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THE
ORCHID ALBUM,

COMPRISING

COLOURED FIGURES AND DESCRIPTIONS

OF

NEW, RARE, AND BEAUTIFUL

ORCHIDACEOUS PLANTS,

CONDUCTED BY

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CYPRIPEDIUM ASHBURTONIÆ SUPERBUM

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[PLATE 400.]

Garden Hybrid.

Terrestrial. *Leaves* distichous, ligulate-acute, bright green above, reticulated with a deeper shade, pale green beneath, and from six to eight inches in length. *Dorsal sepal* broadly ovate, pure white in the upper half, tinged with bright light green near the base, streaked with rosy purple, and spotted with rich deep purple, lower sepals similar but smaller; *petals* spreading, oblong-obtuse, bright purplish brown, passing into purple towards the apex, narrowly bordered with pale yellow, and bearing on the edge a fringe of reddish brown hairs; *lip* large, with spreading horns, bright brownish purple, the horns yellow. *Staminode* yellow, with a tinge of emerald-green in the centre. It is a cross between *C. barbatum superbum* and *C. insigne*.

CYPRIPEDIUM ASHBURTONIÆ SUPERBUM. *Williams' New Plant Catalogue*, 1889, p. 23.

Many of our subscribers who are not *Cypripedium* growers may think that we are illustrating this genus somewhat too largely, but we consider there cannot be too many of them, if the species and the varieties are carefully selected, in order to weed out the poor and indistinct kinds. The taste for *Cypripediums* has become very popular of late years, and if an ordinary collection of good kinds is selected, flowers may be had every day in the year, so that there is a decided reason for the prevailing interest which is taken in them, and we hope it may continue. Orchid growers of all classes devote much attention to these plants, and since our old friend Dominy made it so plain how hybrids could be obtained, every grower appears to be raising them from seed, and some of them by thousands. This is very encouraging, but careful selection is necessary in choosing the parents, in order to produce brilliant colours and distinctness in form, both of which are required in order to permanently establish the popular taste. Some of the crosses which have been obtained, and are now young plants, should lead to some startling and wonderful results, far exceeding anything which has yet appeared, and which will render us independent, to a great extent, of foreign importations, save for the purpose of establishing new colours among our garden hybrids.

The form whose portrait we here lay before our readers, is a good one, being much superior in colour to the typical plant, and this shows the result of careful selection in the parents; it is the result of a cross between *C. barbatum superbum* and *C. insigne*, whilst the parents of *C. Ashburtoniæ* were *C. barbatum* and *C. insigne*. This plant was distributed to the public by us in the Spring of

1889, and the figure here given was taken from a plant in our own collection in the Victoria and Paradise Nurseries.

Cypripedium Ashburtoniae superbum is very free in habit of growth; it is also an abundant bloomer, and vastly superior to the type, the flowers being larger, and more beautifully coloured. The leaves are from seven to eight inches long, by about an inch in breadth, the ground colour being bright light green, sparingly tessellated with darker green, whilst the under side is of a uniform pale green. The scape bears a single large flower, the dorsal sepal being some two inches in length, and two and a quarter inches in breadth. It is pure white, streaked and spotted with rosy purple, and flushed with green towards the base, the petals being bright purplish brown, full purple towards the points, and margined with pale yellow; lip large, bright brownish purple, yellow beneath towards the base. It blooms during the months of September and October, and continues six weeks or more in full beauty.

This variety is at present very rare, as, like every hybrid *Cypripedium*, it takes a long time to increase; more especially is this felt when all has to be accomplished from one plant. We find it thrive well when potted in rough, turfy, light yellow loam, and fibrous peat, to which may be added with advantage some sphagnum moss and some nodules of charcoal. During the season of active growth it requires a liberal supply of moisture to its roots, but when this is past, less will suffice. *Cypripediums* are seldom quite dormant, and therefore require the soil to be kept constantly moist; shading is also necessary from the direct rays of the brighter sunshine, but they enjoy all the light possible, as this strengthens the foliage, assists in ripening up the growth, and enables them to produce vigorous and highly coloured flowers. These plants, although not very subject to the ravages of insects, yet at times are attacked by them, and therefore care must be given to prevent them spreading, as everything sour and dirty, and insects of all kinds, must be sedulously removed from about them.
