

BULLETIN OF PEONY NEWS

No. 11

IRIS NUMBER

Dedicated to the American Iris Society

Edited by the Secretary of the Society

A. P. Saunders, Clinton, N. Y.



AND EXPERIMENT STATION
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OFFICERS OF THE AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY

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CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Society is open to both professional and amateur growers. Nomination is not necessary for those desiring admission, but a list of applicants for membership is presented to the Society at its annual meeting and the names are there voted on.

Those who make application for membership at any time receive at once the publications of the Society, so far as they are available.

The dues are \$3.00 a year, but applicants for membership are required to accompany their application, which should be

sent to the Treasurer, by the payment of \$5.00, of which \$2.00 is an initiation fee and \$3.00 a payment for their first year's dues. When the application is made before January of any year, the \$3.00 is considered as applying to the current year—June to June—but when the date of application is later than January first the payment is applied to the following year—June to June. Thus anyone making application in May and paying \$5.00 would be clear of dues until after the annual meeting the next year.

The publications of the Society include the following:

- 1907 A Peony Checklist
(in co-operation with Cornell University)
- 1908 Descriptive Bulletin No. 259
(with Cornell University; out of print)
- 1909 Proceedings of the American Peony Society
for the Years 1903 - 1908 (out of print)
- 1910 Descriptive Bulletin No. 278 (with Cornell University)
- 1911 Descriptive Bulletin No. 306 (with Cornell University)
- 1914 Proceedings of the American Peony Society
for the Years 1909 - 1913
- 1915 Bulletin of Peony News, No. 1 (out of print)
- 1916 Bulletin of Peony News, Nos. 2 and 3
- 1917 Bulletin of Peony News, Nos. 4 and 5
- 1918 Bulletin of Peony News, Nos. 6 and 7
- 1919 Bulletin of Peony News, Nos. 8 and 9
- 1920 Bulletin of Peony News, No. 10 (Hollis Number)

It is planned for the future to issue four News Bulletins a year. These contain the proceedings of the Society and articles on different phases of peony culture.

To the American Iris Society

On January 29th, 1920, the American Iris Society was founded. It aims to straighten out the nomenclature, to bring the flower into wider appreciation by the public, to encourage the breeding of new and finer sorts, and in general to do for the iris what the Peony Society has been striving to do for the peony.

There should therefore be only the most cordial feelings of friendship between the two societies. For no jealous rivalry exists between the peony and the iris—the twin glories of June. The iris may have her moments of regret in contemplating the opulence of bloom and the enduring substance of petal in her vivid companion; the peony may wish it could emulate the delicate loveliness of form which it sees in the iris, or its subtle harmonies of blue and mauve; but each aids the other in gracing that most radiant season.

So we wish only good to the Iris Society,—success, long life, and much solid achievement.

Our good wishes are perhaps kindled to a warmer glow by the thought that the Iris Society is indeed our *alter ego*. The membership lists of the two societies reveal a large identity of names. So we of the Peony Society may very naturally entertain friendly feelings towards ourselves as members of the Iris Society.

Be that as it may, this number of the Peony Bulletin is dedicated to the sister organization with congratulations on their most auspicious beginning, and with hearty good will for the future.

OFFICERS* OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

President

JOHN C. WISTER . Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa.

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New York City

*Note—Elected to serve until Annual Meeting June, 1920,
nominated for the year 1920-21.

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone with an interest in Irises is eligible to membership in The American Iris Society, which was organized on January 29, 1920, and already has members in almost every part of this country and Canada, members who keep in touch through the pages of *The Flower Grower*. The annual dues are \$3.00 and whether you are a mere beginner or a specialist, a breeder or a commercial grower you will find some among us with kindred interests. Timely notes of general appeal are published, but behind the scenes there is a brisk correspondence on questions of classification, of genetics, of history and botany. Culture is the subject of a special bulletin for June issue, official data cards for descriptions are now ready, and I shall make no rash promises for the future. Seven exhibitions are scheduled for this spring, a big trial ground is to be started at the New York Botanical Garden and lesser plantings for study or show are planned for Washington, St. Louis and probably San Francisco and St. Paul. Further developments in this line perhaps in your own city, will depend wholly upon the support of our members.

To promote the culture and knowledge of Irises is a brief statement of our aims; we plan to concentrate the stray bits of information and place them at your disposal. Such a special study whether it be of peonies or irises, roses or what you will, gives a background that adds greatly to the joy of a garden and may make the garden and its associations of winter interest. The cordial spirit which Mr. Wister met in England and France and the welcome given us in these pages by the American Peony Society are both but proofs of how strong a bond is a garden.

Robert S. Sturtevant, Secretary

VISITS TO EUROPEAN IRIS GARDENS

By John C. Wister

Introduction

It was my good fortune last spring to be able to secure my discharge from the Army in France and to travel for five weeks through France and England visiting gardens and nurseries. An account of my visits to Dessert and Lemaigne to see Tree Peonies has already been given in an earlier issue of this bulletin, but I timed my trip especially to see Irises, and I followed their blooming season north, beginning with the Mediterranean coast on May 19th and seeing my last irises at Kew on June 19th, the day before I sailed for home.

In the following papers I have described in detail my visits to the various gardens and the chief varieties seen, but I should like to acknowledge here the very great kindness with which I was met by everyone and to extend my thanks for all the hospitality that was offered to me.

My trip coming just at the time of the adoption of Quarantine 37 in this country made me fear that I might not be received with favor by some nurserymen, but whatever resentment they may have felt against the injustice of this law their attitude towards me was always cordial and polite. I came in this time to know most of Europe's greatest Iris growers, and must express here as I have expressed so often in speaking to my friends, my great admiration for their courage in continuing their garden work throughout the trying times of the war. It is true that their places are not in good condition, a fact for which they one and all apologized, but when one considers what their home countries have gone through, there is certainly no occasion to apologize for weedy gardens, but rather they are entitled to step forward with pride and point out that they have kept their

plants alive through the most trying period of the world's history, and that they are now ready to go forward with their work.

Some of my articles have already appeared in "The Garden" (London) and are reprinted here by the courtesy of its editor, Mr. H. C. Cowley. I hope that the publication of them by the Peony Society will bring them before our new circle of readers, who may learn to appreciate as I do, the great debt that American gardeners owe to the plant breeders of Europe. For no matter what we may say of our own Iris and Peony breeders in this country — and we are justly proud of them — we must remember that practically all the pioneer work with these two flowers was done by Europeans. Even today their best varieties remain our best varieties; and although as gardeners we should encourage in every way our American breeders, we should not look forward to becoming independent of the very skilful men in Europe who have done so much for us in the past.

Visit to M. F. Denis

Balaruc-les-Bains, Herault, France

May 19 - 20, 1919

Leaving Paris at 8:00 p. m. Sunday, May 18th, I changed cars at Avignon at 8:00 Monday morning, and proceeded via Nimes and Montpellier to Cette, arriving at 11:40. There I was met by M. Denis's automobile and driven to his house in Balaruc-les-Bains about six miles distance. His place is near the top of a hill overlooking the bay, the city of Cette and the mountain Cevennes, and the Mediterranean beyond. The view is wonderful though much broken up by trees, of which M. Denis is very fond; indeed he prefers to sacrifice his view rather than his trees.

M. Denis's place is small, probably not more than four or five acres in all, and is cut into many small gardens at different levels. There is one small greenhouse devoted to orchids, and there are many orchids being grown in the gardens and in the grass, also many roses and other flowers.

I found a collection of fifty or one hundred of the standard European Irises—varieties such as Darius, Dr. Bernice, Gracchus, Gagus, Her Majesty, Honorabilis, Miss Maggie, Mrs. H. Darwin, Mrs. Neubronner and many others. They were all small, much smaller than usually seen in America, probably on account of the hard gravelly soil in which they are grown, and lack of care during the war. These older varieties have been kept by M. Denis because he has used them for breeding, and likes to have them for comparison.

More recent varieties were :

Iris King, Ed. Michel, La Neige, Alcazar, Eldorado, Miss Willmott, Rhein Nixe, Archeveque, Goliath, Prosper Laugier. These were slightly larger, but with the exception of Alcazar, still below medium size.

Among these stood the variety Ambassadeur, a new seedling of Vilmorin's, not yet in commerce. It is by far the finest Iris in M. Denis's garden, and as fine an Iris as I have ever seen. The flower is large, of heavy substance and stands stiffly on a strong stem. The color is exceedingly rich, the standards smoky purplish bronze, the falls rich velvety maroon. The whole is like a Dr. Bernice with purple in it, or a very, very deep Eldorado, but more bluish.

There were several Iris species in bloom. Ricardi was the most interesting because of its use by M. Denis in breeding. It is a large flower of the Trojana type to which it must be closely related. The falls are narrow and not of good substance, and as a whole it does not deserve a place in the garden. Biliotti is a much smaller flower of fine coloring; and a wild type of Pallida collected by Sir Michael Foster at Como was especially noted for its fine coloring.

M. Denis's seedlings may be roughly divided into two general classes: first, those which owe their size to Iris Ricardi, and second, those which superficially show no trace of the species Ricardi.

First Group.

In this group are found all the important seedlings of M. Denis. By crossing he has been able to combine the large size of Ricardi with the good form and different col-

ors of our common garden Irises. The finest of these are probably :

- xxxxx** Mlle. Schwartz (Pal.) Very close to Caterina with a little pink in it, larger, not quite so tall, but a very free bloomer, which Caterina is not. Massed it makes a wonderful display.
- xxxx** Mme. Claude Monet (Ger.) (Ric. x Kochii). An enormous flower, unfortunately not of the best form; of rich Kochii color.
- xxx** Clement Desormes (Sq.) (Ric. x Her Majesty). A larger, better, and more purplish Her Majesty.
- xxx** Mme. Durande (Sq.) (Ric. x Var.) A much paler and much larger Eldorado.
- xxx** M. Cornault (Sq.) (Ric. x Amas). A magnificent deep-colored variety, but surpassed by Ambassadeur.
- xxx** Saul (Sq.) A deeper larger Iris King; late.
- xxx** Belcolor (Var.) Pale yellowish white.
- xx** M. Trinidad (Pal.) A Caterina type.
- xx** Leverrier (Sq.) S. pinkish. F. purplish. 3½ inches.
- xx** Ricardi Blanche (Am.) Fine white.
- xx** Dalila (Sq.) A very popular variety but of a color that I personally do not care for.
- x** M. Brun (Sq.) The largest of all, but a very weak stem. Her Majesty type.
- x** M. Chabert (Sq.) (Ric. x Sq.) Prosper Laugier type.
- x** Jennie (Pal.) (Ric. x Junonia). Dark blue.
- x** Perrone (Pal.) (Ric. x Junonia). Pale blue.

M. Denis's latest white seedling, Miss Cavell, had finished blooming; he regards it as his best white.

Second Group.

Seedlings not showing parentage of Iris Ricardi. This group includes a number of medium or small flowered Irises which have been selected and named on account of fine and distinct color, good form, and freedom of bloom.

Of the many forms the following were noted :

- xxx** Our King (Pal.) Deep pink.

- xx Romeo (Var.) S. lemon. F. purple.
- x Troost (Pal.) Purple pink. A dark Her Majesty.
- x M. Aymard (Pal.) Still deeper.
- xxx M. Degrully (Sq.) Red Cloud type.
- x M. Menetrier (Sq.) S. yellow. F. purplish.
- xxx Mme. Boulet (Pli.) S. yellow. F. gray. Tall.
- xx Mme. Denis (Pli.) A dark Mary Garden.
- xxx Mme. Masse (Pli.) Mary Garden type.
- x Mme. Bazes (Pli.) Mary Garden type.
- xx Vieil Or. (Sq.) (Old Gold). Smoky golden. F. purplish.
- xx M. Austin (Sq.) Small, fine color.
- xxx M. Boyer (Sq.) Wine red.
- xx Deuil de Valery Mayet (Sq.) Prosper Laugier coloring.
- x Julia Grisi (Neg.) Small, good form.
- x Gernez (Neg.) Small, good form.
- x Rene Denis (Sq.) Small, fine color.
- x Corbeau (Sq.) Small, fine color.

It will be noted that most of the above are of Squalens coloring, the smoky lilac and purplish bronze shades evidently being favorite colors with M. Denis. They are at their best when viewed singly at twilight when the delicate shades are best brought out, and they are consequently not as well suited to ordinary garden planting as the blue Pallidas and yellow Variegatas which give bright masses of color.

It should also be noted that the varieties containing Iris Ricardi blood are best adapted to a hot dry climate, and they have not as yet been sufficiently tested in the North. Several varieties including the beautiful Mme. Claude Monet have proved unsatisfactory to growers near Paris, but as several other varieties (including Dalila, Troost, Mlle. Schwartz) have proved satisfactory near Paris and also in England, it is evident that no general rule can be drawn at present, but that each individual variety must be tested separately.

M. Denis's enthusiasm for Irises and his success in Iris breeding should be an inspiration to all gardeners and Iris lovers, and when his varieties become better known, I am cer-

tain they will be much appreciated for their soft and curious colorings and their large size. Let us hope that his growing interest in orchids will not lead him to give up Iris breeding, but rather that he will find time for both, and continue to give us new Iris seedlings from year to year.

Visit to Millet et Fils

Bourg-la-Reine, Seine, France

May 28, 1919

Leaving Paris by the Porte d'Orleans it is only about ten minutes by tram to Bourg-la-Reine.

I found M. Millet in his exhibition garden behind his house, where large bunches of *Hemerocallis* were being cut for the Paris market. Here I saw also a new seedling Oriental Poppy, the color of Mahony, but the largest and tallest poppy I have ever seen.

M. Millet's main Iris collection is in a field a half mile or so from his house. Here he has a large collection of the standard named varieties, which are well-known in America. He has also a collection of M. Denis's Ricardi seedlings. Many of these were not so impressive as when I saw them in their home in the south of France, and are evidently better suited to hot dry climates than to the cool and wet climate of Paris.

M. Millet was in the French Army the early part of the war and was severely wounded; during his long absence his plants of course, suffered, for his father, the founder of the business, was too old and feeble for active work. While all of his plants suffered during his absence, he tells me that the mortality of the Iris Ricardi seedlings was especially high, and he complains also that these seedlings while of large size are not with him free bloomers. He brings the same complaint against the beautiful new introductions of Vilmorin (which I shall describe later) which contain a great deal of *Amas* (*Macrantha*) blood, from which they inherit their size, but also, unfortunately, their sparseness of bloom. The observation that large size is often obtained at the expense of

quantity of flowers is, of course, not new, but it was brought to my attention in the Millet Iris fields more strongly than ever before.

As I have said, the Denis Irises with few exceptions were not conspicuous in their bloom, though what flowers there were of Mlle. Schwartz and others were of fine size and coloring. But I had come especially to see M. Millet's seedlings. He had sent me last year some buds by mail which opened fairly well in water in our barracks; though with one exception I had not been greatly impressed by them. This only shows again the utter impossibility of judging a variety from a few cut blooms.

The one variety that I did greatly admire last year was Souv. de Mme. Gaudichau (Pres. Morel x Pal. Dal.) After seeing it growing I can unhesitatingly state that it is not only M. Millet's greatest variety but that it is one of the richest in coloring of all Irises, and should take its place among our most valuable garden varieties. The flowers are a very deep rich velvety purple, of very large size; and it is a free bloomer and makes a stunning garden effect.

Following this variety are several other Irises, none of which have especially large flowers, but which are of fine and distinct color, of good form, and above all are exceptionally valuable as garden plants on account of their freedom of bloom; they are:

- xxx Col. Candelot. An exceptionally rich Squalens with S. of a smoky copper, F. crimson.
- xxx Khamsin. A Squalens with S. yellow. F. purplish.
- xxx Armenien. A fine Squalens with S. smoky chamois. F. purple.
- xxx Tunisie. Squalens. S. smoky, F. purplish.
- xxx Delicatissima. (Pal. Dal. x Qn. of May). A Pallida with a pinkish tinge.
- xxx Igouf. (Sq.)
- xxx Mady Carriere. (Pal.)

Other good varieties but hardly equal to the above are :

Ivanhoe (Neg. x Pal.) Violet blue, with a tinge of copper in it.

- xx Souv. de Delagrange. A small flower with the rich coloring of Vilmorin's Ambassadeur.
- xx Arlequin (Sq.) S. coppery, F. deep brown like Prosper Laugier, but S. more golden, and beard gold.
- xx Corrida (Pal.) Pale blue, very free.
 - x M. Hautefeuille.
 - x Lionel Millet.
 - x Savgnian.
 - x Herocles.
 - x Mme. de Sevigne. S. purplish, F. white with purple.

These are but a few that I have noted out of many. The Millet seedlings have been selected more for freedom of bloom than for exceptional size, but the flowers are by no means small.

I believe that all the above and possibly others are well worthy of a place in a collection of any size. Souv. de Mme. Gaudichau deserves a place in any collection no matter how small.

Besides Iris I saw a number of Oriental Poppy varieties, Hemerocallis, Tree Peonies, and a few early herbaceous plants. Violets, in which M. Millet specializes, were out of bloom. His exhibition garden behind his house is very long and narrow with a broad walk bordered with box bush down the centre. On each side of the walk are big clumps of peonies at intervals. When M. Millet is able again to get the skilled labor that he needs, this will be a wonderfully beautiful and interesting garden to visit. It is beautiful even now after four and a half years of war.

Visit to Vilmorin, Andrieux & Cie.

Verrieres, France

May 28, 1919

In the afternoon I went from Bourg-la-Reine with M. and Mme. Millet by train to Verrieres five or ten miles distant. After a hot walk of half an hour we reached the office of the Vilmorin Nurseries and Seed Farms. Here M. Mottet, who has charge of all the plant growing, greeted us and conducted us to the Iris Fields. Our way led through a beautiful rock garden on the grounds of one of the members of the Vilmorin family, where we saw many Alpines in bloom, and also a fine specimen of the new *Deutzia Vilmorinae*—a most gorgeous shrub; also a beautiful hawthorn with a Paul's Carmine Pillar rose covering the top of it.

There are two Iris collections, of three plants to a variety, one arranged according to sections, *Pallida*, *Variegata*, *Squalens*, etc., the other arranged by color. Besides this there are several Iris fields, each of an acre or more in extent. In the variety collections the number of varieties is very large, including nearly all forms we know in America, and also many very old varieties whose names I did not know. In the big Iris fields, the number of varieties was not large, but was confined mostly to Vilmorin introductions new or old.

xxxx Eldorado.

xxx Alcazar.

xxx Archeveque.

xxx Isoline.

xxx Oriflamme.

xxx Prosper Laugier (Verdier).

xxx Parc de Neuilly (Pal.) Purple self.

Among recent introductions I noticed the following with very large flowers:

xxx Parisiana. Deep violet of Mary Garden type.

xxx Ambigu (Sq.) Reddish effect. Better and more purplish than Prosper Laugier. More reddish than Opera.

- xxx Opera (Sq.) Purplish effect. But more reddish than Alcazar though not brownish like T. Medrano.
- xxx Dejaset (Dwf. Squalens). S. smoky, F. purplish. A harmonious soft coloring, not a contrast of color as in Mme. Blanche Pion.
- xxx Veloute (Neg.) Archeveque type.
- xx Cherubin (Am.) Light pink, Wyomissing type. Color washy.

These are all sterling novelties with the possible exception of the last which may be no improvement on Wyomissing. They are all large flowered and most of them make a good massed effect, though as stated above they are not as free as the smaller Millet varieties. The form of Amas is a little too much in evidence to suit my personal taste, as I prefer falls held more horizontally. Vilmorin has good stocks of these and they are offered at fair prices. I do not know what stocks of them we have in America, but I hope enough so they can soon be offered in quantity.

I shall next list a number of magnificent seedlings which are not yet in commerce, but a few of which will probably be introduced in 1920 and a few more year by year. Unfortunately our ridiculous and unjust Plant Quarantine law will probably make it hard for us to get these varieties into the United States in sufficient quantities for them to become widely known in our gardens in the next decade.

The flowers of all these are very large—in some cases, enormous; the form usually very good, and plant good. Let us admit at once that they are not (to judge from the few specimens seen) as free bloomers as we should like. They make up for this in size.

- xxxxx Magnifica (Pal.) The largest Iris I have ever seen. Flower measures 6 inches high. S. light purple on white, very broad. F. very long, deep mauve purple. It lacks the blue, but is lighter than Alcazar. Has the color of Nuee d'Orange but without its smokiness.
- xxxx Drapeau (Sq.) S. lavender white, F. purplish.

- xxxx Ballerine (Amas type). Lacks the purple mauve note of Magnifica.
- xxxx Allies (Sq.) Reddish bronze.
- xxx Artilleur.
- xxx Dragon (Sq.) Eldorado type.
- xxx Cluny. A very floriferous Pallida.
- xxx T. Medrano. A unique deep brown Squalens with no purple in it.
- xxx Moliere. A smaller Magnifica.

Ambassadeur was not yet in bloom. I had marked it at M. Denis's garden. I saw it again when Vilmorin exhibited it at the Paris Flower Show June 5th (which shows what a late variety it is) and again marked it xxxxx.

The next list gives varieties that I just didn't place with the above because in some cases I saw only one flower, and I wanted to rate the blooms conservatively.

- Saphi. Neglecta type.
- Turco. A small Pallida with lavender pink.
- Trianon. A small flower, fine color.
- Moncey. A deep flower like Perfection or Othello.
- Zouave. Mary Garden type.
- T. Grevin. Lighter than Opera, more purple, lacking the maroon of Opera.
- Diane. Amas type.
- Erebe. Synonym of Kochii.

I have named a sufficient number to give an inkling of what treasures the Vilmorins are going to introduce during the next five or ten years, so that Iris lovers may be on the look-out for them.

Vilmorin, Andrieux & Cie. are one of the oldest and greatest seed growers and merchants of the world. I will not attempt to guess how many hundreds or thousands of acres they cultivate or how many thousands of men and women they employ. The Nurseries I visited reminded me of Dreer's Riverton Nurseries on an enormous scale, though there is very little glass. Perhaps the impression was more due to the

absolute order and cleanliness of the place—I cannot say more than to say it is as well kept as Dreer's. Perhaps the late Mr. William Dreer learnt this at Verrieres for he was sent abroad when a young man to serve a short apprenticeship with the Vilmorins.

Thanks to M. Millet and M. Mottet I spent a most happy and instructive day, and at least caught a glimpse of what France is doing to improve the Iris. This glimpse is sufficient to show me that the English and our new American breeders will have a high standard to live up to.

Visit to R. W. Wallace & Company

Colchester, England

June 6 and 14, 1919

Leaving London at 3:15 I arrived at Colchester at 4:30 and meeting Mr. Wallace, spent four hours among the Irises with him.

The Wallace collection is very large. It contains the best of the old varieties in quantity, and all the newer introductions of Denis, Millet, Vilmorin and Farr, and thus gives a very comprehensive survey of practically all the varieties now in commerce. Here also are the best of Sir Michael Foster's seedlings, of Mr. Yeld's seedlings, and finally, the latest novelties of Sir Arthur Hort, and of Mr. A. J. Bliss.

It was instructive to see these newer sorts growing side by side with the older ones and it served to show again how very fast Irises have been improved of late years. When a sufficient stock of the new varieties has been propagated, the older varieties will be entirely driven from our gardens.

Of the older varieties the following were seen in fine form: Albert Victor, Amas, Aurea, Cengialti and C. Loppio, Cordelia, Darius, Flavescens, Gracchus, Her Majesty, Innocenza, Jacquinianna, Maori King, Nationale, Nuee d'Orange, Pal. Dalmatica, Perfection, Thorbecke, Victorine. They will endure longer than most of our older varieties, but many of them are already outclassed, and it is only a matter of a short time before the others will be.

Of more recent introduction the following were noted :
Of Denis, Mlle. Schwartz, Dalila, Troost, and M. Aymarde (Our King is better than either of these), M. Boyer, very distinct in color, Deuil de Valery Mayet, and (June 14th) Mme. Durande. Of Millet, Souv. de Mme. Gaudichau, Armenien, Corrida, Ivanhoe. Of Vilmorin, Alcazar, Archeveque, Cherubin (very washy in color), Ed. Michel, Eldorado, Isoline, La Neige, Monsignor, Parisiana, Prosper Laugier. Of Cayeux and Le Clerc, Eugene Bonvallet (very ordinary), Mme. Blanche Pion, Ma Mie, Petit Vitry. Of Farr, Chester Hunt (poor), Hiawatha, Mount Penn, Montezuma, Windham, Wyomissing. Of Goos and Koenemann, Gagus, Iris King, Rhein Nixe.

Of still more recent introduction are the following of Sir Michael Foster :

Barbara, Caterina, Crusader, Kashmir White, Miss Willmott (La Neige is better than either), Shelford Chieftain. Lady Foster was unfortunately not flowering, the plants having been too much cut up owing to the big demand.

Of Mr. Yeld, Dawn, Asia (June 14th) a very tall, large Squalens. Lord of June was not in flower.

Of Sir Arthur Hort, Ann Page, Volumnia, Hermione, Miranda, Queen Elinor, Elizabeth, and Julia. The first three are Trojana types with enormous flowers. The others are smaller Pallidas, of good form, and very free.

The above varieties cover nearly the entire field of Bearded Iris culture (with the exception of the new American seedlings of Miss Sturtevant, which have not yet reached England.) It will be noted, however, that most of the above raisers have worked in rather narrow lines—the French, for instance, have given us mostly Squalens varieties ; Denis and Vilmorin in working for extreme size of flower have produced plants tending to the shy side in flowering ; Millet in giving us extreme freedom of bloom has not given great size ; Goos and Koenemann, with the exception of the few varieties listed above, have given us very crude coloring ;

Farr's Iris (as a whole) lack size; Sir Michael Foster and Sir Arthur Hort have given us mostly large Trojanas and small Cengialtis.

In considering this the work of the next breeder, Mr. A. J. Bliss, becomes the more remarkable. He has given us splendid new seedlings in every section of the late Tall Bearded Iris — Pallida, Variegata, Amoena, Plicata, Neglecta and Squalens. While not reaching in most cases the extreme size of flower of some of Vilmorin's largest seedlings, he has given us in all cases large flowers, held well up, of extreme freedom, and of clear and distinct coloring.

The finest of the Bliss seedlings — Dominion — is already famous; indeed its fame has far outrun the distribution of the plant itself, for its high price has so far put a check upon its wide dissemination. I had heard it so much praised that I feared a disillusionment when I should see the plant itself. But when I came upon it in Mr. Wallace's collection I found that all that had been said of it still failed to do complete justice to the beauty of the flower. It is spoken of as a glorified Black Prince. But this is not enough. Its color, deeper, richer, and more velvety than that of Black Prince, its heavy substance, and its fine form, quite distinct from that of any other Iris, place it in a class all by itself. As to the habit of the plant, it is not over tall, and the flower is not over large; the stem is strong and very rigid; indeed the one defect of the plant is that it is somewhat lacking in grace on account of its rigidity of stature. To meet the great demand for roots, Mr. Wallace has been obliged to divide his stock as much as possible, so that there were not very many plants in bloom at the time of my visit.

There are a number of Bliss seedlings in the Pallida section. Of the violet purple selfs Benbow is very large and free and easily the best thing in its color. Rodney is somewhat lighter, while Mrs. Tinley is but a shade darker than Pallida Dalmatica, both being very free, and of branching habit. Drake is almost a counterpart of Pallida Dalmatica, but is earlier and much freer. E. H. Jenkins, and Morwell are much like Caterina but very free blooming. Tartarin

and Bluebird are both bi-colors of the Amas type. The flower of the former is really too big and flops in the wind through lack of substance. Tom-Tit is a violet purple Cengialti seedling, small, dwarf, and free.

Of the pink Pallidas, Roseway is a much improved Queen of May. Margaret Moor and Phyllis Bliss are both of the Mrs. Alan Grey type, but both distinct improvements over that variety. Gules is a much redder flower and might almost be placed under Squalens.

In the Variegata Section, Knysna has standards of golden yellow and falls of velvety red brown. It surpasses all our standard varieties for garden effect. It is taller than most Variegatas, and much brighter than any of the tall Variegatas, having none of the dull tones found in Iris King. Marshmallow is an even finer flower individually, having a yellow edge in the fall. It is much like Maori King but the flowers are held high, thus remedying Maori King's greatest fault.

In the Amoena Section, Tristram is an improved Thorbeck, taller and larger; and there are several other as yet, unnamed forms in this section.

In the Plicata Section, Camelot surpasses Mme. Chereau and Ma Mie. It is extra tall, sometimes four feet high, and very free. Dimity is a distinct type with the color delicately suffused throughout the flower, instead of having distinct veinings. It is of a peculiar crinkled substance. Francina is described as a "red edged" plicata. Hilda is of Mme. Chereau type but of better form.

In the Neglecta Section, Sweet Lavender with standards of French grey lavender and falls of rosy lavender is unlike anything we have. On many stems four flowers were open at once. Azure gives the same color contrast that is seen in Perfection, but the flower is much bluer as a whole. Clematis — a flower of the peculiar form of the double Japanese Iris — is to me more curious than beautiful.

In the Squalens Section, Cretonne is entirely distinct, of reddish purple wine color, this color predominating not only in the flower, but also in the spathes, and at the base of the

plant. Dora Longden, Dusky Maid, and Mrs. Cowley are all of rosy *Squalens* type, of fine form and very free.

It will be noted at once that these seedlings cover a very great range of color. The most remarkable thing about them is the very high standard which Mr. Bliss has set, for practically all the above are distinct advances on our existing forms.

This completes the tall bearded Irises seen at Colchester. An interesting comparison with them was a collected type of the species *Variegata* from Hungary which was not more than six inches in height, and has very small flowers. Other interesting types seen were the *Oncocyclus* x *Pogoniris* crosses of Sir Michael Foster, of which Lady Lilford, Nazirin, and Parvar were in bloom. Mr. Wallace says they increase readily with him, thinks that their lack of vigor in America may be due to soil rather than to climate, and suggests treating with heavy dressing of super-phosphate of lime.

In the beardless sections, *Chrysographes*, *Delavayi*, *Fulvala* and *Orientalis Gigantea* (syn. *Ochroleuca*) were in bloom, and also a fine mass of the Californian *Bracteata*.

Among other plants, *Eremurus* were just going out of bloom, as were many species of Alpines, of which many species and varieties are grown in pots and frames.

Considering the great shortage of labor, the nurseries as a whole were in excellent condition.

Visit to Mr. A. J. Bliss **Morwellham, Tavistock, Devon**

June 7 - 9, 1919

Mr. R. W. Wallace and I left London Saturday, June 4th at 10:50 on the L. & S. W. Railway, and reached Tavistock, which lies west of Exeter, at 4:30. From here we drove by automobile through the beautiful hilly Devon country five miles to the little deserted village of Morwellham on the banks of the Tamar River. Here Mr. Bliss lives, along with his flowers and his books, in the old "Ship Inn." He welcomed

us most cordially, and insisted upon our having tea at once. Then he and his brother who was visiting him for a few weeks, conducted us about 200 yards to the little allotment which is his garden. It was a long walk for Mr. Bliss as he had sprained his ankle a few weeks before and it was still very painful.

The allotment covers a bit of ground hardly more than 100 x 100 feet. A small portion is given up to narcissus and gladiolus, and all the rest to iris. Mr. Bliss has but few named varieties of these. In fact he has retained only those which are useful for breeding or for reference in connection with past crosses. Among the first of them were one or two each of: Amas, Pallida Dalmatica, Trojana Superba, Assau-rez, Cengialti, Maori King, Flavescens, Mrs. H. Darwin, Mme. Chereau, Thorbecke, Cordelia, Perfection and Jacquiniana. The rest of the plot contained only seedlings of Mr. Bliss', usually only one of each variety, planted sometimes according to year of crossing and sometimes according to number of cross, but never arranged for color effect, so that the whole presented a very confused jumble to a stranger, and made it difficult to compare varieties.

I desired, of course, to see those varieties I had already seen at Colchester so as to get them a little more thoroughly in my mind. The plants were all full of bloom, but owing to the fact that they had not been divided for years and were very crowded, the flowers were not as large as at Colchester. They were, however, sufficiently large to show how great was their advance over the old varieties.

Next we saw a lot of numbered seedlings of earlier or contemporary crossings which were not considered good enough to name (though many were better than any named variety in general commerce) but which were kept for some certain point which might prove valuable in breeding—a particularly good stem, fine form, or unique color. There must have been several hundreds of these seedlings mixed in with all the other plants, and they were very confusing.

Mr. Bliss then led us on to some of his best things, some already named, but most still under number. I will enumerate these by sections.

Pallida Section :

Lancelot. A self reddish violet.

Tamar. Darker Her Majesty.

Rosalind. Larger Mrs. Alan Grey.

Grenville. Bluer Albert Victor.

F. 103. Improved Mrs. Alan Grey.

G. 89 (15). Believed by Mr. Bliss to be his best Pallida, even better than Rodney or Drake.

E. 228 (1).

G. 84 - 87 (15). A larger Morwell but not as good.

Variegata Section :

Glitter. An improved Abou Hassan.

R. 194 (T) 13. Of Marshmallow type with reddish brown falls.

G. 187 (4). Iris King without the margin in the falls, and very free.

G. 188 (15). Iris King type with broad margin on the falls.

G. 189 (5). Rich butter yellow standards.

R. 153 (15). Very distinct and unique coloring. Minnehaha the closest comparison.

Amoena Section :

Samite. A pure cream white self.

Berenice. Pure white.

G. 189 (G) (10). A greatly improved Rhein Nixe.

Plicata Section :

About 40 seedlings of R. 161 covered the entire range of Plicata form and coloring, surpassing all our older named varieties. It is very difficult to choose between them. My own choice was for numbers 10, 40, and 68. Mr. Wallace preferred others and Mr. Bliss still others. I understand Mr. Bliss will

test them further, and after further judging will send a small number to Colchester for further trial before naming.

Neglecta Section :

Dorman. A very free red-purple bi-color.

Du Guesclin. A bluer Monsignor.

Titan. Of Dominion race.

R. 115 (1). Of Dominion race, taller and redder.

R. 123 (11). Of Dominion race with deeper standards.

R. 118 (b) (2). Of Dominion race, taller and more graceful but flower is not as perfect.

Squalens Section :

R. 115 (2). Dominion race, larger Gules.

R. 149 (2). Dominion race. Larger flower, but lacks the substance and richness of Dominion.

R. 198 (z) 2. Improved Prosper Laugier.

R. 147 (7). A small but very red Squalens.

These I have noted above are exceedingly fine things, but it does not follow at all that they are the very best which were seen. It is very difficult in three days to mentally digest such a lot of new seedlings and to judge them intelligently. I have tried to put down those which impressed me the most. Mr. Bliss himself rates others higher.

I noted also several varieties as signposts of what the future might bring. One of these was a Plicata with pale yellowish ground, probably not good enough for a garden plant but, as Mr. Bliss likes to say, "a valuable ancestor." Another distinct break was a Plicata that flowered on May 19th, a week or more before the first Pallidas and it was long finished blooming before we arrived. Still another was a Squalens which opened its first flowers June 9th. It would seem that these two might lead us to earlier and later varieties in the future. Mr. Bliss's greatest ambition is to give us a crimson iris and a whole race of Dominions of different colors, but he holds out little hope for the present. He says that after twenty years he has only got a few shades nearer

to crimson than where he started with Assaurez, and Dominion is unfortunately proving a very shy seeder, which makes progress slow. He is also working for a large yellow Pallida and a large yellow self Variegata the color of Aurea.

The most noticeable thing about Mr. Bliss is his extreme thoughtfulness and care in which he plans out his crosses beforehand, how he plans for years ahead to create a certain type of flower and how he keeps records of everything that he has done so that he can tell not only what expected results he has achieved but also what unexpected forms have developed. He has not a single label in his garden, but has each plant marked on a plan, and he knows the position of nearly every seedling without reference to the plan at all. He records when his seedlings first bloom but leaves all judging until the second flowering when he describes each variety very carefully, noting all good and bad points.

Living alone in this little out-of-the-world village, free from outside distractions and seeing no other flowers during the iris season, he is able to concentrate to a remarkable degree upon the work in hand, and the results from the few old named varieties he has used are little short of marvelous. The stock of his new varieties is still small and it will necessarily be many years before they have become widely known. When they do become known, however, I feel sure that they will displace at least 90 per cent of the varieties we are growing in our gardens today.

Visit to the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens

Wisley, Surrey

June 11, 1919

Early in the morning of June 11 I took the train from London to Byfleet, a run of about 45 minutes. There I hired a bicycle and rode about four miles to Wisley. Here are the large trial and exhibition gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society. The place has been laid out with great skill into

many different gardens. As one enters there is a wide gravel walk with rose beds on either side and climbing roses at the back, among which Paul's Carmine Pillar and several others were already in bloom. Behind these are tall hedges. Behind the hedge on the left is a large field in the corner of which the iris trials were held in 1916 and 1917.

To the right of the roses the ground slopes away gradually. Near the entrance are greenhouses and further along the path winds down to the big rock garden and also to the water garden where water lilies were already in bloom. Around these points and along the stream were great masses of self sown natural hybrids of *Iris sibirica* x *Iris sanguinea* (syn. *orientalis*) and also some self-sown *Iris Kaempferi*. Beyond the water garden are more fields, one containing the oriental poppy trials, now ablaze with color and another one with peonies just beginning.

I had gone down particularly to see the irises and to compare the newer varieties with the Bliss seedlings that I had just been seeing. This was unfortunately rather difficult to do because the irises were here not at their best, the last hot days, combined with lack of care due to labor shortage, having finished most of the flowers. I did, however, see many good irises, and what was even more instructive, many bad ones; that is to say, old forms now entirely superseded. Among the good varieties noted were:

Pallida Section :

Odoratissima, an old and common, but good form of pallida; Peter Hanson, a larger lighter Tineae; Sincerity (Yeld) a darker Dalmarius; Rhoda, pinker Dalmarius; Florence Wells, more purple than Sincerity, and more blue than Caprice.

Variegata Section :

Aurea, in splendid form; Iris King.

Amoena Section :

Rhein Nixe and Thorbecke the only good ones.

Plicata Section :

Mme. Denis ; Mme. Boulet.

Neglecta Section :

Empress Victoria and Patience, of Perfection type ; Oporto,
a self purple.

Squalens Section :

W. Robins, a less red Jacquinianna ; Beatrice, a Lady Jane
type ; Alcazar, very fine.

There were, of course, several other very good and well-known standard varieties along with these.

What interested me even more than the good varieties was the number of old timers, many of which are not in American commerce, and which are, to judge by what I saw here, entirely outclassed, and which are therefore not desirable for ordinary planting but only for historical or sentimental reasons. Among these were :

Pallida Section :

Kitty Reuthe ; Comte Horace de Paris ; Walner ; Queen
Mary (of Barr, not of Perry).

Variegata Section :

Foster's Yellow ; Harold ; Robert Burns ; Sans Souci.

Amoena Section :

Duc de Nemours ; Duchesse de Nemours.

Plicata Section :

Alma.

Neglecta Section :

Sapho ; Virginie ; John Bull ; Argent ; Chancellor ; Mary
Reuthe ; Queen of the Dell.

Squalens Section :

Vincent ; Hugh Bock ; Colesie ; Howi ; and many, many
more.

I hope that these poor sorts will continue to be grown at

Wisley among the good forms, as an object lesson to all visitors, for such collections are of the greatest educational value.

Visit to Mr. W. R. Dykes
Charter House, Godalming, Surrey
June 11, 1919

Leaving Wisley at noon I caught a train at Byfleet a little after one and in less than an hour was in Godalming. Mr. Dykes' place is small — not more than an acre or two in all but he has a good sized collection of tall bearded irises and probably the largest collection of species of *Apogon*, *Cyclo-*
cyclus and *Bulbous Irises* in the world.

Among the bearded irises the following were noted as specially fine:

Pallida Como. A collected form of Sir Michael Foster's.

An Unnamed *Variegata*. Seedling of *Her Majesty*, in color a cream yellow resembling *Dawn*, much taller than any other yellow self and very valuable for that reason.

Sunshine (Yeld). A *variegata* yellow self of the form of *Dawn*, but of bright glittering yellow color not as golden as *Aurea*. Very fine massed.

Ochracea Coerulea (Denis). *Variegated* with yellow and light purple in the falls, a pleasing combination.

Arlequin (*Squalens*). In better form than when seen at M. Denis's or at M. Millet's.

Jeanne D'Arc (*Plicata*). An old variety in splendid form.

Among the seedlings were an interesting group from *Black Prince* showing great range of color but sticking close to the *Black Prince* habit. One of these, *Richard II*, an *Amoena* with falls of *Black Prince* color, is already in commerce.

Two collected types of the species *variegata*, one from *Bulgaria*, the other from *Hungary*, were exceedingly interesting and showed by contrast the great improvement irises have undergone in our gardens.

Among the beardless were some fine *sibiricas* in many colors including a fine *sibirica* x *sanguinea* hybrid, *Chryso-*

graphes, very rich in color, Bulleyana, Forestii, and Wilsoni, and natural hybrids between these, many of which were very interesting but none as beautiful as Chrysographes. I saw also the true species of Laevigata of an exceedingly beautiful violet blue color but very small (probably owing to drought, as it is a water-loving plant.) A few very beautiful Spanish Irises were in bloom also, but the greater part of bulbous and other groups had finished blooming. How freely they had bloomed could be inferred from the large number of seed pods which were evident everywhere.

Visit to Mr. Amos Perry
Enfield, Middlesex

June 12, 1919

From London to Enfield is only about one-half hour by train, and Mr. Perry's nurseries here were known all over the world before the war for their extensive collections of herbaceous plants and especially for rare Alpines and lilies. When war conditions made it impossible to keep all these collections in good condition, Mr. Perry very wisely confined his attention to his rarer things, and most of these have survived.

I therefore did not see as many irises as I had expected to, but the few which I did see well repaid the journey. There were a number of standard bearded varieties, and I saw also quite a number of Mr. Perry's new seedlings, some of which he may name and send out in the future. Here I saw also the new American self yellow variegata, Mrs. Sherwin-Wright. It is a good yellow, but apparently no better than Aurea, and I agree with Mr. Perry that it should never have been named. The Siberian Irises were specially interesting. Of these Perry's Blue is by far the finest clear sky blue I have ever seen in this group and has splendid horizontal falls (pointing to sanguinea not sibirica as a parent, but it is classed with sibirica on account of its height.)

Mrs. Edward Sanders is the darkest blue of the group; Peggy Perry is intermediate; and Mrs. Perry is a blush

white. These are four valuable varieties. Among other irises I saw some fine specimens of *Chrysographes*, *Bulleyana*, *Wilsoni*, and the Californian *Douglasiana* and *Watsoniana*. Mr. Perry claims that he does not find Californian iris difficult to transplant during or immediately after the blooming period, providing they can be watered as soon as set. He is the first person I have met who says that the transplanting of these varieties is practicable.

Oriental poppies were gorgeous. I had never seen so many different colors in poppies before and came away entirely converted to the new race and particularly pleased with the smallest of them—Perry's Pigmy.

In specially prepared frames were many species of rare lilies, and also some of Mr. Perry's hybrids; while behind his house, half a mile or so from the nursery, was a wonderful rock garden, full of the very rarest Alpines, most of which, unfortunately, I did not know, and which are Mr. Perry's especial delight. He collected them himself all over Europe and Asia Minor and tells me he has collectors in all parts of the world. He has raised a large quantity of hybrids and plans to devote himself entirely to that work as soon as he is able to get his nursery back into its proper condition.

Visit to Sir Arthur Hort Newlands, Harrow-on-the-Hill

June 12, 1919

After leaving Mr. Perry I returned to London and went directly by electric train to Harrow, a journey of less than half an hour. It is one of the prettiest towns I have seen in England, perched up on the hill-top, with crowds of boys of 10 or 15 all dressed alike in grey flannel trousers, blue flannel coats and wide-brimmed straw hats.

Sir Arthur Hort's house is on the very top of the hill with a magnificent view of the country below. He welcomed me very kindly on account of my interest in irises, and was par-

ticularly pleased to learn that some of his new seedlings had been sent from Mr. Wallace's nursery to me in America.

His seedlings are mostly of Trojana type, very tall and very large. Ann Page, Volumnia and Hermione as grown here are fully as large as Vilmorin's Magnifica, though it is only fair to say that they have probably had much more care and feeding in this private garden than Vilmorin is able to give in his nursery.

The iris beds border each side of a long walk in the garden and were still very beautiful, although the wind storm of the previous night had destroyed many of the best blooms. Planted among the standard varieties were a good many seedlings, a few of the best of which have been named. At the end of the garden the path turns at right angles; here was the finest bed of *orientalis gigantea* (syn. *ochroleuca*) seedlings that I have ever seen, some of the plants being over five feet tall even in this dry season.

In another part of the grounds is a rock garden, and here many of the beardless iris species are found in splendid condition, particularly *Chrysographes* and the Californian *Douglasiana*, *Watsoniana* and *Tenax*.

In beds near the house were very many fine roses, especially the single Irish Elegance, and growing against the house was a climbing hydrangea in bloom. The natural slope of the land, with the gorgeous views of the distant country, together with the very simple but effectively planned planting, combine to make this one of the most charming small country places I have ever seen.

Visit to Messrs. Barr & Sons' Nurseries

Taplow

June 13, 1919

Mr. Wallace had told me that I should find a very large collection of standard iris varieties at Taplow, and had said that Mr. William Barr was the best-informed man in Eng-

land on the early history of iris culture. Consequently I decided to make the iris trip up there, in spite of the fact that the irises were nearly over. I found the largest collection of the older varieties that I had ever seen in England, most of them well-known in America, also a complete set of the newer Vilmorin varieties, including Ambigu and Opera, both of which Mr. Barr criticises as being too dwarf. A little further on were the Farr seedlings, from Wyomissing, and seeing them here after all the irises I have seen in France and England I was rather disillusioned about them for they did not seem quite good enough to measure up with the new European sorts. Among the entire set Quaker Lady seemed to me one of those most certain to gain a permanent place, though Mary Garden, Minnehaha, Montezuma and others will probably survive also. Glory of Reading and Red Cloud were not in bloom, but Mr. Barr had not been much impressed with them.

It should of course be remembered that American grown seedlings may not always do themselves justice in Europe, and the European kinds may possibly not prove so good over here as they are at home.

Mr. Barr was able to throw some light for me upon the confusion existing between Pallida Dalmatica and Princess Beatrice. He says that the former is a collected form which was sent out by several English nurseries before Princess Beatrice was named; that Princess Beatrice is another and later collected form from the same region, which was probably named and sent out by the Kelways. It is a larger and better flower than Pallida Dalmatica and is not identical with it, but each has probably been sent out as the other so that it is difficult to tell just what various nurseries and gardens have under each name. He added that the variety Rev. W. Wilks is reputed to be an English seedling of Pallida Dalmatica, but that it is apparently identical with Princess Beatrice.

Mr. Barr marked for me in his catalogue some of the varieties first sent out by his firm, most of which were Taplow seedlings. This list is very interesting, for most of the va-

rieties have been standard sorts in America for years, and it shows the great work done by the Barrs in the early days of iris culture. Some of these varieties are as follows :

Pallida Section :

Albert Victor ; Celeste ; Florence Wells ; Garibaldi ; Guinevere ; Kathleen ; Queen Mary ; Rembrandt ; Walner.

Variegata Section :

Darius ; Edward Simmons ; Hector ; Honorable ; Maori King ; Ossian ; Robert Burns.

Amoena Section :

Calypso ; Poiteau ; Unique.

Plicata Section :

Bridesmaid.

Neglecta Section :

Albatross ; Cottage Maid ; Cythere ; Osis ; Perfection ; Teresita ; Willie Barr.

Squalens Section :

A. F. Barron ; Arnols ; Britannia ; Copperman ; Dr. Bernice ; Exquisite ; Lady Jane ; Lord Grey ; Murat ; Queen Alexandra ; Rachel.

This is the last iris nursery to be visited by me this season. As I look back and consider what a struggle they have had to keep these nurseries going during the war it seems wonderful that they have anything at all left for visitors to see. From M. Millet, away in the French Army, and coming home so severely wounded as to be hardly able to walk, to M. Lemoine within shell-fire of the Germans and with bombs actually dropping in his garden, to Mr. Perry, miles from the front, but with his staff reduced from 65 to 5 and himself working part time for the Government, they have still kept their nurseries going, so that in a few years their places will be in as good condition as ever. It is a wonderful example of work done under tremendous handicaps.

