

THE ALMOND

41. Iran was the centre from which the almond (*Amygdalus communis* or *Prunus amygdalus*) spread, on the one hand to Europe, and on the other to China, Tibet, and India. As to India, it is cultivated but occasionally in Kashmir and the Panjab, where its fruits are mediocre. It was doubtless imported there from Iran. The almond yields a gum which is still exported from Persia to Bombay, and thence re-exported to Europe.¹ The almond grows spontaneously in Afghanistan and farther to the north-east in the upper Zarafshan valley, and in the Chotkal mountains at an altitude of 1000–1300 m, also in Aderbeidjan, Kurdistan, and Mesopotamia. According to SCHLIMMER,² *Amygdalus coparia* is very general on the high mountains, and its timber yields the best charcoal.³

The Greeks derived the almond from Asia Minor, and from Greece it was apparently introduced into Italy.⁴ In the northern part of Media, the people subsisted upon the produce of trees, making cakes of apples, sliced and dried, and bread of roasted almonds.⁵ A certain quantity of dried sweet almonds was to be furnished daily for the table of the Persian kings.⁶ The fruit is mentioned in Pahlavi literature (above, p. 193).

The *Yin yai šen lan* mentions almonds among the fruit grown in Aden.⁷ The Arabic name is *lewze* or *lauz*. Under this name the medicinal properties of the fruit are discussed in the Persian pharmacopœia of Abu Mansur, who knew both the sweet almond (*bādām-i šīrīn*) and the bitter one (*bādām-i tālx*).⁸ It is curious that bitter almonds were used as currency in the empire of the Moguls. They were brought into the

¹ G. WATT, Commercial Products of India, p. 905; and Dictionary, Vol. VI, p. 343. JORET, Plantes dans l'antiquité, Vol. II, p. 279. W. ROXBURGH (Flora Indica, p. 403) concluded that the almond is a native of Persia and Arabia, whereas it does not succeed in India, requiring much nursing to keep it alive.

² Terminologie, p. 33.

³ A really wild almond is said to be very common in Palestine and Syria (A. AARONSOHN, Agric. and Bot. Explorations in Palestine, p. 14).

⁴ HEHN, Kulturpflanzen, pp. 393, 402; FLÜCKIGER and HANBURY, Pharmacographia, pp. 244, 245.

⁵ STRABO, XI. XIII, 11.

⁶ Polyænus, Strategica, IV, 32.

⁷ ROCKHILL, *T'oung Pao*, 1915, p. 609.

⁸ ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 128.