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Volume, Third Series, July to Dec., 1890.

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value, and the sorts of soils which suit them; for there is no best Wheat for all soils and climates, or one pre-eminent sort would suffice, whereas we have at least three or four sorts, red and white, long and short, bearded or blemmy, and even some for the trial of nations, or refined for the finest Wheat soils.

The farms at Verrières have been for forty years past used by the firm of Messrs. Villmorn, Andrieux & Co., as a site for the preservation of old varieties of plants, and for the propagation of the trial of new varieties. The experimental grounds comprise each year about 25,000 plots. As in the case of our own leading seedsmen, these different divisions are applied to the growth of stock seed for distribution among the growers of France, and sometimes selling by the growers so as to subject the produce to the test of comparison; to the trial of novelties introduced by other seedsmen, as in the case of the new Peas I mentioned just now; and to the preservation of a number of the typical cases to study and compare. The work of keeping old sorts true, and in introducing new varieties. It needs but little reflection to comprehend what a vast amount of work is entailed upon the firm and its experts in carrying into effect the various objects thus described. There are then two natural ways for such as may be disposed to follow this line of work: for the cultivation of the sort as such; or for flowers of various kinds; for Mangold (the seed of which is sold by this firm to the extent of two to three million pounds annually); for Potatoes, forage plants, Peas and “Haricots”; and, in fact, for everything. And at the farm of St. Fiere, whose sameness to as bright-looking examples as a lot of village school-children as I have ever seen. There was quite a crowd of small landowners present, and they all looked smart and well-to-do. The ceremony was not of long duration, and at its close we passed among the roundabouts, fancy stalls, and Shooting galleries, and then returned to our betteriums, &c. But, if I may tell the story, my accomplished guide and host, being invited as the mayor to show his skill, smashed three revolving eggs with a pea-rifle very neatly, and then we retired in triumph.

As to the betterium, or Sugar Beets, it is a great mistake, growing them too large, inasmuch as the smaller ones contain a far larger percentage of sugar. The same rule applies to Mangold Wurzel for cattle, which ought never to be grown in rows much more than 27 inches apart, except for the purpose of cleaning foul land. The crop should consist of many and small, rather than few and large. And yet, such is the popular ignorance, that growers sometimes throw it in the seed merchants’ teeth that he dare not (because they are not of the giant or maunmoth breed).

I saw Onions growing in very many plots. The Potatoes are a fine collection, to which, in fact, all the novelties are added every year. The practice here is to select the best from all the sorts here tried and tested, and not to breed any. Some are grown for trial, and some—previously approved of—are grown for seed, i.e., sets, to be sent to growers.

In England a potato merchant will look at no tuber which has not white flesh, and strange circumstances occur at the Criterion or Holborn restaurants—these busy feeding places— if yellow-flashed Potatoes were served at dinner. In France it is the other way: bright yellow is the approved colour, and in one of his frequent visits to England M. Villmorn met with the very early yellow-flashed Potato, Victor, an earlier variety than the Ashleaf, and found no difficulty in transferring it to France, where it has been a great favourite.

We next observed a collection of Gourds and the Custard Narrant, which, when grown in a climate of our own, would avoid the blemishes of the Potato. The blossoms are artificially impregnated, and to keep them true, are confined in such a bag as Grapes are secured in sometimes to bailee wasps and flies. French Beans and Gerkins came next, and then Scarlet Runners—red, white, and bi-colored; and a Lina Runner, and a late Bulgarian sort, named Southern Profyle, with dark-coloured, purple flowers. We passed the ground where the Peas had been harvested, and the dwarf Beans. The green-seeded French Beans, which are so much in fashion in France, are obtained in this way: the seeds are ripe and put into heaps, with a covering of straw to preserve them from the weather. The Beans so treated, when shelled and boiled, preserve their green colour.

The trade in these green French Beans has become a very large one between Paris and elsewhere. There, Nasturtium, biennis, or Dolichos soya, the Soy Bean, is represented here. It is grown for fodder and for ploughing in green as manure, and is of little value in France, it ripening too late, if at all. But it is one of the great food plants of the world, a native of Old World tropics, and anciently used in all countries, and China from remote antiquity. The Bean contains a large proportion of oil, and preparations similar to butter and cheese, and oil, are obtained from it in the cookery of the East.

Flowers and seed are grown in the grounds, of various kinds for the production of stock seed, and with the other objects already noticed. I observed an exquisite light blue Laura, which has raised here, charming rose-coloured sweet Peas; Giadioli; P’hoz Drummondium fimbratis, the blossoms fringed and pointed—an innovation, not an improvement. The lip is pointed, and pubescent. But we had little time among the flowers, and left them for another occasion, my pencil having been mainly occupied among the varieties of Avena, hybrids, and par-hybrids, H. E.

NEW OR NOTEWORTHY PLANTS.

CYPRIPEDEUM "NORTHUMBRIAN" (new hybrid).

This new hybrid has been raised by Mr. Drewett O. Drewett, of Riding Mill-On-Tyne, from seeds of C. calyphlum, fertilised by the pollen of C. imaginum var. Maeli. It belongs to the same group as C. Ashburtong, C. Crossianum, and C. obscurum, in the case of which plants a decorative point of view. The leaf is similar to that of C. imaginum in shape, but it is distinctly marbled with dark nerves and cross veins. The peduncle is 7 or 8 inches long, brown, purple, and pubescent. The bract is similar to that of C. imaginum, about 1 1/2 inches long, convolute in the lower part, dull green, suffused and dusted with dull purple. The ovary is about twice as long as the bract, entirely of a dark brown, and it can sometimes be seen through the sepals which are not of the giant or maunmoth breed.

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Cypripedium siamense, n. sp.

This is a new and pretty Cypripedium, imported from the neighbourhood of Bangkok, in Siam, of which a leaf and flower have just been received from Mons. J. Garden, Horticulteur, Bois-Colombes, near Paris, for description. It belongs to the group with tessellated leaves, and apparently stands nearest to C. javanicum, Reinw. The leaf is linear-oblong, 6 inches long, 1½ inch broad, grey-green, somewhat glaucous above, and tessellated with dark green nerves, very glaucous below. Scape 14 inches high, dark purple-brown, pubescent. Flattened acute, 1 inch long. Ovary 2½ inches, purple-brown. Dorsal sepal broadly ovate, acute, 1½ inch long; light green in the centre and base, passing into light purple, and thence into a broad white margin; the nerves dark green, seventeen in number; and the margin reflexed. Lower sepal smaller, narrower, pale green, with six darker nerves. Petals ligulate, slightly deflexed, 2½ inches long, 8 lines broad, ciliate; light green, with twelve darker nerves, with about six blackish warts on upper margin, the distal third passing into pale purple. The lip 2 inches long, the pouch ellipsoid, sub-compressed, pallid behind and at apex, with small dusky spot, purple-brown in front, the infolded basal lobes meeting at their edge, pale whitish-green, with numerous small and a few larger purple-brown spots and warts. Stamina horse-shoe shaped, with a notch in the basal and a small tooth in the apical side, the margin of a pale purplish colour, and the centre with numerous dark green nerves. I understand that it is to be sent out this spring, and no doubt it will be welcomed by cultivators of this interesting genus. R. A. Balf.:

LOCKINGE.

On October 12 last year we published in these columns an account of the garden at Lockinge, made famous in these days by Lord Wantage. Since the publication of that paper we afforded our readers, on January 11, a view of the conservatory, flower garden, and church; and now we give a view of the rock garden, and a bridge over the neighbouring stream (fig. 26), and another (fig. 27), of the same stream a little distance away from the rockery.

The stream has been very successfully dealt with by the garden artist, and exhibits so little obstruction of art, that it is quite a charming feature of the garden. The rockery is not a very pretentious thing, but it is natural, and well adapted to the growth and to the display of the plants with which it is furnished.

A GARDENER'S PROBLEM.

Horticulture (p. 110) is said to be "built up of traditions"—which means, I presume, that the opinions and practices relating to horticulture have been handed down to posterity unwritten. I, like many others, have scaled the horticultural ladder, or passed through the routine of gardening, in the usual way; but from the very commencement I had to call in the aid of the written history of the profession, in the shape of good standard works on gardening, or that supplied through the medium of the horticultural press, which was always welcome, seeing that it contained the most recent callings from the head-quarters of horticulture. Who, then, can say that horticulture is made up of unwritten traditions? There are hundreds of establishments throughout the country where the knowledge of gardening to be obtained is of the most rudimentary kind, if entire dependence is to be placed on what is to be obtained from the verbal instructions of the chief. Even in large establishments, young men yearning for a knowledge of their profession, must glean it from various sources written and recorded. To ignore these facts is to ignore the valuable assistance given to horticulture by such men as Miller, Loudon, Thompson, Lindley, Thomas Moore, and many others, including living writers.

Much is written about imitating Nature, but I fear that many of her works are inimitable in many parts of the globe, the British Isles included. How can we imitate, in the confined limits of a greenhouse, or on pigmy mounds of earth called rockeries, what Nature requires a continent or a mountain, with their attendant climatic conditions of heat, light, and moisture, to effect? The history of Gentians, Primulas, Saxifragas, the Narss, and others, in gardens, all testify to what I mean. Who has not often been shocked by the bungles on Nature in what are termed natural rockeries, grottoes, and caves, especially as aids to plant culture? Man constructs these paltry imitations often without considering how the plants will be able to obtain light or water absolutely necessary for their existence. The grottoes and caves are planted, and the subjects left pretty much to take care of themselves, and the gardeners then wonder why they die. Illustrations of this may be seen in any otherwise good horticultural establishments. Nature builds rocks in a