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# FLOWERS OF THE FRENCH RIVIERA



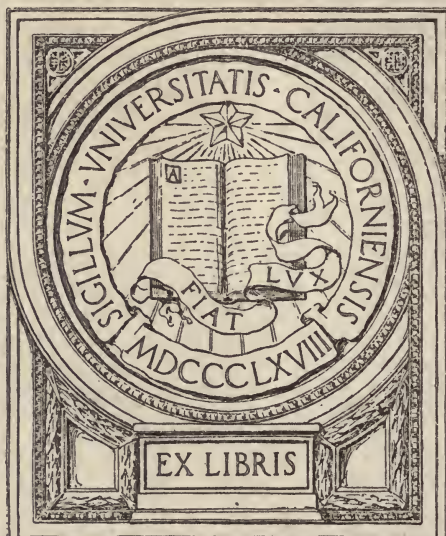
By M. HENRY L. DE VILMORIN

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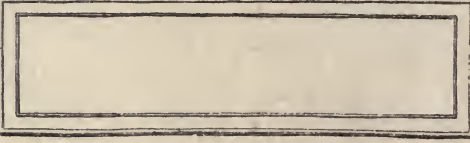
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## FLOWERS OF THE FRENCH RIVIERA.

By M. HENRY L. DE VILMORIN, F.R.H.S.

This paper was prepared at the request of the Royal Horticultural Society of England, and read at their public meeting of the 28th of March, 1893. It is now reprinted, by permission of the Society, from the August number of their Journal, Vol. XVI., Part 1, pages 80 to 104.

WINTERING on the Riviera has become such a common feature of modern life—so many invalids or pleasure-seekers resort annually to the sun-warmed shores of Hyères, Cannes, Nice, and Mentone—that most educated Englishmen of our days are perfectly familiar with the climate, sights, and produce of Maritime Provence.

And not only to actual visitors is the floral wealth of the Riviera displayed on the spot, but, thanks to the ever-increasing rapidity and cheapness of the means of transport, immense quantities of cut flowers are despatched daily to the central and northern parts of Europe in mid-winter, to spread and maintain the reputation of the Riviera as the very place to grow flowers out of doors at the time when they become terribly scarce anywhere else.

I will not venture on a ground already well beaten in attempting to describe the beauties of the Var and of the Maritime Alps, or in contrasting the vigorous and blooming vegetation of the gardens on the Riviera during the colder months of the

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year with the desolate aspect of our pleasure-grounds when covered with snow or beaten by the winter gales.

I will therefore approach the subject from a purely horticultural point of view, and will limit my remarks to a short account of the climatic conditions of the French Riviera, and to a review of the principal kinds of flowers grown there for profit, with brief remarks on the most approved varieties and on the most noteworthy features of cultivation and disposal.

My endeavour will be to give a faithful account of what is being done in the present year (1898), as it must be borne in mind that the production of, and the trade in, cut flowers are undergoing frequent and material changes from one season to the next.

The mere difference in latitude cannot account sufficiently for so large a discrepancy as exists between the coast of Kent or Sussex and that of Provence. The climatic conditions peculiar to the Riviera must be traced in a large proportion to the effect of the sheltering hills and mountains which keep off the north winds, turn away the currents of cold air, and radiate the heat they receive from the sun on warm clear days.

Sunshine, in fact, is the great boon of the district. It may be very well said that the main difference between the climate of Southern England and that of the Riviera is not so much in a higher temperature as in a greater amount of sunlight. In fact, the proportion of sunny to overcast days is nearly three times greater in Cannes than it is in London, and although the total rainfall is nearly the same at both places, the number of wet days is about three times greater in England.

The sea acts also as a moderator. Its deep waters never sink, even in the middle of winter, to a lower temperature than 48° Fahrenheit. All the coast, and more especially the headlands which are nearly surrounded by the sea, derive a very mild climate from the vast extent of almost tepid water round them. The pretty island of St. Honorat, opposite Cannes, which is only a hundred acres in extent, and scarcely rises twenty feet above the level of the sea, is almost free from frost on that account.

Sharp and protracted frosts are seldom experienced on the

Riviera except on low-lying grounds, where cold air collects and lingers for some length of time. On ridges, or indeed on all higher grounds or on hillsides, frost is due only to intense radiation during clear nights, and is easily obviated by the use of light screens of canvas, heather, or reeds. Glass frames are also used very extensively, and each successive season adds several acres to the extent of land covered with glass on the Riviera.

Not that glass houses proper are very frequent on the grounds of the florists. Some score of them are devoted to forcing the climbing Roses and perpetual-flowering Pinks; but by far the commonest structures are low rows of glass frames, supported by a single central rail, and sloping almost to the ground, while the lower part of the sides is made tight with straw, heather, or seaweed. Bush Roses, Pinks, Mignonette, bulbous flowers, bloom freely under such shelter, and the same is found sufficient, heated or unheated, to produce French Beans, Tomatos, and Strawberries in January and February.

The use of artificial heat is by no means despised or neglected by the gardeners and florists on the Riviera, but it is only occasionally resorted to. Nearly all the large glass structures there are provided with hot-water pipes, simply laid flat on the ground, to insure the possibility of heating on an emergency; but the sun alone generally gives more heat than is required, so that the main work consists in airing and ventilating the houses.

Many are the plants cultivated on the Riviera which would *not* be benefited by the use of artificial heat. To Anemones, Polyanthus Narcissi, and Mignonette some shelter is at times acceptable and helpful, but the principal requirements of such plants are plenty of light, bright sunshine, and fresh air.

Flowering trees and shrubs, of course, have to rough it out in the open air. We will take them first.

#### TREES: ACACIAS, EUCALYPTUS, ETC.

All the Australian or New Zealand Acacias, known in the bark trade as the "Wattle trees," and in the flower trade as "Mimosa," have found a new home on the Riviera. Several

dozen species grow there luxuriantly, and become large trees or shrubs in a wonderfully short time.

Five species are largely used for floral decorations, but one of them is pre-eminently "the Mimosa" proper, as *Eucalyptus Globulus* is essentially "the Eucalypt."

*Acacia dealbata* (fig. 1) is the sweetest and most graceful,



FIG. 1.—ACACIA DEALBATA.

the most feathery, and the finest foliaged of all the winter Acacias. It grows to be a large tree, and develops its yellow flowers, which look like stringed beads of the finest silk, as soon as it is three or four years old. A large tree of this species all ablaze with the sunshine on its golden fleece is indeed a beautiful sight.

The blooming season of *Acacia dealbata* lasts from the middle of January to the end of February. Immense quantities of it are then distributed all over Europe, and the price is maintained



at a pretty high figure (about £2 per cwt. on the spot), owing to the limited area over which the tree will thrive. Only in the Esterels and on the gneiss hills around Cannes is the proper soil for *Acacia dealbata* to be found in combination with a suitable climate. On all clayey or calcareous soils the tree sickens, turns yellow, and dies off rapidly.



FIG. 2.—*ACACIA RETINODES* VAR. *FLORIBUNDA*.

An artificial process has been in use for a few years in order to anticipate the blooming season of Mimosa. Flowering branches are cut a week or so before they would bloom in the open air, and are submitted, with their butt end steeped in water, to the action of moderately heated steam. The flowers expand in ten

to twenty hours, and last as long afterwards as if cut direct from the tree. Large tin vats are prepared for the purpose, and the process is a very profitable one, as the first consignments of "Mimosa" fetch a high price at the opening of the season.

Four additional species of Acacia are current articles of commerce, although they stand far behind *A. dealbata* in every respect.

*A. retinodes*, commonly called *A. floribunda* (fig. 2), is a dense tree with numerous narrow phyllodes not unlike Willow leaves. The yellow globular blooms are borne in small groups at the end of very slender branchlets. Their great merit consists in being produced all the year round. No other Acacia can be had from the Riviera through the autumn months. Choice sprigs of *A. floribunda* are very pretty and graceful.

*A. pycnantha* var. *petiolaris*.—The leaves in this species are reduced to an expanded petiole or phyllode, dull green, broad, more or less sickle-shaped. The glomerules of flowers are larger, more dense, and of a deeper colour than those of *A. dealbata*, and they come into bloom some weeks later. The golden yellow branches of *A. petiolaris* are very effective, especially in large masses, but they lack the delicacy and refinement of *A. dealbata*.

*A. cultriformis* (fig. 3) is extremely distinct in appearance. The long, slender shoots are thickly covered with foliage inserted edgewise, of a glaucous or silvery colour, more like scales than leaves. The axillary spikes of flowers stand out near the end of the branch in large numbers, and form a thyrse-like bunch of an intense yellow colour almost verging into orange. *A. cultriformis* is in bloom in March and April.

*A. longifolia* bears oblong phyllodes, and blooms also in March. The axillary flowers are not compressed into a globular mass as they are in all the foregoing species, but make a sort of cylindrical catkin, one inch or more in length, and of exquisite beauty. The plant is very hardy and a strong grower. Only the smell is not nice, and is even by some pronounced offensive.

The so-called St. Helena Acacia, which is a drooping form not far removed otherwise from *A. cultriformis*; *A. binervata*, *A. obliqua*, *A. cyanophylla*, *A. ulicina*, are also very pretty and

useful on the spot, but they are not recognised articles of exportation.

Eucalypts are profusely planted on the Riviera as ornamental trees. Some species are occasionally relieved of part of their flowering branches for commercial purposes.



FIG. 3.—ACACIA CULTRIFORMIS.

*E. cosmophylla*, with medium-sized flowers in threes, white glossy buds of wax-like appearance, and stiff greyish foliage, is the greatest favourite in the Paris market; it blooms in autumn and early winter.

*E. melliodora* gives extremely slender drooping branches, in which graceful leaves accompany small white flowers grouped in trusses of seven ; they have a faint smell of honey.



FIG. 4.—EUCALYPTUS ROBUSTA.

Flowering twigs of *E. robusta* (fig. 4) are very effective. They are erect, with bold bay-like foliage, and pointed buds in terminal bunches, white or tinged with crimson.

*E. Andreana*, Ndn. (fig. 5) is also sometimes sent to the Paris Halles Centrales. The flowers are very small, but



FIG. 5.—EUCALYPTUS ANDREANA.

intensely white, the slender stamens suggesting a little flake of cotton wool. They are disposed in the axils of leaves, in com-

compact masses of twenty to forty. The tree was introduced to the Riviera by the great traveller and landscape gardener M. Edouard André.

Even *Eucalyptus Globulus* (fig. 6) may be considered as



FIG. 6.—EUCALYPTUS GLOBULUS.

very ornamental when its large discs of long white stamens are well expanded.

The white and pink varieties of *E. leucoxylon* are also very

elegant, but, like the Acacias mentioned lately, they are mere fancy flowers, not in regular demand on the markets.

I cannot dismiss the subject of tree flowers without mentioning *Hakea laurina*, alias *H. eucalyptoides*, one of the strangest looking plants when in bloom of the aptly named order Proteaceæ. The half globular trusses of flowers, with their long curved filaments crimson at the base and white at the top, look as much like a sea anemone as anything.

The best collections of flowering trees and large shrubs are to be seen at the Villa Thuret, near Antibes, and at La Mortola, the residence of Mr. Thomas Hanbury. Both places are filled with collections of the highest botanical value. Villa Thuret is officially connected with the scientific universities of France, and La Mortola might aptly be described as a South European extension of Kew Gardens.

#### SHRUB FLOWERS: ROSES, MARGUERITES, ETC.

Roses are everywhere on the Riviera; they grow in hedges, hang from trees, cover the front and sides of houses, overtop fences, and line railway tracks. Many kinds, such as the *Indica major* and the Banksian Roses, bloom only in spring, when they are of surprising beauty. Some others flower nearly all the year round, and it is on these latter that the winter supply has to depend.

The highest authority on Roses in England, the Dean of Rochester, remarked more than ten years ago that out of every hundred Rose-bushes planted on the Riviera, ninety belong to the Safrano variety. The remark holds good to this day, but only where the production of Roses in the open air and without shelter of any description is contemplated. On the other hand, Safrano is very seldom if ever grown under glass.

This shows plainly that the one capital merit of Safrano is to continue blooming and developing buds at a temperature which would be too low for any other Tea Rose. How often, for instance, do we find, even in the North of France or in England, well-formed buds of Safrano in November or December, when every other hybrid or Tea Rose is crippled by cold. It seems that the limit of temperature at which Safrano would cease blooming is just equal to the lowest temperature experienced at well-

sheltered spots on the Riviera, so that in such places the blooming tendency of the plant is sometimes reduced in winter, but never entirely conquered.

Riviera Safranos are very variable in size and beauty, according to the age of the bushes and to the amount of care exercised in pruning, manuring, &c. The long conical buds, unfolding so much freshness and beauty as they begin to expand, are known everywhere as the "Nice Roses." The exterior petals often show a deep crimson colour on the outside; this is generally the effect of cold weather experienced in the bud state.

Young leaves and shoots of the Safrano Rose often exhibit a beautiful brown colour, and they are then turned to good account by the local florists as a contrast to pale blush Roses.

The China Roses (common, blood-red, and Ducher), are also perpetual bloomers on the Riviera; they are planted extensively in hedges. But they are of limited commercial importance, especially as the stems are too slender to carry well the large egg-shaped buds, and so make wiring a necessity.

Only the beautiful, nearly single Rose, Gloire des Rosomanes, is still hardier and more perpetually in bloom than Safrano. It makes a charming and a striking feature of the country in winter, but, although of great artistic beauty, it is too perishable and too short-lived to be sought after as a flower for exportation.

We may refer to open-air Roses, the climbing kinds which, trained along walls on a southern aspect, bloom all through the winter, as Général Lamarque, Gloire de Dijon, Reine Olga de Wurtemberg, and even Reine Marie Henriette and Maréchal Niel, but the two last named succeed better under glass. Even the hardier kinds are much benefited by the use of a canvas screen in front and on top of the wall. Général Lamarque treated in that way gives lots of buds of the purest white. Gloire de Dijon is not a great success on the Riviera; it is too full, does not open well, and is often damaged on the outside.

Very handsome Roses are produced on the Riviera from several hybrid or Tea sorts by the help of glass with or without artificial heat. Souvenir de la Malmaison, Marie Van Houtte, and La France come first under that head, as also Perle de Lyon, Souvenir d'un Ami, and especially several varieties originated on the spot, and mostly raised by Nabonnand, such as Paul



Nabonnand, Papa Gontier, Isabelle Nabonnand, and Général Schablikine.

The first named is one of the finest Roses in existence when grown under glass. It has become one of the greatest favourites on the Riviera. Isabelle Nabonnand is a very large flesh-coloured flower with a darker centre. It grows to a very large size, as does Papa Gontier. Général Schablikine has a very pretty bud, elongated, and of a very bright carmine with a coppery tinge on the exterior; the shoots bear most formidable thorns.

Marie Van Houtte need not be praised here; it gives splendid buds, even in winter, with the help of some artificial heat. In very warm and sheltered corners it blooms well in the open, even



FIG. 7.—CHRYSANTHEMUM FRUTESCENS VAR. ÉTOILE D'OR.

in mid-winter; this is the case chiefly if it be trained against a wall.

Maréchal Niel requires more artificial heat than any other Rose. Next to Safrano it gives the largest money return on the coast, but it cannot be considered as a characteristic sort of the Riviera, as the way in which it is grown there does not materially differ from the English fashion of dealing with it.

White and yellow Marguerites (*Chrysanthemum frutescens*) (fig. 7) are grown in large quantities on the Mediterranean coast. The former are used extensively for house and church

decoration; the latter are amongst the most valuable export flowers. Yellow Marguerites bloom all the year round, but the bright golden flowers are especially sought after from December to May. Pruning tends to concentrate the blooming period to winter and early spring.

The habit and foliage of the yellow variety are just the same as those of the vigorous white Marguerite, Comtesse de Chambord, but the pale gold colour of its rays gives quite a peculiar charm to it. It is generally called "Anthemis" on the Riviera; it is known also as the "Étoile d'Or" Marguerite.

It is said to have originated at the Golfe Jouan from a chance seedling, but nothing absolutely certain is known on the subject. The plant is mostly multiplied by cuttings, which strike easily. It grows into large bushes of three feet in height, and as much in diameter, which are generally shortlived, the flowering power of plants more than three years old being in most cases apparently exhausted.

The flowers, when borne on young vigorous plants, sometimes exceed three inches in diameter; they are scentless, and with proper care can be kept fresh in water for ten days or more.

#### HERBACEOUS PLANTS: PINKS, BULBS, MIGNONETTE, VIOLETS, ETC.

From time immemorial perpetual-flowering Pinks have been grown on the Riviera, as they are in Italy, and especially in Spain; but until the last twenty years they were only considered as household favourites, kept in pots on window-sills or in small gardens. A few gardeners used to raise some plants for sale.

Since the fast trains have been established, which carry the Riviera flowers to Paris in twenty hours and to London in less than two days, the cultivation of Pinks, both in the open air and under glass, has made a wonderful progress. Acres and acres are now devoted to the growth of Pinks about Toulon, Hyères, Cannes, Antibes, Nice, and Beaulieu. Hundreds of glass houses, or temporary structures simply made of two rows of glass frames supported by wooden rails, give to the best class of winter-flowering Pinks the help of some additional heat and of some useful shelter.

But acres upon acres are grown without any glass at all, straw mats or canvas screens only being used to protect the plants from

the effects of radiation, and to afford them the necessary protection against the bad effect of rain or cold dew.

Large tracts of land are met with, especially on the Cape of Antibes, all partitioned into long beds, every one of which is lined with wooden bars supported by rows of posts three feet high. Or, simpler still, tightened wires are run from post to post lengthways, and mats or screens of some cheap material are spread at night over the beds on top of the bars or wires, and they are removed by day in clear weather (that is to say, nearly every day and all day) in order to admit the heat and light of the sun. Canvas strips are sometimes hung down from the bars as an additional protection.

Cuttings are generally made from November to March in a shady place in the open air, or in such houses as are used to force Roses with little or no heat; young plants begin to bear flowers in October, and continue through the winter.

Any well-drained soil is fit to grow Pinks, but the plants are found to succeed especially well on the dark red clayey soil which lies on top of some of the calcareous formations on the coast. Such soil is found, for instance, on the southern part of the Cape of Antibes near the world-famed residence of Eileuroc, and in the Ste. Hélène quarter at Nice.

The following are the favourite varieties:—

#### WHITE.

*Petit Génois*.—Flower small, deeply cut, pure white, hardy, and a most profuse bearer.

*Enfant de Nice*.—A strong plant, very prolific, white with flesh-coloured centre, at times nearly pure white.

*Miss Moore*.—Large, very fine, of good substance, edge nearly smooth.

#### ROSE-COLOURED.

*Rose Rivoire*.—Large flat flower, not very full, edge quite smooth, soft colour.

*Rose Chair d'Antibes*.—Very large and very full, edge deeply toothed, a fine flower.

#### SCARLET.

*Alégatière*.—Flowers large, almost round, of a very bright rich scarlet colour, and a free bearer.

*Rouge Niçois*.—Large and full, a vigorous grower; colour deep scarlet or blood-red, edge toothed.

## YELLOW.

*Comtesse de Paris*.—Large, pale sulphur, very full and finely fringed, occasionally marked with small pink streaks.

This variety was introduced from Seville by, and consequently named after, H.R.H. Mme. la Comtesse de Paris.

## VARIEGATED.

*Panaché de Nice*.—A pretty flower, streaked with deep scarlet on rosy ground, edge of the petals lacinated; a great favourite on the markets.

*Jean Sisley*.—Mottled scarlet and salmon colour, edge bluntly toothed, a very pretty and effective variety.



FIG. 8.—DIANTHUS CARYOPHYLLUS FLORE PLENO var. MARGUERITE.

A new race of perpetual Pinks, known as *Œillet Marguerite* (fig. 8), and apparently of Italian origin, is well adapted for open-air cultivation, and promises to succeed well on the Riviera. It is easily told from other races by its erect habit, yellowish-green foliage, and finely toothed thin petals. It grows fast, and, if sown

early in the year, will bloom in the autumn and through the whole winter. Colours and combinations of colours are not yet as varied as in the old perpetual-flowering Pinks.

Seedling Pinks are grown very largely at Cannes, Antibes, and Nice. Very fine novelties are raised every year, and it is quite probable that a new local strain will find its way into the horticultural trade before long. Flowers of large size and petals deeply and sharply toothed seem to be the characteristic features of the Riviera Pink.

#### BULBOUS PLANTS.

Roman Hyacinths are grown on the Riviera for bulbs and for



FIG. 9.—NARCISSUS TAZETTA VAR. TOTUS ALBUS GRANDIFLORUS.

blooms. From Marseilles to Nice they are seen everywhere. The headquarters for their production is, however, at Toulon and Ollioules. No protection whatever is required, and the blooming season extends, according to situation, from December to March.

The delicate white spikes are sent by hundredweights, at times by tons, and fetch but a poor price on the markets. They certainly cannot compete in northern parts with the same forced in heat on the spot.

A curious industry, which seems to be developing fast, consists in dyeing white flowers by making them suck up various colouring substances mostly derived from coal-tar. White Hyacinths are peculiarly apt to take dye in this way, and they are now frequently offered for sale in Paris either of a rosy lilac, of a salmon colour, or of a glaucous green quite unknown to nature. The same process was tried last year with white Pinks, but it fell flat after a very short run. Its revival as applied to Roman Hyacinths and to forced Lilac appears to give better promise of permanent success.

Polyanthus Narcissi are natives of the Riviera. The wild *N. Tazetta* is found in large numbers on the low-lying meadows all along the coast. Paper-white Narcissus (fig. 9), with its new large-flowered variety, *Étoile d'Or*, *Soleil d'Or*, and *Grand Monarque*, are the most prominent kinds, and they flower in the order named, from November to March.

Daffodils proper, the trumpet and Nonsuch Narcissi, are not yet of common occurrence on the Riviera, although some choice varieties are being introduced by amateurs, and although *Narcissus minor* is found wild on the hills bordering the coast. The fine garden varieties of Daffodils bloom about three weeks earlier there than they do in England, and they will surely gain ground every year.

The Poet's Narciss is also a native of Provence, and dots the hillside meadows and pastures with its dazzling white stars. On peaty grassland above Grasse it is so plentiful that it blooms in white patches, rods in extent, which are discerned miles away on the dark green grass. Bulbs might be lifted there by cart loads; only it is the common late-flowering kind, which is of limited commercial value.

In gardens only the large early-blooming form, *Narcissus poeticus ornatus*, is met with. It is a most valuable form of Parisian origin, but now distributed all over the world (fig. 10).

*Narcissus odoratus* and the single and double Jonquils are plentiful, and spread their fragrance all over the country in March and April.

Hybrid Gladioli are quite hardy on the Riviera, and can be left in the ground from year to year. Dry bulbs started only in summer will bloom in spring, when handsome spikes will fetch high prices. Very few gardeners as yet go in for forced Gladioli.

*Gladiolus segetum* is very plentiful in a wild state, and it blooms through the cornfields in April.



FIG. 10.—NARCISSUS POETICUS ORNATUS.

*G. Colvillei*, and especially its charming white variety "The Bride," are seldom obtained before April. They are grown in large masses such as sometimes to glut the market entirely.

*Gladiolus tristis*, a dull white elegant flower with purplish-black marks on the outside of the divisions, blooms as early as February. It finds favour on the market, chiefly on account of its earliness.

*Allium neapolitanum* (fig. 11) and *Allium triquetrum* are still found wild on the Riviera, although much hunted up by florists. They are also grown in gardens, and give very pretty elegant milk-white umbels of good duration. They should, however, be handled with care, as the stalks if bruised will give forth a powerful smell of garlic.

Tulips of several species are wild on the coast. *T. oculus-solis* and the exquisite pink and white *T. Clusiana* are plucked in the fields. Some early Dutch or Parisian varieties are grown by



FIG. 11.—*ALLIUM NEAPOLITANUM*.

florists, but the strange-looking Parrot Tulips are the most profitable of all.

Freesias become every year more common on the Riviera. They are perfectly at home there, as well as the *Ixias* and *Sparaxis*.

*Lachenalia pendula Aureliana* is a remarkably distinct form, although evidently belonging to the *pendula* type. It is more compact than the common *L. pendula*, and stronger. It has broader leaves and more numerous flowers of a dull red colour scarcely tipped with green. It flowers in the open air through the winter months. It is said, and the fact is supported by high authorities, that the plant was found wild in the Esterel Moun-



tains, close by the track of the old Roman road, Via Aurelia. Still it seems scarcely credible that a species belonging to a South African genus should be found isolated so far and in a place so entirely disconnected with the station of all other *Lachenalias*.

Anemones, like *Narcissi*, are indigenous on the Mediterranean coast. From fields and meadows they were early introduced into gardens. The Provençal varieties of *Anemone* belong mainly



FIG. 12.—ANEMONE CORONARIA VAR. CHAPEAU DE CARDINAL.

to *A. coronaria* (fig. 12). *A. hortensis* is found also in a wild state, but it is scarcely, if at all, subject to cultivation. In deep, rich, moist soil it is found as *A. pavonina*, a large scarlet flower with a golden disc in the centre. On pastures and hillsides it is common as *A. variabilis*, much smaller, and with flowers changing from pink to lilac, sometimes pure white.

A good many wild forms of *A. coronaria* are natives of

Provence, some of which have become extinct in a wild state during the last twenty years.

Two single varieties are very abundant to this day, viz. the common purple and the single scarlet form. The former is very common, and is gathered from field and vineyard nearly all through the winter. It is brought to market in bunches, which look strangely like bouquets of big Violets. The scarlet variety is not either so frequent or so early as the purple, but it is of a very bright colour. The roots are eagerly sought after for commercial purposes. It is a favourite on the Paris market.

Two very distinct double forms were introduced long ago into gardens, and lately into florists' lists. One of them, known to botanists as *Anemone Rissoana*, is called in trade "Anémone Rose de Nice" (fig. 13). It is a double flower with narrow-pointed divisions of a salmon colour, more or less greenish in the centre. It commences to bloom very early, and lasts from January to April. It is one of the most exquisite flowers from the Riviera.

*Anemone grassensis*, locally termed "Capeou de Capelan," presents two distinct varieties, one of a rich crimson colour, the other white mixed with carmine in a greater or less proportion. Both are quite distinct from any other *Anemone coronaria* by the angular appearance of their exterior divisions, which rather suggest a flower of *Nigella* than a cup-shaped *Anemone*. The centre of the flower is filled with short, thickly pressed scales, red, rosy, or flesh-coloured. The "Capelan" *Anemones* flower only from February to April. They are very fine and effective when well grown, especially the white variety.

The large improved strains of *Anemone coronaria*, both single and double, succeed admirably on the Riviera, and are sold on the local markets, and sent to florists in the North in large quantities. All *Anemones* carry well, revive easily in water, and last for many days.

Although by no means peculiar to the Riviera, some varieties of Stocks ought to be mentioned here, as they contribute very large quantities of cheap winter flowers to the local and export trade.

All the varieties of the large-flowered German Stocks, and also of the "Empereur" Stocks, are well adapted to the local conditions; but, in fact, the pure white and the crimson varieties are preferred.

A very fine biennial white Stock, known as the "Nice White,"

as well as a dwarf, very large-flowered whitish lilac form, found their way into general horticulture from being at first purely local strains. A branching blood-red annual Stock is also grown with profit.

Mignonette is in great demand in the South, as well as everywhere else. It is grown under screens, just in the same



FIG. 13.—ANEMONE ROSE DE NICE.

way as the hardier class of Pinks. It is sometimes pinched by frost. The large "Pyramidal" and "Machet" varieties are the only kinds in use.

Many more herbaceous plants are occasionally grown for their flowers on the Riviera; but very few besides those enumerated above constitute a real article of trade. I must, however, make an exception for Violets, which will be mentioned

by-and-by, and for *Iberis gibraltarica*, *I. semperflorens*, and *Arctotis aspera*, and also for the common Cornflower and the closely allied *Centaurea depressa*.

*Iberis gibraltarica* thrives remarkably well, chiefly on rocks or loose walls, in a shady situation. Its large umbels of white and lilac are really wonderful.

*Arctotis aspera* gives through the whole winter a succession of large cream-white flowers, with a deep yellow ring round a black disc in the centre. They are very effective, and stand well in water.

Violets, though last, are certainly not least amongst the Riviera flowers. Large quantities of the common sweet Violet are exported daily, and supply the Paris market to the nearly complete exclusion of North-grown flowers. The rich grass and orchard land round Solliès-Pont in the Var is now the home of sweet Violets. It supplies all the principal markets with ready-made bunches of flowers, collared with fresh green leaves. The large dark Violet "Le Czar" is in great demand, but the pale, white-centred, long-stalked "Wilson" variety holds its own all the same. A new large kind, known as "Luxonne," is well spoken of. It is not yet widely distributed.

Neapolitan Violets are grown by the acre all round Grasse, Magagnose, Vence, and Cannes for the perfume factories. A good proportion of the crop, however, finds its way to the market or to the florist's shop. They are universal favourites, and in constant request for corsage and button-hole. They are met with every day in apartments, where they combine admirably with bright Anemones or golden Mimosa, and tons of them are used at the "battles of flowers."

Although some other flowers not unworthy of attention might still be mentioned, I feel that the line must be drawn somewhere, and I will not, therefore, extend these remarks any further. Suffice it to say, that to a lover of flowers the Riviera is never destitute of some objects of interest and of attraction. At this time of year the contrast between Northern skies and the "Côte d'Azur" is at its highest. Should any of those present here feel inclined, and at liberty, to take tickets to the Riviera for the Easter holidays, they may rest assured that they will find there plenty of material for horticultural observation, and many sights of beauty to gladden their eyes, besides the bright sun and the dark blue sea.





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