A SYNOPSIS OF THE BRITISH RUBI

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It is only of late years that the fruticose species of *Rubus* have received the attention which they deserve: botanists were long contented to call them all *R. fruticosus* or *R. cæsius*, and the introduction by Smith of another name (*R. corylifolius*) must have appeared to be a very great innovation. Each of these is a collective species, by which I mean, one in which many forms, doubtless constituting truly distinct species, are included. Hence the great diversity in the mode of applying these names.

All students of this very difficult genus are extremely indebted to Weihe and Nees v. Esenbeck for the publication of their splendid work the 'Rubi Germanici,' without which it would have been scarcely possible to attain that knowledge of Brambles which we now possess; and all will agree, that for extending our acquaintance with British *Rubi* no name justly stands so high as that of Borrer, to whom we owe the elaborate account of these plants contained in Hooker's 'British Flora' (ed. 2 and 3), and the descriptions of many species in the eminently beautiful but far too little known 'Supplement to English Botany.' Dr. Lindley, in his 'Synopsis of the British Flora' (ed. 1), gave the specific characters of twenty-three species, mostly translated avowedly from the work of Weihe and Nees, but including several supposed to be undescribed. He states that he had attained his knowledge of them from plants growing in the garden of the Horticultural Society, and that he was "satisfied that their distinctions are permanent and important." In his 'Flora of Shropshire' Mr. Leighton has collected together the opinions of the above-mentioned botanists, and also of Nees v. Esenbeck, by sending a perfect set of specimens to each of them, accompanied by corresponding numbers. He has also described the plants with great accuracy, and thus placed students as nearly as possible in the same situation as himself. Without attempting to enumerate all those who are now studying *Rubi*, I cannot pass unnoticed the very valuable papers by Dr. T. Bell Salter in the 'Phytologist' and 'Annals of Natural History,' by which he has shown himself to

be peculiarly qualified to become the illustrator of this genus. I had hoped that he would have undertaken such a review of it as that upon which I have now ventured; this his professional duties prevent. I must take the present opportunity of acknowledging myself to be very greatly indebted to him, both for the gift of specimens and also for the communication of much valuable information.

To Mr. E. Lees, a gentleman who has long paid attention to these plants, I am indebted for a very extensive series of specimens. Many other botanists have liberally assisted me in a similar manner; I would more especially mention the Rev. A. Bloxam and Mr. H. O. Stephens.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to apply those characters to the discrimination of the British species which have been found to be the most permanent by the best British and continental authorities, and would more especially refer the student to the following works in addition to those already noticed: the 'Flora Silesiæ' of Wimmer and Grabowski (Breslaw, 1827); 'Novitiarum Floræ Succiæ mantissa altera et tertia' of Fries (Upsala, 1839—1842); 'Monographia Ruborum Sueciæ' of Arrhenius (Upsala, 1840); and 'Monographie des Rubus de Nancy' of Godron (Nancy, 1843). It has also been my endeavour to ascertain what forms are to be considered as species and what only as varieties. Had views concerning species been adopted similar to those elucidated in the invaluable 'Rubi Germanici,' this synopsis would have contained sixty-three species at the least, and with every wish to reduce them as far as nature will allow, they still amount to about half that number. Several of these are now described for the first time; of them full descriptions are given; of the others the technical characters alone are introduced, accompanied by such notes and observations as appeared to be requisite.

In so large an assemblage of species it becomes necessary to attempt a separation into groups, but in this, as in all rich and natural genera, it is found to be nearly impossible to do so. Many species are easily referable to sections, such as those which I have adopted; but their artificial character is shown by other species which would belong to one section when young, and to another in their maturer state, or which possess characters so nearly intermediate, as to make it very difficult to decide in which section they should be placed. Still the divisions adopted in this essay have been found to be more constant and convenient than those derived from other peculiarities which are employed by some authors.

It is not pretended that all the forms are correctly referred to their true places, but simply that the information within my

reach and the best judgement which I can form have been used in this attempt at their arrangement. Additional study will doubtless show that many alterations are requisite; will perhaps prove that some of those now considered as varieties are really specifically distinct, and demonstrate that several of my species may be combined with others. In those cases in which plants are described as new, every endeavour has been made to ascertain that they are not already published in the works of continental botanists; but the want of authentic specimens has added greatly to the difficulty of determining many of those species which are not represented in the 'Rubi Germanici,' and made it far from improbable that some of my names, and also those of Dr. Salter, will ultimately be superseded. It would appear that botanists generally are very little inclined to distribute authentic specimens of *Rubi*; indeed, when we consider the variable character of many species, and the trouble attending the preservation of sufficiently characteristic specimens of all, we can hardly wonder at their rarity. In my own case, from residing in a district far from rich in brambles, most of my specimens have been collected during botanical tours, when it was scarcely possible to find space for the preservation of more than a very few specimens from each locality.

It is unnecessary to prolong these preliminary observations with remarks upon the value of characters, as the following descriptions will show upon what points it has appeared most desirable to place confidence; but it may be as well to state, that the form and armature of the matured barren shoot, the form of its leaves, the general form and structure of the panicle and its armature, and in some cases its foliage, and the direction of the calyx of the fruit, seem most deserving of attention. The shape of the petals, the colour of the styles, the form of the torus and of the primordial fruit, are points which will probably well repay a careful study; unfortunately my attention was not drawn to them until the opportunities for their examination had passed away. They are strongly recommended to the notice of botanists.

As it has been thought better not to encumber this paper with synonyms, only those references are given which appeared requisite for the more certain determination of the plants.

In conclusion, I must crave the indulgence of those who may honour this synopsis with their attention, and assure them that whatever errors they may find in it are not the result of carelessness, but caused by the paucity of our knowledge of plants which have been too generally neglected. It is hoped that by publishing the knowledge that they may obtain, all botanists will assist in perfecting our acquaintance with a genus, which more than most others requires a division of labour.