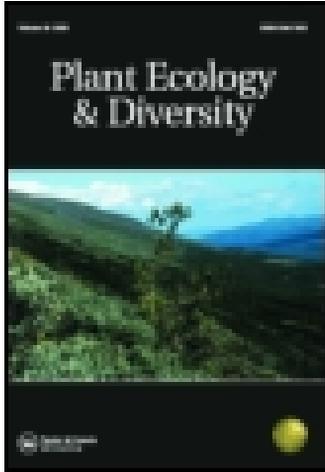


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I. The Ahtoor Ghaut and the Ascent to the Shevaroy Hills from Madras

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ruary 14; *Nordmannia cordifolia*, February 15; *Scilla bifolia* (blue) February 20; *Symplocarpus foetidus*, February 26; *Narcissus pumilus*, February 27; *Dondia Epipactis*, February 28; *Erica herbacea*, February 28; *Aubretia grandiflora*, March 8; *Arabis albida*, March 8; *Scilla bifolia* (white), March 10; *Scilla præcox*, March 10; *Primula denticulata*, March 12; *Scilla bifolia* (pink), March 12.

Mr M'Nab exhibited a spathe and spadix of *Arum cornutum* from the Botanic Garden, developed as an ordinary leaf.

Wm. Tod, Esq., St Leonard's, Lasswade, sent specimens of peculiar lacerated varieties of *Lastrea dilatata*, and *L. spinulosa*, from Dumcrieff, near Moffat.

10th April 1862.—T. C. ARCHER, Esq, President,
in the Chair.

The following gentlemen were duly elected Resident Fellows of the Society:—

JOHN DAWSON, Esq., Alloa.
GEORGE WILLIAM ROBERTSON HAY, Esq.
JOHN DUNCAN, Esq.

The following donations to the Society's Library were laid on the table:—

Flore Medicale Belge, par Armand Thielens.—From the Author.

The Canadian Naturalist and Geologist. Vol. VII. No. 1.—From the Natural History Society of Montreal.

Proceedings of the Royal Horticultural Society. Vol. II. No. 4.—From the Society.

Description of a New Species of *Clerodendron* from Old Calabar, by Professor Balfour.—From the Author.

The following donations to the Society's Herbarium were announced:—

From Dr Carrington—Specimens of *Pinguicula grandiflora*, from Killarney.

From P. Neill Fraser, Esq.—Plants from New Hebrides.

The following donations to the Museum of Economic Botany at the Botanic Garden were noticed:—

From S. C. Mackenzie, Esq.—Fruit of "round plum" from Calcutta.

From Mrs Col. Wyllie, Howard Place—Specimen of *Lepidodendron*, from coal.

From Mrs Piazzi Smyth—Fruit of the famous dragon tree (*Dracæna Draco*) of Orotava.

Professor Balfour intimated the death of Dr Emilius

Dubuc, of H.M.S. Cossack, who had been an active member of the Society, and had contributed to its Herbarium and Museum.

The following Communications were read:—

I. *The Ahtoor Ghaut and the Ascent to the Shevaroy Hills from Madras.*

By Dr ALEX. HUNTER, Madras.

On Friday, the 27th December 1861, I left Madras by the early six o'clock train, bent on enjoying a week's relaxation, and trying the bracing effects of the cool climate of the Shevaroy. For the first twenty or thirty miles the country seemed to be a good deal under water, and the tanks and ditches were fuller than I had expected, considering the light monsoon. Some of the paddy crops were fair and promising, and the cool breeze blowing over the wet fields felt very refreshing. There is little to attract the eye beyond a long flat expanse of low level country, densely wooded in the vicinity of Madras, but becoming bare and uninteresting for nearly twenty miles. The Naggery range of hills, with the bolder Nullamullys to the north, stretching up along the Pulicat lake, are the first objects of interest. These hills were resorted to some years ago as a sanitarium, and were inspected and reported upon, but their height is not sufficient to command a cool bracing climate, and being only from 800 to 1200 feet above the level of the sea, the temperature is not much below that of the plains. On approaching Arcot and Vellore the hills become more rugged, bold, and picturesque. In parts of this range some hills have hardly a trace of vegetation from the base to the summit, while others are covered to the very top with brushwood. This difference seems to depend on the character of the decaying rocks of the hill,—the white pegmatites and pale gneiss rocks yielding a poor sterile soil, while the decomposing green-stone, dark granites, and trap rocks, yield more productive soils. This fact can be easily verified on several parts of the line—as, first, on the bold bare slopes of the Amoor Hill, where the stratified appearance of the pale grey gneiss can be well seen at a great distance. It may also be observed on several of the hills between the Arcot and Vellore stations, where the white pegmatites or binary granites are in all stages of decay; but their slopes are nearly all equally sterile. At 4.20 the train reached Ahtoor; and after a ride of about two miles through a nearly level country, very richly covered with tall brushwood, thickly studded with a great variety of trees, all of a few years' growth, the village of Ahtoor was reached. In the vicinity of the village large patches of the jungle had been cleared for the cultivation of castor oil, horse gram, sesamum, and earth or ground nut (*Arachis hypogaea*), from which a fine white oil is made. The castor-oil plant seemed very luxuriant, attaining a height of ten or twelve feet in some fields, while much that had been seen in the plains near Vellore was only three or four feet in height. In one field, a little beyond the village, along with the castor oil, there was cultivated a great deal of the cockscomb, or love-lies-bleeding, and of a begonia, used by the natives as a vegetable like rhubarb, and attaining a height of four to six feet. At five o'clock the foot of the ghaut was reached, and for about a mile the ascent was very easy, being through bamboo jungle, interspersed here and there with very fine straight tall trees, chiefly of the bombax or silk cotton, and *Eugenia jambolana*, with here and there a young promising teak (*Tectona grandis*), Pterocarpus, Cassia, or Euphorbia, the latter growing to the dimensions of a good large tree. Many of the trees were overhung with very picturesque creepers in great luxuriance, but most of them had

passed into seed; amongst these were the *Cryptostegia*, which yields one of the finest India-rubbers, a very strong fibre from the bark, equal to that of the Yercum or to English flax, and a strong and feathery silk cotton around the seed. Among the other creepers were varieties of *Convolvulus* and *Ipomœa*, some, like the moon-creeper, attaining a gigantic size, and towering up to great heights, and dangling gracefully in festoons or wavy lines nearly vertically for twenty or thirty feet overhead. For about half a mile the bamboo jungle becomes very dense, and the stems attain a thickness of five or six inches. The trees diminish in number, as well as change in their character, being apparently harder, with their wood more knotted and gnarled. *Dalbergia latifolia* and *D. sissoides*, and a tree very like the true mahogany or *Swietenia*, were seen; this we believe to be a *Cedrela*, like the Toon-wood of Bengal. The *Pterocarpus santalinus*, a good red wood, here attains a considerable size. The road now became more steep, tortuous, and difficult. I stopped to admire the scenery and the gorgeous sunset. Below was the level, long expanse of country terminating in the Mysore ranges of hills, with here and there a little streak of water; and, as I afterwards learned, the river Cauvery can be seen in the distance. As the ascent for the last half mile had been rather steep, I dismounted and walked up to ease the pony; but I was soon warned by the attendants that it was only half way, and that we must push on as quickly as possible. For the next half mile the scenery became very varied and bold, from the winding nature of the road, and the large bare rocks piled one above another in the bed of the stream below. About eight o'clock I reached the welcome bungalow, and highest house on the Green Hills.

II. On the Institution of Government Gardens at Travancore, Southern India. By J. B. MALTBY, Esq., President, Travancore.

His Highness the Rajah of Travancore having liberally sanctioned the application of large sums towards the establishment of a public garden or gardens for the introduction into his kingdom of useful and ornamental plants, I proceed to state the manner in which I think that the object sought may be best advanced. The site selected for the principal garden is at Peermade, or rather at a new station named Maryville, a place which appears to be admirably suited for the purpose. It is at an elevation of about 3300 feet above the sea, and enjoys a temperate climate. It is on the line of the high road about to be constructed between Alleppy and Madura. There is every reason to hope that it is free from malaria, being exposed to the influence of the sea-breeze, and experience up to the present time bears out this expectation. The ground is undulating and the soil varied; forests and grass plains alternate with one another. The thermometer (December) falls to 58 in the morning and rises to 73 under shelter at 2 P.M. The rainfall is not accurately known, but is probably about 100 to 125 inches. But the advantage of the site will be more apparent if the objects which chiefly call for attention at the present time are considered. These are, 1. Cinchona; 2. Tea; 3. Coffee; 4. Cotton; 5. Vanilla. The cinchona is of so much importance, that the garden may be viewed as formed to aid in the introduction into the mountainous country of Travancore of this invaluable tree, and the other objects may be considered as subordinate to this.

III. On the Cultivation of Cotton in Mysore. By C. B. SAUNDERS, Esq., Officiating Commissioner for the government of the territories of his Highness the Maharajah of Mysore to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Fort-William.

When the subject of an increased supply of cotton became one of more