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II. Note on a Station for *Primula veris* in Coldingham Bay, Berwickshire

Sir Robert Christison

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3. Mr Alexander Morrison presented a parcel of mounted Australian plants to the University Herbarium.

4. Dr Alexander Hunter exhibited a large series of photographs, principally illustrating Indian vegetation. He also gave interesting information regarding the progress of art in Southern India during the last fifteen years, and exhibited some beautiful examples of wood engraving, by the natives attending the School of Arts at Madras.

8th January 1874.—Sir ROBERT CHRISTISON, Bart.,
President, in the Chair.

The following Candidates were elected—

Resident Fellows.

ROBERT KIRK, Bathgate.

JOHN STEWART, W.S., 4, Albyn Place.

Foreign Honorary Fellow.

BARON FERDINAND VON MUELLER, M.D., Director of the Botanic Garden,
Melbourne.

The following Communications were read :—

- I. *Obituary Notice of Dr J. L. Stewart.* By Dr CLEGHORN.
(See pp. 31-33.)
- II. *Note on a Station for Primula veris in Coldingham Bay, Berwickshire.* By Sir ROBERT CHRISTISON, Bart.

In the fifth edition of his "British Flora," published in 1842, Sir William J. Hooker, in describing the *Primula veris*, adds, "Very rare in Scotland. Near Edinburgh. Introduced about Glasgow. In Scotland scarcely known."

Either Sir William had missed the Scottish localities where now it abounds, or the plant has spread amazingly since the time when the statement now quoted was written. It is probable that he had not visited those districts in the east of Scotland where the plant is by no means uncommon. At all events, thirteen years before the publication of the fifth edition of the "British Flora," Dr Johnston, in his

"Flora of Berwick-on-Tweed," which included all Berwickshire, says of the *Primula veris*, "Hab. meadows and deans, common." I understand, too, that it is common enough now on the coasts of Fife and Forfarshire.

Unaware of the latter fact, and acquainted at the time only with the poverty in cowslips assigned to Scotland by Sir William Hooker, my surprise was great when, paying a visit in the second week of last June (1873) to "The Mount," a villa recently built on the high bank which overlooks Coldingham Bay, I beheld below me, on stepping out upon the terrace between the house and the edge of the bank, a great green slope densely covered with fine bunches of cowslips.

Coldingham Bay is, I believe, the only sandy bay of any extent in Berwickshire. At its west point, which consists of high, perpendicular, jagged rocks, stands the fishing village of Coldingham, which must not be confounded with the rural village of that name a full mile inland. The east point consists of low, very ragged rocks, which lead eastward to a succession of high, precipitous cliffs, extending two miles to the little sea town of Eyemouth, broken, however, by several small, narrow ravines. The ground of the bay is a fine, smooth, deep sand, widely exposed at low tide, but nearly covered at high water. The rocky east point of the bay rises landward till it forms a large, dome-shaped grassy mound, which is connected by a narrow neck with the bank which forms the land boundary of the bay, and which curves round westward to meet the precipitous western boundary. This bank is 90 feet perpendicular above high-water mark, and is over 400 yards, or about a quarter of a mile, in length; and its face towards the sea is a smooth, steep, concave slope of deep, fine turf. The whole of this great slope was an uninterrupted sheet of cowslips in full flower, so crowded that there was at least one fine tuft of them on every square foot; and the dome-shaped mound to the east was scarcely less covered with them.

The ground on which the house of "The Mount" is built descends eastward by a steep grassy slope into a narrow ravine formed by a small stream. The west slope of this ravine, under the house, presents also a great abundance

of cowslips; but on the opposite or east slope these disappear, and their place is taken by the *Primula vulgaris*, or Primrose. A little farther east there is another narrow ravine, on the west slope of which the cowslip reappears, with very few primroses; while on its east slope again reappears the primrose, with only a very few straggling cowslips. I had no opportunity of examining the coast farther east towards Eyemouth. St Abb's Head, which immediately succeeds Coldingham fishing village as one proceeds westward, is destitute of the cowslip everywhere; but Dr Johnston says it occurs in the ravines west of St Abb's.

The only other circumstance worthy of note regarding this interesting cowslip bed at Coldingham Bay is, that the plant, though it grows with great luxuriance and flowers most profusely, is quite destitute of fragrance.

In relation to the possibility of the plant having been introduced into this locality, I may add that "The Mount" is too recent a villa to have been the means of introducing it, and, moreover, up to this time it possesses not an inch of garden ground; that there is a farmhouse with a little dressed ground around it, about 400 yards inland; and that at the angle where the cowslip slope meets the western bank of the bay there is another small villa, with some garden ground, from which the plant, if ever cultivated there, might have strayed. But there are no cowslips on the grassy bank near that villa, and it, too, is an edifice which has been built only a few years. There are no other dwelling-houses near the sloping bank except these three, and the fishing village, which is half a mile from it.

III. *Notes on a Visit to Messrs Dickson & Turnbull's Nurseries, Perth.* By JAMES M'NAB.

The nursery grounds of Messrs Dickson & Turnbull, at Perth, have long been well known to cultivators. They were established in 1766, and from them have emanated many new and useful plants. Amongst flowering plants may be mentioned the first set of double Scotch roses, which were so much in fashion about forty years ago, but which are now, I regret to find, scarcely ever asked for. The original stools of these roses still exist,