

Malayan *inei*) has been made in the west from ancient times. The Egyptians stained their hands red with the leaves of the plant<sup>1</sup> (Egyptian *purer*, Coptic *kuper* or *khuper*, Hebrew *kopher*, Greek κύπρος). All Mohammedan peoples have adopted this custom; and they even dye their hair with henna, also the manes, tails, and hoofs of horses.<sup>2</sup> The species of western Asia is identical with that of China, which is spontaneous also in Baluchistan and in southern Persia.<sup>3</sup> Ancient Persia played a prominent rôle as mediator in the propagation of the plant.<sup>4</sup> "They [the Persians] have also a custom of painting their hands, and, above all, their nails, with a red color, inclining to yellowish or orange, much near the color that our tanners nails are of. There are those who also paint their feet. This is so necessary an ornament in their married women, that this kind of paint is brought up, and distributed among those that are invited to their wedding dinners. They therewith paint also the bodies of such as dye maids, that when they appear before the Angels Examinants, they may be found more neat and handsome. This color is made of the herb, which they call *Chinne*, which hath leaves like those of liquorice, or rather those of myrtle. It grows in the Province of Erak, and it is dry'd, and beaten, small as flower, and there is put thereto a little of the juyce of sour pomegranate, or citron, or sometimes only fair water; and therewith they color their hands. And if they would have them to be of a darker color, they rub them afterwards with wall-nut leaves. This color will not be got off in fifteen days, though they wash their hands several times a day."<sup>5</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> V. LORET, Flore pharaonique, p. 80; WÖENIG, Pflanzen im alten Aegypten, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> L. LECLERC, Traité des simples, Vol. I, p. 469; G. JACOB, Studien in arabischen Geographen, p. 172; A. v. KREMER, Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen, Vol. II, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> C. JORET, Plantes dans l'antiquité, Vol. II, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> SCHWEINFURTH, Z. Ethnologie, Vol. XXIII, 1891, p. 658.

<sup>5</sup> A. OLEARIUS, Voyages of the Ambassadors to the Great Duke of Muscovy and the King of Persia (1633-39), p. 234 (London, 1669). I add the very exact description of the process given by SCHLIMMER (Terminologie, p. 343): "C'est avec la poudre fine des feuilles sèches de cette plante, largement cultivée dans le midi de la Perse, que les indigènes se colorent les cheveux, la barbe et les ongles en rouge-orange. La poudre, formée en pâte avec de l'eau plus ou moins chaude, est appliquée sur les cheveux et les ongles et y reste pendant une ou deux heures, ayant soin de la tenir constamment humide en empêchant l'évaporation de son eau; après quoi la partie est lavée soigneusement; l'effet de l'application du henna est de donner une couleur rouge-orange aux cheveux et aux ongles. Pour transformer cette couleur rougeâtre en noir luisant, on enduit pendant deux ou trois autres heures les cheveux ou la barbe d'une seconde pâte formée de feuilles pulvérisées finement d'une espèce d'indigofère, cultivée sur une large échelle dans la province de Kerman. Ces manipulations se pratiquent d'ordinaire au bain persan, où la chaleur humide diminue