

**A NEW SPECIES OF STELLARIA (CARYOPHYLLACEAE)  
FROM THE NEPAL HIMALAYA**

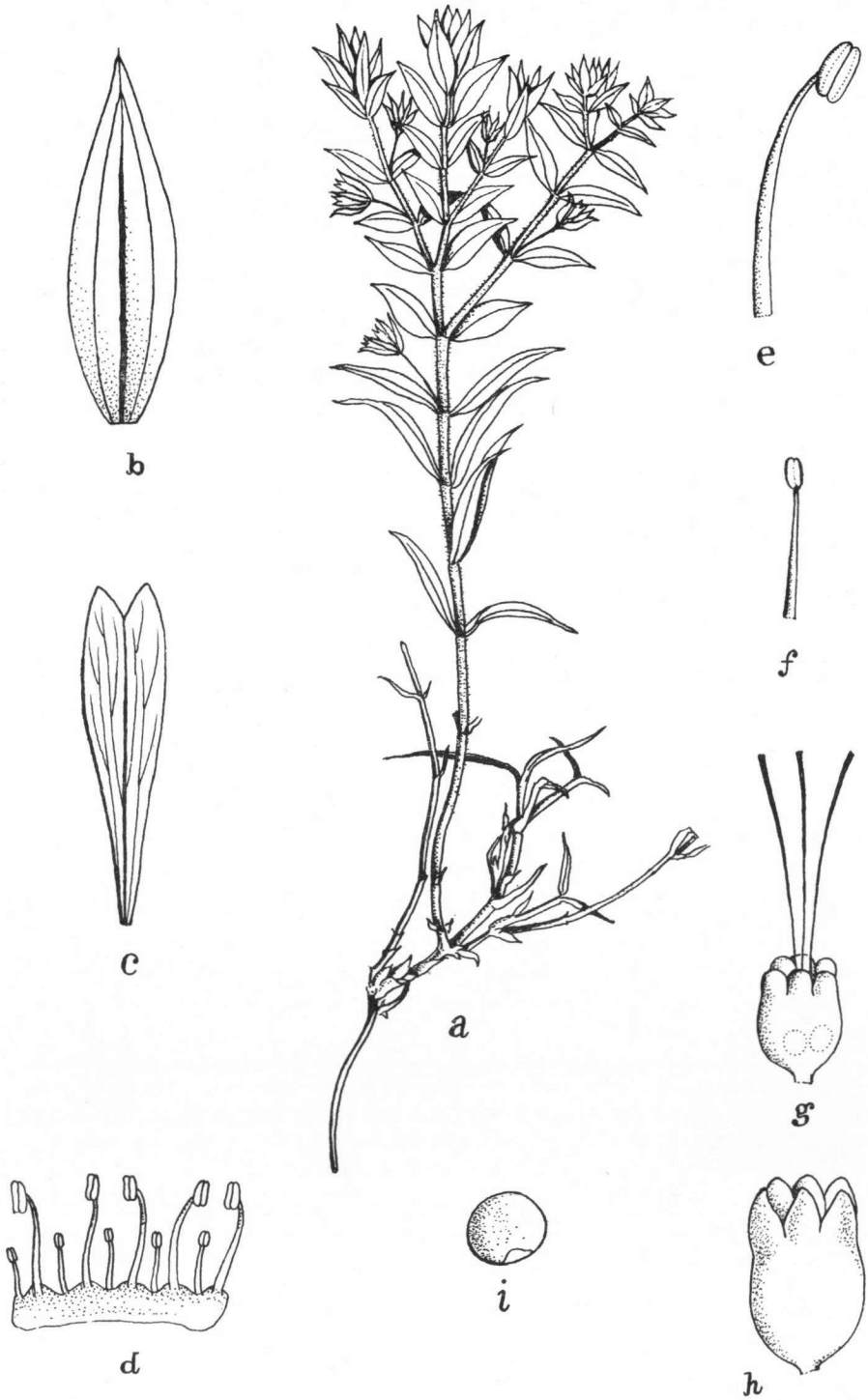
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***Stellaria mukerjeeana*** Majumdar, *spec. nov.* — Fig. 1.

*Herba* perennis, gracilis, caule repente valde furcato. *Rami* erecti vel suberecti, quadrangulares, e gemmis axillaribus emergentes, straminei, squamosi, simplices et infra glabrescentes, corymbose furcati et glandulari-pubescentes, sursum altitudine 10—20 cm attingentes. *Folia* simplicia, exstipulata, sessilia, ad basin connata, opposita, paribus sursum gradatim minoribus et in bracteas transeuntibus, lamina linear-lanceolata vel elliptico-lanceolata, acuta vel ad basin paulum angustata, apice acuminata, integra, margine paulum incrassata et incurva, coriacea, utrinque glabra, infra pallida, 5—20(—25) × 2—5(—6) mm; nervi praeter medium nervum eminentem obscuri. *Flores* albi, 5—6 mm longi, ad nodos singulos in axilla folii unius solitarii, cymas terminales foliosas corymbosas paniculatas efformantes. *Bracteae* foliosae, sed vulgo foliis minores, 5—10 mm longae, pedicello tereti, gracili, erecto-patente, glandulari-pubescente, 3—10 mm longo; bracteolae nullae. *Sepala* 5, usque ad basin libera, lanceolato-oblonga, acuminata, integra, marginibus angustis scariosis, utrinque glabra, e basi 3-nervia, nervo medio eminenti ad apicem in mucronem parvum desinente, nervis duobus lateralibus languidis cum nervo medio sub ipso apice convergentibus, 5—6 × 1.5—1.8 mm. *Petala* 5, libera, subsessilia, oblanceolata, ad apicem in lobos ovatos, subacutos, 0.6—0.8 mm longos breviter bifida, 5.0—5.5 mm longa, sepalis aequalia vel paulo breviora. *Stamina* fertilia 5, staminodiis 5 alternantia, disco paulum 5-lobo glandulari annulari insidentia; filamenta gracilia, cum petalis alternantia, ad basin paulum dilatata, 4 mm longa; antherae subbrunneae, oblongae, 1 mm longae; staminodia linearia, theca vacua minuta albida 2 mm longa, i.e. staminibus fertilibus dimidio breviora. *Ovarium* ovoideum, subsessile vel ornatum brevi gynophoro, 1—5 ovulatum, apice cupulari, discoideo, circum stylos tumescente; styli terni (raro bini), filiformes, glabri, 2.5—2.8 mm longi; stigma simplex. *Capsula* ovoidea, calyce multo brevior, seminibus 1—5, usque ad medium circum apicem incrassatum in valvulas 6 ovatas subacutas dehiscens. *Semina* compressa, rubro-brunnea, fere levia, 1 mm longa.

Perennial, slender herb, with creeping, much branched stems. *Branches* erect or suberect, 4-angled, springing from the axillary, straw-coloured, scaly buds, simple and glabrescent below and corymbosely branched and glandular-pubescent upwards, attaining a height of 10—20 cm. *Leaves* simple, exstipulate, sessile, connate at base, arranged in opposite, equal pairs, becoming smaller and passing into bracts upwards; lamina linear-lanceolate or elliptic-lanceolate, acute or slightly narrowed to the base, acuminate at the apex, entire, with slightly thickened, incurved margin, coriaceous, glabrous on both surfaces, pale beneath, 5—20(—25) × 2—5(—6) mm; nerves obscure except prominent midrib. *Flowers* white, 5—6 mm long, solitary at each node in the axil of one leaf, forming terminal, leafy, corymbose, paniced cymes. *Bracts* leaf-like, but usually smaller than leaves, 5—10 mm long, pedicel terete, slender, erecto-patent,



glandular-pubescent, 3—10 mm long; bracteoles 0. *Sepals* 5, free to the base, lanceolate-oblong, acuminate, entire with narrow scarious margins, quite glabrous inside and outside, 3-nerved from the base, middle prominent nerve terminating into a small mucro at the apex and two faint lateral nerves converging with the midnerve just below the apex, 5—6 × 1.5—1.8 mm. *Petals* 5, free, sessile, oblanceolate, shortly 2-fid at the apex into ovate, subacute, 0.6—0.8 mm long lobes, 5.0—5.5 mm long, as long as or slightly shorter than the sepals. Fertile *stamens* 5, alternating with 5 staminodes, inserted on slightly 5-lobed, glandular, annular *disc*; filaments slender, alternating with petals, slightly dilated at the base, 4 mm long; anthers brownish, oblong, 1 mm long; staminodes linear, with minute, whitish, empty anther-sacs, 2 mm long. *Ovary* ovoid, subsessile or with short gynophore, 1—5 ovuled, with cupular, dislike, swollen apex around the styles; styles 3 (rarely 2), filiform, glabrous, 2.5—2.8 mm long; stigma simple. *Capsule* ovoid, much shorter than the calyx, 1—5-seeded, dehiscent up to the middle around the thickened apex into 6 ovate, subacute valves. *Seeds* compressed, reddish-brown, nearly smooth, 1 mm long.

NEPAL: Muktinath, alt. 4260 m, T. B. Shrestha & Bista 2462 A (Holotype), exposed surfaces on rocks, flowers white; Muktinath, alt. 3800 m, Shrestha & Bista 2462 B. Both in CAL.

The affinity of this very distinct plant is quite uncertain among the Asiatic species of the genus, but it appears to be referable to Sect. *Schizotechium* (Fenzl) Edgew. & Hook. f. and it shows superficial resemblance to *Stellaria monosperma* Buch. Ham. ex D. Don (*S. crispata* Wall.) from which it differs in its habit with creeping stems and erect branches, leafy, cymose, paniculate corymbose inflorescence, and in having 5 fertile stamens alternating with 5 staminodes, and also in the disc-like cupular apex of the ovary which dehisces into 6 valves in mature fruits.

This taxon is named in honour of Dr S. K. Mukerjee for his valuable contribution to Indian plant taxonomy.

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Fig. 1. *Stellaria mukerjeeana* Majumdar — a. Habit; b. sepal; c. petal; d. stamens and staminodes inserted on the disc; e. stamen; f. staminode; g. pistil showing styles and ovary; h. capsule with six valves; i. seed. (Type).