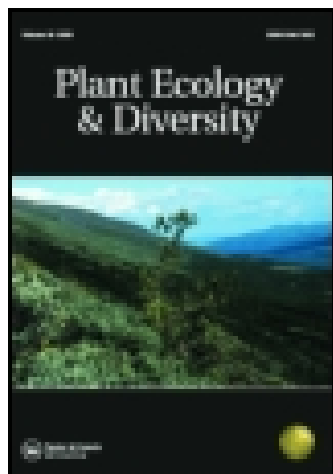


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MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,

June 14, 1906.

Professor BAYLEY BALFOUR, F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

Dr. A. W. BORTHWICK exhibited pear leaves attacked by *Eriophyes pyri*.

Mr. R. L. HARROW showed a series of plants in flower from the Royal Botanic Garden.

W. W. SMITH, M.A., showed a very pale, ash-coloured variety of *Ajuga reptans*, found near Bridge of Allan.

The following communication was read:—

NOTE ON ADIANTUM CAPILLUS-VENERIS (LINN.).

By D. S. FISH.

According to Mr. Chichester Hart, *Adiantum Capillus-Veneris* was first recorded for Ireland by Edward Lhwyd, the antiquarian, who, writing from Cornwall on 25th August 1700, mentions the occurrence of this plant on the islands of Aran, Galway Bay. The flora of these islands is similar to that of the Burren district of Co. Clare. The land is very barren, and scattered stones everywhere abound, giving the country a peculiar appearance.

Another remarkable feature in the landscape of this portion of Co. Clare are the flat beds of limestone, deeply fissured. At the bottom of these fissures *Adiantum* is found in profusion. These sheets of limestone are so level that they resemble enormous pavements, carefully laid down in concrete, the surface being interrupted at more or less regular intervals by deep seams. The seams or fissures running parallel add to the artificial appearance of this curious formation. Plants do not generally occur on the surface of these natural pavements, for there is nothing in which they could root. In the fissures, however, plants grow readily, *Adiantum* sending up fronds 18 or more inches in height,

while *Asplenium marinum* has been recorded from such positions with fronds 3 feet long. *Rubia peregrina* scrambles in many places. A specimen of *Samolus Valerandi* was noticed with stems 18 inches high.

A more favourable position for ferns could hardly be had in the British Isles. Shelter is secured from winds, and the moisture, heat, and shade present form an ideal environment for these plants. The fissures vary in depth, and the stature of the plants therein likewise varies. Flowering plants become very drawn when they occur in the deeper gaps.

So much for an Irish station where the fern luxuriates. *Adiantum* also occurs in Ireland, on dry limestone rocks such as on the one depicted in the second photograph, and by far the most interesting station of this description is found near Roundstone, Connemara. At the back of Roundstone lies Urrisbeg, and crossing this mountain a large fresh-water lake is seen—Lough Bollard. At the east end of this lough there is a small limestone rock on which *Adiantum* grows. This spot has been thrice visited by the Botanical Society, and mention of these visits may not be uninteresting.

1. Dr. Graham and party in August 1838 ("Annual Report," 1838-39, p. 56). Roundstone is mentioned, but no full particulars are given as to the actual site of the *Adiantum*. Most probably, however, this particular spot was the one visited by Dr. Graham. He notes: "On one rock very sparingly, small specimens of *Adiantum Capillus-Veneris*."

2. When the late Professor Balfour's party visited Ireland in September 1874, the *Adiantum* was again noted. Professor Balfour says in his notes of that excursion: "There was a great deal growing on the rock, but fortunately for the habitat it is impossible to get at the roots" (vol. xii. p. 375).

In August 1890 Connemara was visited by the Alpine Club, and *Adiantum* was again found near Lough Bollard. In the report of the excursion (xix. p. 21) a doubt is expressed as to whether the rock noticed on this occasion was the same as that seen on the previous excursion, as the one seen in 1890 was only a few feet in height and not by any means difficult to get at. When growing on limestone the roots penetrate deeply into the crevices, and the plant,

with the exception of its fronds, may be quite inaccessible even though close to hand.

ADIANTUM IN ITALY.

Adiantum Capillus-Veneris clothing masonry over which water continually flows is typical of many Italian scenes. In damp places this fern may spread so freely as to become a weed, but it cannot live on dry ground nor endure drought, as can such ferns as *Ceterach* and *Asplenium Adiantum-nigrum*, *Ruta-muraria*, etc.

ADIANTUM CAPILLUS-VENERIS IN CULTIVATION.

There is little that need be said. For general use the Brazilian species—*A. cuneatum*—is the popular Maidenhair fern, and in many gardens a *Capillus-Veneris* is not cultivated at all, only occurring as a sort of naturalised plant on the walls and floors of plant houses. Although a native, it is not truly hardy. Established plants planted at the Rock Garden last summer perished during the winter. In this respect it is akin to *Asplenium marinum*, with which it is often associated in Ireland. Both like warmth.