

DR. TRIMEN'S HANDBOOK TO THE  
FLORA OF CEYLON:—PART II.

We now fulfil our promise of giving a certain number of extracts from the second part of this valuable work indicative of its general interest and usefulness. We have followed no special plan in making these selections, and we have omitted the scientific references and the full detailed technical descriptions, only giving the popular remarks appended in the case of each plant. These will be found, by our planting readers especially, and by all who are interested in the vegetation around them, to be both instructive and profitable. We quote some examples as follows:—

*Crotalaria Walkeri*, Arn. in Act. Acad. Nat. Cur. xviii. 328 (1836.) Plate xxvi.

Montane zone, especially at the higher elevations; rather common, scrambling over bushes like a climber. Fl. all the year, especially in December and January; bright golden yellow.

Epidemic (?)

A very ornamental plant, well worth cultivation. Differs from (*C. semperflorens*, Vent. *C. Walllichiana*, W. and A.) of the Nilgiri Hills in its much less pubescent leaves and inflorescence, and its much smaller stipules, but possibly only a variety. *C. Walllichiana* is figured in Wight, Ic. t. 982. A dwarf variety occurs on the Horton Plains patanas, with short prostrate stems, small leaves,  $\frac{1}{2}$ — $\frac{3}{4}$  in. long, and smaller pods less inflated at the ends.

*Crotalaria Juncea*, L. Sp. Pl. 714 (1753). Hana, S. Low country, principally in the dry region; rather common. Doubtfully native in the moist region. Fl. Aug.-Oct.; brilliant yellow.

Found in E. Tropics generally but much cultivated. This affords the Sun or Sun Hemp of commerce; it is grown in small quantity by the Sinhalese as about Chilaw, and by the Tamils at Jaffna. It is generally known here simply as 'Hemp.'

*C. fulva*, Roxb., is given for Ceylon in Fl. B. Ind. on the faith of specimens in Kew Herbarium (Gardner, 199, and G. Thomson from Kandy). They may have been cultivated in the Gardens.

*Indigofera Tinctoria*, L. Sp. Pl. 751 (1753). Nilawari, S.

Low country, by roadsides and waste places; rather common, especially in the dry region, but very doubtfully indigenous. Fl. all the year; pink, standard green outside.

Found also in India and Tropical Africa, but scarcely known as a wild plant anywhere, unless in West Trop. Africa.

This is the Indigo plant, so largely cultivated in India. Here there is no cultivation, but the natives of Jaffna use the leaves of the wild plant in obtaining a black dye for cloth.

*I. Anil*, L., is occasionally met with as a roadside weed. It is another indigo-producing species, and is generally believed to be of American origin.

*Aschynomene Aspera*, L. Sp. Pl. 713 (1753). Maha-diya-siyambala, S. Attuneddi, T.

Dry region, in tank and paddy fields, common. Fl. December; yellow.

Also in India, Malaya, and Trop. Africa. This is remarkable for the light, spongy character of the tissue of the stem (which in large plants attains 3 in. in diameter), whence it is often called the 'pith-plant' by the English. It is the 'Shola' of Bengal, and from slices of the stem the well-known pith-hats are made. A manufacture of similar hats was started in 1885 in the jail at Hambantota, in the neighbourhood of which place the plant is plentiful.

*Abrus Precatorius*, L. Syst. Nat. ed. 12, 472 (1767). Olindawel, S. Kuntumani, T.

Low country; common, especially in the dry region. Fl. Feb.; pale violet.

Every Tropical country.

The pretty scarlet and black seeds are well known, and are used as weights by jewellers. The flowers

are sometimes white when the seeds are of the same colour; there is also a form with the seeds wholly black.

The root is the well-known 'Indian Liquorice,' *Glycyrrhiza indica* of the older writers, and is used both internally and externally in native medicine. The seeds are an acrid poison unless cooked.

*Cassia Auriculata*, L. Sp. Pl. 379 (1753). Ranawara, S. Avarai, T. [Plate xxxiii.]

Low country, especially in the dry region and near the coast: common; locally gregarious and abundant. Fl. Feb., March; bright yellow.

Also in Peninsular India.

A great ornament to the barren coast regions.

The leaves of this form 'Ceylon Tea' or 'Mataru Tea,' and the infusion is drunk by the natives on several parts of the coast; when properly cured, rolled, and dried, it is very like true tea in appearance, and somewhat aromatic,\* but slightly purgative. The bark is rich in tannin, and is largely employed for tanning leather in Colombo.

*Saraca indica*, L. Mant. 98 (1767). Diya-ratmal, Diya-ratambala S.

By streams in forests in the low country, especially in the drier districts rather common. Fl. Jan.-March, &c.; pale orange-scarlet; filaments purp'le, anthers black.

Also in India and Malaya.

The flowers are very sweet-scented, especially in the evening; they are at first yellow, and become orange, and finally red, and are profusely produced for many months. The young leaves are pendulous and coloured. The plant is much cultivated for its beauty and sweet scent. Wood light, pale red, rather soft.

*Tamarindus indica*, L., Siyambala, S., Puli, T., the Tamarind is a very commonly planted tree, especially in the dry districts. There are specimens in Hermann's Herb., but it is nowhere wild here. In the dry region of the island it is very conspicuous, every village having several and of an magnificent specimens. Trees are occasionally found apparently wild in the jungle, but always on the site of abandoned villages.

*Acacia Planifrons*, W. and A. Prod. 276 (1834). Odai, Udai, T. [Plate xxxv.]

Dry region; very rare. Confined to the island of Mannar (and a very small part of the mainland opposite), where it is extremely abundant. Fl. Oct.-March; pale creamy-white.

Also in S. India and in Rameswaram Island.

This is the 'Umbrella Tree' of the English; † and very characteristic of Mannar, where it composes almost the whole forest, and from the horizontal arrangement of the branches gives it a very peculiar aspect. The trees, when covered in Feb. with sheets of white blossom, look like old hawthorn trees. It is cultivated in a few Colombo gardens for ornament, and has occasionally appeared on the shore there, no doubt brought with ballast from Tuticorin, where it is also abundant.

The wood is very hard and heavy, pale yellow, and when fresh cut has a faint alliaceous smell. It is much used for firewood, and there is a large export from Mannar to S. India (Tuticorin and Negapatam) amounting in 1890 to 3,446,422 logs, value £68,243 (as I am informed by Mr. M. S. Crawford).

The pods are largely used as food for sheep, goats and cattle in the dry season.

The description under this name in Fl. B. Ind. is partly made up from some other species.

*Rubus lasiocarpus*, Sm. in Rees' Cyclop. xxx. 1815). Var B, subglaber, Thw. l.c. R leucocarpus, Arn. Pag. 16. C. P. 1534.

\* A sample cured in Jaffna, where it is called 'Suga-Seevay,' gave on analysis (to Mr. A. C. Dixon) 3.71 per cent. of an alkaloid and 16.17 of other nitrogenous substances, with 41.14 per cent. of gum, tannin, and saccharine matters.

† The Rev. J. Cordiner, who visited Mannar in 1804, gives an account of the 'Umbrella Tree' in his 'Ceylon,' vol. ii. p. 8 and 32.

Montane regions, 3,000-6,000 ft. or more; common. Var. B, Nuwara Eliya. Fl. throughout the year, pink. Also throughout India and in Java.

There are two forms, large and small-flowered, the former being met with at the higher elevations only.

This is known as the 'Wild Raspberry,' which it much resembles; the fruit, however, has no flavour, and is besides covered with a woolly coat, which renders it inedible.

*Fragaria vesca*, L. Walker-Arnott, in Pug. 16, say she has seen badly dried specimens from Ceylon gathered at 6,000 ft. And about Nuwara Eliya patches of so-called 'wild' strawberries are to be found occasionally, but only, I think, as escapes from cultivation\* About Ootacamund in the Nilgiris, however, a wild strawberry, *F. nilgerrensis*, Schidl., is said to be very common, and is figured (as *F. elatior*) in Wight, Ic. t. 988; but our plant does not agree with this, but with the common wild strawberry of England.

*Terminalia Chebulat* Retz. Obs. Bot. v. 31 (1789). Aralu, S. Kadukkay, T.

Low country up to 2500 ft. principally in the dry districts, rather rare, but locally abundant. Jaffna (Gardner); Wattigoda (Thwaites); Panwila; Uva Province, frequent; abundant; about Nilgala, where it is gregarious. Fl. April; greenish-white.

Also in India, Burma and Malaya.

The fruits are called 'ink-nuts' or 'Gail-nutel' by the English, and are collected for sale to the Moormen by the country people. In Uva the collection is leased and the sale in 1892 fetched R7,500. They are the 'Chebulic Myrobalans' of the old pharmacists, and are here a valued medicine, both when young and in a mature condition. The flesh is very rich in tannin. When dried they show five blunt obscure angles. Wood heavy, very hard, dark brown with a purplish tinge, close-grained, durable.

*Terminalia Glabra*, W. and A. Prod. 314 (1834). Kumbuk, S. Marutv, T.

Banks of streams and rivers in the low country; very common in the dry region; rare in the moist districts. Fl. April, May; greenish-white, strongly honey-scented.

Also in India.

The name *T. Arjuna*, Bedd, seems a quite unnecessary synonym.

Grows to an enormous size in the beds of tanks and rivers in the dry region, and is, generally speaking the most noticeable feature of such scenery. Cordiner recorded specimens at Ya'a, north of Hambantota, in 1800 (which is the earliest notice I find of it for Ceylon), with trunks 23½ ft. in circumference at 5 ft. from the ground. A well-known one at Colombo measured, in 1879, 45 ft. in circumference round the base; and 24½ ft. at 8 ft. above ground.

The astringent bark is used in medicine. It is remarkable for the immense amount of lime it contains, and it is largely burnt as a source of lime for chewing with betel, the copious ash almost entirely consisting of pure calcium carbonate.

Wood greyish-brown, with bands of darker colour, very hard and heavy, smooth, strong.

[*T. tomentosa*, W. and A., is recorded for Ceylon in Fl. B. Ind. The specimen is in Herb. Kew., labelled by Gardner as from 'Jaffna, Dyke.' It was, doubtless, planted there by Mr. Dyke. The species is very doubtfully distinct from *T. glabra*.]

*Eugenia Fergusoni* Tamm.

Var. B. minor, *Trim. Syzygium calophyllifolium* Thw. Enum. 118 (non *E. calophyllifolia*, Wight). C. P. 160.

L. much smaller, not exceeding 1 in., very shortly stalked fruit about ½ in., nearly globular, purple.

Upper montane zone; in open sunny places. The type only in the North-eastern mountain block, Wattedelle (Ferguson), Knuckles Hills and Rangala

\* I am informed that the first wild strawberries noticed at N. Eliya came up in a Cinchona clearing made in 1864, but Arnott's must have been collected at a much earlier date.

† The names *belerica* and *chebula* are Latinisations of the Arabic names for these two kinds of myrobalans by which they were first known in Europe.

Ridge. Var. B. Adam's Peak (Gardner and Thwaites). Fl. April; pinkish-white.

E. demic.

Var. B. seems to differ altogether from *E. calophyllifolia* (to which it is still referred in Fl. B. Ind. in its leaf-venation as well as its remarkably long calyx. The O. P. specimens are in fruit only, and I have not seen the flowers.

*Lavsonia Alba*, Lam, Enc. Meth. iii. 106 (1789). Marutonti, T.

Dry and desert regions, especially near the sea-coast; rather rare. Batticaloa: near Chilaw; Mannar, Jaffna, abundant by the salt lakes. In the moist region cultivated only. Fl. Feb., March; pet. cream-yellow, sep. pinkish; very sweet-scented.

Also in Western India, Kabul, and Persia, and much cultivated elsewhere.

Called 'Tree-Mignonette' in cultivation in Colombo. This is the 'Henna'; the leaves are used for staining the finger-nails and teeth, and also for applying to the head when bathing.

*Hydrocotyle javanica*, Thunb. Diss. ii. 415 (1800). Maha-gotukola, S.

Moist places in grass under trees; very common in the moist region up to 7000 ft. Fl. May-October; pale green.

Also in India, Malaya, Trop. Australia, and E. Trop. Asia.

The large stip, completely enclose the end of the growing branch and young leaf. At the higher elevations the petioles and peduncles are more woolly, and the flowers on longish pedicels, var. B. Thw. (C. P. 2812). *H. zeylanica*, D.C., was collected by Leschenault about Kandy, and is merely a luxuriant form.

Used medicinally in the same way as *H. asiatica*. Mr. E. Green, of Pundalnoya, states (Taprobanean, iii. 7) that the Tamil coolies employ it as a fish-poison.

*Fergusonia zeylanica*, Hb. f. in Ic. Plant. xii. 23 (1876)

Moist low country in dry places; apparently rather rare. Near Colombo (Ferguson); Labugama; Karawita, Fl. Sept.-Jan.; very pale pink.

Also found in Coorg.

Of Sir J. Hooker's two names, *F. Thwaitesii* is apparently the older, but he uses *F. zeylanica* in Fl. B. Ind.

This insignificant but curious plant much resembles *Hedyotis nitida* and also *Spermacoe hispida* and *S. stricta* in habit.

*Coffea Wightiana*.—Wall. Cat. n. 6246 (1828). Kadumallikai, T.

Dry region; rather rare. Jaffna; Mihintale; Uma-oya; Atakalan Korale. Fl. Aug., Sept.; white, very sweet-scented.

Also in S. India.

A resinous gum envelope the calyx. This seems to me abundantly distinct from the next.

*C. travancorensis*, W. and A. Prod. 435 (1834), (Plate lii.) *Coffea iriflora*, Moon Cat. 15 (noon Forst.)

Moist and intermediate region to 3000 ft.; rather rare. Ka'u'ara (Moon); Kurunegala (Gardner); Negombo; Deltota; Doluwo Kaude. Fl. April-June; white, very sweet-scented.

Also in Travancore.

Moon's S. name for this is 'Gas-pitcha,' and the flowers much resemble those of a jasmine.

*C. arabica* L., the common Arabian coffee, introduced to Ceylon from Java by the Dutch about 1690, and largely cultivated, is often found about the sites of former native gardens or plantations, but has shown no tendency to become naturalised.

## TEA IN WYNAAD.

Writing on the subject of agricultural banks yesterday we spoke of coffee being regarded as "safe as a house" in those districts best suited for it. Unfortunately coffee does not thrive equally well on the

\* Commemorates the late W. Ferguson, F.L.S., of Colombo, for many years a diligent and very successful investigator of the flora of Ceylon, who died July 31st, 1887.