





[PLATE 75.]

## THE GOLDEN SWAN-ORCHIS.

(CYCNOCHES AUREUM.)

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*A noble Epiphyte, with clear yellow flowers, from CENTRAL AMERICA, belonging to ORCHIDS.*

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### Specific Character.

*THE GOLDEN SWAN-ORCHIS.* Raceme long, pendulous, compact. Sepals lanceolate, flat. Petals of the same form, but rolled backwards from the point. Lip with a short stalk, at the end ovate and acute, with a round disk the edge of which is broken up into short curved processes forked at the point; the two lowest larger, distinct, and straight. Column the length of the lip.

*CYCNOCHES AUREUM*; racemo longo pendulo compacto, sepalis lanceolatis planis, petalis conformibus ab apice revolutis, labello brevi-unguiculato apice ovato acuto, disci rotundati margine in processibus brevibus arcuatis apice furcatis soluto: 2 basilaribus majoribus discretis rectis, columnâ labelli longitudine.

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TO the very singular race of Swan-Orchises, we have now the gratification of adding a new form, introduced from Central America by Mr. Skinner. It is very near the "Spotted," from which it differs in having a shorter and more compact raceme, whole-coloured pale clear yellow flowers, and a lip the terminal lobe of which is short and ovate, not long and linear-lanceolate, while the appendages into which the edge of the disk is broken up are short, forked, all radiating from the centre, instead of the uppermost one being bent back, and the two lowest are very considerably larger than the others.

Is this a species? or is it a form of *C. maculatum*, or of some other of this masquerading genus? Upon this subject we venture to repeat what was said six years ago in the *Botanical Register*, upon the surprising transformations to which the Swan-Orchises are subject, and concerning which we have no more information than we had in 1846. The plant to which the remarks applied was the green state of the Egertonian Swan-Orchis.

"This is evidently a variety of the *C. Egertonianum*, distinguished by its flowers being of a pale watery green, and not deep purple. But what is *C. Egertonianum* itself? In Mr. Bateman's magnificent



work we are told how the long-spiked small purple-flowered *C. Egertonianum* is only the short-spiked large green-flowered *C. ventricosum*; how the same plant at one time bears one sort of flowers, and at another time another sort; and we have ourselves shown how the same plant, nay the same spike, is sometimes both the one, the other, and neither. *C. Egertonianum* is then a 'sport,' as gardeners say, of *C. ventricosum*.

"But what again is *C. ventricosum*? Who knows that it is not another 'sport' of *C. Loddigesii*, which has indeed been caught in the very act of showing a false countenance, something wonderfully suspicious, all things considered, and justifying the idea that it is itself a mere Janus, whose face is green and short on one side, and spotted and long on the other.

"Then, if such apparently honest species as *C. Egertonianum*, *ventricosum*, and *Loddigesii* are but counterfeits, what warrant have we for regarding the other so-called species as not being further examples of plants in masquerade? For ourselves we cannot answer the question: nor should we be astonished at finding some day a *Cynoches* no longer a *Cynoches*, but something else; perhaps a *Catasetum*. If one could accept the doctrine of the author of the 'Vestiges,' it might be said that in this place we have found plants actually undergoing the changes which he assumes to be in progress throughout nature, and that they are thus subject to the most startling conditions only because their new forms have not yet acquired stability."

Since we have space for the purpose, we avail ourselves of the opportunity to give a list of the known forms of this strange genus.

#### SO-CALLED SPECIES OF CYNOCHES.

\* *Lip perfectly entire, fleshy, without appendages.*

1. *C. Loddigesii* Lindl. *Gen. & Sp. Orch.*, p. 154; *Bot. Cab.*, t. 2000; *Bot. Reg.*, t. 1742.—*Surinam*.—Flowers very large, fragrant, green and purple, with a white spotted lip. Sports by producing smaller broad-lipped flowers without scent, and with a very short cucullate club-shaped column. This is the original state of the genus.

2. *C. ventricosum* Bateman *Orch. Mex. & Guatemala*, t. 5.—*Guatemala*.—Flowers large, green, with a white lip. Sports to *Egertonianum*; and even towards the cucullate form of *C. Loddigesii*, as was ascertained by Sir P. Egerton, in 1849.

3. *C. chlorochilon* Klotzsch; *Sertum Orchidaceum*, t. 16.—*Maracaybo*.—Flowers very large, green, whole-coloured. Has not been observed to sport; but is probably a mere variety of *C. ventricosum*.

\* \* *Lip having the edge broken up into fleshy appendages.*

4. *C. pentadactylon* Lindl. in *Bot. Reg.*, 1843, misc. 26, t. 22.—*Brazil*.—Flowers large, yellowish green, banded with brown. In the garden of Mr. Kenrick, of West Bromwich, this produced two flowers of *Egertonianum*, among the usual flowers peculiar to itself, Sept. 12, 1851.

5. *C. aureum* Lindl. in *Paxt. Fl. Garden*, t. 75.—*Central America*.—Flowers large, clear pale yellow. Has not been yet observed to sport.

6. *C. maculatum* Lindl. in *Bot. Reg.*, 1840, misc. 8; *Sertum Orchidaceum*, t. 33.—*Mexico? La Guayra*.—Flowers small, yellow, spotted with brown. Has not been observed to sport.

7. *C. Egertonianum* Bateman *Orch. Mex. & Guatemala*, t. 40; *Bot. Reg.*, 1846, t. 46.—*Guatemala and Mexico*.—Flowers small, purple or greenish, unspotted. Sports to *Ventricosum*, and to *Pentadactylon*.

\* \* \* *Lip three-lobed, membranous, without appendages.*

8. *C. Pescatorei* Lindl. in *Paxt. Fl. Gard.*, no. 174; *alias* *Acineta glauca* Linden.—*New Grenada*.—Flowers yellow and brown, in a long pendulous raceme. Has not been observed to sport.

9. *C. barbatum* Lindl. in *Journ. of Hort. Soc.*, vol. iv.; *Bot. Mag.*, t. 4479.—*New Grenada, and Costa Rica*.—Flowers soft delicate flesh-colour, spotted with red. Has not been seen to sport.