

## What is *Primula Wallichiana* O. Ktze.?

BY

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The name *Primula Wallichiana* first appears in O. Ktze. Rev. gen. i (1891), 400. Kuntze included *Androsace* in his concept of the genus *Primula* and had to find a new specific name for *Androsace cordifolia* Wall., as *cordifolia* was pre-empted by *P. cordifolia* Rupr. But what is *Androsace cordifolia* Wall. described by Wallich in *Asiat. Research* xiii (1820), 371, and noted by him as a native of forests in Nepal? A brief account is also given in Roxb. Fl. Ind. ii (1824), 7, and by Duby in DC. Prodr. viii (1844), 54. But when Hooker (in Fl. Brit. Ind. iii (1882), 500) came to discuss this species, he placed it apart as an indeterminable species. The description there given is but a repetition of what had previously appeared, and it would seem that Hooker saw no specimens. Had he done so he could have had no hesitation as to the correct placing of this plant. In 1905 appeared in the *Pflanzenreich* the monograph on *Primulaceae* by Pax and Knuth. There *Androsace cordifolia* Wall. is retained (p. 180) in the genus to which it was originally referred. The description is somewhat amplified and a note added:—"Species ab omnibus speciebus generis *Androsacis* distincta foliis manifeste ovato-cordatis." The collector's name, Wallich, has an exclamation mark appended to indicate that the original was seen. This may be a printer's error, for I think it unlikely that the authors of the monograph could make a mistake as to the genus. But Wallich erred and the specimens are none too good. One result has been that botanists interested in the flora of the Central Himalaya have endeavoured to identify certain collected material of *Androsace* with this presumed very distinct species. In more than one herbarium I have noted an *Androsace* so named. These specimens on examination are seen to belong to one variety or another of the polymorphic *A. rotundifolia* Hardw.

I have lately had the opportunity of seeing in the Herbarium of the British Museum an authentic Wallichian sheet under *A. cordifolia*, and it is obviously a *Primula* of the section *Obconica*. This section contains two other Himalayan species, *P. filipes* Watt and *P. Listeri* King. It resembles these in the short inflorescences, but in regard to size and shape of leaves it is more akin to the Chinese *P. sinolisteri* Balf. f. and *P. obconica* Hance. Of this last it may well be regarded as a subspecies. Occurring in Nepal, it marks the most westerly extension of the section.

Kuntze's transference of the plant from *Androsace* to *Primula* is, therefore, quite in order, though his reason for so doing was not the valid reason.

[Notes, R.B.G., Edin., No. XC, February 1935.]