

"get-up" of everything shown so that it may appear to the best advantage possible, proper protection of plants, flowers and all delicate objects; also on the necessity of all fruits and vegetables being tasted or cut open by the judges. In reference to the last-named particular our contemporary makes one or two startling disclosures as follows:

"We have known every berry in a quart of strawberries have a good-sized shot inserted in it, by lifting a calyx-leaf and pressing it into the berry, and this only detected by an outsider "hooking," a berry, and finding the shot between his teeth. The same thing may be done with other fruits, and we have known gooseberries and strawberries to be soaked in water, and vegetables also, in order to add to their weight."

But we took pen in hand chiefly to record our dissent from the following paragraph:

"Secondly, every society should keep a record from year to year of the size, weight, and appearance of all grains, fruits, and vegetables exhibited, the finest of which should have the first premium; but afterward, no first premium should be awarded, unless the article exceeded in quality that of the same sort which had previously obtained a first prize. For instance, if John Doe this year exhibits a bushel of Diehl wheat weighing sixty-five pounds, then no first premium should be awarded to any person, in any future year, for a bushel of the same variety, unless it should weigh sixty-six pounds; and that weight being attained, the next first premium should be awarded to a bushel weighing sixty-seven pounds, and so on. Again, if Richard Roe exhibits six Seckel pears weighing twenty-four ounces, that should be accepted as the standard, and no first prize afterward given unless that weight is surpassed. If celery is exhibited blanched thirty-two inches, and a certain weight, that should be the standard, and no first premium afterward awarded unless it is surpassed in both respects; and so with all products grown from the soil. The object of giving premiums being to excite emulation, and to incite cultivators to improve the qualities of grain, fruit, and vegetables, it is very short-sighted to do away with wholesome rivalry, by giving in one year a premium for wheat weighing sixty-four pounds to the bushel, and the next year four to six pounds less—the latter only having the opportunity to take such a premium, perhaps, because the party who had previously shown it at sixty-four pounds has refrained from exhibiting, although this year he had it of equal weight with that grown last year, thus placing both on the same level as to skill, excellence, etc."

So far as the manifest object of the foregoing

paragraph is concerned, viz: to prevent really inferior products being rewarded by premiums, we are wholly in sympathy with it, but the ground taken is ultra to the verge of impossibility. You cannot go on increasing the weight of a bushel of wheat, the size of a Seckel pear, and the length of blanched celery indefinitely; nature has her limits beyond which she will neither be coaxed nor forced; nor will the time ever come when, in this climate, wheat will weigh as much to the bushel as shot, or a Seckel pear be as big as a pumpkin, or blanched celery rival for length pike-staves and telegraph poles. Fix if you please a practicably high standard; prescribe what an exhibition bushel of wheat must weigh to stand any chance of getting a prize; do the same with fruit and vegetables; positively refuse to premium inferior specimens, and you do all that it is reasonable and fair to attempt. As there are "points" for judging horses and cattle, a "standard of excellence" for judging poultry, &c., so let there be rules for judging all articles, and by no means give a prize to a specimen because it happens to be the best on the ground when it is notoriously below par.

There is one difficulty however, in even going so far as this, which ought not to be overlooked. Seasons differ. With the same culture a bushel of wheat will vary in weight, a Seckel pear in size, and a stalk of celery in length, from this cause alone. Will you punish man for what it is beyond his power to control? Or will you put a premium upon special cultivation for exhibition purposes, such as leads gooseberry-growers in England to "suckle" as it is called a few berries on each bush, by placing saucers of water under them? It is not this extra petting of a few samples for the sake of winning a prize that we want, but good, faithful, diligent culture such as can be bestowed on whole crops, orchards, and farms.

There is surely a *via media* of reasonable practicability and inspiring emulation between the looseness of bestowing premiums on unworthy objects because no better are present, and the ultraism of demanding the attainment of a higher point each and every time of exhibition. The subject is important, and it is high time it were thoroughly ventilated. If this article shall help at all in drawing attention to the matter, our end in writing it will be attained.