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XIV. *On a supposed new species of Rubus.*
By FENTON J. A. HORT, B.A.

READ 10TH APRIL 1851.

At a time when descriptions of Brambles, published by botanists whose qualifications have been fully tested and acknowledged in other fields, are received with incredulity and even derision, those who possess no such advantages have little right to expect a gentler and more charitable treatment. If therefore it were allowable to be guided wholly by personal considerations, I should not venture to add another species to our already crowded list: but cowardice and mock-modesty are as unjustifiable in science as in anything else. It is at all times unfair to assail the worth of a supposed new species and escape the labour of honest investigation by recklessly imputing vanity to the describer: but in the case of Brambles such imputations are not less absurd; for the possible attention of the isolated few who now study this genus can surely have but poor attractions for a vain mind, when accompanied by the certain suspicion of the great mass of botanists, good as well as bad: and on the other hand, there is an obvious restraint in that fear of future opprobrium from the chance of erroneous conclusions and consequent ultimate rejection, which must always haunt the study of difficult groups of plants. Until then a time arrive, when the worshipers of observation and sober induction shall cease to assume *à priori* the worthlessness of the careful observations of others, conducted with a view to trace the manifold laws of variation through the living forms of Nature under the influence of the most different circumstances, we must be content to go our own way quietly, asking no more than bare toleration from those who affect to try our conclusions by a few dry fragments of an isolated form or two out of each species. To students of Brambles therefore, and to them alone, the following description is offered:—

Rubus imbricatus; caule decurvato ramosissimo angulato sulcato glabro, aculeis parvis validis declinatis, foliis quinatis subtus pallidioribus convexis, foliolis imbricatis subconvexis subundulatis cuspidatis, infimis breviter pedicellatis terminali subrotundo cordato

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longius pedicellato, paniculæ angustæ inferne foliosæ ramis longis racemosis ascendentibus, sepalis abrupte cuspidatis a fructu globoso prorsus reflexis, stylis sulphureo-virescentibus, toro subgloboso sessilibus.

Stem soon decurved horizontally or more rarely arching, almost invariably throwing out numerous slender flagelliform shoots, rooting, angular, slightly furrowed, purplish red, glabrous or nearly so, the axillary shoots with a few hairs. Prickles purplish red, glabrous, enlarged and compressed at the base, slender but very strong, declining and rather small, on the axillary shoots slightly deflexed and longer, mostly confined to the angles of the stem. Leaves quinate, convex, slightly wavy over the whole surface, rather opaque and nearly glabrous above, paler and sparingly pilose beneath: leaflets convex; their margins doubly but not deeply dentate-serrate-apiculate; lower pair oblong, cuspidate, shortly stalked, overlapping the obovate cuspidate intermediate pair, which themselves overlap the roundish or roundish-obovate cordate leaflet, which has rather a long stalk: midribs and petioles with strong decurved prickles; general petioles flat above, partial channelled; all hairy. Stipules linear, slightly hairy.

Flowering shoot very variable in length, surrounded at its base by brown scales clothed with white hairs, purplish red, with a few patent hairs. Prickles small, strong, slightly deflexed, glabrous or slightly hairy. Upper leaves simple; intermediate usually quinate, subglabrous above, paler and slightly pilose beneath; leaflets cordate-ovate or -obovate: petioles and midribs with very slender slightly deflexed prickles. Stipules linear. Panicle rather narrow, compound, slightly hairy below, very hairy, but not tomentose above; hairs white: prickles few, short, slender, deflexed: branches long, racemose, the four or five lowest axillary, distant; all ascending or nearly erect. Bracts trifid with narrow segments or simple and broad. Flowers small. Sepals ovate, abruptly cuspidate with an usually rather short linear or almost filiform point, clothed with ashy tomentum within and without, completely reflexed from the fruit. Petals elliptical, concave, clawed, converging, white. Styles greenish yellow below. Primordial fruit rather small, subglobose, glossy black: torus sessile, ellipsoidal or nearly globose.

In many places, mostly on sloping banks, for three or four miles on both sides of the Wye below Monmouth, in both Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire. June and July.

The position of this plant is easily determined. It belongs to the group possessing subglabrous eglandular rooting barren stems and stout leathery leaves. It is closely allied to *R. affinis*, *R. cordifolius*, and *R. incurvatus*. On a hasty inspection it might probably be referred to *R. corylifolius*, but there is in reality a

wide gap between them, the latter species being rightly, I think, referred by Mr. Bloxam to his group of "*Rubi Cæsi*," possessing subterete barren stems, with often a glaucous bloom and sometimes a few small true setæ, somewhat subulate prickles, and many of the drupes in each fruit abortive. Again, it is often difficult to distinguish dried specimens of *R. imbricatus* and the three species above mentioned, although no one accustomed to look at Brambles could confound them when growing. The present plant may be known from the larger and more typical forms of the protean *R. affinis* by the structure of the branches of the panicle, which are racemose and not cymose, and their much slighter degree of divarication from the rachis, and by the sepals being abruptly cuspidate and not gradually acuminate; (to the less developed forms, which apparently constitute Mr. Lees's *R. lentiginosus*, having suberect stems and nearly simple panicles, and growing chiefly in heathy places, it bears no resemblance :) from *R. cordifolius** by the laxer and less pyramidal panicle, the absence of tomentum on the under side of the leaves, and the agreeable flavour, globular shape and glossy lustre of the fruit, which in the latter species are very peculiar, when able to ripen freely, being remarkably large, oblong, with somewhat flattened drupes, dull and burnished rather than glossy, and very insipid (it should be observed that all these three species grow in the same neighbourhood): from *R. incurvatus* by the leaves being hairy, but not clothed with a firm velvet beneath, and by the yellowish green not flesh-coloured styles. The numerous secondary shoots of the barren stem, the imbricated and convex leaves and leaflets, and the absence of tomentum on the upper part of the panicle, sufficiently separate it from all three species.

The extraordinary tendency of *R. carpinifolius* and *R. macrophyllus* to assume the most unlike forms renders it possible that they may be confused with *R. imbricatus* as with several other species. In this case single dried specimens are almost useless, but an intelligent examination of numerous bushes in the same district will commonly detect the aberrancy of type: both are sure to throw out occasionally superfluous small prickles (or even true aciculi) and a few setæ or subsessile purple glands from their barren stems, and a tendency to puffiness and flac-

* Perhaps I may be allowed to take this opportunity of expressing my surprise at Dr. Bell Salter's union of *R. nitidus* of English authors with this species. I carefully watched the two plants last summer growing freely intermixed in the same hedge, and in their sportive variations deceiving the eye for a moment, but for a moment only. When autumn came, the fruits of *R. cordifolius* were invariably perfected, those of *R. nitidus* for the most part abortive, throughout my neighbourhood. Facts like these appear to me valuable collateral proofs of the distinctness of species. Thus I found last year *Luzula Forsteri* always fruitful, *L. pilosa* usually the reverse.

idity is perceptible in even the thicker leaves: *R. carpinifolius* is moreover apt to have its terminal leaflets wholly or partially subdivided, so as to produce septenate leaves. These characteristics are absent from the group "Nitidi," to which *R. imbricatus* belongs.

I may add that it flowers early, almost contemporaneously with *R. nemorosus*, and nearly a month before its true allies.

Trinity College, Cambridge, March 25, 1851.