

other deleterious plants. Sir Andrew Smith informs me that in South Africa a large number of fruits and succulent leaves, and especially roots, are used in times of scarcity. The natives, indeed, know the properties of a long catalogue of plants, some having been found during famines to be eatable, others injurious to health, or even destructive to life. He met a party of Baquanas who, having been expelled by the conquering Zulus, had lived for years on any roots or leaves which afforded some little nutriment and distended their stomachs, so as to relieve the pangs of hunger. They looked like walking skeletons, and suffered fearfully from constipation. Sir Andrew Smith also informs me that on such occasions the natives observe as a guide for themselves, what the wild animals, especially baboons and monkeys, eat.

From innumerable experiments made through dire necessity by the savages of every land, with the results handed down by tradition, the nutritious, stimulating, and medicinal properties of the most unpromising plants were probably first discovered. It appears, for instance, at first an inexplicable fact that untutored man, in three distant quarters of the world, should have discovered, amongst a host of native plants, that the leaves of the tea-plant and mattee, and the berries of the coffee, all included a stimulating and nutritious essence, now known to be chemically the same. We can also see that savages suffering from severe constipation would naturally observe whether any of the roots which they devoured acted as aperients. We probably owe our knowledge of the uses of almost all plants to man having originally existed in a barbarous state, and having been often compelled by severe want to try as food almost everything which he could chew and swallow.

From what we know of the habits of savages in many quarters of the world, there is no reason to suppose that our cereal plants originally existed in their present state so valuable to man. Let us look to one continent alone, namely, Africa: Barth<sup>6</sup> states that the slaves over a large part of the

<sup>6</sup> 'Travels in Central Africa,' Eng. transl. vol. i. pp. 529 and 390; vol. ii. pp. 29, 265, 270 Livingstone's 'Travels,' p. 551.