

trary, if it be adulterated; it falls to the bottom of the vessel, to which it adheres without changing its colour.

Mr. Lemery, in his treatise of Simples, calls this plant the Balm of Judea, following the error of all those writers who believe it to be peculiar to that country.

The palm tree was no less common in the plains of Jericho. It was called *thamar* in the Hebrew, *phanix* in the Greek language, and *Achla* by the Arabs. The tree grows readily in Syria, and rises to the height of a man, after it has been planted about five or six years.

Its trunk is remarkably scaly, owing to the branches being frequently cut when it is young, in order to make it shoot up the faster. It has no branches but at the summit, and its leaves are shaped like a sword. The branches all incline toward the earth, except the stem, which rises from the middle of the tree, and that even bends a little, in proportion as it increases in height.

Under the branches, and particularly under those which have been cut the preceding year, there spring forth large bladders, which contain the flowers. By opening them a little with precaution, they become dry without dropping from the tree. These flowers, which have a great resemblance to those of our wild jasmine, are placed one within the other, and adhere by very delicate membranes to a common pedicle.

Each flower changes into a fruit, which is at first red; afterward becomes green, till it has attained half its size; and at length grows yellow or brown, according to the quality of the balm. When fresh it is very sour; but it turns sweeter as it dries, and tastes almost like our soft apples; these fruits are called dates.

The top of the palm tree is covered with a substance called its brain, which is nothing else than the seed. It may very justly be compared to the down of the thistle, except that it is whiter, more agreeable to the taste, and contains a milky juice.

This tree is of the greatest service, as there is no part of it which the Orientals do not apply to some useful purpose. The wood, though porous, is however fit for building, as its fibres acquire great solidity and power of resistance. Panniers, and baskets for containing merchandize, destined for distant countries, such as incense, myrrh, and rice, are formed of its leaves. Its branches are employed in making cages, boxes, and even beds.—An agreeable liquor distils from its top, which may be drunk without any mixture; the natives call it *lebbi*, which signifies the

tears of the palm tree. Even the stones of the fruit are not useless; they are turned and manufactured in the same manner as bones and ivory, which they imitate in such a manner as often to deceive the most curious observer: the Mahometans carry ornaments made of them in their hands.

Several writers agree in saying, that the palm trees of Jericho and Egypt have the same properties as those of India; but as the Indians are more industrious than the inhabitants of Judea, they derive a much greater benefit from this tree. Of its wood they construct ships and masts.—They spin the bark and fibres, of which they make ropes and cloth; and they manufacture cups and vases of the fruit, after they have extracted the juice of it. 'In a word,' says Hernandez, 'the palm tree furnishes India both with its bread and its wine.'

Pliny the naturalist, has reckoned up forty nine species of the palm-tree. Some of these which I saw were extremely tall; others were lower, and had thicker trunks; some bear a fruit without a stone; others produce a soft fruit, of an oblong figure; and some have a fruit which is large and exceedingly hard.

Among the palm trees of Cyprus, I remarked one, near the town of Salines, which appeared to me very remarkable on account of one of its branches, which in size equalled the trunk. From this principal branch proceeded several smaller ones, covered with leaves like those of the top, and which produced dates, while all the rest of the tree was barren. I saw however a great number of bladders on the bark of all the branches of this palm; but I was told that the flowers they contained withered without ever yielding fruit.

Mathioli, on the authority of Theophrastus, assures us, that the male and female palm tree are equally fruitful; but this is not believed in Cyprus and Syria. In these countries there are some barren palm trees, called males, which are so necessary for the fructification of the rest, that, by carrying them away, the fecundity of a whole plantation may be destroyed. This is a certain fact, of which I had a convincing proof in the neighbourhood of Larnic.

The palm tree is propagated by planting those shoots which arise from the root, or by sowing the stones of the dates, or a part of the germ of the top, called the brain. It requires a warm climate, and a moist sandy soil, impregnated with nitre. When it is newly planted, the roots are surrounded with salt and ashes, to give it vigour,