

II.—“THE PALM *RAPHIA* (*SAGUS*) *RUFFIA*,” BY L. A. BERNAYS  
F.L.S., ETC.

THE marked success which has attended the efforts of past years to introduce and establish many species of that noble order of plants, the Palms, gives peculiar interest to any new evidence of their adaptability to our climate; and, having myself taken a considerable share in the work of their introduction, I am always glad of an opportunity of pointing to successful results, with a view to encourage the cultivation of these beautiful and useful plants. Such an opportunity presents itself now, in the fruiting, for the first time, in Queensland, of a specimen of the small genus *Raphia*, viz., *R. ruffia*. The specimen in question was planted some twelve years ago, in the Acclimatisation Society's gardens, of which the tree has been one of the most admired objects. Unfortunately, this genus is one which, like the banana, dies after fruiting, but which, unlike that fruit, fails to leave behind it young and vigorous successors. If, and there is no reason to doubt from the size which it has already attained, the fruit which I am submitting to you, comes to perfect maturity, the parent plant can be replaced by a numerous progeny, indeed.

I submit examples of the fruit and fibre.

The “hands,” as I may term them, now shewn, were taken from a fruit-spike, about five feet long, and are two, of one hundred and eighteen, which were arranged spirally on the spike. Of these hands 47 were fruitful, and 71 sterile. There were 16 fruit-spikes, and allowing an average of 20 seeds to each fertile hand, gives a result of about 15,000 of the beautifully imbricated

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particular districts are concerned, for the continuity of the Mitchell Shale would be thereby disturbed. A remark which has been suggested by the fact that a dyke is to be met with on the Warrego River below Wallall. This dyke, which was brought to my notice by Mr. R. Austin, railway surveyor, is supposed to extend between Mitchell and Mangalore, and to have a direction of 13 deg. south of west. Its influence may be traced on the course of the rivers of the district.



scaly fruits to the tree in question. If, therefore, the crop matures properly, the whole of our coast-line can be supplied with this beautiful and useful Palm. The species is African, but its exact natural habitat does not appear to be known. It is a cultivated plant in Madagascar and neighbouring islands, and favours low swampy land; although the specimen in question is growing under conditions quite the reverse.

This species, with the only two others known, viz., *R. toedigera* (the Jupati Palm), a native of Amazon, and *R. vinifera*, found on the Niger, have stout, unarmed, short, ringed trunks, with large and spiny leaves, sometimes fifty feet in length, and erect, the entire tree attaining a height of 60 to 70 feet. The leaves of all these species are put to many uses. The women in Madagascar use them with wonderful skill. They divide the outside skin of the leaf into fine threads; these they dry, and then weave them into a soft and very pretty fabric. The fibre is also largely manufactured into a kind of matting, used both for wrapping and for floors. Of this matting the shipments to Mauritius from Madagascar in one year, reached nearly 100,000 rolls, together with two tons of the fibre; for the fibre, the outer skin of the leaves, is used, and it is peeled off in strips while the leaves are young.

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### III.—ON THE CURATIVE PROPERTIES OF THE CUNJEVOI COLOCASIA MACRORRHIZA, *Schott*, BY HON. W. PETTIGREW, M.L.C.

It is a well ascertained fact amongst residents in the Parishes of Mooloolah and Maroochi, to the north of Brisbane, that if a person is stung by contact with the leaf of the "stinging tree" (*Laportea gigas*, *Wedd.*), and the affected part afterwards rubbed at intervals during an hour or so, with the leaf of the Cunjevoi, the pain will cease and not return again; whereas, should no such application be made, the pain will return for a considerable time after, whenever the injured part is made wet; and a case has been mentioned to me of a man who experienced pain, under



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