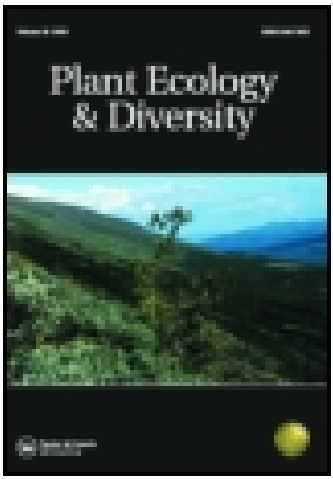
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CAREX DIVISA, HUDSON, AS A SCOTTISH PLANT.

By ALEX. SOMERVILLE, B.Sc., F.L.S.

(Read 12th March 1903.)

It may, I believe, be said with truth that few genera of British plants have more felt the inroads of drainage and agriculture than the genus *Carex*—our Sedges—represented in these Islands by some seventy species. Being in the main paludal, that is marsh-loving, plants, the conversion during the past century of tracts of country from undrained areas into ploughed land capable of yielding cereals and root-crops, has limited not a little those areas where the lower-ground *Carices* at least are to be met with, so that the stations for these are now, in many cases, widely dissevered and isolated.

What I have stated has led me to bring before the Society a Sedge to which considerable interest attaches, a species which, though it occurs in various counties in England, in three in Wales, and in Wexford and Dublin in Ireland, has been reliably recorded from but one county only in Scotland—Forfarshire,—where, curiously, it had until lately continued practically *perdu* for no less than eighty-eight years!

The species I refer to is *Carex divisa*, first described by Hudson, a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, in the first edition of his "Flora Anglica," published in London in 1762, that is a hundred and forty years ago. This Sedge was, in the summer of 1901, re-found near Montrose in Forfarshire by a Mr. James Menzies, as mentioned in the "Annals of Scottish Natural History" for that year, at page 230.

In regard to the floral structure of the species it may be said here that the inflorescence consists of a few short spikelets, all similar, and crowded into a somewhat ovate head, each spikelet having several staminate, *i.e.* male, flowers at its top, those below being pistillate. The stems of the plant are erect and very slender, and rise to a height of a foot or more; the leaves too are long and very narrow.

With marshes near the sea as its habitat, *C. divisa* is, in the British Isles, a local plant. In England, for example, we find it occurring sparingly from Cornwall along the south coast, and up the eastern coast as far as to south-east Yorkshire, in which district there is perhaps more of it than anywhere else, for Robinson, in the "Flora of the East Riding," recently issued, says that though not of common occurrence, it is plentiful, where found, at stations near Hull.

Our object here is to refer to what we now know of this Sedge as a Scottish plant. Eighty-two years ago, Sir William Hooker, in his "Flora Scotica," published in 1821, stated, on the testimony of George Don—whose accuracy at that time had not been impugned—that *C. divisa* occurred in a "Marsh near Montrose, and sea-coast of Angus-shire, chiefly in marshy places." Hooker probably obtained his information from an elaborate paper by Don himself, entitled, "Account of the Native Plants in the County of Forfar," which was contributed in 1813 to Headrick's "General View of the Agriculture of the County of Angus or Forfarshire." In this account, on page 31, where allusion is made to the plant under our notice, there occurs the following sentence:—"By the roadside, in coming from the North Water Bridge, he (*i.e.* the botanist) will find the *C. divisa*, one of the rarest *Carices*."

As Hewett Cottrell Watson asks in the "Cybele Britannica" in 1852, was it not strange that neither Mr. Gardiner, whose admirable "Flora of Forfarshire" appeared in 1848, nor any other botanist up to that time, would seem to have verified or confirmed any one station for the plant in Forfarshire? But what shall we say to the fact that until 1901, and completing an interval of eighty-eight years, no botanist had been able, of his own knowledge, to declare *C. divisa* to be a Forfarshire plant, but instead had to fall back on the statement made by Don.

It is indeed satisfactory that Don's doubted information of such old date should, in our day, be proved to be correct. In August of 1901, Mr. James Menzies, a member of the Perthshire Society of Natural Science, brought from a marsh near Montrose some specimens of a *Carex* new to

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himself, and submitted them to Mr. William Barclay, Perth, the well-known authority on our wild roses. He, in turn, forwarded them to Mr. Arthur Bennett, F.L.S., our Associate, who replied: "I can make nothing else of the specimens than *C. divisa* of Hudson, a very interesting re-find after many years have passed"; and, he added, "The specimens have evidently been arrested in growth, probably from drought, and are small and not well developed, but they are *C. divisa*, Hudson."

By the meeting by Mr. Menzies with this Sedge in Forfarshire, not only is Don's doubted record of it from that county confirmed, but the plant is with confidence restored to the flora of Scotland.

In the "Phytologist" for 1842, at page 405, there appears a communication from the late Thomas Edmonston, of Shetland, a Professor of Botany for a short time in Glasgow, who, as is known, had a remarkable but brief career. In this communication, Edmonston gives a list of additions made by himself to the known flora of ten miles round Edinburgh, in which list curiously there appears the following item:—"*Carex divisa.* Pentland hills, scarce." Professor Trail, however, in his "Topographical Botany of Scotland," treats this record as unreliable, and as an error, as the occurrence of *C. divisa* in the Pentlands has never been confirmed.

I am indebted for much of the information in this paper to the short article referred to, contributed by Mr. Barclay to the "Annals of Scottish Natural History" in 1901, in which he embodied valuable notes sent to him by Mr. Bennett regarding Don's connection with the Sedge in the county of Forfar, with the plants of which district Don was, as we know, so intimately acquainted.

[At the reading of this paper there was exhibited a dried specimen of *C. divisa*, Hudson, from Forfarshire, and, for comparison, specimens from Suffolk (collected by Mr. E. S. Salmon, F.L.S.), and from Co. Wexford (collected by Miss L. S. Glascott, and confirmed by Mr. Arthur Bennett, F.L.S.)].

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