

FREDERICK BOYLE

THE WOODLANDS
ORCHIDS, DESCRIBED
AND ILLUSTRATED

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Described and Illustrated**

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Frederick Boyle

The Woodlands Orchids, Described and Illustrated / With Stories of Orchid-Collecting

HOW THE COLLECTION WAS FORMED

This question may be answered shortly; it was formed – at least the beginning of it – under compulsion. After fifteen years of very hard work, Mr. Measures broke down. The doctor prescribed a long rest, and insisted on it; but the patient was equally determined not to risk the career just opening, with an assurance of success, by taking a twelve-months' holiday. Reluctantly the doctor sought an alternative. Yachting he proposed – hunting – shooting; at length, in despair, horse-racing! Zealously and conscientiously undertaken, that pursuit yields a good deal of employment for the mind. And one who follows it up and down the country must needs spend several hours a day in the open air. Such was the argument; we may suspect that the good man had a sporting turn and hoped to get valuable tips from a grateful client.

But nothing would suit. After days of cogitation, at his wits' end, the doctor conceived an idea which might have occurred to some at the outset. 'Take a house in the suburbs,' he advised, 'with a large garden. Cultivate some special variety of plant and make a study of it.' This commended itself. As a boy Mr. Measures loved gardening. In the Lincolnshire hamlet where he was born, the vicar took pride in his roses and things, as is the wont of vicars who belong to the honest old school. It was an hereditary taste with the Measures' kin. Forthwith a house, with seven acres of land about it, was purchased at Streatham – 'The Woodlands,' destined to win renown in the annals of Orchidology.

But the special variety of plant had still to be selected. It was to be something with a flower, as Mr. Measures understood; hardy, and so interesting in some way, no matter what, that a busy man could find distraction in studying it. Such conditions are not difficult for one willing to spend hours over the microscope; but in that case, if the mind were relieved, the body would suffer. At the present day orchids would suggest themselves at once; but twenty or twenty-five years ago they were not so familiar to the public at large. One friend proposed roses, another carnations, a third chrysanthemums, and a fourth, fifth, and sixth proposed chrysanthemums, carnations, and roses. Though the house and the large garden had been provided, Mr. Measures did not see his way.

I am tempted to quote some remarks of my own, published in October 1892. 'I sometimes think that orchids were designed at their inception to comfort the elect of human beings in this anxious age – the elect, I say, among whom the rich may or may not be included. Consider! To generate them must needs have been the latest "act of creation," as the ancient formula goes – in the realm of plants and flowers at least. The world was old already when orchids took place therein; for they could not have lived in those ages which preceded the modern order. Doubtless this family sprang from some earlier and simpler organisation, like all else. But the Duke of Argyll's famous argument against the "Origin of Man" applies here: that organisation could not have been an orchid. Its anatomy forbids fertilisation by wind, or even, one may say, by accident. Insects are necessary; in many cases insects of peculiar structure. Great was the diversion of the foolish – eminent savants may be very foolish indeed – when Darwin pronounced that if a certain moth, which he had never seen nor heard of, were to die out in Madagascar, the noblest of the Angraecums must cease to exist. To the present day no one has seen or heard of that moth, but the humour of the assertion is worn out. Only admiring wonder remains, for we know now that the induction is unassailable. Upon such chances does the life of an orchid depend. It follows that insects must have been well established before those plants came into being; and insects in their turn could not live until the earth had long "borne fruit after its kind."

‘But from the beginning of things until this century, until this generation, one might almost say – civilised man could not enjoy the boon... We may fancy the delight of the Greeks and the rivalry of millionaires at Rome had these flowers been known. “The Ancients” were by no means unskilful in horticulture – witness that astonishing report of the display at the coronation of Ptolemy Philadelphus, given by Athenaeus. But of course they could not have known how to begin growing orchids, even though they obtained them – I speak of epiphytes and foreign species, naturally. From the date of the Creation – which we need not fix – till the end of the Eighteenth Century, ships were not fast enough to convey them alive; a fact not deplorable since they would have been killed forthwith on landing.

‘... So I return to the argument. It has been seen that orchids are the latest and most finished work of the Creator; that the blessing was withheld from civilised man until, step by step, he gained the conditions necessary to receive it. Order and commerce in the first place; mechanical invention next, such as swift ships and easy communications; glass-houses, and a means of heating them which could be regulated with precision and maintained with no excessive care; knowledge both scientific and practical; the enthusiasm of wealthy men; the thoughtful and patient labour of skilled servants – all these were needed to secure for us the delights of orchid culture. What boon granted to mankind stands in like case? I think of none. Is it unreasonable then to believe, as was said, that orchids were designed at their inception to comfort the elect in this anxious age?’¹

Mr. Measures, however, was quite unconscious of his opportunities. It was mere chance which put him on the right track. Tempted by the prospect of obtaining something, forgotten now, in the way of roses or carnations or chrysanthemums, he attended a local sale. Presently some pots of *Cypripedium barbatum* were put up, in bud and flower. They seemed curious and pretty – he bought them. It was a relief to find that his gardener did not show any surprise or embarrassment at the sight – appeared to be familiar with the abnormal objects indeed. But it would have been subversive of discipline to ask how they were called. So Mr. Measures worked round and round the secret, putting questions – what heat did the things require, what soil, would the green-house already built suit them, and so forth? Finally, in talking, the gardener pronounced the name – *Cypripedium*. Planting this long word deep and firm in his memory Mr. Measures hurried to the house, looked it out in the multitudinous books on gardening already stored there, and discovered that *Cypripedium* is an orchid. Pursuing the investigation further, he learned that orchids are the choicest of flowers, that several thousand species of them, all beautiful and different, may be cultivated, that some are easy and some difficult. It dawned upon him then that this might well be the special variety of plant which would answer his purpose.

But he was not the man to choose a hobby without grave deliberation and experiment. The very next essay, only three days afterwards, suggested a doubt. He saw a plant of *Dendrobium thysiflorum* in flower, and carried it home in a whirl of astonishment and delight; but next morning every bloom had faded, and the gardener assured him that no more could be expected for twelve months. This was a damper. Evidently a prudent person should think twice before accumulating plants which flower but once a year, and then last only four days. But just at that time, by good fortune, he made acquaintance with Mr. Godseff who, in short, explained things – not too hastily, but in a long course of instruction. And so, making sure of every step as he advanced, Mr. Measures gradually formed the Woodlands collection.

Perhaps it would be logical to describe the arrangement of our treasures. But an account which might be useful would demand much space, and it could interest very few readers. It may suffice, therefore, to note that there are thirty-one ‘houses,’ distributed in nine groups, or detached buildings. All through, the health and happiness of the plants are consulted in the first place, the convenience of

¹ It seems not unlikely that scholars may read this and misunderstand. I am not ignorant that ‘the Ancients’ had frames, probably warmed green-houses – since they flowered roses at mid-winter – and certainly conservatories. But these facts do not bear upon the argument.

visitors in the second, and show not at all; which is to say that the roofs are low, and the paths allow two persons to walk abreast in comfort but no more.

The charge of these thirty-one houses is committed to Mr. J. Coles, with thirteen subordinates regularly employed. Mr. Coles was bred if not born among orchids, when his father had charge of the late Mr. Smee's admirable garden, at Wallington. After rising to the post of Foreman there, he entered the service of Captain Terry, Peterborough House, Fulham, as Foreman of the orchid houses; but two years afterwards this fine collection was dispersed, at Captain Terry's death. Then Mr. Coles went to enlarge his experience in Messrs. Sander's vast establishment at St. Albans. In due time the office of Orchid and Principal Foreman in the Duke of Marlborough's houses was offered to him, and at Blenheim he remained eight years. Thence he proceeded to the Woodlands.

THE CATTLEYA HOUSE

Our Cattleya House is 187 feet long, 24 feet wide; glass screens divide it into seven compartments. The roof, of a single span, is 11 feet high in the centre, 4 feet at the sides.

The compartment we enter first is devoted to *Laelia elegans* mostly. On the big block of tufa in front, blooms of Cattleya and *Laelia* are displayed nearly all the year in small tubes among the ferns and moss; for we do not exhaust our plants by leaving the flowers on them when fully open. Scarlet Anthuriums crown the block, and among these, on the bare stone, is a *Laelia purpurata*, growing strongly, worth observation. For this plant was deadly sick last year, beyond hope of recovery; as an experiment Mr. Coles set it on the tufa, wired down, and forthwith it began to pick up strength. But in fact the species loves to fix itself on limestone when at home in Santa Catarina, as does *L. elegans*.

It may be desirable to point out that the difference between Cattleyas and *Laelias* as genera is purely 'botanical' – serious enough in that point of view, but imperceptible to the eye.

A special glory of Woodlands is the collection of *L. elegans*. In this house, where only the large plants are stored, we count five hundred; seven hundred more are scattered up and down. Nowhere in the world can be seen so many examples of this exquisite variety – certainly not in its birthplace, for there it is very nearly exterminated. In such a multitude, rare developments of form and colour must needs abound, for no orchid is so variable. In fact, *elegans* is merely a title of convenience, with no scientific value. It dwells – soon we must say it dwelt – in the closest association with *Laelia purpurata*, *Cattleya intermedia*, and *Cattleya guttata Leopoldii*; by the intermingling of these three it was assuredly created. Mr. Rolfe has satisfied himself that the strain of *Laelia purpurata* is always present. By alliance with *Catt. Leopoldii* the dark forms were produced; by alliance with *Catt. intermedia* the white. Since that misty era, of course, cross-fertilisation has continued without ceasing, and the combinations are endless.

Evidently this suggestion is reasonable, but if an unscientific person may venture to say so, it does not appear to be sufficient. Among six flowers of *L. elegans* five will have sepals and petals more or less rosy, perhaps only a shade, perhaps a tint so deep that it approaches crimson, like *Blenheimensis* or *Turneri*. Could one of the three parents named supply this colour? Two of them, indeed, are often rosy; in some rare instances the hue of *L. purpurata* may be classed as deep rose. But these are such notable exceptions that they would rather suggest a fourth parent, a red Cattleya or *Laelia*, which has affected not *elegans* alone but *purpurata* and *intermedia* also. Nothing of the sort exists now, I believe, in the island of Santa Catarina. But we are contemplating aeons of time, and changes innumerable may have occurred. The mainland is but a few miles away; once Santa Catarina was attached to it. And there, a short distance to the north, lives *Laelia pumila*, which might supply the rosy tinge.

Several artificial hybrids of *Catt. guttata Leopoldii* have been raised. By alliance with *Catt. Dowiana* it produces *Catt. Chamberlainiana*; with *Catt. superba*, *Feuillata*; with *Catt. Hardyana*, *Fowlerii*; with *Catt. Loddigesii*, *Gandii*; with *Catt. Mendelii*, *Harrisii*; with *Laelio-Cattleya Marion*, C. H. Harrington; with *Catt. quadricolor*, *Mitchelii*; with *Catt. Warcewiczii*, *Atalanta*. *Catt. Victoria Regina* also is assumed to be a natural hybrid of *Leopoldii* with *Catt. labiata*. There may be other crosses probably, since no official record of Hybridisation exists as yet. Curiously enough, however, no one seems to have mated *Cattleya Leopoldii* with *Laelia purpurata* so far as I can learn. Thus it is not yet proved that *L. elegans* sprang from that alliance.

But the hybridisers have an opening here not less profitable than interesting. For the natural supply is exhausted – if any stickler for accuracy object that some still arrive every year, they may overhaul their Boswell and make a note. Sir, said his hero, if I declare that there is no fruit in an orchard, I am not to be charged with speaking falsely because a man, examining every tree, finds two apples and three pears – I have not the book at hand to quote the very words. When *L. elegans* was

discovered, in 1847, it must have been plentiful in its native home beyond all other species on record. The first collectors so described it. But that home was a very small island, where it clung to the rocks. Every plant within reach has long since been cleared away; those remaining dwell in perilous places on the cliffs. To gather them a man must be let down from above, or he must risk his life in climbing from below. But under these conditions the process of extermination still proceeds, and in a time to be counted by months it will be complete.

In describing a few of the most precious varieties at Woodlands, I may group them in a manner to display by contrast the striking diversities which an orchid may assume while retaining the essential points that distinguish it from others. One form, however, I must mention here, for it is too common to be classed among peculiarities, yet to my mind its colouring is the softest and most dainty of all. Petal and sepal are 'stone-colour,' warmed, one cannot say even tinged, with crimson. Nature has no hue more delicate or sweeter.

Adonis.— Bright rosy petals – sepals paler – lip and edges of lobes carmine.

F. Sander.— The latest pseudo-bulb measures 2 feet 3 inches – topping the best growth of its native forest by six inches; from base to top of the spike, 4 feet less 1 inch, and as thick as a walking-cane. This grand plant has been in cultivation for three years. The sepals and petals are those of *L. e. Turneri*; the lip resembles a fine *L. purpurata*.

The plant next to this, unnamed, has pseudo-bulbs almost as long, but scarcely thicker than straws.

Empress.— A very dark form of *Turneri*.

Medusa.— Tall, slender pseudo-bulbs – very dark.

Neptune, on the contrary, has pseudo-bulbs short and fat, whilst the colouring is pale.

H. E. Moojen.— Doubtless a natural hybrid with *L. purpurata*, which takes equally after both parents.

Godseffiana.— Nearly white; the broad lip carmine – lobes of the same hue, widely expanded.

Mrs. F. Sander.— A round flower, very dark rose; sepals and petals dotted all over, as in *Cattleya Leopoldii*.

Red King.— Yellowish throat. Lip good colour and round, but narrow, without the prolongation of some or the lateral extension of others. Curiously like the shape of *L. Perrinii*.

Stella.— Dusky rose and similarly spotted, but different in shape – sepals and petals much thinner.

Boadicea.— Sepals and petals deep rose. Long shovel lip crimson-lake.

H. G. Gifkins.— The sepals are palest green, with a rosy tinge; petals pale mauve. The lip, maroon-crimson, spreads out broadly from a neck almost half an inch long, and its deep colour stretches right up the throat.

Mrs. R. H. Measures.— Pure white, even the lip, except a touch of purple-crimson in the centre and slender crimson veins.

L. – C. Harold Measures.— A fine hybrid of *L. e. Blenheimensis* and *Catt. superba splendens*, which takes mostly after the former in colouring, the latter in shape. It is a round flower, with a crimson lip immensely broad; two small yellow spots are half concealed beneath the tube. Sepals greenish tawny, petals dull pink with crimson lines.

Sade Lloyd.— A very pretty form. Sepals and petals rosy, tinted with fawn colour. The crimson lip is edged with a delicate white line, as are the lobes, which fold completely over the tube.

Doctor Ryan is distinguished by a very long protruding lip.

Ophelia.— As big and as round as *Catt. Mossiae*. Tube very thick and wide.

Macfarlanei.— We have two so named. In this grand example the pseudo-bulbs are more than 2 feet high, proportionately thick. Eight or nine flowers on the spike. Sepals and petals glaucous green. Long lip of brightest crimson.

Leucotata.— Sepals and petals white with rosy tips – lip white, saving rosy lines and a rosy stain.

Nyleptha.— Sepals and petals fawn colour, edged with rose. Very wide lip of deepest crimson.

Haematochila.— Sepals stone-colour flushed with pink, petals dusky pink. Lip carmine-purple, rather narrow, shaped like a highly ornamental spade.

Paraleuka.— All snowy white save the carmine lip, the form of which is curiously neat and trim.

Tenebrosa.— In this specially dark variety the tube is long, closely folded, rose-white, with lines of crimson proceeding from the back. As they meet at the lower edge they form a border as deep in hue as the lip. But our darkest elegans, eighteen years in the collection, has not bloomed for six seasons past.

Schilleriana splendens.— Sepals and petals white, with a faintest rosy tinge and a yellow stain on the midrib. Lip long, straight, forked at the tip, liveliest crimson-purple.

Stelzneriana.— Rosy-white. The crimson of the lip does not spread all over but lies in a triangular blotch.

Measuresiana.— Sepals greenish-yellow, the leaf-like petals similar, pink towards the edges, lined with rose. Both spotted at the tip with crimson. The lip is that of Catt. bicolor, short comparatively, straight, and darkest crimson.

Ladymead.— The white sepals and petals have a palest tinge of rose. On the lip are two broad yellow eyes after the fashion of Catt. gigas.

Venus.— Almost white. Petals veined, sepals dotted, with crimson – the underside of both heavily stained. Lip almost fawn-colour at the edges, with veins widening and deepening into crimson at the throat.

Luculenta.— A very pretty hybrid of Messrs. Sander's raising, palest mauve. Lip rather narrow but grand in colour. Shovel-shaped.

Frederico.— A very odd variety – small. The stone-coloured sepals are outlined with rose, the petals with purplish pink. Both are speckled with brown. Lip brightest maroon-crimson, prettily scalloped.

Platychila.— Pale purple. Remarkable for its immense crimson lip.

Luciana.— Green petals, curling strongly towards the tip; petals widening from the stalk like a leaf, pink with a green midrib. The lobes white, narrow, square, and deepest crimson, the lip that of Catt. bicolor.

Monica.— Snow-white. Petals broad, sepals strongly depressed. In the middle of the spreading crimson lip is a patch almost white.

Tautziana.— Sepals mauve, petals violet, somewhat darker, lip almost maroon. It is singular in shape also, forked like a bird's tail.

Blenheimensis.— Sepals and petals rose with a violet tinge; very broad labellum with a distinct neck, emerging from a short tawny tube – carmine in the throat, purplish at the edges.

Macroloba.— The lobes here are white and enormous. Enormous also is the lip, and singularly beautiful, deepest crimson at the throat, with a broad purple margin netted over with crimson lines.

Juno.— This also has a very large white tube. Sepals and petals rosy, rather slender, fine crimson lip.

Matuta.— Large, broad and shapely. Sepals greenish, with a pink tinge, petals rosy-tawny. Tube very short, lip brightest crimson, standing out clear as a flag.

Minerva.— One of the most spreading, but thin. Colour rose, the petals darker. Narrow sepals. Tube white. Lip carmine.

Princess Stephanie.— Sepals bright green, petals slightly green, edged with pale purple, and crimson lines. Bright lip after the model of Catt. bicolor.

Amphion.— A dark variety. The long lip has two eyes like Catt. gigas.

Beatrice.— A hybrid of L.e. Schilleriana and L. purpurata, remarkable for its lip, long and shovel-shaped, nearly the same breadth throughout.

Morreniana.— Sepals dullish red purple – the lower strongly bowed, as are the wide petals of similar hue. The lip spreads on either side of the white tube like the wings of a purple-crimson butterfly.

Mrs. Mahler.— A hybrid – Catt. Leop. × Catt. bicolor. Very small but very pretty. Sepals palest green, petals almost white, tinged with pink at the edges. The shovel-shaped lip pinkish crimson.

Euracheilas.— Sepals dusky stone-colour, edged with pink, petals all dusky pink. Very large but narrow. The maroon-crimson lip extends at right angles from the tube, without any neck.

Schilleriana.— The variety most clearly allied to *L. purpurata*. White or palest rose of sepal and petal, the latter marked with purplish lines at the base. Lip a grand purple-crimson, fading sharply towards the edges.

Weathersiana.— Sepals palest tawny suffused with rose, petals mauve. The broad lip of fine colour is so strongly indented that it resembles the bipennis of the Amazons.

Euspatha.— Reichenbach suggested that this is a hybrid of *L. Boothiana* or *L. purpurata* with some *Cattleya* – probably *intermedia*. It is white, with broad, sepals and petals. The tube is open nearly all its length, and the wide lip of crimson, fading to purplish edges, shows scarcely an indentation.

Hallii.— Crimson-purple sepals – petals darker; the lip approaches maroon.

Oweniae.— In this case the sepals and petals – which are leaf-shaped – stand out boldly, straight on end – rosy with mauve shading, more pronounced in the latter; lip round, of a charming carmine.

Incantans.— A very large and stately bloom. Sepals of the tender warm stone so often mentioned, petals broad and waved, of the same colour down the middle, flushing to rosy purple on each side. A fine crimson-velvet lip.

Melanochites is a very symmetrical flower, though not ‘compact,’ as the phrase goes. All lively rose-lake, the petals a darker tone. The grand broad lip of purple crimson has a pretty yellow blotch on either side beneath the tube. It is sharply forked.

Pyramus.— Sepals of the flushed stone-colour which I, at least, admire so much; but the flush is more conspicuous than usual. Petals clear rose. Lip vivid crimson, with the same yellow blotches under the white tube.

Bella.— The purplish crimson sepals and petals are tipped with buff. Lip shovel-shaped, dark crimson.

Sappho.— Here the pale purple sepals only are tipped with buff, while the petals, which curl over, are rose. The carmine of the lip is very pretty.

Macfarlanei II.— Sepals of the same colour, but greenish, strongly marked with the distinctive spots of *Catt. Leopoldii*, edged with rose; petals rose, lined with crimson on either side of the white midrib. The long tube opening shows a strongly yellow throat. The labellum is short, but superb in colour.

Myersiana.— A large form. Sepals dusky, tinged with crimson at the edges. Petals softly crimson. Very long tube. The crimson lip has a pale margin, and a pale blotch in the front.

Cleopatra.— One of the very best. Like that above in petal and sepal, but paler. The broad tube, however, is snow-white, saving a touch of magenta-crimson, bright as a ruby, at the tip of the lobes. And the lip, finely frilled, is all magenta-crimson, with not a mark upon it from throat to edge.

Wolstenholmae.— White, the sepals tinted with purple. Petals broad, with a purple outline. Lip narrow and long, of a colour unique, which may be described as crimson-purple. In the throat are two curious white bars; between them run arching purple lines close set, which, on the outer side of the bars, extend to the edge of the lip. A very remarkable flower.

Eximia.— Also very remarkable – not to say uncanny. The narrow sepals and petals, almost white, have a mottling of rosy mauve along the edges, which looks unwholesome, as if caused by disease. But the long paddle-shaped lip, crimson, changing to purple as it expands, is very fine. It has two pale yellow ‘eyes’ elongated in an extraordinary manner.

Lord Roberts.— Very handsome and peculiar. The colour of the sepals, strongly folded back, is warm grey, tinged and faintly lined with crimson; this tinge is much more pronounced in the petals. The large tubular lip, finely opened, is uniform crimson-magenta, not so dark as usual.

A LEGEND OF ROEZL

So soon as I began to take interest in orchids I was struck with the number of odd facts and incidents in that field of botany. One gains but a glimpse of them, as a rule, in some record of travel or some scientific treatise; and at an early date it occurred to me that if the stories to which these fragments belong could be recovered, they would prove to be not only curious and interesting but amusing – sometimes terrible. I began to collect, therefore, and in the pages following I offer some of the results.

It is right to begin with a legend of Roezl, if only because his name will often recur; but also he was incomparably the greatest of those able and energetic men who have roamed the savage world in search of new plants for our study and enjoyment. Almost any other mortal who had gone through adventures and experiences such as his in our time would have made a book and a sensation; but the great collector never published anything, I believe, beyond a statement of scientific facts from time to time. This is not the place to deal with his career; I am only telling stories. But it is not to be dismissed without a word.

Roezl will be gratefully remembered so long as science and horticulture survive the triumph of democracy. I have heard it alleged that he discovered eight hundred new species of plant or tree. It is credible. In the memoir published by the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, which was brief of necessity, fourscore were enumerated, with the addition, here, of 'many others,' there, of 'etc.' Roezl was no specialist. A wise regard for his own interest confined him almost to orchids in the later years. But in his catalogue of achievements I find new lilies, new conifers, fuchsias, agaves, cacti, begonias, saxifrage, dahlias, convolvuli, tropaeolums, tacsonias – a multitude, in fact, beyond reckoning. In one expedition he sent eight tons of orchids to Europe; in another ten tons of cacti, agaves, dion, and orchids! The record of his travels is startling; and it must be observed that Roezl's first aim always was to escape from the beaten track. His journeyings were explorations. Many an Indian tribe never saw a white man before, and some, perhaps, have never seen one since. Mexico was his first hunting-ground, and thither he returned more than once; Cuba the second. Thence he was drawn to the Rocky Mountains, California, and Sierra Nevada. Then in succession he visited Panama, New Granada, Sierra Nevada again, California again, Washington Territory, Panama again, Bonaventura, the Cauca valley, Antioquia, Northern Peru, crossed the Andes, returned to Bonaventura, and thence to Europe. Starting again he searched Colorado Territory, New Mexico, California, the Sierra Madre; worked his way to Caracas, thence through Venezuela, crossed to Cuba, to Vera Cruz, explored the state of Oajaca in Mexico, sailed to Lima, crossed the Andes again to Tarma and Changamaga, back into Southern Peru, wandered as far as the Lake of Titicaca, searched Bolivia, traversed the Snowy Mountains to Yungas, back to Lima and Arica, crossed the Andes a third time, visited Ecuador, and made his way back to the valley of the Cauca. How many thousand miles of journeying this chronicle represents is a problem for laborious youth. And the botanist uses roads, railways, and horses only to get him from one scene of operations to another. He works afoot.

It is good to know that Roezl had his reward. Eighteen years ago he died, full of years and honours, in his native Bohemia. And the Kaiser himself was represented by a high dignitary at the unveiling of his statue in Prague.

The experiences I am about to tell were made in the course of that long march through the woods from La Guayra in Venezuela to Ocaña in New Granada. Among the special trophies of it was *Cattleya Roezlii*, a variety of *Cattleya speciosissima*; but I am not aware that the secluded tribe whose habits interested Roezl so much had any immediate connection with this plant. Perhaps before going further it may be well to note that any assertion of the great Collector might be admitted not only as an honest report, but also as a fact which he had verified, so far as was possible. Dr. Johnson was not more careful to speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

It was somewhere round the sources of the Amazons that Roezl sojourned for a while in a village of those strange people whom the Spaniards call Pintados – ‘painted’ Indians. Their colour, in fact, is piebald – light brown, dark brown, and a livid tint commonly described as red, in blotches. They are seen occasionally in Guiana, more rarely in Venezuela and Brazil. The colouring is ascribed to disease, rather because it is so hideous and abnormal, perhaps, than for a solid reason. Roezl thought it ‘natural.’

He was making his way through those endless forests by compass, with two mestizos from Columbia who had served him on a former journey, and a negro boy. For guides and carriers he depended on the Indians, who passed him from settlement to settlement. It is fitting to observe here that Roezl never carried firearms of any sort at any time – so he used to say. Of great stature and prodigious muscle, utterly fearless, never unprepared, happen what might, he passed forty years in such wandering as I have outlined, and never had occasion to strike a blow. Several times he found himself between contending factions, the armed mobs of Spanish America, and lost everything; many times was he robbed, but never, I believe, assaulted. Nerve and humour protected him. As for the wild Indians, I fancy that they were overawed by his imposing appearance; and especially by an iron hook which occupied the place of his left hand, smashed by an accident.

This system of travelling at leisure from settlement to settlement enabled him to pick up a few necessary words of each language, and to give warning of his approach to the next tribe. The Pintados welcomed him in a quiet fashion – that is, the chiefs did not object when he repaired an empty hut and took possession. It was at the end of a long ‘street,’ parallel to the river. The rude dwellings were not scattered. Each stood opposite to its fellow across the way, and Roezl noticed a large flat stone in the middle between every pair. Towards nightfall the Indians trooped back from their fields; but all the women and grown girls entered at one end of the village, the men at the other. This was curious. As they marched up, the former dispersed in huts to the right hand, the latter to the left, each sex keeping to its own side of the stones. After depositing their tools the men came out and gathered silently around the strangers’ quarters – only very young children ran to and fro. After a time the women reappeared with steaming calabashes, which they bore half across the road, and set, each of them, on the stone before her dwelling. Then they returned. Forthwith the males strolled back, carried the supper to their respective huts, and in due time replaced the empty calabash upon the stone, whence the women removed it.

It will be understood that these strange ceremonies interested Roezl. Evidently the husbands lived on one side of the street, the wives and young children on the other. The moon was full and he watched for hours. After supper the males returned to squat and smoke around his hut, scarcely speaking; but one after another they withdrew presently, each to his own abode. So long as the moonlight enabled Roezl to observe, not one crossed the way. And afterwards he discovered that this is an eternal rule – a husband never enters his wife’s dwelling. The separation of the sexes is complete.

Long before satisfying himself on this point Roezl saw enough to convince him that the usages of this secluded people must be well worth study. He remained among them as long as he could, and even made memoranda – the first and only time, I believe, that he kept records other than botanical or scientific. It may be hoped that they survive and will come to light, since his papers are now stored in the museum at Prague. I am dependent on the memory of those whom he amused with curt stories of adventure over pipe and glass on his visits to England. They are many, and they preserve the liveliest remembrance of one to whom Johnson’s remarks on the greatest of modern orators are peculiarly applicable. ‘If a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed to escape a shower, he would say, “This is an extraordinary man.”’ Unfortunately, it is the most striking observations alone which they recall, with but a vague impression of others.

Every hearer asked, of course, how the race could avoid extinction under such circumstances? But it appears that the separation is only public – an exaggerated prudery, one might describe it, though we may be sure that the sentiment lies infinitely deeper. The sexes work apart, as has been

said; after the men have cleared a piece of ground they leave it to the women, and clear another for themselves. But when a youth has a mind to marry, in the first place he builds a hut in the forest. Then he awaits the train of women returning, steps gently among them, and takes the maiden of his fancy by the hand. She throws him off at once if disinclined, and there is an end of it; otherwise she suffers him to lead her a step before freeing herself. Day after day in that case the invitation is repeated, and the maiden takes two steps, then three, until at length she quits the procession entirely and surrenders. There is no ceremony of marriage, but, so far as Roezl could gather, the bond is absolutely sacred; in fact, if we think of it, those conditions of life forbid intrigue. It should be added that the other women and girls studiously ignore these proceedings, and that till the last moment a damsel may change her mind, repulsing the lover favoured hitherto.

A bride remains in the woodland hut for several weeks, not a soul visiting her except the husband. Meantime he builds a 'town house' for himself, and the mother or female relatives build one opposite for his wife. In fixing the stone between them there is a ceremony, as Roezl gathered, but the nature of it he was unable to understand. Though the pair never meet again in public as long as they live, they spend as much time as they please together in the forest. And really, after due consideration, I cannot but think that the system shows remarkable sagacity. Truth compels me to add, however, that Roezl suspected infanticide. We may hope he was mistaken. Why should a people living as do these restrict the number of their children? The battle for existence is not desperate with them apparently, since they till the soil, and their territory, in effect, is boundless. No Indian race of South America feels the pride of caste; if these do, they are a notable exception in that as in other respects. Girls receive no dower; the expense of marriage, as has been seen, is *nil*. Why should they limit the family? We know that obvious reason does not always guide the savage in his habits. But when a painful fact is not assured we may allow ourselves the comfort of doubting it.

This is all I have been able to collect about a most extraordinary people. My informants do not recollect, if they heard, whether the separation of the sexes was peculiar to this clan or general among the Pintado Indians. In fact, I have nothing more to say about them.

It was here, however, that Roezl met with an adventure which he often told. His hut, as has been mentioned, was the last of the row – a ruin patched up to keep the baggage dry. He always carried a folding tressle and a light board to fix upon it, which made a sort of desk, with a camp-stool to match. One evening he set himself as usual to write labels and memoranda for his herbarium. The description of a curious plant secured that day proved difficult, and darkness had long set in. So absorbed was the enthusiast in dissecting its anatomy that he gave no attention to a loud purr, though conscious of the sound for some moments. At length he raised his eyes. By the open doorway stood a creature whose dusky fur glistened like silk in the lamplight, and great yellow eyes stared into his. It was a black jaguar, rarest and most savage of all felines.

So they remained, staring. Roezl felt his hour had come. He could not have moved a limb; his hair rose and the sweat poured down. The jaguar also kept still, purring louder and louder. Its velvet lips were slightly raised, showing a gleam of the huge fangs. Presently it drew nearer, still purring – came up to the tressle – arched his back like a cat, and pressed against it. Crash fell desk, lamp, specimen box, camp-stool and enthusiast – a clattering overthrow! The servants rushed in. No jaguar was there.

Roezl used to attribute his escape to the practice of never carrying arms. When the brute was approaching, he must have fired had a weapon been handy – no man could resist the impulse. And then, whatever the issue of the shot, he would certainly have died.

THE CATTLEYA HOUSE

With *L. elegans* are lodged fine examples of *Cattleyas gigas* and *aurea*, with some of their varieties; generated, as we may assume, by natural hybridisation. These rank among the supreme treasures of the orchidist, unequalled for size and rarity – perhaps for beauty. To those who have not seen the offspring it might seem impossible that the stately loveliness of the parents could be excelled. But by a very simple process Nature achieves the feat – she combines their charms.

Of *Cattleya gigas* we have some two hundred specimens. It is the largest of the genus, saving its own hybrids, a native of New Granada, discovered by Warcewicz in 1848. He sent no plants home, and though a few were despatched afterwards, Roezl practically introduced the species in 1870. Conscious of supreme merit, it is far from eager to bloom; but at Woodlands we do not personally feel this drawback.

Of course there are many varieties of *Cattleya gigas*, for it is truly said that two blooms of orchid exactly alike cannot be found. But I shall mention only two.

Imschootiana is huge even above its fellows, for a flower may be nine inches across; the colour of sepal and petal mauve, with a crimson-purple lip of splendour beyond conception. The golden throat under a crimson-purple tube is lined with bright crimson; the characteristic ‘eyes’ gamboge, fading to white.

Sanderæ. – Some may well think this the loveliest of all its lovely kin. Probably it is a foreign strain, though remote, which gives such supreme softness to the magenta of the lip. On that ground the golden ‘eyes’ shine forth with an abruptness positively startling. The broad sepals and petals are sweetest rosy-mauve. Even the tube is deep crimson.

Here also is *Cattleya bicolor Measuresiana*, an exquisite example of a species always charming to my taste. In this instance the sepals and petals are purest and smoothest olive green; the very long shovel-shaped labellum magenta-crimson, outlined and tipped with white.

Of *Cattleya aurea* again the varieties are many. It was brought from Antioquia, New Granada, by Wallis, in 1868. If crimson and yellow, tastefully disposed, make the most gorgeous combination possible, as all human beings agree, this and its sister *Dowiana* are the most gorgeous of flowers. The ordinary form of *Cattleya aurea* is nankin yellow, but in the variety *R. H. Measures*, sepal and petal are gamboge. The glorious lip, opening wide from the very base, has long brownish blurs descending from the throat, on a golden ground which fades to yellow towards the edge. There are two clear crimson patches in the front, and the margin is clear crimson, whilst the whole expanse is covered with fine stripes of crimson and gold alternately.

We come to the hybrids of these two which, dwelling side by side, have been intermarrying for ages; and their offspring again have intermarried, forming endless combinations. *Cattleya Sanderiana* was first discovered under circumstances rather odd. One of Messrs. Sander’s collectors, Mr. Mau, was hunting for *Odontoglossum crispum* by Bogota. He came upon a number of *Cattleyas* – none of them in bloom – and gathered any that came in his way, taking no trouble, nor even mentioning the incident in his letters. In due course he brought them to St. Albans along with his *Odontoglossums*. Mr. Mau said nothing even while the cases were being unpacked. Apparently he had forgotten them.

‘What are these *Cattleyas*?’ asked Mr. Sander, in surprise.

‘Oh, I don’t know! I found them in the woods.’

Old spikes still remained upon the plants, and bunches of withered rags at the end. Mr. Sander perceived, first, that the flower must be gigantic beyond belief; next, that it was red.

‘Go back by next mail!’ he cried. ‘Search the woods – gather every one!’ And Mr. Mau did actually return by next mail.

This was *Cattleya Sanderiana* – sometimes as much as eleven inches across; in colour, a tender rosy-mauve. The vast lip is almost square, with a throat of gold, lined and netted over with bright

crimson. It has the charming 'eyes' of *gigas* in perfection, and the enormous disc, superbly frilled, is of the liveliest magenta crimson.

Chrysotoxa, another of these wondrous hybrids, 'favours' its aurea parent; with buff-yellow petals and sepals, the lower of which hang in a graceful bunch surrounding the huge lip of dark orange ground, with an edging of maroon-crimson, narrow above, widening to a stately breadth below; the whole closely covered with branching lines of crimson.

Mrs. Fred Hardy is a third – divinely beautiful. White of sepal and petal, with the vast magenta-crimson lip of *Hardyana*. The glorious effect may be in part imagined.

We have yet a fourth of this amazing group – *Trismegistris* – most nearly allied to *Sanderiana*. I have not seen this variety in bloom; it was introduced only three years ago. But the name signifies that it is the quintessence of all. Individual taste may not always allow that claim, but no one disputes that it is at least equal to the finest.

But the thoughtful cannot contemplate these wondrous things with satisfaction unalloyed. Unless some wealthy and intelligent persons in South America undertake to cultivate them in a regular way, it is too probable that in a generation or two they will be utterly lost; for we cannot hope that the specimens in Europe will endure so long, however vigorous they may be at present. Here is the letter which accompanied the last consignment – sad reading, as I think: —

Medellin, January 27, 1896.

Messrs. F. Sander and Co.,
St. Albans.

Gentlemen – I arrived here yesterday from Alba Gumara and received your much honoured letter of November 11, 1895. I shall despatch to-morrow thirty boxes, twelve of which contain the finest of all the aureas, the Monte Coromee form, and eighteen cases contain the grand *Sanderiana* type, all collected from the spot where these grow mixed, and I shall clear them all out. They are now nearly extinguished in this spot, and this will surely be the last season. I have finished all along the Rio Dagua, where there are no plants left; the last days I remained in that spot the people brought in two or three plants a day and some came back without a single plant. I left my boy with the Señor Altados to explore while I despatched the boxes and get funds, when I shall return for the var. *papilio* which Altados promised to secure for me, and go on up to the spot called the Parama San Sausa. In the boxes containing the aureas you will find about 300 seedlings which have not flowered; these are from a grove of trees where no plants have previously been gathered from, and where the finest *Sanderianas* and aureas grow intermingled in one family. These *Cattleyas* only flower once in a year – that is, from March to the end of July, and both kinds together. Some of the flowers measure upwards of 10 inches – and on a spike you can have nine flowers. I cannot wait in that fearful region longer than the flowering time; the awfully wild aspect of everything and scarcity of wholesome food and help for the work is simply maddening. If I shall find the other orchids you want I do not know. My boy is gone with Altados for the *Oncidium*. You may believe me that many more of these fine *Cattleyas* do not exist, and I can, after all, perhaps not find so good as may be in those you will now receive.

In the last years I have seen these plants in bloom, when I was so ill with fever, and in no other place can you get such a fine type.

The plants that I planted when I was taken ill no one found; no one has been here, and the plants had grown well and some of them very much rooted.

Trusting that all will arrive in good order, I remain, gentlemen, your very obedient servant,
Carl Johannsen.

Cattleya Mendelii

The next division is styled the Mendelii house; more than three hundred large examples of this species – to be accurate and pedantic, it should be called a variety – occupy the centre, a hundred and eighty the stand to right.

Cattleya Mendelii lives in the neighbourhood of Ocaña, New Granada, at an altitude of 3500 feet. It was introduced by Messrs. Backhouse in 1870, and named in honour of Mr. Sam Mendel, a great personage at Manchester in his day. Distinctions of colour are very frequent. Some pronounce it the loveliest of *Cattleyas*.

Among the noble specimens here, many of them chosen for individual peculiarities, not half a dozen are named; the rest bear only letters showing their class, and certain marks understood by the initiated. It will be a relief when this system, or something like it, becomes general. And the time is not distant; at least, the privilege of granting new names at will must be restricted among those who obey the authorities.

The few plants here which enjoy a special designation are: —

Monica Measures.— Petals rose, with a broad streak of purple down the centre from base to point. Sepals also rose, tipped with purple. Lip of darkest crimson, fringed.

Lily Measures.— A very large flower, white of sepal and petal. On the lip, somewhat pale, as if to show it off, is a splash of purple-crimson, sharply defined.

R. H. Measures.— Sepals and petals tinted with rose. Enormous lip, very dark crimson, fringed.

William Lloyd.— For this I can only repeat the last description, yet the eye perceives a difference not inconsiderable.

Mrs. R. H. Measures.— All white saving the yellow throat and two small touches of purple in the front.

Duke of Marlborough.— This variety moved the great Reichenbach, as he said, to ‘religious admiration.’ No doubt it is the grandest of all *Mendeliis* – which is much to say; very large, perfectly graceful in form, exquisitely frilled. The colour of sepal and petal pink, the throat yellow, the spreading disc magenta-crimson.

The left side of the house is filled with large plants – some two hundred – of *Cattleya Schroderae*, which the learned recognise as a variety of *Cattleya Trianae*. It has the great advantage, however, of flowering in April, and thus, when discovered in 1884 by Arnold, collecting for Messrs. Sander, it filled a gap in the succession of *Cattleyas*. Henceforward the careful amateur might have one variety at least in bloom the year round. Named of course after Baroness Schröder. All *Cattleyas* are scented more or less at certain times of the day, but none so strongly as this, nor so persistently.

It does not vary so much as most of its kin, but it shows perhaps a greater tendency to albinism than any – as seems natural when its colours are so much paler. Among these grand plants we have three white, notably —

Miss Mary Measures, of which the picture is given.

Overhead hang smaller plants of *Cattleya Mossiae*, *Trianae*, *Mendelii*, and *Laelia Lucasiana*; among them no less than five *Cattleya speciosissima alba*.

Speciosissima Dawsonii is here also, finest of the coloured varieties – purplish rose of sepal and petal, lip large, yellow in the upper part, rosy crimson below, with margin finely fringed; and

Laelia pumila marginata. – In its ordinary form *L. pumila* is one of the loveliest flowers that blow, and admiration is enhanced by surprise when we observe how small and slender is the plant that

bears such a handsome bloom. But this rare variety is lovelier still – its broad, rosy-crimson sepals and petals and its superb crimson lip all outlined with white.

Cattleya Bowringiana

The third division of the Cattleya house contains, in the centre, some hundreds of Mendeliis; Cattleya Bowringiana on the right hand, Cattleyas Mossiae and Wageri on the left; all ‘specimen’ plants, for health and vigour as for size.

Cattleya Bowringiana was imported fifteen years ago from British Honduras, but it has since been found in other parts of Central America. In colour – rosy purple, with deep purple lip, white in the throat – it does not vary much, nor in shape; at least I have not heard of any named varieties. But Cattleya Bowringiana in good health is always a cheering spectacle; its young growths push with such a demonstration of sturdiness – having to rise much beyond the ordinary stature – and its bunch of eight or ten flowers stands so high above the foliage. Nowhere may that pleasant spectacle be enjoyed with more satisfaction than at Woodlands.

Cattleya Mossiae

Since Cattleya Mossiae was introduced more than two generations ago, and remains perhaps the commonest of the species, I need not describe it. Mrs. Moss of Ottersfoot, by Liverpool, conferred the name in 1856. Love of orchids is a heritage in that family – so is the love of rowing. The lady’s grandson, Sir J. Edwardes Moss, now living, was Stroke of the O.U.B.C. and at Eton, as were his father and his uncle. And the ancestral collection of orchids is still maintained.

White Mossiaes are not uncommon, though their exquisite beauty makes them precious in all meanings of the term.

Mrs. R. H. Measures is best of all – a famous variety – white of sepal and petal. Deep and graceful frilling on the lip is always characteristic of this species; it reaches absolute perfection here. The yellow of the throat is much subdued, but purple lines issuing from it spread over all the white lip, with a very curious effect. Purple also is the frilling.

Grandiflora. – Deep rose. Petals very broad, lip immense, finely mottled and veined with purple.

Excelsior. – Blush-rose. Lip rosy purple, with a white margin.

Gilbert Measures. – A superb variety. White with a faint flush. Sepals and petals unusually solid. Lip very widespread, with purple lines and splashes of magenta-purple.

Gigantea. – Biggest of all. Rosy pink. The orange of the enormous lip and the frilling specially fine.

Catt. Wageri, though granted a specific title, is a variety of Cattleya Mossiae, from Caracas, discovered by Wager in 1851; white, excepting a yellow blotch on the lip.

From the roof, among a hundred smaller plants of Cattleya, hangs a specimen of *Laelia praestans alba*, as rare as lovely – all purest white, except the lip of brilliant purple with yellow throat. Like many other orchids from the high lands of Brazil, this will grow equally well in the cool house. It is, in truth, a variety of *L. pumila*; its normal colour rosy purple.

Cattleya Gaskelliana

The fourth compartment is given up to Cattleya Gaskelliana, a species from Venezuela, not showy, as a rule – though striking exceptions can be found, as here – but always useful. Like Cattleya Schroderae it filled a gap when discovered in 1883, for there was no species at the time which flowered in July. Its normal colour is mauve; the lip has a big yellow blotch and a mottling of purple in the front.

About four hundred plants are accommodated in this house, among them four albinos – one with eight pseudo-bulbs and two flowering growths. But the finest flower is

Miss Clara Measures. – snowy white, of course, but with a lip like *Cattleya Mossiae*. Among others notable are: —

Dellensis. – A noble variety. Mauve-pink – the petals immensely broad. The great spreading lip has a gamboge throat fading to chrome-yellow, intersected with lines of bright crimson. The crimson of the front is defined as sharply as if by the stroke of a paint-brush.

Godseffiana. – Pale rosy mauve. Petals immense. Lip a curious dusky crimson, with a narrow dusky-yellowish outline.

Duke of Marlborough. – Gigantic. Sepals and petals bright rose; the broad lip has the same dusky outline.

Measuresiana. – Very pale. The crimson of the lip, which is long but comparatively narrow, runs far up the throat, but leaving two clear yellow ‘eyes’ as distinct as in *Cattleya gigas*.

Sanderiana. – Pale. The lip, of excellent colour, spreads so suddenly as to form a perfect circle.

Herbertiana. – Mauve. A very compact flower. The bright yellow of the throat extends downwards and to either side of the lip in a very remarkable manner. The dusky margin surrounds a purple-crimson stain, scored with lines of deeper hue.

Woodlandsensis. – Here the same oddity – due to natural hybridisation doubtless – is carried much further. The whole disc of the lip is buff, with only the merest touch of purple on either side the central line, and another, scarcely perceptible, at the tip.

Along the roof hang small plants of *Cattleya gigas* and others.

FIFTH DIVISION

The fifth division is a resting-place, where one may sit beneath a grand specimen of *Kentia Forsteri*, surrounded by palms as in a nook of the jungle, to compare notes and talk of orchids. After such refreshment we enter the last compartment.

Cattleya Trianae

To left here are more *Mendeliis*, to right more *Bowringianas*, *labiatas*, and *Trianaes* mixed; rows of *labiata* overhead. Specimen *Trianaes* occupy the centre – some two hundred.

This again is a species so old and so familiar that I need not describe it. But there is none more variable, and we have some of the most striking diversities here.

Macfarlanei. – An immense flower, white, with the faintest possible flush. The great lip, vivid orange beneath the tube, changes to white above the disc. To this succeeds a blaze of purple-crimson, outlined in two semicircles as clear as brush could draw.

Robert Measures. – Lively mauve. The broad petals have three purple lines at the base and a mottling of purple on either side. Lip not large but of the grandest crimson, darker towards the throat.

Measuresiana. – Petals clear mauve, sepals a paler hue, lip very compact. Its carmine rises far up the throat, surrounding the yellow and white ‘eyes’ with the happiest effect.

Woodlandsensis. – Sepals and petals lilac flushed. The great lip beautifully striped with rosy magenta.

Tyrianthina takes its name from the Tyrian purple or wine-coloured tips of the petals – a singular development. The labellum shows the same tint, even darker.

Here also I note *Catt. Harrisoniae* *R. H. Measures*. It cannot be said that this differs from the normal type in any respect; but one may venture to assert that it is the finest example thereof – at least, a finer could not be. Upon the mauve sepals and petals, much larger than usual and more lively

in colour, the great labellum, primrose and gamboge, with mauve tip, stands out superbly. There is no more striking *Cattleya* than *Harrisoniae* in this form.

A STORY OF CATTELEYA BOWRINGIANA

No tale hangs upon the discovery of *Cattleya Bowringiana*, so far as I have heard. A planter named Turkheim sent it from British Honduras to Mr. Bowring of Forest Farm, Windsor, in 1884. The species has a wide range. Mr. Oversluys came upon it in Guatemala very shortly afterwards, and curious incidents followed.

This admirable collector was hunting for *Oncidium splendidum*, a stately flower not very uncommon once, but long extinct in Europe. No man knew its home, but Mr. Sander, after close inquiry and profound deliberation, resolved that it must be a native of Costa Rica. Thither he despatched Mr. Oversluys, who roamed the wilderness up and down five years, seeking a prize within his grasp all the time, so conspicuous that it escaped notice – as sharp boys select the biggest names upon a map instead of the smallest, to puzzle a comrade. But that is another story.

Irritated and despairing as time went by, but not permitted to abandon the search, the collector found diversion now and again in a gallop through the neighbouring States. And once he pushed as far as Guatemala. All these forays were profitable, of course; such a shrewd and experienced hunter finds game in every forest. But Mr. Oversluys was not equipped for the wholesale business, as one may put it, on these expeditions. They were reconnaissances. In Guatemala, at the moment which interests us, he had only two servants and three mules.

I do not know exactly where he came across *Cattleya Bowringiana*; it might be anywhere almost, apparently, in the Central American Republics. The species was rare and very precious at the time – to be secured, though in the smallest quantity. When Oversluys came upon it, he threw away the miscellaneous rarities he had collected, hired two more mules – all he could obtain – loaded as many as they could carry of the very finest plants, specimens such as we dare not dream of now, and started for the nearest port, meaning to return for more so soon as he was ‘shut of your confounded *Oncidium splendidum*.’ In such disrespectful terms he wrote to St. Albans.

At the house where Oversluys slept one night was a boisterous young Guatemalan, one of the tipping, guitar-strumming, all-round-love-making sort so common in Spanish America. But this youth was an Indian or almost – betrayed by his lank hair and narrow shining eyes. Such a character would seem impossible for one of that blood beyond the confines of Guatemala. But the supremacy of the Indians under Rafael Carrera’s despotism has worked a change there. It lasted long enough to train a portentous generation. When a pig-driver of their race conquered and ruled the descendants of the Conquerors as absolutely as a Turkish bashaw of old, Indians might well abandon the timid subservience of their forefathers.

This young fellow insisted upon playing cards with Oversluys, who declined. Then he began to quarrel. But a good-looking daughter of the landlord intervened, and he promptly struck the light guitar. After supper he felt the warmest friendship for Oversluys, and dropped off to sleep while babbling a serenade to the landlord’s daughter.

The friendship had not evaporated next morning. Don Hilario – he allowed himself the title and a most aristocratic surname – was returning to his native village, through which Oversluys must pass; there to remain, as he admitted cheerfully, until his friends at the capital had suppressed certain proceedings at law. These friends, it appeared, were dames of high position, and the proceedings related to a serious deficiency in his accounts as clerk in the Financial Department. But it was all great fun. Don Hilario could not think of his appearance in the dock without peals of laughter. No apprehension marred his enjoyment. Those great personages named, of the female sex, would take very good care he was not prosecuted – or they had best look out. In short, we recognise the type of a cynical half-caste Don Juan.

As they journeyed on together, Don Hilario noticed the orchids, which were simply slung across the mules. He knew, of course, that such weeds are valued in Europe; every child in those realms

is familiar with collectors nowadays. ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘those are poor things compared with the great bushes on the roof of our church.’

Oversluys was roused at once. Since Roezl made the discovery, fifteen years before, every one had come to know that rarities may be expected on an Indian church. The pious aborigines collect any orchid of exceptional beauty which they notice in the woods and carefully replant it on the sacred building. It was the custom of their heathen forefathers.

‘Are there any white ones among them?’ Oversluys asked. An albino form of *Cattleya Bowringiana* had never been heard of, but he thought it might exist. And if so the roof of an Indian church would be the place to look for such a treasure.

‘As many white as red! I say, what will you give for a dozen?’

This was a difficult question under any circumstances, since the plants could hardly be flowering then; and there is no difference in growth betwixt the white varieties and the red. Besides, Oversluys had not the very slightest confidence in this youth.

‘How will you get them?’ he asked.

‘Never mind that. Pay me half the money down and I’ll bring the plants to-morrow. You know, our Indians are suspicious of collectors. You mustn’t be seen in the village.’

That was reasonable enough in one point of view, but preposterous in the other. ‘Oh,’ said Oversluys, ‘I must see the orchids at any risk – that’s flat! and I must hear how you mean to work.’

‘Why?’

‘Because if you take them without the Padre’s consent you know as well as I that the Indians will be after me at daylight, and – h’m! There would be work for the doctor! What sort of man is your Padre?’

‘A sort of pig, of course,’ laughed Don Hilario. ‘A fat old boar, ready for the knife. And my knife is ready, too! Patience, friend, patience!’ His eyes still laughed, but he made the significant gesture so common in those lands – a sudden stealthy grip of the machete at his waist.

This was not an unimportant revelation. ‘You are on bad terms with the Cura?’ Oversluys asked.

‘Not now. He thinks I have forgotten. It’s years ago. I was a boy. But the Castilian never forgets! I will tell you.’

The story was not edifying. It related to a young woman in whom the Cura felt interest. He surprised her in company with Don Hilario and beat the lad.

‘Well,’ said Oversluys, ‘I’m sorry you and the Padre are not friends, because I will have nothing to do with removing orchids from the church unless he bears part in it.’

‘But the pig will want all the money.’

‘You need not tell him how much I am to give you.’

Don Hilario argued, however, until, finding Oversluys immovable, he grew sulky. The fact is that to strip their church against the Indians’ wish would be not a little perilous even though the Cura were implicated; to ignore him would be madness. Collectors have risked it, they say, before and since, but never assuredly unless quite certain that the prize was worth a deadly hazard. In this instance there was no security at all.

As they approached the village Don Hilario brightened up. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘what will you give me?’

Oversluys had no money, but he offered a sum – the amount of which I have not heard – payable in Guatemala city; to be doubled if the orchids should prove white. Don Hilario declined this proposal with oaths; he dared not go to Guatemala city, and he could not trust a friend. The negotiations came to an end. Grumbling and swearing he rode for a while by himself; then fell into silence, and presently rejoined Oversluys quite cheerful. The houses were close by.

‘It’s a bargain, friend,’ he said. ‘Your hand! It’s a bargain!’

‘Good! Now I won’t take my mules with the orchids into the village. Can you lead us round to the other side? There is a hut there, I daresay, where I can leave my men and return with you.’

Don Hilario declared that such precautions were unnecessary, but when Oversluys insisted he led the way through by-paths. They did not meet a soul. Upon the edge of a broad savannah beyond was a corral, or enclosure, and a shed, used by the *vaqueros* for slaughtering, branding, and so forth in the season, empty now. Hundreds of cattle browsed slowly towards the corral, for evening approached and the woods were full of jaguars doubtless. Though unwatched at this time of year, they took refuge nightly in the enclosure. It was just such a spot as Oversluys sought. His men had food, and he told them to remain with the animals. Then he returned with Don Hilario.

It is usual to ask the Cura for lodgings in a strange place; he himself puts up a traveller who can pay. This was a rotund and masterful priest. They found him alighting from his mule, with soutane rolled up to the waist, showing a prodigious breadth of pea-green trousers. He wore a triple string of blue beads round his neck, and flourished a whip of cowhide.

Oversluys looked like a traveller who could pay, and he received a greeting as warm as foreigner can expect; a foreigner in those lands is presumed to be no 'Christian.' They entered the parsonage. Don Hilario was to broach the business, but first Oversluys would satisfy himself that the orchids were worth negotiation. He slipped away.

A glance settled that. The church was a low building of mud, as usual. On either side the doorway, looking down the street, stood an ancient idol, buried to the waist, but still five feet high. The features were battered, but the round eyes, with pupils cut deep in a half circle, glared in hideous threat, and the mouth gaped for blood; no need of an interpreter there – one saw and felt the purpose. But Oversluys was not interested in these familiar objects. He looked up. His comrade had not exaggerated the size of the orchids, at least. They were noble specimens. But as for their colour he could see no trace to guide him.

Don Hilario had gone to greet his parents; it was comparatively late when he returned, but then he got to business forthwith. The Cura was startled. He showed no indignation, but after pondering declined. Before going further, Oversluys asked whether the orchids were white? Impatiently the Cura replied that he never looked at them – very likely they were. People decked the church with white flowers, and perhaps they got them from the roof. He had other things to think about.

Oversluys guessed that the man was eager to sell but afraid, and fretful accordingly. He raised his price, whilst Don Hilario taunted the Cura with fearing his parishioners. That decided him. Loudly he declared that the church was his own, and consented.

The deed must be done that night. But who would climb the church roof in the dark? Don Hilario was prepared for that difficulty. He knew half a dozen fellows of his own age and stamp who would enjoy the mischief. And he went to collect them.

It was long past midnight when the band appeared – a set of lively young ruffians. So vivacious were they, in fact, though not noisy, and so disrespectful to their pastor as they drank a glass for luck, standing round the board, that Oversluys thought it well to prepare for a 'row.' He slipped out, saddled his mule and tied it by the door.

Then the young Indians filed off in high spirits, chuckling low and nudging one another. The Cura followed to the door, commended them to heaven and stopped. Don Hilario would not have that – he must take his share of the enterprise. The others returned and remonstrated warmly. In short, there was such hubbub, though all in low tones, that Oversluys grew more and more alarmed. The Cura gave way savagely, however, and they started again; but Oversluys kept well behind, leading his mule. It was a dark night, though not dark as in a northern climate. He could follow the little group with his eyes, a blurred mass stealing over the plaza. The church itself was faintly visible a hundred yards away. All remained still and silent. He advanced.

A low wall encircled the church. The Indians did not think it prudent to use the entrance – of which those idols were the gate-posts, as it may be said. Oversluys, reassured, had drawn close enough now to see them creep up to the wall. Suddenly there was a roar! A multitude of figures leapt up the other side of the wall, yelling!

That was 'Boot and Saddle' for Oversluys. Off he set full gallop, for the risk of a broken neck is not worth counting when vengeful Indians are on one's trail. But though all the village must have heard him thudding past, no one pursued. Very extraordinary, but the whole incident was mysterious. After fifteen years' experience the collector – a shrewd man at the beginning – knew Indians well, but he could never explain this adventure. Sometimes he thought it might have been a trick from beginning to end, devised by Don Hilario to get the Cura into a scrape. I have no suggestion to offer, but the little story seems worth note as an illustration of manners.

Oversluys had good reason to remember it. Uncomfortably enough he waited for dawn in the dank wood, holding his mule by the bridle, not daring to advance. As soon as the path could be faintly traced he started, and happily found the corral where his mules and servants had been left. The cattle were streaming out already, bulls in advance. They blocked the gateway, and with the utmost promptitude Oversluys withdrew into the bush. Making his way to the fence he shouted for his mozos – in vain; climbed over with no small difficulty and entered the shed. His mules were safe enough but both mozos had vanished, having found or made friends in the neighbourhood. And all his precious Cattleyas, left defenceless, had been munched or trampled flat by the cattle! He never ceased to mourn that loss.

A STORY OF CATTLEYA MOSSIAE

Since orchids never die, unless by accident, and never cease to grow, there is no limit to the bulk they may attain. Mishap alone cuts their lives short – commonly the fall or the burning of the tree to which they cling. Mr. Burbidge secured one, a *Grammatophyllum*, ‘as big as a Pickford’s van,’ which a *corvée* of Dyaks could not lift. Some old collections even in Europe show prodigious monsters; in especial, I am told, that of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick. Mr. Astor has two *Peristeria elata* at Cliveden of which the bulbs are as large as an ostrich egg, and the flower stems rise to a height of nine feet! The most striking instance of the sort I myself have observed, if not quite the biggest, was a *Cattleya Mossiae* sent home by Mr. Arnold. It enclosed two great branches of a tree, rising from the fork below which it was sawn off – a bristling mass four feet thick and five feet high; two feet more must be added if we reckon the leaves. As for the number of flower-scapes it bore last season, to count them would have been the work of hours; roughly I estimated a thousand, bearing not less than three blooms, each six inches across. Fancy cannot rise to the conception of that gorgeous display. I doubt not that the forest would be scented for a hundred yards round.

Such giant *Cattleyas* are very rare in the ‘wild state.’ An orchid, though immortal, is subject to so many accidents that only species of very quick growth attain great age; these are less exposed to the perils of youth, naturally. From time to time, however, an Indian removes some plant which strikes him for its beauty or its size, and starts it afresh on a tree not too tall – and therefore young – in view of his hut. Thus it takes a new lease of life and grows indefinitely. I have not heard that ‘white’ peons are so aesthetic.

This *Cattleya Mossiae* had been rescued by an Indian. Mr. Arnold first saw it on his memorable search for *Masdevallia Tovarensis*. I must tell that episode to begin with.

More than thirty years ago a German resident at Tovar sent a white *Masdevallia* to a friend in England. There were very few species of the genus, few plants indeed, under cultivation at that time, and all scarlet. The novelty made a vast sensation. For a good many years the owner kept dividing his single specimen, and putting fragments on the market, where they fetched a very long price. Under such circumstances a man is not inclined to tell where his treasure comes from. At an earlier date this gentleman had published the secret so far as the name ‘Tovar’ went. But there are several places so called in Spanish America, and importers hesitated. At length Mr. Sander made up his mind. He sent Mr. Arnold to Tovar in New Grenada.

Masdevallias are reckoned among the most difficult of orchids to import. From their home in cool uplands they must be transported through some of the hottest regions on the globe, and they have no pseudo-bulbs to sustain them; a leaf and a root, one may say, compose each tiny plant.

Mr. Arnold, therefore, was provided with some sacks of Sphagnum moss in which to stow his finds. These sacks he registered among his personal baggage. At Waterloo, however, the station-master demurred. Moss, said he, must travel by goods train. Arnold had not allowed himself time to spare. The Royal mail steamer would leave within an hour of his arrival at Southampton; to go without his moss was useless; and a pig-headed official refused to pass it! Mr. Arnold does not profess to be meek. He remonstrated with so much energy that the station-master fled the scene. There was just time enough to load up the article in dispute and jump into a carriage, helped by a friendly stranger.

The stranger had showed his friendliness before that. Standing at the open door, he supported Arnold’s cause with singular warmth and vociferation. The latter was grateful, of course, and when he learned that his ally was a fellow-passenger to Caracas he expressed the hope that they might share a cabin. There was no difficulty about that. In short, they chummed.

This young man announced himself as Mr. Thompson, a traveller in the hardware line, but he showed an intelligent curiosity about things in general – about orchids, for instance, when he learned that such was Arnold’s business. Would it be possible for an ignoramus to make a few pounds that

way? – how should he set about it? – which is the class of article most in demand just now, and where is it found? Before the voyage ended, that traveller in the hardware line knew as much about *Masdevallia Tovarensis* as Arnold could tell him. He bade goodbye aboard ship, for pressing business obliged him to start up country forthwith.

Late in the afternoon Arnold, who was to stay some days at Caracas, met his agent on the Plaza. ‘By the bye,’ said that gentleman, ‘are you aware that Mr. Blank started this morning in the direction of Tovar?’

Now Mr. Blank was a man of substance who began orchid-growing as an amateur, but of late had turned professional.

‘Bless me!’ cried Arnold, ‘is he here?’

The agent stared. ‘Why, as I understood, he travelled in the same ship with you.’

Arnold seized him by the wrist, while in his mind’s eye he reviewed all the passengers; they were not many. The only one who could possibly be Mr. Blank was – Mr. Thompson!

‘Get me a horse, sir!’ he sputtered. ‘Which way has the villain gone? And a guide – with another horse! I’ll pay anything! I’ll go with you to hire them! Come along!’ Ten minutes afterwards he was on the track, full gallop, stopping only at the hotel to get his pistol.

At a roadside posada, fifteen miles beyond, Mr. Blank was supping in peace. The door opened. Arnold stalked in. He was in that mood of intensest passion when a man’s actions are stiff though he trembles – all his muscles rigid with the effort of self-restraint.

Quietly he barred the door and quietly he sat down opposite to Mr. Blank, putting his revolver on the board.

‘Get your pistol, sir,’ said he, scarcely above a whisper, ‘we’re going to settle this business.’ But Mr. Blank, after a frenzied stare, had withdrawn beneath the table. Arnold hauled him out by the legs, demanding instant combat.

But this was not the man to fight. He preferred to sign a confession and a promise, guaranteed by most impressive oaths, not to revisit those parts for six months. Then Arnold started him back, supperless, in the dark.

It may be added that the gentleman whom I have named Mr. Blank lost his life in 1892, when seeking the habitat of *Dendrobium Schröderianum*, under circumstances not wholly dissimilar. As in this case he sought to reap where he had not sown. But peace be with him!

Without more adventures Arnold found *Masdevallia Tovarensis*. Of the first consignment he despatched, forty thousand arrived in good health. This quest completed in shorter time than had been allowed, he looked for another ‘job.’ One is only embarrassed by the choice in that region. Upon the whole it seemed most judicious to collect *Cattleya Mossiae*. And Arnold set off for the hunting-grounds.

On this journey he saw the monster I have described. It grew beside the dwelling of an Indian – not properly to be termed a ‘hut,’ nor a ‘house.’ The man was a coffee-planter in a very small way. Nothing that Arnold could offer tempted him in the least. His grandfather ‘planted’ the *Cattleya*, and from that day it had been a privilege of the family to decorate one portion of the neighbouring church with its flowers when a certain great feast came round. Arnold tried to interest the daughter – a very pretty girl: the Indian type there is distinctly handsome. Then he tried her lover, who seemed willing to exert his influence for the consideration of a real English gun. Arnold could not spare his own; he had no other, and the young Indian would not accept promises. So the matter fell through.

Three years afterwards Arnold was commissioned to seek *Cattleya Mossiae* again. Not forgetting the giant, he thought it worth while to take a ‘real English gun’ with him, though doubtless the maiden was a wife long since, and her husband might ask for a more useful present. In due course he reached the spot – a small Indian village in the mountains, some fifteen miles from Caracas. The *Cattleya* was still there, perched aloft, as big as a hogshead. Arnold’s first glance was given to it; then he looked at the owner’s hospitable dwelling. It also was still there, but changed. Tidy it had never

been, but now it was ruinous. None of the village huts could be seen, standing as they did each in its 'compound' – a bower of palm and plantains, fruit-trees, above all, flowers. Afterwards he perceived that they had all been lately rebuilt.

The old Indian survived, but it was not from him that Arnold learned the story. The Cura told it. There had been a pronunciamiento somewhere in the country, and the Government sent small bodies of troops – pressgangs, in fact – to enlist 'volunteers.' One of these came to the village. The officer in command, a good-looking young man, took up his abode in the Indian's house and presently made it his headquarters, whence to direct the man-hunts. Upon that pretext he stayed several weeks, to the delight of the villagers, who were spared.

But one evening there was an outbreak. The lover rushed along the street, dripping with blood – the officer, his sword drawn, pursuing. He ran into his hut and snatched a gun from the wall. But it was too late; the other cut him down. The day's field work was over – all the Indians had returned. They seized their machetes, yelling vengeance, and attacked the officer. But his soldiers also were close by. They ran up, firing as they ran. Some villagers were killed, more wounded; the place was sacked. Next morning early the detachment moved off. When the fugitives returning counted their loss, the pretty daughter of old José was missing. The dead lay where they fell, and she was not among them.

The Cura, an amiable veteran, did not doubt that she had been carried off by force; was not this girl the most devout and dutiful in the parish? He saddled his mule forthwith and rode into Caracas. The officer had delivered his report, which may be easily imagined. Governments in Spanish America at this day resent any kind of interference from the clergy. Had a layman complained, doubtless there would have been an inquiry; in Venezuela, as elsewhere, maidens are not to be carried off by young aristocrats and no word said. But the authorities simply called on the accused for an explanation, accepted his statement that the girl followed him of her free-will, and recommended him to marry her. This he did, as Arnold ascertained. As for the rest —*quien sabe?*

These sad events account for the old Indian's behaviour. Arnold found him at home, and with him a young man not to be recognised at first, who proved to be the lover. The muscles of his neck had been severed, causing him to hold his head awry, and a slash had partially disabled his right arm. Arnold was told abruptly that he could not lodge there, and he withdrew. But on a sudden the lover whispered eagerly. They called him back.

'Will you buy the Cattleya?' asked old José.

'How much?'

'Fifty dollars and a good gun.'

'It's a bargain.'

He paid there and then, nor quitted the spot, though very hungry, until his followers had sawn through the branch and lowered its burden to the ground. Carrying his spoil in triumph, suspended on a pole, Arnold sought the Cura's house. There he heard the tale I have unfolded.

Not until evening did the Padre chance to see the giant Cattleya. He was vexed, naturally, since his church lost its accustomed due. But when Arnold told what he had paid for it, the good man was deeply moved. 'Holy Virgin and all saints!' he cried, 'there will be murder!' And he set off running to the Indian's house. It was empty. José and the lover had been seen on the road to Caracas hours before – with the gun.

I am sorry that I cannot finish the story; too often we miss the dénouement in romances of actual life. But the Cura felt no doubt. It may be to-night, or next year, or ten years hence, he said, but the captain is doomed. Our Indians never forget nor forgive, nor fail when at length they strike.

The murder was not announced whilst Arnold remained in the country. But all whom he questioned gave the same forecast. Unless the Indians were seized or died they would surely have vengeance.

CYPRIPEDIUM INSIGNE

Here is a house full of *Cypripedium insigne*; nothing else therein save a row of big *Cymbidiums* in vases down the middle, *Odontoglossum citrosum* and *Cattleya citrina* hanging on wires overhead. Every one knows this commonest of *Cypripeds*, though many may be unacquainted with the name. Once I looked into a show of window-gardening in the precincts of Westminster Abbey, and among the poor plants there, treasures of the poorest, I found a *Cypripedium insigne* – very healthy and well-grown too. But when I called the judges' attention, they politely refused to believe me, though none of them could say what the mysterious vegetable was – not the least curious detail of the incident. The flower cannot be called beautiful, but undeniably it is quaint, and the honest unsophisticated public loves it. Moreover the bloom appears in November, lasting till Christmas, if kept quite cool. The species was introduced from Sylhet so long ago as 1820, but it flourishes in many districts on the southern slope of the Himalayas. New habitats are constantly discovered.

There are 505 plants in this house, and if individual flowers be not striking commonly – that is, flowers of the normal type – the spectacle is as pretty as curious when hundreds are open at once, apple-green, speckled with brown and tipped with white. But to my taste, as a 'grower,' the sight is pleasant at all seasons, for the green and glossy leaves encircle each pot so closely that they form a bank of foliage without a gap all round. But besides this house we have one much larger elsewhere, containing no less than 2500 examples of the same species. If no two flowers of an orchid on the same plant be absolutely similar, as experts declare – and I have often proved the rule – one may fancy the sum of variation among three thousand. Individually, however, it is so minute in the bulk of *Cypripedium insigne* that a careless observer sees no difference among a hundred blooms. I note some of the prominent exceptions.

Clarissimum. – Large, all white, except a greenish tinge at base of the dorsal, and the broad yellow shield of the column.

Laura Kimball, on the other hand, is all ochreous yellow, save the handsome white crown of the dorsal and a narrow white margin descending from it.

Statterianum is much like this, but spotted in the usual way.

Bohnhoffianum has a dorsal of curious shape. The crest rises sharply between square shoulders which fold over, displaying the reverse. It has no spots, but at the base is a chestnut blotch, changing to vivid green, which again vanishes abruptly, leaving a broad white margin. Vivid green also are the petals, with brown lines; the slipper paler. This example is unique.

Macfarlanei is all yellowish green, with a white crest.

Amesiae. – The dorsal has a broad white outline and a drooping crest. To white succeeds a brilliant green, and to that, in the middle, bright chestnut. Chestnut lines also, and dots, mount upward. The green petals are similarly lined, and the slipper is greenish, tinged with chestnut.

Longisepalum is flesh-colour, with a greenish tinge and pink spots on the very long dorsal. The pink spots change to lines upon the petals. Slipper ruddy green.

Dimmockianum. – The broad and handsome dorsal is green, with white margin. A red stain at the base is continued in lines of spots upwards. The petals are scored with the same colour.

Measuresiae. – Big, with a grand dorsal, pale grass-green below, broadly whitening as it swells. Petals the same green, with a dark midrib and fainter lines. Slipper yellow.

Rona is an example of the common type in its utmost perfection – large, symmetrical, its green tinge the liveliest possible, its white both snowy and broad, and its spots so vigorously imprinted that they rise above the surface like splashes of solid chocolate.

Majesticum is another of the same class, but distinguished by the enormous size of its dorsal.

Dorothy. – Dorsal greenish yellow, with faint spots of chestnut and a broad white margin. Petals and slipper the same greenish-yellow tone.

R. H. Measures.— For size as for colour this variety is astonishing. Its gigantic dorsal is white, prettily stained at base with pale green, in which are enormous red spots, irregularly set. Petals tawny greenish, with lines and dots of red. The slipper matches.

Harefield Hall variety resembles this, but smaller. The great spots of the dorsal are more crimson, the petals and slipper a darker hue.

Frederico.— Within a broad white outline the dorsal is all yellow, heavily spotted and splashed with chestnut. The reddish tawny petals are lined and spotted with chestnut, and the tawny slipper shows a chestnut network.

Corrugatum.— The name refers to a peculiarity unique and inexplicable. The slipper, so smooth in every other case, has a strong breastbone, so to say, and five projecting ribs on either side, arching round diagonally from the back – pale brown on a darker ground. The dorsal is all yellow, spotted with brown, but the crest overhangs, showing its white underside.

Drewett's variety.— Dorsal white, with a green base and huge blotches of red-brown; greenish petals lined with the same; ruddy greenish slipper.

Eximium.— A natural hybrid doubtless, though we cannot guess what its other parent may be; it came among a lot of the ordinary form. Very small. The funny little dorsal is yellow, spotted throughout with red. The small petals have a crimson tinge, much darker in the upper length. Slipper dull crimson; the yellow shield of the column is very conspicuous on that ground.

Hector.— The dorsal is pale grass-green, with a white crest and margin and large chestnut spots; petals and slipper reddish ochre.

Punctatum is a title very commonly bestowed when the usual spots run together, making small blotches, arranged in lines; often the petals have a white margin, more or less broad, which shows them off.

Here also I should mention the famous Cyp. ins. *Sanderae*, though, as a matter of fact, it is lodged elsewhere. The story of this wonderful orchid has often been told, but not every one has heard it. I may be allowed to quote my own version, published in *About Orchids – a Chat* (Chapman and Hall, 1893). ‘Among a great number of *Cypripedium insigne* received at St. Albans, and “established” there, Mr. Sander noted one presently of which the flower-stalk was yellow instead of brown, as is usual. Sharp eyes are a valuable item of the orchid-growers’ stock-in-trade, for the smallest peculiarity among such “sportive” objects should not be neglected. Carefully he put the yellow-stalk aside. In due course the flower opened and proved to be all golden. Mr. Sander cut his plant in two, sold half for seventy-five guineas at Protheroe’s auction rooms, and the other half to Mr. R. H. Measures. One of the purchasers divided his plant and sold two bits at a hundred guineas each. Another piece was bought back by Mr. Sander, who wanted it for hybridising, at two hundred and fifty guineas.’ Not less than forty exist perhaps at the present time, for as soon as a morsel proves big enough to be divided, divided it is. Here we have two fine plants and a healthy young fragment.

To describe the flower is an ungrateful task. Tints so exquisitely soft are not to be defined in words; it is pleasanter to sum them up in the phrase ‘all golden,’ as I did formerly, when there was no need for precision. But here I must be specific, and in truth *Cypripedium insigne Sanderae* is not to be so described. The dorsal, beautifully waved, has a broad white margin and a cloud of the tenderest grass-green in the midst, covered with a soft green network. There are a few tiniest specks of brown on either side the midrib. The petals might be termed palest primrose, but when compared with the pure yellow slipper a pretty tinge of green declares itself. A marvel of daintiness and purity.

In this house hang Catt. *citrina*, Odont. *citrosimum*, and *Laelia Jongheana* – five rows. Of the first, so charming but so common, it is enough to say that the owner of this collection has contrived to secure the very biggest examples, in their native growth, that a sane imagination could conceive – so big that I should not have credited a report of their dimensions. The ordinary form of *citrosimum* also demands no comment, and I deal with the interesting *Laelia Jongheana* elsewhere. But we have a number of *citrosimum roseum*, which has white sepals and petals and a pink lip; of *citrosimum*

album, all purest white, save the yellow crest; and of the cream-coloured variety, which to my mind is loveliest of all. Sir Trevor Lawrence collects these at every opportunity, and I remember the charming display he made once at the Temple Show, when their long pendulous garlands formed the backing to his stand.

STORY OF CATTLEYA SKINNERI ALBA

The annals of botany are full of incident and adventure, especially that branch which deals with orchids. All manner of odd references and associations one finds there. I myself, having studied the subject, was not much surprised to meet with a tale of orchids and cock-fighting lately; but others may like to hear how such an odd connection arose.

The name of the orchid was *Cattleya Skinneri alba*, one of the rarest and most beautiful we have; the name of the hero, Benedict Roezl, greatest of all collectors. This experience gives some notion of his ready wit, cool daring, and resource. But I could tell some even more characteristic.

It is necessary to say that *Cattleya Skinneri tout court*— a charming rosy flower — was discovered by Mr. Skinner long before this date — in 1836; but no white *Cattleya* had yet been heard of.

It was in 1870. Roezl had made a very successful foray in the neighbourhood of Teticapan, Guatemala, and with a long train of mules he was descending towards the coast. His head mozo could be trusted; the perils of the road — streams, mud, precipices, and brigands — had been left behind; Roezl, rejoicing in the consciousness of good work well done, pushed on by himself towards the village where they were to spend the night.

He had not been there before, but the road — rather, the trail — was plain enough. Unfortunately it led him, after a while, into a jicara-grove. This tree, which supplies the calabash used throughout Central America, has some very odd peculiarities. Its leaves grow by fours, making a cross, and on that account, doubtless, the Indians esteem it sacred; their pagan forefathers revered the cross. The trunks spring at equal distances, as if planted by rule, but such is their natural habit; I have the strongest impression that Mr. Belt found a cause for this eccentricity, but the passage I cannot discover. Thirdly, jicara-trees always stand in a low-lying savannah, across which they are marshalled in lines and 'spaced' like soldiers on parade in open order — at least, I never saw them in another situation. Such spots are damp, and the herbage grows strong; thus the half-wild cattle are drawn thither, and before the wet season comes to an end they have trampled the whole surface, obliterating all signs of a path, if one there be, and confounding the confusion by making tracks innumerable through the jungle round.

Upon such a waste Roezl entered, and he paused forthwith to deliberate. The compass would not help him much, for if it told the direction of the village, the Indian trail which led thither might open to right or left anywhere on the far side of the grove. Travellers in those wilds must follow the beaten course.

At length he took bearings, so as to go straight at least, and rode on. Presently an Indian lad came out from the forest behind him, but stopped at sight of the tall stranger. Roezl shouted — he spoke every patois of Spanish America with equal fluency. The boy advanced at length. He could only talk his native Quiché, but Roezl made out that he was going to the village — sent him ahead, and followed rejoicing. So he crossed the jicara-ground.

But in the forest beyond, it was not easy to keep up with an Indian boy trotting his fastest. In a few minutes the guide had vanished and Roezl hurried along after him. Suddenly a ragged rascal sprang out from the bushes ahead with levelled gun. Roezl glanced back. Two others barred his retreat.

Not unfamiliar with such incidents, he laughed and offered his purse — never well filled. Good humour and wit had carried him through several adventures of the kind without grave annoyance; once in Mexico, when he had not one silver coin to ransom himself, a party of bandits kept him twenty-four hours simply to enjoy his drolleries, and dismissed him with ten dollars — which was a godsend, said Roezl. But these fellows only spoke Quiché, and they were sullen dogs.

The purse did not satisfy them by any means. They made their prisoner dismount and enter the forest, marching behind him. The camp was close by, and here Roezl found his guide, hitched to a tree by the neck. The brigand officer and some of the men talked Spanish, and they appreciated

Roezl's 'chaff,' treating him with boisterous familiarity; but they would not hear of letting him go until the Captain's arrival. He sat upon the ground, exchanging jokes with the ruffians, drinking their aguardiente and smoking their best cigars, like a jovial comrade.

Meantime the Indian members of the band were out of the fun, and they attended to business. What they wanted of the lad Roezl did not understand, but when he persisted in refusing they beat him savagely. At length it went so far that Roezl could not bear to hear the poor fellow's cries. Putting the matter humorously, he begged the lieutenant to interfere, and that worthy commanded the Indians to desist.

After an hour or so the Captain appeared, and Roezl's case was put before him; at the same moment, however, the scouts brought in a priest. He had resisted probably, for they had bound and beaten him. Such treatment was novel, doubtless. It had taken all spirit out of the holy man, who walked as humbly as could be till he set eyes on the Captain. Then his courage returned. They were old acquaintances, evidently, and the Padre claimed satisfaction. He did not get it; but the Captain set him free, with apologies. The boy proved to be his servant, and he also was released. Roezl asserted a claim to equal consideration as defender of that youth, and at length it was ungraciously allowed. Remembering, however, that his precious orchids would soon arrive and fall into the brigands' hands, to be smashed in spite probably, he ransomed them by a bill drawn on himself at the capital. Then he rode on to overtake the priest, who was Cura of the village which he sought.

Not prepossessing at all was that ecclesiastic. None of the bandits had a more stupid expression or one less amiable. But Roezl found presently that he had some reason for ill-humour. Six cocks had he taken to a grand match at Tetonicapan the day before – three his own, three belonging to parishioners; and every one was killed! The boy had been sent in advance to break the news.

Cock-fighting is the single amusement of that population, besides drink, of course, and the single interest of its ministers – most of them, at least. This padre could talk of nothing else. It was not a subject that amused Roezl, but he knew something of that as of all else that pertains to life in those countries. The dullest of mortals could not help gathering information about cocks and their ways in a lifetime of travel up and down Spanish America; the most observant, such as this, must needs collect a vast deal of experience. But Roezl was not interested in his companion.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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