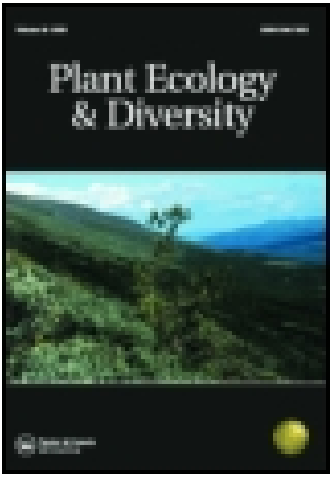
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III. Notes on the Propagation of Drosera dichotoma, Labill

Mr M'Nab

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made from portions of the tree found in 1830, given to him by Mr Forbes, the representative of Wallace & Co., marble masons; pieces from the old tree in the Royal Botanic Garden, and bits from other sources, and in all these he found the structure constant; and when compared with sections made from trees found at Craigleith in 1873, he found that all showed the same structure as those figured in Witham's work, on the Structure of Fossil Vegetables, published in 1833. He stated also, that in many of the sections he found medullary rays. In addition to the above, he also mentioned that he had found small specimens of wood enclosed in the thin limestones in Camstone Quarry, Arthur Seat, showing perfectly the structure of the Araucarioxylon.

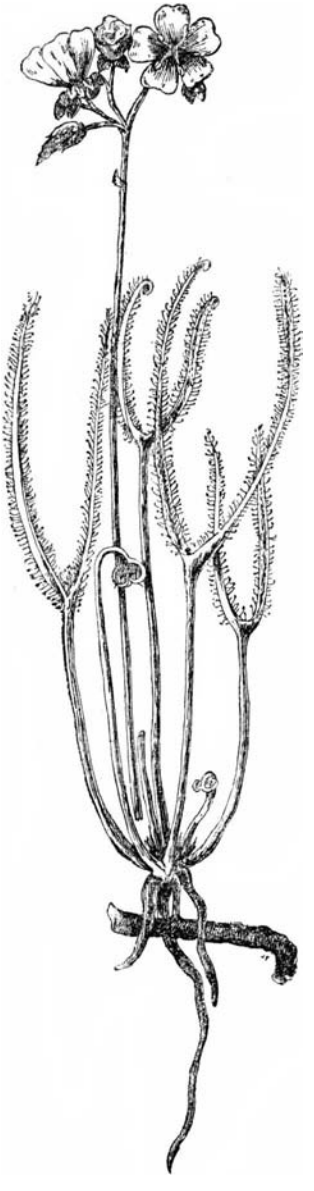
III. *Notes on the Propagation of* Drosera dichotoma, *Labill.* By Mr M'Nab.

This Sundew is one of those curious plants rarely seen in cultivation. It is a native of Sydney, New South Wales; and although it was introduced into this country nearly thirty years ago, under the name *Drosera binata*, Sm. ("Bot. Mag.," t. 3082), it still remains very scarce in British gardens. Hitherto the mode of increasing the plant has been by subdivision of the crown of the root, which is done during early spring before the leaves unfold. This is a slow method of propagation, as the plants require to be of considerable size before subdivision can be resorted to. Of late years attention has been directed to the root propagation of the Ipecacuanha and other plants. Mr Robert Lindsay, the plant foreman in the Royal Botanic Garden, endeavoured to increase this Sundew by root propagation, and his efforts have been crowned with success. The roots for the purpose of propagation are generally taken from strong-growing plants during the process of crown-division. They are black, and of a wiry consistency, and are cut into numerous pieces from half an inch to an inch or more in length. These are laid on the surface of shallow earthenware pans or flower-pots, filled with a mixture of sandy peat soil, and are covered about half an inch deep with the same mixture. They are then enclosed with

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a bell-glass, and are placed in a damp, warm, propagating-house. In the course of a fortnight, swellings begin to appear on the surface of the detached roots, which increase in length till they reach the surface of the soil. This generally occupies five weeks. When the leaves become developed, they are mostly of a binate form, and soon cover the surface of the pan as if they had been a crop of seedlings. When about two inches in height, they are separated, and put into small pots, containing soil similar to that in which the roots were originally placed, with the addition of some chopped sphagnum moss freely mixed through it. If carefully attended to, they soon make excellent plants.

This Sundew may be grown to a large size, and will flower abundantly, either under basket culture in sphagnum moss, or in pots covered with sphagnum, and placed in a damp but sunny situation, or in shallow pans of water. It thrives well in a greenhouse, or in cool glazed pits, placed near the glass. It also succeeds in the rock garden, where a flat saucer is sunk below the pot to prevent the moisture from escaping. In such a situation it was kept alive during the winter of 1871, merely having some loose leaves thrown over it. Under open-air culture, however, the plants



Double-leaved Sundew
(*Drosera dichotoma*).

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generally become black with dust and insects, collected by the viscid secretion given out by the leaf glands.

The genus Drosera contains many beautiful and unintroduced species, many of them very remarkable in habit, particularly the climbing forms. They are chiefly natives of New South Wales and the Cape of Good Hope. Some of the species have very large flowers, such as the *Drosera capensis* and *D. cistiflora*. If these or other allied species can be introduced into our gardens, it is likely that they may be propagated by cuttings from the root like the *D. dichotoma*. The first species introduced from Sydney to Kew was named *Drosera binata*, having each leaf once forked. Judging from the figure of this plant in the "Botanical Magazine," it must have been drawn from a weakly specimen, as the flowers are small compared with those which the *D. dichotoma* produces. In cultivation this plant seems to vary much; the original binate form has, no doubt, become dichotomous, and can also be reversed. In proof of this, several of the plants now in the garden have their leaves binate, although produced from the dichotomous form by sub-division and root formation, while some plants have their leaves divided into two, three, four, and five parts on the same individual. These circumstances satisfy me that there is no permanent distinction of these supposed species, and as the dichotomous form is the most prevalent, it ought to retain the name.

Since writing the above, I find Planchon, in his excellent paper on the Droseraceæ, published in the "Annales des Sciences Naturelles," vol. v., makes the *D. binata*, *D. dichotoma*, *D. pedata*, *D. intermedia*, and *D. Cunninghamii*, all synonymous. He also states that the leaves often vary on the same specimen, a fact confirmed by the specimens in the Botanic Garden.

IV. *Notes on Open-Air Vegetation at the Royal Botanic Garden.* (No. V. 1873.) By Mr M'Nab.

I cannot allow this session to close without giving a few brief remarks on the present state of the open-air vegetation. From the commencement of this year I have, at stated

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