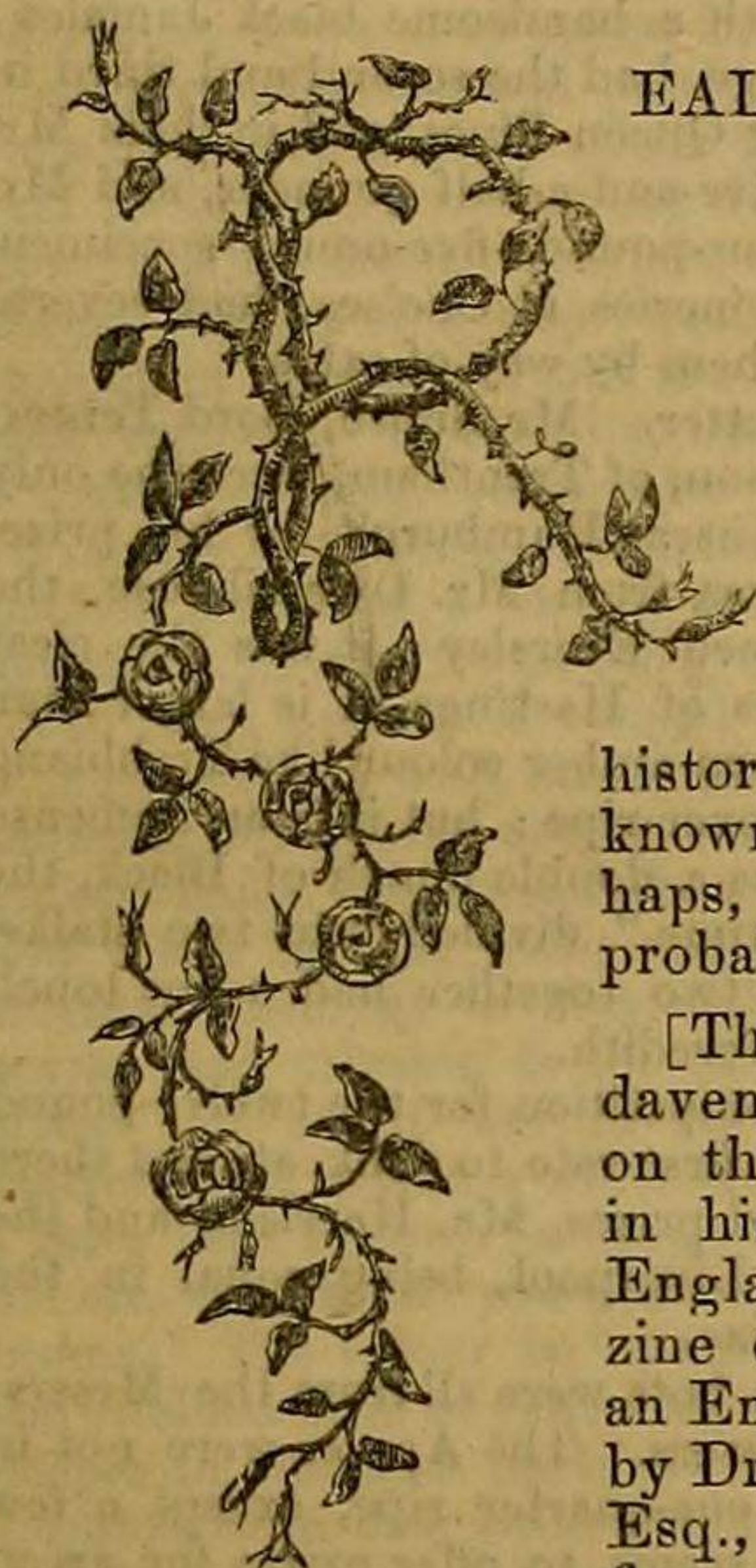


WEEKLY CALENDAR.

Day of M'nth	Day of Week.	SEPTEMBER 10-16, 1861.	WEATHER NEAR LONDON IN 1860.					Sun		Moon		Clock before Sun.	Day of Year.
			Barometer.	Thermom.	Wind.	Rain in Inches.	Rises.	Sets.	Rises and Sets	Moon's Age.			
10	Tu	Glycine monoica.	30.072-30.035	deg. deg. 58-32	N.E.	—	m. h. 29 af 5	m. h. 25 af 6	m. h. 46 8	6	m. s. 3 10	253	
11	W	Phlox pyramidalis.	30.267-30.161	64-28	N.E.	—	30 5	23 6	43 9	7	3 31	254	
12	Th	Saffron Crocus.	30.315-30.113	66-28	S.E.	—	32 5	21 6	51 10	8	3 52	255	
13	F	Nolana prostrata.	29.985-29.776	70-38	S.	.02	33 5	18 6	morn.	9	4 13	256	
14	S	Zinnia.	29.605-29.494	67-46	S.W.	.04	35 5	16 6	5 0	10	4 34	257	
15	SUN	16 SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.	29.493-29.485	65-47	S.	.01	37 5	14 6	21 1	11	4 55	258	
16	M	Polygonum orientale.	29.662-22.582	65-54	S.W.	.18	38 5	12 6	35 2	12	5 16	259	

METEOROLOGY OF THE WEEK.—At Chiswick, from observations during the last thirty-four years, the average highest and lowest temperatures of these days are 68.1° and 46.4° respectively. The greatest heat, 86°, occurred on the 12th in 1858; and the lowest cold, 31°, on the 12th in 1848. During the period 135 days were fine, and on 105 rain fell.

PARENTS OF SOME GLADIOLI.



EALLY obliged should I be if you could tell me the names of the parents of *Gladiolus gandavensis*. Also, whether the six following varieties—Eldorado, Canasi, Ophir, Linné, Brenchleyensis, and Vulcain, are the progeny of *G. gandavensis* by itself, or of *G. gandavensis* crossed by some other species? If the history of these six varieties be not known, their appearance may, perhaps, to instructed eyes tell their probable origin.—CHARLES DARWIN.

[The parents of *Gladiolus gandavensis* have been first mis-stated on the Continent by Van Houtte, in his description of it, and in England by Paxton, in his "Magazine of Botany." *Gandavensis* is an English seedling, and was raised by Dr. Herbert and by J. T. Alcock, Esq., but neither of them could flower it or any of the seedlings of

the same cross, and they sent out the bulbs to Mr. Bidwell, at Sydney, where the climate was more favourable. Mr. Bidwell flowered all the seedlings at Sydney, and one of them, *gandavensis*, found its way back to Europe. The false parentage given to it by M. Van Houtte shows that that "way" was not as it ought to have been.

Van Houtte's parentage was between *natalensis* and *cardinalis*; but it is a curious fact, that the Natal bulb resisted all the attempts to cross it everywhere with any one of the west Cape species. *Natalensis* was the mother of *Gladiolus gandavensis* by the pollen of the Madagascar *oppositiflorus*, and the cross was accomplished by two of the most correct breeders of their times. Through *oppositiflorus* as a floodgate both the west and east Cape *Gladioli* and their offspring have been induced to breed as freely as the *Pelargonium*. Like the *Pelargonium* the *Gladioli* of the present day are, and have been, fast "improving" on the principle of breeding in-and-in. There is no seedling in cultivation from *gandavensis* by any distinct species whatever. But *gandavensis* is certainly a true cross-bred plant between two genuine wild species; and although it is now more than twenty years of age, not the age when it was announced on the Continent, it is the last distinct cross between any two species in the genus.

The seedlings which you mention are all garden crosses, but they are not the most dissimilar from the originals. *Gladioli* are now getting striped and picoteed like *Dianthus*. Mr. Beaton once or twice mis-stated the nativity of *Gladiolus gandavensis*, saying it was an Australian seedling, while it merely flowered there, with Mr. Bidwell, for the first time.—D. B.]

THE CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW OF AUTUMN FLOWERS AND FRUIT.—SEPT. 4th & 5th.

It was a grand Show, and the finest Dahlias ever yet seen were there. The best Hollyhocks that ever were known were there also, right and wrong—that is to say, it is not only wrong, but very wrong, to give one farthing for cut flowers of Hollyhocks; for if there is a blackleg between Sydenham and the Brigg of Ayr, he has here the power and the inducement to cheat his customers with the most unworthy-of-cultivation Hollyhocks that ever were seen, for out of the worst spike one flower picked, and cooked to look as the best we had there, and a prize being obtained for it, it might be called a first-rate, and then the exhibitor might turn round and say it was not his fault, the Judges said so, and surely it was right and fair to turn a penny by it. That is exactly where the arrow tends to from cut blooms of Hollyhocks more than of any other flower.

The very best China Asters in the world were there, and twice, if not three times, better than they were seen before. There were thousands of them, and literally there was not a bad flower among the whole. But there is one thing mightily in their favour—they have no ephemeral names to confuse and bother people. They are in two classes—the quilled or German, and the French or flat-floreted sorts. Now, just look at one of the best German Asters, and see what we have lost in the loss of the tasselled Chrysanthemums through the madness of the best of our brethren, the florists, in their hurry to get at the "improvement" of one section of the family. Why should we not have Chrysanthemums exactly in the form of the best China Asters, as we might just as easily have had from the tasselled kinds of Mr. Sabine's account of them, as we do have the charmers of the incurved mood?

But the *Gladioluses*, of all the flowers of this generation, have made the most rapid strides on to perfection of "lug" and feather; and *Verbenas* put up in bunches, are very pretty ornaments in the drawing-room on pretty little stands of knick-knacks, but in that way they are of all other flowers the greatest traps to the simple and unwary who may frequent some shows. Nothing in the palmy days of honest George Robinson, of Charing Cross renown, was more likely to deceive a good customer as a bunch of so many trusses of *Verbenas*; and I would leave it as a legacy to my country readers never to buy or even think of such a thing as buying a new *Verbena*, from only seeing a pretty bunch of it at a show. But understand me, I would not advise the doing away with the exhibition of cut *Verbenas* by any means.

What I would like to see is this—only a few heads with a sufficiency of brains to see the folly of the present system with all cut flowers, not even excepting the Rose. What good has all the money done that was spent in rewards for fruit at Chiswick for the last thirty years? It never taught a single individual how to place a dish of dessert on the dinner-table, which is by far the most essential "property" for a working gardener to know about fruit. What on earth is the good to the propelling power of gardening in civilisation, that you can anticipate from exhibiting heaps of cut flowers, without heads or tails, or any kind of real meaning in their arrangement?

This was certainly the most beautiful sight of cut flowers I ever saw; but I could not help musing on our childish ways of displaying them. Is there no man or woman on this or that side of the Thames who would enjoy a design with cut flowers that would combine the richness of five distinct shades of colour in *Dahlia*, *Verbena*, *Hollyhock*, or *Aster*? Can a mortal learn