Forgotten publications by Alfred William Bennett and their effect on the nomenclature of some Asian Simaroubaceae species

I. M. Turner^{1,2}

Summary. Attention is drawn to some forgotten papers published by Alfred William Bennett relevant to the taxonomy of Asian angiosperms. Three binomials in Simaroubaceae, were published by Bennett in a paper in the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions* earlier than in current listings. Lectotypes are designated for *Brucea mollis*, *Eurycoma apiculata*, *Picrasma javanica* and *P. andamanica*.

Key Words. Asia, *Brucea*, *Eurycoma*, lectotypification, *Picrasma*.

Introduction

Alfred William Bennett (1833 – 1902) was a Victorian botanist. After a period working as a publisher, in 1868 he became lecturer in botany at Bedford College and St Thomas's Hospital in London (Cleevely 2004). Initially, he studied angiosperm groups including Burseraceae, Ochnaceae, Polygalaceae and Simaroubaceae. Bennett provided the accounts for these four families in the *Flora of British India* (Bennett 1872, 1874, 1875a, b, c). As a person with a job in a medical institution, it is perhaps unsurprising that Bennett worked on the Burseraceae and Simaroubaceae; families that contain well-known medicinal plants. What seems to have been largely forgotten is that Bennett published some papers on Indian Burseraceae and Simaroubaceae around the same time as the *Flora* was published. There was a review of the medicinal products of the families (Bennett 1875d). This is listed in *Taxonomic Literature* (Stafleu & Mennega 1993, sub no. 20.840) without a complete source. It was in fact published in the *St Thomas's Hospital Reports* (not St Bartholemew's as sometimes cited). Although the volume title page is dated 1874, dates of 1875 appear in various places in the text, including in pages before, as well as after Bennett's paper, so a publication date of 1875 is accepted here. The paper does not validate any names, so is not of nomenclatural importance.

Bennett also published several papers (Bennett 1873, 1875e, f) on the two families in the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions*. This was a weekly periodical making it easy to date the contributions exactly and compare these dates with the known publication dates of the parts of the *Flora of British India* (Stafleu & Cowan 1979). What becomes clear is

that a few species names were first validated in the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions* rather than in the *Flora of British India* or elsewhere.

Brucea mollis

Wallich used this name for a plant collected in Sylhet (now in Bangladesh) and grown in the Calcutta Botanic Garden. As no description was included or referred to under number 8483 in the *Numerical List* (Wallich 1847), the name was not validated. The validation of the name is generally attributed to Kurz in a paper on new Burmese plants (Kurz 1873) published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Fortunately, the dates of issue of the parts of this volume were printed after the contents pages. Number II, which included Kurz's paper, was issued on 28 May 1873. On 10 May 1873, Alfred Bennett's description of *Brucea mollis* appeared in the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions*, and so Bennett must be taken as the publishing author of the name. A lectotype is here selected from among the material distributed by Wallich under number 8483.

***Brucea mollis* Wall. ex A.W.Benn.** (Bennett 1873: 882). Type: Sylhet, *F. De Silva* s.n. [EIC 8483A p.p.] (lectotype K-W [K001125626], selected here, including material labelled 'b' in pencil only).

Eurycoma apiculata

Bennett's description of this species in the *Flora of British India* is generally taken as the original place of publication of the name. However, he included a

description in the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions* of 10 May 1873 nearly two years before the Simaroubaceae account was published in February 1875. A specimen collected by Maingay in Penang is here designated as lectotype for *Eurycoma apiculata*.

Eurycoma apiculata A.W.Benn. (Bennett 1873: 882). Type: Peninsular Malaysia, Penang, Government Hill, February 1867, A. C. Maingay 2272 [Kew distrib. no. 293] (lectotype K [K001129804], selected here).

Picrasma andamanica

The name *Picrasma andamanica* first appeared in print in a report on the vegetation of the Andaman Islands by Kurz (Kurz 1870) but, as no description was included or referred to, the name was not validated. The name has therefore generally been attributed to the *Flora of British India* in which the Simaroubaceae were published in February 1875 (Stafleu & Cowan 1979), but a description appeared in Bennett's paper in *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions* published on 10 May 1873, so this is the first validation.

The name is now generally considered a synonym of *Picrasma javanica* Blume (Nooteboom 1962; Debnath 1999). Kulip & Wong (1995) referred to the type of *Picrasma javanica* as an un-numbered Blume specimen collected in Java in the Leiden herbarium. There are several sheets in L that match these details, which I consider as original material for the name, but none is labelled by these authors. I therefore consider this as an ineffective lectotypification and here formally designate a sheet that has been labelled as the holotype as lectotype, to avoid further confusion. *Picrasma andamanica* is here lectotypified to a Kurz specimen from South Andaman in K.

Picrasma javanica Blume (1825: 248). Type: Java, C. L. Blume 248 (lectotype L [L 0850251], selected here). *Picrasma andamanica* Kurz ex A.W.Benn. (Bennett 1873: 882). Type: Andaman Islands, South Andaman, S. Kurz s.n. (lectotype K [K000651345], selected here).

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