

*On Croftia, a new Indo-Chinese genus of Scitamineae.*—

By G. KING and D. PRAIN.

[Recd. 31st May, Read 3rd June.]

With Plate IX.

While engaged in sorting into the Calcutta Herbarium the material of the natural order *Scitamineae* received since 1892 (the date when the account of the family published in vol. vi. of the *Flora of British India* was completed) the writers met with a form that appears to differ generically from any hitherto described.

A member of the tribe *Zingibereae*, this plant by the form and arrangement of its flowers recalls the genus *Globba*, by its habit and its fruit the genus *Cautleya*. In reality, however, it is equally remote from both; its 3-locular ovary forbids more than a passing comparison with *Globba*; the absence of a lip makes its association with *Cautleya* impossible.

Its nearest natural ally appears to be the genus *Rhynchanthus*, alongside of which it must be placed. This genus\* is remarkable among *Euzingibereae* in possessing small erect corolla-lobes, a lip that is reduced to a mere tooth, and a most curious petaloid filament bearing an anther with no appendage; it is at the same time devoid—though this is a less unusual character—of any trace of lateral staminodes. *Rhynchanthus* has been compared by its author with the genus *Burbridgea*† which differs in having broad corolla lobes, a distinct lip, a stamen with short filament and an anther with a long appendage; here again there is no trace of lateral staminodes.

The present plant resembles *Rhynchanthus* in possessing small erect corolla-lobes and an inappendiculate anther; it agrees further in having no lip—that organ not being represented even by a tooth. But its filament is not petaloid and there are present two distinct petaloid lateral staminodes resembling a good deal those of a *Globba* or of a *Mantisia*; the corolla tube, moreover, which in *Rhynchanthus* is funnel-shaped above the middle, is in the present plant very narrowly tubular from base to limb, as in *Globba*; the stylodes also are elongated and

\* *RHYNCHANTHUS* Hook. fil. Bot. Mag. t. 6861 (1886); Engler, Natürlich. Pflanzenfam. ii. part 6. p. 23 (1889); Baker in Hook. fil. Flor. Brit. Ind. vi. 257 (1892). One species; *R. longiflorus* Hook. f. loc. cit., obtained in Upper Burma by Dr. J. Anderson, and by the Collectors of Hort. Low.

† *BURBRIDGEA* Hook. fil. Bot. Mag. t. 6403 (1879); Engler, Natürlich. Pflanzenfam. ii. part 6. p. 22 (1889). One species; *B. nitida* Hook. f. loc. cit., obtained by Mr. F. W. Burbidge in North-West Borneo.



filiform in place of being short and oblong. While then *Burbidgea* deviates from *Rhynchanthus* in having a lip, the present plant differs equally in having lateral staminodes. And though it comes nearer to *Rhynchanthus* both as regards structure and as regards habitat than *Burbidgea* does, it seems to the writers to differ sufficiently in essentials to deserve generic rank apart from *Rhynchanthus*.

The necessary diagnosis and description are appended. The genus has been named in honour of Sir Alfred Croft, K.C.I.E., lately President of the Society, whose warm sympathy with every branch of Natural Science and of Literature is so well known to us all.

#### NAT. ORD. SCITAMINEAE.

##### *Trib. Zingibereæ.*

*CROFTIA* King & Prain; *gen. nov.* *Calyx* spathaceo-tubulosus, antice parum fissus, postice oblique breviter 3-dentatus. *Corollae* tubus elongatus prorsus angustatus, lobi breves 3, ovato-lanceolati acuti, erecti, postico ceteris paullo majore. *Staminodia* lateralialia falcata subpetaloidea prope basin filamenti opposita erecta dimidiumque filamenti inferius arcte imbricatum amplectentia; labellum plane obsoletum. *Filamentum* elongatum ad styli receptionem canaliculatum; antherae loculi 2, parum distantes, connectivo ultra loculos haud producto. *Ovarium* 3-loculare, placentis axilibus; stylus filiformis in canali filamenti receptus; stigma ultra loculos parvum apice fimbriatum; stylodia filiformia. *Fructus* ovatus pericarpio demum membranaceo; semina subglobosa arillo cupulari parvo tenui margine dentato basin tantum seminis amplectente; embryo centrali, lineari, recto.

*Rhizoma* e fibris carnosis fasciculatis. *Folia* ovato-lanceolata vel lanceolata basi cordata, vaginis longis laxis. *Inflorescentia* terminalis, spicata, subsecunda. *Flores* singuli bracteâ spathaceâ, bracteolis 2 inaequalibus, sessiles, lutei.

*CROFTIA* *SPECTABILIS* King & Prain. A herb with thickly fascicled root-fibres, rhizome very small. *Stem* 8-10 in. high, leafy. *Leaves* ovate-lanceolate or lanceolate, base cordate, apex acute or acuminate, with lax sheaths 5-6 in. long; blades 3-5 in. long, 1.5 in. wide, thin glabrous green on both surfaces, rather paler beneath. *Spikes* 3 in. long, subsecund, 8-12-fl. *Bracts* thin .75-9 in. long, ovate-lanceolate; bracteoles .3 in. long linear. *Calyx* .25 in. pale yellow with red spots. *Corolla* with yellow tube .65 in. long, very slender throughout, hirsute externally; lobes .3 in. long .15 in. wide ovate-lanceolate acute, glabrous on both surfaces. *Filament* .75 in. long; lateral staminodes .4 in. long, glabrous on both surfaces, falcate, erect, closely overlapping each other and the somewhat produced margins of the



lower half of the filament so as to form a subgibbous tube ; the channel along the filament slightly pubescent with scattered hairs. *Ovary* pubescent externally, crowned with a style 2 in. long and with 2 filiform stylodes .35 in. long. *Fruit* hirsute, .35 in. long, .25 in. across. *Seeds* .12 in. long with a cupular hyaline basal arillus.

UPPER BURMA : Shan Hills, at Taungyi. *Dr. King's Collectors!*

Flowers most resembling those of a *Globba* both in appearance and in arrangement ; there is here, however, no labellum, while the lateral staminodes and the petals, in place of being patent, are erect ; the lateral staminodes moreover are here closely imbricately opposed to the lower half of the slender filament which they embrace anteriorly, and to which consequently they impart some degree of support. In habit and in fruit this plant most resembles a *Cautleya*, but its floral structure removes it as far from the *Hedychieae* as its ovarian structure removes it from the *Mantisieae*. Its nearest ally is *Rhynchanthus*, one of the *Euzingibereae*, of which it has much the bracts and calyx and quite the corolla. *Rhynchanthus*, however, differs in having a petaloid filament without lateral staminodes ; a stigma with truncate entire, not fimbriate margin, and short oblong, not elongated filiform stylodia.

---



King, George and Prain, David. 1896. "On Croftia, a New Indo-Chinese Genus of Scitamineae." *The journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 65(II), 297–299.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/114417>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/366800>

**Holding Institution**

American Museum of Natural History Library

**Sponsored by**

Biodiversity Heritage Library

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.