

man, energetically commenced their culture; and in the course of a few years twenty varieties could be purchased.<sup>183</sup> At about the same period, namely in 1813 or 1814, Lord Gambier collected some wild plants, and his gardener, Mr. Thomson, cultivated them, together with some common garden varieties, and soon effected a great improvement. The first great change was the conversion of the dark lines in the centre of the flower into a dark eye or centre, which at that period had never been seen, but is now considered one of the chief requisites of a first-rate flower. In 1835 a book entirely devoted to this flower was published, and four hundred named varieties were on sale. From these circumstances this plant seemed to me worth studying, more especially from the great contrast between the small, dull, elongated, irregular flowers of the wild pansy, and the beautiful, flat, symmetrical, circular, velvet-like flowers, more than two inches in diameter, magnificently and variously coloured, which are exhibited at our shows. But when I came to enquire more closely, I found that, though the varieties were so modern, yet that much confusion and doubt prevailed about their parentage. Florists believe that the varieties<sup>184</sup> are descended from several wild stocks, namely, *V. tricolor*, *lutea*, *grandiflora*, *amaena*, and *altaica*, more or less intercrossed. And when I looked to botanical works to ascertain whether these forms ought to be ranked as species, I found equal doubt and confusion. *Viola altaica* seems to be a distinct form, but what part it has played in the origin of our varieties I know not; it is said to have been crossed with *V. lutea*. *Viola amaena*<sup>185</sup> is now looked at by all botanists as a natural variety of *V. grandiflora*; and this and *V. sudetica* have been proved to be identical with *V. lutea*. The latter and *V. tricolor* (including its admitted variety *V. arvensis*) are ranked as distinct species by Babington, and likewise by M. Gay,<sup>186</sup> who has paid particular attention to the genus; but the specific distinction between *V. lutea* and *tricolor* is chiefly grounded on the one being strictly and the other not strictly perennial, as well as on some other slight and unimportant differences in the form of the stem and stipules. Bentham unites these two forms; and a high authority on such matters, Mr. H. C. Watson,<sup>187</sup> says that, "while *V. tricolor* passes into *V. arvensis* on the one side, it approximates so much towards *V. lutea* and *V. Curtisii* on the other side, that a distinction becomes scarcely more easy between them."

Hence, after having carefully compared numerous varieties, I

<sup>183</sup> Loudon's 'Gardener's Magazine,' vol. xi. 1835, p. 427; also 'Journal of Horticulture,' April 14, 1863, p. 275.

<sup>184</sup> Loudon's 'Gardener's Magazine,' vol. viii. p. 575; vol. ix. p. 689.

<sup>185</sup> Sir J. E. Smith, 'English Flora,' vol. i. p. 306. H. C. Watson, 'Cybele Britannica,' vol. i. 1847, p. 181.

<sup>186</sup> Quoted from 'Annales des Sciences,' in the Companion to the 'Bot. Mag.,' vol. i. 1835, p. 159.

<sup>187</sup> 'Cybele Britannica,' vol. i. p. 173. See also Dr. Herbert on the changes of colour in transplanted specimens, and on the natural variations of *V. grandiflora*, in 'Transact. Hort. Soc.' vol. iv. p. 19.