

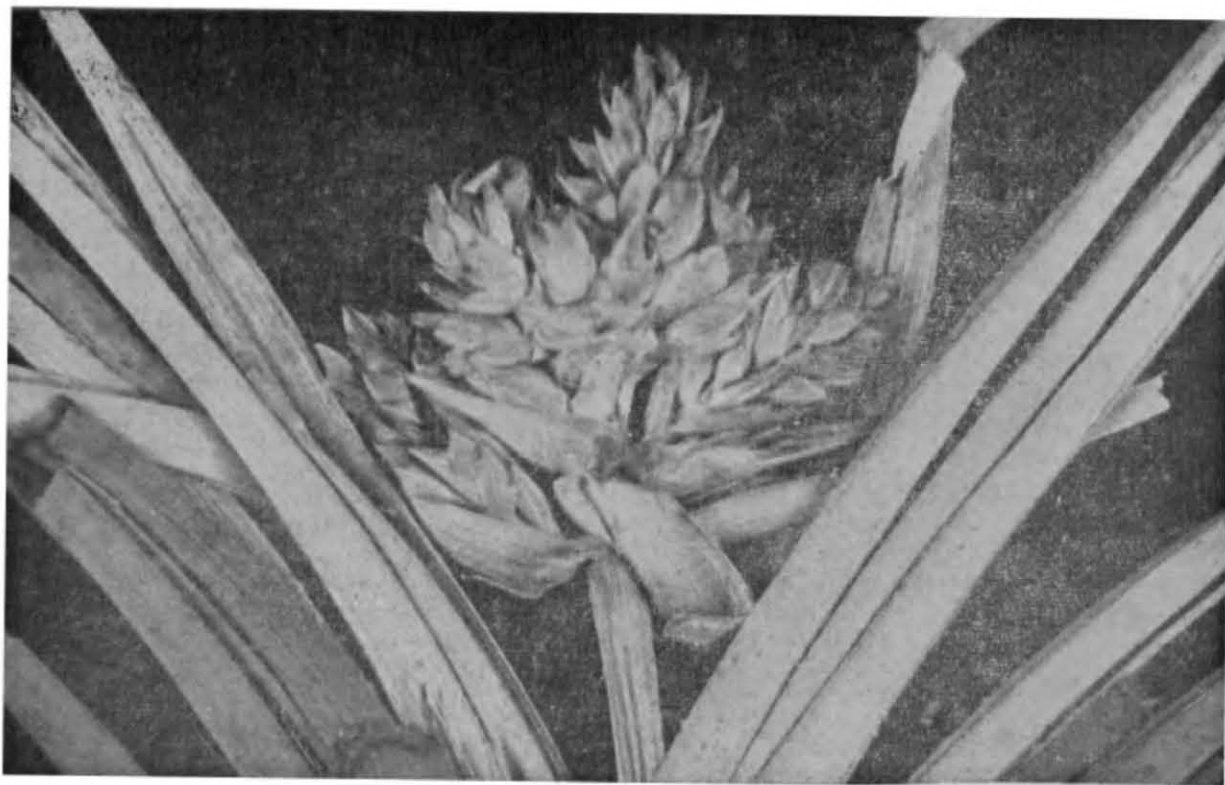


FIG. 2. Enlarged view of the spike of spikelets $\times 4$.

OREOPTERIS ELWESII (BAK.) HOLTT.—A POORLY KNOWN ENDEMIC FERN, REDISCOVERED

Holttum (1981) revised the genus *Oreopteris* Holub comprising of three species in the world flora, of which one species i.e. *O. elwesii* (Bak.) Holtt. is known to occur in India as endemic to Sikkim only. Holttum (l. c.) while giving new description for *O. elwesii* expressed that "This very distinct species has never been well described, it still needs a better description than the above, made from fuller material." This remark led us to investigate the matter in detail. Scrutiny of literature revealed some data viz. Beddome (1883) cited its locality as "Sikkim (*Elwes*, only once collected and a single frond without stipe)". Again Beddome (1892) reported its occurrence and pointed out that "Copious speci-

mens were gathered by Mr. Levinge's collectors at a high level in Sikkim" and provided description for stipe and lamina but missed details about rhizome and scales etc. Later O. Ktze. (1891) and Ching (1936) made new combinations as *Dryopteris elwesii* (Bak.) O. Ktze. and *Thelypteris elwesii* (Bak.) Ching respectively, without citing any details about specimens examined. Loyal (1961) reported chromosome numbers in *Thelypteris elwesii* (Bak.) Ching as $n=36$ from the specimens collected from North-Sikkim but no Voucher specimen has been cited. Similarly, Mehra and Bir (1964) enumerated its occurrence with a note that "Plants grow in abundance near Chhango (4200 m) and near Lachen

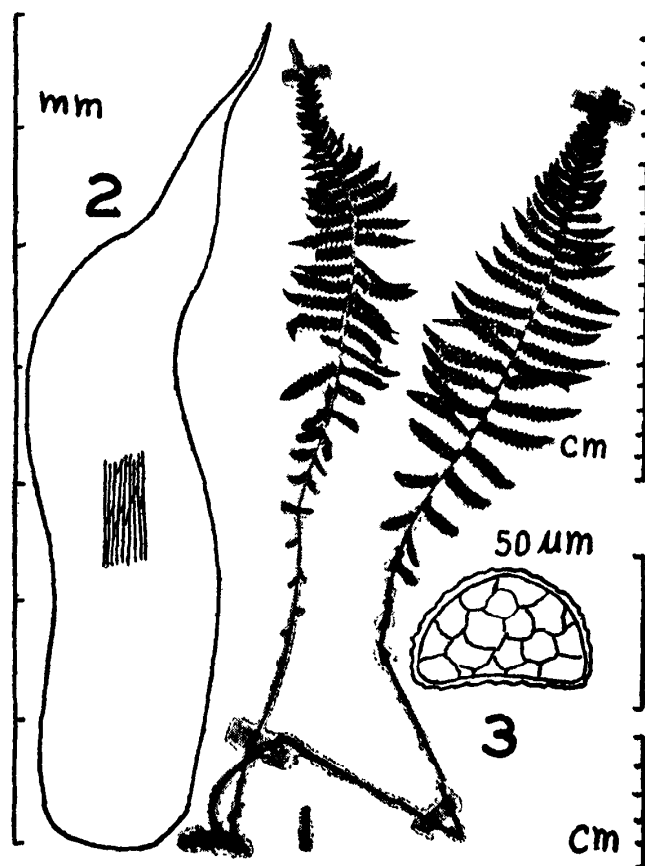
(2700 m), North Sikkim". They also cite no specimen and give no description. Holttum (l. c.) in revisionary studies append distribution from "Sikkim, known from few collections" without citing specimens examined. Thus, it is evident that the Type specimen and other specimens available in Herb. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (K) are incomplete. Now, a search for the specimens in the Central National Herbarium (CAL) proved fruitful and three old collections traced out were collected during the years 1884, 1889 and 1892. Of these three, specimens of two sheets are complete. The authors could not get access to examine the specimens collected and reported by Loyal (l. c.) and Mehra & Bir (l. c.) and moreover, none of them cited any specimens examined in their publications. However, inspite of a number of visits to Sikkim by various Survey parties from the Botanical Survey of India in the past could not collect the species except a party from the Cryptogamic Unit, which recently visited in September-October, 1982 and collected a few plants from Lachen Valley, Sikkim, after the lapse of about ninety one years.

Keeping in view of the absence of fuller description, citation of the specimens and complete illustrations etc., the authors provide complete description with citations of specimens examined and illustrations etc. for better understanding of, so far, poorly known endemic and rare fern from the Indian region of Sikkim.

Oreopteris elwesii (Bak.) Holtt. in Nayar et Kaur Comp. to Bedd. Handb. 204. 1974 ; Kew Bull. 36 (2) : 225. 1981. *Nephrodium elwesii* Bak. in Hook. et Bak. Syn. Fil. ed. 2 : 497. 1874. Type : *H. J. Elwes*, Sikkim (K). *Lastrea elwesii* (Bak.) Bedd. Ferns Brit. India Suppl. t. 376. 1876 ; Handb. Ferns Brit. India 239. 1883 ; Suppl. to Handb. 54. 1892. *Dryopteris elwesii* (Bak.) O. Ktze., Rev. Gen. Pl. 2 :

812. 1891. *Thelypteris elwesii* (Bak.) Ching, Bull. Fan. Mem. Inst. Biol. 6 : 308. 1936 ; Loyal, Proc. Indian Sci. Congr. pt. III, 265. 1961 ; Mehra & Bir, Res. Bull. (N. S.) Punjab Univ. 15 : 150. 1964.

Rhizome creeping, clothed with many light-brown, ovate-lanceolate scales $4.0-6.0 \times 1.5-2.0$ mm, smooth in margins. Fronds tufted, 1.0 to 1.5 cm apart ; stipe up to 20 cm long, glabrescent, bright chest-nut coloured, shining, a few deciduous scales present in the basal region ; lamina bipinnatifid, elliptic-lanceolate, 30.0 to 55.0×6.0 to 8.0 cm, narrowed from the middle to both ends, the lower pinnae gradually smaller and running down into mere auricles ; pinnae alternate 0.5 to 2 cm apart with aerophores at their bases ; rachis pale castaneous bearing a few deciduous white



Oreopteris elwesii (Bak.) Holtt.

Figs. 1-3 : 1. Habit, Gamie 318 (CAL). 2. Outline of rhizome scale. 3. Distal part of spore.

hairs up to 5 mm long on the lower surface ; middle pinnae 4.5-6.0 × 0.8-1.0 cm, hardly widened at their bases, lobed to little more than half-way to their costa, lobes entire with rounded apices, costules 3-5 mm apart, veins 3 to 5 pairs, simple or forked ; lower pinnae somewhat deflexed with asymmetric base, the basal acroscopic lobe slightly enlarged and the basal basioscopic lobe reduced ; costae bearing $\pm$ small glands and unicellular hairs on lower surface, grooved on the upper surface with a few unicellular hairs on the ridges bordering the groove, rest of the surface glabrous. Sori submarginal ; spores monolet, 30-50 μ m in diameter, perisporate forming a few irregular meshes. (Figs. 1-3).

Specimens examined : INDIA : Sikkim : Lachun valley, 8000 ft, 29.7.1884, *Gammie* 318 (CAL) ; Ex Herb. *Levinge*, 1889, *Bootia Collector* 1884 (CAL) ; Lachung valley : Yeumtong, 12000 ft, 24.8.1892, *Gammie* 997 (CAL) ; Lachen valley, 25.9.1982, *Ghosh* 56700 (CAL, BSA).

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A NOTE ON THE GENUS *DICKASONIA* WILLIAMS (ORCHIDACEAE)

The genus *Dickasonia* was established by Williams after Mr. F. G. Dickason of Judson College, Rangoon, Burma who used to send orchids from Burma to Mr. Williams from time to time for determination. Among his collections an orchid having the character of united lip and column which was otherwise inseparable from the genus *Panisea* L. was noticed and he published it

as *Dickasonia vernicosa* as a new genus and a new species in the year 1941.

After over three decades this plant was reported by U. C. Pradhan from Manipur under the name *Kalimpongia narajitii* as a new genus and a new species from India (Pradhan, 1977). To confirm their identities the protologue and illustrations of both the species were gathered (courtesy Dr. G.