ART. V.—1. *The Book of the Rose.* By the Rev. A. Foster-Melliar, M.A. London, 1894.
2. *The Rose-Garden.* By William Paul. Ninth Edition. London, 1888.

WHEN the learned Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, remarks that 'Nature cannot be below Art, since Art merely copies Nature,' it is plain that he had never compared an exhibition Rose with any one of the lovely but wholly different hedge-flowers to which it owes its origin. The history of Rose-culture has not been one of copying Nature at all, but of transforming her, and often by somewhat violent methods. Rose-culture, indeed, may claim to be quite among the oldest and the most highly developed of the many struggles of men with Nature; it is not an attempt to copy her by art, but skilfully to evolve a nobler product than would be possible from unassisted Nature.

This art, then, reaches back into a distant past, since—as we shall show directly—an elaborate system of Rose-culture must have existed in the civilized world for at least two thousand years. But this exceedingly interesting part of Rose-history has received far less consideration than it deserves. Most writers on Roses are content with a few stock quotations—always unverified—from Sappho or other poets, and none of them seem to have thought it worth while to enquire what these poets meant by 'the Rose,' whose beauties they praised. Thus Sappho, Anacreon, and, according to our Version, the Song of Songs also, found the Rose a natural simile for the comparison of beauty; but it is obvious that the lovely and quickly-fading dog-rose, or eglantine, of the hedges is at least as suitable for this purpose as the finest of Hybrid Perpetuals. Was the Rose of the Greek poets a wild or a cultivated flower? On this essential point writers on Roses, though they have now built up quite a considerable and very charming body of literature, are discreetly silent. Mr. Foster-Melliar, the author of the latest and much the most practical book on Exhibition Roses—he is somewhat scornful of all others—says (unjustly, we hope) that 'few readers of a Rose-book will care for much research into the history of the Rose,' and thereupon passes the ball back with much dexterity to his voluminous predecessor, Mr. William Paul. Mr. Paul, himself the foster-father of many a famous Rose, has amassed in his gigantic volume all the allusions to the flower in ancient or modern literature on which he could lay hands; but it seems never to have occurred to this practical Rose-grower that a poet's Rose is a very vague flower.
The

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The Dean of Rochester again, in that fascinating book which has tempted so many waverers inside the gates of the Rose Paradise, characteristically proves that the Rose, alone among flowers, satisfies the great Vincentian maxim, by being acknowledged *semper*, *ubique*, *ab omnibus*, and thereupon presses no further what he too modestly calls 'the broken-winded Pegasus that once cantered in Oxford riding-schools.'

We propose therefore, in the following pages, to treat of the Rose from a point of view which, in the earlier stages, has been confused by its numerous and able prophets; not as a naturally beautiful flower, but as the chief ornament of cultivated gardens from the earliest known times. The history of systematic Rose-growing is an immensely long one, far older than is generally supposed. It is a history also which, naturally enough, presents to us several enormous gaps that cannot now be adequately filled. But it is amply sufficient to prove that the vast crowd which gathers at the Crystal Palace on the first Saturday in July, for the National Rose Society's great Exhibition, is doing homage to an art which—to go back to our text from Marcus Aurelius—has not been copying but steadily improving upon Nature, and that for some thousands of years.

Some indication of the origin of the Rose, both in time and in country, is probably given in its name. This, undoubtedly, comes to us through the Latin from the Greek *ῥόδον*, a word which is now agreed to be, in the wider sense, Oriental, not Greek. But to which of the two great families of language it belongs, is less certain. Heyn maintains it to be Iranian, that is, of the Aryan family—of the older tongue of Persia and Bactria; and Persia might unquestionably put forward strong claims to be the true native country of the Rose. But Professor Skeat, who has the majority of modern authorities on his side, declares it to be a pure Semitic word—the Arabic *ward*, a flowering shrub, thus denoting the flower of flowers *par excellence*. It is worth noticing that the Persian word *gul* similarly meant at first only a perfumed flower, but has come to be used of the Rose alone. *Ut rosa flos florum, sic est domus ista domorum*, is the emphatic way in which the inscription over the lovely Chapter-house at York claims it as being the very flower of Architecture.

Both theories, however, of the name agree with all other indications that we can trace, in placing the original home of the Rose, much as that of our earliest forefathers, in the central or western-central district of Asia; but, instead of spreading only in a westerly direction, the Rose took, apparently, a more catholic

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catholic view of the earth, and expanded impartially east and west, without showing any reluctance about longitude, while disliking the more violent changes of temperature implied by an extension of latitude. It has been found by travellers as far south as Abyssinia in one hemisphere and Mexico in the other; but it never seems, voluntarily, to have come very near to the Equator. Northward, however, nothing seems to stop it, since it has conquered Iceland, Greenland, and Kamtchatka.

'In Iceland, so [in]fertile in vegetation that in some parts the natives are compelled to feed their horses, sheep, and oxen on dried fish, we find the *Rosa rubiginosa*, with its pale, solitary, cup-shaped flowers; and in Lapland, blooming almost under the snows of that severe climate, the natives seeking mosses and lichens for their reindeer, find the Roses *maialis* and *rubella*, the former of which, brilliant in colour and of a sweet perfume, enlivens the dreariness of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.' *

Humboldt gives similar testimony about the Western Hemisphere :—

'We did not find,' he says, 'one indigenous Rose-tree in all South America, notwithstanding the analogy existing between the climates of the high mountains of the torrid zone and our own temperate zone. It is wanting in all the southern hemisphere, within and beyond the tropics. It was only on the Mexican mountains that we were happy enough to discover, in the nineteenth degree of latitude, American eglantines.' †

The modern cultivated Rose, on the contrary, has leapt the Equator, and, like ancient Rome, has taken all the world for its province. Orders for the newest and best varieties now come regularly to the great Rose-merchants of Colchester or Lyons, even from New Zealand and Australia.

The Rose then, in its westward course of empire, reached Greece at a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. If it came first as a garden-flower—which is quite possible—it must have been, like the alphabet and many other precious discoveries, conveyed through the Phœnicians. It would be tempting here to call up a vision of Messrs. Barca & Co., florists, of Tyre, with seed-grounds somewhere under Lebanon, exporting Roses to Athens and Corinth; but, unhappily, at this point the materials for history are defective. Most Rose-books indeed, and about one writer annually in the 'Rosarian's Year Book,' steadily copying from the most laborious of them all, inform us that Sappho wrote a poem about Jove electing the Rose as the Queen of Flowers. Now this is such a curious myth

* 'A Book about Roses,' ch. iii.

† 'Personal Narrative of Travels,' iii. p 487.

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that it deserves a slight pause for examination. The extant fragments of Sappho tell us nothing about Roses, cultivated or wild. She probably, however, like later poets, found the Rose an effective comparison for maiden beauties, since Philostratus, who lived about 200 A.D., and possessed no doubt a larger body of Sapphic poems than we do, tells us that she was 'a lover of the Rose, and compared the most beautiful maidens to it.' And hence it was a graceful turn of Meleager in his 'Garland of Poetry'—quite worthy, say, of Mr. Andrew Lang or Mr. Austin Dobson—to remark that of Sappho's verses he had selected *βαιὰ μὲν ἀλλὰ ῥόδα*—'few, but all of them Roses.' But where is the poem on the elected Queen of Flowers? In any case, if Sappho had written such a poem, the Rose must have been a King, not a Queen. To the scholar, a 'Queen of Flowers' is like a feminine Angel, a being ignored by the Church, who appears first on modern Christmas-cards.

This supposed poem of Sappho comes from a book, by Francis Fawkes, entitled 'Translations from Anacreon, Sappho, &c.,' and published in 1760. In a note to this poem (fr. 5) Fawkes says, 'We are indebted to Achilles Tatius for this poem, which is generally ascribed to Sappho.' Achilles Tatius, it may be necessary to explain, lived about 500 A.D., and is said to have become a Christian bishop. He wrote—let us hope, among the sins of his youth—a romance of very unepiscopal character, called 'The History of Leucippe and Cleitophon.' In the course of this story he makes Leucippe, the heroine, sing a song in praise of the Rose, which in his time, as we shall see, was a highly-developed flower. But, curiously enough, he says he will only give the argument of her song in prose, and a very remarkable and interesting piece of prose-poetry it is. Leucippe says:—

> 'If Zeus were to set a King over the flowers, the Rose would be that King. It is the glory of the earth, the pride of all plants, the very apple of the eye amongst flowers. It is the blush that overspreads the meadows; it flashes out beauty like the lightning. It is the very breath of love; the friend that introduces Aphrodite to the heart. For waving tresses it has its sweet-scented leaves; it wantons in the luxuriance of its soft petals as they ripple into smiles under the breath of the zephyr.'

Truly a notable passage to discover in a sentimental novelist fourteen hundred years ago! But the strangest thing is that not a word is said of Sappho. Her name in this connexion seems to have been an invention of 'the ingenious' Mr. Fawkes, though he has led blindfold along with him almost all our modern writers upon the Rose!

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It would be exceedingly interesting—nor would it be at all antecedently improbable—to find a mention of the cultivated or even of the wild Rose in the Hebrew Scriptures; but, unfortunately, in the two well-known passages, 'I am the Rose of Sharon' and 'The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose,' the word *chabatstseleth*, which is thus rendered in our Authorized Version, is of very doubtful meaning. The latter passage is rendered in the Vulgate, *lilium*, the lily, and the former, somewhat inconsistently, *flos campi*, the flower of the field. The etymology seems rather to point to a bulbous plant, and the general opinion of commentators is that the flower intended was some form of the Narcissus or Daffodil, which still blooms abundantly in the plain of Sharon. At any rate, the allusion is to a wild flower.

The earliest certain trace in Greek literature of the Rose as a cultivated flower is to be found in Herodotus, in his account of the rise of the House of Macedonia. The sons of Temenus, he says (Bk. viii. 138), fled into another part of Macedonia, and took up their abode 'near the Gardens of Midas. In these Gardens there are roses which grow of themselves'—that is, we suppose, without much attention to pruning or budding—'so sweet that no others can vie with them in this; and their blossoms have as many as sixty petals apiece.' Every Rose-grower will at once recognize in this, the most venerable of all Rose records, the original *Rosa centifolia*, still, more than two thousand years afterwards, one of the sweetest in many an old English garden—the old Provence or Cabbage Rose. And it is a curious illustration of Herodotus's accuracy in unsuspected details, that Pliny describes the same Rose as found principally in much the same district, in the neighbourhood of Philippi, the people of which, he says, get it from the neighbouring Mount Pangæus, and greatly improve it by transplantation. In the long history of Roses, the Provence or Hundred-leaved Rose seems chiefly to have formed the backbone of continuity.

But, alas! the Greeks, for all their exquisite taste in most other things, seem to have cared little for gardening. It is not quite true, indeed, as the Dean of Rochester asserts, that of Greek gardens we know nothing; but we certainly know very little, apparently because there was little to know. The sacred enclosure of a temple—*βρύων δάφνης, ἐλαίας, ἀμπέλου*—was probably thought the ideal garden. A Greek under the hot sun of the south, and living on the dusty limestone of Athens or Corinth, desired above all things in his pleasure-garden shady trees to walk or lie under; and there is nothing that the Rose abhors so much—no, not raging tempests or biting frosts (within reason)

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reason)—as the dank shade and the greedy roots of trees. If he wanted flowers at all, it was probably only for a garland to tie round his head over his wine, as the budding Senior Wrangler ties the wet towel round his head over his green tea. The few flowers that he cared about having at all found their place, therefore, mostly in the unshaded kitchen-garden; and a very odd passage in Plutarch * throws considerable light on the state of Greek horticulture by telling us of the juxtaposition by good gardeners of their rose and violet beds with the rows of leeks and onions; which suggests, as Bekker says, that both were equally wanted for cutting, not for garden decoration. In later Greek literature, as in Anacreon, the allusions to Roses are endless, but, except where they are merely comparisons, they are almost always named simply as accompaniments of wine or dancing. A well-known verse of the Book of Wisdom (ii. 8) is purely Greek in character, and the sentiment, 'Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered,' might be a quotation from Anacreon. The allusions in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, however, do give distinct evidence of elaborate cultivation; one passage speaking of 'the rose-plantations of Jericho,' and another of the 'roses planted by the brooks of waters.' † Such a situation would doubtless be necessary in Palestine, small artificial trenches of water being used for dividing the blocks of rose-beds; whereas in England, tempting as it is for the saving of labour, the farther your Roses can be kept from the water the better.

We pass then, with some relief, from the Greeks to the Romans, for here, at least, this marks an advance in refinement and in art. Under the Roman Empire we read of Roses so highly cultivated that we could make quite a practical handbook by combining the amusingly modern-sounding instructions scattered here and there, especially in Pliny. We now find Roses budded on the briar, severely pruned in early spring, discriminated by the habits of their varieties, foreshadowing Mr. Foster-Melliar's great twelfth chapter on 'Manners and Customs,'—probably the highest perfection to which the personal study of Roses has reached,—and even, to some extent, grown under glass. This curious start in the great art of Rose-growing seems to coincide almost exactly with the foundation of the Roman Empire. The grim old Senate had cared nothing for flowers, or for aught else that was soft and beautiful in life. It is difficult to imagine a Camillus or Scipio with a rose-

* 'De capienda ex inimicis utilitate,' c. 10

† Ecclus. xxiv. 14; xxxix. 13.

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wreath on his head—*nisi ebrius*—but still more difficult to fancy him caring what blooms the wreath was made of.

The luxury of the Roman Empire created the first great development of the cultivated Rose. Lower motives may lead to refined results, as Carlyle used to insist. The first use even of the wreath, which seems to have been to a Greek the final cause of Roses, is said to have been only a glorification of the tight string tied round the head to avoid the next day's headache! Thus, for example, the great Varro, though he was as omniscient as our own Bacon, and wrote most elaborately on cultivation, as well as everything else —*de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*—still seems to think of Roses as propagated only by cuttings; that is, on their own roots; a method in which no great advance in the perfection of blooms is possible. Columella, on the other hand, though he lived only a century later, says very truly, that Roses should be budded on bushes (*fruticibus*)—by which we suppose he means wild briars—with laterals left about a foot long. And he adds, in words which modern Rose-growers will be pleased to find inculcated so long ago, that the ground must thoroughly be hoed over, and careful thinning out of the shoots must be finished —here, of course, we must allow something for latitude—not later than the 1st of March. Pliny also gives us the good advice to have our plants quite a foot apart, and to hoe round them well. It is certainly unfortunate that Columella did not tell us a little more about his 'bushes'; whether they included anything like our 'standards,' for example, and what species might be used for budding or grafting upon. But though the dog-rose of the hedges (*cynorrhodon; R. canina*) has proved by far the best of all foster-parents to the Rose, it is a mistake to suppose that she has limited this privilege to her own immediate relations, such as our own many varieties of the briar, or that curious little Italian rose from Como, which is literally such a thorny subject among Rose-growers, the stock called by the name of its introducer, Signor Manetti. In Persia, which, as we have shown, might claim to be, perhaps, the native land of the Rose, it is grafted upon the black poplar (*populus nigra*), and the experiment has been tried in the Isle of Wight. The Rose will live as a parasite upon many alien stocks. It is a popular belief in many parts of the country that our darkest Roses, such as Prince Camille de Rohan, first got their colour by being grafted on the black currant; and Mr. Paul quotes from a book of the seventeenth century to show that the Evergreen Roses (*R. sempervirens*) were supposed to derive their special characteristic from having been originally allied with the

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the holly. The subject of stocks, and their modifying influence on the bud or graft, have been by no means, as yet, finally explored.

Some other instructions of ancient manuals will be of interest to modern Rose-growers. Thus Pliny tells us to plant Roses 'deeper than vines, but not so deep as corn,' which is rather too like a Delphic oracle, and scarcely definite enough for a beginner. He also justly insists on the advantages of rigorous 'cutting-back' (*recisio*), but, very oddly, attributes just as good effects to burning (*ustio*). Theophrastus also, in his 'History of Plants,' says that it was usual to set fire to the rose-trees, and adds that this was considered necessary to produce good blooming. No wonder Mr. Paul is horrified, and asks whether these writers can possibly be in earnest. Certainly few Rose-growers now would have the courage to try it on their beds. But, after all, the fire would probably leave all the plant below ground absolutely uninjured, and in that case the process would not greatly differ from the severe pruning considered necessary for modern exhibition Roses. Thus Mr. Foster-Melliar says, 'Every year the whole of the plants in my beds, Hybrid Perpetuals and Teas alike, for the standards are elsewhere, are swept clear away nearly to the level of the ground.' The process of pruning by fire then may perhaps not have been so reckless or barbarous as it seems at first sight.

Another very interesting practice, if we can take Pliny's authority for it, was to secure early blooms out of doors by filling a trench round the rose-bed with hot water just when the buds began to break, thus making a sort of open-air forcing-pit. Has any enthusiastic amateur tried this method to get blooms early enough for the Crystal Palace in a late season? The difficulty would seem to be that the hot water would have to be applied frequently in order to produce any effect at all, and that, in that case, the blooms would necessarily be injured by over-watering the soil. It is perhaps conceivable, indeed—though he does not say so—that he means that the hot water was poured into sunk iron troughs. Hot-water tubes for warming houses and heating baths were among the most universal luxuries of the Roman Empire, and were far better managed by the Roman plumber of the first century than by his English successor of the nineteenth. Naturally these were used for the greenhouses, which began to be fashionable in the first century A.D., and are often mentioned, especially by Martial.* It used to be thought that the *specularia*, or panes, were made only of talc, but glass panes have been found at Pompeii, and there is no reason why

* viii. 14, 68; xiii. 127.

glass

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glass should not have been used. Aided by this new invention, and stimulated to continual improvement in methods of cultivation by the increasing trade, the Rose-growers who supplied Rome with the most beautiful and least harmful of all her luxuries, were able to send Roses thither nearly all the year round. Intermediate flowers between those grown under glass and in the open borders would be supplied by climbing Roses from the *peristylium* or fountain-court, such as may often be seen in Italy now, where doubtless some predecessor of Gloire de Dijon or Climbing Niphetos made the court a Paradise of beauty and perfume to its Rosarian owner. Seneca, indeed, as beseemed his Stoic ideals, was somewhat alarmed at the alteration of nature by greenhouses and such other unholy devices of art. 'Do they not live contrary to nature,' he indignantly inquires, 'who desire a Rose in winter, and by diligent application of hot-water [pipes?] and skilful changes of position'—surely this at least could only apply to pot-plants—'make a spring flower into a winter one?' *

Another very interesting question that arises is on the distinction of species and varieties, and how far cultivation had succeeded in producing anything like the wonderful variation of colour, perfume, growth, habit, and length of blossoming that distinguish the modern Rose amongst all flowers. Here we are, unfortunately, left very much in the dark, since no Latin author writes as a Rose-grower in any degree whatever, except Pliny, and he only as one little item in his vast list of qualifications. Hence we cannot expect to find any other division than that of species, varied, at most, by local situation. Even the distinction of colour seems to have been extremely vague. This may be due to the generally accepted fact that the colour-sense amongst the ancients was very imperfectly developed. The curious use by Horace of *purpureus* as the adjective for a swan and by Albinovanus for snow is the stock instance for the Romans, while the vagueness of Greek colour-adjectives has been treated of in a famous passage of 'Modern Painters.' Still, even so, it is curious that there should be such very slight traces of white Roses in ancient times, and none whatever of any other colours than red or white. 'Rosy' to

* 'Locorum apta mutatione brumalium florem vernum exprimunt.' (Sen. Ep. cxxii. 8.) The reading *brumalium* has no point here, and can scarcely stand. It requires also the meaning of 'force prematurely' to be given to *exprimunt*. Roses were naturally a 'spring' flower in Italy, blossoming in the open ground in April, as Martial says (xiii. 127):

'Quondam veris erat, nunc tua facta rosa est.'

We would read therefore *brumalem*: 'make what is properly a spring flower give its blooms in winter.'

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both Greeks and Romans conveyed much the same connotation as it oddly does still, when scarcely one Rose out of ten is 'rose-coloured.' In countries such as Bulgaria, where the Rose is grown only for the manufacture of perfumes, red Roses have an enormous preponderance, not for their colour, but because of their richer qualities. The fields of red Roses there are in many places picturesquely divided by hedges of white ones, which give an inferior kind of extract.

Nowadays, particular varieties cut across general lines of demarcation as lightly as Remus leaped the hypothetical walls of Romulus. 'Gloire de Dijon,' for example, is classed as a pure Tea, but exhibits most of the supposed qualities of Hybrid Perpetuals; 'Her Majesty' is called a Hybrid Perpetual, but from some unknown strain has inherited manners and customs which she keeps to herself. We do not hear of a Roman florist advertising a celebrated Rose for lasting qualities as 'Imperator Augustus,' of an early-blooming but deceptive 'Nero,' of a beautiful but delicate 'Octavia,' or of a thorny, rampant-growing 'Agrippina.' To the modern Rose-exhibitor there are but three kinds: Hybrid Perpetuals, which include Hybrid Teas (though the National Rose Society has lately attempted—with dubious results—to differentiate the latter); Teas, which include Noisettes; and a vast remainder of all other kinds, which are swept together under the general name of Garden Roses. On the other hand, inside these great continental divisions, every single variety or species is known as accurately by its manners and customs as mothers know their children or shepherds their sheep. To Roman Rose-growers, if Pliny accurately represents their views, the varieties were known almost wholly by their place of origin, and, apparently, different places preserved their different species. The two most celebrated kinds, he says, were the Campanian and Prænestine,—the former of which was the earliest to bloom, while the latter continued longest into the autumn. The brightest of all in colour was the Milesian, which had only twelve petals; no doubt it was a crimson Damask. The sweetest-scented of Roses came from Cyrene, in Africa, where the best oil of Roses was then made. There was another sort called by the Romans the 'Greek' Rose, but by the Greeks *lychnis*, which was no larger than a violet and had no scent—perhaps a sort of Banksia or Polyantha. Another was called the 'Greekling,' which closed up so tightly that it was useless, except in the bud, and would not open, unless forced by the hand, so that some rules similar to that of the National Rose Society about 'altering the character of the Rose,' must have been in force if it were ever exhibited. The

celebrated

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celebrated 'Hundred-leaved' or 'Cabbage' Rose was, as might be expected, conspicuous in lists, being grown both in Greece and Italy. This has an undoubted claim to the premier place among all cultivated Roses of the perpetual type. A curious proof of its magnificent 'substance' among the other single or semi-double flowers seems to be given in the advice of Cæpio, Quæstor of Bithynia in the reign of Tiberius, who wrote a book about flowers, in which he advised that the 'Cabbage'—a name which Dean Hole bitterly deprecates; the 'Provence' is in every way better—should only be used in garlands 'as the cardinal points of the crown.' Lord Penzance's Hybrid Sweet-briars would have made ideal Roses for festal garlands.

The Rose was also used very largely in medicine, unguents, and perfumes, though the methods of preparation, and the uses to which it was applied, are difficult to disentangle and compare with modern ones. So far as the Rose holds a place in modern medicine at all, it is mainly through the conserve of the heps or berries, which do not seem to be definitely mentioned in the ancient literature of the subject. This conserve is of no very special medicinal value, but of considerable use for the table when carefully prepared, owing to its peculiarity and delicacy of flavour. Some kinds are much more valuable for this purpose than the common Dog Rose, particularly the *Rosa rugosa*, introduced from Eastern Asia, because of the great size of its magnificent heps, which make it a splendid decorative plant for the garden in autumn. The cultivation of the Rose for medicinal purposes is not expressly mentioned, but is highly probable from the large use that was made of the *rosaceum*, or rose-ointment, which seems to have been the most universal of all medicaments, either alone, as a salve, or in combination with other drugs. It is not clear whether there was any difference between *rosaceum*, rose-ointment, and *rhodinum*, rose-oil; but if so, it can only have been in the comparative solidity of the former. The full art of distilling flowers was introduced into Europe by the Arabs, and has not been traced back even in Persia earlier than the ninth century A.D.; while the extraction of the volatile oil, or attar of roses, was not made until the sixteenth century by Geronimo Rossi, of Ravenna. It is curious that its discovery in Persia was forty or fifty years later still, and was apparently made independently of the Italian's invention. The Roman method is described more than once by Pliny. It consisted, not of extracting any of the properties of the Rose, but of steeping the blooms in oil or wine—chiefly the former—until they were completely absorbed. The thick syrup was then passed through a hair-sieve or coarse sacking, and boiled,

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boiled, like the *defrutum* of grapes in the Georgics, and afterwards clarified. How much of actual rose essence can have remained after this drastic treatment would seem to be doubtful. But rose-water—that is, water scented with rose-petals by some simpler process of distillation—was largely used in the cookery, medicine, and perfumery of the Roman Empire; evidently quite enough by itself to have given an enormous stimulus to its cultivation for the purposes of trade.

But the chief use of the Rose at that time—indeed the only use that has generally taken hold of the imagination of the modern historian—would seem to have been for purposes of luxurious display at great banquets, beside which—if we accept literally the traditional interpretations of a few passages—the utmost efforts of New York and Chicago millionaires fade into insignificance. In the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1888, one of the most noted of the pictures was Mr. Alma-Tadema's 'Rose Feast of Elagabalus,' which was regarded by artists as a splendid *tour de force* in overcoming the extraordinary difficulty of the broken lights in a vast mass of falling rose-petals. The account, which is by no means improbable, is that, among many other Petronian diversions of a less harmless character, the Emperor tried the effect of almost literally smothering his guests in a shower of roses from nets concealed under the ceiling. The association of this with 'luxury' is somewhat difficult to the modern mind, though the confusion of profuseness with enjoyment is not, and doubtless never will be, entirely extinct. We should naturally regard it as simply an extravagant practical joke, if it were not for the fact that it is only a curious exaggeration of other obvious attempts at luxury long before. At a famous banquet of Cleopatra to Antonius, for example, it is said by Athenæus * that the rose-petals lay a foot and a half deep on the floor,—a curious idea, indeed, of enjoying Roses,—and that this extravagance cost a talent, say 250*l*. Yet even with this as a rough standard of the expense of Roses to go by, we still have perpetually repeated, as if it were merely parallel, the incredible story in the present text of Suetonius, that at a banquet given to Nero (not *by* Nero, as Dean Hole and Mr. Paul say) *the Roses alone* cost 'considerably more than four millions of sesterces,' or upwards of 32,000*l*.! Nero could have buried the whole of Rome in roses for that sum, provided that the supply held out. But, apart from the ridiculous impossibility of the story, the whole passage is exposed to the gravest suspicion of corruption,

* iv. 29.

and

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and may have a totally different meaning.* We may note, however, an amusing interchange of parts between the eloquent Dean and the famous nurseryman in their comments on this supposed extravagance. Mr. Paul delivers himself of a portentous sermon beginning, 'Alas, that these gems of earth should have been so perverted from their just use!' Dean Hole, on the contrary, makes the practical comment, 'A nice little order for his nurseryman!'

Much saner as well as more interesting evidence of the greatly increased and improved cultivation of Roses is given by the frequent mention of them as flowering in winter, which, as we have seen, caused the Stoic Seneca some misgivings. The most striking of these is a pretty epigram of Martial,† describing the astonishment of an Egyptian master-mariner bringing Roses in winter as if they were sure to find favour at Rome, but thinking little of his native Rose-beds when he saw the masses and wreaths of glorious blooms from Pæstum displayed in every florist's shop over the whole city, even to the unfashionable suburbs. 'The Rose was once,' says Martial, in another epigram, 'the flower of Spring; now she is wholly Cæsar's flower.'

All these, and many other indications, point unmistakably to a very large, a very skilful, and a thoroughly organized trade in Roses carried on under the Empire between Rome and certain country centres. These centres would doubtless be more particularly the places that, as we have seen, gave names to varieties,—Præneste (*Palestrina*), Tibur (*Tivoli*), and several places in Campania. But the most famous of them all was Pæstum, a place to be named in Rose-annals as deserving equal honour with Lyons or Colchester. Any place obtains an immortality by being merely named in Virgil, and the peculiarity of this mention—the 'twice-blowing Rose-gardens' of Pæstum—has attracted considerable notice and speculation. The true explanation seems to be that long and skilful culture had developed the Lucanian Roses beyond those of the growers of other places—they were the Hybrid Perpetuals of antiquity. Lucania was the Essex or Hertfordshire of Rome, and

* Suet. Ner. c. 27: 'Indicebat et familiaribus cenas' (that is, invited himself to dinner), 'quorum uni mitellita quadragiens sestertio constitit, alteri pluris aliquanto rosaria.' The word *mitellita* is quite unknown, and the feeble guess that it meant some floral decoration is entirely based on the conjunction here with *rosaria*. Then, again, *rosaria* could scarcely be used of cut Roses or plants in pots; it means the place where Roses grow: and if the word be genuine here, it would seem more probable that there is some lacuna, and that possibly the confiscation of some gardens, or the enforced purchase of them at an extravagant price, is alluded to. The passage, at any rate, is useless as evidence.

† vi. 80; xiii. 27.

Pæstum

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Pæstum was its Colchester or Cheshunt. Hither the Paulus or Cantius of the day—their names have unfortunately not been preserved, like the Sosii, the great publishers of the Roman Albemarle Street—was drawn by the same reason that attracts the modern Rose-grower to certain centres: the favourable climate, and a buttery loam, such as feeds fat the Roses of Colchester. The three Doric temples of Poseidonia, the earlier city of Pæstum, as they now stand in their majestic loneliness, the rich yellow of their travertine columns sharply outlined against the violet hills, are among the least forgettable sights in Europe. But many visitors to Pæstum have had the Virgilian echo still in their ears, 'flashing out in golden phrase,' even amongst the ruins, and have tried to find some remnant of those Roses that were once more famous than the temples. 'What a place was this for a Rose-garden,' writes the late John Addington Symonds, 'deep loam reclaimed from swamps, and irrigated by perpetual streams.' 'Roses to Pæstum' was the conventional equivalent of our 'coals to Newcastle.' But if their descendants survive on the spot at all, they have relapsed into their primitive wildness, in fit sympathy with the fortunes of the place itself. Swinburne, it is true, in 1785, says he found Roses 'flowering with delicious fragrance both in summer and autumn,' but probably this is only his reminiscence of Virgil, and he did not visit the place at both seasons to verify the fact. Later travellers have only found, at most, some small single Roses, apparently of something like the Damask kind, which still clamber about the historic stones. The true descendants of the famous twice-flowering Pæstum Roses are only to be found in the Provinces, to which they were brought and left as a precious legacy by their Roman occupants.

Pæstum then must be looked on as only one centre, though the most distinguished, of a great trade in Roses, which certainly existed during the Empire. But the puzzle is to see how the florists could get any reasonable proportion of the cut blooms safe to Rome. There is a railway now from Battipaglia, the station beyond Salerno, which runs (or, to be quite correct, proceeds) by way of Pesto, but even with a railway it is a journey of twelve hours to Rome. Of course a large portion would naturally go rather to Naples, or to Baiæ during the bathing season, than to Rome. Pæstum also was not the only source of supply to Rome, and one of the most notable, Præneste or Palestrina, was only twenty miles from Rome. This was the Bedale or Newtownards of the Roman market, its Roses being the latest in flowering, and doubtless it reaped a harvest in early seasons, even as the Crystal Palace Trophy goes northwards in a hot summer.

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summer. But still we find that the Pæstum blooms were the most celebrated of all at Rome; and when every possible provision for the packing and transit of cut flowers has been allowed for, it seems certain—as many other indications would also suggest—that the Rose had reached a far more advanced state of cultivation than is generally supposed. Roses, to be worth sending that distance for sale, must have had the ample substance and firm petalling that only come with long and careful selection and assiduous cultivation. The single Damasks or Sweetbriars which one sometimes sees represented as wreathing the brow of the Roman in his hours of ease, would scarcely have travelled from a market garden in the suburbs; we must assume that the Roses in the baskets of the flower-girls on the steps were, in substance, of practically much the same character as the 'Paul Neyron' or the 'La France' to be seen in their place to-day. And for this, at least, all modern Rose-growers will gladly give some credit to the much-abused luxury of the Roman Empire.

The break-up of the Empire involved, however, in the cataclysm the art of Rose-growing, among many other things supposed to be more important, and the gardens of Pæstum became as deserted as its temples. The link of connexion between the ancient and the modern history of the Rose is probably to be found, as we have indicated, in the famous *Rosa centifolia*, the 'Provence' or 'Cabbage' Rose, which was certainly introduced into Gaul by the Romans, and found a home from which it may very naturally have taken its more elegant name. It has, however, been maintained that the name 'Provence' is a misnomer, and that it should be 'Provins,' this Rose having been first brought to England from Provins by Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster. This is, we believe, purely a myth, though the coincidence of name is somewhat curious. Provins, once the residence of the Comtes de Champagne, a dignity possessed by this Earl of Lancaster in right of his wife, was celebrated for its Roses, and even to the present day a conserve of Roses—of the petals, not the heps—is made there, as it is in Roumania and Turkey. But the Rose of Provins is a crimson, single flower, which is said, with some probability, to have been first brought from Palestine by the Crusaders; in short, it is a true Damask, and Pliny would have classed it as the 'Milesia,' not the 'Centifolia.' The 'Provence' Rose, on the contrary, is of a pure 'rose-colour,' and the special characteristic that has made it so important in Rose-history is that depth and solidity of its petalling which caused the Romans

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Romans of old, and the French now, to call it the 'hundred-leaved.' A historian, therefore, who knew anything about Roses would probably at once reject the proposed theory.

After the Rose-feasts of the Emperors history has very little to record on the subject of Roses in gardens. The celebrated thirteenth-century poem, the 'Roman de la Rose' of Guillaume de Lorris, gives us little or no help, since a poet of any age or country may well represent himself as falling in love with a beautiful rose-bud, wild or cultivated though it be. The Wars of the Roses, named from the cognizances of the Houses of York and Lancaster, give something a little more tangible, showing that, at any rate, both white and red Roses were to be found in English pleasaunces. One wonders whether the famous York and Lancaster Rose was also then to be found there, under some other name. If so, it was admirably suited, as Mr. Foster-Melliar remarks, for any Vicar of Bray of the period, showing as it does both red and white as well as parti-coloured blooms on the same plant. This fine and hardy Damask Rose of 'sportive' tendencies has unhappily become rare in gardens now; partly, probably, from the common confusion of it by ladies with the much inferior 'Gallica' Roses, 'Rosa mundi' and 'Village Maid,' which are striped lilac and white. An Irish Member of Parliament once asked whether the Government would take steps to prevent the confusion of whiskey *with an inferior liquid of the same name imported from Scotland.* We wish that Rose-growers would prevent the confusion of the noble old 'York and Lancaster' with inferior Roses imported from France.

But after all possible gleanings have been made by the most industrious collector, it must be admitted that the history of Roses from the fourth century, or so, to the sixteenth, is very nearly a blank. They existed, of course, in gardens, in France and Italy and England, but they were not cultivated with any special attention or enthusiasm. The gap between their ancient and the modern culture curiously coincides with the convenient and popularly accepted division between 'ancient' and 'modern' history. The first fixed date which the National Rose Society trusts itself to give in its Catalogue for the introduction of a Rose to England is 1596; and this, again, is for our old friend, the Provence Rose, which other authorities state to have come to us, by way of the Netherlands, as early as 1567. In either case the modern history of Rose-growing synchronizes—perhaps a little tardily—with the revival of all other culture in the days of Elizabeth.

ART.

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