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THE

GARDENERS' CHRONICLE

A Weekly Illustrated Journal

OF

HORTICULTURE AND ALLIED SUBJECTS.

(ESTABLISHED IN 1841.)

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glimpse of Socotra, but its shores are too far away to yield anything plainly discernible; and even Minicoy, an island lying between the Maldives and Laccadives, gives only a faint suggestion of plant-life. Its low-lying land is fringed with scattered Cocoa-nut Palms, of which, later, one sees so many. Before reaching Ceylon, the ship passes within sight of the southern point of India, but not near enough to show what its plants are like. In fact, therefore, the arrival in the harbour of Colombo brings a surprise. Coming down to the shore, and extending as far as the eye can reach on either side, are crooked* Cocoa-nut Palms, here and there intermingled with trees having foliage of the deepest green. A botanist is struck at once by the superb capabilities of such a country for a tropical garden. These capabilities were not overlooked by the Dutch, who succeeded the Portuguese in possession. A Botanic garden was founded by them at Slave Island, in Colombo, but when the Dutch were driven out by the British, it fell into neglect. There was, however, at this period, an excellent garden connected with the country place of the first English Governor, near Colombo, which, at the beginning of his century, was under the charge of a naturalist, who gave it somewhat the character of a botanical garden.

In 1810 Sir Joseph Banks sketched the plan for a botanical garden in Slave Island, Colombo, and succeeded in transferring thither from Canton Mr. Kerr, who became its chief. According to the work from which I have derived these facts, the Slave Island garden was subject to floods, and consequently the establishment was moved to Kalutara. One finds here and there in Colombo traces of the old occupancy remaining in the names of some of the streets—"Kew," for instance. From Kalutara the garden was transferred, in 1821, to its present site. Since that time, the large garden has established four branches, in order to secure all the advantages which can come from having land at different altitudes and with different exposures.

The branch gardens are—(1) Badulla, founded in 1836, in the eastern part of the island, with an elevation somewhat over 2000 feet. "The climate here is somewhat drier than on the western side of the hill region, receiving but little rain with the south-west monsoon." (2) Anuradhapura, dating from 1833, about a hundred miles north of the large garden, is the ancient capital of the island. Besides the interesting ruins at this point, which are well worth seeing, there exists the oldest historical tree in the world, *Ficus religiosa* (the sacred Bo), assigned to 283 n.c. This garden has a short rainy season and a hot dry climate. (3) Henaragodda, 33 feet above the sea, and thoroughly tropical, is on the railroad running from Colombo to Kandy. It was founded in 1876. Here certain plants which cannot be grown at Peradeniya, are very successfully cultivated. (4) Hakgala, established in 1890, as a nursery for Cinchona cultivation, is near Nuwara, Eliya (commonly pronounced "Nevralia") the famous sanitarium. It is almost 6000 feet above sea-level,† in a place of surpassing beauty. Above the garden is a frowning double cliff 1500 feet high, and all around the views are most attractive. The Gate affords one of the best of these. The landscape reaches over the Uva district towards the Haputale gap and the Madulima hills. On entering the garden the bewilderment begins. On every hand one sees species in the most grotesque juxtaposition. Plants from Australia, such as Casuarinas and Acacias, are perfectly at home with East and West Indian, Japanese, and English plants; of the latter there are many which seemed thrifty and well established.

Although the garden is used primarily for experi-

mental purposes, it has been laid out with regard to effectiveness of grouping, and with remarkable success. A botanical visitor is, however, constantly trying to separate in his mind the different plants from the curious collocations which everywhere abound, and demonstrate better than in any other place I have ever seen the wide range of tolerance of climate. The superintendent, Mr. W. Nock, who has had large experience in the West Indies, has carried on some interesting experiments in acclimatizing plants from the western hemisphere, such as "Cherimoyer" and the like. There are few plants in the garden more attractive from an economic point of view than the vegetables of doubtful promise, such as Arracacha, and those of assured culinary position, "Choco" or "Chocho" (*Sechium edule*), for example. Some of the medicinal plants in hand were doing well in every way, while others have proved somewhat disappointing, for instance, Jalap and Ipecacuanha.

The Ferns, especially the Tree Ferns, and the species of *Eucalyptus*, form one of the marked successes at this garden. Mr. Nock stated that the most troublesome weed in the garden is a species (perhaps more than a single species) of *Oxalis*; it is simply impossible to eradicate it. G. L. G.

(To be continued.)

NEW OR NOTEWORTHY PLANT.

CYRIPEDIUM CHAMBERLAINIANUM, *O'Brien, n. sp.* (See fig. 34.)

This is a surprisingly beautiful and distinct novelty, and quite unexpected by its lucky importers, Messrs. F. Sander & Co., of St. Albans, who, when sending their collector to a hitherto unsearched part of New Guinea, had little hopes of gaining such a plant, which, in addition to being an entirely new species, is also the first of a totally new section of *Cyripedium*. The plant is robust, and resembles a giant *C. Spicerianum*, or it might easily be taken for a large *Angraecum pellucidum*, so distinct is its growth from that of any other species.

From the evidence of the dried spikes sent over by the collector, and those which opened immediately after their arrival, and from which our illustration was prepared, it is seen that native specimens have spikes showing from twelve to twenty or even more flowers on a spike, each flower springing from a stout and ornamental bract. The flowers themselves may be likened in colour to those of *C. superbiens* or *C. Morgani*, but in their botanical features there is nothing to compare them with. The dorsal sepal is yellowish-white, with six rosy-purple lines, three on each side of the mid-rib, and the base of the sepal has a profusion of rosy-purple spots. The lower sepal is similar to the upper, but smaller; and a very peculiar feature in both is, that they are strongly pubescent or hairy on the backs. The petals are spreading, curled, and twisted, and beautifully spotted with crimson, the margins undulated and furnished with white hairs at the edges. The labellum or pouch is white, beautifully and densely spotted with rose colour on the lower portion. Altogether it is a charming plant, and well worthy to bear the name of the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., to whom Messrs. Sander have requested it to be dedicated. *James O'Brien.*

THE HOTHOUSES OF H.I.M. THE EMPEROR FREDERIC AT CRONBERG.

The Empress Frederic's castle at Cronberg is built among most picturesque and mountainous scenery. The air which blows from the adjacent mountains is extremely pure, and doubtless very favourable to the growth of Orchids and alpine. Annexed to the castle are many greenhouses, three of which are over 357 feet long. Each is divided into four compartments, varying from 65 to 97 feet long, by 19½ feet wide, and 10½ feet high. One of these houses is devoted to Orchida, and was selected because of its particularly favourable position. It contains a great number of the rarest and most

beautiful species and varieties, many plants being of unusual size, and now in full bloom or showing great promise for the future. A table 6 feet wide is set apart in the centre of this house, and decorated with hothouse and ornamental-foliaged plants; many choice and beautiful species are represented. On each side of this stand a path, 3 feet wide, leads past all the stages, which are about 3 feet wide and raised 2½ feet above the ground. The space beneath the shelves is bordered with red ornamental tiles.

Between the stages and the wall is a space 3 inches wide, to allow the warmed air to circulate. The shelves are not perforated, but the pots are not stood directly upon them, being raised on a Pitch-Pine lattice-work 4 inches high, so that the air can freely circulate; this arrangement also enables zinc basins full of water to be placed near the plants, so as to increase the humidity of the atmosphere. The house is heated by twelve pipes, six on each side, so that in spite of the extent, an even temperature of 64° to 68° can be maintained. This charming building contains a considerable number of Orchids, all furnished by the Horticulture Internationale, the fine foliage of which fully attests the good care taken of them and the appropriateness of the locality chosen. Among the Orchids we may cite: sturdy specimens of different varieties of *Laelia purpurata*; good varieties of *Cattleya labiata autumnalis*, which have just bloomed well; the rare *Laelia grandis tenebrosa*, so much admired when shown this year for the first time, and which is now in apathe; *Cattleya Mendeli*, *C. Mossiae*, *C. anrea*, *C. gigas*, *C. Percivaliana*, with good promise of bloom; *C. granulosa*, various fine plants of *Phalaenopsis Schilleriana*, *P. amabilis*, *P. grandiflora*, and other beautiful varieties; twelve splendid *Angraecum sesquipedale* covered with buds, showing excellent cultivation, 18 to 24 inches high, and of remarkable beauty; their graceful leaves are of a sombre green colour, entire all the way down to the pot; *Oncidium Lanceanum*, which has recently flowered; a quantity of *Dendrobium bigibbum* which has been in bloom five months, and is still covered with clusters of flowers; *Grammatophyllum Ellisii*, and other good species; *Houlletia odoratissima Lindeni*; fine plants of *Laelia elegans*; of *Rodriguezia* (*Ernlingtonia*) *rubescens*, a charming species, the smallest plant of which has borne since the commencement of the season a dozen clusters of pure white flowers, most graceful in form. They began to come into leaf at once, and at the end of ten days some of them had as many as fifteen shoots, all well-rooted. As soon as the blooms were faded, the flower-stems were cut, and the surface of the compost dressed with living sphagnum, in which roots soon formed abundantly; to this treatment, the vigour of the plants may, doubtless, be attributed. The plants of *Rodriguezia pubescens* are hung about a foot from the glass, as are the *Phalaenopsis*, certain *Paphiopsis*, *Stanhopea*, *Miltonia Roezli*, *M. Phalaenopsis*, and *M. vexillaria*, now in full bloom, and many other species, the vigorous health of which leaves nothing to be desired. Other hot-house plants are doing well in the same house, especially the *Nepenthes*, which are hung near the entrance, and bear many graceful pitchers. The other houses contain various plants; *Stephanotis floribunda* climbs along the rafters; *Cissus Lindeni* and *C. discolor*, the charming *Tropaeolum Lindeni*, newly imported by the Horticulture Internationale, has evergreen foliage of an excellent colour, and promises to take a first place as an ornamental plant; there are also *Passiflora triloba*, another recent importation, and many others. One house is full of *Gardenia grandiflora*, well grown, and blooming abundantly; others are filled with Pinks and other plants requiring a similar temperature. Finally, there is a house especially built for cool Orchids; it is about 65 feet long, 13 feet wide, and 7½ feet high; the shelves to the right and left are about 2 feet above the ground; in the centre is a path about 3 feet wide. The shelves support Pitch-Pine lattices of various heights, on which the pots are arranged on steps, so that the plants may be as near the glass as possible. In this house is a fine collection of *Odontoglossum*, chiefly *O. Alexandrie*

* Crooked conveys the idea of sharp angles, whereas the Cocoa-nut Palm is gracefully bent.

† Somewhat over 5000 feet would be more correct.