

TREES PLANTS, AND FLOWERS OF THE BIBLE.

THE Carob is a native of Palestine. It is a leguminous tree, of the evergreen species, which grows in clusters in hedges. Its fruit is a long brown pulp, which resembles that of the locust very closely, both as to its general appearance and its pulp, except that it is larger. The pulp is very sweet, and is used for food. The monks call it St. John's Bread, alleging that this was the "locust" that formed a part of the Baptist's food.



CAROB FRUIT.

THE Mastic Tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*) is mentioned only in the Apocrypha. (Susan. verse 54.) It produces the fragrant resin known in the arts as "mastic," and this is obtained by making incisions in the trunk in the month of August. It was used by the ancients, as it is with us, to strengthen the teeth and

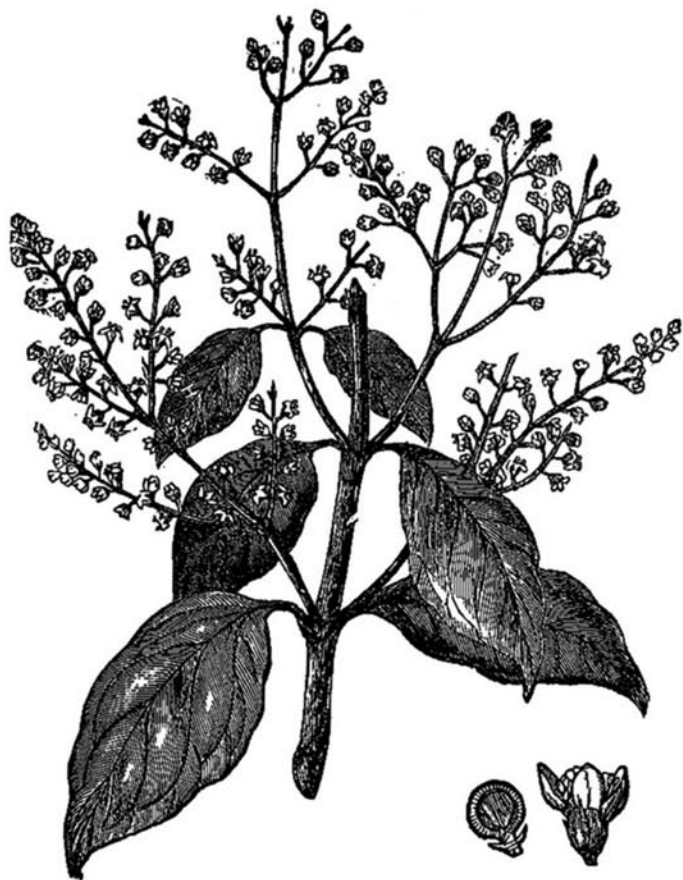
gums, and was highly prized for this purpose, as well as for many medicinal virtues it was supposed to possess.

It has often perplexed many persons to know how the Mustard plant could become a tree, and one in whose branches the fowls of the air could lodge (Matt. xiii. 31, 32); but it is known now that there is a mustard tree as well as a mustard plant. This tree, or shrub, is the one of which a portion is shown in the engraving on the next page. It is called by botanists the *Salvadora Persica*, and by the Arabs *Khardal*, or Mustard. We are told that it will



MASTIC TREE.

reach the height of twenty-five feet, that its leaves taste like cresses, that its seed is bruised and used for mustard, and that an application of the bark will raise blisters. The seed is very much smaller than the black pepper corn. It grows near Jerusalem on the banks of the Jordan, and along the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, where our Lord addressed His parable to the people: "The kingdom of heaven is



THE MUSTARD OF SCRIPTURE.

like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."



PAPYRUS.

of this tree as a material for writing on, and it gave its name to the paper of the present day.

In ancient times Egypt was the granary of the world. Wheat is produced in almost every part of the world, but the wheat of Egypt

The Hebrew word *Gôme*, translated "rush" and "bul-rush" in the Bible, unquestionably signifies the papyrus, or paper-reed of the ancients. It formerly grew in quantities in Egypt (Ex. ii. 3; Isaiah xviii. 2), but is not found there now. It grows in Syria, however, and has been seen growing on the banks of the Lake of Tiberias, a few miles north of the town. It has an angular stem from three to six feet high, occasionally reaching a height of fourteen feet. It has no leaves; the flowers are in very small spikelets, which grow on the thread-like, flowering branchlets which form a bushy crown to each stem. The ancients used the bark



WHEAT.

was justly celebrated for its excellence. It has five or seven ears on one head, so that it presented its usual appearance in this respect in Pharaoh's dream. (Gen. xli. 5-7.) The "meat-offerings" of the Mosaic service (Lev. ii.) were all made of wheaten flour.

THE Pomegranate grows wild in Syria. It is low, with a straight stem, reddish bark, many and spreading branches, dark green lancet-formed leaves, and large and beautiful crimson blossoms. The fruit is of the size of an orange, of a tawny brown, with a thick, astringent coat, containing an abundance of seeds, each enveloped in a distinct, very juicy, pink coat, whose flavor, in a wild state, is a pure and very strong acid; but in the cultivated plant, sweet, and very pleasant. The ripe pulp is eaten by itself, or with a sprinkling of sugar; or is made into a sherbet. The value of the fruit, and the beauty of the flower, made the pomegranate a favorite in gardens. (Song of Solomon iv. 13; vi. 7-11; viii. 2; Joel i. 12.) Artificial pomegranates were among the ornaments of the robe of the High Priest. (Ex. xxviii. 33.) The fruit was very common in Palestine.

THE Balsam Tree was once very common in the Holy Land, especially in Gilead, from which circumstance it derived the name by which it was best known. It is valuable for the balsam or balm which exudes from it, and which is still highly valued in Palestine as a cure for external wounds. The greater portion of the balm now used in the East comes from Arabia. Its odor is exquisitely fragrant and pungent, and it is very costly. It is used both as a medicine and as a cosmetic for beautifying the complexion. (Gen. xxxvii. 25; Jer. li. 8.)

THE Myrtle is a fragrant evergreen, which grew in the Holy Land. It was used by the



THE POMEGRANATE.



BALM OF GILEAD.

Jews to adorn the booths and sheds in which they dwelt when they came up to Jerusalem to attend the great Feast of Tabernacles.

THERE is every evidence that the Lily was quite common to Palestine in ancient times. It must have flourished on the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret, and in the broad, deep valleys of the Holy Land. That its flowers were brilliant in color seems plain, for it is said to surpass the glorious apparel of Solomon. The *Lilium Chalcedonicum*, or Scarlet Martagon, which grows in profusion in the Levant, would seem to be the lily of the Scriptures.

FITCHES (sometimes called Vetches) are a species of wild pea. Two Hebrew words are translated "fitches," one of which probably means "spell" (Ezek. iv. 9), and the other *gith*, a



THE MYRTLE.



THE LILY OF SYRIA.



FITCHES.



THE LILY OF SYRIA.

plant resembling fennel, and very pungent. (Isa. xxviii. 25.) The seed is black and aromatic.

THE Mandrake is called *dudaim* in the Bible. It grew in the fields of Mesopotamia, and was gathered in the month of the wheat harvest—that is, in May. It grows also in Palestine, where it is very strong scented. There is some doubt in the minds of some writers as to the identity of the *dudaim* with the Mandrake (*Atropa Mandragora*). "It is known," says Oldman, "that Orientals place especial value on strongly-smelling things, that to more delicate senses are unpleasing. . . . The intoxicating qualities of the mandrake, far from lessening its value, would rather add to it, for every one knows with what relish the Orientals use all kinds of preparations to produce intoxication."



MANDRAKES.

THE Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) grew very abundantly in many parts of the East, but was regarded by the ancients as peculiarly characteristic of Palestine and the neighboring regions. The trunk is of a moderate size, and is marked with seams of the fallen leaves; the leaves are pinnate, with linear pinnæ. It is dioecious, its fertile or pistilliferous flowers being borne on a different tree from the stamiferous ones, rendering the crop entirely useless, unless the tree has been either naturally or artificially impregnated; and it has always been the custom of the Arabs to hang clusters of stamiferous flowers on those trees which bore only pistilliferous ones. This occurrence is celebrated by a feast at the proper season of the year, and is called the "Marriage of the Palms;" and so well is this practice known, that the half savage tribes destroy the subsistence of their enemies by cutting down the male trees during their predatory incursions.



DATES.

THE first mention of the Olive Tree in the Bible is in the relation of the return of the dove sent out of the Ark by Noah, with an olive branch in its beak. It furnishes the inspired writers with numerous metaphors. The tree was cultivated to a great extent in the Holy Land, and was closely connected with the domestic life, the commerce, and the religious ceremonies of the Israelites. The oil was



OLIVE FRUIT.

used at the coronation of the sovereign, and was mixed with the offerings in sacrifice. The wood was used extensively in Solomon's Temple. Almost every village had its olive grove, and has to this day. The berries, which produce the oil, were gathered, sometimes by shaking the tree, and sometimes by beating it. Then the fruit was trodden in the "oil fat" (Joel ii. 24), and the oil extracted. The wind often stripped the tree of the blossoms before the fruit was formed, and the locust frequently destroyed the



AN OLIVE GARDEN.

crop. The tree thrives best in warm, sunny situations. It is of moderate height, with knotty, knarled trunk, and a smooth, ash-colored bark. It grows slowly, but it lives to an immense age. Its foliage forms a pleasant shade, and those who are familiar with the tree find an inexpressible charm in the rippling changes of its slender gray-green leaves.

THE Vine (*Vitis vinifera*) has been cultivated in Palestine from the earliest times. It was also cultivated in Egypt at a very remote period, some people professing that Osiris first taught men the use of it. The vines of Palestine were celebrated both for luxuriant growth and for the immense clusters of grapes which they produced. When the spies were sent forth to view the Promised Land, we are told that on their arrival at the Valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes, and bare it between two men on a staff. Travellers have frequently testified to the large size of the grape clusters of Palestine. Schulz speaks of supping at Beitshin, a village near Ptolemais, under a vine whose stem was about a foot and a half in

diameter, and whose height was about thirty feet, which, by its branches, formed a hut upwards of thirty feet broad and long. "The clusters of these extraordinary vines," he adds, "are so large that they weigh ten or twelve pounds, and the berries may be compared to our small plums."

THE Lentil is a favorite article of food in the countries in which it grows, having been in use there from the earliest times. It is of the pea family, and is cultivated like the English pea, but is sown later. Large quantities of lentils are imported into London and Hamburg, to be used as an ingredient in soups and sauces, being much prized by cooks. In Egypt and Syria, the parched seeds are exposed for sale in the



LENTILS.

shops, and they are esteemed the best food to carry on long journeys. They are dressed in the same manner as beans, dissolving into a mass, and making a pottage of a chocolate color. It was for a mess of lentils that Esau sold his birthright.



HYSSOP PLANT.

THE Hyssop is a plant which grows to the height of about eighteen inches, all whose stalks and branches terminate in erect spikes of flowers. The leaves, which are small, spear-shaped, and close-sitting, have a rich aromatic flavor, and to the taste are warm and pungent.



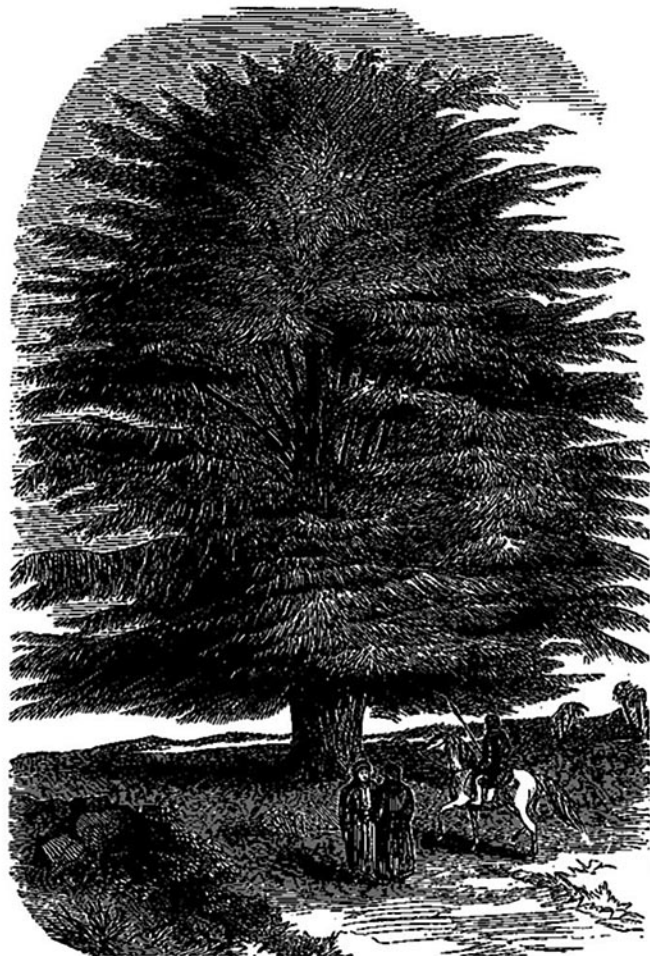
It may be that its detersive, cleansing, and medicinal qualities pointed it out as a most fitting agent for the service of the Passover.



JUNIPER.

THE word rendered Juniper in the Scriptures refers to a sort of broom which is found in the Desert of Sinai, and is called by the Arabs the *Rethem*. It is very abundant in the Desert of Sinai, and affords shade and protection, both in heat and storm, to travellers. It is a leguminous plant, and bears a white flower. It is found in Palestine, in Spain, and in Portugal.

THE Cedar of Lebanon, or cedar larch, is a native of the coldest parts of Mount Lebanon and the range of the Taurus, and from its superior magnificence became, with the inspired writers, the emblem of greatness, splendor, and majesty. The durability and fragrance of the wood caused it to be used for the most costly buildings. It formerly covered Lebanon with such thick forests that Solomon employed four-score thousand hewers in obtaining timber. Now the



CEDAR OF LEBANON.

cedars have dwindled down to a few groves, the principal of which contains but 380 trees. The largest of these trees have a diameter of nine feet.