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THE  
GARDENERS' CHRONICLE

A Weekly Illustrated Journal

OF

HORTICULTURE AND ALLIED SUBJECTS.

(ESTABLISHED IN 1841.)

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# The GARDENERS' CHRONICLE

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Netherby has been by the modern arts of forestry and arboriculture. Several great planters have resided here, from the Dr. Graham who planted the oldest woods to the late baronet.

#### THE WOODS.

But the greatest planter and improver was the famous statesman, Sir James Graham. Since his time Netherby, in the annals of Cumberland, has held the same place that Holkham does in Norfolk. The story would be too long to tell. It commenced before Sir James succeeded to the title and estates, when he resided at Crofthead, where Mr. Sutherland, the present wood manager, pointed with just pride to a noble, spreading Turkey Oak, planted seventy years ago, at the birth of Sir Frederick Graham. It must suffice to say of the improvements of Sir James Graham, that when he came to the estate, it was let chiefly—save the limited woodlands—to a race of crofters, who were wretched farmers, lazy by day and only active at night when they snared game, netted salmon, and smuggled goods over the border. This state of things Sir James reformed by wise measures, such as Sir John Sinclair adopted at Caithness when he reformed his estate under very similar conditions, enlarging the holdings, and introducing scientific farming, to the great advantage of all concerned. Farming is not a subject adapted to these columns, but I may say of the forestry at Netherby that I have seen nothing superior to it anywhere. On the occasion of my former visit the late Mr. Baty, who died in office here as wood manager, showed by statistics that the planting of woods on the moors and other lands had produced a considerable revenue, while the profit on the expenditure had been very satisfactory. There are now about 3500 acres of plantations, and 20 acres are planted annually over and above the quantity which is every year cleared and disposed of. Timber pays better than corn, or even grass. The sorts of trees are Larch, Scotch Fir, Spruce, and Silver Fir on the moors and stony land, and in stiffer soil, Oak and Ash. The Beech grows well on the hard, rocky soil which abounds here, and that tree forms a great ornament in some parts of the park and home domain. There is a magnificent specimen—a noble, wide-spreading Beech—on the lawn, on the north-east front of the house; and in the surrounding grounds Mr. Davidson, the gardener, presented me to a giant such as one willingly pays respect to—a grand Silver Fir. We hear of trees having been worshipped, and of deities moving in their branches in India, when all the neighbourhood came out to witness the miracle of the tree bending its top. I am sure no Fig tree in India can be more worthy of a deity than this giant Silver Fir. It has never known a pruning-hook, nor the destructive shade of other trees, and it is, therefore well feathered with side branches. The girth at 5 feet is about 14 feet, and the height not less probably than 30 yards. The Silver Fir cannot endure water at the root, and it likes uneven and even precipitous surfaces where moisture abounds, and drainage is well secured as at Inverary, where it grows pre-eminently well in the policies of the Duke of Argyll, each tree a tower, and thousands of them on the steep banks and hill sides near the castle, with ten or twelve loads of timber in each. Hundreds of acres of woods with green drives through them, surround the charming sylvan spot, where the Grahams of Netherby have reared their roof tree, and the glimpses Mr. Sutherland gave me during our drive, recalled the "pleasure in the pathless woods," which Byron describes, a pleasure which to my mind is much enhanced after a shower, where they are well kept and not pathless, and when occasional hares and many pheasants enliven the scene, and blackbirds and thrushes sing, and rabbits hop quickly across the drives to hide their upturned "scutches" in the brushwood. We did not meet with a squirrel, and no doubt these dainty little graceful creatures with their ample tails, and their impudence, beyond that of any other quadruped, prefer a sunny rather than a showery day for making their excursion; or,

perhaps, the gamekeepers have done with them what the Spanish patriot said on his death bed he had done with his enemies when he was told to forgive them before dying: "Haven't got any," he replied, "shot them all!" I have spent many a delightful day with gamekeepers in the woods, and have shot more than one of them in the gaiters, therefore I respect them. But why will they be so unnecessarily bloodthirsty? Why do they stick up traps for owls in all directions in the woods at Netherby? Owls fly by night when the young pheasants are safe in their coops. As night birds, they destroy thousands of mice and other vermin, and do a vast amount of good.

#### THE PLEASURE GROUNDS.

The 30 or 40 acres of kept grounds and shrubberies around the house are remarkable for their native beauty without any great display of exotic shrubs. They are well managed, and the Rhododendrons, which abound here, are kept well pegged down, so as to cover the ground. The wild Hyacinth is a feature of the place, many acres of it blossoming gloriously in the season. There are miles of delightful walks, sometimes by the steep sides of a burn which has cut its way deep through the sandstone-rock which forms the substratum of the several soils—from clay to stone—on the surface. A remarkably fine Ash, with tall trunk containing much timber, denotes a good soil, and perhaps clay, on that spot, whilst the numerous Beeches bespeak stony land. In the deep woods the Lichen covering the trunks and branches of the trees, tells of a moist atmosphere, and a climate favourable to timber.

Following the burn, past a summer-house on the banks, thatched with moss, and over a rustic wooden bridge high above the stream, we reached the spot where it flows by a watertall into the Esk, turbid and turbling wildly after rain, and smooth and bright as crystal in fine weather. Three birds follow the windings of streams in their flight, and do not cut off corners unless obliged—the kingfisher, the most wide-spread of the three; the dipper, which frequents the northern burns; and another bird of a smudged pale colour which soap and water would not whiten. I was not sure about this bird, but a young man known here for his knowledge of birds and skill in stuffing them—the naturalist of the estate—was feeding the pheasants in the wet grass of a wood pasture. He spoke with very proper caution, especially so near the Scottish border, and said that judging from my description, without having seen it, it would be the lesser whitethroat, which frequent the burns in Cumberland. I saw one in the park at Naworth, near the castle. Following the Esk by a path high above the river, we shortly crossed its stream by a narrow suspension-bridge that sagged under us as we went over, and having looked into the church of the parish of Kirk Andrews, we returned the nearest way to the Crofthead. The parish just named is 25 miles long, and the people can hardly all attend the little church; they come mostly to be buried, however, and, living or dead, the bridge shortens the distance, and was erected for that purpose. Sir James Graham rests with his ancestors in Arthur's Church, beautifully placed on a point of land close to Longtown, the name of the church and parish being a corruption apparently of Arthur's Head.

#### THE GARDENS.

The kitchen gardens reward inspection. I looked with interest on two old Myrtles planted seventy years ago, on what is now the back wall of the conservatory. There are three graperies, big houses, one 50 feet long, with rafters of 27 feet, filled with Black Hamburgs to be ripe September 1, when the demand for shooting parties, which are very popular here, is always very great. Three Peach-houses will presently yield abundance of 8 and 9-ounce fruit, and one such Peach per foot is a satisfactory crop.

The pinetum was planted by Sir Frederick Graham thirty years ago, in ground formerly a kitchen garden. It is rather a wet site, with clay sub-soil, thoroughly drained 3½ feet deep; but none of the drains low

run, as the soil is kept dry by the trees. At the planting of the pinetum, which is somewhat obscured by surrounding timber, the best specimens were obtained, and most of them are growing well. They form a good but rather crowded collection, and one could wish that objects of so much beauty were rather more widely scattered, on the Dropmore plan, and that space were afforded to admire them singly and separately. The Wellingtonia grows well here, and there are several good specimens. The stately Abies Nordmanniana, one of the handsomest of Conifers, thrives exceedingly well. Coming from the mountains of the Crimea, it is inured to frost, and in this sheltered site on our western coast it is, of course, untouched by the severest winter. This tree appears to thrive in a great variety of soils. One may see it growing without loss of shape or foliage in dry sandy land, whilst here it flourishes on a wet soil, perfect in shape from top to bottom, and covered with rank rich foliage. Abies Albertiana, from the Pacific coast, is a fit companion for the last, being as hardy, and, I thought, as handsome, for it looked its best at Netherby—lovely in its early summer foliage, sprinkled all over with light green young shoots. A. grandis is here in all its grace and glory, 70 feet high, or already almost half the height that it attains in Vancouver's Island, or in the Fraser River. A. nobilis, too, has reached, perhaps, a fourth of the height of 200 or 300 feet that Mr. Douglas assigns to it in the same regions. That other giant of the forests of the West discovered by the same explorer, and named after him, is emulating the specimens at Scone. It is a good characteristic of the Douglas Fir, noticeable in one of the specimens here, that when it loses its top by accident it soon makes another, which is not the case with all the Conifers. The Silver Firs in this collection have evidently found a favourable site. Abies Lowiana is another of the tribe, making itself quite at home. H. E.

#### NEW OR NOTEWORTHY PLANTS.

##### CYPRIPEDIUM HOOKERÆ (Rchb. f.) VAN. VOLONTEANUM, n. var.

This attractive Cypripedium is a recent Bornean introduction, known in gardens as C. Volonteatum, though I doubt if botanically it is more than a distinct variety of C. Hookeræ. The leaves are proportionally narrower than in the typical form, the petals broader and more obtuse, the lip a little constricted below the horizontal mouth, and the staminode quite orbicular, without notches. In other respects, it is quite like typical C. Hookeræ. The petals are 1 inch broad, bright purple at the apex, and much spotted with the same colour below; the lip 10 lines in diameter. The above differences, though slight, may perhaps serve to distinguish it from a horticultural point of view. It has appeared both with Messrs. Hugh Low & Co., of Clapton, and with Messrs. F. Sander & Co., of St. Albans. The above description was drawn from a plant flowered by the former, who have presented to Kew a wild dried flower. The latter exhibited a plant at the recent Temple show, when it received an Award of Merit.

##### ÆRIDES J'ANSONI, *hyb. nat.* (!)

The species of Ærides are notoriously difficult to define satisfactorily, and the subject of this note is more than usually perplexing. It appeared in a collection of A. odoratum, Lour., imported from Burnham by Messrs. Hugh Low & Co., through Mr. Boxall, but is quite unlike any form of that species which I am able to discover; in fact, it appears to be quite intermediate between it and A. expansum, Rchb. f., which also grows there, for which reason I think it may be a natural hybrid between the two. Compared with A. odoratum, the leaves are narrower, and less fleshy, the tips of the segments more rosy-purple, the side-lobes of the lip more spreading, a little more curved, and transversely barred with rosy-purple, and the front lobe twice as broad,