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Note On The Occurrence Of A Variegated Form Of The Common Mistletoe (*Viscum album*)

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MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,

Thursday, June 14, 1894.

Professor BOWER, President, in the Chair.

Mr. WILLIAM SANDERSON exhibited a plant of *Oncidium macranthum* in flower.

From Mr. CAMPBELL of Ledaig was exhibited a shell-full of ripe strawberries from his open garden.

Amongst herbaceous plants from the Royal Botanic Garden on the table were a series of hybrids of *Dianthus*, raised by Mr. BURNETT, of Aberdeen.

Mr. TAGG exhibited specimens of *Tabernæmontana longiflora*, Benth., showing extra-axillary branching.

The following papers were read :—

NOTE ON THE OCCURRENCE OF A VARIEGATED FORM OF THE COMMON MISTLETOE (*Viscum album*). By J. GRIEVE.

There is at present growing on a healthy thorn, in the Dean Cemetery of this city, a form of the common mistletoe sufficiently striking to merit attention being called to it. As will be seen from the specimen exhibited, the leaves are beautifully variegated, such a departure from the normal type being very unusual. Indeed, I do not know of any other example of the mistletoe "sporting" in this manner, and I have ventured to place it before the Society in order to learn if any of the members have met with such "sports" in this parasitic plant. The specimen exhibited is some ten or twelve years old, but no record of it has hitherto been made.

Issued November 1894.

Mr. DUNN remarked that he had seen variegated specimens of mistletoe, but only on unhealthy hosts.

NOTE ON THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF SAXIFRAGA WALLACEI, HORT. By J. GRIEVE.

As I am aware that the Botanical Society of Edinburgh does not confine its attention to matters of purely scientific botany, but takes a great interest in everything relating to horticulture also, I need scarcely apologise for bringing under your notice the subject of the origin and history of a now well-known plant, namely, *Saxifraga Wallacei*. I am the more anxious to place this subject before you, seeing that doubts still exist in the minds of many—both as to the parentage of the plant and its raiser*; and being acquainted with its history from the beginning, I am able to speak with some degree of confidence on the subject.

In 1873, Messrs. Jas. Backhouse & Son, of York, sent out

* Under *S. Camposii*, Boiss. et Rent., in the "Botanical Magazine," t. 6640, which had been in cultivation for many years at Kew, Mr. Baker places as a synonym *S. Wallacei*, Hort., and says:—"According to Willkinson, its [*S. Camposii*] nearest affinity is with *S. trifurcata*, Schrad. ('Botanical Magazine,' t. 1651), and *S. cuneata*, Willd., but to me it appears to be scarcely distinguishable from *S. Maveana*, Baker ('Botanical Magazine,' t. 6384), except in the smaller leaves, which seem never to assume the reniform shape. It is true that, judging by the dried native specimens, *S. Camposii* is a stouter, more rigid species, with a more crowded rosette of leaves, and shorter peduncles and pedicels, but under cultivation these differences are so considerably modified that the two plants may not unreasonably be regarded as geographical forms, one inhabiting the southern mountains of Spain, the other the northernmost ones of Marocco. The *S. maderensis* represents the same type in its western limit of growth—the island of Madeira; the *S. cuneata* of the Pyrenees represents the northern limit within the Peninsular area; within that area occur the equally or, indeed, more closely connected forms of *S. obscura*, Gren. and Godr., and *S. canaliculata*, Boiss. et Reut.; and it would not be difficult to connect all with the forms that occur under other names elsewhere in Western Europe." This is interesting taken in connection with the following dogmatic assertion of a writer in the "Garden," xxxv. (1889), p. 420:—"S. Wallacei, however it may have found its way to the Dean Cemetery, is *S. Camposii*, Boiss., cultivated for many years in gardens, and having nothing to do with *S. Maveana*." As illustrating the confusion that exists regarding these dactyloid saxifragas, the following quotation from another writer in the "Garden," xxix. (1891), p. 545, may be noted:—"True *S. Camposii* of Boissier is very seldom met with in cultivation, and I question whether it is to be found growing in any garden except that of M. Boissier himself, or of some one to whom he may have given a specimen of the plant."

J. D. Hooker
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two new Saxifrages—*S. Maweana** and *S. Wilkommiana*.† These were described by them as “two new species of the *S. palmata* section, with showy tufts of large pure white flowers, on stems six to ten inches high.” They added that, though nearly allied to each other, they are quite distinct, and might be regarded as two of the finest of the group. The first of these, *S. Maweana*, has now practically gone out of cultivation; but the second, *S. Wilkommiana*, is still grown.

Some two years after they were sent out, the late George Wallace, of the Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh, succeeded in raising from them a saxifrage now usually known in plant catalogues as *S. Wallacei* of gardens. This plant has become very widely known, and it is, perhaps, one of the best of its kind, whether for bedding purposes or as a pot plant. It has some qualities which mark it as an improvement on both parents, since it lasts longer in bloom than *S. Maweana*, and is of much superior habit to *S. Wilkommiana*, while it possesses a sweet scent but faintly present in either parent. Messrs. Dicksons & Co. procured the original plant from the raiser, and at once proceeded to increase it, preparatory to sending it out.‡ As many as 10,000 pots of it have been in stock in Messrs. Dicksons’ Nurseries at one time—for, although the plant very rarely seeds, it is easily grown from cuttings. It was distributed all over Britain and throughout the Continent of Europe, as well as in America.

As already stated, doubts have been thrown on its origin and history, and it is chiefly to set these doubts at rest, and to give honour to whom honour is due in the raising of it, that I have ventured to bring this subject to-night before

* *S. Maweana*, Baker, figured in the “Botanical Magazine,” t. 6384, was discovered by Mr. P. B. Webb, of Paris, in 1827, “in its only known habitat, rocks of the Beni Hosmar range of mountains opposite Tetuan,” in Morocco, “at about 2000 feet elevation.” He regarded it as a form of *S. globulifera*. It was not recognised to be a new species until Mr. Maw gathered it in 1869, and it was introduced into cultivation by him. It is also figured in “Gardeners’ Chronicle,” 1871, fig. 300.

† Is the *S. canaliculata*, Boiss. et Reut., from the mountains of Spain?

‡ It was awarded a first-class certificate by the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society in 1878. The name was given at the suggestion of Mr. James M’Nab.

the members of the Botanical Society. I trust the plant will long keep alive the memory of its raiser—one who, though but a humble horticulturist, was, throughout a long life, a keen and enthusiastic lover of plants.

NOTES FROM THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN, EDINBURGH.

I. REPORT ON TEMPERATURE AND VEGETATION DURING MAY 1894. By ROBERT LINDSAY, Curator.

The past month of May will be remembered as one of the most disastrous to vegetation that has occurred for many years. Preceded by a very mild and genial month, vegetation was in a most forward and flourishing condition, rendering it peculiarly susceptible to injury from frost. Between the 19th and the 24th of the month a succession of frosty nights took place, which has done serious damage to fruit crops throughout the country. Many hardy trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants have sustained severe injury. The following plants, in exposed situations, were more or less injured:—*Azalea pontica*, *A. mollis*, and Ghent varieties Laburnum and Horse Chesnut, had their flowers browned and destroyed; young shoots of Oak, Ash, Maple, Larch, *Abies Veitchii*, and *A. cephalonica*, Roses, *Dimorphanthus*, Rhododendrons of the Arboreum and Campanulatum breeds, *Pieris formosa*, Tulip tree, etc.; *Spiræa palmata*, *S. Aruncus*, *Rodgersia podophylla*, *Rheum officinale*, and *R. Emodi*, *Tamus communis*, *Polygonum Sieboldii*, *P. amplexicaule*, *P. molle*, *Trillium grandiflorum*, Male Fern, Oak Fern, Royal Fern, and even the Common Bracken had their young fronds completely blackened. The thermometer was below the freezing point on six occasions, registering in all 23° of frost. The lowest readings occurred on the 20th, 28°; 21st, 26°; 22nd, 28°; 23rd, 28°; 24th, 28°. The lowest day temperature was 48°, on the 16th, and the highest 70°, on the 4th of the month.

On the rock-garden 227 species and varieties came into blossom against 300 for May of last year. Among the most interesting were:—*Anemone narcissiflora*, *A. Polyanthus*, *Aciphylla Colensoi*, *Anthemis alpestris*, *Androsace sarmentosa*, *A. lactea*, *Anthyllis erinacea*, *Aquilegia Whitmanniana*,