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Sassafras in China. (Sassafras Tzumu, Hemsl.)

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BRITISH EAST AFRICA. Nyasaland: Blantyre, *Scott*; Mount Mlanji, *Whyte*; Mlanji Plateau, *McClounie*; Uvera, *Miss E. Kenyon*; Nyika Plateau, *McClounie*, 30.

In the Flora of Tropical Africa, v. 342, these plants were included under *O. affine*, Hochst., which differs in having broader leaves and non-denticulate corolla-lobes.

900. *Dasystachys nervata*, *C.H. Wright* [Liliaceae-Asphodeleae]; *D. Grantii*, Benth., affinis, quae bracteis quam flores multo longioribus foliisque flaccidis recedit.

Rhizoma ignotum. *Folia* per anthesin 15 cm. longa, 1.5 cm. lata, oblonga, acuminata, rigida, apice cucullata, utrinque glaberrima, nervis primariis circa 17 prominentibus. *Scapus* 22 cm. longus, cylindricus, parte superiore minute puberulus; racemus 10 cm. longus, rhachide pedicellisque glabri; pedicelli 2 mm. longi. *Perianthii* segmenta oblonga, valde concava, obtusa, 3.5 mm. longa, 1.5 mm. lata, alba, extus ad apicem luteo-puberula, uninervia. *Stamina* perianthii segmentis paullo breviora; filamenta e basi lanceolata complanata subulata; antherae 1.5 mm. longae, 1 mm. latae, obtusae. *Ovarium* trilobum; lobis globosis; stylus ovario aequilongus, columnaris; stigma punctiforme; ovula in quoque loculo 4-6. *Capsula* 4 mm. diam.

RHODESIA. Between Broken Hill zinc mine and Bwana M'cuba copper mine, *C. E. F. Allen*, 338.

XI.—SASSAFRAS IN CHINA.

(*Sassafras Tzumu*, Hemsl.)

W. B. HEMSLEY.

A few days before Mr. Wilson left on his third journey to China, he brought me some specimens of a laurel, collected by himself in the Patung district of Hupeh, which he had identified with the North American *Sassafras officinale*, Nees, and also with my *Lindera Tzumu* (Journ. Linn. Soc., vol. xxvi. p. 392) and *Litsea laxiflora* (loc. cit. p. 383, t. 8). He was quite right as to the two last, which were described from imperfect materials; the former from a specimen bearing young fruit, and the latter from a specimen bearing flowers of one sex only and no leaves; both instances of imprudence in founding species on imperfect specimens. He was also right, I think, as to the Chinese tree being a species of *Sassafras*; but, although there is a striking similarity between the dried specimens from China and those of *S. officinale* from North America, an examination of the flowers has revealed differences that are almost of generic importance, as the genera of Lauraceae are limited. Both species have heteromorphic, deciduous leaves with the same kind and range of variation, and the inflorescences of both sexes, which appear before the leaves, present no obvious differences. The flowers of the North American species are, however, somewhat larger, and the floral diagram is quite different. I have not examined a large number of flowers, but

those examined agree with the descriptions and the excellent figures in Sargent's "Silva of North America," vol. vii. t. 304. Only a small number of flowers of the Chinese species were examined, but they were so far uniform in structure. The following is a comparison of the flowers of the two species:—

| | <i>S. officinale</i> , Nees. | <i>S. Tzumu</i> , Hemsl. |
|------------------|--|---|
| Male flowers ... | glabrous within | hairy within. |
| Stamens ... | 6 + 3 with the filaments biglandular at the base | 6 + 3 with the filaments biglandular at the base. |
| Staminodes ... | none | 3, alternating with the glandular stamens. |
| Pistillode ... | none | prominent. |
| Female flowers | glabrous within | hairy within. |
| Staminodes ... | 3 + 3 | 6 + 3 + 3, similar to the stamens and staminodes in the ♂ |

As it is intended to publish a figure and full description of *S. Tzumu* in *Hooker's Icones Plantarum*, the foregoing differential characters will be sufficient here.

As Sargent remarks, *Sassafras officinale* or *Sassafras Sassafras*, as he has called it, was probably one of the first North American trees to be introduced into Europe. Gerarde describes it in his "Herbal" (1597), and in Johnson's edition of the same work (1633), he states that his figure was made from a small tree growing in the garden of Mr. Wilmote at Bow, some few years previously. In 1838 Loudon (*Arboretum Britannicum*, vol. iii. p. 1303) recorded specimen trees at Kew and Syon House sixty feet high, and the latter as having a trunk three feet in diameter.

Sassafras Tzumu, Hemsl., is a valuable timber tree which, on the authority of Dr. A. Henry, sometimes attains very large dimensions. It is the *tzu-mu* or *huang-chin* of Central China, and appears to be abundant in the Province of Hupeh. Kew also possesses specimens from Ningpo, Chekiang (*Faber*), and from Kiukiang, Kiangsi (*Maries*).

XII.—DECADES KEWENSES

PLANTARUM NOVARUM IN HERBARIO HORTI REGII CONSERVATARUM.

DECAS XLIII.

421. *Aconitum Gammiei*, Stapf [Ranunculaceae]; affinis *A. leucantho*, Stapf, differt glabritie, foliis multo magis dissectis divisionibus linearibus brevius petiolatis, galea magis depressa et magis hiante, nectario haud calcarato, sed in dorso basin cucullae versus gibbosa.