

ROSE LETTER



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ROSE LETTER

The Heritage Roses Group

©

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CONTENTS

For the Love of a Rose	2
On Francis E. Lester	4
The Rose of Runnymede	5
Donahey's Comic Strip Rose #2	10
Plantier: Lyon's Father of Roses	14
Orient Meets Occident: Inquiry into Hybrid Chinas	19
Centenarians: Roses of 1918	24
Report on the 18th World Rose Convention	28

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FOR THE LOVE OF A ROSE

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Several days before I set out for my annual rose exploration and visit to Oregon this past May, I received an email with two photo attachments of a rose. Would I be willing and able, asked my friend Laura in the email, to identify the rose and visit the elderly woman near Portland who grew it? To a rose adventure I could not say no.

I had scarcely arrived in Portland from an overnight stay in Eugene when I was whisked off an hour later to End of the Trail Interpretative Center in Oregon City where I was asked to help identify three or four roses brought by pioneers on the Oregon Trail. I identified two—*Rosa gallica officinalis* (the Apothecary’s Rose) and ‘Rosa Mundi’ were easy—but could not identify a third, and informed a member of the Center that no such rose as “Richard II,” exists or existed, as the fourth rose, a white single, had been labeled.

From there Laura, a member of the Northwest Rose Historians, drove me to the nearby town of Gladstone to meet Mrs. Dickerson. When I was introduced to Ardalee Dickerson, age 87, she greeted me warmly with expectation and a quaver in her voice.

Stepping outside, she led us to her little garden where she promptly sat down in a chair, somewhat breathless, and pointed to the rose.

Sprawling over a high, wire fence, a cascade of magenta, violet, and blue flowers greeted us. I had done my homework. “Lovely!” I said. “I’ve never seen it before in person—only in pictures. The name of this rose is ‘Donau!’—with an exclamation point. It means Danube, no doubt because it reminded the breeder of the river. It was bred in Austria in 1913.”

“Oh, I’m so happy to know its name!” Mrs. Dickerson’s voice applauded. “My grandmother got it in 1918. It’s a hundred years old.”

We asked if she knew any more of its history and were told she had brought it from the family homestead situated between the communities of Lacombe and Scio in Linn County, Oregon. “My great-grandfather Wesley Sanders on coming west stopped in Texas, picked up a Cherokee bride, and came to Oregon. My grandmother Sanders, his daughter, married a Churchill—he mistreated her, was so mean hardly anyone went to his funeral. Anyway, she bought the rose. Now my health is not so good, so I’ve decided to go to an Assisted Living place. But I don’t want this rose to just disappear. I don’t know anyone else who grows it. I’d be happy if you could take cuttings and plant them, maybe even in a public garden.”



I said I’d be glad to take cuttings and disseminate them, so Laura and I set to the task, bundling together in wet newspapers and a plastic bag at least a dozen or so. I was thrilled. Here was a woman who loved a rose so much that she couldn’t bear to see it vanish. After all, ‘Donau!’ is quite unusual, aging as it does to slaty blue, not unlike the color of the blue Danube.

Somewhat similar is the more common ‘Vielchenblau’ climbing rose, but its flowers are smaller, less full, and don’t age to such a blue. And although ‘Vielchenblau’ shows a white stripe on an occasional petal, ‘Donau!’ exhibits white stripes and broad white

streaks on most petals. Both emit a pleasant scent. (I suspect some people who think they grow ‘Vielchenblau’ might actually be growing ‘Donau!’.)

As a whole Oregonians of another era love roses. Ardalee Dickerson grew a few other roses as well, but it was for this one, for the love of this distinctive rose ‘Donau!’ that she sent out a call to preserve it. The world could do with more preservation of beauty symbolized by the rose.

Francis E. Lester established his nursery Roses of Yesterday and Today near Watsonville, CA in the 1930s. He and his wife spent much time in the Gold Rush country of the Sierra foothills searching for and identifying old roses brought by the pioneer settlers.



"Once, looking into the heart of the rose ‘Francis E. Lester’, its half-closed petals still retaining the pinky look which later fades, I found a browsing spider with a body like a blob of mercury and legs so delicate and transparent as to make any Venetian glass-blower throw in the sponge."

—Mirabel Osler, *In the Eye of the Garden*



THE ROSE OF RUNNYMEDE

Darrell g.h. Schramm

It's a running meadow, runnels running through it here and there—at least it was in 1215. But 799 years later in 2014, the Thames River overflowed and flooded the entire meadow, no doubt a phenomenon that had occurred many times in the intervening centuries. Yet this watery meadow was the spot where King John met with some 170 barons and their knights, only to feel compelled to affix his seal to the *Magna Carta*. And 660 years later in 1875, the great English rose breeder William Paul named a new Hybrid Perpetual rose 'Magna Charta'. (One wonders why the spelling differs from that of the document it commemorates.) The rose won not a medal but a certificate that year.

I know of no other rose named for a document or other written text. But the *Magna Carta* is considered one of the greatest and most influential writings of the free world.

It was not an early form of an English constitution, as some

non-historians assert, nor did it proclaim universal liberty or form the grounds of democracy. Nor was it signed—signing to authenticate a document was not a known practice in the 13th century. It was sealed, that is, stamped with King John's wax seal.

The context for the *Magna Carta* is this: Monarchy and baronage had long been contending violently for power. The contention began with John's brother, Richard the Lion-heart who as king had levied a high tax on the nobles to pay his mercenaries in the Third Crusade. Once John was king, the taxation continued. Furthermore, John repeatedly insulted and antagonized his nobles. He did so first with the Lusignan noble family by stopping a wedding ceremony in Angoulême and taking the child bride from Count Hugh Lusignan and marrying her himself. He also seized some of their lands and later accused them of treason. Alienating his nobles was to become a pattern, for he gave neither respect nor favors to his allies, doing as he pleased without regard for allies, friends, or family (his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine excepted.)

Furthermore, he lost in battle the duchy of Normandy, which had belonged to the English since 1066. With that ignoble loss, many a Norman baron now found himself on the sceptered isle, jostling for territory and power. Meanwhile, King John's whimsical and thoughtless disposition kept many a baron on edge. Who next would be dismissed or deposed or hounded to death as he had the powerful but brutal Baron William de Briouze, once a favorite? Uneasily slept the barons under the weight of the crown.

The barons and earls were further outraged when King John, ever capricious, ever fearful, gave strongholds and castles, once belonging to nobility, to foreign mercenaries. That was going too far.

In 1214 he lost the rest of what is now French lands except Gascony, yet he expected the barons to pay for the cost of his defeat. That unacceptable demand led to the baronial seizure of London in May of 1215. The time to limit the king's power had come.

Fearful, duplicitous, King John agreed to meet the nobles at Runnymede. Of the 170 or so barons, about half were fence-sitters, not allying themselves with the 25% who opposed the king nor with the other quarter who remained loyal. But neither of the other two groups wished to offend the powerful opposition. Insincerely, King

John affixed his seal to the parchment.

At least thirteen copies of the *Magna Carta* were made, four of which still survive in England, all written in abbreviated Latin with some



medieval slang tossed in. I viewed the copy in Salisbury. This aristocratic document was revised several times. The one housed in the National Archives of Washington, D.C. is the 1297 version.

Not a constitution, not “the mother of democracy,” but a symbol of freedom under law, the *Magna Carta* essentially protected the interests of the nobility. In other words, freedom was limited to the nobles and most of the mercantile class. By 1354 the term “free man,” which did not include women, children, serfs and other poor people, was altered in a momentous phrase to read, “no man, of whatever estate or condition he may be.” Now the lowest levels of society were to be protected against arbitrary misuse of power. In that same revision, the phrase “due process of law” was first used. But it wasn’t until 1629 that trial by jury, *habeas corpus*, and due process of law applied to all.

Just prior to the American Revolution, the colonists reminded England of *Magna Carta’s* law of restraint on arbitrary power. Later, the Fifth Amendment borrowed, with slight alteration, wording from the reworked document: “No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.” As old as the *Magna Carta* is, it still touches us today.

The rose ‘Magna Charta’ touches me as well. It, too, is a “magna,” a great rose, great in the sense of large, great in abundance of flowers, great in a strong, sweet perfume, great in luxuriance and beauty. From fat, round buds emerge clear, bright pink flowers, shapely and cupped, their petals often reflexed at the edges. The sepals exude a peppery scent. Profuse in spring, scant in

summer, better again in autumn, the roses ornament a bushy, tidy, upright plant that grows to at least six feet but less so in a container. It may acquire some mildew, though mine never has. Because of its vigor, it can cover a space six to eight feet in width, so it is best not to place it too near other plants.

In 1888 William Paul himself praised it as “one of the finest roses grown.” Ten years later, Theodosia Shepherd claimed it was “one of the most satisfactory roses of this class for California.” During that same decade, nurseryman Horace Pratt of Fruitvale (now part of Oakland, California) extolled its virtues as one of the few Hybrid Perpetuals free of fungus and given to recurrent bloom. All still true.

One wonders then, fashion followers aside, why such a strong, healthy, scented, and beautiful rose should have been so neglected in the majority of U.K. rose literature in the 20th century. The obscure John Weathers of England in 1903 wrote, “This showy rose makes a fine display in the garden.” T. Geoffrey Henslow included it in his *Rose Encyclopedia* of 1922, and A.J. Macself gave a slight nod to it in his *Treasury* of 1938, but not even the *Official Catalogue of Roses* of the National Rose Society in 1914 nor its *Rose Directory* of 1965 mentions it. In between those years, in 1959 Richard Thomson gave a brief description and good opinion. But

Gertrude Jekyll ignored it; so did Kingsley, Harkness, Wheatcroft, Thomas, and Austin. (No doubt I’ve overlooked a few.) Finally, Peter Beales depicts and describes it in 1997. His nursery still sells it. Oddly, the English seem not to promote this English rose.

In New Zealand, however, Nancy Steen remembered it in her famous work, *The Charm of Old Roses* (1966).

‘Magna Charta’



seems to have been more appreciated in the USA. Our Samuel Parsons mentioned it in 1908, the Biltmore Nursery catalogue in 1913, Ellwanger in 1914 (though he labeled it incorrectly as a Hybrid China). Glendon A. Stevens in his book of 1926 wrote glowingly of it: “I know none better in tender deep-pink color or surpassing it in fragrance. It is one of the very best and desirable of all roses.” Bobbink & Atkins listed it in 1932, R. C. Allen murmured of it in 1948, Joseph J. Kern was selling it in 1964 (but not in 1974). In 1990 Scanniello and Bayard were more informative, adding to the description that it was an important rose, one that had been (and still is) used to breed modern roses. Some of those roses are ‘Champion of the World’, ‘Magnafrano’, ‘May Queen’, ‘Le Merveille Écarlate’ (2013) and others. Clair G. Martin in 1999 waxed loquacious in his delight with ‘Magna Charta’.

In the United States, this rose is sold by Burlington Roses in California and Rogue Valley Roses in Oregon. In Europe it is sold mostly in France but can be bought from one nursery each in Denmark, Sweden, and Germany. At the intersection of history and horticulture, the magnificence of the rose of Runnymede, ‘Magna Charta’—despite often being overlooked—continues to gladden the heart and eye wherever it blooms in vase, pot, or garden. It truly is, as Clair Martin wrote, “One of the good ones.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sept. 8: **Sacramento Historic Cemetery** Rose Garden. Rose propagation class, 10:00 a.m.

Sept. 11-13: **Heirloom Expo**
Santa Rosa, CA fairgrounds. HRG will be selling old and rare roses.

Oct. 13: **Sacramento Historic Cemetery** Rose Garden. Beautiful Bounty Rose Tour. 10:00 a.m.

Donahey's Comic Strip Rose #2

Don Gers

The Equinox, first day of spring 2018 and it's cold and raining here in Northern California.

Punxsutawney Phil, that weather prognosticating groundhog of Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, saw his shadow and got it right. We've had six more weeks of wintry weather (and very welcome rain).

A Garfield cartoon, published on March 18th, inspired me



to write this story. (John Davis at seventy-two has been drawing Garfield for forty years now.) Garfield the cat is seen in the first four frames staring out over a snowy windowsill with increasing excitement. In the fifth frame he sighs and frowns, and the final frame shows Jon, his master, looking out the same window and asking: "What is it, Garfield?" Garfield in his thought balloon forlornly replies: "Thought I saw a bud on the Tea Rose."

An unknown rose I received from a friend who lives in Grand Marais, Michigan, alerted me to another cartoonist with an interest in old roses but whose work is ancient history now. His name is William Donahey, born in 1883 in Tuscarawas County, Ohio. He was a shy youth, "very reclusive" even as an adult, and born into a strict Methodist household where Bible reading was *de rigueur* and "fairy stories were beyond the pale." But the joy of his youth was the time he spent visiting an uncle who lived the pioneer life where Bill

learned about self-reliance and the practical techniques of homesteading. Very early in youth he surrounded himself in his imagination with make-believe people and fantasy situations, like a drawing he did of an ice cream hill you could ski and eat at the same time. His oldest brother was Governor of Ohio in the 1920s and the middle brother a cartoonist for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, so Bill followed in the cartoonist brother's footsteps. He went on to create his own comic feature he named *The Teenie Weenies*, which was published by the *Chicago Tribune* beginning in 1914. The *Teenie Weenies* were a village of miniature people about two inches tall who lived in a real-sized world. For safety, they lived hidden under a dense rose bush in houses made of discarded tin cans, a lost hat, an old shoe, even a teapot. They foraged for discards from the big house, using miniature tools to carve up real-sized potatoes and other vegetables. The cartoon with its stories of the life of these tiny people became very popular with children. It was syndicated nationwide, also published in books, and continued until 1970 when Bill Donahey died.

Never having seen the *Teenie Weenies* cartoon, I discovered Bill Donahey quite by accident. In the early 1990s I was exchanging rose cuttings and divisions with Nancy McDonald, a seed exchange friend who summered in Grand Marais, Michigan, on the south shore of Lake Superior across from Canada at the extreme upper peninsula of the state. Nancy was sending me unknowns for identification she had found at old homesteads and cemeteries. One in particular I was very fascinated with because it looked like a wild species, possibly a hybrid with *Rosa carolina*, with bristly hips and a habit of spreading by short erect canes with scattered thorns and very fragrant, smallish, double, almost scrooled pink flowers which balled a lot. Nancy had labeled it with the study name "Donahue's Center" for the collection location and the "center" place in her garden where she propagated it. Overgrown by brush all these years later, I rediscovered it last spring in my study plot while cleaning up the area. Looking at it again, I suddenly realized it was probably one of the Banshee roses Leonie Bell had studied and written about. Checking its original record in my accession notebook, I found I had misread the name; it was "Donahey's" not "Donahue". Curious, I googled "Donahey" and the story appeared of a cartoonist who lived

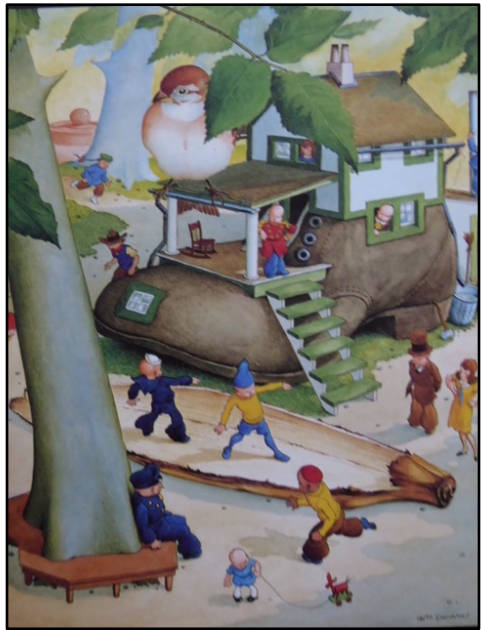
in a Pickle Barrel house on the shore of Grand Sable Lake near Grand Marais. Now I was very interested.

I obtained Joseph Cahn's book *The Life and Art of William Donahey* with many of his cartoon illustrations, including some of his drawings of a rose bush that I now recognized. From the very beginning of the cartoon the Teenie Weenies lived under this rose bush. Donahey even titled a book he published in 1922, *The Teenie Weenies Under the Rose Bush*. A curious habit of the Teenie Weenies' rose bush was its growth like a forest of tall erect, scattered rose canes with thorns, the very habit of the Banshee-like rose Nancy had sent me collected from Donahey's property. And in a story from one of his cartoons I read: "The year comes full circle with the blooming of the overarching rosebush. As a surprise for The Lady



of Fashion, The Turk fashions a string of scented beads from fallen petals." Banshee petals are ideal for creating fragrant rose beads. So I suspect the "Donahey Banshee" was his model for drawing the cartoon. And I'm guessing Donahey probably brought the rose to Grand Marais from his childhood home at New Philadelphia, Ohio, or possibly his uncle's property since the cartoon was started about twelve years before he moved into the Pickle Barrel house on Grand Sable Lake. The Pickle Barrel house was a gift to Donahey from his advertising sponsor, Monarch Brand foods, who got the idea from one of the cartoonist's advertisements for Teenie Weenies pickles which were sold in miniature oak casks.

In all the years
Donahey drew his rosebush in
the cartoon, no one seems to
have asked its name nor was
any name ever published, as
far as I can learn. So it
comforts me to give
Donahey's nameless, unsung
cartoon rosebush an identity
and recognition. 'Banshee', an
historic Revolutionary War
era rose, had the longest run
of any cartoon rose and
sheltered the community of
Teenie Weenies who
delighted young and old for
56 years.



A HEALTHIER ROSE: USING MYCORRHIZAL FUNGI

Commercial mycorrhizal fungi is a natural, organic root system enhancer that comes in the forms of tiny particles and powder. Not only does it increase nutrient and water uptake by forming an underground network of rootlets that grow faster and longer than the ordinary root, but its use also stimulates growth and flowering. When roses are grown in natural soil, it protects against several diseases. During the planting or transplanting of a rose, I sprinkle about two teaspoons of granules onto the roots.

According to Dr. Sabine Ravnskov of Aarhus University, Denmark, mycorrhizae are not, however, helpful or viable in peat-based soils and soils strongly fertilized with phosphorus. Use of fungicides will also inhibit if not harm the beneficial fungi. Mycorrhizae can be purchased at most good nurseries or ordered online.

--The Editor



Mme Plantier

PLANTIER: LYON'S FATHER OF ROSES

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Madame Plantier, a name pinned to a most famous, fragrant, and favorite ivory-white rose, was the third wife of Jacques Plantier. And Jacques Plantier was the first acclaimed rose breeder of Lyon, France.

He was born on May 27, 1792. With a father and a grandfather as ardent gardeners, he soon developed a passion for horticulture, so that by age 19 he had become a gardener for Count d'Arloz at the Chateau de Grammont. In short time, he was virtually manager of the grounds. Visitors to the estate, noticing his fine work, soon made his reputation.

Also working at the Chateau was a servant girl, Josephthe (or Josette) Louise Bandol, about four years Jacques' senior. The two were married in December 1812. About ten weeks later their son Claude Henri was born. During this time, Plantier had become interested in rose production. The birth of his son occasioned him to name two of his first roses, both Bourbons, 'Claude Plantier' and 'Henri Plantier'. Much later in life, when his son had become a

bishop, he named a Hybrid Perpetual ‘Evêque de Nimes’ (Bishop of Nimes). When a daughter was born three years later in 1816, he named a rose for her, ‘Julie Plantier’. Unfortunately, Julie died fourteen months later.

Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Lyon where Plantier became renowned as a first-rate gardener of both produce and flowers which his wife sold at the local market. As his reputation grew, so did his nursery, located on the banks of the Saône River. Indeed, he became recognized as “the true founder of the cultivation of roses in the south of France.” It was in this period, in 1825, that he introduced the phenomenal rose ‘Gloire des Rosomanes’. Plantier then sold it to nurseryman Jean-Pierre Vibert.

In Brent Dickerson’s words, this is “one of the greatest and most influential roses of all time.” It was quite different from the other early Bourbons, for it was red rather than pink. Actually, its semi-double blossoms are velvety crimson or maroon. We do not know its parentage, but it seems likely that Plantier used ‘Sanguinea’, ‘Ternaux’, ‘La Spécieuse’ or any other of the early ‘Slater’s Crimson’ types, including ‘Slater’s



Gloire des Rosomanes

Crimson China’ itself, and hybridized it with a Bourbon. So we might call ‘Gloire des Rosomanes’ a Hybrid Bourbon or a Hybrid China, though some rosarians insist on calling it a Hybrid Perpetual. By any class, it smells as sweet.

The plant grows long, slender but vigorous branches studded with occasional prickles and seven leaflets to a leaf. The flowers, sweetly scented, appear in profuse clusters and bloom from summer to winter. The bush is useful as a hedge and has been used so in

California. In fact, California Nursery Historical Park, in the Niles district of Fremont, boasts a long hedge of it along its entrance driveway. Known in the vernacular as “Ragged Robin,” the plant has been used as a rootstock; Howard & Smith began using it so in Southern California as early as 1922.

I wonder if sometimes, when a red rose emerges from the base of a differently colored rose, it is confused with rootstock ‘Dr. Huey’? After all, ‘Dr. Huey’ is a second generation descendent of ‘Gloire des Rosomanes’.

More importantly, it has been a parent to ‘Bardou Job’, ‘General Jacqueminot’, ‘Géant des Batailles’, ‘Grand Capitaine’, and ‘Gruss an Teplitz’, to name a few well-known old roses still available today. Certainly it has transferred its coloring.

Jacques Plantier may also have bred the Hybrid Perpetual ‘Rochambeau’, a bright carmine rose with white stamens, during this time. Two sources (albeit of the 20th century) give its introductory date as 1830. If they are correct, ‘Rochambeau’ may contend with ‘Hybrid Remontant à Bois Lisse’ as the first Hybrid Perpetual. But the date given by Dickerson for ‘Rochambeau’ is *circa* 1836. Either way, it has long ago vanished. But were it the first Hybrid Perpetual, it would be another feather in the cap of the Father of Lyon Rose Breeders.

When Plantier’s first wife and excellent helpmeet died in 1827, he married Charlotte Romain three years later. Sad to say, a year and six months later she died in childbirth. One wonders if the child survived, and if so, whether Plantier’s ‘Pauline Plantier’, ‘Emilie Plantier’, ‘Gloire de Plantier’, or ‘Triomphe de Plantier’, all lost now, was named for the child.

Additionally, according to Lacharme’s catalogue of roses, in the year he purchased Plantier’s nursery, a Tea rose is listed named ‘Charlotte Plantier’. Since most old and recent sources claim that Lacharme’s first rose appeared in 1843, it is quite likely that ‘Charlotte Plantier’ is another overlooked rose bred by Plantier himself.

In the spring of 1834, Jacques Plantier married Mary Frances Perrat. The following year he released a Hybrid Perpetual and his famous Hybrid Noisette ‘Mme Plantier’, named for his new wife. This beautiful, very full rose mounds itself exuberantly into a

huge dome of a plant with long, smooth wands of deeply serrated, Kelly green to dark green leaves. The large, white flowers with forty to 150 petals, grow in small clusters that tend to weigh down the slender branches. The blossoms exhibit a button eye. Though the bush is virtually without prickles, the leafy sepals, like the pedicels, are furnished with tiny glands. A strong, pleasant fragrance enlivens its glory. In my visits to and explorations of more than thirty pioneer cemeteries in Oregon, I encountered ‘Mme Plantier’ time after time. It was especially breathtaking in the Damascus Pioneer Cemetery, slightly southeast of Portland. What an incredible beauty! A beauty bountiful!

Were I to undertake another garden, it would begin with ‘Mme Plantier’ as a focal point; all paths would lead to her.

In 1837 Plantier released two roses and again two more in 1838, one being the Bourbon ‘Pierre de St. Cyr’, still to be found in some few nursery catalogues. A pale, silvery lilac-pink, it grows on vigorous canes, making it a good pillar plant. It climbs with some rapidity and bears seeds freely. According to William Paul in 1848, it can be grown as “a Weeping Rose” profuse with “its elegantly cupped flowers through summer and autumn.” Fragrant, it comes



"New Orleans Cemetery Rose"

into bloom somewhat later than most other Bourbons. The found rose “New Orleans Cemetery Rose” fits not only the few old descriptions we have of it but also all the photos shown on HelpMeFind. Mine has yet to invite any kind of fungus or other disease. The surname Saint-Cyr, like the given name Pierre, is not uncommon in France. One possible man for whom the

rose may have been named is Pierre Benoit Carra de Vaux Saint-Cyr, a captain, born in Lyon, who by 1834 was living in Paris. But I have been unable to confirm this as a namesake.

Indeed, Jacques Plantier may have released more roses between 1825 and 1840, but it seems not all his roses are accounted

for, and at least two of them are not dated. The year 1840, however, was his premium year with the release of at least fourteen roses. Of the 42 or so he produced altogether, at least thirteen were Bourbon, at least nine were Hybrid Perpetual, and at least eight were Tea. Some few were Chinas, Noisettes, and other hybrids.

It was 1840 when he sold his establishment to Francois Lacharme, who had been a frequent visitor to the Plantier gardens. Yet he continued to breed roses—about ten more that we know of—and to mentor Lacharme, who introduced most of Plantier’s later roses.

The first great rosarian of Lyon, Lyon’s Father of Roses, died at Nimes, where his son presided as Catholic bishop. The year was 1872. In Latin, the inscription on his tombstone reads: “My flowers have borne the fruits of virtue and honor.” And so, too, for those flowers and fruits, especially the three surviving roses, should the nearly forgotten Jacques Plantier be honored and praised.

CREDITS

Front Cover: 'Gloire des Rosomanes' by A. Bricogne

Page 2: Pamela Temple

Page 3: Laura King

Pages 5, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21 top, 22 middle & bottom,
23, 26 middle: Darrell Schramm

Pages 7, 10, & 13: public domain

Page 8: from William Paul's *Rose Garden*, 1888

Page 12: Jonathan Windham

Pages 22, 25, & 27 top: Bill Grant

Page 24: Margaret Furness

Page 26 top & 27 bottom: Etienne Bouret

Page 26 bottom: Hans van Hage

Back Cover: Bill Grant



Frederic II de Prusse

ORIENT MEETS OCCIDENT: AN INQUIRY INTO HYBRID CHINA ROSES

Darrell g.h. Schramm

A nearly forgotten class of roses is the Hybrid China. Slighted, overlooked, misconceived as a category—a *soi-disant* Gallica is not a Gallica, a would-be Damask is not a Damask—the Hybrid China is routinely labeled as Gallica, Damask, Alba, Bourbon, or Noisette when, in fact, it partakes of only a portion of those genes. Indeed, *Rosa chinensis* is a parent of Bourbon roses, Portlands, Noisettes, and those classes that followed, for the Hybrid Chinas resulted in crossing *R. chinensis* with the popular roses of the early 1800s.

Nearly twenty-five years after the two China roses were introduced to Europe, ‘Slater’s Crimson China’ and ‘Old Blush’, one red, the other pink, respectively, roughly around 1790, European breeders began crossing them with Gallicas, Damasks, Albas, and others. The Gallicas were famously fertile; only somewhat less so were the Damasks, Bourbons, and Noisettes. Between 1814 and 1820, seventeen Hybrid Chinas had come into commerce. One of them, ‘Rivers’ George IV’, is still sold by Peter

Beales Roses in England. By 1837, as listed in Alexandre Hardy's catalogue, about 170 Hybrid Chinas had found their way to the Luxembourg Gardens and to the market, their numbers a few years thereafter declining as recurrent Tea roses, Bourbons, and Hybrid Perpetuals gained in popularity.

Hybrid Chinas are generally characterized by smooth canes, smooth and rather shiny (but not glistening) foliage, often tall and arching stems, abundant vigor, profuse flowering, rich blooms with Old Garden Rose aspect, and a long retention of their well-formed flowers growing singly or in small clusters. A great number of them bear a chalice-shaped receptacle. Most of them are fragrant, often deliciously so. Many of them produce scarce or no prickles, some produce mere bristles, a few claim prickles larger and more numerous than those of the rather harmless Gallica.

As a whole, they perform well in unfavorable conditions. The taller sorts serve well as pillar or trellised roses. They should be pruned to between six and twelve bud-eyes immediately after bloomtime. As for bloomtime, with a few exceptions, Hybrid Chinas flower but once a year. No doubt that is one reason they have been slighted. Yet the most distinctive feature of this class of roses is its extended bloom, far longer than Gallicas, Damasks, Albas, and Centifolias.

When breeders first began crossing the "everblooming" Chinas with old European roses, they doubtlessly anticipated bringing forth new repeat-blooming roses. However, most Hybrid Chinas are possessed of a recessive gene, i.e., they are the offspring of a recurrently blooming rose and a once-flowering rose, the repeat-flowering trait having receded in the first generation (f₁) of roses, a trait that will reappear in some of the second generation (f₂) of roses.

Essentially, Hybrid Chinas are sterile. As triploids, they have 21 chromosomes, meaning they cannot all pair up; at least one will be left out. But occasionally the gametes veer from expectation and acquire the full set of fourteen chromosomes (28 total) as tetraploids to develop the recurrent trait. In short, what most Hybrid Chinas have spent on vigor, they have economized on remontancy.

Among the notable early Hybrid Chinas, 'Athalin' of 1829 when crossed with 'Rose du Roi' gave its one offspring the recurrent



Brennus

rose character, thus contributing to the Portland and Hybrid Perpetual class. ‘Brennus’ of 1830, having 28 chromosomes, is sometimes remontant and fertile, and was thus often exhibited but seems not to have been used in breeding. ‘Malton’, on the other hand, also ripe with seed and inclined to rebloom somewhat in Mediterranean

climates, produced five offspring.

A Hybrid China which could as well be called a Hybrid Bourbon (Bourbons contain Chinas) is the more astonishing ‘Gloire des Rosomanes’ (see front cover). Introduced in 1825 by Jacques Plantier, it marches in the vanguard of 14,900 descendants, not least of them ‘Bardou Job’, ‘General Jacqueminot’, ‘Giant de Batailles’, ‘Grand Capitaine’, and ‘Gruss an Teplitz’. By their fruits you shall know them, the Chinese genes.

Unlike all others of this class, ‘William Jesse’ of 1838, sent out as a Hybrid China but—like ‘Gloire des Rosomanes’—seems to have carried strong Bourbon genes; it became parent and ancestor to 17,977 descendants into the 28th generation. Indeed, ‘William Jesse’ might well be proclaimed The Glory of Hybrid Chinas. The famous ‘La Reine’ boasts as one of its first generation offspring. In the second generation we find such renowned roses as ‘Anna de Diesbach’, ‘James Veitch’, ‘Jules Margottin’, ‘Souvenir de la Reine d’Angleterre’. Later generations include ‘Baroness Rothschild’, ‘Cecilia Scharsach’, ‘Comtesse Cecile de Chabillant’, ‘John Hopper’, ‘Mme Gabriel Luizet’, ‘Mrs. John Laing’, ‘Paul Neyron’,



‘Captain Christy’, ‘Comtesse d’Oxford’, ‘Dame Edith Helen’, ‘Dr. Andry’, ‘Lady Mary Fitzwilliam’, ‘Mabel Morrison’, ‘Mme Abel Chatenay’, ‘Marie Bauman’, ‘Marchioness of Londonderry’, ‘Schoener’s Nutkana’, and ‘Ulrich Brunner fils’, to name but a scant number. This partial list is evidence that most of our Western roses bear Chinese genes, that the Orient is meshed with the Occident. And yet ‘William Jesse’ has all but vanished.



Alexandre Laquement

Still, more than a few dozen Hybrid Chinas remain. Among those already mentioned we find ‘Alexandre Laquement’, ‘Blairii #1 and #2’, ‘Catherine II’, ‘Comtesse de Lacépède’, ‘Crêpe Rose’, possibly ‘Eulalie Lebrun’, ‘Frederic II de Prusse’,

possibly ‘Hippolyte’, possibly ‘Jenny Duval’, ‘Juno’ (not the Centifolia), ‘Lady Stuart’, ‘Mercédès’ of 1847, ‘Nubienne’, ‘Presidente Dutailley’, and what I call the *soi-disant* Gallicas ‘Belle de Crécy’ and ‘Cardinal de Richelieu’. Hardy’s catalogue



Blairii #2



Lady Stuart

adds ‘Duchesse de Montebello’ and ‘Spong’.

Roses such as ‘Belle de Crécy’, ‘Cardinal de Richelieu’ and ‘Comtesse de Lacépède’ and others often classed as Gallicas lack a

distinguishing feature of true Gallicas: sessile leaflets (leaflets nudged against the petiole, without a petiolule). Though, to complicate matters, I must add that ‘Belle de Crécy’ exhibits both sessile and non-sessile leaflets. ‘Belle Biblis’ also seems to be an exception— did Descemet use a China rose in the crossing? Certainly its vigor is such that it leafs out in early spring, much sooner than other Gallicas.



Belle de Crecy

Another trait of the *Gallicanae* category and of Albas is their matt foliage. But the leaves of, say, ‘Malton’, ‘Cardinal de Richelieu’ ‘Belle de Crécy’ ‘Blairie #2’, ‘Frederic II de Prusse’ ‘Catherine II’, and others exhibit some sheen, some more pronounced than others. The true Old Garden Roses—Gallicas, Damasks, Centifolias, Mosses, and Albas—do not display a shininess on their leaves.

The point here is not so much that we must classify some of these roses as Hybrid Chinas rather than Gallicas, Mosses, Bourbons, and the like, but that what we have assumed were strictly Western roses actually contain Eastern genes as well. Without those



Cardinal de Richelieu

genes our modern roses would not rebloom. In the Hybrid China the Orient has married the Occident. If our Western pride suffers somewhat from this acknowledgement, we might think of the Hybrid China, as well as Noisettes, Bourbons, Hybrid Perpetuals, Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, and all our modern roses, as the Universal Rose.



CENTENARIANS: ROSES OF 1918

Darrell g.h. Schramm

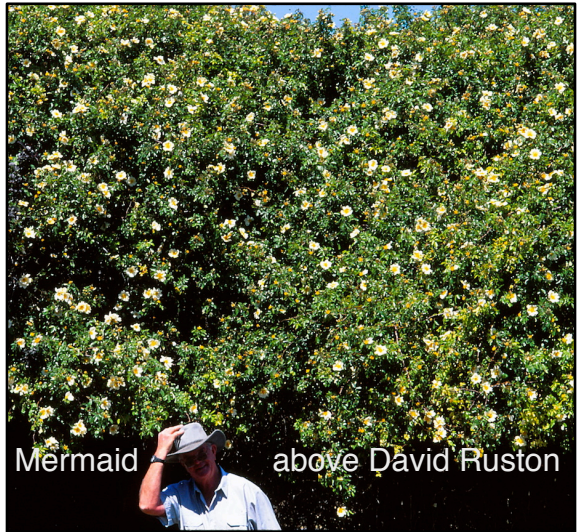
In 1918 the Great War in battle after battle was still raging but by autumn was winding down. The Armistice was signed on November 11th. In the spring and early summer Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras belatedly had declared war on Germany. Ernest Hemingway had joined the Red Cross; the Chilwell ammunition factory in England exploded, killing 134 workers and injuring numerous others; and the flu pandemic erupted, infecting a fifth of the world's population. On a brighter note, Ingmar Bergman, Madeleine L'Engle, Leonard Bernstein, and Nelson Mandela were born. And new roses, as if to compensate for so much bleakness, continued to be introduced.

One hundred years ago the combined countries of England, France, Germany, Ireland, and the United States *en toto* bred about ninety new roses. This does not count the climbing sports. Of those ninety, only about sixteen survive today. About fifty of the original 1918 roses were Hybrid Teas, of which only five can be found in commerce now, but two of them, 'Golden Ophelia' and 'Arabella', not in the United States. The Hybrid Teas may have been in the ascendancy as rose popularity goes, but few of them were of much endurance. By 1920, a number of English rose breeders and others

were questioning the constitution and progress of this rose. Advancement in form and fragrance was slight if not questionable. The crimson color had improved but that seemed accompanied by a loss of scent in the flower. Jean-Pierre Vibert had warned some eighty or ninety years earlier that the weakening of traits in a species is commensurate with the intensification of color. Furthermore, huge numbers of newcomer Hybrid Teas had disappeared within ten years, given their susceptibility to disease. By 1936 the famous breeder Wilhelm Kordes declared, “The Hybrid Teas are looking more poorly every year as the raisers are mixing them again and again.” In the U. S., nonetheless, inbreeding was to continue with a vengeance.

Then there are the other classes within those ninety. Thirteen were Pernetianas, a class now unfortunately subsumed into the Hybrid Teas; one of those survive: ‘Christine’. Like many of McGredy’s roses, it was likely named for a friend or family member. Courtney Page thought it “probably the best yellow rose introduced since the advent of ‘Lady Hillingdon’.” Supposedly it is “mildew proof.”

Of the seven ramblers produced, three remain, one of them—‘Mermaid’—more popular, except for one, than any of the roses of 1918. This vigorous, soft yellow single can climb up and through a large tree. ‘Emily Gray’, named for the sister of the breeder A. H. Williams, is a strong yellow, double rose. And ‘General Testard’, named for the Brigadier-General who fought in WWI and during the first two years of WWII, retiring in 1940, is a colorful pink, white and yellow rose, whose yellow is the huge boss of stamens.





Three of the Polyanthas survive: ‘Eblouissante’, ‘Verdun’, and ‘Marechal Foch’. The first means “dazzling.” The second refers, of course, to the battle fought for nearly ten months, causing a million casualties. And the third honors Marshall Ferdinand Foch of France, who eventually became the Allied Commander of WWI. It was virtually through his command that the allies won the war. In December 1921, he visited Portland, Oregon, where he was presented with a huge basket of more than 100 roses which he accepted on the behalf of his fellow French citizen Joseph Pernet-Ducher who had bred Portland’s favorite rose ‘Mme Caroline Testout’. Foch is buried near Napoleon.

Three of the Reverend Pemberton’s 100-year-old Hybrid Musks stay steadfastly popular: ‘Pax’,—a Gold Medal winner—and ‘Thisbe’, named for the lover of Pyramus in the tale by Ovid and later Shakespeare, and ‘Daybreak’. ‘Pax’, whose name means peace, celebrating the end of The Great War, continues growing in many gardens, our

own little acreages of peace.

The sixteenth rose is a Hybrid Rugosa, the only one of that class introduced that year. Named ‘F. J. Grootendorst’, it is by far the



most popular surviving rose of 1918—despite its lack of scent! It is sold by more than sixty rose nurseries worldwide. No doubt its ornamental style, its blossoms with scalloped edges, its profuse flowering and its utter freedom from disease account for much of its popularity. It may have been named for Floris J. Grootendorst (1852-1937), a Dutch breeder of trees, who also had a son by that name (1886-1958).

I had mentioned two Hybrid Teas earlier, ‘Golden Ophelia’ sold only in Australia and Japan, and ‘Arabella’, in deep pink, sold only by Martin Weingart in Germany. Also that year appeared the Hybrid Teas ‘Emma Wright’ in orange-pink shades; ‘Los Angeles’, and the beauty ‘Gloire de Hollande’ in deep scarlet. Only Rogue Valley Roses in Oregon sells this century old glory from Holland, a glory that would exalt any garden and home. Wish these survivors a Happy Birthday!



REPORT ON THE 18TH WORLD ROSE CONVENTION

Recently I returned from the World Federation of Rose Societies' 18th convention held in Copenhagen. Special tours took place before and after the convention, but the convention itself comprised six days consisting of sixteen lectures, one panel, and several tours of Danish gardens, both public and private, both within the city and without.

Of the sixteen lectures, seven addressed Old Garden Roses almost exclusively, and two others included them. Given the short summers of Scandinavia and Finland, it is no surprise that the Nordic lectures focussed almost entirely on heritage roses. The Dane lecture addressed species roses in some detail but also included Gallicas, Albas, Damasks, Centifolias, and Bourbons. The late Queen Ingrid, "always in the garden," considered 'Zepherine Drouhin' her favorite flower.

For twenty years in Norway, a university team of three has collected old roses from people's gardens—cuttings, suckers, seeds—in the belief that "sharing is keeping." In addition to species roses, the team has found Boursault roses, Hybrid Chinas, Mosses, Noisettes, and native *Spinossissimas*. The team has taken many of these to the Swedish genetic bank for identification or more information.

Sweden, of course, is known for its POM, its national program of cultivated plant diversity. Between 1850 and 1890, 250 Gallica varieties were sold in Sweden; today, the number is 57, 45 of which are in the Swedish Gene Bank. One particular Centifolia, known as "Erik", has been found in 93 sites in Sweden as well as Norway—clearly a popular rose. *Spinossissimas* are also prominent in this gene pool. To date, 15,000 roses have been documented as growing in Sweden, 94% of which are once-flowering.

In Finland six different species roses are native, which includes their double forms. *Spinossissimas* are especially prevalent, but so are Gallicas, *Francofurtanas*, *Rugosas*, *Centifolias*, and Albas. The deep pink Centifolia of 1819 'Minette' is especially widespread, as is the 1759 'Blush Damask'.

Iceland grows six types of *Spinossissimas* and one species, *R.*

majalis, all in regions far apart from each other. *Rosa pendulina* thrives there and is used for hybridizing. The Alba ‘Blanche de Belgique’ does especially well. Diseases are not a problem for Iceland’s roses; only the weather is.

A talk by Mia Grondahl of Sweden focussed on heritage roses lost, found, and preserved for the future in the southeastern tip of Sweden known as Osterlen. Her book tells stories about the more than 200 roses collected from 55 villages in Osterlen. Though the roses had been given names like “The Blacksmith’s Rose”, many were identified as ‘Great Western’ (the most common), ‘Harison’s Yellow’, ‘Blush Damask’, ‘Alba Maxima’, ‘Joseph Guy’, ‘Mme Caroline Testout’, ‘Crimson Rambler’, and others.

Another lecture addressed the old roses of Germany, especially those of Daniel August Schwarzkopf, probably the earliest breeder of roses in Europe. (See my article, “Before and After Josephine: The Roses of Wilhelmshöhe” in the May 2015 issue of *Rose Letter*.) The talk added newly discovered information to my own.

The most exciting talk of all for me was given by Eleanore Cruse: “Roses au Naturel.” Cruse lives in the rugged, remote countryside of Ardeche in southern France where she grows species and old roses informally to blend in with trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and rills of a pristine countryside. Thirty-some years ago she created Roseaie de Berty, a nursery and rose garden where roses spill, ramble, and climb in wild, abandoned freedom. It’s a Shangri-la I long to visit.

Tours took us to gardens at Rosenborg Castle, Fredensborg Palace (Queen Margrethe II’s summer residence), as well as to parks with rose gardens and three or four private gardens. One was an Old Rose preservation garden in Valby Park outside the city. In some of the various gardens, especially those in Copenhagen itself, the roses were past their prime or even spent. Nonetheless, it was thrilling to know that old roses are still loved and grown here and, despite Denmark’s current drought, to see the plants lush and green.

Two years from now in June 2020, the Heritage Rose Conference will be held in Brussels. Belgium is known for its many gardens and its famous Hex Castle. Like its rose garden, the one in Kortrijk and the rose garden at Vrijbroek have all won the international Award of Garden Excellence. —The Editor

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Blush Damask