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THE
ORCHID ALBUM,

COMPRISING

COLOURED FIGURES AND DESCRIPTIONS

OF

NEW, RARE, AND BEAUTIFUL

ORCHIDACEOUS PLANTS.

CONDUCTED BY

Plate 498
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THE COLOURED FIGURES BY JOHN NUGENT FITCH, F.L.S.

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CYPRIPEDIUM GRATIXIANUM

CYPRIPEDIUM GRATRIXIANUM.

[PLATE 524.]

Garden Hybrid.

Terrestrial. *Leaves* ovate-lanceolate acute, four and a-half inches long, one and a-half inches broad, light green tessellated with dark green, densely spotted with red at the back. *Scapes* one-flowered. *Flowers* three and a-half inches across; *dorsal sepal* broad and flat, the acute apex slightly incurved, ground colour rosy purple, becoming paler towards the median zone, which is suffused with a yellow tinge at the base, the whole margined with pure white; six or seven converging purple veins occur on each side of the median purple bar, and a few rows of dark purple spots are scattered over the basal half; *petals* broad, of a purplish rose ground colour, which becomes paler towards the median part, changing into a yellowish tint at the base, the whole densely covered with smaller or larger dots of deep purple, mostly arranged in longitudinal rows, becoming especially concentrated at the base; *lip* large, well formed, of a rich deep purple veined with black-purple, and shading off into yellowish green at the back. *Staminode* large, flat, dark purple.

CYPRIPEDIUM GRATRIXIANUM, *Williams, supra.*

The subject of our plate is, without exaggeration, one of the finest and handsomest hybrid *Cypripediums* that have been produced of late. The number of crosses effected in this popular genus is enormous, as a glance at the lists compiled by Mr. Hansen and Mr. Chapman will amply prove, and it is, therefore, not surprising that amongst such a host of forms produced at random, a large proportion are, and must of necessity be, inferior in many respects to others. Of these inferior forms it may safely be predicted that they will, after a short duration, vanish never to be seen again; while the better and finer forms will hold the field as long as *Cypripediums* appeal to the fancy and aesthetic sense of a small section of mankind. With these latter we have no hesitation in classing the hybrid now figured, which for beauty in form and colour will hold its own amid its many competitors for popular favour.

Cypripedium Gratrixianum belongs to a well-marked group of hybrids which includes amongst others such forms as *C. conco-Lawre* and *C. Lawrebel*. It was obtained as a result of crossing *C. bellatulum* with *C. Enfieldense*, this latter, itself a hybrid, being the result of a cross between *C. Hookerae* and *C. Lawrenceanum*. *C. bellatulum* has already given rise to a great number of fine hybrids, all more or less noteworthy. *C. Enfieldense*, on the other hand, has not, hitherto, been employed as the progenitor of new forms; this is no doubt accounted for by its hybrid nature, for, as a rule, hybridisers prefer species for crossing, since hybrids when employed for this purpose frequently prove but indifferent parents, being

rather prone to atavism, or, in other words, they display a tendency to revert to the original forms. *C. Gratrixianum* combines the characters of the three species concerned in its origin—*C. bellatulum* which can be traced in the petals; *C. Hookerae* in the pouch; and *C. Lawrenceanum* in the dorsal sepal.

Cypripedium Gratrixianum has light yellowish green ovate-lanceolate acute leaves, four and a-half inches long and one and a-half inches broad. The flowers are bold and handsome, rather short-stalked. The broad flat dorsal sepal is of a rosy purple ground colour margined with white, and with converging purple stripes; the median portion is much paler, shading into yellowish towards the base, where also occur a few rows of dark purple spots. The petals are broad and somewhat flattened and curved, of a bright purplish rose ground colour, the median portion suffused with pale yellow, which becomes intenser towards the base, the whole covered with innumerable minute spots and dots of a dark purple, arranged mainly in rows, smaller and closer together at the base, larger and more scattered towards the apex. The pouch is somewhat elongated, dark mauve-purple shading into a lighter purple towards the dorsal side, and veined with deep purple laterally.

To succeed well in growing this plant, it should be potted in a mixture of brown peat fibre and living sphagnum moss; ample drainage should be given, as otherwise the peat is apt to become sour, which would be fatal to the well-being of the plant. It will be found to do well in the East Indian house, and during the growing season it requires a liberal supply of water. During the dark and dull days of winter a smaller quantity will suffice, although the plants should never be allowed to become dry; great care and circumspection is therefore required in this respect. The atmosphere also should be kept in a moist state, as otherwise thrips will undoubtedly commit ravages which will permanently disfigure the plants. The subject of our illustration flowered in the collection of S. Gratrix, Esq., of West Point, Whalley Range, Manchester, to whom we have much pleasure in dedicating it. The Orchid collection at West Point is confided to the charge of Mr. McLeod, and bids fair to become one of the finest in the kingdom.
