



EPIPHYLLUM HOOKERI

(Plate 192)

EPIPHYLLUM HOOKERI

Hooker's Epiphyllum

Native of Trinidad

Family CACTACEAE

CACTUS Family

Cereus Hookeri Link & Otto, Cat. Sem. Hort. Berol. 1828.*Epiphyllum Hookeri* Haworth, Phil. Mag. 6: 108. 1829.*Phyllocactus Hookeri* Salm-Dyck, Cact. Hort. Dyck. 38. 1842.

In tropical America there is found a very interesting genus of cacti known as *Epiphyllum*. Unlike the cacti from the desert regions of Arizona and Mexico with which we are most familiar, the plants of this genus do not grow in dry regions but are often found in dense rain-forests; like their desert allies they too must have xerophytic conditions, so they grow on the bark of trees and are known as epiphytes. These plants do not have leaves but the stems are flat, green and leaflike, functioning as leaves. The flattened stems were at one time supposed to be leaves upon which the flowers were borne, which is the origin of the name *Epiphyllum*.

The genus contains about twenty-four species, ranging from central Mexico through Central America to central South America. None are known to be native in the West Indies, except in Trinidad. One or more, however, have been described from Cuba, but these were doubtless based on cultivated plants. It is possible that there are species in the mountains of Santo Domingo or in the southern Antilles which will be found when those regions are more thoroughly explored. A number of epiphyllums are in cultivation and some of them are highly prized as ornamentals. Some are night-bloomers while others are day-bloomers; some have large sweet-scented flowers. *Epiphyllum oxypetalum*, generally known as *Phyllocactus bifrons* in the trade, is a great favorite.

The name *Epiphyllum* dates back to 1689 when it was first used by P. Hermann. Its use, however, as a generic name in the modern sense dates from 1812 when it was used by Adrian H. Haworth, who made it a new genus based upon *Cactus phyllanthus*. Some years later other plants were referred to *Epiphyllum*, and still later the type of the genus *Epiphyllum* was made the type of a new genus, *Phyllocactus*, and the name *Epiphyllum* was used for a totally different plant, namely *Epiphyllum truncatum*. *Epiphyllum* has recently been restored to its original type, while the "*Epiphyllum*"

of the gardens becomes *Zygocactus truncatus*. The species which is shown in our illustration is native to Trinidad and has long been in cultivation in gardens and conservatories.

Hooker's epiphyllum has stems at first erect, but soon drooping, often becoming pendent, and six to ten feet long; the branches are very variable, either long, slender and whip-like, or broad, thin and leaf-like. The lateral branches are sometimes three inches broad, with a crenate margin. The flowers appear at night, and are not sweet-scented; the flower-tube is very slender; the outer perianth-segments are lemon-yellow while the inner ones are pure white; the filaments are white. The fruit is oblong, about two inches long, and red.

J. N. ROSE.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE. Fig. 1.—Flower. Fig. 2.—Upper part of stem.