

Art. 4.—WILD AND GARDEN ROSES.

The Genus Rosa. By Ellen Willmott, F.L.S. Drawings by Alfred Parsons, A.R.A. London : Murray, 1910-14.

'A GOOD general monograph of the Genus Rosa is needed.' This is the opening sentence of 'A Classification of Garden Roses' written by Mr J. G. Baker, F.R.S., in 1885. For more than twenty years Miss Willmott has been studying the genus, from her own large collection of species and varieties, from home and foreign botanical gardens and herbaria, from her copious botanical library and all other available printed matter; meeting with untold difficulty and obstruction from the conflicting evidence of former writers, but labouring on single-handed, with utter patience and determination; deferring her own conclusions, and sifting those of others with the most deliberate care and perseverance, so that nothing should stand in her notes but that which had been absolutely proven. The work was at first undertaken for her own information and the use of friends; but, as it grew, its importance became obvious, botanists recognising the fact that here was the making of the book so long desired. It was then that, yielding to urgent insistence, Miss Willmott undertook the great task of producing a monograph of the genus, that should embody a description of all the known species and the more important of the hybrids and typical garden varieties.

Hitherto, Rose classification had been, at the best, indefinite. The only book of systematic Rose botany was John Lindley's 'Rosarum monographa' published in 1820; but later botanists have found his characterisation of the primary groups too indistinct to be accepted as authoritative; moreover, so many new species have been discovered and described since his time that his lists are necessarily incomplete. The beautiful drawings of Redouté's 'Les Roses,' published in 1802, had hitherto given it a pre-eminent place as a book of Rose pictures; but in this the subjects are garden Roses of the then known kinds, chosen for their beauty, and, although some letterpress was added by the botanist Thory, it cannot claim to be considered as a botanical text-book.

It would appear that a possible Redouté only arises once in a hundred years. Happily we have one in Mr Alfred Parsons, without whose collaboration such a book as this could not have come into existence. Speaking of Redouté's book in her preface, Miss Willmott uses words that apply equally and exactly to the beautiful work, careful and laborious, and withal fine in style, of our Royal Academician:—'In delicacy of drawing and in fidelity of colouring it surpasses every other flower-book. The drawings are portraits, at once precise and artistic.'

It is found that the Roses of the world fall into twelve groups or sections, the individuals of each section agreeing in exhibiting some characters in common. In some cases it needs the close scrutiny of the trained scientist to determine the place of a specimen, but, broadly and generally, there are well-known features by which the group to which any Rose belongs may be fairly well determined. Even in everyday horticulture those who are much among plants, and notably those who specialise, are able to recognise some faint trace of resemblance—what may be called a trick of physiognomy—so that among the hosts of hybrids and crosses that are now being produced, a very fair guess at probable parentage may be made. In Roses it is the leaf or the fruit, rather than the bloom, that is the more usual indication of relationship; while for definitely placing in one of the primary groups the botanist has often to be guided by some less obvious character, such as the stipule, the leaf-like attachment at the base of the leaf-stalk; observing whether it is toothed or fringed or otherwise edged, and how it is shaped and set on; noting also the form and arrangement of the style and the extremely variable form of the prickles. In the case of Roses that climb these are curved or hooked or set facing diagonally backward; some are very wide at the base, others are straight needles or even only bristles. It is a common error to speak of the thorns of a Rose; no Rose has thorns. A thorn is a hard, woody structure growing out of the wood of a branch, and it can only be severed by actual cutting; a Rose prickle is attached to the bark or outer skin only, and can easily be detached by side pressure.

To note briefly some of the more prominent of the Roses in the twelve groups, the first section (*Simplicifoliae*) has the Persian Rose (*R. persica*). It stands alone in appearance and some of its characters. It is the only Rose that has simple leaves, that is to say, a leaf of one leaflet only; a frugality that is further emphasised by there being only the faintest trace of a stipule. The bright yellow flowers have red-brown blotches at the base of the petals. Its only cognate is *R. Hardii*, a hybrid of *clinophylla* and *berberidifolia*, Roses of China and Japan, raised by Hardy, the curator of the Luxembourg gardens in Paris. This is the nearest representative of *persica* in gardens, and is just hardy in England. Like *persica*, it has bright yellow, brown-blotched flowers.

The second group (*Systylae*) has *Rosa arvensis*, the loveliest of the British Roses. It grows as a weak bush about three feet high, trailing until it meets with something it can clamber into, when its growth is increased and it is better able to display its clusters of snow-white flowers. The old garden favourites known as Ayrshire Roses have *arvensis* for one original parent, the other being supposed to be the South European *sempervirens*. The blooms were at first single, but already in the early years of the 18th century some more distinctly climbing and double forms were in cultivation in Scotland.

Rosa multiflora, a Japanese species, was first described by Plukenet in 1700. Sir Joseph Hooker says it was not known in England till 1875, though it had already been grown in France for thirteen years. The Seven Sisters Rose, formerly a favourite in gardens, is *R. multiflora*, var. *platyphylla*. Its pretty name is said to come from the variously tinted flowers in the panicle, seven different shades of pink and rose being noticeable. The type *multiflora* is an extremely vigorous rambling Rose; the yearly branches are from fifteen to twenty feet long. It is one of the best Roses for rough wild gardening. The garden Rose, Crimson Rambler, which came to England from Japan in 1878, is apparently *R. multiflora* crossed with *R. chinensis*. The origin is a mystery; it is very hardy and easy to propagate. Its brilliant effect soon gained it a wide popularity, though this has of late years been modified by the appreciation of the more refined beauty of various Roses that have been raised

from it. Other hybrids of *multiflora* have also enriched our gardens, some of a strong rambling habit and others quite dwarf; charming little garden Roses flowering in dense clusters, that are commonly known as polyantha hybrids.

Rosa moschata, the Musk Rose, is an Indian mountain plant. From its great beauty it would naturally be one of the earliest Roses known. It was described by Theophrastus of Mitylene, a contemporary of Alexander the Great. In our own Tudor times Gerard had it in his garden at Holborn in no less than three forms; Parkinson also figures it. Hakluyt, writing in 1599, says it came to England from Italy; Bacon speaks of it as giving off its scent in the air. The varieties of the Musk Rose may all be known by the central column of styles, which are more united in this than in any other of the Systylae. In an unpublished diary Sir George Watt writes thus of this beautiful wild Rose:

‘This is by far the most obvious and most characteristic Rose of the Himalaya. It climbs over the bushes by the wayside and over the small trees of the forest. It thus produces dense roundish masses, which, when in bloom, look like patches of snow. Its bright flowers are the delight of bee and bird, and it perfumes the air in a manner few people could realise who have not lived in the invigorating atmosphere of the early months of summer on the outer ranges of these mountains. The Western Himalaya, without the Musk Rose, would be without half their charm.’

Rosa ruga, a hybrid of *arvensis* and *chinensis*, is one of the most beautiful climbing Roses. It is an old favourite in gardens, having been in England since 1830. There are not many Roses that are distinctly unbeautiful, but this may certainly be said of *R. Watsoni*, a curious plant from Japan. It has small, mean, colourless flowers in rather shapeless trusses that have the appearance of being stunted or blighted; the leaves are twisted and attenuated, and their set and action have an aimless character; they also look as if some enemy had been at work upon them or as if they had been passed through boiling water.

Rosa wichuriana came to England in 1890. It is distinguished by a trailing habit and bright, glistening

foliage with Box-like leaflets. It was at once perceived that here was a species that should be the parent of useful garden Roses. Many beautiful kinds have been raised from it, and their number is always increasing. Nearly all retain the brilliant polish of the foliage. *Rosa setigera*, the Prairie Rose, that ranges through the southern and middle United States, is said by botanists to be the only American representative of the section *Systylae*.

In the third group (*Indicae*) the China Rose (*R. chinensis*) is the most typical. It was brought to this country by Sir Joseph Banks in 1789, and has ever since been one of the best loved Roses of English gardens. The French know it as Rose Bengal. The beautiful dark variety of French origin, *Cramoisie Supérieure*, should be in every garden. *Fellenberg* is another of the garden Chinas of deep colouring; it forms a good-sized bush and is always in bloom. The green Rose, a curious freak, with all the floral organs transformed into leaves, is also a China. *Chinensis var. semperflorens* has slender stems, dainty leaves, and double deep-red flowers; its whole appearance is of distinguished refinement. Another miniature China, like a dwarf copy of the type plant, is known as Miss Lawrance's Rose. It is a favourite in the Paris markets, where it is charmingly grown as a pot plant.

The wonderful Rose commonly known as Fortune's yellow is *R. chinensis pseudo-indica*. It was found by Robert Fortune when he was travelling in China for the Horticultural Society of London in 1842-1846. He thus describes his first sight of this Rose in a Mandarin's garden:

'On entering one of the gardens on a fine morning in May I was struck by a mass of yellow flowers which completely covered a distant part of the wall; the colour was not a common yellow but had something of buff in it which gave the flower a striking and uncommon appearance. I immediately ran up to the place and to my surprise and delight found that I had discovered a most beautiful new yellow climbing Rose.'

He expressed a hope that it might prove hardy in England, as it came from Northern China. A superb

picture of this wonderful flower is in 'The Genus Rosa.' Except in the most favoured parts of our islands it is scarcely a plant for the open, but it is one of the best of Roses for cold-house treatment.

A cross of *chinensis* with *moschata* resulted in the beautiful *R. noisettiana*; and from this have been obtained a limited number of garden forms, all showing something of the Musk Rose's peculiar grace and charm. They do not seed freely, but some beautiful hybrids have resulted, of which the well-known old Roses Lamarque and Aimée Vibert are examples. A later cross gave the orange-coloured William Allen Richardson. It would be well if raisers paid more attention to the Noisette class; for, though it may be more difficult to work upon than others, yet the probability of producing Roses of refined beauty is relatively greater. From Upper Burma came in 1888 the great *Rosa gigantea*, with white bloom five inches in diameter. It is not hardy in England, but is admirable in the gardens of the Riviera.

The fourth section (Banksianae) begins with the Chinese Banksian Roses. Both the double-white and double-yellow are well known, though the yellow, of a rich butter colour, is the one oftenest seen in gardens, where, when it is in soil and site that suit it well, it blooms with extreme profusion. It was first brought to Europe in 1807. The type plant has white flowers; it grows in great hanging bushes in the gorges of the Yangtse. It is curious that in cultivation there are no prickles, though it always bears prickles in a wild state. The large white Cherokee Rose (*R. laevigata*), though best known in the Southern United States, is believed not to be a native, but to have come from Japan. It can be grown in the south of England. The very beautiful Rose Anemone (*R. laevigata* + *chinensis*) was raised in Germany in 1896.

The fifth group (Bracteatae) has the remarkable Macartney Rose. It is quite unlike any other Rose, from its extremely characteristic foliage, of stiff texture, brilliantly polished and evergreen, and its large single white flowers with a mass of bright yellow anthers; the whole appearance being of singular nobility. The double-flowered kind in general cultivation is disappointing, for, though it grows vigorously—much more freely than

the type—and forms masses of healthy-looking buds, they do not open satisfactorily. Still, the foliage is so handsome that it would be worth growing for that alone.

The sixth group (Microphyllae) is represented by *R. microphylla* and its double form; a very distinct flower, with globular, extremely prickly buds and large fruits also densely armed, and crowned with the stiff deeply-toothed calyx-lobes. The flowers open wide and flat and are of a lively pink deepening to the centre. The leaves are remarkable for their many leaflets, a single leaf having sometimes as many as fifteen. Except for the better development of the curious fruit, the double-flowered form is the only one worth growing.

Group VII (Cinnamomeae) with one exception, that of the group that follows, occupies a wider geographical area than any other, though it appears neither in Britain nor in the Himalaya. It contains a large proportion of American species. *R. cinnamomia* is best known in the double form; in the older days it was frequent in gardens. It has a peculiar sweet scent supposed to be like cinnamon, though the resemblance is difficult to trace. It has small flat flowers and wide-winged stipules that are sometimes an inch across from tip to tip. *R. laxa* is a handsome species with pink or rosy flowers nearly three inches across; it is a native of Siberia and the Altai Mountains, and is not yet in cultivation in England. *R. Fendleri* is a pretty Rose of the Rocky Mountains.

R. rugosa, one of the most distinct of the Rose species, is also one of the hardiest. It ranges through northern China and Japan, Kamschatka and Siberia. It was first known in England in 1796, but it is only of comparatively late years that it has come into general cultivation. It is the least exacting of Roses, thriving in the smoky atmosphere of large towns and also on sea-shore sand-hills. It hybridises freely, imparting its strong constitution to its descendants; the remarkable potency showing in distinct traces of the rugose-reticulate leaves, even to the fourth generation. A fine hybrid, the pure white Blanc double de Coubert, is of great value in gardens, its good bushy habit and handsome deep green leaves fitting it for quite special uses in garden design. *R. calocarpa* is a beautiful hybrid of *rugosa* and *chinensis*, of

French origin. *R. Iwara*, a hybrid of *multiflora* and *rugosa*, is a white Rose of much beauty.

Rosa virginiana, a North American species, extending from Newfoundland to Pennsylvania, is more commonly known in gardens as *R. lucida*. It is an extremely useful bush for wild planting, spreading by suckers. It is best in slight shade, as the pretty, faintly scented pink bloom is apt to burn and shrivel in hot sunshine. The abundant clusters of scarlet fruit are handsome in autumn, when much of the foliage assumes a fine colouring of red and orange. The double form of *R. virginiana*, the Rose d'Amour of old gardens, known in England since 1768, is one of the most charming of small Roses. *R. humilis* is a low, spreading plant of Virginia, Eastern Tennessee and Carolina; several other American species, of which the more noticeable are *Caroliniana*, *nitida* and *foliolosa*, are mainly of botanical interest. *R. Californica* is so variable that some botanists have been inclined to make several species. *R. gymnocarpa*, of the North-western States and British Columbia, and also *R. Webbiana* have some affinity to the European *spinosissima*, while *R. granulosa* forms a link between the Cinnamomeae and the Rubiginosae.

The eighth group (Spinosissimae) has first *R. spinosissima*; the *pimpinellifolia* of Linnaeus. It is a plant of poor land, often near the sea-coast, occurring over a wide extent of Europe and temperate Asia. It has the widest range of any wild Rose and is the most northerly, as it has been found in Iceland. The popular English name Burnet Rose comes from the close resemblance of its leaves to those of the herb Burnet (*Sanguisorba*). It is the origin of the Scotch Roses or Scotch Briars so well known in gardens. It is said that they are hybrids with some double garden Roses, but, except for the colouring and doubling of the flowers, they retain all the characters of the wild plant, so that they might be supposed to be garden sports rather than intentional hybrids. Before the middle of the 19th century no less than seventy-six varieties were catalogued. Stanwell Perpetual, with larger flowers, and blooming for a longer season, is certainly a hybrid. The colour of bloom of the type-plant is a beautiful lemon-white—*Rosa altaica* resembles it exactly but is a little larger both in bloom and

bush; *ochroleuca* and *hispida* are both yellow species. *R. spinosissima myriacantha*, named the Rose of a Thousand Thorns, a native of Spain and Southern France, is densely set with prickles, as the specific name implies.

Rosa foetida, or *R. lutea* of some botanists, the yellow Austrian Briar, ranges from the Crimea through Asia Minor to Turkestan, and thence to Thibet, and has occasionally been found in Southern France and Switzerland. The colour is a fine yellow, but it has a heavy, unpleasant smell. The Copper Austrian Briar, the only Rose that has a colouring of pure scarlet, was known in England in the 16th century; it is probably a natural variation from the yellow, as flowers of both colours are occasionally found on the same plant. Its distribution is through Asia Minor, Persia and Turkestan. It is interesting to observe that the scarlet colour on the petal is an extremely thin film laid over the yellow; also that in painting there is no other way than this of getting the same kind of brilliancy. The Persian Rose, *R. persica*, which came to England in 1838, is a beautiful double yellow Briar; *R. Harrisoni*, produced in America, much resembles it but is paler in colour. *R. hemisphaerica*, formerly called the yellow Provence Rose, with large double yellow flowers, is now rare in gardens. It was a favourite of the Dutch flower-painters. *R. xanthina*, *R. Hugonis* and *R. Ecae* are nearly related yellow-flowered species, ranging from the Altai Mountains to Western China. A natural hybrid of *R. spinosissima* with white bloom, named *R. involuta*, is found in the Hebrides; a variant with pink flowers grows by the Menai Straits. Some of the sub-species are so various in character that they are difficult to distinguish, botanists classifying one group together as *Sabiniae*. *R. hibernica* connects the group *Spinossissimae* with that of *Caninae*.

Rosa pendulina, more commonly known as *R. alpina*, extends from the Pyrenees, through the Alpine chain, to Greece. It is said to have come to England in 1683. A cross with *R. chinensis* resulted in the Boursault Roses. The old Red Boursault has a rank crimson colour that is not now much in favour in gardens. The variety *Amadis* has a better red colouring, as has also *Lheritieranea*; Blush Boursault, with flowers of a pure

pinkish white deepening to a rosy middle, is one of the most charming of garden Roses. The Labrador Rose, *R. blanda*, has rather large single pink flowers. *R. pratincola*, of the North-western United States and Canada, is remarkable for being almost herbaceous; the yearly shoots rise to nearly two feet, bearing handsome red flowers in a terminal panicle.

The ninth section (Gallicanae) contains Roses of the most supreme importance. To the botanist, as botanist, one species may be as worthy as another, but this group of Roses has, within the whole space of time of which we have written record, been intimately associated with the history, poetry, painting, literature and lives of civilised nations. It may safely be said that no one group of plants has ministered so closely to human sensibility or has so greatly promoted human happiness. Joy in the beauty of Roses and thankful enjoyment of their varied sweetness has ever been one of the best and purest of human pleasures; and it is these flowers of France and Southern Europe, carefully tended and developed by patient skill, that has made them first favourites in all gardens where the best kind of beauty is sought and cherished. These were the Roses that so often appear in the pictures of the Dutch flower painters; and in more recent years it was these flowers, now old-fashioned but always adorable, that, amid all the thousands of more modern kinds, held the admiration and inspired some of the most beautiful work of Fantin-Latour, whose genius and sympathy enabled him to show on his canvases not only their intrinsic beauty and dignity, but a pathetic suggestion of their relation to human life and happiness.

Early in the 18th century the Dutch were the first raisers of hybrids. Till then garden Roses were but few, as may be seen by the limited numbers described by Gerard, Parkinson, and other early writers. It was within the first twenty years of the 19th century that the French took up rose-growing. This was, in the beginning, largely due to the influence of the Empress Josephine, in whose day an extensive collection was made in the garden of the Luxembourg by Dupont. After 1815 rose-growing went on apace in France, growers vying with each other in the production of new flowers;

and England soon followed. The names of the earliest raisers should be recorded in honour:—Vibert, Laffay, Prévost, Desportes, and Hardy in France, and, following them, Mason, Loddiges, Lee, and Kennedy in England. Between 1820 and 1830 there were as many as 2500 Roses enumerated in catalogues, the greater number being *gallicas*. The Red Rose of Lancaster could only have been a variety of *gallica*; the mixture of the two colours in *R. gallica versicolor* accounted for the name 'York and Lancaster' for this very old garden Rose, which is striped and splashed with pink and red on a white ground, though the same name is often applied to a Damask that is also parti-coloured and marked in much the same way. The Bourbon Rose is a hybrid of *chinensis* and *gallica*; it originated in a garden in the Isle of Bourbon. Its most noteworthy descendant is the well-known Souvenir de la Malmaison, a handsome pale pink Rose with a strong scent of a rather unpleasant quality.

Rosa centifolia, the Cabbage Rose, was of all others the best-loved flower of old English gardens. It is now, as ever, the sweetest-scented Rose known. Herodotus extols it as the most fragrant that he knew. It was in English gardens in the 16th century, though no record remains of its actual introduction. The Moss Rose, *R. centifolia*, var. *muscosa*, is a Cabbage Rose with a dense moss-like growth—pubescent and glandular—on the calyx and stem. This growth has a special and delicious scent, of a cordial quality which mingles with, and much enhances, the excellent sweetness of the flower. *R. pomponia* is a diminutive Cabbage Rose in a few varieties, of which the best known is De Meaux; to this the Burgundy pompons are nearly related. The Provins Rose, *R. provincialis*, is a native of Spain, Italy, and France. The names Provence and Provins for Roses of the *centifolia* and *gallica* classes have been often confused, but botanists are agreed that Provins is a variety of *R. centifolia* and Provence of *R. gallica*.

Of the Damask Rose, *R. damascena*, the origin is uncertain, but it is widely cultivated in the East. *R. damascena rubro-tincta* is an old garden favourite of strong *gallica* character. It has the two names of Hebe's Life and Reine Blanche. The origin of *Rosa alba*, another excellent old garden flower, is doubtful, but it is

supposed to be a hybrid of *canina* and *gallica*. It was the White Rose of York, a red *gallica* being the badge of Lancaster. It has been found wild as a natural hybrid. William Paul in his 'Rose Garden' accounts for fifteen varieties. It is the White Rose of English cottage gardens, where it may still, in some districts, be found in some abundance. It must always be one of the most charming and individual of garden Roses. Though some of the older varieties may be lost, we still have the white, nearly single and full double, the double pink Maiden's Blush, and the very beautiful pale pink Celestial. All the *alba* varieties may be known by the distinct character of the foliage; the whole leaf has a wide, flat shape with the blunt leaflets handsomely toothed, and a quite peculiar bluish colour.

The tenth section (*Caninae*) has the Dog Roses. At least a hundred species have been defined, but it has been found convenient to group them under certain typical forms. They range through Europe, North Africa and North-western Asia, but are absent in the Himalaya and Japan. The species of most use in gardens are *R. rubrifolia*, a plant with smooth, glaucous, red-tinted leaves, formerly regarded only as a curiosity, but now found useful for certain colour effects in gardening; and *R. macrantha*, a beautiful Rose found wild in France early in the 19th century. It has pale pink flowers three inches wide and is a valuable plant for half-wild places.

The eleventh group (*Villosae*) contains a few species that are mainly of botanical interest, but two are of some value in gardens from their handsome fruit, namely *R. Hawrana*, a Hungarian plant with large red hips densely bristled, and a nearly related species *R. pomifera*, the Apple Rose, with still larger fruits that endure far into the winter.

The twelfth and last section is *Rubiginosae*, the Sweetbriars. *R. Eglanteria*, the well-known Sweetbriar of gardens, is wild throughout Europe and extends to Persia. It is said to be one of the eight Roses known to classical authors and is the only British species that from old times has been welcomed in gardens. It is extremely long-lived. An old Sweetbriar cut down in Touraine near the middle of the last century showed in the stem

section a hundred and twenty annual rings. In old English still-rooms, where the women of the better families made many good things, the young shoots were candied.

It remained for an amateur, the late Lord Penzance, to recognise the possibilities of the Sweetbriar in hybridisation. After an arduous life of legal toil he devoted the years of his retirement to the raising of hybrid Roses; specialising in Sweetbriar. The kinds he produced, all more vigorous than the type, are a lasting benefit to gardens. In the work of professional Rose-growers the last decade has seen astonishing progress; those of France, England, Germany and America taking part in an international contest of skill and judgment that is yearly enriching the already bewildering store of good things that awaits the choice of those who desire the best and most beautiful in their gardens.

A careful study of 'The Genus Rosa' reveals not only its value to science in its development of clear issues from a mass of indefinite and sometimes conflicting evidence, and in the showing of Rose species, hitherto unfigured and barely known but now perfectly portrayed and exactly described, but proves its further and perhaps wider significance to ordinary students of Rose nature and Rose capability. The combination of delineation and scientific description, with the addition of the wealth of matter of supreme interest other than purely botanical, will serve as a further incentive to well-considered hybridisation as well as to a clearer understanding of the relationships of the wild Roses and of the garden kinds that have been derived from them. The book in its published form consists of a number of paper-covered parts in two portfolios, convenient for access and study. Its perfect production, both of page and picture, will be a joy to the bibliophile.

GERTRUDE JEKYLL.