Père Urbain Faurie.

By

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PÈRE URBAIN FAURIE
1847-1915

[Père U. FAURIE as a botanical collector is well known to our readers both in Japan and abroad, and therefore a sketch of his life cannot but be of interest to us all. As he was a French missionary, it was to be expected that some

account of him would be given in some French journal; but owing perhaps to the terrible war now raging over all Europe, no such memoir, so far as I am aware, has yet appeared, although a year has elapsed since his death. It would be a great pity, if so famous a collector as Father FAURIE, who devoted his whole life to the cause of botany, should be allowed to depart without any appreciation of his life and work appearing in any botanical journal. My readers will generously take this as one reason, why this article appears in these columns in my very poor English.]

In July, 1915, on coming back from a botanical excursion to Mt. Fuji, I found a telegram awaiting me announcing that Père FAURIE was dangerously ill. This was soon followed by another saying that the reverend Father had passed away. What was my sorrow and astonishment to receive the sad news that so vigorous and indefatigable a man as Père FAURIE had so untimely breathed his last. It seems he had suffered but a few days.

Father FAURIE was born in 1847, in the department of la Haute-Loire (Aveyron, France). In 1873, he came to Japan as a Catholic missionary. After staying in Tōkyō for some years, he was given a charge in Hokkaidō, then in Hirosaki, and later in Aomori. Throughout his missionary life, he showed a strong inclination towards botany, and his devotion to it increased during his last years. In making botanical collections, he travelled throughout all Japan, striking out into many unbeaten paths. His journeys extended southwards to Formosa, through Loo-choo, Kiushiu, Korea, Shikoku, Hondō and Hokkaidō, and northwards as far as the Kurile Islands and Sachalin. He also collected in Hawai. His assiduity in the work of collecting was almost incredible. For this purpose, he travelled in all seasons. He would climb any mountain however difficult, if he thought it botanically interesting. Quite alone, with his press-plates and very simple provisions on his back, he would travel and work for many days in the mountains, sleeping at night perhaps in a tree or under a crag. There are probably very few mountains in Japan which the Father did not climb.

Naturally, his collections were very extensive, his herbarium at Aomori being by far the largest in Japan. His love of plants became ever more intense, and in his advanced years, he devoted himself entirely to making collections. Twice, he went to Formosa; first, in 1901, and again, in 1913, when he stayed there until his death. In all parts of Formosa, except where the presence of dangerous savages prevented, he travelled, traversing pathless peaks and precipitous valleys. Once when guided to a mountain by a Japanese friend, he became entangled in a pathless thicket. His guide after some effort, having found a path, called the Father to come towards it. But the latter, who never followed a walkable way, was eagerly looking for plants and replying, "This is my way, not that," buried himself again in the dense thicket. Neither wild savages nor poisonous snakes had terrors for Father FAURIE, when plants were in sight. Once when I asked him how he managed to walk through pathless woods where snakes were abundant, he answered simply, "I put on a pair of zōri" (peasants' straw-sandals), and showed me his bare legs covered with scratches.

Père FAURIE's second excursion to Formosa was the last and perhaps the most extensive of his life. Arriving there in December, 1913, he collected in various places,* and finally in Kwarenkō prefecture, where he was taken ill and came back to Taihoku to the church at Daidōtei.

On reaching the church, he seemed quite exhausted; his shirt was tinged with blood, and his nose was bleeding. Nevertheless,

*In December, 1913, he collected in the vicinity of Taihoku at such places as Maruyama, Hokuto and Tamsui. In January of the following year, he went southward to Takao, Mankingsing and Raisha, and northwards to Kōrishō, Tōyen Ōkaseki, Shinten and Kelung. In April, he collected in Shinten and Urai; in May, Hokuto; from May to July, in the Arisan range; in September, in Hokuto, Tamsui, Shakkō and Kelung; in October, in Hokuto, Taihoku, Tamsui, Kwannonzan and Kelung; in November, Maruyama, Hokuto, Tamsui, Kelung and Shinten; in December in Shakkō, Kagi and the Arisan range for the second time. In January, 1915, he collected in Hokuto; in February, Shōrin, Hokuto and Mt. Daiton; in March, in Taihoku; from March to April, in the Arisan mountains for the third time; in April, in Mt. Daiton for the second time, in Taihoku and Hokuto; in May, in Kappanzan; and lastly, from May to June, he collected in Kwarenkō. For this information, I am indebted to Mr. K. SAWADA of Formosa.

he went to work in his room, and worked till late in the night. The next morning he felt very dull, but stuck to his work. After a while, he went to his friend, and said, "Dōshite mo kitsui"* (I'm sorry, but I've got to give up). On the advice of his friend, he went to a doctor, who, to his great astonishment, removed two leeches from the back of his nose. He must have slept out in the mountains without shelter and been unconscious of the leeches finding their way into his nostrils. His health from now on steadily failed, and his Japanese friend urged him to go to a hospital; but as the staff of the latter had been educated in Germany, he declined to go and insisted on remaining quietly in his room at the church. There he still continued his work for some days. At last, he could stand no more, and became aware that his powers were failing. When with assistance he had bathed, he laid himself upon the bed from which he was pretty sure he would never rise again. Then he stretched out his arms and said, "Ah! Nanto arigataikoto; konnani nagaku kono sekaini orukotono dekitanowa" (How thankful I am to have lived so long in this world). After that, he became paralyzed and could utter nothing that was intelligible. He lay for a few days in a semi-conscious state in which his utterances and gestures were entirely those of praying and of preparing dried plants. When awakened from his peaceful sleep, he raised his hand as if in prayer; that done, he moved his hand as if in the preparation of specimens. These actions were performed turn and turn about. Thus, on the fourth of June, 1915, praying and preparing, this noble priest who had devoted his whole life to God and to plants, passed away in his sixty-eighth year. Working, still working for evangelism and botany even at the point of death, and at last when he found his powers fading away, lying down to sleep quietly in the arms of Him whom he served, he died as he had lived, a man of sincere piety and lofty ideals.

In his daily life, when he was not caring for plants, he was

*The Father had a perfect mastery of Japanese, and seemed to prefer to speak in Japanese rather than in his mother tongue.

reading the Bible. One would see him collecting in the mountains in the day-time and on his way back in the evening, reading his Bible in the train. When spoken to in the carriage, he would say, "Chotto matte kudasai" (Please wait a moment), and become absorbed in prayer. After going to bed, he used to get up twice in the night to attend to his drying plants.

Father FAURIE was a very cheerful, amiable man and was very much beloved by us, especially by the young people of our laboratory. We are greatly indebted to him for loans of material, which he made to us very generously. For myself, however, what I especially owe to him is of a quite different nature. One day he came to me and said, "I am urged to go to Formosa by Western botanists who, in seeing your papers, are very much interested in the study of the flora of that island and desire to have materials. I must go there, and compete with you in sending collections to them."

Now for my part, for nearly fifteen years, I had been devoting myself to the study of the flora of Formosa, and in my work had met with greater success, perhaps than my limited ability warranted. This was mainly due to the fact that the flora of the island had been long forgotten by Western botanists who had till then left its study entirely to me. And to myself also up to that time, the study of the flora of the island had been something like a pleasure excursion on an endless sea, in which the land of completion was far out of sight. Fortunately, for the previous five years, the Botanical Survey had made considerable progress, and a faint hope had come to dawn in my mind that the completion of the study was not far off, and that it might possibly be finished within a few,—say five years.

Such was the condition of our Botanical Survey of Formosa, when the Father came to me to give me the final spur. He frankly said that he had come as my rival; but I, who am by no means clever in mind or strong in body, was not equal to competing with such a vigorous and devoted man. So I could but implore him to let me have a few years more to complete my studies on the Formosan flora. This he absolutely refused to do, and started for Formosa where he remained working

incessantly and sending his collections to the West. Nothing remained for me to do but to devote myself to my work with all the energy at my command. It is for compelling me to do this, that I am grateful to him. Those who at times have complimented me have in no whit helped on my work. He was my benefactor, because he gave me an important stimulus on the one hand, and on the other, set before me the living example of his own devoted life.

In February of this year, I was sent to Formosa for further collecting. On the day before I started from Taihoku for the savage districts, I visited the learned Father's grave, and there I said to myself that I desired to follow his noble example as far as I could with my poor ability. In my travels, I heard much about his experiences and saw numerous traces of his work. I first went to Rinkihō and Keitao, then to the Arisan range, crossing many mountains. When descending through the dense forests of Arisan, I saw Mt. Tōzan, towering up before my eyes, bold and high in the blue sky, with its bare precipices above tinted into rose by the morning sun, and its lower slopes clad in the dark green of its deep forests. There the people told me how the Father had taken a few provisions on his back with his press-plates and started for the mountain to collect in its beautiful valley. He remained away for some days stopping at night quite alone under a crag and came back cheerfully with large collections. That a man of sixty-eight years should have taken every thing he needed on his back, and climbed so steep a mountain as Tōzan, is nothing short of astonishing. Wherever I went, I was greatly encouraged by his experiences and renewed the promise that I made to myself before his grave. I went far into the savage districts and explored Mt. Gokwanzan, towering majestically above the central ranges of the island, and raising its peaks over eleven thousand feet into the heavens. I went down to Hakku and up to Suisha. Then I went to the mountainous regions of Giran prefecture, which until a few years ago had been impossible to visit on account of the head-hunters. During my travels, I never forgot the beautiful example set before me by the Father; yet I fear I shall never be able

to attain, or even approach, to the standard of his devoted conduct.

This memoir, such as it is, has been written with feelings of deep respect as a token of my great esteem and reverence and as an expression of my sincere gratitude to the noble Father.

Tōkyō, May 24th., 1916.