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IV. NOTES ON PLANTS IN THE PLANT HOUSES. By R. L. HARROW.

December of 1895 has been a favourable one for plants cultivated under glass, being generally mild, and thus any extremes of artificial heating, which often prove a weakening agent during the dull winter months, have been rendered unnecessary. Among the first plants to break into a new season's growth are the tropical ferns, and the adiantums are usually a few weeks in advance of other genera in producing fresh fronds.

Among the most interesting plants that have flowered the following may be noted:—

Epidendrum paniculatum, Ruiz et Pax. An epiphytal orchid, one of the most widely distributed in S. America. The terete stems are about two feet long under cultivation, but in their native habitat are said to reach from three to four feet. The pale lilac and dull green flowers are very fragrant. The date of introduction is unknown.

Saccolabium giganteum, Lindl. This strong growing species is, under culture in this country, a dwarf-growing plant, with a close-set spike of fragrant flowers having white sepals and petals dotted with amethyst spots. It was first introduced in quantity by Messrs. Veitch in 1864 from Burmah.

Masdevallia polysticta, Rehb. This winter-flowering species is a native of Peru, and was introduced to this country by Messrs. Veitch in 1874. Its scape of five to seven fragrant flowers rises well above the leaves. The sepals are pale lilac, dotted with numerous purple spots, and the tails are light yellow, about half an inch long.

Other species of orchids which have flowered during the month are:—*Cypripedium Leezanum*, Hort.,—a hybrid of *C. insigne* × *C. Spicerianum* raised by Messrs. Veitch; *C. venustum*,—a pretty species with mottled foliage from Nepal, the petals bearing several dark blotches along their margins; *C. Dautherii*, Hort.,—with rather large flowers, a hybrid of *C. Harrisianum* × *C. villosum*; *Rodriguezia pubescens*, Rehb.,—the pendulous racemes of yellowish white flowers are sweetly fragrant. The plant

is said to be rare in its native habitat, Brazil. *Oncidium Cavendishianum*, Batem.,—a native of Guatemala. This species is distinguished as one of a group of this genus without pseudo-bulbs, the leaves springing from a stout rhizome. The flower scape is strong, terminating in a branched panicle. *Epidendrum ciliare*, Linn., var., *giganteum*,—one of the oldest known orchids in this country, introduced in 1790 from the West Indies. The pseudo-bulbs resemble those of a *Cattleya*, while the most conspicuous parts of the white flowers are the middle lobes of the filiform lip. *Pleurothallis ornata*, Rehb.,—a curious little species from tropical America.