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XV. *On the form of the Capsule and Seeds as affording a specific character in* *Primula vulgaris* (Huds.), *P. veris* (Linn.), and *P. elatior* (Jacq.). By the Rev. W. A. LEIGHTON, B.A., F.B.S.

READ 13TH JULY 1848.

VERY much has been written from time to time on the Cowslip, Primrose and Oxlip, both to prove their specific identity and the contrary; and many experiments have been undertaken with similar views, but as it appears to me without having arrived at any certainty. The question seems still an open one. Most of these writers, whose papers I have had the means of consulting, whilst they duly describe the forms and peculiarities of the leaves, flowers, scape and other parts of the above plants, never take any notice of the capsule and seeds. The same may be said of both English and continental botanists, whose works I have referred to.

It occurred to me that possibly good specific characters might exist in the form of the capsule and seeds. Accordingly, having a plant of the Bårdfield Oxlip (*P. elatior*, Jacq.) in my garden, given to me in 1842 by my friend Mr. C. C. Babington of St. John's College, Cambridge,—and also Cowslips (*P. veris*, Linn.) and Primroses (*P. vulgaris*, Huds.), transplanted thither from the neighbouring fields, I determined to examine and compare the three plants in these particulars; and I was agreeably surprised to find my conjectures realized. The result of this comparison will be best exhibited by the accompanying drawings of these parts in the three plants, in which the relative proportions of each to the other have been carefully preserved.

The capsule of *P. vulgaris* is ovate, half the length of the calyx, the seeds globose, their surface elongato-papillose, the style glabrous, the subulate teeth of the calyx straight and meeting together at their apices.

In *P. veris* the capsule is elliptical, scarcely half the length of the calyx, the seeds forming round flattened discs, their surface rotundo-papillose, the style hairy, the short triangular teeth of the calyx incurved and converging, but not meeting together at their apices.

In *P. elatior* (Jacq.) the capsule is linear-oblong, as long as, or even slightly longer than, the calyx, the seeds forming round flattened discs, their surface rotundo-papillose, the style glabrous, the ovato-lanceolate teeth of the calyx curved outwards.

Primula vulgaris (Huds.).

Luciefelde, Shrewsbury, June 6th, 1848.