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SCLEROGLOSSUM v. ALD. v. ROS.—A FERN GENUS NEW TO INDIA

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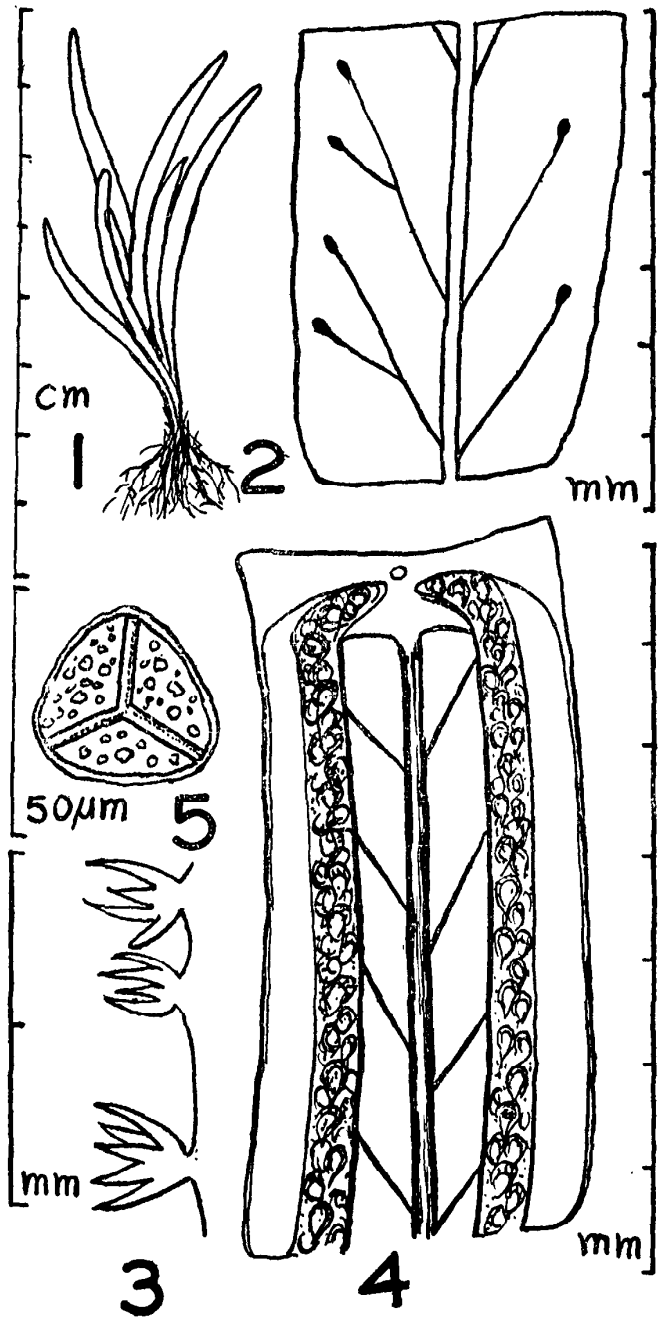
During the course of examination of herbarium specimens of Pteridophytes in Herb. (ASSAM) for the assessment of rare/ threatened occurrence of species, the author came across a few peculiar specimens kept in the folder of unidentified specimens apparently looking alike genus *Vittaria* J. Sm. On critical examination of the specimens, it was concluded that because of the presence of stellate hairs on the lamina and trilete spores, absence of paraphyses and confinement of coenosori in the apical part the material does not belong to *Vittaria*. A perusal of relevant literature together with comparison of Type material number *Thwaites* 3807 (CAL) revealed that the plant belongs to the genus *Scleroglossum* v. Ald. v. Ros. representing *S. sulcatum* (Kuhn) v. Ald. v. Ros. The genus *Scleroglossum* v. Ald. v. Ros. is allied to Tropical American genus *Cochlidium* Cop. but can be easily distinguished by its coenosori deeply immersed in two distinct longitudinal, oblique grooves, one on each side of the midrib either superficial or immersed in a single groove protected by the curled or conduplicate lamina and absence of stellate hairs in *Cochlidium* Cop.

According to Christensen (1934) *S. sulcatum* (Kuhn) v. Ald. v. Ros. is known to occur in Ceylon, Malaya and Polynesia. However, Holttum (1954) did not record its occurrence in Malaya, whereas Beddome (1883, 1892) reported its occurrence in Ceylon, Malaya and also New Guinea. The author also examined a few specimens of this species from Malaya in CAL, thus, its earlier report of occurrence in Malaya is duly confirmed. The genus *Scleroglossum* v. Ald. v. Ros. and the species *S. sulcatum* (Kuhn) v. Ald. v. Ros. is reported for the first time from Meghalaya in India. The detailed description, illustrations and ecological notes on *S. sulcatum* are furnished to facilitate its easy identification in the herbarium and field.

Scleroglossum sulcatum (Kuhn) v. Ald. v. Ros. Bull. Jard. Buit. ser. 2. 7 : 39. 1912 ; Sledge, Bull. Brit. Mus. 2 (5) : 157. 1960. *Vittaria sulcata* Kuhn, Linn. 36 : 68. 1869 ; Bedd. Handb. Ferns Brit. India 408. t. 240. 1883 ; Suppl. Handb. Ferns Brit. India 103. 1892. *Taeniopsis falcata sensu* Bedd. Ferns Brit. India t. 175. 1867, non. *Vittaria falcata* Fée. *T sulcata* (Kuhn) Bedd. Suppl. Ferns Brit. India 25. 1876.

Small plants, 3-6 cm high. Rhizome short, suberect, ascending, clothed with a few lanceolate, thin, dull-brown, smooth scales. Fronds densely tufted, sessile, subfalcate, 3-6 cm × 2.0-3.0 mm, slightly narrowed towards base and rounded at apex, leathery, a few small stellate hairs present on the lamina, midrib not visible on the lower surface, veins hidden, simple to forked with clavate ends, not reaching the margins. Coenosori intramarginal, deeply immersed in two distinct longitudinal oblique grooves

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Scleroglossum sulcatum (Kuhn) v. Ald. v. Ros. .

Figs. 1-5 : 1. Habit. 2. Part of vegetative leaf showing venation. 3. Stellate hairs on the lamina. 4. Part of fertile leaf. 5. Proximal part of spore.

confined to the apical part on either side of the midrib. Spores trilete, 35-50 μm in diameter, verrucoid. (Figs. 1-5)

Specimens examined : INDIA : Meghalaya-Jowai : Jorain forest, 20.4.1963, *Kataki* 3463 (ASSAM). MALAYA : Perak : Gumbong Batu, 6000 ft, *Wray Jr.* 895 (CAL); Water fall hill, *Wray Jr.* 1724, three specimens (CAL).

Type number : Central Province, *Thwaites* 3807 (CAL).

Ecology : Plants epiphytic on tree trunks and branches covered with moist mossy cover.

The species seems to be extremely rare in India, since no subsequent collections have been made after the year 1963.

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