing in similar situations elsewhere. The conditions which maintain them are, on the other hand, apparently quite evident. All the bogs are of the floating type, though anchored by at least a few roots or stems so that they do not drift about over the surface of the pond. Beneath the film of floating vegetation there is often twelve or more feet of water, as we learned by measuring through some of the numerous and treacherous openings in the floating mass. In the winter the ice forms beneath as well as through this comparatively thin layer of loosely entangled stems and peat moss. As the warm weather approaches in the spring the ice in the open pond is readily melted; not so with that in and under the bogs. Shielded from the sun's rays by the mass of stems and moss it melts but slowly and lingers long into the spring. At the date of our visit (19th of May) the ice at the depth of eight inches or a foot below the upper surface was still, in many places, too thick for us to break even by jumping upon it. In the more exposed spots it had entirely melted and at intermediate places we succeeded in breaking it where it measured more than an inch in thickness. It will thus be seen that many of the plants, while yet in bloom, had the lower part of the stems and roots at least partially encased in ice—a truly boreal condition of affairs and one which readily accounts for such an abundance of these northern plants at this station.

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.



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