

PAPERS READ.

REPORT ON A SMALL COLLECTION OF PLANTS FROM
THE AIRD-RIVER, OBTAINED BY MR. THEODORE
BEVAN DURING HIS RECENT EXPEDITION ;

SUBMITTED BY BARON VON MUELLER, K.C.M.G., M.D., PH.D.,
F.R.S., &c.

(Plates VI and VII.)

Among the plants entrusted to the writer's examination, two prove new to science, and of these two now the descriptions are offered. Besides species of the following genera occur in the collection :—*Myristica*, *Pittosporum*, *Quercus*, *Mucuna*, *Manilloa*, *Voacanga* (*Orchipeda*), *Dischidia*, *Fagraea*, *Selaginella*, *Trichomanes*, *Davalia*, *Asplenium*, *Aspidium*, *Polypodium*.

The *Manilloa* is the *M. grandiflora* of Scheffer. Mr. Bevan remarks, that it attains about 15 feet in height, that the stem is bare, that the colour of the floral leaves is salmon-pink, and that they bend downwards in bell-shaped masses.

MUSSAENDA BEVANI.

(Plate VI.)

Branchlets glabrous ; leaves nearly orbicular, only along their costate nerves hairy ; racemes few-flowered, almost corymbose ; peduncles, bracts, pedicels and calyces rather densely beset with appressed brownish hairlets ; lobes of the calyx often isomorphous, during anthesis longer than the tube, deltoid-semilanceolar, acuminate, early deciduous, the fifth calyx-lobe (if changed) extremely large, conspicuously stalked, pale, ovate-orbicular, almost glabrous ;

corolla many times longer than the calyx, rather densely short-hairy outside, its lobes narrowly semi-lanceolar, hardly half as long as the throughout slender tube, inside minutely papillular-hairy; stamens reaching nearly to the summit of the corolla-tube; filaments extremely short; anthers linear, pointed, almost half as long as the tube of the corolla, narrowly but conspicuously bilobed at the base; stigmas setaceous-linear, thrice shorter than the style; ovary short.

Near the Aird-River (Theodore Bevan, Esq.).

The small branchlet obtained bears only one leaf, which evidently is diminutive, so that the rounded form may not be normal; the inflorescence may also, perhaps, become more elongated, than shown by our material.

The broader calyx-lobes but narrower corolla-lobes, further the shorter filaments, the longer anthers and the extremely narrower stigmata distinguish this new Papuan species already from all forms of *Mussaenda frondosa*, the only congener hitherto recorded from New Guinea. The form of the leaves (so far as known), the shortness of the tube of the calyx at flowering time, the whiteness of the vestiment of the corolla-tube upwards inside, and the not ovate corolla lobes separate our new plant easily from *M. Forsteniana*. Close affinity to any other species could not be traced out.

I most gladly connect with this beautiful and probably fragrant plant the name of the explorer, through whose bravery and skill the regions of the Aird-River system have now become opened up to civilization and commerce, with the additional hopeful prospect of ready access to high and likely salubrious main ranges for mining and rural enterprises.

BEGONIA SHARPEANA.

(Plate VII.)

Leaves large, obliquely cordate-orbicular, slightly acuminate, at the margin and beneath along the nerves minutely fringed, above imperfectly conspersed with minute depressed papillular corpuscles, on both pages subtle-dotted, and when young partially red-tinged;

petioles densely beset with lax spreading compressed hair ; cyme dichotomously branched, many-flowered, glabrous ; bracteoles comparatively large, quite petaloid, roundish, situated closely under the calyx, entire, deciduous, as well as the calyx-lobes and petals rosy-red ; lobes of the calyx petaloid, renate-orbicular ; petals of the staminate flowers two, of the pistillate flowers one ; lanceolate- or ovate-elliptical ; stamens rather numerous (25-30), anthers roundish with cuneate base ; filaments connate only near their base ; styles three, very short, almost free ; lobes of the stigmas much twisted ; fruit three-celled ; membranes from two of its angles almost dimidiate-orbicular, the membrane from the third angle nearly as broad as its own length, almost truncate at the summit, but thence outward not acutely protracted, all three appendages somewhat rigid, extending at both ends beyond the fruit-cells, but only slightly decurrent ; placental plates two in each cavity of the fruit ; seeds very minute, almost ovate, pale-brownish, somewhat furrowed.

In the vicinity of the Aird-River (Theodore Bevan, Esq.).

This handsome plant, which should readily enter into horticulture, has been chosen to perpetuate in the vegetation of the great Papuan Island also the memory of the Rev. Mr. Sharpe, who recently succumbed as a martyr of Christianity, while carrying the gospel to the wild regions of New Guinea.

Begonia Sharpeana agrees with *B. sinuata* to some extent in the form of its leaves, in its inflorescence, in the size of its flowers and in the form of its anthers ; but the petioles are not glabrous, the leaves are larger and far more inequilateral, the petals of the fruit-bearing flowers seem always reduced to one, the styles are three in number and so the fruit cells, the appendages of the fruit are much more unequal, reach beyond the cavities and are angular at the summit ; besides all this the occurrence of a pair of broad petaloid bracteoles under the flowers is quite unusual in the genus *Begonia*. This new species should systematically be placed in the section *Knesebeckia* near *B. scutata*. The characteristics of the stem and root remain as yet unknown, so the stipules and the

manner of fruit-dehiscence ; the dried leaves are tender-membranous and not much paler beneath.

This seems an apt opportunity to record some other plants, previously unknown from New Guinea, though not obtained through Mr. Bevan's Expedition:—*Triumfetta rhomboidea*, N. Jacquin ; *Tristania suaveolens*, Smith ; *Notothixos subaureus*, Oliver ; *Panax fruticosum*, Linné fil. ; *Alsomitra Muelleri*, Cogniaux ; *Scaevola oppositifolia*, Miquel ; *Ipomoea chryseides*, Ker. ; *Eria Kingii*, F. v. M. ; *Cyperus digitatus*, Roxburgh ; *Monogramma dareocarpa*, Hooker ; *Lepidozia Wallichiana*, Gottsche ; *Phragmicoma Novo-Guineensis*, Stephani ; *Marasmius crinis-equi*, F. v. M.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

(PLATE VI.)

MUSSAENDA BEVANI.

Fig. 1.—Expanded flower.

Fig. 2.—Portion of corolla-tube laid open.

Fig. 3.—Calyx with style and stigmas.

(Somewhat magnified).

(PLATE VII.)

BEGONIA SHARPEANA.

Fig. 1.—Front-, side-, and back view of stamens.

Fig. 2.—Styles and stigmas.

Fig. 3.—Transverse section of fruit.

Fig. 4.—Seed.

(All magnified, but not to the same extent).



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