

SOME ASIATIC PEONIES

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By A. P. Saunders, President, American Peony Society, Clinton, N.Y.

I propose to discuss in the following pages some of the peony species that have come to us out of Asia; and as the geographers do not tell us exactly where in Caucasia is the line which separates Europe from Asia I shall feel free to include some of the Caucasian species—the ones with which I have had first-hand experience—and to omit others which I know less well.

The Caucasus is rich in peony species and has given us some of the most precious native forms we have, though most of these are still but little known to the gardening public.

Anyone interested in peony species should not fail to consult Major Stern's excellent paper in the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society for January, 1931. I shall have occasion to refer to it more than once in the course of this article.

P. MACROPHYLLA, the coarse-leaved peony.—This species is well named. The individual leaflets are entire, that is, not lobed or dissected; and they attain proportions which for a peony are enormous. I have measured a terminal leaflet that was 9x6 inches. If drawn on paper this looks like an incredible size for a peony leaflet; and so I felt when I later ran across the measurement in my records. So in the succeeding spring I again laid a tape measure along the leaves, and had no difficulty in finding several of the same dimensions.

The plant is a very early bloomer, coming in with the single *TENUIFOLIA*, which contests with *MACROPHYLLA* the honour of being the first of all peonies to open its blooms in the spring. I have a number of seedlings of *MACROPHYLLA*, and they vary a little in season; but each year it is a race between the earliest of these and the single *TENUIFOLIA* to see which shall be first. In a normal season—if there be such a thing—these two plants open their first blooms in my latitude about the tenth or twelfth of May, though in a very early year I have seen blooms in April. Mr. F. W. Moore, in the Garden, vol. xlv., p. 71 (1894), gives the following dates for the first blooms of different species in his garden:

P. CRETICA, May 1.

P. TENUIFOLIA, May 3

P. ARIETINA, May 4

P. HUMILIS, May 6

P. PEREGRINA, May 7

My *P. CRETICA* bloomed for the first time in the spring of 1930, and was by no means one of the first species to bloom; but perhaps when the plant is better established it may appear at an earlier date.

The expanded flowers of *P. MACROPHYLLA* are white, botanical descriptions designating them as yellow to the contrary notwithstanding. True, the opening buds are sometimes greenish or yellowish; but any such color fades out as the bloom expands, and by the time it is open the petals are white. The seedlings I have raised show very little variation in the color of their flowers.

On the whole the plant is a good one, especially on account of its earliness. It crosses fairly well with the Chinese peonies as well as with the forms of OFFICINALIS, and gives interesting hybrids, some of them very fine.

P. MACROPHYLLA is easily recognized by its very early bloom and by its coarse foliage, which is as if blistered; that is, the veins are depressed so that the shining surface of the leaf stands up above their level. If any further mark of recognition were needed, it would be supplied by the box-like odor of the leaves, which in full sunlight is quite strong, and, so far as I know, belongs to this species alone.

The seed-pods when open, display blue-black fertile seeds along with many large, brilliant, rose-red, sterile ovules. It is hard to see what purpose these sterile ovules can have served in the evolutionary process, but they are common to quite a number of peony species, and they do add greatly to the beauty of the plant in autumn.

P. MLOKOSEWITSCHI.—“This pleasing little assortment of syllables”, as Farrer calls it, is applied to a plant which, like P. MACROPHYLLA, is a native of the Caucasus region. It is not only one of the most distinct of all peony species, but in the whole range of peonies it is to my thinking one of the most beautiful we possess. It should be in the garden of everyone who cares for lovely plants. If my readers get nothing else from my efforts except the determination to add this plant to their gardens, their time and mine will not have been wasted. Unfortunately it cannot be counted on to thrive everywhere. With me, on a stiff clay and in a very severe climate it flourishes almost like a weed, though I must admit that I lose a plant now and then from crown rot. But some of my correspondents in various parts of the United States find it an uncertain grower, and M. Lemoine writes me that it does poorly with him and Nancy.

The blooming season of P. MLOKOSEWITSCHI is extremely early—only a few days later than that of P. MACROPHYLLA; and the flowers are of a light clear yellow; not a cream-white called yellow, but a true and enduring yellow, such that when the petals fall off they still retain their full color. The shade is neither so deep nor so bright as in P. LUTEA, it is true, but no one would hesitate to call these flowers yellow, and a very beautiful shade of yellow.

The foliage is glaucous green with some bronzy-red in it, and the stems are bronzy-red. There is some variation of color in the leafage of different seedlings, and most of them are of a plum-purple color when the shoots first appear above ground. The plant is handsome even out of bloom; when in bloom it is strikingly beautiful. In autumn when the seed-pods burst they are seen to be filled with dark-blue seeds mixed with bright, rose-red, sterile ovules similar to those of P. MACROPHYLLA. The leaves are apparently covered on the upper surface with some waxy secretion, for they are not wetted by water-drops, which lie in the depressions like little spheres of crystal.

It would seem as if this plant had been specially created to yield us by crossing with the Chinese peonies of our gardens a grand race of double yellow peonies. But, after making a good many hundred attempts to produce such crosses without ever getting so much as one hybrid seed, I have come to the conclusion that its creation must have been for some other purpose. Apparently its Caucasian blood is curdled by the mere thought of accepting a Mongol mate. And yet, Cophetua-like, it accepts the little beggar-made TENUIFOLIA and mates with her willingly.

The botanical affiliations of P. MLOKOSEWITSCHI seem to be with TRITERNATA, and probably with CORALLINA, though regarding the last I have as yet no direct evidence.

P. TRITERNATA.—This plant has a good deal the appearance of MLOKOSEWITSCHI, though it is light green instead of bronzy. The bloom of TRITERNATA is light mauve pink, but not a bad color, and it fades into a

rather pretty shade. Its habitat is the Caucasus region and Asia Minor. The species has been long in cultivation, but for only a very short time in my garden, and I do not therefore feel well qualified to speak about it, except to say that it is a desirable plant. It crosses on Mlokosewitschi with extreme ease, and is no doubt closely related to that species, with which it shares an undying hatred of the Chinese peonies, for with them it will apparently have nothing to do.

P. WITTMANNIANA.—Here is another desirable plant from the same region of country; though this one has been found also in northern Persia. In general appearance *P. WITTMANNIANA* might be described as the feminine counterpart of *P. MACROPHYLLA*. She has refinement and delicacy where he has strength and coarseness. Matrimonial alliances between the two houses seem to be warmly favored on both sides, and are fruitful; this I take to indicate that the two species are rather closely related.

The blooms of *P. WITTMANNIANA* are of a very pale yellow color. One might call them yellow if one were looking for a yellow peony, or cream-white if one were after a white one. M. Lemoine has used this plant in producing his famous crosses with Chinese peonies, which bear the names *MAI FLEURI*, *LE PRINTEMPS*, *AVANT GARDE*. These hybrids are excellent plants, and with me have far more vigor than the species *WITTMANNIANA*, which shows a tendency to enjoy poor health in my garden. This species has also been crossed with *P. OFFICINALIS*, and a hybrid form is on the market under the name *P. WITTMANNIANA SPLENDENS*. It is not very splendid, but it does hold its own at that early season when there are few peonies to compete with it.

The leaflets in all four of the species so far considered are entire. Those of *MLOKOSEWITSCHI* and *TRITERNATA* are much rounded at the ends; those of *MACROPHYLLA* less so, while in *WITTMANNIANA* the leaflets are rather pointed. This species, like the others, show the idiosyncrasy of producing red sterile ovules mixed with the fertile seeds. This character is, I presume, very marked in *CORALLINA*, from its name; but that species will not be dealt with here, as I have still to see it in bloom. Not but what I have bought plants under *P. CORALLINA* several times and grown them on for years; but so far all that have come to maturity have turned out to be something else. Would that we could devise some way by which the careless nurseryman who sells us plants not true to name could be compelled to replace not the plants, but our lost years:

The ease with which they intercross would indicate a close relationship between *P. MACROPHYLLA* and *P. WITTMANNIANA*, but I do not believe that *P. MLOKOSEWITSCHI* is at all close to either of these, for it does not cross readily with them. Furthermore, the hybrids of *MACROPHYLLA* with *SINENSIS* and of *WITTMANNIANA* with *SINENSIS* are in general very much alike, while *MLOKOSEWITSCHI* does not give hybrids at all with *SINENSIS*.

Two other species remain to be considered which have their haunts in Caucasia and near-by regions. These are *P. TENUIFOLIA* and the so-called *P. HYBRIDA*.

P. TENUIFOLIA.—I have already spoken of this as one of the earliest of all peonies to come into bloom. The plant is familiar to almost everyone who grows perennials; and no one could fail to recognize it from its feathery foliage. The leaves are the very opposite of those in the species heretofore considered, for these are divided and dissected until you would think the plant had a mania for leaf dissection. I once had the curiosity to count the points on a leaf of *TENUIFOLIA*, and there were over two hundred. This passion for subdivision, curiously enough, does not come on the plant at the beginning of its life, but grows on it by degrees. The germinating seedlings of *TENUIFOLIA* do not have their first leaves any more divided than are those of several other species, such as *VEITCHI*, *WOODWARDI*, *EMODI*. Indeed, the young *TENUIFOLIAS* could scarcely be distinguished from the young plants of these other species. Small weak roots, the result of root division of

TENUIFOLIA, will also, sometimes for a year or two, makes leaves which show no more subdivision than do those of VEITCHI.

The species TENUIFOLIA has single bright crimson flowers, which nestle in the leaves at the top of the stem—are “sessile”, having no stems of their own. The color of the flower is clear and brilliant and it is a favorite in old-fashioned gardens; it is indeed already so widely known that there is no need to stress its merits.

P. TENUIFOLIA is native to the region stretching from Transylvania to the Crimea, the Caucasus, and Armenia. It was introduced to English gardens in 1765, and has since that time spread itself widely around. It is stoloniferous, i.e. makes runners underground, and forms buds on root fragments; hence there is no difficulty in multiplying it if one is so minded.

There are two forms of TENUIFOLIA which are probably mutations from the original species; these are the double crimson, having the color of the single-flowered plant, and the single form known as TENUIFOLIA ROSEA, which bears blooms of a peculiar watery pink. These are both pretty; the double-flowered form, which is of unknown antiquity, blooms about a week later than the single it is widely offered by nurserymen, but the pink single form is rather rare, though it is carried in England by Messrs. Barr and Sons, Mr. Amos Perry, and perhaps others.

The single-flowered plant sets seed to its own pollen, but, with me at least, never abundantly. The double-flowered form has no stamens and therefore sets no seed unless hand-pollinated; but it does give seed to the pollen of other species when there is not too high a degree of incompatibility between them.

The seedlings of TENUIFOLIA shows a difference from other peonies in bringing their seed-leaves above ground when they are germinating. Most peonies keep their seed-leaves tucked away in the seed, and the first leaf they send up is a true leaf; but TENUIFOLIA brings up first two rather long strap-shaped seed-leaves, and later the first true leaf. The tree peony also does this once in a while but only very exceptionally.

A plant sometimes offered in catalogues along with TENUIFOLIA is the one known as TENUIFOLIA LATIFOLIA. The name is sufficiently descriptive, the leaves being somewhat broader than in the type. The bloom is crimson in color but not so good as TENUIFOLIA itself. I have had the plant under observation for a couple of years and find that it sets no seed and has sterile pollen. It is therefore to be

considered as probably a hybrid. I have been unable to find any record of its origin. It may be a TENUIFOLIA-ANOMALA hybrid, but there is no method of analysis by which this can be determined; the only method is to raise a strain of TENUIFOLIA-ANOMALA hybrids for comparison; and this is being done.

The name P. LACINIATA, which is sometimes coupled with that of TENUIFOLIA, seems to be a synonym of P. ANOMALA, and is, I think, generally accepted as such.

P. HYBRIDA.—This plant has a peculiar history. The legend that attaches to it is to the effect that it “was found by Pallas in the Botanic Garden at St. Petersburg, growing near its two parents, P. ANOMALA and P. TENUIFOLIA.” This is an unfortunate legend, for the plant is known to exist in the wild state, and the evidence is quite conclusive that it is not a hybrid at all. Lynch in his monograph on Paeonia (1890) very rightly treats it as a true species, as it has been found native in the Caucasus and other regions; and the botanic garden at Leningrad has in recent years offered in its exchange list seed collected in various localities. Its pollen is very active and has none of the appearance of a hybrid pollen. The plant is not unlike TENUIFOLIA in general appearance, but the color of the petals is somewhat lighter, and the flowers are stalked above the leaves, so that the plant when in bloom makes a rather better show in the garden than does TENUIFOLIA. I consider P. HYBRIDA a desirable garden form, and I wish it had a better name; for to name a species “HYBRIDA” is bad at

the best, but to call this one *TENUIFOLIA HYBRIDA*, as is often done, is much worse if it is neither *TENUIFOLIA* nor a hybrid. I wish it might be renamed after Lynch, who first credited it with the independence that is its due; but I suppose it is too late for that.

P. ANOMALA.—This species has already been mentioned. It occurs as a wild plant in Europe and all through the western half of Siberia, especially in the Ural and Altai mountains and in the region of Lake Baikal. The true species is not commonly supplied by nurserymen. Most of the plants one buys as *ANOMALA* turn out to be either one or other of the forms known as *ANOMALA INSIGNIS* and *ANOMALA INTERMEDIA*. I believe both of these to be hybrids between *ANOMALA* and some other species, but the evidence is not yet conclusive. However that may be, they are both of them preferable to the type as garden plants, for they both have fairly good bright crimson flowers; the blooms do indeed become purplish with age, but they never descend to such a dull and muddy purple as characterizes the true species. For the breeder, on the contrary, the varieties *INSIGNIS* and *INTERMEDIA* are but poor substitutes for the type, as they are, I think, sterile both as to seed and pollen, and if one is carrying out breeding experiments, a fertile plant, even if ugly, is to be preferred to a sterile one. My opinion of the species *ANOMALA* is based on the plant under that name in the collection at Highland Park, Rochester, N.Y. If it should turn out that their plant is not true to name, my judgment as to the merits of this species would have to be revised.

I have had a bad time with seeds of *P. ANOMALA*. I have bought them wherever I have seen them offered and have never had a single germination, is it possible that *ANOMALA INSIGNIS* sometimes sets a few seeds, and that most of the so-called *ANOMALA* seed in commerce is of that origin? Or is the seed of *ANOMALA* perhaps of very slow germination, lying in the ground for a number of years before it comes up? I hope to have the true species in bloom in my garden this year or next and shall then be able to make more exact observations on it.

P. EMODI.—This is the only peony that has so far been reported from the Himalayas. It is found at elevations of 5,000 to 10,000 feet, from Kumaon to Kashmir. The flower is white, 3 to 4 inches across, and is said to be very beautiful. Some suspicion still attaches to it on account of doubts as to its hardiness. We can scarcely believe that a mountain plant growing at such altitudes could be tender. Yet Major Stern, in the article to which I have already referred, states that he does not find the plant hardy in his garden and that he has never had it in bloom. I have also not yet bloomed it, but it came safely through the severe winter of 1929-30 and made good growth in the following summer. And I can now report (April 1931) that it is pushing up strongly for another year's growth; and even a group of young seedlings which germinated a year ago and were set out last summer are every one in good growth. And none of these plants have had more than a light protection of straw. I feel convinced therefore, that the plant withstands the winter well, and that Major Stern's difficulties with it must have some other origin.

It is not possible to say much about the natural affinities of this species. The leaflets are much divided, recalling *P. VEITCHI* or *P. ANOMALA* in their general appearance, and I suppose it is mainly on this account that a relationship has been assumed between *P. EMODI* and *P. ANOMALA*. I do not very much believe in similarity of leaf forms as indicating close relationship in peony species. Further, this species is said to bear several flowers to a stem, sharing this peculiarity with *P. VEITCHI* and *P. SINENSIS (ALBIFLORA)*; and some have found here an indication of a relationship to *P. SINENSIS*. Now the plant can hardly be related to both *SINENSIS* and *ANOMALA*, for these two are certainly not at all close to one another. There is something individual and distinctive in the general style of *P. EMODI*, which suggests that it may perhaps stand by itself without any close affiliations with the species named, the

question of its relationships must be left open until the plant can be more carefully studied.

There is a group of forms from Western China to which several specific names have been attached; but it looks as if they might all really be variants of one species.

P. VEITCHI was at first referred by Kew to P. ANOMALA, but was later recognized by Lynch as distinct. Then came P. WOODWARDI, which is certainly close to P. VEITCHI and perhaps no more than a variety of that species. P. WOODWARDI is different in color, blooms a week or ten days earlier, and as its young shoots differently colored. But later in the season the two plants are almost indistinguishable; and their compatibilities in cross-breeding experiments are so far as I have gone, practically the same. P. WOODWARDI is a much more attractive plant than P. VEITCHI, mainly because the flowers of WOODWARDI are of a charming rose-pink color, whereas those of VEITCHI are of a magentaish deep pink. Mr. Amos Perry, who has raised a large batch of seedlings of WOODWARDI, tells me that it is extremely variable, yielding occasionally very beautiful and distinct forms. An American correspondent reports a white-flowered form as having appeared in a small group of seedlings.

The third plant in this group is P. BERESOWSKYI. This plant is found in the same general region as the two preceding, namely, the western borderland of China, between China and Tibet. Farrer found plants of this group in the mountains of that district, but did not distinguish between them. He speaks thus: "Sp. 67 (?BERESOWSKYI) abounds between 8,000 and 9,000 feet on the alps of Thundercrown and Satanee—not a woodland plant but loving grassy, stony dells and glades on the open alp. . . It is in my eyes a species of singular charm and delightfulness; it has voluminous lucent foliage and stems of 12 to 20 inches, carrying several flowers in all sorts of clear and clean tones of rosy pink, light or dark, with a golden eye of stamens, and so intoxicating a fragrance of roses that all the hill becomes a rose-garden as you go by its generous jungles of large and lovely blossom in May and June" (English Rock Garden, vol. ii., Appendix, p. 589). I notice that in the recently published book on the plant introductions of Reginald Farrer the Species No. 67 is referred to P. Woodwardi. I have had a plant under the name P. BERESOWSKYI in growth for several years, and last year it bloomed for the first time. In general character the plant is certainly very near to WOODWARDI, and in the color of the flower the two are also scarcely distinguishable; but BERESOWSKYI came into bloom about a week later than VEITCHI, which would be nearly two weeks later than WOODWARDI. This may, of course, have been due to the fact that the plant was blooming for the first time; yet I notice that in the early days of April, WOODWARDI was shooting up strongly, whereas BERESOWSKYI had not yet appeared above ground.

Taken all together, I think the evidence suggests the existence here of a species which has not yet "settled down". Farrer's description indicates considerable variation in color among the plants which he saw, and which we may presume were all of the same species; and this is confirmed by the experience of Mr. Amos Perry. But this is not all. Major Stern, in the article already mentioned, gives the height of Veitchi as about 40 inches, where WOODWARDI is given as being about 1 foot high. Lynch's original description of VEITCHI gives its height as 2 feet, which is a very different matter from 40 inches. However, an article in the Gardeners' Chronicle for June 18, 1927, describes VEITCHI as being 2-3 feet high. I have never seen any botanical description of P. WOODWARDI, but Major Woodward, who knew the type plant, said of it in a letter to E. H. Wilson: "It differs from VEITCHI in that it flowers ten days to a fortnight earlier, is rosy pink, whereas VEITCHI is a darker red, and the leaves of VEITCHI are a shining green, those of WOODWARDI, especially on some plants, being of a bronzy hue at first." He says nothing of any marked difference in height, which he could hardly have failed to mention if one of them had been three times as tall as the other, or even twice as tall. With me both plants are of the same height, namely, about 1 foot as they stand; but, as the stems are arching, their actual length would be from 1 1/2 to 2 feet. Does not all the evidence point to the existence here of a group of plants of one species or of several, in which color, stature and season are so variable that no sharp specific lines can be drawn? With regard to the fragrance of WOODWARDI, so vividly described by Farrer, I must say that the plant as it grows with me has no noticeable odor; nor do I detect any smell in VEITCHI, though it

stands recorded (The Garden, vol. lxxiii., p. 542; 1909) that "owing to the peculiar smell possessed by the plant it is known in China by a native name which means 'stinking moutan'," i.e. stinking peony. Perhaps, then, variable in odor as well as in stature and in color.

Spread over parts of China and in Japan and Korea is a group of forms, all at least related to each other, to which the following names have been attached:

In Japan: *P. OBOVATA* in its two forms, *ROSEA* and *ALBA*; *P. JAPONICA*.

In Korea: *P. OREOGETON*.

In western China: *P. OBOVATA ALBA*; *P. WILLMOTTIAE*.

P. OBOVATA is the native wild peony of Japan and occurs in both pink and white forms. Farrer says of the variety *ALBA*: "The Japanese *OBOVATA* whose pearl-white goblets I remember above Shoji is

a jewel quite outside any condemnation" (Alpine and Bog Plants, p. 53). I have not yet bloomed this plant, but I have seedlings coming on in various stages of maturity. Seeds of *P. OBOVATA* may be had from Japanese seedsmen.

P. JAPONICA (Miyabe and Takeda, Gard, Chron., 3rd ser., vol. xlvi., p. 366; 1910).—This seems to be a renaming of *P. OBOVATA ALBA*, the native white form of the Japanese wild peony; while *P. OREOGETON* (Baker and Moore, "Contributions to the Flora of N. China," J. Linn Soc., vol. xvii.; 1880) appears also to be at least closely related to the same plant.

Coming now to western China, we have two plants, or at least two names, *P. OBOVATA ALBA* and *P. WILLMOTTIAE*. I have bloomed the former of these, and a most beautiful plant it is. My plants of this *OBOVATA ALBA* came from Allgrove in England, who has continued the strain grown in Veitch's Nursery and derived from seed sent home from western China by the late William Purdom in 1909. The foliage of this plant is so distinct that, once seen, it could hardly thereafter be forgotten. The leaves are laid out with a peculiar flatness, and have a very handsome dull reddish-bronzy color; indeed, they look as if they might be of bronze. The flowers are of an absolute whiteness such as I know of in no other peony; and the whole plant possesses a quality of distinction which casts my young Japanese plants quite in the shade.

P. WILLMOTTIAE ("Dr. Stapf in Bot. Mag., vol. cxlii., T. 8667, made *P. WILLMOTTIAE* a distinct species; he regarded *P. OBOVATA*, Maxim, as its nearest ally"—communication from Kew).—Whether this plant is really distinct from the *P. OBOVATA ALBA* from the same region can only be finally determined by observations on the two plants growing side by side, I have as yet no plants of *P. WILLMOTTIAE*. But the late E. H. Wilson, who knew Chinese and Japanese plants as few have known them, made to me the following statement regarding this group a few months before his death: "There is one species native to Japan, *P. OBOVATA* and its white form *P. OBOVATA ALBA*, which seems to be the same as *P. JAPONICA*. There is also a Korean *P. OBOVATA* which is larger and hairier (*P. OREOGETON*.) Then, in western China, there is *P. WILLMOTTIAE* or *P. OBOVATA ALBA*. I consider these two identical, but the plant is a very distinct species from the *P. OBOVATA ALBA* in Japan. The plant from western China is a larger and far superior plant."

It should be added that Fedde (Report nov. spec. regni vegetab., 1913, pp. 319-320 gives *P. JAPONICA* as a good species, distinct from *P. OBOVATA ALBA*, while Matsumura (Index plant, Jap.) gives *OREOGETON* as a synonym of *P. OBOVATA*. And there the matter rests at present.

It is most desirable that all these plants should be brought together so that they may be studied side by side, not alone as to their visible characters, but also as to their behavior in cross-fertilization experiments with other species.

We come now to a species native to northern China and Siberia which has had a rather special history. This is *PAEONIA ALBIFLORA*, also called *PAEONIA SINENSIS*, the remote ancestor of the great race of garden plants which we call Chinese peonies. What is one to say of such a plant? Once a modest wild flower, it is now one of the glories of our spring gardens, a florist's flower grown by hundreds of acres in America, a fancier's specialty, and a plant of which tens of thousands of seedlings are raised every year in the hope of finding some new variation that will bring fame or profit to its originator.

It seems strange that this wild plant should have been capable, without, as I believe, any intercrossing with other species, of giving rise to the thousands of named varieties which cumber the lists of peony specialists today. But it must be remembered that the plant was widely cultivated in China a thousand years ago, and that when introduced into Europe about the beginning of the nineteenth century, it already existed in China in at least a hundred distinct varieties.

You in England do not specialize so much in the Chinese peony as we do in America. With us, besides its general use in gardens, it has become a very popular florist's flower, and the cut flower trade absorbs hundreds of thousands of peony blooms every year. There is an immense demand for peonies for the so-called Memorial Day trade. This falls on the 30th of May, and is a national holiday in commemoration of the men who fell in the Civil War. Graves all over the country are then profusely decorated with flowers, and cut peonies for that purpose are bought in enormous quantity.

But of the Chinese peony as a cultivated plant I do not wish to speak. The primitive species should be my theme; but that plant is rare in cultivation, and I have never seen it in bloom. I believe that I now have it in my collection, and I presume it is not materially different from the many single-flowered plants which appear in a batch of seedling Chinese peonies. Farther than that I cannot at present go.