

## BOTANY.

**PRIMROSES IN A ROOM.**—There is a very easy, but I do not know whether it is a commonly known, way of keeping primroses in bloom in a room. The whole plant should be taken up, and the mould cleared from the roots. It should then be placed in a shallow vessel kept well supplied with water (an ordinary saucer will serve the turn admirably). With a little moss placed round the plant, it forms a very pleasing, although simple ornament to the drawing-room table. The plant will continue to bloom for weeks, and generally produces abundance of flowers. These, after the first few weeks, become of an unusually pale tint, and prove, I fancy, that artists are right in saying that primrose-colour is a delicate green. Some plants that have been tried this year had flower-stalks seven, and even more, inches in length.—*R. B.*

**THE IVY (*Hedera helix*).**—Is it a generally-known fact that the ivy occasionally produces blossoms in the early spring, as well as in the autumn? I find in my diary for last year an entry, under the date of March 7, to the effect that I then observed, near Parson's-green, Middlesex, a branch of ivy, almost leafless, bearing several heads of blossom of a *bright yellow* colour; and on the 25th of last month, I noticed, in a hedge near High Wycombe, a similar specimen, having two or three heads of well-developed flower-buds. In both cases the specimens had flowered in the previous autumn. Perhaps some correspondent may be able to adduce similar instances.—*B.*

**TUNBRIDGE FERN (*Hymenophyllum Tunbridgense*).**—This interesting species is included in the last number of "Beddome's Ferns of Southern India," where the author states that he has found it on the mountains close to Chokampatty (Tinnevely), at an elevation of 5,000 feet. It had previously been found in Ceylon, and also to extend to the Australasian Colonies.

**DEVONSHIRE MISLETOE (see p. 88).**—Our correspondent was certainly wrong in affirming that the *mistletoe* and *cowslip* are unknown in Devonshire. We have received several communications, which we regret that our space will not allow us to publish. Both plants have several localities in this county, and the *mistletoe* does not appear to be at all rare.—*Ed. Sc. G.*

**HORSE-CHESTNUTS.**—In a village, about three miles from Puteaux, near Paris, was, four years ago, a large starch manufactory. The materials consisted wholly of horse-chestnuts, and the starch was excellent.—*P. B. S. J.*

**NEW IRISH DIATOM.**—The *Microscopical Journal* contains an account of the discovery of *Arachnoidiscus ornatus* in a pool of brackish water at Malahide, in the county of Dublin.

**THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.**—Can you picture to yourself a man going wooing with a "Delphinium Donkelsarii" in his button-hole? Don't you think Snappdragon hardly an august enough translation of "Antirrhinum caryophylloides?" No humble-bee would venture to show its nose in an "Indigofera coccinea endecaphylla," and I should like you to tell me, off-hand, what a "Gutierrezia gymnospermoides" smells like, or a "Cucumis aradac."—*Jones' Holiday Papers.*

**BLOODY-MAN'S FINGERS.**—Adverting to p. 36, the reason why some parents discard orchis-flowers from their children's nosegays, may have some superstitious connection with the legend which states that a species of *Orchis* grew plentifully on Mount Calvary, and was unspotted until the crucifixion, when some drops of blood fell, and spotted it. There are many such legends, one of which, equally authentic, states that the aspen has always been tremulous since that event, because "the cross" was made of its wood. It has also been affirmed, on the same authority, that the fig-tree poisons all other trees near it, having acquired this property only since the curse was pronounced on "the barren fig-tree."—*A. V.*

**CRYPTOGAMIC VEGETATION IN SIKKIM HIMALAYA.**—There were few mosses; but crustaceous lichens were numerous, and nearly all of them Scotch, Alpine, European, and Arctic kinds. The names of these, given by the classic Linnæus and Wahlenberg, tell in some cases of their birthplaces, in others of their hardihood, their livid colours and weather-beaten aspects; such as *tristis*, *gelida*, *glacialis*, *arctica*, *alpina*, *saxatilis*, *polaris*, *frigida*, and numerous others equally familiar to the Scotch botanist. The lichen called *geographicus* was most abundant, and is found to indicate a certain degree of cold in every latitude: descending to the level of the sea in lat. 52° N. and 59° S., whilst in lower latitudes it is only to be seen on mountains. It flourishes at 10,000 feet in the Himalaya, ascending thence to 18,000 feet. Its name, however, was not intended to indicate its wide range, but the curious map-like patterns which its yellow crust forms on the rocks.—*Hooker's Himalayan Journal.*

**SELF-FERTILIZATION.**—It is an astonishing fact that self-fertilization should not have been an habitual occurrence. It apparently demonstrates to us that there must be something injurious in the process. Nature thus tells us, in the most emphatic manner, that she abhors perpetual self-fertilization.—*Darwin's Fertilization of Orchids.*

MR. DARWIN has announced a new work, entitled "Domesticated Animals and Cultivated Plants, or the Principles of Variation, Inheritance, Reunion, Crossing, Interbreeding, and Selection under Domestication."