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IV. Botanical Notes from Naples

Professor Allman

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two species, each of different genera—one an arborescent *Leptospermum*, of which only a single tree was found, high up on the side of Mount Lidgbird; the other a shrubby *Melaleuca*, inhabiting rocky, exposed situations, near the coast, on the south-western side. The last, locally called “Kilmogue,” is used as a substitute for tea, and said to be a pleasant and exhilarating beverage. The Leguminous plants were also single species of distinct genera, and more indicative of other countries than of Australia. Proteaceæ, a family as abundant as the two last with us, is wholly wanting, although it has representatives both in New Caledonia and in New Zealand, of which countries the Cinchonaceous plants found here are also typical. Taken as a whole, the plants are perhaps more nearly allied to those of Norfolk Island than of any other country.*

IV. *Botanical Notes from Naples.* By Professor ALLMAN.

In a letter to Professor Balfour, dated Naples, 28th January 1870, Professor Allman says:—“It is now about five weeks since we reached Naples. I have not been so successful as I had hoped in the exploration of the Neapolitan fauna. Some good work, however, I have done. I have gone over the ground of some of the old naturalists, and have found several new species, besides turning up some of the old ones, which had not been noticed since the time of Cavolini. I am putting up some interesting things for the Museum.

“You have no idea of the wretchedness of the weather here. Were it not that every one is agreed in calling this a most exceptional year, the fine climate of Italy must be regarded as a delusion. At this moment Vesuvius and the surrounding hills are covered with black-streaked dirty-looking snow, which in the course of twenty-four hours will probably have all disappeared, to be renewed in a day or two again; while a bitter penetrating north-east wind—the ‘tramontana,’ as they call it—is cutting its way through and through one, and making us long for our honest bracing Edinburgh winter, which lays no claim to climatal amenities.

* We do not give the list of plants observed by Mr Moore, as he proposes to prepare a more detailed account of the Flora of this interesting Island.—[Eds.]

And yet there is, after all, something very wonderful in these Neapolitan winters, something which gives them a special charm, and while we shiver in the cold, delights us with the aspect of summer which surrounds us. The ilexes and stone pines, and other evergreens, are in such profusion, that were it not for the great extent of country occupied by vineyards, dreary enough at this season of the year, we should scarcely miss the foliage of the deciduous trees. In the villas the oranges are growing in the open ground, where they attain the size of some of our largest evergreens, and are now laden with their ripe fruit. Camellias nearly as large grow equally without protection, and are flowering as freely as in our conservatories. *Schinus Molle* is in every garden, with its drooping branches and beautiful racemes of red fruit; and there are gigantic magnolias, and bays, and oleanders, and eucalyptuses. Australian mimosas are now in full flower, and casuarinas are carrying their cones, and in the male tree every pendant branch is continued into a long moniliform group of flowers. *Araucaria brasiliensis* is also in abundant fruit, and *Araucaria excelsa* is here a magnificent tree, attaining a height of 70 feet, and with its whorls of branches perfect from root to summit. Then there are date palms, with a height from 40 to 60 feet, with their heavy clusters of golden fruit, which, however, rarely ripens, and *Chamærops humilis* with stems of from 4 to 15 feet in height. On every rock and cliff in the suburbs, and round every village, and everywhere along the dusty roads, are agaves and opuntias and trailing mesembryanthemums, as common as furze bushes and brambles are with us.

“But it is the indigenous flora after all which, in my opinion, gives a special and peculiar charm to the Mediterranean vegetation, and possesses an interest beyond that of all the introduced plants, however beautiful. It is on the coast road between Vietri, a small town south of Naples, and Amalfi, that we have the native flora in perfection; for, though still rather early in the year for its full development, the hill sides are clothed with arbutus, and arborescent heath, and myrtle, and cistuses and rosemary, wherever the native vegetation is not displaced by terraces of lemons, and oranges, and olives. The smilax clings whenever-it can get

support; the woods are filled with purple crocuses, and the broad leaves of the cyclamen give promise of a carpet of flowers somewhat later; the little Italian Arum is in blossom in every shady nook, and wherever there is a moist rock the beautiful fronds of the *Adiantum Capillus-veneris* form a tapestry of exquisite verdure. Those who have seen only the flora of Northern and Central Europe can have no conception of the wonderful richness and beauty of the vegetation of the warmer temperate zone."

Professor Allman adds:—"I paid a visit the other day to Mrs Somerville, on her ninetieth birthday. She is a charming old lady; her senses, with the exception of slight failure in her hearing, are still perfect; she can thread her needle without spectacles, and is in full intellectual vigour. She is engaged with a second edition of her work on 'Molecular Science.'"

V. *Report on the Open-Air Vegetation in the Royal Botanic Garden.* By Mr M'NAB.

It has been my practice for the last twenty years to lay before the Botanical Society, at the February meeting, a notice of the spring plants then in flower. Frequently the list has been large. Last February meeting (1869), twenty-four species were noticed as being in bloom. This year, however, I can only record the flowering of the *Tussilago fragrans* on the 18th January, and the snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) partially on the 2d of February. During the winter, the hellebores have been flowering profusely, while the *Primula vulgaris* var. *Gentiana acaulis*, and wallflowers have produced blooms more or less throughout the winter, and cannot therefore be recorded amongst the true spring flowering plants. Up to this time we have experienced a good deal of frost. On nineteen mornings since 1st January, the thermometer has been below the freezing point, the six lowest temperatures being on the 11th, 22d, 24th, 27th, and 30th January, also on the 10th of February, the thermometer falling respectively to 25°, 25°, 26°, 17°, 20°, and 21°; while the six highest morning temperatures during the same period were on the 7th and 8th of January, also on the 1st, 3d, 5th, and 7th of February, being respectively 38°,