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XLVI.—On the “*Jatun condenado*” (*Lycopodium catharticum*), an efficacious remedy for the Leprosy among the Indians of Columbia. By Sir WM. J. HOOKER.

[With a Plate.]

SPECIES of the genus *Lycopodium* exist in almost every part of the world, from the equator to the extreme arctic regions, and from the level of the sea to a height on the Andes approaching to the limit of perpetual snow. No less than 200 species are enumerated in the fullest list that has yet been published*, and many new ones exist, yet undescribed, in our Herbaria. All are, I believe, capable of affording a blue dye; but not more than one, so far as I know, has been found to possess any remarkable or valuable properties. I allude to the *Lycopodium clavatum*, or common club-moss of Europe, which has been celebrated for ages, and perhaps not undeservedly, for its various uses, insomuch that upon the continent it is a well-known article of commerce. The best general account we have of it is that given in the ‘Nouveau Dictionnaire des Sciences Naturelles,’ where we learn that “the whole plant possesses peculiar qualities, but is most celebrated for the yellowish inflammable and detonating dust, which even resembles gunpowder in the two latter respects, and is afforded by its capsules in an immense quantity. This substance is largely collected, and applied to different purposes, being known by the vulgar name of *vegetable brimstone* or *lycopode*. A pinch of it, when cast upon any burning matter, takes flame instantly, darting forth a blaze which almost immediately disappears, and without leaving any perceptible odour. It is this singular property which has caused the lycopode to be employed on the stage to represent lightning, infernal flames, &c., as well as in the preparation of fire-works. Its consumption is so great as to render it a rather lucrative object of commerce in Switzerland and Germany, where this vegetable powder is principally collected, and where it is often adulterated with the staminal dust of the fir-cones, which, however, possesses none of its qualities. Towards the close of summer, during autumn, and the commencement of winter, the spikes

* See Hooker and Greville, ‘Enumeratio Filicum’, in Bot. Misc., vol. ii. p. 360, and vol. iii. p. 104.

Lycopodium catharticum.

of this *Lycopodium* appear, and diffuse the lycopode contained in their capsules. They are cut off and carried home to be dried in boxes or sieves prepared for the purpose, and being shaken from time to time, the powder drops out, when it is collected, and, after being anew dried, is fit for sale.

“In pharmacy this dust is used to roll up boluses and pills, the result being to cover them with a foreign substance, which preserves them unaltered. In fact, so completely does the lycopode coat the surface of pills, that they may be put into water and taken out again without being moistened, an experiment which may be still more satisfactorily made by putting one’s hand into water into which lycopode has been thrown, when the hand will come out dry. The adherence of these minute seeds to one another is doubtless the cause of this phænomenon.

“This plant is administered in decoction as a diuretic, also for the relief of gout and the destruction of vermin. The powder is considered to be antispasmodic, and is drunk in white wine to cure dysentery and scurvy. Formerly it was used in pulmonary complaints, whence it obtained the name of *Pulmonaria*, as it did that of *Plicaria* from being employed in the north, principally in Sweden and Poland, for the cure of the *plica*, a malady in which the hair becomes endowed with sensation, and is mingled and matted together in a living mass. The effect of the lycopode in this latter dire disease was, by preventing the mutual contact of the hairs, to hinder their adherence.”

Of late years, and especially in this country, I believe that as a medicine the *Lycopodium clavatum* has not maintained its reputation, from a probably mistaken notion that its virtues in the cure of scorbutic diseases have been greatly overrated. But when it is known that the Indians of Columbia in South America, guided by experience alone,—for they never can have heard of the properties of our European *Lycopodium*,—have discovered a remedy for the most lamentable of cutaneous complaints in a species of the same genus, growing in their own country, we cannot but deem the subject deserving the attention of the physicians of the old world; and it may be worth the while to subject to fresh tests the real virtues of our

common club-moss (*Lycopodium clavatum*), and to ascertain how far some of our other native species may be endowed with similar qualities. Three or four kinds are extremely frequent on the mountains of Scotland and the north of England. It should be ascertained too whether the active principles, if any, reside in the foliage or in the seeds or spikes.

My attention was first called to the South American *Lycopodium* by William Turner, Esq., our late Minister at Bogota, where he most obligingly devoted some of the time which could be spared from his more important duties to collecting seeds and specimens of the vegetable productions of that extremely rich botanical region, and which he has communicated to me. Among those which arrived in the early part of this year are fine specimens of the plant in question, and which I soon discovered to be a new and very handsome species of *Lycopodium*, as the subjoined figure will show. They were accompanied with the following note: "Plants of '*el Jatun condenado*,' which in the Inga language means the *great devil*: this is another plant found in Asuay of the equator, and whose medicinal virtues are only hitherto known to the Indians. It has been discovered that it proves a remedy much more efficacious than the *Cugchimchullo** against leprosy; and it is stated that in fifteen days it cured a lady to whom an Indian administered it from gratitude, and who had not received relief from any other medicine."

Shortly after, my valued friend Professor Wm. Jameson sent me a collection of plants from Pillzhum, including specimens of this very *Lycopodium*, with the remark, "From the mountains of Pillzhum;—it operates in a small dose as a violent purgative. It has been administered as a remedy against elephantiasis, and is known by the name of *Jatun condenado*. From the violence of its operation it requires caution."

This species I propose thus to characterize:

LYCOPODIUM CATHARTICUM.

(Plate XIV.)

Caule ascendente dichotomo, ramis (cum foliis) acutis, acute tetragonis foliis arcte quadrifariam imbricatis ovato-acuminatis rigidis carinatis

* *Ionidium parviflorum*, of which see an account in 'Companion to the Botanical Magazine', vol. i. p. 277.

glabris basi paululum productis marginibus incurvis ciliatis, capsulis, axillaribus reniformibus bivalvibus.

Hab. Asuay of the equator, *Hon. Wm. Turner.* Mountains of Pillzhum, *Prof. W. Jameson.*

Caulis inferne radicans, procumbens, dein erectus, dichotomus, spithamæus, *penna corvina* parum crassior, ramis elongatis apice acutis. *Folia* quadrifariam arete imbricata, erecta, rigida, ovata, acuminata, paululum incurva, rigida, glabra, subnitida, plerumque rufa, rarius pallide viridia, basi paululum producta, dorso carinata, marginibus subinflexis, obsolete lacero-ciliatis. *Capsulæ* axillares, majusculæ, folio paulo latiores, reniformes, bivalves flavæ. *Sporulæ* minutæ, flavæ.

As a species this may be considered allied to my *L. rufescens* (*Icones Plantarum*, vol. i. tab. 36) from the same country, but it is quite distinct. The leaves are erect and closely imbricated in four ranks, and with such regularity that the keels of the leaves form four continued lines or angles, and between these are four flat sides, so that the stems and branches have a perfectly square appearance.

Fig. 1. Portion of the stem and leaves. Fig. 2, Side view, and fig. 3, back view of a leaf, with the capsule. Fig. 4. Capsule, magnified.

XLVII.—*Miscellanea Zoologica.* By GEORGE JOHNSTON, M.D., Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

V. DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME ENTOZOA.

[With a Plate.]

PHYLLINE HIPPOGLOSSI. Plate XV. Fig. 1—3.

Generic character. “*Corpus complanatum, breve, subovale, gelatinosum, disco contractili magno uncinis armato posticè terminatum.*” Lamarck.

Specific character. “*Ph. dilatata, albida; medio corporis ocello didymo candido.*”

Ph. Hippoglossi, *Lam. Anim. s. Vert.* v. 295. *Stark, Elem.* ii. 142.—*Hirudo Hippoglossi*, *Mull. Zool. Dan. Prod.* 220. no. 2669. *Zool. Dan. tab.* 54. *fig.* 1—4. *Fabr. Faun. Grænl.* 322. no. 302. *fig.* 8. *Turt. Gmel.* iv. 71. *K. E. v. Baer in Nov. Act. Acad. Cæs. Leop. Nat. Cur.* xiii. 678. *pl.* 32. *fig.* 5—6.

DESC. The body is about an inch long and three-quarters of an inch broad, ovate, flat, thin, and semitransparent, lubricous, firm, and somewhat cartilaginous to the touch, smooth,