

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
6th March 1873.*

No. 41. Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce, (Forests,) to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Calcutta, 15th February 1873, No. 6-289 :—

I AM directed to forward a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 17, dated 24th December 1872, on the subject of the cultivation in India of the *Adansonia digitata* or baobab tree, the bark of which is considered to yield a valuable material for the manufacture of paper, and to request that the Government of India may be favoured with an opinion as to the probable expediency of forming plantations in suitable localities, convenient for the export of the bark.

2. The tree, it is believed, grows freely in most parts of India, and seeds even in Upper India, though in the North-West a large proportion of the seedlings perish during the first winter ; but though it very likely may be found remunerative to export from the African Coast the bark of natural forests of the tree, it is questionable whether it would be profitable to sink money in raising artificial plantations, and to wait for 30 to 50 years for bark, which after all must be inferior to that now being exported from the Portuguese Settlements in Western Africa, where innumerable trees, many hundreds of years old, exist.

—

From Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, to the Government of India, dated India Office, London, 24th December 1872, No. 17.

I HEREWITH transmit for the consideration of your Excellency's Government a copy of a letter from Dr. Hooker, bringing to my notice the value of the bark of the baobab tree, and suggesting that measures might usefully be taken in India to encourage its growth in suitable localities. I shall be glad to receive an expression of your views on this subject, and the results of any inquiries you may cause to be made with reference to the planting of the baobab on waste lands, such as the Sikkim Terai.

—

From Dr. J. D. HOOKER, Director, Royal Gardens, Kew, to the Under-Secretary of State for India, dated Royal Gardens, Kew, 30th November 1872.

I BEG most respectfully to direct the attention of His Grace the Secretary of State for India in Council to the value of the bark of the baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata*) for the purpose of paper-making, which has lately led to its export to England upon a very extensive scale from the Portuguese Settlements in tropical Western Africa—a fact which I have recently ascertained through an African correspondent engaged in this trade.

Considering the value of the fibre of this tree, the astonishing rapidity with which the *Adansonia* grows, its great bulk, the thickness of its bark, the great quantity of fibrous material it contains, and the facility with which this is stripped and packed for export, I cannot but entertain the view that it may prove the most productive source of paper-making material hitherto discovered.

The *Adansonia* is a native of Africa, but has long been known in India in a naturalized state, having been introduced in very early times, and being found in various districts throughout the Peninsula and in Bengal, while it is cultivable in all. Dr. Roxburgh mentions trees of it in the Calcutta Botanic Garden, as attaining a girth of 18 feet, at 4'-5" above the ground in about 25 years. A famous specimen in Ceylon is 50 feet in circumference at 6 feet above the ground ; and I have myself seen young specimens of great bulk in gardens near Calcutta. In

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
6th March 1873.

tropical Africa the trunk attains 90 feet in circumference. So vast, indeed, is its girth that this tree was for years supposed to be the oldest vegetable inhabitant of the globe; naturalists being at that time ignorant of the astonishing rapidity of its growth, which is perhaps unequalled in the vegetable kingdom. The strength of the fibre is best illustrated by the Bengal proverb "as secure as an elephant bound with a baobab rope."

Under these circumstances I would venture to suggest that the proper authorities in India be instructed to report upon this subject, and especially to inquire whether the baobab may not be grown with advantage on waste lands in India, and especially in malarious districts, such as the Sikkim Terai.

The other uses to which the baobab is put in India and Africa are, the large dry fruits are used as floats by the fishermen of Guzerat; the dried pulp of the fruit is used in Egypt, Senegal, and the West Indies as a febrifuge; and in cases of diarrhoea, boiled with ashes and palm oil; the fruit forms a soap used in West Africa. Lastly, it is said that the negroes make coffins of the hollowed timber, in which the body dries without decomposing.

No. 42. ORDER THEREON, 6th March 1873, No. 261.

Forests, No. 4.

FORWARDED to the Board of Revenue
and the Inspector of Forests for their
remarks.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

No. ⁶
289

FROM

A. O. HUME, ESQUIRE, C. B.,
Secretary to the Government of India,

TO

The Secretary to the Government of Madras

Department of Agriculture,
Revenue and Commerce.
(Forests.)

SIR,

Calcutta, the 16th February 1873.

I AM directed to forward a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 17, dated 24th December 1872, on the subject of the cultivation in India of the *Adansonia digitata*, or baobab tree, the bark of which is considered to yield a valuable material for the manufacture of paper, and to request that the Government of India may be favored with an opinion as to the probable expediency of forming plantations, in suitable localities, convenient for the export of the bark.

2. The tree, it is believed, grows freely in most parts of India, and seeds even in Upper India, though in the North-West a large proportion of the seedlings perish during the first winter; but though it very likely may be found remunerative to export from the African coast the bark of natural forests of the tree, it is questionable whether it would be profitable to sink money in raising artificial plantations, and to wait for 30 to 50 years for bark which, after all, must be inferior to that now being exported from the Portuguese Settlements in Western Africa, where innumerable trees, many hundreds of years old, exist.

I have the honor to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

A. O. Hume

Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 17, dated India Office, London, the 24th December 1872.

From—Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India,
To—The Government of India.

I HEREWITH transmit, for the consideration of Your Excellency's Government, a copy of a letter from Dr. Hooker, bringing to my notice the value of the bark of the baobab tree, and suggesting that measures might usefully be taken in India to encourage its growth in suitable localities. I shall be glad to receive an expression of your views on this subject, and the results of any inquiries you may cause to be made with reference to the planting of the baobab on waste lands, such as the Sikkim Terai.

Dated Royal Gardens, Kew, the 30th November 1872.

From—Dr. J. D. HOOKER, Director, Royal Gardens, Kew,
To—The Under Secretary of State for India.

I BEG most respectfully to direct the attention of His Grace the Secretary of State for India in Council to the value of the bark of the baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata*) for the purpose of paper-making, which has lately led to its export to England upon a very extensive scale from the Portuguese Settlements in tropical Western Africa, a fact which I have recently ascertained through an African correspondent engaged in this trade.

Considering the value of the fibre of this tree, the astonishing rapidity with which the *Adansonia* grows, its great bulk, the thickness of its bark, the great quantity of fibrous material it contains, and the facility with which this is stripped and packed for export, I cannot but entertain the view that it may prove the most productive source of paper-making material hitherto discovered.

The *Adansonia* is a native of Africa, but has long been known in India in a naturalized state, having been introduced in very early times, and being found in various districts throughout the Peninsula and in Bengal, while it is cultivable in all. Dr. Roxburgh mentions trees of it in the Calcutta Botanic Garden, as attaining a girth of 18 feet, at 4'-5" above the ground in about 25 years. A famous specimen in Ceylon is 50 feet in circumference at 6 feet above the ground; and I have myself seen young specimens of great bulk in gardens near Calcutta. In tropical Africa, the trunk attains 90 feet in circumference. So vast, indeed, is its girth, that this tree was for years supposed to be the oldest vegetable inhabitant of the globe, that being at that time ignorant of the astonishing rapidity of its growth, which is perhaps unequalled in the vegetable kingdom. The strength of the fibre is best illustrated by the Bengal proverb "as secure as an elephant bound with a baobab rope."

Under these circumstances I would venture to suggest that the proper authorities in India be instructed to report upon this subject, and especially to enquire whether the baobab may not be grown with advantage on waste lands in India, and especially in malarious districts, such as the Sikkim Terai.

The other uses to which the baobab is put in India and Africa are:—the large dry fruits are used as floats by the fishermen of Guzerat; the dried pulp of the fruit is used in Egypt, Senegal and the West Indies as a febrifuge; and in cases of diarrhoea, boiled with ashes and palm oil, the fruit forms a soap used in West Africa. Lastly, it is said that the negroes make coffins of the hollowed timber, in which the body dries without decomposing.

Revenue 1873. *W. H. P.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
REVENUE AND COMMERCE.

FORESTS. *H. 556.*

To

No. $\frac{6}{287}$.

Dated the 15th February 1873.

Received 27th 1873

SUBJECT.

PROPOSED cultivation in India of the *Adansonia digitata*,
or baobab tree.

O. S. G. P.—No. 213, A., R. & C.—14-2-73—130.

H. 261 *St. H. P. to the*
Forwarded to the Inspector of
Forests, for their remarks. 27-27-

6th March/73

No 41-42

*To the Board of Revenue Sec 7 Sec 5
the Inspector of Forests*