

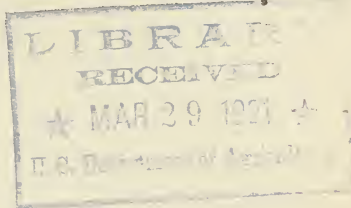
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"It is what we think and what we do that makes us what we are"

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# The Unvarnished Truth



## SINCERITY.

"Let us then be what we are, and speak  
What we think, and in all things  
Keep ourselves loyal to truth."

—Longfellow

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## Appreciation.

To All Lovers Of Really Beautiful Irises.

GREETING.

Once again I have the privilege and opportunity to express my sincere appreciation of your exhibition of confidence in me by imposing a trust that in these days is faith indeed. Thanks, thanks for your faith, thanks for your wonderful faith in me. Surely the wonderful powers of truth and beauty must have expressed themselves with force for you and for me. It was your faith, your confidence, your trust in me that has made possible another attempt and endeavor to make more sense out of the Iris situation by eliminating more of the older varieties and some of the new sorts and rating more of the older varieties and some of the new sorts. I trust that Beauty has been my guide through the maze of conflicting tastes so that my decisions have been made with wisdom and that you can now purchase more really beautiful irises, knowing in advance that a delightful surprise is awaiting you when your treasures bloom and that you have made an investment in beauty.

It was audacity indeed on my part to attempt all alone and by myself such a task as trying to give verdicts on different degrees of perfection and I am deeply grateful for assistance given by your ordering this booklet so far in advance and for your patience in waiting so long after reading my appealing advertisements. For it was the early orders that gave me renewed confidence in myself that this effort would not fail but would be carried on to a successful conclusion.

Now, while this booklet is nearing completion, I am reminded that one good turn deserves another: so I have taken the liberty of giving much more information about the Iris than was really intended. Thus in a measure I shall atone for the long delay. Trusting that the Supreme Beauty has given me power to make The Unvarnished Truth worthy of its name, so that if possible it will arouse and create even more enthusiasm for that flower of faith, hope, inspiration and destiny, the Bearded Flag Iris, I am

Yours for the really beautiful,

Truthfully,

H. W. GROSCHNER.

## Introduction.

The reason for this effort is that there is a genuine need of it. Proof of this assertion is supplied by an Iris lover whose order was received only a few days ago and who says: I have been seeking for some time a book with really worth-while criticism on Irises. Score ONE for The Unvarnished Truth. If nothing more has been accomplished, it is at least "on the spot." This augurs well for the future reception of the booklet. It gives me a pang of regret to perceive that so much money is wasted every year on inferior varieties of flowers. Perceiving that no one has ever before tried to make any sense and reason out of the Iris situation I have attacked the evil "graft" at its source. Some limit must be set to the introducing of new varieties of the Iris: the number of good, bad or indifferent is already so great as to be bewildering. The time has come for some one to act. Flower societies have done little or nothing of real service along this line for their members and as long as growers dominate horticultural activities they will "muddle" along and not get anywhere. Most growers would like to see others discard inferior sorts: but they want their own graft let alone. If some of my readers think that I am extreme in my views my answer would be that I am meeting an extreme. "So let the fur fly."

Unwilling to wait any longer for someone else to undertake this task I have myself made the start and have determined to break away, cut loose, strike out and "go it alone and blaze the way" to common sense, reason and progress and construct an ideal of beauty that others can later improve upon if they will. In my pioneer endeavor to attempt to rate different degrees of beauty, standards of excellence had to be devised to represent some of the best thought upon this subject. I confess that I have no patience with those who think it is not possible to satisfy the majority of the discriminating connoisseurs of flowers. I believe that I have gone ahead and done it. My opinions have been moulded somewhat by the opinions of growers and some of my customers and friends, to whom I am deeply grateful and indebted. Without their valuable aid this task that has been undertaken would not have reached its present state of perfection, whatever that amounts to. I should be an unfaithful lover of Nature indeed if I did not give credit to whom credit is due for this undertaking and endeavor. To Nature, then to Beauty and to Truth, to whom I trust that I have been a faithful and humble servant, this modest little volume is respectfully dedicated.

H. W. GROSCHNER.

## Owed to Spring.

There are seed-books all over the table,  
The catalogues cover the floor,  
The postman will be here tomorrow  
With, maybe a dozen more.  
I am wading through oceans of readin'  
As I sit here alone in my den  
Perusing the reams of the beautiful dreams  
Of those wonderful catalogue men.  
The Congressman's seeds are a-comin',  
Tho the frost is yet on the pane,  
And the chickadees out in the Birches  
Are singing a glad refrain.  
For everything has its uses  
And these birdies, as they fill,  
Will give thanks indeed, for this Government  
seed,  
Out on the window sill.  
Now, I don't want your spineless cactus,  
As I never much minded a scratch,  
But give me a spineless body,  
When I weed out the Onion patch.  
I once got some strange Sweet Corn,  
In color the devil's black,  
And I planted it far from the other breeds,  
But, s'help me, the joker came back.  
Yes, it came back one breezy evenin',  
The thought of it just makes me sore,  
For the Corn that I grew was every hue,  
Red, white an' blue—an' some more.  
An' they didn't call me no wizard,  
Nor creator, or genius or such,  
But in language plain an' somewhat profane,  
They abused me to beat the Dutch.  
An' I'm sick of the bloomin' business,  
Sick of strivin' and' tryin' again,  
To accomplish those joys of the catalog guys,  
Those wonderful catalog men.  
So. Bend, Ind. Frank M. Ryan.

## Why The Unvarnished Truth?

In these busy days some persons have a rather vague conception of the real truth, more so when they are eager to sell goods, and some points of information that the buyer would be pleased to know are not mentioned. Like varnish that is applied before the surface has been smoothed to a fine finish they attempt to gloss over part of the truth. Therefore the real, whole, plain and unvarnished truth, truthfully told, concerning a popular flower, often misrepresented, is what you may expect to find in this booklet.

## Soldier at Asylum Stirred by Carnation.

A red carnation given to him Christmas morning by the Service Star legion awakened in an unidentified soldier at the State hospital the first sign of interest shown by him since he was brought to that institution some months ago. The soldier, who is one of the 33 state hospital patients regularly visited by members of the legion aroused himself to lift the flower from the Christmas basket given to him, and refused to allow it out of his hands during the day. Members of the committee which visited the hospital say the flowers touched the soldiers' hearts more than any other gift contained in the baskets.—Dec. 26.

The above clipping from a Toledo newspaper is just another manifestation of the wonderful power of beauty. This illustration appeared while *The Unvarnished Truth* was being compiled and that was the reason that this one was selected for publication. I have more illustrations of the power of beauty represented in flowers that are quite convincing one that "beauty is food for the soul."

**Gold Crest.** (Dykes) Great stress is laid on the gold crest in the throat of this variety and it is strikingly beautiful; but not much is said of the remarkable shade of transparent blue of the standards and falls. My plant was very small when it bloomed and naturally it would only throw a small bloom; if a mature plant should give a flower of any size at all this variety may be a rival of *Crusader*. The extreme scarcity of this variety is rather significant.

**Thorbeck.** I cannot agree with W. R. Dykes that this variety is more beautiful than *Victorine* because it has a clearer color. The color in the falls of *Victorine* is more brilliant and of a richer hue. In my opinion the few marks of white in the falls and purple in the standards do not mar the beauty of this variety for several reasons. Contrasts of purple and white are seldom if ever displeasing; as a rule they are striking. I think that the markings on the flowers of *Victorine* would be analogous to using a dash of spice or seasoning in food to give it more "pep". In this case too much has not been used, but just enough to make it a gay looking flower. *Victorine* has a long slender stem which makes it valuable for cutting and corsage wear. *Thorbeck* is just as weak a grower as *Victorine*, and the stems are short; in this case I would make an exception to absolutely clear colors and decide in favor of *Victorine* as the more beautiful.

## The Shy-Blooming Irises.

Personally I do not consider a shy-blooming *Iris* nearly as undesirable as a shy-blooming *Peony* or some other flowering plants, for the reason that *Irises* increase so rapidly that there will certainly be a chance of more bloom from more plants; if space is limited they can be planted in almost any out of the way place, for they will do fairly well without extra soil preparation. I should certainly make an exception for two very distinct sorts, *Isoline*, which I think is *Vilmorin's* greatest among his older varieties and *Zua*.





## History.

Among the testimonials received after the first edition of my Iris catalogue was sent out was the following.

Minnesota—"I want to congratulate you on the stand you have taken in trying to make your catalogue and descriptive matter so plain that there can be no mistaking it. The frankness of your descriptions should be appreciated by those who have experienced bitter disappointment by alluring and deceiving descriptions of inferior varieties. I wish other growers might follow your example of trying to give the unvarnished truth about the various varieties of flowers they handle. It would certainly save a lot of disappointment as well as needless expenditures."

If this catalogue gave such satisfaction how much more satisfaction would a new one give that would be about a fifty per cent improvement in giving frankly plain and truthful descriptions of more varieties or Irises? So I decided to get out a second edition which I claimed was "the most illuminating Iris catalog of today." At least some of its readers must have thought so too, for among the testimonials received in commendation of the second edition of my Iris catalogue was the following:

### The Handwriting on the Wall.

Dear Mr. Groschner:

"I certainly appreciate your honest and praiseworthy efforts to weed out varieties that are so inferior that they should not be grown or sold any longer. The same is true of the Peony and other plants. It is up to the nurserymen to do this, for the blame rests with them. There is an obligation that the various flower societies assume when they collect their annual dues from their members, to give them all the information at their command and help them to be successful with their special flowers. But, here is where the commercial grower dominates the situation and keeps going so that he may not lose on varieties that are not worth growing. You are surely the pioneer in going after the truth in this matter and have the best wishes of all the amateur, if not the professional, flower and plant grower. I am a member of the A. I. S., A. R. S. and A. P. S. and would up and call blessed the man who would stand up in the business and other sessions of the flower societies and 'go after them proper' in attempting to reduce the numbers of varieties to the very shortest list of the very best only."

Such words of praise were too much; but they were proof positive that "honesty is the best policy" and is its own reward. Not knowing that my good Iowa friend was an Iris grower my Iris catalogue had been sent to him free. He remitted for it and added a dollar for The Unvarnished Truth. This testimonial was absolutely unsolicited and I could not have found if I had tried, anyone who was better qualified to judge my efforts and pass an opinion on my endeavors. My friend was not only an Iris grower and nurseryman but a member of the American Iris, Peony and Rose societies. So his verdict is authoritative and carries conviction. I esteem most highly the verdict of my good Iowa friend; for it is surely a convincing illustration of the power of beautiful truth that mighty and mysterious force upon which our present and future existence depends.

The power of this most mighty force was shown again by its overcoming obstacles. My Iris catalogue was not sent out until the last week in September and in some cases, even later. In spite of the fact however that most people had bought their supply of Irises for the season, and in spite of the severe business depression that was on, truth, beauty and honesty saved the day, for the volume of business that materialized so extremely late in the season was gratifying indeed. The voice of the people had been heard again concerning my efforts to make some sense out of the Iris situation and they not only spoke but they were willing to part with some of their "coin." What an object lesson that when the pinch comes, honestly proves it is its own best reward.

## **Beauty, The Mighty Force Supreme.**

Beauty is one of the most powerful forces, if not the most powerful force in the realm of thought and feeling, and when linked hand in hand with its twin, light, it is irresistible. The first illustration of this mysterious force was given when light dawned upon a chaotic world and the beauteous universe came into being. Ever since the dawning of creation man's very existence has been dependent upon this mighty force, so wonderful in its various degrees of power. Not only is man's mere existence dependent upon this force, but his highest welfare as well. Ever since the birth of beauty, Nature has by illustration impressed upon man that beauty is the secret, the open sesame, to all his noble ambitions and aspirations. A lesser beauty is always overruled by a more refined and higher beauty in fascinating; thousands of illustrations occur. But we must advance to the task more immediately at hand.

## The Unvarnished Truth.

The decision to publish The Unvarnished Truth came about in this way. Along about the time my Iris catalogues were sent out I happened to read in a horticultural medium that in the new order that would result from the world war the flower seed and plant catalogues of the future would be on a higher plane in that they would give more truthful descriptions of the goods listed, or some such words to that effect. As the last edition of my Iris catalogue was along this line I thought that mine was the forerunners of what these improved catalogues were to be. So I decided to get out a booklet and give plain and truthful descriptions of all the Irises that I knew, whether I had them for sale or not. The best part of it would be to give the truth concerning the high priced novelties; if they were a fake they would be called, no matter whom should be hit or hurt; the whole plain and unvarnished truth would be truthfully told and nothing but the truth. Of course such a booklet could not be given away for nothing; because no prices would be quoted and I should have something for the labor spent in composing the booklet and for the expense of publishing it. Many people are willing to pay for legal and medical advice; but only a few can perceive that horticultural advice would save them money and time. But I decided to take the chance and rely upon the power of truth and beauty to bring me some compensation for the incessant labor and research work that such an undertaking would involve. Thus the Unvarnished Truth was conceived.

In the next edition the Unvarnished Truth this space will be used to give one more reason for writing the U. V. T.

## Beauty Is To Be Feared As Well As To Be Admired.

Paradoxical as it may seem, beauty is to be feared as well as to be admired. Yet the fear of this aesthetic power will vanish in proportion as our knowledge of it increases. If a little learning is a dangerous thing, just so is a little knowledge of beauty a dangerous thing. A study of this mighty force will be a revelation to all and a study of how beauty is employed in the plant game "to separate people from their money" will be a revelation to all. Then there need be no fear of beauty in the plant business, if you rely upon the whole, plain and unvarnished truth, frankly told.

## The Plain and Simple Things Are The Most Beautiful And The Most Enduring.

Nature, the Supreme Authority, has since the dawn of creation continuously pointed out to all mankind that it is the plain and simple things that are the most beautiful and the most enduring. Nature, the Master Artist, demonstrates, expresses and impresses her most supremely beautiful creations by their plainness, greatness, vastness, supremacy and eternity. They are everywhere and always in evidence. We do not have to look for them. Light is the most sublimely beautiful creation, and the plainer it is, the more beautiful it always will be. Who does not know of the beautiful snow? How much more beautiful it is the plainer and cleaner it is? What regions of sublime grandeur the polar regions must be and what a vision of glory. Plainness and simplicity are here almost personified and glorified. What an object lesson for all of us that "Nature is the best teacher."

The starlit sky is beautiful and the sky is beautiful with fleecy clouds; but most people will agree that it is the more beautiful when it is plain and clear. Whether it be the intense blue skies of Switzerland, the turquoise skies of Italy, the cloudless skies of sunny Spain, the sapphire skies of the Carolinas or the clear blue skies of Colorado and California it must be remembered that these skies are thus mentioned when they are plain and clear. Sunset skies are miraculously beautiful; but they do not last long and people would tire of them if they did.

The storm-tossed ocean is remarkably beautiful after the gale has spent its force and the waves roll shoreward while the resulting white spray forms a beautiful contrast with the water of greenish hue; but the sea is more wonderfully beautiful when it is grandly calm and the sky so clear that one can apparently see to the end of space.

The prairie is beautiful, sprinkled with wild flowers and if an occasional tree or grove adds variety to the scene. But more impressively beautiful is the boundless prairie unobstructed. The wild flowers are of short duration and occasional prairie fires consume the trees. But the plain green prairie remains.

The forest wall is at times beautifully illuminated by brilliantly hued trees, for a few weeks in spring, and more gorgeously in autumn. How tiresome they would become if they displayed their bright colors all summer long. And if they did not wear their plain dress of clear green.

Landscape designs as a rule all look pretty on paper; they are at least mysterious and strong color contrasts attract the uneducated eye. But some designs that I have seen would not really be beautiful. So much showy and abnormal material would be used that the planting would not look natural. A landscape composition that is worth while looks natural; it is plain and simple just like some natural landscapes you have seen that have never been altered by the hand of man. Nature is the supreme landscape artist and "Nature is but an effect whose cause is God."

So it must be perceived that plainness and simplicity are the greatest or at least among the greatest of virtues. Artists, designers and craftsmen are aware of this and this element of plainness is reflected, is evident and dominant in all their creations that attain preeminent fame and stand the test of time and are useful and durable. Altho plainness is sometimes represented by uniformity and regularity, it must be admitted that these qualities even are an approach toward plainness and are certainly thus more commendable than irregularity or lack of uniformity.

I believe that I could go on and write a volume upon this subject and name thousands of things to prove my contention. I do not know of two words that so nearly have one and the same meaning as "plain" and "clear". "Clear" is a twin sister of "plain" and they are as much "alike as two peas". One might say that clearness is refined plainness, for the two sisters might have exactly the same complexions; yet one would have a clearness that would not be so evident in the other and anyone with any perception at all would pronounce the clear complexion the more beautiful. If this is so, just so are the clear colors in flowers the more beautiful and anyone with clear thoughts will not for a minute dispute or contradict the assertion, I am sure.

## **There Is No Other Business Like It—Guard Your Mood.**

There is probably no other business that offers such opportunities for graft by the use of the power of beauty as does the seed, plant and flower business, none in which the seller makes so good "get away with it"; none in which the getting away is always good and yet the getter cannot be got. It goes without saying, too, that the opportunity has often been fairly embraced. The power of beauty is so great at times that it overcomes the better judgment of some at a critical moment. The mood to buy or not to buy often is determined by the spur of the moment. But haste is waste; so the secret of wise buying is to guard the mood.

## The Color Is The Thing.

Some descriptions of Irises and other plants lay stress on the beautiful foliage, habit of growth, growing qualities, freedom of bloom, size of flowers, etc. In fact, they mention every characteristic except the beauty of the flower's color. In my opinion the color is the thing and every other point is subordinate to this. If the color is fine or extra-fine we can then consider the other points of merit possessed by the plant. I believe that most people grow flowering plants for the beauty of the bloom and to my mind in most cases if the flower is not of high quality in every respect, but particularly as to color it is not worth while. As a general rule I judge every flowering plant by the beauty of its bloom, first, last and all the time.

## The Dominant Colors Of The Iris and Some Colors Of Doubtful Beauty.

Blue and purple are the dominant colors in the bearded Irises and varieties of these shades should in my opinion dominate in any representative collection. Probably about half would be near to the number that should be in such a collection. Thus the impression of blue and purple shades would always be dominant in thoughts of bearded irises. The addition of too many colors of doubtful and questionable beauty should be guarded against; they should be added "with caution" and restraint lest they crowd out the representative or natural colors. So far the extreme in a red Iris has not been reached yet. In my opinion a genuinely red Iris, at least a bright red would be an outrage against Nature and the canons of good taste; there would be no more sense nor excuse for a really red Iris than there would be for a blue rose, purple peony, red larkspur purple or blue gladiola, or purple or a gray tulip. These colors among these flowers are too far removed from the natural color order and would be looked upon as oddities.

## I Meant What I Said And I Mean What I Say.

Several years ago a western Iris grower took exceptions to my assertion that it was "an impediment in the way of popularizing the Iris to keep on foisting off on the public the inferior varieties." This grower got really hot under his collar. Now I do not say that this foisting is always played intentionally, but the fact is, plants are foisted off and that is the long and short of it. My assertion is supported by the aims of the new Iris Society, one of which is to discourage the introduction of inferior varieties; and my contention is again supported by this extract from an editorial in the *Flower Grower*: "Our catalogues are filled with named varieties; old forms stand cheek by jowl with new; and who, as an individual, can tell which is worth while for his garden? Many varieties, both old and new should be thrown into the discard."

## First Impressions Of The Sturtevant Seedlings.

All signs indicate that the Sturtevant seedlings are the highest quality that were ever sent out at one time. This opinion is based on seeing less than half of them; but I am sure that more of the varieties I have not seen will be admitted into my Master list. Miss Sturtevant has set for her seedlings a high standard which other originators might well emulate. This would redound to their credit. The fact that a few varieties have been withdrawn from sale after being introduced is an example that other originators should follow. To admit mistakes is highly commendable. Not to correct a mistake is to no one's credit.

**Bluet.** Altho the flower is only medium in size it has a shade of blue that must appeal to all who like real fine colors. I know of no other finer blue.

The color of **Elinor** is beautiful; but the stem is only medium in length and for that reason this variety is not worth \$5.00.

The standards of **Ann Leslie** do not come perfect; but this defect is not a serious failing. The color of the falls described as dahlia carmine, is well done. It is a brilliant, rich and velvety hue that must arouse admiration from most Iris lovers.

The gray irises do not appeal to me and **Afterglow** I do not fancy. The buff yellow in the center of the falls gives variety a quite distinct appearance. I may like it better when it blooms again.

**Merlin** is not poor in color; but to my opinion it is not extra fine.

**Raken** and **Wiffenpoof** are no better than their names.

Queen Caterina, B. Y. Morrison and Shekinah have been so highly recommended that I have taken a chance and purchased them without seeing the blooms. I expect at least two to be fine enough to gain admittance into my master list and the chances are that more of the Sturtavant seedlings will squeeze into my select list by the sheer beauty of their blooms.

## The Bliss Seedlings.

The bloom of Dominion that I saw at the Cincinnati Iris show did not impress me as being extra fine. The coloration under artificial light appeared to me to be as follows: standards, a dark lavender or blue-purple; falls, a slightly reddish purple, whilst the throat had a white netting. At first glance the general color effect would remind one of the early varieties Major and Kharput and some other varieties that have falls of a slightly reddish hue.

## The Farr Seedlings.

As the pioneer Iris originator of this country Mr. Farr has given us some Irises that will be grown for years to come. If three-fourths of his varieties were culled out most of the remaining fourth would rank fairly high in quality; and in my opinion would equal in quality the same number that were imported and introduced at about the same time. Allowances must be made for the Farr seedlings for at the period they were introduced the interest, taste and powers of discrimination of fanciers were not near what they are today. Judged as a whole the Farr seedlings are a remarkable achievement for their beauty and distinctness. Besides the varieties in my Master lists I know the following:

**Juanita.** The color is much deeper than in Dalmatica and in my opinion it is not extra-fine. A customer writes me that the color is not a real blue or lavender. This is exactly my own opinion; it seems to be a mixture of the two. The color is not clear enough to suit me. The fact that this variety is sold at a lower price by nearly all dealers than most of the Farr seedlings would sustain and support me in claiming that it is not extra-fine.

**Mary Gray.** The color is beautiful; the season of bloom about midway between the early and late varieties. On account of the medium length stem I should discard this variety.

**Blue Jay** is not exactly poor in color, but it is not fine enough to grow.

**E. L. Crandall.** Good color, but a rather weak grower and the stem is of only medium length.

**Glory Of Reading.** It seems to me that this one has been misnamed. I cannot see any "glory" about it.

**Pauline.** Mine is not of the same color as that shown in the catalogue; if it were it would be useful in a large collection to give variety; the color is much darker and more of a wine red than any other color and so it could be classed with the reds. The color is not extra fine.

**Mt. Penn.** The general color effect could be called a dark pink. It does not appeal to me.

**Paxatawney** is somewhat on the order of Quaker Lady, but not worth while.

**Quaker Lady.** This variety appeals to me more than does Eldorado, which is on the same order.

**Mary Garden.** The design in the falls is remarkable, very odd and is beautiful; but in my opinion the beauty is marred so much by the non pleasing color of the standards that people are taking a chance in expecting to be satisfied with this variety.

**Powhatan** does not appeal on account of too much variegation in the falls.



**Chester Hunt.** Seeing an illustration of the bloom of the variety named reminds me that its beauty is somewhat marred by specks in the falls. This defect is not very noticeable, however.

**Aletha.** I thought so much of this variety at first that I increased my stock; but now it will be discarded. All who prefer the lighter frilled varieties will not care for it. The frilling is wider and much darker than in *Madame Chereau*.

### The Foster Hybrids.

Altho Sir Michael Foster has been called the Father of the Iris I cannot perceive that his originations rank higher in quality than some of our American originators. Of the Foster creations that I know **Crusader** is the finest and a fine variety it is.

**Blue Boy** should never have been introduced. It is a short stemmed flower of medium size and the color is certainly nothing extra fine, even if it is distinct. The blue beard mentioned in descriptions is of a pale blue and does not compensate for the mediocre color of the bloom.

My **Lady Foster** has not yet bloomed.

### The Dilkush Hybrids.

The Dilkush hybrids are more curious than beautiful and useful. The varieties that I know are all short-stemmed. **Parvar** is a miserable color; if it were a clear black it would be of some use and have some excuse for being; but it is not. It looks fly-specked or as if it had been splashed with mud. **Lady Lilford** is similar in color. Of the new hybrids that I know **Parsam** is a rich and brilliant-hued color in the sunlight and possibly beautiful.

### The Trojana Varieties.

My experience with these has been limited; but it is sufficient to cause me to resolve that I will not waste any more time on them. I have been informed by one grower that *Trojana Superba* is slow to increase and very subject to root-rot and that the intention has been every year to discard this tribe of the Iris. The infusion of Trojan blood is very evident in some Irises by their shyness of bloom and slow to extremely slow growth; examples are *Isoline* and *Caterina*. Whatever value the Trojana sorts afford for crossing, it would appear that too much of a good thing is too much.

### Richard II (Dykes)

This variety was highly recommended to me by Mr. Amos Perry and lauded to the skies. It was claimed to be one of the finest in the world. With me it is a fizzle and a fake. It is "not in it" with *Rheinnixe* or *Victorine* or even *Thorbeck*. The picotee edging of white is more imaginary than real, because it is so inconspicuous as to be hardly noticeable. The stem is short and the plant not a good grower. I have been informed that Mr. W. R. Dykes does not think much of this variety. Such an opinion, coming from the country of its introduction, certainly proves my contention that the palming off of inferior varieties cannot be too severely condemned.

## Some More Fine Irises.

The following varieties vary from fine to extra fine in quality. After another blooming season I may not think as much of some of these as I do now: Argus, Dawn, Haydn, Brionese, Merlin, Parc de Nully and Sambucina.

**Col. Candelot.** (Millet). I believe that this is one of the new French varieties that will become quite popular. It is another Squalens variety that appeals to me.

**Lou Fuller** (Vaughn) In color almost identical with Aurea; standards a slightly paler yellow, the stems longer. This last feature is an improvement.

**Lord of June.** I want another blooming season to compare this variety with other fine sorts before rating it.

**The X Iris.** Lent A. Williamson impressed me at the first view as being an extra-choice Iris and quite distinct. Its failing is a stem of only medium length.

## Zua (Crawford)

The bloom is exquisite and despite its serious failings it will be prized by all who want the very choicest Irises. The stem is short and the plant is a shy bloomer. It is one of the shy blooming Irises, however, I should retain on account of blooming so early and when there are so few really fine Irises out.

**Gagus and Mithras.** It is incomprehensible to me why anyone would place both these varieties in the same list, as a collection of fine varieties, for several reasons. They are both similar or on the same order. Mithras has standards of golden yellow. Gagus has standards of a lighter yellow shade. Mithras shows its superiority in the falls: there is not as much venation as in gagus, so that it is of a more solid or clear color. The reticulation of white in the falls of Gagus does not add to its appearance. The faint Picotee edging of dull yellow is more imaginary than real; it is hardly noticeable.

## Some Irises Of Variable Quality.

The following varieties I want to see once before arriving at final conclusions: None of them are actually poor, but all of them are not extra fine.

**Alcarza.** My plants did not bloom this year. My recollection is that the bronze throat mars its beauty.

**Orriflamme.** This variety is not as hardy as most Irises and it is risky to grow it in the Northwest.

**Walneriana.** Color is a rather grayish lavender and so far the only one of this shade that I care for; but at that it is hardly extra fine.

**Fontarabie.** On the order of Firmament, but not nearly so beautiful.

**Cora.** Fine to extra fine.

## Taking The Bull By The Horns.

The way to eliminate the undesirable and synonomous Irises is to eliminate and not keep on talking about it and not get anywhere. The thing to do would be to discard them wholesale. At first one should go over them in the rough and then keep on refining them down until their number is somewhere within reason. To eliminate intelligently would be to get rid of many varieties that many persons agree are undesirable and most growers know that many varieties in this last are not worth while; but some do not have the courage to discard them while others are blinded and obsessed by thoughts of immediate gain. It would appear that the main thought with some is "get the money while the getting is good." Common sense should tell anyone that the list of Irises cannot keep on growing forever and common sense should decide that many of the older varieties should be discarded to make room for the new varieties of unquestioned beauty and some that are worth a trial. But even many new sorts are not worth naming and even to try them out is a waste of time.

While everyone is hesitating whether to go ahead, or not, afraid to hurt someone's feelings, or otherwise, I will take the bull by the horns, give them a vigorous twist and hold on "for dear life" until my object is accomplished. I will "start the ball a rolling" to knock out all the varieties in this list by discarding them. No doubt there will be some protests that this or that variety should be retained, for this or that reason. Let someone with taste, ability, and powers of discrimination point out why any of these varieties should be retained. I do not claim to be infallible but I should like to see anyone who thinks that he can make a better job of this eliminating game let him get into it; the field is open and "let the best man win out". I will not waste a word concerning why some of these varieties should be discarded other than to state that they are either not worth discussion or too closely resemble varieties that hold the stage on account of priority. So I have reserved descriptions and comments for varieties that people have been "getting stung on" by catchy names, deceiving or alluring descriptions. I will endeavor to give the whole plain and unvarnished truth. All in this list I would discard, I am "all set" to go ahead and "here goes."

### Discard List.

Ada, Arnols, Albert Victor, Alice Barr, Agnes Barr, Abdul Aziz, Blue Boy, Bridesmaid, Brookiana, Caterina, Cherubin, California, Clio (Peterson) Grachus, Garrick, Lady Jane, Morencia, Mexicain, Monhassan, Rose De Chin, Rigolette, Honorable, Hugo, Nazimo, Niebellungen, Sans Souci, Standard Bearer, Purple King, Pallida Speciosa, Perfection, Jordan, Manraliscae, Porcelain, Gloriette, Oporto, Walhalla (Int) Marori King, Mrs. Neubronner, Richard II (Dykes).

**Clio** (Peterson) A grower writes me that this one is the same as an old variety that has been grown in his neighborhood for years. This is my own opinion also.

**Garibaldi** From Rainbow Gardens; a miserable shade of purplish pink.

**Fairy.** On account of weak stems the flowers almost lie on the ground, so that they become lop-sided. Thus they are of little use for cutting. Beautiful as this variety is I should discard it.

**Exquisite.** Judging from its name one would think that it was something extraordinary; it is really a distressing color combination.

**Cordelia.** Somewhat on the order of Perfection. The falls are mottled or veined with a darker color which mars whatever beauty it has. The edging of rose is not at all evident. I have endeavored to find out from other growers who list this variety if theirs has an edging of rose; but no reply has been received. My plants came from Chase.

**Farr Varieties.** Aletha, Blue Jay, E. L. Crandall, Glory of Reading, Hiawatha, Hugo, Iroquois, Jaunita, Mary Gray, Montezuma, Mr. Penn. Navajo, Nokomis, Pauline, Paxatawney, Red Cloud, Rose Unique, Tecumseh.

**Fryor Varieties**—Golden Plume, Clarence Wedge, Glory.

**Sturtevant Varieties.** Raken, Wiffenpoof.

## Some More Odd Ones.

The following varieties are of various degrees of oddity.

Aletha, A. F. Barron, Ada, Gracehus, and Nokomis. The standards of the following sorts are of an exceptional bright yellow color which gives a little beauty to the flowers, even if the falls are odd. Those who like the strikingly odd things should get their fill if any of these are tried. Select them in the order named. Fro; Gold Bound, Morenci and Monhassen.

**Tamerlane.** I cannot agree with the statement that this variety is the most "kingly of Irises." I think that King of Iris, holds the boards for this distinction; the maroon color of the falls suggests royal robes and the gold edging the gold braid. I do not care for Tamerlane on account of the falls hugging the stem and the coloration is not extra fine.

**Rose Unique.** There is no sense in saying that this variety is the nearest approach to a pink Iris. This statement has "stung" thousands of people. One grower writes me that "it irritates me to read of Rose Unique described as the nearest approach to a pink Iris; it is not pink and certainly not rose. To me it is an apoplectic color." I note in the Flower Grower that this thing has been called an "atrocious color." That description suits me to a "t".

**Mars.** Not extra fine.

## The Fryor Varieties.

I know only a limited number of these and so far I am not very favorably impressed by them. Such a wholesale, indiscriminate naming of varieties is ridiculous and absurd. It would appear that the seventy-eight Fryor seedlings should be reduced to about a dozen varieties. I shall have to be shown that Fryor has originated seventy-eight varieties so distinct and beautiful that they are worth growing. In my opinion there are hardly seventy-eight varieties of all originators in existence that would satisfy those who want the very finest and distinct tall bearded Irises. **Golden Plume**, **Clarence Wedge** and **Glory** should never have been introduced. I am taking a chance on rating **Glory** at this time because I have seen it only once; but if I am mistaken correction will be made in the supplement.

## What Colors Do You Like?

It is said that men prefer deep, strongly colored flowers, while women favor pale, delicate or pastel shades.

To our way of thinking, the question of color is largely a matter of individual taste, temperament or education. We would certainly deny that all men prefer deep shades and that all the fair sex favor pale shades. We have seen ladies gush over black Pansies, maroon Sweet Peas and Tulips; indeed, these colors have almost invariably attracted the attention of lady visitors. On the other hand, their male companions have centered their attention upon the pink, scarlet and lavender shades.

The general market demand is a good indication of popular taste, and we venture to think that the call is for lighter shades.

To a great extent color is a question of education. Some people can never discriminate because they are color blind, oftentimes without being aware of it. The florist has it in his power to influence color selection among his patrons. The more the general public gets to know about plants and flowers, the more refined becomes the taste of the general run of people.

One has but to travel and see various gardens to judge the horticultural knowledge of people, and we venture to say that where the softer shades of red, blue and yellow predominate there will one find a more refined class of people.

Incidentally, too, flower color is to a considerable extent a question of what flower? No one wants a red Violet; such would be an outrage to all flower lovers.

**Good.**

The above clipping from the Florists Exchange does its bit to sustain me. The central idea is **education**.

## **A Candid Dahlia Critic.**

Writing to the Horticultural Advertiser, Robt. Fife, the well-known Dahlia authority and member of the famous Scottish house, Dobbie & Co., ventures to express his opinion on Dahlia novelties of the Decorative, Peony and Collarette types certificated by the R. H. S. and the National Dahlia Society.

He declares that not one of the new Dahlias sent out by British raisers in 1919 and 1920 is an improvement upon existing sorts; many of them are not worth garden room, and for that reason he catalogs none of them. The only type that holds up to standard is, in his opinion, the exhibition Cactus.

Well done. The above clipping from the Florists Exchange is a welcome addition to The Unvarnished Truth. I congratulate by Brother across "the pond" for his courage in giving the whole, plain and unvarnished truth. The Britishers are past masters in "foisting off" etc.

## **The First View.**

I know of no undertaking in which one is so liable to change one's mind from the first impression received as in judging flowers. Experienced judges who make quality a study can often form a good perception from one view; but of course the second view is better and the third still better. So any voting on the quality of flowers is liable to be uncertain if many opinions are formed by the first view. In my opinion a separate vote should be held for those who have fairly large collections and the results tabulated only from the second or third view. My own decisions are made from the second and third view and often from a fourth or fifth except where noted.

## **Let It Be Beautiful In Itself.**

One of the methods or suggestions advanced for the retention of the unnatural colors among Irises will be that some of them harmonize with flowers of other species. To this I would say "fiddlesticks": if a variety is not beautiful in itself let it be discarded. As there are more colors among Irises that are beautiful in themselves than in any other flower, shades and colors of questionable beauty are certainly not needed nor are desirable.

## **The Iris Root Rot.**

I would a billion times prefer to praise than to criticize, but my feeling is that unless some truths are told that have been learned about this serious disease the unvarnished truth would not completely fulfill its mission. Whether they realize or not the spread of this infection is the fault of growers and dealers sending out diseased stock. More details will be given in the Flower Grower.

## The Glad Philosopher.

I cannot altogether agree with the attitude expressed in some of his musings:

“Inasmuch as individual tastes differ, too much value should not be accorded in these matters to any one person’s opinion; and besides he may be influenced by prejudices. I am free to confess to a prejudice, myself, against freckled and striped flowers, Gladoli in particular. Speckled monsters do not appeal to my sense of beauty. I have no quarrel with those who see beauty in Navajo blankets and crazy quilts, but as for myself—well, my eyes delight in quieter, more subdued and harmonious tones.”

It must be admitted that some people have no taste and some persons have no more powers of perception in selecting flowers than a ten year old child. It is true, tastes differ and some allowances must be made for this difference of opinion; but this “individual matter”, “individual tastes” stuff is being “overworked”. This is the game used by some growers and originators as an excuse to “keep on foisting off on a confiding public” etc. I claim that it is possible to evolve a standard of excellence that a majority of discriminating persons can agree on as being the finest. I also confess to a prejudice against speckled and striped flowers and with good reason. They are abnormal. Therefore they cannot cheer and inspire, elevate and refine, comfort and enoble, which to my mind is the mission of beauty.

As to Navajo blankets they are not so much in evidence to every passerby. I would prefer to educate rather than to quarrel; but I am willing to quarrel with some growers and others who frame such excuses as “individual tastes” etc. They are after the money first, last and all the time and satisfaction can take its chances. No matter who it is, whoever does not strive to elevate his profession, calling, business, craft or trade is no credit to it. There are in the world today too many with a happy go lucky, don’t care attitude; their way is to “let George do it.”

“In venturing to pose as a critic, I realize the danger of making hasty conclusions or premature announcements, for I have known of some who judged too hastily—and later, after a more extended experience, have had to reverse their impulsive opinions. I refrain, therefore, from expressing adverse criticisms of any varieties at this time.”

It is possible for persons who make quality a study to arrive at conclusions or make announcements sooner or much sooner than those who have not. Then again one can make a first report or give a first impression, subject to change. Such first opinions are of great value to a waiting public.

## **The American Iris Society.**

The reference made in the introduction of flower societies not getting anywhere, etc., does not apply to the Iris society for the reason that there has hardly been enough time for this society, still so young, to hold a symposium.

### **The Future Of The Unvarnished Truth.**

The future of The Unvarnished Truth will depend somewhat on its reception by its readers. It is my intention to get out another edition that might make the first one look like a primary effort. In order to complete the first edition on time quite a bit of interesting material was left out. All this will be included in the second edition. Besides this left-over supply there will be plenty of new material and all the present text will be revised or rewritten. Now I will do all this providing that I have assurance in advance that the demand for this greater Unvarnished Truth will be enough to make the venture a paying proposition. I know of no better way to increase the sales of this much needed book than to let people see it through other people's eyes. So I should be pleased to have the candid and frank opinion of the Unvarnished Truth whether its readers' opinions agree with mine or not. The price of the greater Unvarnished Truth will be \$1.50, which will include the 1921 rating list of new Iris novelties. All who purchased the first edition either by cash or secured it as a premium with Iris orders can obtain the new revised edition for 50c or it will be given free with all orders for Irises amounting to \$10.00 or for 25c if the order totals \$5.00.

### **1921 Supplement To The Unvarnished Truth.**

This rating list of more of the new and older varieties will be issued immediately after the blooming season or about June 1st. I realize that this list will be desired as soon as possible and it will not wait for the later revision of the Unvarnished Truth, but it will be pushed through with all the speed possible. The price of this new rating list will be 50c—free with an order for Irises amounting to \$10.00. This new spring rating list will rate six or more of the Sturtavant seedlings, the same number or more from Bliss and Perry, some of the very finest of Millet, Farr, Vilmorin, Williamson, Cleveland, Fryor and probably a few of other originators.