

## Book Review

*PHARMACOGNOSY OF AYURVEDIC DRUGS.* (Kerala). By K. Narayana Aiyer and M. Kolammal. Pp. 116. Department of Pharmacognosy, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, India. Series 1, No. 6, 1963. Rs. 7.50.

Number six of this series describes sixteen ayurvedic drugs from twenty-six plants. Of the plants described, one of them, *Cynodon dactylon*, Bermuda grass or Dog's Tooth grass, p. 18, is well-known in this country because its rhizome is used as a substitute for couch grass, *Agropyron repens*. Another plant, p. 31, *Mimosa pudica*, is the well-known sensitive plant commonly studied in botanical physiology. A third plant, *Gloriosa superba*, is well known as a hot-house climber. The remaining plants are native Indian plants not usually cultivated in this country. Each plant is illustrated by a full-page drawing; two of them, namely *Gloriosa superba* and *Asteracantha longifolia*, are represented in colour, the remainder being carefully executed line-drawings. The illustrations were prepared by two artists, Sri T. K. P. Iyer and Sri K. K. Warier.

The description of each drug begins with quotations in Sanskrit characters from the ancient writings followed by a transliteration into arabic alphabet. These notes have been prepared by two physicians acting under the guidance of the Director of Indigenous Systems of Medicine and of the Principal, Ayurveda College, Trivandrum. The information about each drug is given under two headings; first under the Ayurvedic name with quotations and transliteration from the Sanskrit; then under the systematic botanical name or names with a full description in modern form. Details are given in a regular sequence as follows. Synonyms and names in four native languages; Distribution and Habitat; Habit and General Features; External Morphology; and, when a particular plant member is used as the officinal part, that is described in detail. For seven of the drugs, the histology of the underground plant member is described and illustrated by carefully executed drawings.

The book is a valuable contribution to the study of the vegetable materia medica of Indian indigenous drugs.

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