

so as to allow a large body of soil between, and this should consist of peat and broken stone and sand in about equal proportions. Mere crevices that the hand could explore are of no use at all; they should be deep enough to hold a man by the leg if his foot slipped into one, and should open below into beds of broken stone and peat and sand, and be filled with the same sort of mixture. Having made a good rockery with a northern aspect for coolness, it will be desirable to ensure a regular dribbling of water all over it from May to August, not indeed to keep it flooded or boggy, for the drainage should be perfect, and the dribbling constant, but to keep the whole mass of rock and soil moist, for the roots of these shrubs are never dry in their own mountain gardens. We cannot create an alpine climate, and the more we see of alpine plants under cultivation, the more thoroughly convinced we are that the question of climate is of comparatively little consequence; but we can shut out from them the meridian beams of the midsummer sun, and ensure to their roots, all the summer long, the kindly moisture which is so essential to their well-doing.

The following is a list of alpine shrubs that require the same treatment as the alpine rose, and are worthy to be associated with it as gems of "purest ray serene." To plant them on a little rockery would be murder—they want light, and space, and air, and a good body of peaty soil. *Andromeda tetragona*, *Azalea amena*, *Calluna vulgaris* fl. pl., *Cotoneaster thymifolia*, *Cytisus sessilifolius*, *Daphne alpina*, *Empetrum nigrum*, *Genista tinctoria* fl. pl., *Helianthemum vulgare* in variety, they do well in shade, but better in the fullest sunshine; *Menziesia polifolia*, *Polygala chamæbuxus*, *Ruscus hypoglossum*, *Salix reticulata*, *Vaccinium amœnum*, *V. ovatum*, and *V. stamineum*.

S. H.

RHODODENDRON VENUSTA.—EARLY FLOWERING RHODODENDRONS.



YOU ask for information respecting the *Rhododendron Venusta*. I believe it to be a distinct species; and I am acquainted with two varieties. I first saw the *Venusta* flowering in a friend's drawing-room in March, 1845. It had been purchased from Messrs. Lucombe & Pince, near Exeter; and from their nursery was immediately procured the parent plant now growing at Ashbury. The foliage is of a dull green, the underside brown, and often curled back at the edges. The flower opens rose-colour, and turns paler in a day or two. The time of flowering varies with the season, and is very protracted—some years beginning in November, and ending early in May. I have known it in full beauty at Christmas, and any time through January and February, generally with the snowdrops. It is often spoilt with a single night's frost; yet, even after continuous frost and snow, a few days' thaw is sufficient to bring forth the buds fit for cutting and opening in water.

November.

Two or three years later, a second plant of the *Venusta* was obtained from the late Mr. Veitch, of the Heavitree Nurseries, near Exeter, and proved a variety of Pince's *Venusta*. The growth of the plant is stiffer; the colour of the flowers far more brilliant, and of a darker rose-colour; and before they are fully opened, the stamens and pistil project decidedly beyond the corolla, giving it a peculiarly pointed appearance. It is the handsomer of the two, but it blooms later—not till February or March; it passes more quickly, and will not retain its beauty in water longer than a few days or a week; whereas Pince's *Venusta* will keep for three or four weeks without withering. It is singular that Veitch's *Venusta* is attacked by some kind of fly; and it is rare, on a sunny day, to find a flower fully opened without two or more holes pierced through the lower part of each tube.

Is it usual for the *Rhododendron Pictum* to flower in winter? A plant was procured, in 1861, from the late Mr. Veitch, of Exeter, labelled "*Pictum*." For three or four years it grew luxuriantly, without flowering. At last, two or three fine blooms appeared in the month of February; and since then it has always bloomed within a week or two of the same time. For the last two or three winters there have been hundreds of flowers on the single plant in full beauty at once. Pure white, deeply marked, truss conical.

I hope to have the pleasure of sending you specimen flowers of each kind when the season arrives.

J. H. W.

[*Rhododendron Pictum* is a garden variety of the *Ponticum* section. There are many equally good that flower equally early; as, for example, *Jacksoni*, *Altaclarensis*, *Hendersoni*, *Nobleanum*, *Lady Duckworth*, *Stamfordianum*, *Perspicuum*, etc., etc. In the "kind climates" these early-flowering varieties are invaluable for the flower-garden; but elsewhere—and, to be definite, let us say near London—they are of little use, except to grow in pots for the conservatory. We again thank our friends for the aid afforded in illustrating the subject of "Beautiful Trees for Kind Climates," and beg of "J. H. W." to appropriate of our thanks a Benjamin's portion.—Ed. F. W.]

NEW ROSES FOR 1873-4.

BY W. D. PRIOR, ESQ.



AN instalment of the New Roses has come to hand, and will, no doubt, be followed shortly by the whole flock. In face, however, of the superlatively inferior quality of most of the varieties issued last year, it ought to be a grave consideration with English purchasers whether they will experiment for some little time in the new French roses, leaving our brethren across the Channel to test their productions at their own expense. We could then easily obtain such as we required of approved value.