





**PERISTERIA ELATA. LOFTY DOVE-FLOWER.**

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*Class and Order.*

GYNANDRIA MONANDRIA.

( Nat. Ord.—ORCHIDEÆ. )

*Generic Character.*

*Flores* subglobosi. *Petala* subcarnosa, 3 ext. æqualia, valde concava, 2 int. lato-obovata. *Labellum* obovatum, carnosum, truncatum, cum basi columnæ articulatum, disco cristato crasso. *Columna* basi petalorum adnata, apice solummodo libero, inferne longe producta, insigniter dilatata alata, alis erectis obtusis carnosissimis crassis intus unidentatis. *Anthera* bilocularis. *Massæ pollinis* 2 clavatæ, compressæ, hinc lateraliter fissæ.

*Specific Name.*

PERISTERIA \* *elata*.

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DESCR. A parasite. *Bulb*, when it has attained its full size, as large as a swan's egg, broadly ovate, green, obscurely striated and somewhat wrinkled, having at its base the remains of old, membranous, sheathing *scales*, at the summit bearing from three to five *leaves*, which are from two feet to forty inches in length, and six inches in breadth at their greatest diameter, lanceolate, or almost sword-shaped, acute, with several strong ribs, prominent at the back, and having many plicæ and striæ; the outer ones sessile and sheathing, the inner tapering at the base into a sort of petiole. From the base of the bulb arises the *flower-stem* or *scape*, four feet high, terete, glabrous, having  
below

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\* From περιστέρα, a dove, from the resemblance in the shape of the column to that bird.



below three or four large, sheathing, membranous scales, and at the extremity a *spike* or *raceme* a foot in length, of large, yellowish-white, almost globose, fleshy *flowers*, yielding a peculiar fragrance, somewhat resembling that of the *NUPHAR lutea*. *Bracteas* much shorter than the germen, ovato-acuminate, often carinate, rigid, green tinged with purple. The three outer *petals* of the flowers are broadly ovate, almost rotundate, very concave, the two inner ones rather more delicate, broadly obovate, all of them subconnivent. *Lip* erect, broadly obovate, truncate, erect, thick and fleshy, having a large excrescence or protuberance, somewhat wrinkled, on the disk, often sprinkled with deep purple dots, which reach to the base, where the *lip* is jointed upon the prolonged base of the column. *Column* adnate with and decurrent upon the bases of the petals, its upper part alone free and standing forward nearly horizontally, the rest is extended downwards, remarkably dilated and thickened, bearing on each side two large, fleshy *wings*, which are erect, and reach nearly to the top of the column, rounded at the apex, below the middle bearing a conspicuous tooth: the whole is of the same waxy white with the petals, but the upper or inner side of the wings is beautifully sprinkled with deep purple dots. *Anther* hemispherical, white, two-celled. *Pollen-masses* 2, clavate, flattened, with a fissure at the outer margin, deep yellow, waxy, firm, fixed upon an oblong-acuminate membrane, with its margins recurved; this projects beyond the anther-case, so as to resemble the beak of a bird. *Germen* cylindrico-clavate, furrowed and slightly twisted.

In the year 1826, HENRY BARNARD, Esq. of Truxillo in Peru, communicated to RICHARD HARRISON, Esq. of Liverpool, a bulb of a remarkable, parasitical, orchideous plant, which he had found in the neighbourhood of Panama, and the flower of which is there looked upon with no little consideration, and known to the inhabitants by the name of "*el Spirito Santo*." The reason for this appellation was quite obvious on the blossoming of the plant, which did not occur in Mr. HARRISON'S stove, until the summer of the present year, 1831, when the centre of the flower exhibited a column which, with its summit or anther, and the projecting gland of the pollen-masses, together with the almost erect wings, bore a striking resemblance to a Dove, the emblem of the third person in the Trinity. *El Spirito Santo* was therefore applied by the same people, and in the same religious feeling as, dictated the naming of the "*Passion-Flower*."



So soon as the curious flowers were fully expanded, Mr. HARRISON, with his usual kindness, forwarded me a specimen ; together with an excellent drawing from the pencil of Mrs. ARNOLD HARRISON. This is, in part only, copied, to suit the plate of the Magazine ; and therefore but imperfectly represents the stately appearance of the original. For this species is no less remarkable among Orchideous plants for its stature, than for its large and copiously flowering spike.

Being unable to find any Genus of the ORCHIDÆ which corresponds with it, I have ventured to give it a Generic name significant of the dove-like appearance of the column of fructification.

It is to be hoped, now that Mr. HARRISON has so successfully cultivated this rarity from the tropical parts of America bordering on the Pacific, that Mr. BARNARD will further the cause of Science by collecting and introducing to our stoves other plants of the same family, and which bear a long voyage better than many less interesting tribes.

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Fig. 1. View of the Column and Lip, the latter bent down. 2. Side view of the upper part of the Column and Anther. 3. Anther-case. 4. Upper, and 5, underside of the Pollen-masses : *magnified*.