

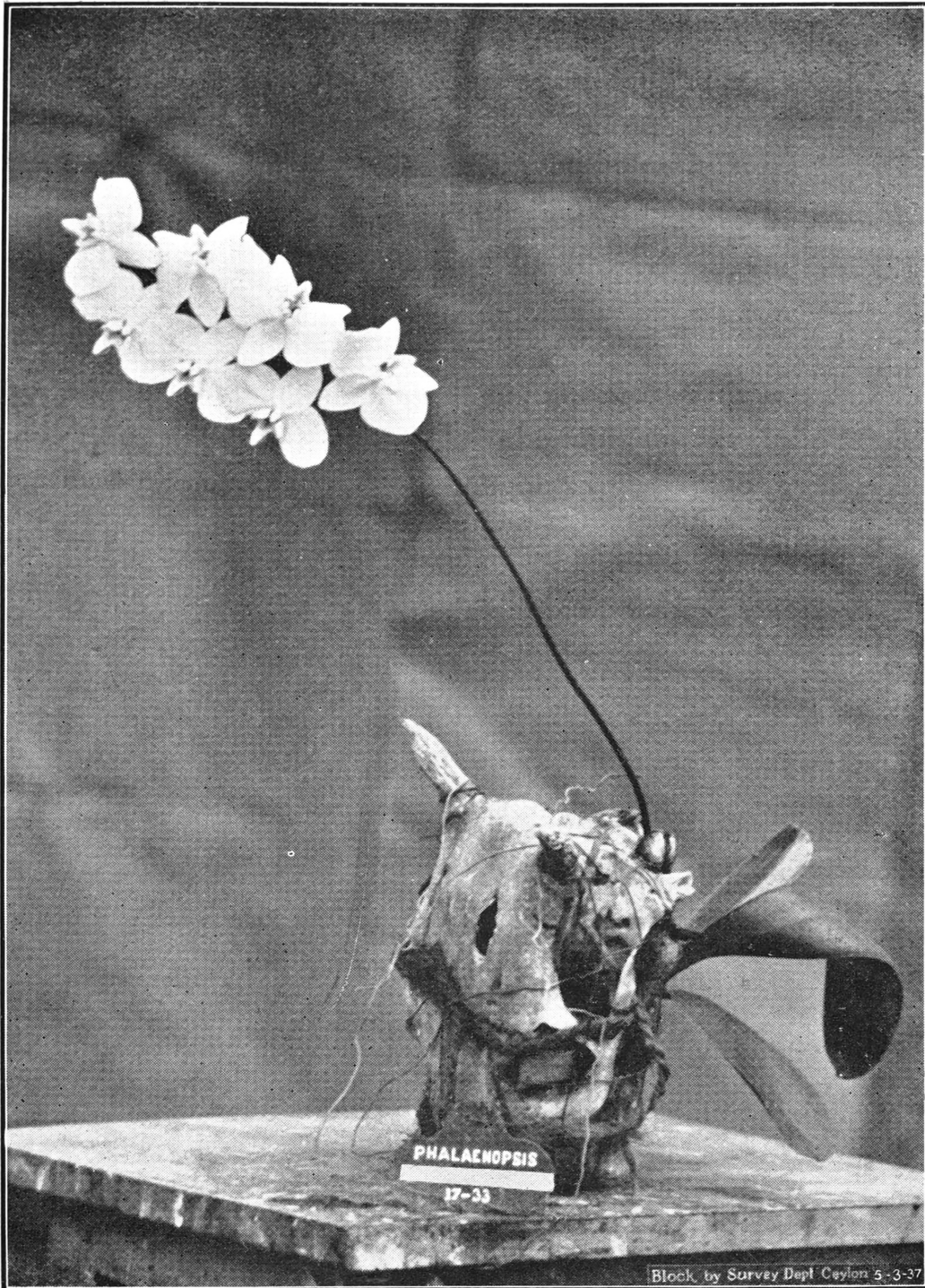
## NOTES ON ORCHIDS CULTIVATED IN CEYLON PHALAENOPSIS AMABILIS BLUME

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FOR magnificence of flowers no genus of tropical orchids surpasses *Phalaenopsis*; plants of this genus are mostly natives of the very hot and moist parts of the Old World, their natural range extending from Assam and Burma, through the islands of the Indian Archipelago, to the Moluccas and Philippines. None of the species has pseudo-bulbs, but the leaves are generally thick and leathery. In several species the upper surface is prettily mottled with silver-grey, and the under side coloured a deep purple. The genus is distinguished by the grace with which the flowers are displayed. They usually face in one direction, and are elegantly supported on slender, frequently branching racemes. Another charm of *Phalaenopsis* is its remarkably free-flowering nature. A valuable property is the length of time the flowers remain in beauty.

The accompanying photographs of *Phalaenopsis Amabilis* Blume, a beautiful, free-flowering species, the flowers of which if kept dry, will remain fresh for several weeks. It has thick, elliptical, lance-shaped, brownish-green leaves, divided obliquely by a prominent midrib. The flowers are borne in two opposite rows, on long, pendent, often branching racemes. They are 3 inches in diameter, and are entirely white except the lip which, on the inner side, is spotted and streaked with rosy pink and yellow. In shape the sepals are broadly ovate, the petals being still broader and somewhat rhomboidal; the lip is three-lobed, the side lobes standing erect at each side of the column, while the central one divides at the apex into two slender, twisted filaments. It was found in Java and the Philippine Islands, and was first introduced into Ceylon in 1836. It flowers at various seasons, but most freely during the summer months.



*Phalaenopsis Amabilis* Blume

*Culture.*—Different species of *Phalaenopsis* are grown in different ways, and the one under reference represents a typical example of one grown in a bullock's skull with success.

-Growing, as has already been stated, in some of the most tropical regions of the globe, on the trunks of trees and on the sides of rocks, where during the rainy season an immense quantity of rain falls, *Phalaenopsis* luxuriates only under conditions of great heat and moisture, and especially is this the case during the period of active growth. Pots and baskets, rafts and blocks of wood or tree fern trunks are much to be preferred.

In whatever position the plants are grown, a free and ample drainage is of the utmost importance. The material in which they are planted should consist of a thin layer of clean, fresh sphagnum or fibre placed upon a good layer of potsherds, porous brick, bone, and lumps of charcoal. They require, however, more moisture at the roots if grown on blocks or rafts, whilst if grown in pots more drainage will be required than when they are planted in baskets. Too much water must not be given to these plants at any time except when the plants are growing, and great care is necessary when they are inactive. The moss in which they are planted must never be allowed to get quite dry. Watering overhead should be especially avoided during dull weather.

The successful cultivation of *Phalaenopsis*, as well as of all other plants, depends upon efficient drainage. If grown on blocks or rafts they should be placed on good-sized ones so that there may be plenty of surface for the roots to cling to.

In fastening the plants on, first place a little sphagnum or fibre on the block, then fix the plant on with copper wire.

These plants are difficult to propagate, as they supply few opportunities for division. To this rule, however, *Phalaenopsis Luddemanniana* is an exception, as it produces young plants upon the flower scapes very freely. Sometimes the other species also will produce young plants on the old flower stems. It has been found that *Phalaenopsis Stuartiana* produces them upon its roots: when this happens they should be left on till well rooted and then placed on small blocks.