

7. *Graphis Parmeliarum*, C. K. Parasitic on *Parmelia tinctorum* as rounded brownish spots scattered over the upper surface of the thallus, generally separate, but at times marginal and confluent, slightly raised above the surface of its host, 2-3 mm. in diameter. The lirellæ can be observed on these spots as radiating dark-brown lines, not extending quite to the centre of the parasitic thallus, or reaching its circumference, 1 mm. in length, with slightly raised thalline excipula, and very fine thalamial line. The surrounding thallus paler near the lirellæ than elsewhere. Spores non-det.

Habitat : On *Parmelia*, Rosewood Scrub.—J. SHIRLEY.

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## USES OF SOME QUEENSLAND PLANTS

BY C. HEDLEY, ESQ.,

(Read on the 12th June, 1888.)

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WHILST resident at Boyne Island, in the Port Curtis district, certain qualities inherent in many of our native plants, and especially such as were availed of by the blacks, were brought under my notice. The few facts in this connection now recorded, constitute a portion of the information thus gleaned, and they may be of service to those who have occasion to deal with the indigenous vegetation of the colony in its economic bearings. For a knowledge of several of the facts related I am beholden to Mr. Wyndham, of Boyne Island, whose long sojourn in districts peopled by our aborigines, and keen habits of observation, especially qualify him for speaking on the subject under consideration.

*Rhizophora mucronata*, Lam., the red mangrove. — The honey which the native bees collect from the blossoms of this tree is reputed to be of a poisonous nature, and that it probably is endowed with some active deleterious principle, seems probable in view of the following occurrence. A man and his

mate, who were employed in the vicinity of a large swamp in which these mangroves grew, amused themselves one holiday by searching for "sugar bags." Whilst thus engaged, they found a patch of timber where the bees were particularly numerous, being at the same time surprised at the discovery, as it is unusual for blacks to overlook so many bees' nests in one locality. Having eaten a quantity of the honey, they shortly afterwards returned to their camp, when they each soon experienced severe internal pains, attended by considerable distention of the stomach. One man procured relief from these distressing symptoms by use of brandy after the well-known proprietary medicine "pain-killer" had been tried to no purpose. Meanwhile, his companion grew worse, was rolling in agony on the ground, and had concluded that he was about to die, and was only relieved by a repetition of the same treatment. These men were afterwards informed by the blacks that it was their custom to refrain from cutting out those bees' nests which occurred in the vicinity of rhizophora swamps. I noticed that a Polynesian laborer chose the arched root of a rhizophora when selecting a piece of wood such as would be most suitable for making a bow from, and a native of one of the Solomon Islands informed me, that in his own country the sprouting fruit of this tree was commonly regarded as being edible.

*Avicennia officinalis*, Linn.—Many cattle that would, doubtless, have perished during the recent protracted drought from failure of other fodder, were sustained by browsing on the foliage of the white mangrove. At one homestead I noticed that the cows ran up and collected every time that an axe was used, in the expectation of a few limbs of this mangrove being lopped off for their consumption. The influence of this diet on the quality of the milk was unmistakable, for it gave it a very characteristic flavour. The only use to which the wood is put is, according to my experience, that of affording material for knees in boat-building. The *Avicennia officinalis* is evidently a very slowly-growing tree, and, moreover, it does not spring up again when once cut down, for clearings made a dozen years since amongst these trees have all along remained bare.

*Excæcaria agallocha*, Linn.—The milky juice of this tree, which has won for it the name of milky mangrove, was, as I learnt, formerly used by the Port Curtis blacks as a poison for their spears.

*Vigna vexillata*, Benth.—This trailing leguminous plant was locally known as Gooma, and was described to me as having often a large flat root similar in shape to that of a turnip, much prized by the blacks as an esculent. Two other species of the genus *Vigna*—namely, *V. luteola* and *V. lanceolata*, were, notwithstanding they possessed very different blossoms, also recognised by the blacks as Gooma.

*Ipomæa pes-capræ*, Roth, the Burkunbullum of the Port Curtis tribe, also yields to them an esculent tuber.

*Boerhaavia diffusa*, Linn., has also an esculent tuberous root, which, as I am informed, was once eaten by the blacks all over the New England district of New South Wales. Its sweet potato-like root was known to the Ucumbil tribe of Inverell as “tow,” and to the Wallari, on the Barwon, as “tar.” A Port Curtis black, whom I interrogated, named it “youral,” a denomination applied, as I afterwards learnt, to all “vines or creepers.”

*Geodorum pictum*, Lindley.—The tubers of this terrestrial orchid are also eaten by the blacks about Gladstone, with whom this plant goes under the name of Yeenga. In the Rockhampton district, it receives the name of Uine.

*Hypoxis hygrometrica*, Labill.—The small tuberous rhizome of this common Amaryllid was eaten by the blacks of Keppel Island.

*Cymbidium canaliculatum*, R. Br.—This common tree orchid seems to me as likely to afford the most substantial aid to a man lost in the bush. It is abundant, easily collected, and of such striking appearance that it need not be mistaken or forgotten by any traveller. The fruit and the pseudo-bulbs will support life even if chewed raw. But if the latter are grated up and boiled, a body is produced not to be distinguished from arrowroot. Delicate

children have been reared on this when accidents have cut off from them other supplies. The natives speak of this valuable plant as "Dampy-ampy, and amongst whites it is known as native arrowroot.

*Xanthorrhœa arborea*, R. Br.—Another resource for food is the heart of the grass-tree, which, when cut out, has much the same appearance and flavor as has the heart of the better known cabbage palm tree. This was one of the plants the natives used when compelled to make fire by friction.

*Adriana acerifolia*, Hook.—This euphorbiaceous shrub has been pointed out to me as being one whose leaves were dried and then smoked by the blacks as a substitute for tobacco.

*Polygonum* sp. (probably *P. orientale*) was pointed out to me as being one of those which the blacks used in obtaining fish, and that when a quantity of it is pounded up and thrown into a waterhole, it rapidly brings all the fish to the surface in a dying condition, without impairing their wholesomeness as food. The same property is said to reside in the barks of several of the wattles.

The following additional plants, growing in the Port Curtis district, yield to the blacks edible fruits, even if they are not otherwise noteworthy, namely:—*Careya Australis*, F. v. M., the Moonta, a small tree which has ovoid fruit  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. in greatest diameter; *Ficus rubiginosa*, Desf. the "Pingy;" the rough-leaved fig *F. aspera*, Foost., the Boorkol, with purple fruit; the cluster fig, *F. glomerata*, Willd, which last furnishes the settlers with excellent jelly; *Sarcocephalus cordalus*, Miq. the Leichhardt tree, having fleshy heads of fruit; *Mesembryanthemum æquilaterale*, Haw.; *Grewia polygonum*, with deeply bi-lobed fruit; *Geniostoma Australianum*, F. v. M.; *Carissa ovata*, R. Br.; and *Eustrephus augustifolia*.

Other economic plants with their names in the language of the Port Curtis tribe are *Acacia aulacocarpa*, A. Cunn., known amongst them as "Dilka;" *Melaleuca leucodendron*, Linn., "Bethar;" *Petalostigma quadriloculare*, F. v. M., the emu apple, which they speak of as the Tronganongan; *Eucalyptus tessellaris*, F.v.M., the Wonkara; *Spondias pleiogyna*, F. v. M., or Burdekin plum, the Noongi; and *Hibiscus radiatus*, Cav., with its dark centred delicate pink-colored flowers, the Quootham.



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