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Publisher: Taylor & Francis
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered
Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41
Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh

Publication details, including
instructions for authors and
subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tped18>

On a Botanical Visit to the Balearic Islands in April 1903

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Published online: 29 Nov 2010.

To cite this article: James W. White F.L.S. (1905) On a Botanical Visit to the Balearic Islands in April 1903, Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, 22:1-4, 436-448, DOI: [10.1080/03746600509480362](https://doi.org/10.1080/03746600509480362)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03746600509480362>

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tubuloso-campanulatus quinquedentatus, 15–17 (12–30) mm. longus, extra tomento aureo facillime detergibili, post delapsum tomenti niger, intus glaber, dentibus rotundatis mucronatis densius vestitis; corolla infundibuliformis, 6–6·5 cm. longa, lobis 1·5 cm. longis extra pilosis, lutea, parte anteriore intus densissime villosa; stamina 7–8 mm. supra basin inserta; filamenta minora 16–18 mm., majora 23–25 mm. longa; staminodium 7 mm.; thecæ 3–3·5 mm.; ovarium glabrum 4–4·5 mm. longum; stylus 26–27 mm.; discus vix 1 mm. altus.

In campo prope San Estanislao, *Hassler*, 4159, 4164.

ON A BOTANICAL VISIT TO THE BALEARIC ISLANDS IN APRIL 1903. By JAMES W. WHITE, F.L.S., President of the Bristol and District Pharmaceutical Association. Communicated by ALEX. SOMERVILLE, B.Sc., F.L.S. (With Specimens in Illustration.)

(Read 10th December 1903.)

Many good things come to him who pursues a hobby. I do not say to him who *possesses* a hobby, for my own is to me a bright attraction ever in sight but always ahead of me, pleasantly and irresistibly luring me on to a pursuit that can never end in possession, because there can be no finality in the work that the pursuit entails.

Delightful experiences lie thickly by the track along which the field-botanist is beckoned; and among them, journeys to foreign lands in search of plants are perhaps the richest in charm and suggestion. Pictures of bygone rambles rise radiant in the memory as one turns over the herbarium sheets, and such visions not only awaken and recall many happy scenes, but stimulate to new effort and research. Probably no trip will more delight and soothe my fancy in after hours than that which has inspired the present paper.

The date was Monday the 20th of April, in the Easter vacation, and as my fellow-traveller's engagements made it necessary for him to be again in England on the 8th of May, there resulted eighteen days for a couple of botanists interested in the European flora to use to the best advan-

tage., Now, if one wants to gather plants at that early period, it is before all things essential that one should go as far south as possible. And a careful comparison of maps and time-tables showed that we could certainly have a day or so longer in the Balearic Islands than in any other spot on the same parallel of latitude. Sicily we intensely desired, and Corsica we greatly longed to see, but the first was too far away, and from the second the return steamers did not fit in. We learnt also, on turning to the books, that we should certainly find in the Balearics a very remarkable and interesting vegetation, richer in extent and in quality than that possessed by any other European district of similar size. Taking the relative areas of Corsica and Sardinia combined, of Sicily, and of the Balearic Isles, it has been estimated that while the first contains 1 endemic species in 933 sq. kilometres, and the second 1 in 336, the Balearics possess 1 in 95. This group of islands taken together are about equal in area to the county of Somerset, and their native plants comprise nearly 1400 species of flowering plants and ferns. Of that number more than 1000 belong also to the peninsula of Spain, and almost as many to Italy, France, and Algeria respectively, showing that when the vegetation is compared as a whole with that of neighbouring countries, an evident fact is that, excepting some species that are entirely special, and some others rare and little known that give to it a peculiar character, the flora of the Balearic group is very closely allied to that of the countries named. But the striking feature of this flora is that it contains about 40 species known to grow only in one other country, and 50 which are at present unknown elsewhere in the whole world.

At 9 A.M. on 21st April we left Paris for Barcelona, and twenty-four hours later set foot in that big Spanish port. There was time to look around, and for calls at the steamboat office and a bank; and it may be useful to note that one gets at least a *peseta* more for an English sovereign in Barcelona or Palma than is given in London. At 2 P.M. we were off for Minorca in a small steamer with very small engines, a good deal of cargo, and a good many hours allowed for the voyage.

We rolled along over the waves at about eight or nine knots an hour. My doings for the rest of that day and the night following are of no particular interest to anybody, but there was then developed the sole tinge of sadness that pertains to my recollection of the trip. Going on deck next morning we were running along under the low rocks of Minorca, and presently entered the splendid harbour of Port-Mahon, passing on the left the graves of our soldiers for whose loss, and that of the forts they defended, Admiral Byng was condemned and shot. Masses of warm grey rock, houses tier above tier—dazzlingly white, with red roofs and bright green shutters,—the “sapphire sea” below, and a sky of as deep a hue above, formed a scene not easy to describe, but which is familiar to most Mediterranean travellers. Before the vessel had moored we were boarded and welcomed by Don J. Rodriguez, the veteran naturalist, whose name is indelibly impressed on Minorcan botany. He had been advised of our coming by my old friend Mr. E. M. Holmes, well known in Mahon and elsewhere as “le premier algologue Anglais.” After lunch, three gentlemen, botanists of Mahon, were introduced, and under their guidance we at once started on a walk to Cala Mesquida—a lovely bay four miles to the north-east, where many rare plants abound. On rocks skirting the road we saw a big shrubby wormwood (*Artemisia arborescens*), the largest European species, and *Capparis spinosa*, not yet in flower. Next, *Ferula communis*, a gigantic umbellifer nine feet high, two species of *Frankenia*, and two of *Asphodel*. The smaller asphodel (*A. fistulosus*) is only about a foot high, while the larger (*A. albus*) reaches four to five feet, and is among the commonest, as well as the most ornamental, plants in the islands, growing everywhere indifferently on the highest hills or on ditchbanks in the lowlands. It appears that this plant bears locally three different names at three stages of its growth. Before the flowering stem appears it is “Purrasa,” when flowering it is called “Au Bo,” and finally, when dry, “Caramusha.” My informant insisted on this being written down, as he knew no similar instance. A strong spinous shrub bearing delicious-looking yellow fruit, much like a small choice apple, next arrested

attention. This proved to be *Solanum sodomæum*, an introduced species, and the fruit were "Dead Sea apples," handsome to look on but utterly uneatable. Passing over some low hills we reached the beautiful coast and came upon a wealth of rare plants. Yellow masses of *Ononis crispa*, most viscid and glandular, which when pressed seems to incorporate itself with the paper into one sticky mess; *Senecio Rodriguezii*; *Digitalis dubia*, a pale-coloured foxglove, very soft and velvety; *Euphorbia imbricata*; *Lavatera minoricensis*; and *Vicia bifoliata*,—all were found within a small compass. These are special Balearic plants, and the two latter grow only at Cala Mesquida. The fragile, filiform stems of the little vetch have to be extricated from the midst of prickly bushes, up through which they invariably grow, and to obtain them uninjured one must exercise all that patience and restraint in language for which the field-botanist is noted. The number of spinous and prickly plants in the locality was remarkable. Thorns and prickles prosper well in that country, and fences are cheap and good. A thicket of *Oxycedrus juniper* overgrown with *Smilax* is quite unapproachable. But besides those, the *Calycotome spinosa*, *Juncus acutus*, and other well-known species, there were scattered about among the stones many inviting mossy-looking cushions of close texture, hemispherical in shape, and often four or five feet in circumference, tempting the weary pedestrian with their apparent softness. But far from affording a comfortable seat to the wayfarer, these cushions of *Astragalus poterium* are masses of interlacing needles, among which the small white flowers appear. Other similar but coarser cushions are formed by plants of *Sonchus spinosus*. From neither is it possible to prepare satisfactory specimens for the herbarium. *Asparagus horridus*, too, consists of little else than two-inch spines, sharp, and so tough and strong that I had to tread portions under foot to flatten them enough for pressing. Yet the young shoots of this plant are tender and edible, and they appeared to furnish all the table asparagus that was served during our stay in the islands. The coast thereabout reminded one of the choicest Channel Island scenery, but is even more rocky. Minorca is a solid mass of stone.

The exposed surfaces weather in a curious way into sharp knife-edged ridges, and loose fragments lie in profusion everywhere. Returning in the twilight from that first excursion over a specially rough hillside, I asked one of our guides if the whole island was of that nature. "Oh no," he said, "not at all, in many parts it is quite different—far more stony!" Quarrying is unnecessary, for building material lies at hand in plenty, and the difficulty is to clear land for cultivation. Thick walls bound the fields, and walls are often built around fruit trees with the double purpose of giving them protection and of getting rid of the stones. Rubble masonry in the islands is marvellously well built and durable without mortar, and immense labour and patience are displayed in terracing hillsides for agriculture. But the people have been always skilful in the handling of stone, for does not ancient history tell us that the Balears were the champion slingers of the world? Possibly they were more successful with their native pebbles than when, later, they took to using leaden balls, for one historian goes so far as to say that the lead melted in the air from the extreme violence with which it was slung.

And the prehistoric masons of Minorca in remote antiquity possessed the art of building in high perfection. Their monuments, the "talyots," "taulas," and "navetas," built of huge blocks and slabs, are well preserved at this day. They are peculiar to the Balearic Isles, have no affinity with the megalithic remains in other countries, and their purpose can only be conjectured.

The next morning we drove to Albufera. The dusty wayside was bright with flowers, among which Boraginaceæ were prominent. The deep blue of borage, the varying violet and purple of many species of *Echium*, and the quieter hue of *Cynoglossum pictum* furnished much of the colour. In striking contrast arose here and there tall spikes of *Celsia cretica*, the most showy plant in Minorca, with blossoms as large as a crown piece—yellow, blotched with red. Other good things gathered thereabout included *Lepidium Carrerasii* (peculiar to Minorca), *Salvia clandestina*, *Ephedra fragilis*, *Ornithogalum arabicum*, *Briza minor*, and some rare Leguminosæ.

Several of our commonest species at home—such as the dandelion, daisy, and deadnettle—are entirely absent from the islands. Their places are taken by plants of very different character. On waste ground everywhere is a pretty, graceful sort of thistle (*Galactites tomentosa*); and quite as common is the squirting cucumber (*Ecbalium Elaterium*). Sufficient of the drug grows wild in Minorca to supply the needs of a century at the present rate of consumption.

There is no pasture in the Balearics, and therefore few of the grasses that make our English hay,—no cats'-tails, fox-tails, or dogs'-tails, nor, in fact, any species with the name *pratensis*. And, as a consequence, there are no milch cows and no butter. Goats, pigs, and sheep pick up what they can among the rocks, by the roadsides, and on the stubbles. Sheep, as the most dainty feeders, come off the worst. As they wander over the stones, gaunt and hungry, pitiful objects, with every rib showing, they tell you plainly that it is useless to ask for mutton-chops in the islands. Cow's milk, beef, and butter are city luxuries, to be obtained only by much favour and many *pesetas*. The universal custom is to breakfast on a peculiar rich, light bun or cake called "ensiamada," which is much more readily eaten than described. It is slightly indigestible, and with coffee or chocolate stands by one well until the midday meal.

It is vain to look for English hedgerow flowers that beautify our deep lanes and wood-borders in the springtime. There are no sweet violets, bluebells, or red champions; no golden celandine, stitchwort, or blue speedwells. We bruise no broad-leaved ramsons under foot and sniff their odour. Nor does marsh-marigold edge willowy copses with its splendid flowers. No upland fields are gay with gorse or daffodils, nor in the south does "modest woodruff scent the mossy shade." But yet our British hawthorn seems quite at home, flowering in April. We noted also the blackthorn, large nettle, and some docks. Oddly enough, the whole six Balearic geraniums are common Bristol plants. In all else no vegetation could be more unlike. The hillsides are covered with red and white *Cistus*, lavender, *Genista*, mastic, and big shrubs of heath

and rosemary and myrtle; while the undergrowth is often of several species of *Helianthemum* and labiates, sprinkled with white flowers of *Cyclamen balearicum*, the "San Pera Violet" of the natives. Here and there is a clump of the curiously jointed *Ephedra fragilis*, a juniper, a pomegranate, or a fig springing wild from clefts in the rock. Interesting and beautiful as are all these, they are excelled in Minorca by the plentiful and luxuriant *Euphorbia dendroides*, a most elegant bush when in bloom. The stem of this species is quite woody, and sometimes a foot or more in circumference. It rises in regularly three-forked branches into a beautiful pale green hemisphere five or six feet high. The largest trees are of *Quercus Ilex*. Exposed to the constant sea-gales, these are all bent and twisted to the southward by the prevailing wind. *Pinus halepensis* is the only native pine. Smaller and less picturesque than the cultivated species, it yet affords a pleasing prospect from the light green of its soft outspreading tufts of leaves.

The mastic (*Pistacia Lentiscus*) in the Balearics, as on the Riviera, forms as a mere bush the chief constituent of the underwood. But a very old tree was pointed out to us in Minorca as one of the largest in existence. Its branches covered a space about thirty feet in diameter, which would make it probably as large as the celebrated tree at Bordighera. In cultivation, instead of clover-fields, one sees great sheets of the vivid crimson flowers of *Hedysarum coronarium*, the Minorcan forage plant that has been found well suited to a dry and windy climate.

At Albufera we came to a large fresh-water lake, with some brackish marsh between it and the sea. Here was abundance of *Leucojum Hernandezii*. We saw it later in Majorca, but elsewhere it grows only in Sardinia. Near the water's edge were *Silicornia fruticosa*, and *Suæda fruticosa*; and close at hand *Lavatera cretica*, *Lotus creticus*, *Melilotus messanensis*, *Vicia atropurpurea*, and *Scrophularia ramosissima*. On the shore were also some enormous tamarisks of great age; some of the trunks being ten to twelve feet in circumference. One object of this day's excursion was to obtain the *Daphne vellæoides*, Rodrig., abundant on the Isla Colom. Landing on that island from a fisherman's boat we immediately came upon plenty of the

rare and beautiful little shrub, bearing small white flowers low down upon the branches, and very evidently distinct from all other daphnes. This reflection applies to all the Balearic rarities without exception. These endemic species are remarkable for the strikingly decided characters that separate them from their congeners. They indeed are "species of the first order." Hardly had our boxes closed upon the daphne twigs, than a fine *Arum* was sighted (*A. muscivorum*),—its spathe resembling a hog's ear, reddish, and very hairy. Here also many bulbs of the great squill (*Urginea scilla*) protruded from the scanty soil in all directions, some as big as a child's head. I learnt that the natives are well aware of the medicinal properties of squill, and, moreover, have the practice of keeping a plant upon the staircase of each house as a charm against erysipelas. Then appeared the proprietor of the island, a singular figure. Clad in rags, rope sandals, and a battered straw hat, he was yet monarch of all he surveyed on that lonely rock. He was at pains to explain to us that our lovely *Arum* was a pest in his domain, and how fortunate it was that pigs would eat it, and indeed liked it.

On the following day, by the kindness of a local land-owner, we were enabled to visit the Barranco de Algendar. Outside Mahon we met a fisherman running at full speed with a heavy basket on his back, and were told that the custom was always to run into town with a catch, sometimes from ten miles out. Our guide remarked further that his countrymen were a hardy race. The island, he said, swept by cruel winds and lacking water, produced barely enough to sustain the inhabitants. They therefore could never make full use of their digestive apparatus, and as most diseases, he believed, arose from keeping it too thoroughly employed, good health and long life resulted. The consumption of alcohol, however, threatened trouble, amounting as it now did annually to two dollars per head of the population. I fancy that there would be consternation here at home also if our use of intoxicants stood at that same figure, but the trouble would be in the national exchequer, and not in the temperance councils. But I feel sure that my Minorcan friend did not wish to be taken seriously. A land that can produce three crops of potatoes,

and that, wherever scratched by a primitive wooden plough, is stated to yield half as much again as a similar area would upon the mainland, should not be despised. Any community that adheres to the main principles of temperance, plain living, and abundant exercise, will of necessity be hardy and long-lived.

The famous Barranco is a fissure, or cañon, riven through the plateau of miocene rock that occupies the whole of southern Minorca. Following a sinuous course of six or eight miles from near the centre of the island to the coast, its pinnacled rocks and precipices, two or three hundred feet high, are grandly picturesque. A stream threads the bottom of the gorge, and cliffs alternately close in to make a dark narrow cleft through which the water rushes like a millrace, or open out that the sun may play on the orange gardens and subtropical vegetation that flourish at the bottom of the moist ravine, where the air is always soft and warm. Sheltered entirely from the high winds of the uplands above, this is one of the few spots in the island where palms and citrus fruits can reach perfection. *Laurus nobilis* attains the height of fifty feet, and rare plants are frequent along the rocky escarpments. *Pæonia corallina* abounds, a variety differing from our Steep Holms plant by its glabrous follicles. A decoction of the root is much used as a remedy for epilepsy. *Delphinium staphisagria* also is plentiful, and *Urtica pilulifera*, the most vicious and venomous of nettles. Other new species met with that day were *Viola stolonifera*, *Lotus tetraphyllus*, *Ononis minutissima*, *Sibthorpia africana*, *Micromeria Rodriguezii*, *M. filiformis*, *Scolopendrium Hemionitis*, and *Selaginella denticulata*.

One of the last rambles from Mahon took us westward along the harbour to Villa-Carlos, a suburb founded by the British under the name of George Town. Here stand our soldiers' deserted barracks, untenanted since the occupation. When an English ship of war visits the place, the blue-jackets play football in the barrack square under windows from which their compatriots looked out a century and a half ago. Two *Mesembryanthemums* (*crystallinum* and *nodiflorum*) grow here on rocks by the sea, and the curious *Ophrys speculum* that has a mirror-like patch on its

labellum. As we were discussing by the roadside a peculiar *Chlora* that seemed new to us, some Menorquins passed, and their remarks were translated by our companion as follows:—"Oh yes, they are Americans. Most of the medicine that people take nowadays comes from America. They travel here and gather our weeds, and compound the remedies on their return."

Time will not permit me to do more than mention many things that could not escape observation—the dazzling cleanliness of the towns, the courtesy of the people, and their kindly feeling for everything English, and beyond that the manifest traces of a still existing influence of the old British occupation.

We left Minorca feeling that we would fain have stayed forty days instead of four, both on account of the intrinsic charm of the place and the extreme kindness that we received from our Spanish *confrères*.

After a starlight passage on the night of the 27th, the sun rose as we entered Palma Bay, and its rays fell on the capital of Majorica, its great Gothic cathedral, its wind-mills, and its palms. A more enchanting scene cannot be imagined.

Majorca is the largest and most fertile of the islands. The soil is so rich, the climate so soft, and the natural scenery so beautiful that many endearing names have been bestowed upon it throughout the ages. Approached from the sea the aspect is more Oriental than European. And the more prominent vegetation—the abundant *Agaves*, prickly pears, caroubs, and fine date-palms, as also the dwarf native palmetto (*Chamærops humilis*) which covers many wild rocky slopes by the sea—all give an Eastern colouring that harmonises well with the old Moorish buildings, and with the fine mountains that glow in blues and purples beyond the Palma plain. This great plain, protected on the north and east by high ranges, of which the most elevated peaks reach 5000 feet, is closely cultivated, and produces a long list of vegetables, cereals, and fruits. The attention of a stranger is arrested by the number of wind-sail pumps used for irrigation, and by the universal practice of planting almond and fig trees in the cornfields. The pruning of these fruit trees leaves them

open in the centre to the sun, so that the amount of shade thrown in that brilliant climate is insignificant, and may even be beneficial to the crops. As regards other trees, *Quercus Ilex* and the small native pine cover large tracts among the mountains, whilst the olive is more abundant in the lower regions, where it appears to have been cultivated from very ancient times. The giant olives of Valdemosa certainly must have been planted by the Moors, possibly a thousand years ago. Gnarled, twisted, and contorted into fantastic shapes, the heartwood gone ages ago, and the outer shells, though still vigorous and sustaining tall stems, often split into three or four separate trees now standing several feet apart, these extraordinary trees are more suggestive of a monstrous vegetation imagined by a Doré or a Dante than of symbols of peace and amity. Of native timber in our sense of the term, there is none in Majorca. The antiquated and expensive system of cooking by charcoal still prevails throughout the islands, with the result that practically all the large trees have been destroyed by the charcoal burner. A truly lamentable result of the demand for this costly and unwholesome fuel is that the beautiful Balearic box-tree (*Buxus balearica*), known only in Majorca and at one small spot in Spain, a handsomer and more elegant plant than our British species, has been almost completely destroyed. At one time it is said to have formed actual forests among the mountains. Some of the trunks attained the size of a man's body and furnished wood for cabinetmaking; but about the year 1851 they were all cut down and converted into charcoal. At the present time, a few small bushes merely are scattered over the cordillera of the north. We ourselves found only two.

I am not going to weary you with a detailed account of excursions in Majorca, but will only note briefly the richness of our gatherings in the few localities we were able to visit. On the shores of Palma Bay and the slopes under Beller Castle grow a large number of rare plants, viz. *Silene cerustoides*, *S. rubella*, *Arenaria procumbens*, *Helianthemum umbellatum*, *H. Serra*, *H. salicifolium*, *Fumana Spachii*, *Paronychia urgentea*, *Anthyllis cytisoides*, *Ononis breviflora*, *Hedysarum spinosissimum*, *Bubocastanum incras-*

satum, *Linaria triphylla*, *Lavandula dentata*, *Sideritis romana*, *Avena bromoides*, *Lamarkia aurea*, *Ægilops ovata*, and *Æ. triaristata*.

Passing across the island to the mountain village of Pollensa, we made our way up the beautiful Val de Ternellas as far as Castel del Rey, and met with many Balearic specialities, viz. *Hypericum balearicum*, *Rhamnus balearicus*, *Rubia balearica*, *Smilax balearica*, *Polygala rupestris*, *Alkanna lutea*, *Vincetoxicum nigrum*, and *Chamærops humilis*.

From Pollensa, also, we reached the charming hamlet of Ariant, lying to the north-east amid a circle of towering rock pinnacles. By the mule-path over the Col we saw *Delphinium pictum*, not yet in flower, and masses of *Phlomis italica*. On the coast, beyond Ariant, we were successful in finding the most interesting plant of the whole trip, the very latest discovery in the Balearic flora. Six years ago Mr. Clarence Bicknell, on a journey through the mountains with mules, strayed from the track in a fog, and so came upon a new species of *Pimpinella* that now bears his name. Prior to our visit, no botanist but himself had seen this plant growing, and without his instructions we should not have found the place. Sheltered among huge masses of rock fallen from stupendous precipices above, at a spot where another thousand feet of cliff shelves down to the sea below, *Pimpinella Bicknelli* is safe enough from man's interference. Although of robust habit, it may, of course, be a decadent or dying-out species, under ban of some inexplicable natural limitation; but if so, its destiny will be worked out alone amid the solitude and desolation of that grand north coast. My fond hope is that some day I may revisit the spot at a time when the plant shall be in fruit, for that had not developed in April.

For the rest, there might be much to say on the beauty of Miramar, preserved in its pristine wildness by the Austrian Archduke Ludvig Salvator, a distinguished scientist and the friend of all naturalists, who has there a house filled with Majorcan antiquities and works of art. On his domain we first saw *Hippocrepis balearica*, *Brignolia pastinacæfolia*, and *Allium subvillosum*. And of charming Soller, too, the "Garden of the Hesperides," where loaded orange boughs bend to the earth, and the cool evening air

is heavy with rich perfume of many flowers. All the fruit-trees of Europe seem to flourish side by side in the groves of Soller. There we climbed on to the Sierra, to the Col de Lofra, a twelve hours' tramp, to be rewarded with *Brassica balearica*, *Genista cinerea*, *Taraxacum obovatum*, and *Helichrysum Lamarkii*. There also we scrambled in the torrent-bed of the Couma to get *Helleborus lividus*, *Pastinaca lucida*, *Linaria fragilis*, and *Scutellaria Vigineuxii*, the most delicate of labiates. Very few folk indeed have ever met with the latter, for which one has to crawl between the boulders into crevices deep and damp. And apart from botany, it is delightful to walk about the streets and look through widely-open doors into the great tiled halls, spotlessly clean, and gay with palms and flowers, and get a glimpse at the far end of oranges and peleragoniums beyond. All the houses, rich or poor, stand wide open all the time, as if the people were ambitious to show off their neatness and good taste to every passer-by. Door-bells are unknown and knockers rare. If no one be at home, the doors remain open just the same. The friendly, simple people are everywhere good-natured and anxious to please. Not a beggar, lout, or ill-behaved person did we see in that fascinating land, where men and customs change but slowly, and where the people have all the virtues of those who mix but little with the outer world. They do not know the American or British tourist; no preparation has been made for him, and no one speaks his language. Who shall say that his coming is greatly to be desired?

EXCURSION OF THE SCOTTISH ALPINE BOTANICAL CLUB
TO FORT-WILLIAM AND ARISAIG, JULY 1903. By ALEX-
ANDER COWAN.

(Read 11th February 1904.)

The Club met on the evening of Monday, 27th July, at the Chevalier Hotel, Fort-William, and devoted Tuesday, the 28th, to Ben Nevis, where a pleasant day was spent in exploring the corrie. The Members were accompanied by Mr. Symers M. Macvicar, and they are greatly indebted to