

17. PONĒRĀ striātā.

A very singular Orchidaceous plant has lately flowered with Mrs. Wray of Cheltenham, among a collection sent to that lady from Guatemala by Mr. Skinner. It has the roots of a *Neottia*, a slender stem three or four feet high, unbranched, and covered with narrow grassy leaves, from four to six inches long, the points of which are obliquely emarginate, and the sheaths rough, like those of *Arpophyllum*, with little green or purple tubercles. When old the stems become leafless, are closely covered with rugged sheaths, and produce here and there from their axils clusters of two or three sessile flowers, of a pale buff colour, and less than half an inch long. In form they are exactly like a *Maxillaria* or a *Dendrobium*; both sepals and petals being striped with bright reddish-brown. The column is short, taper, with a pair of small auricles on each side of the anther-bed, and a dorsal tooth curved over the anther, which is membranous, 4-celled, and contains four pollen-masses adhering in pairs by means of single straps of powdery matter. The labellum is wedge-shaped, slightly downy, curved downwards in the middle, and two-lobed at the apex. It evidently belongs to the rare and little known genus *Ponera*, (so called from *πόνηρος*, unhappy, in allusion to the starveling appearance of the species), and represents among *Epidendreae* the tribes of *Malaxeae* and *Vandae*, of which *Dendrobium* and *Maxillaria* are respectively the types. The present opportunity induces me to offer

an improved character of the genus, and an enumeration of the species hitherto discovered.

PONERA. Sepala erecta, carnosae, lateralia majora, basi producta cum pede elongato columnae connata; dorsale planum. Petala ovalia, basi angustata, libera. Labellum cuneatum, bilobum, ascendens, arcuatum, cum basi columnae articulatum, omnino nudum. Columna brevis, teres. Anthera membranacea, depressa, 4-locularis. Pollinia 4, per paria adhaerentia; caudiculis binis pulvereis incumbentibus. Stigma subrotundum, excavatum, subbilabiatum.—Herbæ terrestres, gramineae, simplices. Folia linearia disticha, vaginis verrucosis. Flores fasciculati, terminales (?) in caule folioso, v. axillares in caule defoliato. Ovarium breve, conicum, rectum, sessile.

- Sp. 1. *P. juncifolia* (Gen. & Sp. Orch. p. 413.); foliis subulatis canaliculatis secundis, spicâ subbiflorâ terminali in caule folioso, labello retuso, clinandrio mutico.—*Mexico*.—A single specimen of this rare plant exists in Mr. Lambert's herbarium. It has a stem about a span high, and extremely narrow leaves which, in the dried state at least, are all directed towards one side. The flowers are separated from each other by an interval of nearly half an inch.
- Sp. 2. *P. graminifolia* (Bot. Reg. 1839. misc. 15. *Nemaconia graminifolia*, Floral Cabinet, p. 127.); foliis lineari-lanceolatis obliquè emarginatis, spicâ subbiflorâ terminali in caule folioso, labello acuto apice recurvo crenulato, clinandrio mutico.—*Mexico*.—A grassy plant of no beauty, resembling *P. striata* in the form of its leaves, but different in the structure of the flowers.
- Sp. 3. *P. striata*; foliis lineari-lanceolatis obliquè emarginatis, spicâ subbiflorâ axillari in caule defoliato, labello bilobo integro, clinandrii dente dorsali in antheram incurvo.—*Guatemala*.—This differs from the preceding in the lip being two-lobed, not acute and recurved, in its margins being entire and not crenulated, in the anther-bed having a dorsal tooth which curves over the anther, and two much smaller blunt teeth on each side of the stigma; it has also the property of flowering on the old leafless stems instead of the young leafy ones. The flowers are pale buff, striped with brownish orange.