

more numerous at that particular place. At length he brought me a fine lot of plants in excellent condition, and I was glad to reward him for his trouble, and to take them immediately under my own charge.

The natives describe this plant as growing in running streams. The root or rhizome is about the size of a man's thumb in thickness, and six or nine inches long, often branching in different directions like the roots of the ginger or turmeric, but in one continuous growth, not a succession of distinct formations attached at the termination of one and the commencement of another. The root is composed of a white fleshy substance apparently without large or tough fibres, and is covered with a somewhat thick light brown skin. I was informed that it also grew in places which were dry at certain seasons of the year; that the leaves then died down, but the root, buried in the mud, retained its vitality, and, when the water returned, fresh leaves burst forth. The natives spoke of it as tenacious of life, and said that wherever the earth around even the smallest portion of it remained moist, that portion would put forth leaves when again covered with water. This plant is not only extremely curious, but also very valuable to the natives, who, at certain seasons of the year, gather it as an article of food,—the fleshy root, when cooked, yielding a farinaceous substance resembling the yam. Hence its native name, *ouvirandrano*, literally, yam of the water,—*ouvi* in the Malagasy and Polynesian languages signifying yam, and *rano* in the former signifying water.

The *ouvirandra* is not only a rare and curious, but a singularly beautiful plant, both in structure and colour. From the several crowns of the branching root growing often a foot or more deep in the water, a number of graceful leaves, nine or ten inches long, and two or three inches wide, spread out horizontally just beneath the surface of the water. The flower-stalks rise from the centre of the leaves, and the