

## CHAPTER VIII.

## FLORA.

The trees most commonly met with in gardens and topes are the same as in other districts of the presidency, such as the mango, tamarind, banian, margosa and cocoanut. The avenues lining the roads near Gooty and Anantapúr are the finest in the district. The topes planted by Mr. Campbell and Mr. Robertson have already been mentioned. The more common indigenous trees are the babul (*acacia arabica*), the bér (*zizyphus jujuba*) and the wild date (*elate sylvestris*). The bark of the useful and hardy babul tree (often the only prominent object in the boundless plains) is used in tanning and in medicine; its wood serves for the harder implements of agriculture, the thicker branches for tent pegs, and the gum, (which closely resembles that of the Arabian tree,) in medicine and the arts. (Newbold). "The bér tree has some resemblance to the birch, the upper surface of the leaves being of a deep green and the lower of a whitish colour. The wood is used for building and for agricultural implements and the fruit is eaten by natives. The leaves ground up with tyre are given in bowel complaints and in difficult parturition. The leaves of the wild date are made into mats, and the stalks into baskets and tatties, and the fruit is much prized by natives." The babul is found chiefly in the black soils, the bér and the date in low sandy situations near nullahs.—(Medical Topographical Report.)

Captain Newbold writes: "The plains yield trees and shrubs, many of which are employed in medicine, agriculture and the arts; the *indigofera cœrulea* yielding a blue dye, the *kusum* or *carthamus tinctorius* yielding a pink and scarlet, the *maddi* (*terminalia alata*) and the *morunda citrifolia* yielding red dyes, the common milk-hedge used as a black dye for leather, the jaman or *neredi* (*calyptranthes caryophyllifolia*) the juice of which is employed to precipitate the colouring matter of the indigo. The bark of the *turwer* (*cassia auriculata*), the *tangadi* (*cassia fistula*) and the juice of the *yercum* (*asclepias gigantea*) are used in staining and preparing leather; the latter and the milk-hedge afford the charcoal used by natives in the manufacture of gunpowder. The flowers of the *nictanthes* are used as a yellow dye, and the leaves of the shumbali (*vitex megundo*) and the fruit of the trailing *elalerium* in medicine."

Much useful wood is brought from Sandúr and the Kampli hills, and in the "sandy alluvial flats and moist low ground the feathery cocoanut, the graceful palmyra (*borassus flabelliformis*) and the oderiferous dwarf date abound. To these may be added the Parkinsonia, the nim or margosa tree, useful for its timber and the bitter medicinal oil prepared from its seeds, the sacred banian and the graceful tamarind whose acidulous fruit is used as an article of food, in medicine and in the arts, while its wood affords a strong durable timber, though the natives I am assured are averse to its use in house-building."—(Captain Newbold in Journal of Madras Lit. Soc.)

The verdant gurtvi (*ixora parviflora*) whose branches are used for torches is found growing in the low jungly hills all over the district.

"The only shrubs seen, and which over-ran the uncultivated black soil are the tangadi (*cassia auriculata*), and the physic nut (*jatropha glauca*). The former resembles the broom in appearance having a bright yellow flower, and its seeds are considered refrigerant. The latter has a very unsightly appearance, and from the seed an oil is extracted which is used in chronic rheumatism and paralytic affections. These with a few acacias are the only plants to be seen on the vast plains of cotton-ground. The tortilis euphorbia is commonly found amongst rocks with many other shrubs such as the milk-hedge, prickly-pear, aloes, (*asclepias gigantea* and *datura fatuosa*).—(Medical Topographical Report.)

Teak and other valuable timber is floated down the Túngabadra from the Canara and Mysore forests during the south-west monsoon and landed at the Vallabapúr anicut in the Hadagalli taluq.

Some account of the grains and pulses commonly grown is given under the head of agriculture (Part III, Chapter I.) The fields are seldom hedged or protected by a wall, but in the black cotton soils are often bordered by rows of the prickly Jamaica yellow thistle. (*Argemone Mexicana*.)

Notices of the plants cultivated for the sake of their fibres and the various vegetable products from which oils are expressed or manufactured will be found in Part III, Chapter II, Trades and manufactures. T. Subramanya Pillay, Dresser, attached to the Sub-Collector's Office, assisted by some local native doctors, drew up for me a list of the most common native drugs indigenous to the district. I find however that this list is so similar to the one given by Mr Carmichael at page 48 of the Vizagapatam Manual that I have thought it needless to reproduce it here."

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