BEGONIA HEMSLEYANA.

Native of Yunnan.


Genus BEGONIA, Linn.; (Benth. & Hook. f. Gen. Plant. vol. i. p. 841.)

Begonia (Platycentrum) Hemsleyana; dense caespitosa, radice tuberosa, tuberibus carnosiss fasciculatis fusiformibus, caulibus 1-1½-pedibus parce ramosis petiolisque gracilibus elongatis erectis puberulis pallide roseis, foliis palmatipartitis, segmentis radiatis lanceolatis acuminatis remote serratis sessilibus vel in petiololum brevem angustatis glaberrimis supra lete viridibus rubro anguste marginales penninerviis, stipulis ovato-lanceolatis herbaceis, pedunculis axillaris petiolis longioribus glaberrimis, cymis dichotomis paucifloris, bracteis lanceolatis caducis, floribus roseis, masc. sepalis 2 ovato-rotundatis subacutis, petalis 2 multo minoribus oblongo-ovatis, staminibus in capitulum globosum brevissime stipitatum dense confertis, filamentis gracilibus antheris pyriformibus apice rotundatis sequalongis, loculis lateralis, fl. fem. longius pedicellatis nutantibus, perianthii segmentis 6 sequalibus oblongis obtusis, ovario 2-loculari 3-alato, ala una multo majore oblonga apice rotundata, stylis 2 subequalibus stigmatum crucibus brevibus spiralis iter curvatis, fascia stigmatosa continua, placentis septo medio insertis bipartitis undique ovaliferis, capsula latiore quam longa pendula 3-alata, alis 2 brevibus tertia fere pollicari oblonga apice rotundata nervis validis costata, dehiscentia inter alas breviores imperfecte operculari.

The discovery of a palmatipartite-leaved Begonia in the Old World is a very remarkable one, the few known species with this character being all American. B. Hemsleyana has, however, no affinity with the latter; it belongs to the section Platycentrum of A. de Candolle (Prodr. vol. xv. p. 347), which is represented by eighteen species in India, and is regarded as a sub-genus by C. B. Clarke, in his paper on Indian Begonias (Journ. Linn. Soc. vol. xviii. p. 118). Its nearest ally is an undescribed Chinese species, also discovered by Dr. Henry, in which the leaves are orbicular, and seven to nine-lobed to the middle.

B. Hemsleyana was raised in the Royal Gardens, Kew, from seed collected at Mengtse, in Yunnan, at an elevation of four thousand to five thousand feet, by Dr. Henry, F.L.S., in 1898, who describes it as a very pretty plant, a foot to a foot and a half high. It flowered freely and

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continuously in a warm greenhouse, from April, 1899, onwards, forming a compact mass of foliage, suggestive of a well-furnished Hellebore. I have named it in commemoration of the services rendered to botanical science by the researches into the Chinese Flora of my friend, Mr. W. B. Hemsley, F.R.S.

Descr.—Roots of fleshy, fascicled, fusiform tubers, with copious, black rootlets. Stem one to one and a half feet high, densely tufted, erect, sparingly branched, leafy, succulent, rose-pink, slightly hairy. Leaves erect, long-petioled, orbicular, four to five inches in diameter, palmatifid or sub-pedate; segments seven to nine, radiating from the top of the peduncle, sessile or narrowed into a short petiolule, lanceolate, acuminate, irregularly, rather distantly serrate, lateral pair sometimes lobulate, bright green above, pale beneath, young sometimes edged with red; petiole three to four inches long, erect, glabrous, rose-pink; stipules half an inch long, oblong-lanceolate, herbaceous. Cyme dichotomous, few flowered, monocious; bracts lanceolate, caducous; pedicels of fem. lengthening and decurved in fruit. Male fl. one and a quarter inch diam.; sepals orbicular-ovate, pale pink, darker coloured towards the tips; petals half as large, oblong. Stamens very many, capitate, filaments short, crowded on a very short stipes; anthers pyriform, tip rounded, slits narrow, lateral. Fem. fl. — perianth rather larger than the male; segments five, sub-equal, oblong, obtuse; style very short, stigmas two, hippocrepiform, with circinately incurved horns, stigmatic band continuous. Capsule on an elongate, decurved pedicel two inches long, broader than long, coriaceous, three-winged, dorsal wing much the longest, oblong, tip rounded, strongly many-ribbed, dehiscence imperfectly opercular between the narrow wings.—

—J. D. H.

Figs. 1 and 2, Anthers; 3, stigmas; 4, section of ovary; 5, capsule:—All enlarged.