



The Rose Garden, In Two Divisions

William Paul

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The rose garden, in two divisions : Division I. Embracing the history of the poetry of the rose, the formation of the rosarium, and a detailed account of the various practices adopted in the successful cultivation of this popular flower : Division II. Containing an arrangement, in natural groups, of the most esteemed varieties of roses recognized and cultivated in the various rose gardens, English and foreign; with full description and remarks on their origin and mode of culture

CHAPTER I.

The History of the Rose, from the Earliest Times to the Fall of the Roman Empire.

THE ROSE, which is the leading flower of the day, the acknowledged favourite of the four greatest nations in the world, is to be found in a wild state very generally spread over the earth's surface.

As if too beautiful to be excluded from the natural Flora of any one of the ancient divisions of the world, it graces alike various countries of Asia, Africa, and North America, and extends over the whole of Europe, where, blooming in its native wild-ness and simplicity, it is universally prized and admired.

But although the geographical distribution of the various species makes the Rose an inhabitant of nearly the whole of the Northern Hemisphere, some species are far less plentiful than others, or, if plentiful in certain localities, have a less extended range. Here is one, confined to some particular and favoured spots; here another, not content with ranging one quarter of the globe ; —the ROSA CANINA, for instance the one most commonly seen adorning our wilds and hedge-rows—is found also in Africa and Asia.

It is a remarkable fact that Australia has naturally no Roses, and none have yet been found wild very near to or south of the Equator. Humboldt, in his " Personal Narrative," remarks — " We did not find one indigenous Rose-tree in all South America, notwithstanding the analogy existing between the climates of the high mountains of the torrid zone and the climate of our temperate zone. It appears that this charming shrub 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."—
Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Region of the New Continent', &c. y vol. iii., p. 487.

It is in the temperate regions of Asia, and throughout Europe generally, that those species abound from which nearly the whole of the present garden varieties have sprung. But if we extend our view, we find some growing on the mountains of North

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America, whose tops are covered with eternal snow ; and others in the dreary wilds of Greenland, Kamtschatka, and Iceland ; while in Siberia there are several interesting species. On the other hand, if we turn to warmer climates, we discover that Mexico, Abyssinia, China, Persia, India, and Egypt have their Roses; and even on the outskirts of the mighty Sahara one species is found, gladdening the approaches to the

desert with its clusters of white flowers, though often

Born to blush unseen,

And waste their sweetness on the desert air.

Who were the first people to bring this flower from its natural habitats, to be a dweller in cultivated grounds, must ever remain a matter of conjecture. Doubtless it attracted the notice of the virtuoso in plants at a very early date; probably when they were valued for food only, or as objects of curiosity, or for their medicinal properties. We may follow in imagination the busy doings' of the plant collector in the earliest times; we may fancy him gathering and fixing in one spot the beautiful productions scattered around him, and it is natural to suppose that the most beautiful or the most useful would be first collected. This surely would give an early date to the civilisation of the Queen of Flowers. And doubtless the Rose has a claim to our regard as well for its high antiquity as for its beauty, variety, and fragrance.

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Leslie Woodson:

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