

struck a spear four or five inches deep into the thick firm end of the stalk of the leaf, about six inches above its junction with the trunk, and on drawing it back a stream of pure clear water gushed out, about a quart of which we caught in a pitcher, and all drank of it on the spot. It was clear, cool, and perfectly sweet. On further examination I found that there was no filtration of the water through any part of the plant, as I had been led to suppose when I had seen water drawn by Sir William Hooker from one of the specimens in the palm house at Kew. There was a kind of natural cavity, or cistern, at the base of the stalk of each of the leaves, above its union with the stem, and the water which had been collected on the broad and ribbed surface of the leaf had flowed down a groove or spout on the upper side of the stalk into this natural reservoir, whence it supplied nutriment to the tree, and refreshment to the traveller and the laborer.

"But in Madagascar this tree might, with propriety, be called the *builder's tree* rather than the traveller's tree. Its leaves form the thatch of all the houses on the eastern side of the island. The stems of its leaves form the partitions, and often sides of the houses : and the hard outside bark [this tree again has no bark, but the outer layer of all endogenous trees is harder than the interior, and is sometimes confounded with the bark of exogenous trees like those of our forests,] is stripped from the inner and soft part, and having been beaten out flat, is laid for flooring ; and I have seen the entire floor of a long well-built house covered entirely with its bark, each piece being at least eighteen inches wide, and twenty or thirty feet long. The leaf, when green, is used as a wrapper for packages, and keeps out the rain. Large quantities are also sold every morning in the markets, as it serves the purpose of table cloth, dishes, and plates at meals ; and folded into certain forms is used instead of spoons and drinking vessels."

The magnificent and useful tree here described is well represented in the work by a wood-cut from a photograph. It belongs to the same natural family as the *Strelitzia*, of which several species, one of which is as large as this *Urania*, may be seen in English hot-houses, and the plantains and bananas which are such familiar objects in tropical countries. No plants, excepting the palms, can compare with these in the splendour of their foliage.

It seems from Mr. Ellis's observations that at least the ruling tribe