

THE

GARDENERS' CHRONICLE.

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OF

HORTICULTURE AND ALLIED SUBJECTS.

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THE GARDENERS' CHRONICLE.

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resided in the colony, and whose knowledge of European husbandry has enabled him to manage a Cape farm with considerable success; he is one of the small number of English colonists who were at this time to be met with in the country. This place is called Witteboom, a name which, with great propriety, it has received on account of numerous plantations of large Witteboom, or Silver Trees, which grow about it. The native station of this handsome tree is the sloping ground at the foot of the eastern side of Table Mountain; and at present very large plantations occupy the same situation on the northern side, next to the town. That this space should be the only part in all the colony where it grows wild can be no subject of wonder to any person who has the least knowledge of Cape botany, since the natural places of growth of a multitude of other plants are circumscribed by limits equally contracted."

Here, then, is irrefragable evidence that the Silver Tree was extensively planted long ago in the peninsula, if not elsewhere. From his route map it would appear that Burchell just missed the localities in the Drakensteinberge cited above; and therefore, although he is silent on the subject, the Silver Tree may have existed there in those days. Yet it is surprising that it should have been so long overlooked or disregarded in so accessible a part of the country.

With regard to the cultivation of the Silver Tree Dr. Marloth states it only grows in a soil strongly impregnated with decomposed granite. He nowhere met with it in sandy or slaty soil, and repeated attempts to cultivate the tree in and around Cape Town have, it is said, failed.

With regard to natural means of dispersion, the Silver Tree exhibits a very singular adaptation of the withered perianth, which doubtless assists in conveying the seeds short distances, at all events. Miss North's painting shows some plumed bodies floating away from the opened cones, which puzzled us much until we had examined herbarium specimens, and ascertained what they were. The strongly bearded or plumose, four-lobed, finally scarious perianth breaks away from the base of the light one-seeded nut, the lobes still covering by their tips, and forming an orifice through which the persistent capitate style does not slip. When the fruit is quite ripe and the weather dry and sunny the four lobes of the perianth spread outwards from below, and the winds carry them away, bearing the seed-vessel hanging by the tip of the style; the withered perianth thus forming, as Dr. Marloth observes, an admirable breakfast. Such a contrivance or provision is unique so far as we know, but of course much remains to be learnt in this direction.

In habit of growth the Silver Tree bears some resemblance to a stout Pine or Araucaria, and the cone-like aggregation of the seed-vessels adds to the likeness. It is, however, of comparatively small stature, not exceeding 40 feet in height, even in the most favourable situations. The male and female flowers of all the species of *Leucadendron*, and the allied South African genus, *Aulax*, are borne on different plants, and in consequence of the cones being persistent the females are readily distinguished from the males. This is very striking in *Leucadendron platyspermum*, an expanse of which is represented in one of Miss North's paintings.

The silver, soft, downy leaves of the Silver Tree are crowded, and lie almost flat on the branches, like slates on a roof, each leaf partly covering several others. This down is so dense that it is easy to write or paint upon it when the leaves have been dried; and leaves thus manipulated are among the first curiosities sent home by Europeans arriving at the Cape, *W. B. H.*

MANILLA HEMP.—The plant so well known as the Abaca (*Musa textilis*), from the stem of which Manilla Hemp is prepared, is described as doing remarkably well at Sandakan, in Borneo. The smallness of the population, the well-to-do character of the people, as well as their disinclination to hard work, is said to prevent anything like an industry in the preparation of the fibre being established similar to that in the Philippines. Should a machine, however, be discovered adapted to its production, at however small a profit, there is no limit to the quantity that can be produced.

New Garden Plants.

EPIDENDRUM ARACHNOGLOSSUM (Rehb. f.) CANDIDUM, nov. var.

This is a discovery of Mons. E. André, and was published by this successful traveller in the *Revue Horticole*, Dec. 16, 1882, with a plate. It is also spoken of in the last edition of the *Orchid Growers' Manual*, p. 309, where I am quoted as the author, just as Mons. E. André says—"cette nouvelle espèce a été nommée par M. Reichenbach." I have, however, seen it quoted in excellent papers as *E. arachnoglossum*, André. It is much in the way of the fine *Epidendrum evectum*, Hook. f. The flowers are of the finest amethyst-purple, with a yellow callus; the lip is comparable to the lips of *Epidendrum tricolor* and *E. neogranatense*. The laciniae are, however, very deeply cleft, and the fringes are often toothed, now with one tooth, now with several teeth. On each side of the column are one or two seriate broad lateral calli, the median one being rhombic, usually five-toothed, the median tooth being the most prominent. There are also usually small side calli outside the lateral ones, each side one. I am now very agreeably surprised at the receipt of a fine variety, having white flowers, and only the lateral calli orange. It is likewise a discovery of Mons. E. André, and was kindly forwarded to me by Mons. Godefroy Lebeuf, of Argenteuil, Rue du Sannois, who is so well known as a most enthusiastic orchidist and as a most successful botanic traveller in Cochinchina. *H. G. Rehb. f.*

CYPRIPEDIUM CONCOLOR (Parish) REYNIERI, nov. var.

It is well known that some Orchids produce their most luxuriant varieties in some territories, while they appear in far more modest guise in other regions. One might believe such to be the case with *Cypripedium concolor*. I have before me a wild specimen, gathered by this excellent botanist, as well as the first flowers developed in Europe, and numerous other flowers.

And now comes a grand plant, sent by M. Godefroy Lebeuf, of Argenteuil, Paris, 26, Route de Sannois. It surpasses everything I ever saw of *Cypripedium concolor*—said to be now-a-days a very rare plant, but seen in glorious development with Sir Trevor Lawrence, M.P., President of the Royal Horticultural Society. The very fine, well-marbled, very blunt leaves of the fresh plant attain a span in length, and exceed 2 inches in breadth. The large flowers are of distinct yellow colour; those on the plant are rather vivid, and have on the outside of the sepals a blotch of mauve-purple. The staminode is quite rhombic, with a blunt tooth on each side in front of the apex, ochre, with dark purple spots, and a white (!) margin in front. I had a few weeks ago a flower of *Cypripedium concolor* with a staminode of the same shape, but totally yellow with blackish dots. It was kindly sent me by Mr. E. Harvey, Aigburth, Liverpool.

Then there is another flower, sent by M. Godefroy Lebeuf, with a far darker tint, which is quite superior. It is said to come from a three-flowered inflorescence. I learn that inflorescences with four similarly fac flowers were seen! This would be phenomenal.

M. Godefroy Lebeuf informs me that this was the last discovery of poor Auguste Reynier, who fell a victim to his zeal by bloody hands in Cambodia. It is a great satisfaction to add the name Reynier to this plant, which may have afforded the last satisfaction to him. August Reynier must hereafter be kept in our grateful memory as one of the many martyrs of botany and horticulture. *H. G. Rehb. f.*

CYPRIPEDIUM WINNIANUM, nov. hybr. Angl., ex hort. reg. Veitch.

At my left hand is the *Revue Horticole*, 1885, No. 20, containing M.E. Bergman's interesting memoir, *Les Cypripedium de Siam*; before me are my sketches of *C. Germinianum*, *Drewettianum*, and *Winnianum*, and the last is undescribed. It was raised at the Royal Exotic Nursery of Messrs. J. Veitch & Sons. This time we have as parents *C. villosum* and *C. Druryi*. I am informed by Mr. Harry Veitch that the plant has more the habit of *Cypripedium Druryi* than that of *C. villosum*. The leaf at hand has the

breadth, the dark mark at the base, and that peculiar dark, nearly glaucous green of *C. villosum*. The peduncle has dark red hairs, and the ovary is quite as hairy, yet the hairs are neither as long nor as crowded as those of *Cypripedium villosum*. The bract is much shorter than the ovary, and has some dark purplish spots at the base, longer than it usually is in *C. Druryi*. The upper sepal is oblong-acute, not broad, whitish-yellow, with the centre of dark Indian-purple (colour of Messrs. Winsor & Newton). The lateral sepals form a far smaller body, much shorter than the lip, of the lightest ochre colour. Petals are nearly as in *C. villosum*, reddish on outer side against the upper sepal, yellow on the inner side, with a long and not too narrow brown line on the mid-line, borrowed from *C. Druryi*, and with numerous small brown spots at the base. The lip is that of *C. villosum*, and so is the staminode, yet it is broader than in *C. villosum*, though the shape is the same excepting in breadth.

Mr. Harry Veitch has requested that it may bear the name of Mr. Charles Winn, of Birmingham, one of my very assiduous correspondents, who is so very famous for his splendid *Masdevallias*, among which the little known gorgeous port-wine coloured *M. Roezlii* has often flowered. *H. G. Rehb. f.*

PHAIUS TUBERCULOSUS, Bl.

The excellent variety, sent in February, 1884, by Mr. Sillem from Laurie Park, has reappeared on even a larger scale with Sir Trevor Lawrence, who kindly forwarded me a fine example. The very large side laciniae of the lip may be described as reddish-brown, with scattered small orange spots. The mid-lacinia has mauve blotches on its margin, no mauve-purple ones. The lip has yellow at its base in front and some mauve-purple markings in the middle. I am very pleased with this great beauty, which might be called var. *superba*. *H. G. Rehb. f.*

DISA GRANDIFLORA.

This beautiful and curious ground Orchid was introduced into this country as long ago as 1825, its native home being the top of Table Mountain, behind Cape Town, where it grows in wet peat earth on the margin of lakes and streams, in an atmosphere which, we are told, is often involved in dense mists, which even in the hottest months prevail for a week or a fortnight together, and where the temperature is occasionally as low as 31°, and as high as 95°.

Seeing that this fine plant has been introduced into this country for so long a period, and is so fine a subject when well flowered (sometimes described as the Flower of the Gods), it seems surprising that it is not more generally cultivated, especially when it is known that the chief elements necessary for its successful culture were fairly well understood at least as far back as 1854. At a meeting held at Chiswick in July of that year (see *Gardeners' Chronicle* of that date) a fine specimen of this plant was shown by Mr. Leach, who also, in a letter to the same journal, gave details of his treatment, which agrees with my own, and appears to suit them. The reason, therefore, that this beautiful Orchid is not more generally cultivated cannot be that the necessary treatment is not pretty widely known, but is due, in my opinion, to some local peculiarities and conditions of the atmosphere, and also probably to the properties of the water used, a liberal supply of which is absolutely necessary while in active growth.

I suppose there are very few Orchids the growth of which has puzzled more experienced Orchid growers than this *Disa*; and what makes the matter more tantalising is the fact that at a few places here and there we find its cultivation to be the simplest matter imaginable. Here we have no plants in the garden which give us less trouble than the *Disas*. Probably our rather humid position in the valley of the Druryent, and the heavy rainfall, may have something to do with the success in the growth of this flower, but I am inclined to think that the quality of our water, which is soft, and comes off the peaty moors between here and Chesterfield, has a good deal to do with our success.

Our plants have occupied the same position for some years—namely, a wooden stage in the Cape Heath house (the conditions which suit the Cape Heaths seem to suit the *Disa*), one portion of the stage being over the water-tank, and close to an outer door, which is left open during the day in the summer, as well as the side ventilators opposite, so that there is always a strong current of air playing among the plants. We are careful never to remove