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FARRER-INGLEBOROUGH HALL—ENGLAND

R. H. Briggs, Rawtenstall, England

It may be taken for granted that visitors to England have, long before they leave their native shores, formed some idea as to the places of interest they intend to visit and the shrines to which, if possible, they will make pilgrimages.

Poetry, like music, knowing no frontiers it is perhaps only natural that Shakespeare's country is favoured by nearly all—to Americans. Sungrave Manor in Northamptonshire where dwelt the ancestors of George Washington, is a place worthy of pilgrimage, those interested in historic buildings find the old Abbeys, Cathedrals, Guildhalls, etc. with which this country is so richly endowed a source of interest, whilst for others the green and pleasant land of England "That gem set in a silver sea" as Shakespeare described it, with its age-old lawns and gardens and stately homes suffice.

As Halls go, Ingleborough Hall is a comparatively small place of residence and certainly would not, either on account of its spaciousness or for any architectural features it possesses, be considered a place worthy of a pilgrimage but it looms large in the eyes of all true lovers of Alpines inasmuch as it was the birthplace and home of that intrepid plant collector, Reginald Farrer, a man who did much to enrich our knowledge of and our gardens with floral gems from far-off lands, and ultimately laid down his life in their pursuit.

The Hall stands almost at the foot of the mountain of that name which, like some huge sphinx, dominates the fertile plain below and is a prominent landmark for miles around.

It stands abrupt from the limestone crags which are a feature of this district the greyish-white rock out-jutting from and contrasting pleasantly with the rich green turf which provides lush pastureage for innumerable hill sheep of which unfortunately the blizzards of last winter took severe toll.

The view from the summit of these crags—and from the mountain particularly—is one of grandeur, not of the awe-inspiring kind commonly associated with descriptions of alpine scenery, but one of pastoral and tranquil beauty.
Emily Bronte, one of the trio of remarkable sisters of that name, aptly describes such a scene in one of her poems:

"A heaven so clear, an earth so calm,
So sweet, so soft, so hushed an air,
And—deepening still the dream-like charm,
Cattle browsing everywhere."

Such is the view in front of us, the snug hamlets each with its turreted church, grey but mellow, with roofs richly patterned with moss and lichens, the farmsteads and verdant pastures amongst which the Ribble winds its tortuous way like a silver thread soon to lose itself in the sea beyond.

Away to the left the gaunt pile of Pendle Hill made famous by Harrison Ainsworth in his historical novel Lancashire Witches lies like some recumbent giant hemming in the valley whilst slightly nearer on a wooded knoll stands Clitheroe Castle, victor of many a siege; sentinel of the plain.

There is evidence in one of Farrer's books that in moments of depression occasioned by long periods of dull, damp and sodden conditions, the impenetrable yet penetrating mist of mountainous Asia pervading everything and enforcing an inactivity so irritating to one of his active temperament, his thoughts turned towards his homeland hills and crags, the clear air, sparkling sunshine, light and warmth radiating from every projecting rock; again to quote Emily Bronte:

"Such were the scenes, he knew them well,
He knew the turfy pathway's sweep.
That, winding o'er each billowy swell,
Marked out the tracks of wondering sheep."

Although Farrer is best known by his travels in and writings of the Alpine regions of Europe and Asia, it was not amongst these his passion for collecting developed; that began when, as a youth armed with haversack and collecting box, he scaled the crags and mountains which lay almost at his door.

Being frail of body he was educated at home in his early youth and allowed to indulge in his hobby perhaps more from a health point of view than from any hope there may have been that one day it might lead to fame. His first rock garden, constructed at the age of fourteen, indicates that he took full advantage of the opportunities thus afforded him.

Fortunately for Farrer he was born in a district botanically rich, especially in alpines, plants which seemed to have a peculiar fascination for him, and that gem of English flora, Primula farinosa, growing in profusion not only on Ingleborough but on Whernside and Penygent, neighboring mountains he knew equally well. Had Primula farinosa been a discovery of China or Tibet it would have been hailed as a rare
treasure, its very prolificacy militates against its receiving the encomiums its dainty form and graceful beauty so richly deserve.

F. Arnold Lee in his botanical classic The Flora of West Yorkshire enumerates over 800 varieties of plants and describes the Farrer district, including the mountains Ingleborough, Whernside and Penygent, as the richest in Yorkshire from a botanical point of view, and of all the treasures the area contains none appealed more to Farrer than P. farinoso and Saxifrage oppositifolia.

In Vol. 2 of his book On the Eaves of the World Farrer refers to some of these gems of his homeland hills and moors. Writing of a Tibetan Androsace he says “It sheets the croppped warm lawns of Da Tung in a shimmer of pink and flows down the naked gravelly banks in such cascades of rippling crimson that from afar you think of Saxifrage oppositifolia in the walls of Penygent.” In another passage in the same book he writes, “I wandered on beside the beck dreaming of Primula farinosa in just such a similar situation far across the world.”

Farrer has been accused of grossly over-estimating the beauty of some of his discoveries but in fairness it should be said that when he saw them in their native habitat they were probably all that he claimed them to be. It is common knowledge that many plants when transplanted to an alien country and in alien soil often show a marked variation from the true type.

Farrer’s adoption of the Buddhist faith certainly gave him access to and a measure of protection in territory he would otherwise have found great difficulty in penetrating. One is apt to regard his action in so doing as a faint for this purpose, but in his On the Eaves of the World he vigorously defends his action and just as vigorously extols the religion of his adoption.

The news of his defection from the “Faith of his Fathers”—and particularly his embracing so heathenish a faith—came as a severe shock to the villagers of his native Clapham who, parochial both in circumstances and outlook with their sole interests being centered in and around the old church, was received with something akin to dismay. As far as the majority were concerned Reginald Farrer’s name was one to be forgotten. Any attempt to try to elicit information from the old inhabitants concerning Farrer’s early life causes a wince and leaves one with the impression that the mere mention of that name is as a probe to a particularly nasty wound.

Farrer has left behind a wealth of literature whether considered as books of travel or records of exploration and plant collecting. And though amongst the tombstones in the churchyard of his native village of Clapham can be found the names of many of his forbears, Reginald Farrer’s is not amongst them. Subjecting his frail body to hardships,
physical discomforts, and climatic conditions which would have taxed the strength of even a robust person, he died in the wilds of Upper Burma at the early age of forty nursed only by his faithful followers who, despite his idiosyncrasies, had learned to love and respect him. A simple cross by the pathside marks his last resting place.

In his private rock garden in the grounds of Ingleborough Hall, Farrer's mother erected a Memorial to him (pictured on preceding page) which reads—

In Loving Memory
of
Reginald John Farrer, eldest son of
James Anson and Elizabeth Farrer of Ingleborough.
Born Feb. 17, 1880, Died at Nuitadi, Upper Burma
He died for love and duty in search of rare plants.

Note: A fuller and more descriptive account of the flora and other features of the Farrer country will appear in the National Auricula Society's Year Book to be issued early in 1949 under the heading Primula Farinos a at Home. The article is by T. Meek, a member who has spent much time botanizing in this district.

Editor's Note: If memory serves, Mr. Briggs at one time mentioned that Ingleborough Hall can be seen from his home, "High Bank," with the aid of field glasses. It is seldom possible to get first hand, new and authentic information such as he has given us and his work and employment of photographers to obtain the pictures which accompany the text is deeply appreciated by the Society.

GRAY IS BEING WORN THIS YEAR

The Northwest's spring and summer were not quite as melancholy as November in England but suggestive enough to induce Mrs. Glen Fisher of Oshkosh to send the poem written by one of England's famous wits sometime in the earlier years of the 19th century.

NOVEMBER IN ENGLAND

No sun—no moon!
No morn—no noon!
No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day—
No sky—no earthly view—
No distance looking blue—
No road—no street—no "other side the way
No end to any "Row!"—
No indications where the Crescent go—
No top to any steeple—
No recognition of familiar people—
No courtesies for showing 'em—
No knowing 'em!
No traveling at all—no locomotion,
No inkling of the way—no notion—
"No go" by land or ocean—
No mail—no post—
No news from any foreign coast—
No park—no ring—no afternoon gentility—
No company—no nobility—
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member—
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds,
November!

Thomas Hood.
Three wide-eyed Midwest gardeners who'd never set foot in the Pacific Northwest, made the trek to that Primrose paradise in late March, and have come home "missionaries" for both the country and the Primroses.

Mrs. Glen Fisher of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and Mrs. Olga Tiemann of Westboro, Missouri, were my comrades in the great adventure which took us as far south as Salem, Oregon, and as far north as Victoria, B.C. (to which we flew from Seattle). Being interested in every kind of plant life and all types of gardening our memories are bulging with impressions, facts, and conclusions.

At the risk of sounding like a man from Mars giving a resume of America after a one-week visit, here's a Midwest slant on Primroses in Oregon and Washington.

The weather struck us first. It was damp, rainy, and cool, with temperatures varying only slightly. None of this business of freezing one day and soaring to 70 degrees the next, as is apt to happen in Iowa. Freezing weather is unusual even in mid-winter, and early spring finds the thermometer maneuvering between about 40 and 50 degrees. This coolness, cloudy weather, and moisture, makes spring last a wonderfully long time. The grass was lush and green, glossy broad-leaved evergreens were in flower or fruit. Everywhere we looked was greenness. Thick moss such as we find in dark damp woodlands, covered tree trunks and branches everywhere, and also clung to wood-shingled roofs. We loved all this greenness (especially since we were fresh from bleak winter landscapes) and the wonderful growing conditions, but missed sunshine.

Primroses are made to order for such weather conditions, that's obvious! How wonderfully they grew! And to our amazement they were used casually as edgings around curbs and driveways, trim around shrubbery, close to houses as foundation plantings, and to garnish doorway rockeries. I can't think of anything used as widely in our gardens unless it's petunias.

Being early spring—apricot and scilla season—the Juliana hybrids and Acaulis types were at their prime. They were showiest when used in masses of a single color. Most popular and widely used was Wanda, as vivid as a prolific violet, and eye-catching when used as a carpet beneath shrubs.

Along garden paths, and in rockeries, Primroses had self-sown into thickets, or enticing clump groupings. Others were carefully arranged in formal beds, or trim borders. To us who had struggled to keep Primroses alive, and who considered ourselves pretty clever to have multiplied a handful of Juliana Hybrids, and maintained a few successful Acaulis, this magnificent ease of culture seemed phenomenal. We were hilariously amused at the paragraph printed in the Program of the Primrose Show that read: "Primroses are among the easiest and more useful of spring and early summer flowering perennials. They do well in spite of neglect, yet respond to good treatment." That wasn't the way we'd heard it!
ships as well as education and sights of great beauty. We saw rows of promising seedlings in unusual new colors; blues that were improvements in size as well as color; Polyanths with huge florets and sturdy stems. The Primrose people are as wonderful as the flowers they grow, and almost overwhelmingly hospitable.

The Society Show in Portland was the climax of our trip, the ultimate in sights, and flower people.

On arriving home it was a blow to discover that a good share of my Primroses had winter-killed. There were reasons enough that I should have been anticipating it. The winter was "the hardest on record" with temperatures skidding to 16 below zero, frost penetrating 6 ft., very little snow for protection, and an interval when a layer of ice did some smothering. If we'd had only one of those conditions we could draw a clear conclusion as to what did the killing. Now we can only guess. Anyhow a large percentage of the fine Polyanthus are gone, even though they were carefully mulched. The Juliana hybrids, bless their sturdy hearts, came through smiling in most instances. Some are more durable than others, notably Lodge, Lakewood and Dorothy. Those of a more creeping and shallow-rooting habit do not thrive so well for me. Japonica and Pulverulenta were wiped out, except in one odd corner. That was an unpleasant surprise. Sieboldia, on the other hand, lived through wherever it was planted. My only Auriculas were seedlings, which vanished of course.

I've decided that those of us in the Midwest who love Primroses, had better get busy and do some breeding. Possibly if we cross various handsome plants that have survived the rigors of this winter, we can develop a strain that will adapt to our climate.

As for sight-seeing trips to learn about flowers—let me recommend them as an exhilarating and thrilling experience, giving one appreciation, understanding, and perspective. One gardens with new zest.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

General election of officers will be held at the annual meeting of the American Primrose Society, December 21, 1948, 7:30 P.M. in the Auditorium of the new Oregonian Bldg., S. W. Broadway and Jefferson Sts., Portland. Members outside the Portland area in good standing who wish to vote but cannot attend the annual meeting may send for ballot. request to be received by the Secretary-Treasurer, Carl Maskey, 2125 5th Ave., Milwaukee 2, Oregon, not later than November 16th. Marked ballots must be returned to that office before the annual meeting, at which time they will be opened and counted.

EARLY MAY IN LANCASHIRE

"Last week (the first in May) and on a delightful day, we were privileged to make a tour in the Ribble Valley. It was a real treat to see the banks and meadows almost clothed with Primroses. On one embankment you could scarcely see a blade of grass so abundant were the Primroses—wild Violets, too, were almost as much in evidence and the whole countryside was a veritable garden."... from correspondence received from Mr. R. H. Briggs, Rawtenstall, England.

THE DENTICULATA-CACHEMIRIANA MERRY-GO-ROUND

Florence Levy

For over sixty years a controversy has flourished around the question of whether P. cachemiriana, so called, is a variety or a garden form, a distinct species as Munro would have it in 1879, or whether it was hybrid as suggested by several earlier scientists who named P. capitata as the father. This last theory was unable to stand up any length of time nor could any other possible second parent be found so its hybridity was short lived. Under the other classifications is has been cataloged and sold these many years.

The generally accepted distinction between the two types is that the so-called P. cachemiriana bears a heavy coating of white or yellowish farina on the underside of the foliage, but those who have grown much P. denticulata recall that it, too, is sometimes mealed. Another difference between the two is that the foliage of P. cachemiriana is more mature during the flowering season while that of P. denticulata is still in an undeveloped stage. Those who have grown both types will have also noted that the one sold under the name Cachemiriana (if actually the true type and not incorrectly labeled), is quite dwarf; has less color variation; blooms later; is smaller in all its parts; wants better drainage in a sharp, leaf mold soil. And that, conversely, P. denticulata waxes fat in a thick soil, is easier to keep, has wide color variation which can be increased through selection from almost blue to near red, and is lush of growth.

P. denticulata has been called the commonest Himalayan Primula and was first collected and described by Dr. Buchanan in 1802 but was not flowered in England until 1841 and 1842. As one of the most traveled of the Primulas it ranges from the extreme southwestern Himalayas on the borders of Afghanistan and Turkestan to the eastern flanks in Nepal, Sikkim and beyond into Western China. In elevation, also, P. denticulata works a wide field climbing from around 7,000 to 12,000 feet. Any plant of such wide distribution is naturally bound to vary widely and my premise, based upon observation and comparison, is that the type which is erroneously known as P. cachemiriana is but a geographical form of P. denticulata growing at a higher elevation in a dryer situation. A plant indigenous to such a location would be more dwarf and less lush than one growing in a rain-soaked area at a lower level; it has seemed apparent that foliage bearing farina is more often associated with plants growing in dryer as opposed to wetter situations; dryer locations in the Indian Himalayas are more or less restricted to the northwestern portion and the limited area would preclude any great color variation.

Hooker, a leading 19th century authority on Indian flora, says the plant is from western Himalaya, or Kashmir (which may or may not have bearing on its name) which province is notably drier than other sections of the range being just east of semi-arid Afghanistan and Turkestan. Hooker gave the plant varietal status, P. denticulata var. cachemiriana, but this name together with Munro's specific designation, P. cachemiriana, are now considered synonymous with P. denticulata and the form loses its identity in the blue and violet sea of Primula denticulata.

...
Those of you who have followed the Society’s Quarterlys have read in the January, 1945 issue Mrs. Lou Roberts’ comprehensive presentation of P. Juliae and its hybrid forms. The following January Dr. C. R. Worth of New York added new names to her extensive listing of Julianas. In the April, 1944 Quarterly Mr. Fred Borsz gave a good description of the various kinds available in the Portland area.

P. Juliae, horticulturally speaking, is a recent discovery, Professor Kusnetzow—Director of the Dornpat Botanic Garden—describing and naming the species in 1901. The plant sent the Botanic Garden at Oxford from Jurgen (Russia) in August, 1910, flowering in England for the first time in 1911. The species has both thrum and pin forms and differ considerably from one another in form and size. In France it founds its way first into the hands of de Vilmorin and was called petite, vivacious, rustic with a rampant rhizome by the French. This would seem to be the whole unvarnished truth on the history of the plant. Proof that it was found under a waterfall has never turned up but it is more than likely true and, at any rate, makes a delightful picture.

P. Juliae is unquestionably a wonderful subject for cross breeding. It is only due to its comparatively recent discovery and the interruption by two major conflicts that good, miniature hybrids are still somewhat limited but the production of new varieties in America is gaining momentum. In her Quarterly article Mrs. Roberts gives a clear picture of what has been done up until a few years ago with the crossing of P. Juliae and Primula acaulis, the Cowslip, Oxlip, the true English Primrose, the Levantine Primrose and the inter-crossing of the hybrids themselves, all of which hybrid forms are known as Julianas.

A. J. Johnson in the February, 1946 issue of the English magazine, “My Garden,” when discussing border Primulas says that, dear as the old Primulas are, “The weathercock of fashion will always influence these things, and of late years Primula vulgaris has, to some extent, queered its own pitch by producing in combination with P. Juliae a race of primroses which has done much to usurp the place of our old friends along our border fronts. That these Juliana primroses are good garden value none will question, and if they do not possess the same antique charm as the others, they are astonishingly prolific bloomers, and offer a wide range of rich colours, as well as delicate hues.

To propagate them by division is as easy as shelling peas and they do so flourish that no soil or site seems to come amiss to them. Indeed, for colour, masses of colour in beds or borders, I know of nothing to equal them in the spring garden, and it is surprising they are not more extensively used. Wanda, one of the least worthy, is familiar, but where, in bulk, are the rosy-apricot E. R. Jones; Gloria, very sumptuous in deepest claret-crimson; the warm wine-red Vulcan, the equally rich Merton Hybrid, and little Pam, so intensely deep in its petunia-purple; not to mention ivories, yellows and some first-class whites. There seems no end to these delightful plants, which, by the way, should be as profitable to the nurseries as they are to every amateur who looks for generous returns from little outlay.” And in the September, 1946 issue he goes on to say, “Even our primrose and its varieties have been unable to resist the spate of Julianas which has lately surged into cultivation, and it would be difficult to overestimate the influence these have had upon gardens in general. From the magenta P. Juliae of the Caucasus have arisen numbers of hybrids and varieties which, by their accommodating natures in any passable loam, ease of increase by division, prolific flowering and rich and varied colours, have become indispensable for rock gardens, borders, edgings and colony planting.

In sun or light shade they will give masses of colour for three or four months, and during that period the leafage is quite insignificant. Though Wanda is the most popular Juliana, it is the least worthy of the crimson-magentas, easily eclipsed by Gloria, the diminutive Pam and the more orange-crimson Merton Hybrid. Crispi is a pretty rose-lilac; E. R. Jones...
One of the pleasures of raising Primroses is the orderly, unhurried sequence of exercises from the daily springtime round to keep current on the latest openings to the fall finalities. Assuming that the plants and seedlings are well established, having been set in late spring, summer and early fall and kept moist, cultivated and binned, the work is really done. But there are pre-winter extras that will repay you well for the small effort involved. In rainy sections fallen leaves should be kept from the plants to avoid rotting of crowns. Mulching, if not already done, will prove of distinct advantage in lessening the beat of rains, slowly feeding the plants and adding protection against heaving up with frost action. Lush Asiatic do not need or want a fortified mulch but one of well-rotted leaf soil, rotted wood or decomposed sawdust.

Place small mounds of bait beneath foliage throughout your planting of evergreen types. A bait with sodium fluosilicate in apple pomace in combination with 3% metaldehyde is good for strawberry beetle as well as slugs, snails and cutworms. When buying baits ask for this combination or notice the active ingredients tabulated on the sack. Any plants dwindling noticeably in size may be prey to the larvae of the strawberry beetle. Dichloro ethalother can be used around the plant, or a solution of lypo and nicotine (a tablespoon of each to the gallon, two cups to a plant) is poured close to and around the plant while foliage is held up and out of the way. Those who have lost plants through the depredations of field mice know the necessity of placing rodent exterminator beneath foliage intermittently throughout the garden and in mole runs, if any. Possibly newer products are on the market but Red Squill is still effective.

Watering lightly during sub-freezing, snowless periods to coat plants in ice mulch is quick protection. Brush, boughs or cornstalks placed over the ice retards thawing and completes the security. We would like to know just what mid-westerners and other climatic unfortunate do when water pipes as well as ground freeze and no snow to soften the landscape.

**QUESTION BOX**

Question from New York: I lost almost all the Polyanthus seedlings from what seems to be leaf spot, brown spots on the leaves which finally died away leaving roots intact. Acaulis was not seriously affected, nor other Primulas adjacent to the affected ones. What treatment should be used?

Kindly forward answers to the Editor’s Office, Gresham, Ore.

There are some interesting offers in the advertising section this quarter. If you are in the market for any of these items, your patronage of the firms giving support to the Quarterly is appreciated.
English Holly

The ideal Christmas gift for your friends or to decorate your home that festive touch. Our postpaid box 2”x4”x5” filled with bright red-heralded sprays of shiny green English holly, 1000 seed to the address you wish. Also Christmas corsages of holly, cones and berries.

Write for further information and prices on larger lots.

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Mixed colors: Plum, near red, magenta, yellow, lavender, blue, pink, tan, purple, cerise and two-toned. $1 dz. postpaid Ready Sept. 1st.

1918 Seed
88 % Blue Primula $1. pck.; Primula mixed, nearly all colors, $1. pck.; Acaulis, nearly all colors, $1. pck.; Auricula, all the new shades $1 pck.; Pulverulenta (Harlequin strain), Japonica (pink, red, cerise) 50¢ each pkt.

Viola seed, mixed, six imp, blue, indigo, ivory, purple and light shades 50¢ each pkt.

Helen's Primrose Gardens
1491 E. Halsey St., Portland 16, Ore.

VETTERLE & REINELT
Capitola, California

Originators of PACIFIC STRAIN of POLYANTHUS PRIMROSES

National Auricula Society (of England)

The Society's YEAR BOOK for 1949

will be ready for distribution in February, price $1.25 p. pd.

Remittances for same can be sent to Mrs. Florence Levy Box 218, Gresham, Oregon before Dec. 31st, or direct to the Hon, Sec'y, R. H. Briggs


Special features will be colour plates including the gold-centre seedling, Florence Levy, awarded 1st prize, Manchester, 1948. Also "How to Grow Auriculas from Seeds and Off-sets" by G. Douglas.
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Botano deluxe is a new balanced formulation containing four potent pest killers. Now for the first time the home gardener is offered all four in one modern multi-purpose dust. No other garden dust offers such effective easy-to-use scientific pest control.

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GOLD POLYANTHUS, some orange tones, fragrant, heavy trusses, stiff stems, pkt. $1.25.

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BULLEYANA HYBRID, Candelabra in tones of yellow, orange and terracotta, pkt. $.50.

Planting Instructions. Illustrated list of other Primulas.

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