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Mrs. Frederick L. Keays. Old Roses in Calvert Country, Maryland

Across St. Leonard's Creek from our farm is an old plantation where, long before the war of the states, there grew under the pantry window an old rose called the Faded Pink Monthly.

Before the war, the cook took a cutting from this rose and grew it near her cabin door. During our searchings through old gardens in our part of Calvert County for old roses to grow on our place, Lillie, this cook's daughter, who is now our cook on the farm, showed us the way to the old plantation to see if we could get something from the original rose. It proved to be entirely gone-not a trace left. Years ago, Lillie had carried her mother's rose plant to her home when she married. It had suffered some during late years but had pulled along. A tough old dear! When we were disappointed in our search for the original, Lillie gave us her old rose, hesitatingly, as she thought it would die. So we acquired the rose grown by her mother before the war, a plant "slipped" before 1860. A wonderful gift! It was a very large, very woody stump with a sparse top. We pruned and planted it very carefully with shelter and old richness bedded below to coax it. The fine old grandmother rewarded our care so generously that during the summer of 1930 it grew ample top to furnish us with cuttings in November from which we have grown several new plants. One of these cuttings, with the autumn bloom of this year, is shown in the illustration facing page 104.

To identify the Faded Pink Monthly teased us through many months of real study. All we surely knew was that it had a fragrance not like a China or Tea, that it resembled the China bloom, that it flowered in immense clusters, and that it was old.

Carrying our notes and holding fast and hard to our descriptions of bush, foliage, bloom, and general habit, we made repeated visits to the New York Public Library, where we studied those beautiful volumes, "Les Roses," written by Thory and illustrated by Redoute. After we had run down the Chinas to repeated disappointment,-for we thought it was some sort of China,-we went after the early Noisettes, the early ones which we had not known, our Noisette acquaintance, hitherto, having been confined to Marechal Niel and other later varieties into which the Tea cross had been introduced.

The story of the Noisette is interestingly told by the authors of 1817 to 1870. Mr. Nicolas has repeated it in his recent book, "The Rose Manual." He writes, "The Noisette has an interesting history since it probably is the first strain originated in America. By fertilizing the Musk variety, *Rosa moschata alba*, with the Bengal rose, John Champneys, of Charleston, S. C., obtained a variety called 'Champneys' Pink Cluster.' A few years later, Philippe Noisette, from seeds of this variety, produced several perpetual-blooming hybrids which he sent to his brother in Paris under the name of 'Noisette Roses'." Ellwanger in his book, "The Rose," says, "Louis Noisette received it about the year 1817. These roses, originally, had the characteristics in a great measure of the old Musk Rose, such as scent and a tendency to bloom in large clusters. The group is naturally of strong growth and nearly hardy." This blush Noisette of 1817 was called *Le Rosier de Philippe Noisette* by Thory and so painted by Redoute in "Les Roses." In "Les Roses," the *Rosier de Philippe Noisette* is thus described: The bush grew in France to 8 or 10 feet. (Four to 5 feet is the height attained by the Faded Pink Monthly so far in its career with us.) Branches are glabrous, with prickles quite strong, a bit crooked, red on the flowering shoots, brown on the old branches. Leaflets, 5 to 7, oval pointed, rarely obtuse, glabrous, green above, paler underneath, simply and finely serrate. Petioles velvety, armed with several little recurving prickles which extend onto the vein of the impaire or end leaflet, sometimes. Stipules are

adnate with the petiole, bisected, pointed at end, toothed and glandulous on the edges. Flowers are lateral and terminal. The first to open are larger than the Musk Rose, the later ones a little less in size. They have a fragrance "tres-suave." The flowers are rarely solitary, more often they come 3 or 6 together at the ends of the branching stems, where they unite in a sort of panicle often composed of a great quantity of flowers, even as many as 130, which develop successively and very well. The tube of the calyx is shaped like a little keg. The pedicels are covered with downy hairs or glands. The sepals are two entire and three provided with small simple pinnules. They are pointed at the end, downy inside, and edged with little sessile glands. (Faded Pink Monthly so far has never exceeded 30 in a cluster of bloom.) The corolla has 7 or 8 ranks of white petals washed with pink, a little yellow at the claw, irregularly indented at the top. Styles are free, with stigmas reddish making a salient pistil. The rose partakes of the China Rose in foliage, flowers, and period of bloom. It differs from the Musk Rose by having free styles which in the Musk are joined in a column.

With the exception of height and quantity of flowers in a cluster, this was the Faded Pink Monthly.

In Redoute the text says the rose begins to bloom in July and blooms until frost. With us in southern Maryland, Faded Pink Monthly begins late in May, blooming until cut by frost. We noted a few facts not touched upon in the above description: An occasional flowering branch was found quite devoid of prickles; the unpaired leaflet was generally a bit longer than the paired; a few bracts were foliaceous, perhaps the result of rich feeding; the pedicels frequently were subarticulate or jointed. Comparing the odor with the Musk, we decided that the fragrance was musky.

Because we were not completely satisfied, we went to other books. Boitard added to our description that the leaflets are sharply and simply toothed, with the serrations converging; that bracts, a noticeable feature in the bloom of Faded Pink Monthly, are linear, lanceolate, awl-shaped, glandular on the edges, and often inclined to drop off. He mentions that the inner petals of the flower are entire while the outer ones are notched. Cochet adds that the stipules are deeply toothed, like *Rosa moschata*, and that the leaflets are a "beau vert tendre." Other authorities state that thornless flowering shoots and jointed pedicels are found. Many speak of the Musk fragrance.

It seems, with the Faded Pink Monthly so bravely meeting these fine points of description, deficient up to now only in ultimate height and size of cluster, we are justified in believing that this is a plant of *Le Rosier de Philippe Noisette* 1817.

Were there others somewhere? We went hunting. While we have not found another Faded Pink Monthly anywhere, our hunting has been good. We have one with white flowers coming in great clusters, pure white under the sun but often opening with a deep rose-colored, small, sharply marked center made by the rosy shanks of the petals. The books say 'Aimee Vibert' is pure white. So be it. We are calling the white rose "St. Leonards" as we got it near the St. Leonards post office.