Raisonnée du Musée de Saint Germain-en-Laye," p. 157, sums up the present state of opinion in France on this question in this thoroughly impartial fashion: "The knowledge of pottery (of the cave men) is doubtful; at the most it was the privilege of some few tribes. The fragments of pottery discovered in the quaternary beds can almost always have been introduced there through fissures or by the action of burrowing animals;" and in a note, giving a bibliography of authorities, upon this difficult question of quaternary pottery one can always fall back upon later disturbunce of the beds, as do MM. de Mortillet and Cartailhac, who deny formally the existence of pottery in the age of the reindeer."

I think these citations are ample to show that all do not concede that palæolithic man made pottery.

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Mr. MacDougal and Poisoning from Cypripedium spectabile.

In Bulletin No. 9, Minnesota Botanical Studies, are several interesting papers; and Mr. D. T. MacDougal's paper "On the Poisonous Influence of Cypripedium spectabile and Cypripedium pubescens" is of special interest because there is conclusive evidence that at least one of these plants is poisonous to some people. Both of these species are common in parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and I remember at least one case of supposed poisoning from the Large White Lady's Slipper. Some twenty years ago this species was common in rich moist woods in the coulés and ravines near springs and in the marshes of western Wisconsin. Children used to collect this species in large quantities, and on one occasion a young man collected a large quantity of the flowers, followed by a swollen face. It is so long ago, however, and as I could scarcely have been more than ten or eleven years old, I do not remember more than the collecting of the flowers and that his swollen face was attributed to this plant. It may have been from Poison Ivy, which is common in this region, but the person insisted he was poisoned by this Lady's Slipper. Mr. MacDougal gives the following interesting experiment, which leaves no doubt as to the poisonous character of the plant to some persons at least: "The author, while in the field at Twin Lakes, near Minneapolis, September 7, 1893, met with several well grown plants of *C. spectabile*, with newly formed seed pods. A robust specimen was broken off near the base of the stem, and the leaves were brushed lightly across the biceps muscle of the bared left arm. A slight tingling sensation was felt at the time, and fourteen hours later the arm was greatly swollen from the shoulder to the finger tips." He finds two kinds of hairs, one glandular, the other pointed. The poisonous effects may be due to the piercing of the skin by the pointed hair and the consequent action of the acid contents, or the surface irritation by the contents of the glandular hairs. Seventeen other plants found in Minnesota are enumerated which are poisonous to the touch, and some of these are common weeds like Cocklebur (*Xanthium canadense*), Horse Weed or Fleabane (*Erigeron canadense*) and White Spurge (*Euphorbia corollata*). The writer of this note is extremely sensitive to the action of Poisonous Ivy (*Rhus vernix*), but *Primula obconica*, which is said to be poisonous to some people, had no effect nor did it have any effect on several students working in the botanical laboratory on whom the experiment was tried. I know of one person who is systematically poisoned when he picks up wild grass. When questioned he stated that Poison Ivy was not seen by him. This matter of poisoning to the touch by different plants is largely a matter of individuality and condition of the system. Previous to 1886 I could pick and cut Poison Ivy with impunity, but in the spring of that year I was poisoned, and ever since I have been sensitive to its action. I may state that at the time I was subject to a slight bilious attack. I was perspiring very freely. I am certain that I touched my eyelids and face; had I not done so I would have been free from its effects.

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A Miniature Water Lily.

I HAVE been shown Mr. H. B. Ayres's note in the last number of *Science*, in which he credits me with having found *Nymphæa odorata var. minor* on the Moose River, near James Bay, in 1885. Though I ascended the Moose River in that year, I neither collected nor saw this plant. In the year 1886, however, in lat. 54, near the head waters of the Severn River, which runs into Hudson Bay, I did collect a *Nymphæa* which I took to be *N. odorata var. minor*. Specimens were sent to Dr. Britton, who identified them as *Castalia pygmæa*, Salisb. (*Nymphæa pygmæa* Oit. = *N. tetragona*, Georgi). Dr. Britton wrote me at that time: "The plant may be at once distinguished from the eastern *N. odorata var. minor*, by the oblong leaves, sometimes nearly twice as long as broad, with narrow, acutish lobes and the flowers still smaller, with seven to eight rayed stigma." The specimens in the herbarium of this department were then examined, and it was found that specimens collected by Dr. Robt. Bell, in 1879, on the Mesinabic River—a branch of the Moose River—and named *N. odorata var. minor*, were also this species.

Mr. Wm. McInnis, of the Geological Survey Department of Canada, reports a small *Nymphæa* as being abundant in some of the small lakes east of the Rainey Lake, almost due north of Red Lake. It seems to me probable that both these and the Red Lake and Turtle Lake plants are *Castalia pygmæa* and not *Nymphæa* (*Castalia*) *odorata var. minor*.

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The Swastika Cross.

THE display of relics in the anthropological building of the Columbian Exposition, collected by Mr. Warren K. Moorehead from a cluster of mounds near Chillicothe, Ohio, contained, among many other very interesting objects, a large number of Swastika crosses made from thin strips of copper. The occurrence of copper ornaments of that shape so perfectly wrought, and in such numbers, occasioned much surprise, and attracted great attention. A communication which I made to the *New York Independent* of Nov. 16, describing these objects, has brought to me two interesting communications from widely separated portions of the globe giving valuable information concerning the wide-spread use of this symbol.

Mr. John Thorgeirson, writing from Bannacks, Montana, tells me that an ancient MS., owned by his grandfather, in which there were many runic characters, represented Thor's hammer as of the form of the Swastika cross. It is interesting to note, also, that before Christianity had wholly subdued the Northmen the sign of the cross and of Thor's hammer, when made before partaking of festive draughts, were sometimes confounded, greatly to the misunderstanding of spectators.

Another communication from Rev. F. H. Chalfant, missionary at Shantung, China, informs me that the same symbol is among the mystic Chinese characters, to wit, "wan" ($\overline{|}+\underline{|}$), and is a favorite ornament with the Chinese.

This occurrence of so peculiar a symbol in countries so widely separated as Scandinavia, China, and the Mississippi Valley is certainly suggestive either of an original con-