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LINDENIA

ICONOGRAPHY

OF ORCHIDS

CONDUCTED BY

J. LINDEN, and LUCIEN LINDEN.

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CYPRIPEDIUM VICTORIAE MARIAE HORT.

PL. DLIX.

CYPRIPIEDIUM VICTORIAE MARIAE HORT.

CYPRIPIEDIUM. Vide *Lindenia*, I, p. 17.*Cypripedium Victoriae Mariae*. Affine *C. Chamberlainiano*, a quo tamen florum colore differt.*Cypripedium Victoriae Mariae* HORT. *Gard. Chron.*, 1893, I, p. 613. — *Orch. Rev.*, Ap., 1896.

The first appearance of *C. Victoriae Mariae* was in 1893 when it was exhibited at a Meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society, London, on May 9th but did not receive any award. At that time *C. Chamberlainianum* was a quite recent discovery, and the new arrival was probably regarded as a variety of that species. It is however distinct enough so far as colour is concerned, and also perhaps by the length and formation of the inflorescence, to be considered a true species, and such is the opinion which still seems to prevail in horticultural circles.

The surprise caused by the introduction of *C. Chamberlainianum* five years ago will be remembered. Although that new species has not realised — far from it — all the hopes which had been centred in it, it still had the merit of representing a type at once curious and quite out of the ordinary. Its flowers, more strange than beautiful, attracted attention by their singular form — the lip being inflated about the middle and attenuated to a point at the base, by the short horizontally twisted petals, the oval shield-like staminode, and by the novel and very varied colour largely suffused with a rosy-wine tint; also, and perhaps more particularly, by their ladder like arrangement on a very tall and many flowered scape, a character which would have been highly appreciated had the flowers only expanded several at a time. Unfortunately they only open in succession, and it is seldom that two are seen open together on the same peduncle.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks the new features of *C. Chamberlainianum* have attracted the attention of orchidists, and especially hybridisers who may hope to make use of its qualities and to lessen its defects by crossing with more highly favoured species.

C. Victoriae Mariae is chiefly distinguished by the colour of the upper sepal which is creamy white, washed and striped with green instead of violet rose, and spotted at the base with the latter colour; by the absence of pubescence on the outer surface of this organ; by the darker colour of the petals, which are neither spotted with rose nor pubescent, and by the colour of the more slender lip which is of a uniform deep violet red, while in *C. Chamberlainianum*, the lip is white and green, and covered with a multitude of violet rose dots, especially towards the tip.

These two species, which appear to be natives of New Guinea, should be grown in the warm orchid house. They are vigorous growers, and are hardly ever out of bloom owing to the flowers being produced in succession.

Our drawing was made from a plant shown by M. G. MITEAU, the well-known Belgian amateur, at a Meeting of the ORCHIDÉENNE on Jan. 10 last, when a First Class Certificate of merit was awarded.

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Mignonette on her garret window with *Odontoglossum Alexandrae*, and in summer the inevitable Geranium by a *Cattleya Mossiae*, neither snobs nor millionaires will continue to interest themselves in such common plants.

The rich collections of Mr. X., Baron Y. and Lord Z. will then disappear. The stupid biddings at the auction sales of Protheroe and Stevens will also cease, and there will be no more disputes and guinea offers for choice varieties, nor will the portion of a unique variety any longer be worth its weight in gold.

Horticultural Catalogues will then announce to customers the price per thousand, of Orchid Seedlings of one or two years growth, with a discount of 5 per cent. on orders of 10,000 and more, just as at the present day nurserymen offer osiers and conifers in their price lists for plantation purposes.

Seedling Orchids will be purchased and grown in quantity by specialists who supply the markets, and orchids in bloom — fallen from their ancient glory — will lie pitifully stranded on the stalls of the retail dealers of the Quai aux Fleurs, at the Place de la Madeleine, or at Covent Garden, huddled together with pots of Gilliflowers or Marguerites within the reach of the most modest purse. Having enjoyed the riches and happiness of this world they will then become a source of pleasure to humble folk.

At this epoch we shall also see displayed on the outside cover of horticultural journals an advertisement announcing the approaching publication of a practical work on orchids from the pen of one of the most competent and sympathetic orchidologists, under the suggestive title of "Orchids in Europe: The Rise and Fall of a Vegetable Genus to the Twentieth Century." Such is the accurate and fatidical picture of the probable results of hybridisation. Does it please or sadden? Having faithfully reproduced the arguments on either side I hesitate to say. And yet, whether fashion bears them to the highest point or abandons them through caprice, orchids will still remain queens among flowers and be preferred by true amateurs who will continue to admire them as one of the most sublime expressions of nature's beauty.

J. RAGOT.
