

THE GARDENS' BULLETIN STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

Vol. IV.

March, 1927.

Nos. 2 & 3

Some old photographs of the Singapore Gardens

By the courtesy of the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, we have been provided with a set of old photographs of the Singapore Gardens, which we believe have never been published. They were taken about the year 1877, when H. J. Murton was Superintendent.

On the accompanying plates we publish a photograph from this collection taken on the top of the Bandstand Hill (Plate I), and a recent one taken as nearly as possible from the same position (Plate II).

The old photograph takes in a wider angle than the recent one, and it is not possible to make the two match exactly, but they have certain features in common which enable a comparison to be made. The Bandstand area itself is evidently the same now as in early days. In the recent picture the extreme right-hand portion of the raised area, and the palms which adjoin it, are not shown; the other palms of the ring (*Actinorhynchus calapparia*) are seen, though their heads could not be included in the picture.

The fine tree of *Koompassia malaccensis* is prominent in the background, near the middle of both pictures; evidently in 1877 it was nearly as tall as now, and its age must be considerable. On the right of the recent photograph appears the beautifully regular form of a jelutong tree (*Dyera costulata*): the dark tree on the right of the old picture may be the same individual, or possibly the *Artocarpus lanceifolia* which is very close to it. On the right of the *Koompassia* in 1877 is seen a clump of the traveller's palm (*Ravenala*). This still exists, but is hidden by the congea bush in the foreground of the recent photograph. The large tree in the background on the left of the old photograph is probably the fine *Shorea leprosula* (Seraya batu) killed by lightning in 1909 (see Agric. Bull. S.S. and F.M.S., Vol. VIII, plate opposite p. 364).

On the left of the picture of 1877, in the background, appear trees covered with creepers. These trees stand between the Upper

and Lower Ring roads round the Hill. In Murton's reports of 1877 and 1878 it is recorded that a fern rockery was started under some trees in this position, but their death and collapse in 1877, owing to the smothering of creepers which grew over them, caused the site to become too open for ferns. The present rockery on the north-west of the Bandstand Hill was established later by Cantley, beyond the Lower Ring Road. Two other photographs (not here published) show the creeper-covered trees in closer view, and enable their position to be located fairly accurately. The creeper which smothered them was probably *Thunbergia laurifolia*, which still continually causes much trouble. It occurs in many parts of the Gardens and has frequently to be cut back, to prevent further disasters like that which spoiled Murton's rockery.

Another photograph in the collection shows the road through the Gardens Jungle (now called Liane Road); the jungle adjacent to the road was not so well grown as now, and the road much more open. Another shows a view down Maranta Avenue, and indicates that the palm valley and its slopes, below the Director's house, had not then been planted with the palms which are now there.

Other pictures in the southern part of the Gardens show equally great changes. The island in the lake was covered by spreading trees (of which the largest was probably a Waringin) instead of the graceful clump of nibong palms and fine pandans which now adorn it. The avenue of sealing wax palms (*Cyrtostachys lakka*) on the south side of the Bandstand Hill had not been planted, and a view southwards from the site of that avenue shows the monkey house (then newly erected) in its original position near the present herbarium, and beyond it on the horizon the buildings of Tanglin Barracks, not then hidden by all the trees which have since grown up. It is hoped to publish others of these photographs in later issues of the Bulletin. Further details concerning the history of parts of the Gardens here mentioned are recorded in the papers published by Mr. Burkill in Volume II of the Bulletin, pp. 55-72 and 93-108.

R. E. HOLTUM.

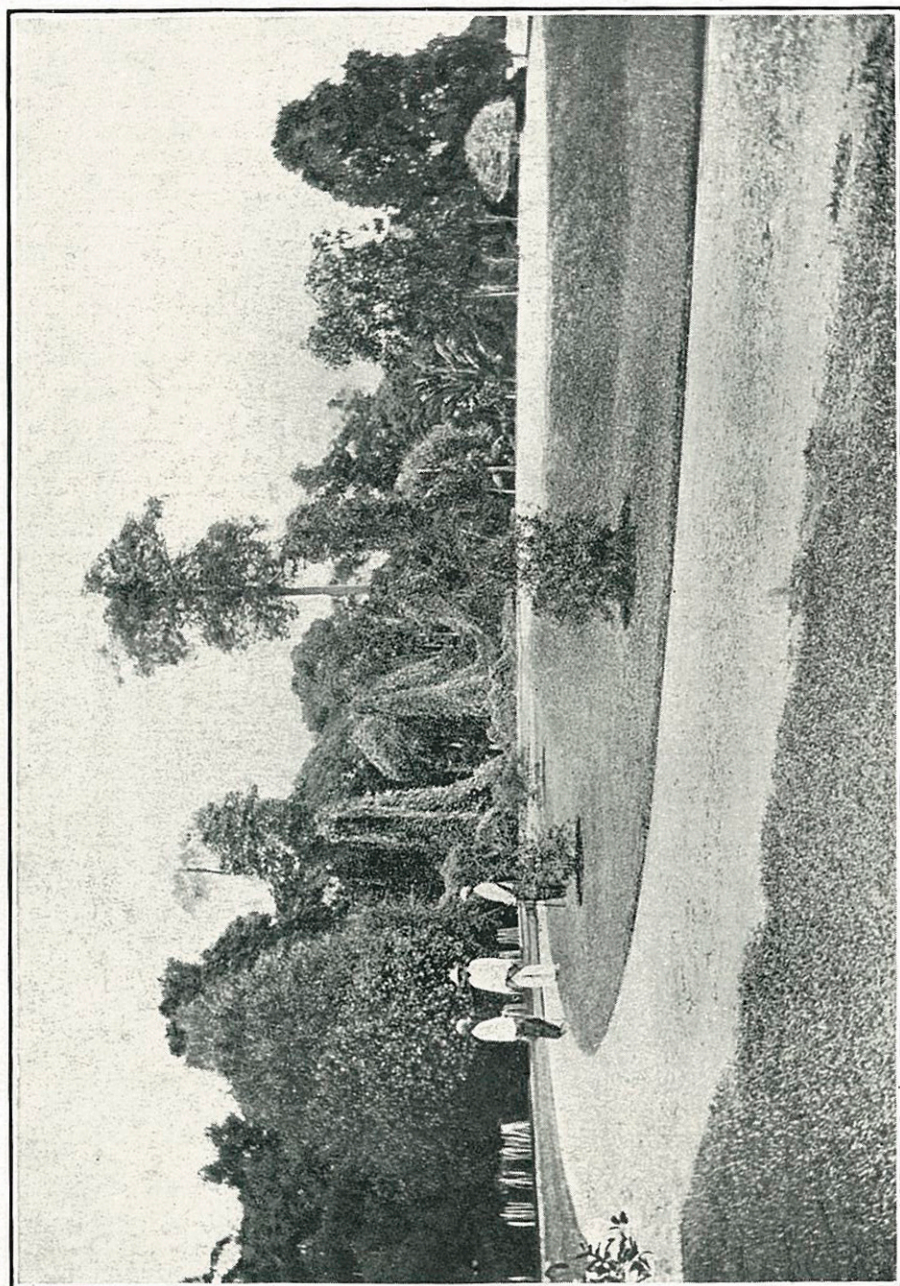
Additions to the Flora of the Malay Peninsula

BY M. R. HENDERSON, F.L.S.

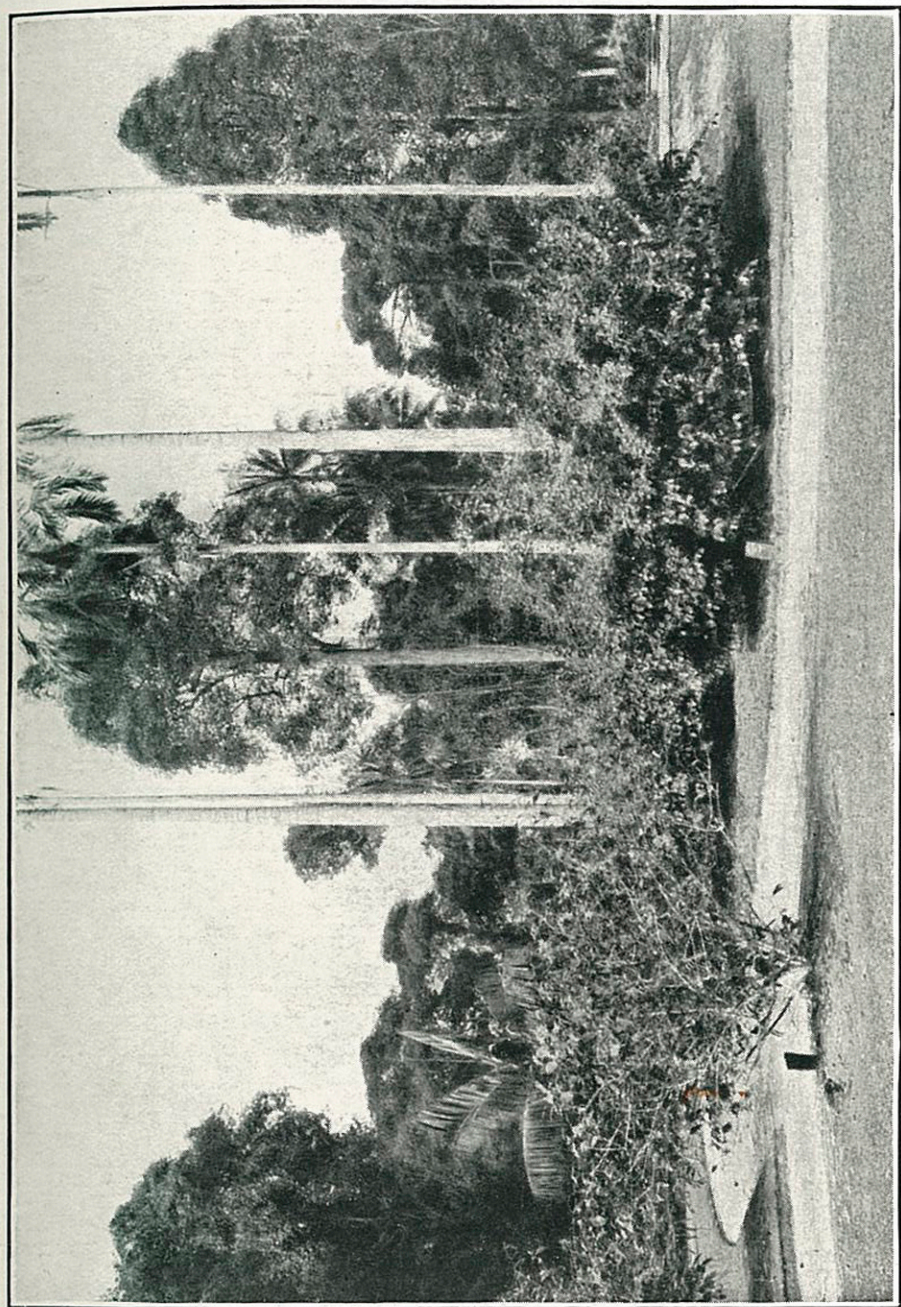
ANONACEAE.

Goniothalamus rotundisepalus, sp. nov.

Frutex 1-2 m. altus. Ramuli glabri, partes juniores ferrugineo-pubescentes. Folia glabra, 14-23 cm. longa, 4.5-8.5 cm. lata, oblonga vel elliptico-oblonga, acuminata, base acuta, nervis utrinque



The Bandstand Hill, Singapore Gardens, about 1877.



The Bandstand Hill in 1925.