

## A NORTH AUSTRALIAN DENDROBIUM.

By W. H. NICHOLLS

*Dendrobium dicuphum*, F.v.M.—This elegant species is briefly described and commented upon by its author, Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller, in *Fragmenta Phytographiæ Australiæ*, viii, 28 (1871), but he had previously described it fully (under *D. bigibbum*), in Vol. vi of the same work. It is one of those forms which range themselves around the superb Cooktown Orchid (*D. phalanopsis*, Fitz.). *D. superbiens*, Reichb.; *D. FitzGeraldii*, F.v.M.; and *D. bigibbum*, Lindl. are other Australian species—all close allies. *D. dicuphum* is well separated from all these forms in several particulars—chiefly that of habit. Bentham refers to this species as *D. bicuphum*, but the meaning is identical.

The specimen from which my drawing was made is in the possession of Mrs. Charles Barrett, of Elsternwick, Victoria, and was collected by her during travels with her husband in Northern Australia in 1933, and exhibited at a Club meeting early this year. One haunt of *D. dicuphum* is at Koolpinyah, about 30 miles from Darwin, where it grows on the Paper-barks (*Melaleuca*), also on other trees in this locality, and is reported as fairly abundant. In Darwin the showy and graceful sprays of flowers are favoured for wedding bouquets, etc., a purpose for which they are well suited.

It is unnecessary to give a full description of this orchid, for the accompanying plate shows its characteristics. The individual flowers are approximately 3 cm. in diameter; the segments of the perianth are pure white—deep purple at the base—thus the flowers possess a contrasting centre.

Bentham gives, in *Flora Australiensis*, vi, a fairly detailed description of *D. dicuphum*; but his material was dried, and the colour of the blooms is incorrectly given. He also records few flowers to a raceme (three or four), in Mrs. Barrett's plant the raceme possessed fifteen.

I am indebted to Dr. R. S. Rogers, of Adelaide (S.A.) for the definite determination of this orchid.

Bentham gives the following habitats for this species: The Liverpool R. (Gulliver), and Port Darwin (Schultz).

## KEY TO ILLUSTRATION (DENDROBIUM DICUPHAM, F.v.M.)

Fig. A.—A typical specimen.

Fig. B.—Calli on the labellum-lamina.

Fig. C.—Spur.

Fig. D.—Column head showing wing wither removed.



*Dendrobium dicuphnum* F.v.M.



Nicholls, W H. 1937. "A North Australian Dendrobium." *The Victorian Naturalist* 54, 66–67.

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