THE

ORCHID ALBUM,

COMPRISING

COLOURED FIGURES AND DESCRIPTIONS

OF

NEW, RARE, AND BEAUTIFUL

ORCHIDACEOUS PLANTS.

CONDUCTED BY

ROBERT WARNER, F.L.S., F.R.H.S., AUTHOR OF SELECT ORCHIDACEOUS PLANTS,

AND

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THE BOTANICAL DESCRIPTIONS BY THOMAS MOORE, F.L.S., F.R.H.S., CURATOR OF THE CHELSEA BOTANIC GARDENS.

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

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VOLUME II.

BOTANICAL GARDEN.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY B. S. WILLIAMS,

AT THE

VICTORIA AND PARADISE NURSERIES, UPPER HOLLOWAY, N.

MDCCCLXXXIII.



CYPRIPEDIUM MEIRAX.

[PLATE 95.]

Garden hybrid.

Epiphytal. Acaulescent. Leaves distichous, coriaceous, oblong-lanceolate, acute, the upper surface of a dull dark green, faintly mottled with transverse markings, the underside of a dull wine purple. Scape (peduncle) densely hairy, dark purple, with a short boat-shaped purplish-green bract at the base of the six-ribbed ovary. Flowers medium-sized, solitary on the peduncle; sepals hairy externally, glabrous and glossy within; the dorsal one broad ovate, about an inch in breadth, ciliate at the base, and fringed at the edge with whitish hairs, blush-white, with a stout central dark purple stripe, having on each side a short green one, and beyond that five others graduated in length, and of a greenish-purple colour, the central rib more prominently hairy at the back and tip; lower connate sepal oblong-ovate obtuse, whitish, with seven green ribs or veins; petals linear-oblong, broadest upwards, two inches long and about half an inch broad, plane at the base, recurvo-undulate at the tip, the upper side (half) glossy, of a deep claret-purple, streaked with green at the base, somewhat ribbed, ciliate with purple hairs, the central rib stouter, purple, with a few round black spots distributed along its base, the lower half of the same colour but less glossy; lip rather large, oblong, an inch and three-quarters long, polished, the sides purple, deeply inflexed and extended at the base like a pair of ears, the front part green and veiny towards the tip, with a short purple rib, deep purple towards the edge; the inside of the pouch yellowish-tawny, beautifully spotted with crimson. Staminode large, roundish, deeply notched in front, dull purplish-tawny, with green veiny markings in the centre, shining as if varnished, thickly studded with short stiff hairs.

Cypripedium Meirax, Reichenbach fil., in Gardeners' Chronicle, N.S. xiv., 524.

This is one of the many hybrids that have been raised in this country, and which we owe to the handiwork of cultivators. It must be highly gratifying to those who devote their time and skill to so interesting a pursuit as the origination of new varieties, to witness the success of their labours, and we are greatly indebted to those amateurs and nurserymen who have so successfully carried out this process of hybridisation. Some of the new forms produced may be disappointing, but others are in every way encouraging, by yielding fresh forms and colours, and in this way, through careful selection, many beautiful flowers are originated. In their native country the wild plants are no doubt crossed by insects, but in such cases there are, perhaps, comparatively few forms growing sufficiently near together, and even those not all flowering at one time. The artificial hybridiser has the advantage of more abundant material to operate upon, and he can seize the most favourable

opportunities for crossing various forms and colours from different localities; while by growing them together, and getting them into flower at the same time, the operation can be performed with a greater prospect of securing good results. We, therefore, hope that this useful and interesting work will be carried on with spirit by our amateur orchidophilists.

There is no class of Orchids more useful than that which forms the subject of our plate. The flowers of the Cypripediums in most cases will last a long time, and the plants are, moreover, of easy cultivation, requiring but little room, and most of them possessing perennial beauty in their nicely variegated foliage. The hybrid we now figure was raised by R. Warner, Esq., Broomfield, Chelmsford, from whom we have procured the stock. It was raised in company with several others, which have proved to be most beautiful and free-blooming subjects, but of which the parentage has not been noted.

Cypripedium Meirax was named by Professor Reichenbach. It is a small-growing form, as will be seen by our plate, but it produces good showy flowers, the dorsal sepal being broad, white, with green and purple veins, the petals purplisherimson with green nerves, and the lip veined and barred with purple. It blossoms during the winter and spring months, according as it completes its growth, and the flowers last six weeks or more in perfection.

The plants require the same treatment as those of the *C. barbatum* section. The most suitable material for growing them in is rough fibrous peat, having a small quantity of charcoal interspersed; they must have good drainage, as they need a good supply of water during the growing season, which follows the blooming period, and while they are making their growths they require more water. They will thrive either in the Cattleya house or the cool end of the East India house, near the light; but they must be shaded from the hot sun in summer. A little sun heat, however, will not injure them.

The Cypripediums of this character are propagated by dividing the plants when they begin to grow, leaving one or two old growths at the back. The divided parts should be potted in small pots until they are rooted, and then, should they require it, larger ones may be given to them.

Insects should be kept under. Sometimes the red thrips will attack the young leaves; this should be well sought after, for if it gets ahead the leaves will soon turn brown, and get very much disfigured, the plant, moreover, getting injured. A little tobacco powder applied to the leaves is a good remedy. When the insects are found to be destroyed it can easily be washed off.