

# FLORAL NOVELTIES.

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Illustrated by E. CARTER.



COMPARETTIA SPECIOSA.

forms, combined and arranged by Nature herself, she being frequently aided in her work by the scientific gardener, who elaborates and enlarges upon her original schemes.

The evolution of "new" flowers is curious and interesting. The foundation of many of these is often a "sport"—one of those freaks of nature that are often so startling and so disappointing. "Sports" are very inconsistent, and may never appear again, much to the chagrin of the cultivator, who hopes he may have secured a veritable prize.

A new flower does not necessarily mean a new plant. A plant is sometimes under cultivation in England for years without flowers. The *Camensia maxima* is a striking instance. This has been here since 1873, and though every possible experiment was tried to induce it to bloom it obstinately refused to do so until last year, when, curiously enough, it flowered simultaneously in three different parts of England—Kew, Hungerford, and Scarborough.

It is a handsome climber, with large clusters of fragrant creamy-white flowers fringed with gold, its foliage being of a rich deep green. It was discovered by Wetwitsch in the forests of Angola. One can imagine



CATTELEYA LE CZAR.



HERE is nothing new under the sun we are told. Yet surely the surprises that one encounters nowadays at a modern flower-show are somewhat calculated to awaken a shade of suspicion as to the truth of this time-honoured adage? What can be more marvellous than the transformation that most of our flowers have undergone during recent years?

It is difficult to believe that most of the new flowers are merely variations of existing

how effective it must have looked festooning with its masses of bloom the lofty trees on the outskirts of the forests.

Among the more recent additions to



ACIDANTHERA BICOLOR.

horticulture, we find the *Acidanthera bicolor*, a pretty, sweet-scented member of the iris family. It was originally found in the mountainous parts of Abyssinia by Hochst, as early as 1844, but was lost sight of, so far as England was concerned, and only rediscovered and introduced into this country a year or two ago. I believe however it was cultivated to some extent in America. It bears from four to six ivory-white flowers with purple blots at the base. It is quite hardy and will succeed in most situations if the bulbs be lifted and stored during the winter.

Perhaps no plants excite more wonder and admiration than do orchids. These are so prolific in new varieties that it is difficult to make a selection. One of the best artificial hybrids of the past year is *Laelio-cattleya decia alba*, exhibited last November by Veitch. These are entirely white, except the lip, which is a mauvy pink lined with a beautiful network of silvery white.

The *Cattleya le czar* is indeed a regal flower. Its long sepals are bright rose colour, the petals pale carmine, the lip rich crimson shaded to a royal purple and fringed with gold. In this case the insects have undertaken the cross-fertilisation and set the gardeners an inverted problem to solve, viz., given the child, find the parents? A dainty orchid is the *Comparellia speciosa*, with its graceful spray of orange-coloured flowers.

The *Maxillaria striata* is more curious than beautiful. It has pale greenish-yellow petals and sepals lined with deep chocolate, the lip is white in front lined at the tip with purple. This is grown by Sander, of St. Albans, who also owns the beautiful *Cattleya aurea* (Mrs. F. Hardy).

The *Campanula profusion* is a new hybrid whose pale blue masses of flower will be very ornamental on rockeries and borders. By no means the least interesting feature of this plant is the fact that it represents a very curious problem in the study of hybridising. It is asserted to be the result of a cross between two white flowering plants, *C. isophylla alba* and *C. carpathica alba*, a circumstance which cannot at present be explained. The value of a white variety of any plant is well known in experimental fertilisation. For



MAXILLARIA STRIATA GRANDIFLORA.

instance, the seed produced by placing the pollen of a white variety on the stigmas of an orange variety, or vice versâ, may result in pure red or pure yellow flowers, owing to the red and yellow which are present together in the orange becoming disassociated in the seedlings. This has been attempted with striking results in begonias and rhododendrons. Speaking of rhododendrons reminds me of the new *Rhododendron numa*. This boasts a long pedigree, no less than four distinct species being concerned in its ancestry, and it forms a connecting link between the Indian azalea and the *Javanico jasminiflorum* group of hybrids. It is, as a rule, a difficult matter to obtain crosses between two species botanically belonging to distinct sections of the genus, as the seedlings obtained are very few in number, difficult to rear, slow in growth, and very shy of flowering.

Many attempts have been made to vary the shape and colours of the cyclamen. Messrs. Low have so far succeeded as to induce the petals to form crests and fringes, while De Langhe, of Brussels, has raised a

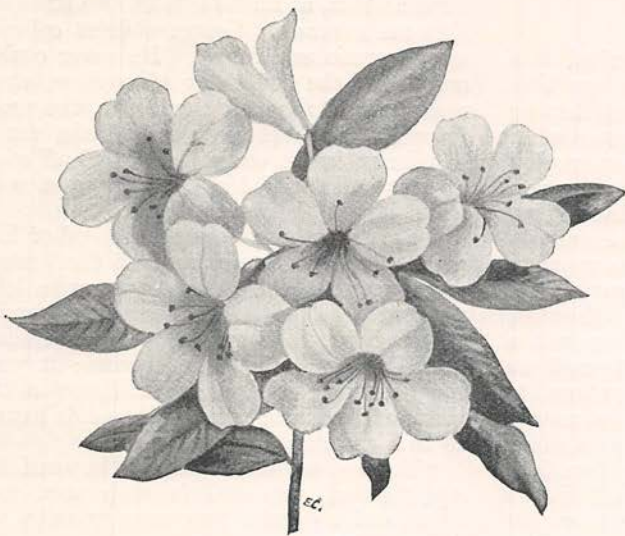
variety which he has called the *Cyclamen papilio*, in which the petals branch at the edges, and the whole flower is more primula-



CATTELEYA AUREA (MRS. F. HARDY).

shaped and of very beautiful colours. The methods of transforming the shape of the flowers are as interesting to the student of evolution as to the horticulturist. M. de Langhe tells me that about ten years ago he noticed among his ordinary cyclamens a plant having remarkably beautiful foliage and an unusual number of flowers which were varied in shape, and generally shorter, rounder, and more spreading than the ordinary cyclamens. He isolated the plant and carefully gathered the seeds when ripe. The next year these seeds produced, on the whole, similar plants, though some showed still more marked improvement on their parent, while others were the reverse. The best of these were selected to bear seed, and in this way the plants went on improving for ten years.

But pen and pencil must stay, for after all they are inadequate to deal with such a theme.



RHODODENDRON NUMA.