The lateral petals are similar in colour to the sepals. They are curved a little—less than the lateral sepals—and project outside them; length 3½ mm., breadth 1 mm. or a little more.

The lip is emerald green with malachite green at the lateral borders. Its centre forms a shallow flat bottomed recess. The borders of this recess are thickened particularly below and less so at the sides.

The sides of the lip are parallel and drawn forward on either side of the column, but they end rounded below and not in auricles. The apex has three teeth, of which the central is bent back on the limb through about 40 degrees. From base to apex of this tooth, the lip, measured outside, is 3 mm. long, but inside it is so attached to the column that there is less than 2 mm. free. If the lip be flattened it is found to be 2½ mm. across.

The column is emerald green. The anther wall after the flower opens shrivls and frees the pollinia upwards. It seems probable that pollen can reach the stigma without the intervention of insects. But the parts are so small that it is very difficult to ascertain what usually happens.

After flowering a purple line appears on the ovary down the dorsal face from top to bottom, and two smaller fainter lines appear on the ridges on either side: these ridges are slightly frilled.

In the Annals of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Calcutta, viii., (1898) on plate 23 is figured the Sikkim form of this species. The flowers of which are "red or occasionally yellow" (p. 20).

I. H. BURKILL.

THE SINGAPORE PRICKLY-PEAR.

The Prickly pear which may he seen near the coast about Tanjong Katong, on various roofs in Singapore town, sometimes in Chinese gardens and often in pots in Chinese houses, is *Opuntia monacantha*, Haw., and not *Opuntia Dillenii*, Haw., as recorded.

Its home is in south-eastern Brazil, along the coastal districts; in which place it must have attracted the attention of early voyagers, for there is a figure sufficiently accurately representing it in Lobel's Icones which was published in A. D. 1591.

It was certainly in english Winter-gardens about 1700; and long before 1790, at which Sate the records for India begin, it was taken to Southern India and Bengal so that in 1790 it had already become widely distributed from Madras to Calcutta; there is reason to believe that it was in Cochin-China also at the same period. The shoots were supplied to ships for a vegetable because, although

not very appetising, anything was valuable that would keep green and could be used to ward off the dreaded scurvy. It is probable that its distribution to the East was due to this use.

Its home in the coastal region of south-eastern Brazil has a moist climate; and the countries, which are its new homes, have like conditions. It has recently been recorded by Dr. H. Johnstone and Mr. Henry Tryon in the Report of the Queensland Prickly-Pear Travelling Commission, to exists in Southern France (as a rare plant), in the island of Teneriffe, in the coastal regions of South Africa from the Cape peninsula to East London, in Natal, at Pretoria and Pietershurg in the Transvaal, at Zanzibar, Beira and Lorenzo Marques in East Africa, in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, as well as in the sub-Himalayan tracts, Assam, Bengal, the eastern parts of the Central Provinces of India, Madras, Ceylon and Burma.

Opuntia monacantha is one of the very few Prickly-pears which withstand the moisture of Singapore and are not difficult to cultivate.

I. H. BURKILL.

A NEST OF LIVING DRYMOGLOSSUM PILOSELLOIDES.

It is recorded that birds making nests in Europe sometimes distribute herbs, because seed accidentally gets enmeshed in the material interwoven (Willis and Burkill in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society,* viii., 1893, p. 86); but the use of a living fern in the East is probably unrecorded.

In clearing away a thicket in the Botanic Gardens a nest of the Merebah (*Pycnonotus analis*) was found in the crown of a tree fern, having a foundation of dead leaves, a lining of Arenga palm fibre, and a wrapping of living and leaf-bearing rhizomes of the common little epiphytic fern *Drymoglossum piloselloides,* Presl, which by this use had obtained a new coign of vantage.

Ridley in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society No. 31, 1898, p. 84, writes of this bird in the Botanic Gardens making nests "of bents and roots."

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