

must not be a mere variation, but a decided difference of form or feature. The merit of any novelty of feature, moreover, must always be estimated subject to the higher qualities of form, substance, smoothness, proportion, &c.

Cut flowers for competition are always shown in collections, *e. g.* Roses, Carnations, Pansies, Gladioli, Hollyhocks, Asters, &c. Hence, many of the points advanced under the head of Plants staged in Collections, apply to the *e. also*; but there are additional points, such as those advanced under New Florists' Flowers, and over and beyond all these come in the special properties of each particular kind of flower. I will merely mention those which are of general application, or nearly so:—

1. *Conformity with the terms of the Schedule.*

2. *Freshness, and unimpaired Condition.*

3. *Special Properties* of the particular flower under judgment, and more particularly as regards:—Form, substance, smoothness of texture and margin, purity and definition in colour.

4. *Variety.*

The only strictly accurate mode of judging is by allotting marks to each collection or plant in respect of each point of merit, and finally summing up the total. This may seem a tedious method of arriving at a result, but it need not be so in reality; and it is practically the method under which, by means of a mental process, our best judges arrive at their decisions. When this plan is adopted there is no guesswork, but the sum of the merits of a plant or a collection must come out accurately. I can only here briefly indicate how the method may be applied:—

In Plants staged in Collection, the first point settles whether the collection is admissible or not—nonconformity with the schedule means disqualification. The other points must be gone over *seriatim*, and a decision arrived at whether each plant can be marked as good, bad, or indifferent, in respect to each point. As the points are not all equal I would allow double marks for the points of primary importance, and single marks for the secondary ones. Under the former, good would be represented say by 6 marks, indifferent by 3 marks, bad by 1 mark. Under the latter good would stand at 3, indifferent at 2, bad at one. With a little practice these numbers would be soon run out, even in a collection of a dozen or a score of plants, especially if prepared slips with columns for the different points were handed to the judges previous to their commencing their duties. I should put the points numbered 2, 3, 4, and 5 (health, freshness, beauty, compatibility) in the first category, and 6, 7, 8, and 9 (size, variety, facility of culture, rarity, and value) in the second, as regards col-

lections of flowering plants; and 2, 3, and 4 (health, freshness, beauty), in the first, and 5, 6, and 7 (facility of culture, size, rarity,) in the second category, as regards specimen plants. In this way the decisions may be very accurately made out, the groups being all competitive.

In the case of new plants, the subjects require a different treatment, the object being to determine their intrinsic, not their comparative merit. Here, consequently, a fixed number, say 100, should indicate the highest degree of excellence, and any lesser number awarded will show the degree in which they approach this highest degree of merit. Practically those plants which gain 75 marks or upwards would be 1st class in merit; those which gain over 50 up to 75 would be 2nd class; and those which gain only from 30 to 50 would be 3rd class. In these cases the full number assigned to each meritorious feature is only to be awarded to the perfect condition of that feature, and any lesser proportionate number according to the actual degree of merit.

In reducing this to practice, the following would be the marks indicating the highest degrees of excellence in the case of New Flowering Plants:—

1. Freshness of habit.....	15	
2. Profuseness and display of flowers	15	
3. Healthiness of leaf-development..	15	
4. Purity, brightness, or contrast of colour.....	10	
5. Endurance, substance, and form of flowers.....	10	
6. Succession of bloom.....	10	
7. Size of flower.....	10	
8. Distinctness of character.....	5	
9. Gratefulness of odour in leaves or flowers.....	5	
10. Novelty of a decided kind.....	5	
		=100 marks.

Glaring defects amongst new flowering plants would be presented by the under-mentioned peculiarities, each of which should reduce the award by 10:—Straggling habit, flimsy flowers, muddled or dingy or fleeting colours, fetid odour.

The following is the scale proposed for New Foliage Plants:—

1. Freshness of habit.....	15	
2. Healthiness of leaf-development..	15	
3. Gracefulness or nobility of aspect	15	
4. Endurance of foliage.....	15	
5. Distinctness of character.....	15	
6. Agreeableness of colouring.....	10	
7. Definition in markings.....	10	
8. Novelty.....	5	
		=100 marks.

As glaring defects which may occur in this class of plants, may be mentioned the following peculiarities, each of which should reduce the award by 10:—Straggling habit; flimsy, tender, rapidly perishing leaves; indistinct or fleeting colours or markings.

In the case of New Florists' Flowers, the points of excellence would bear the numerical ratio indicated below:—

1. Form.....	15	
2. Substance.....	15	
3. Smoothness.....	15	
4. Colour.....	10	
5. Fixity of colour.....	10	
6. Proportion.....	10	
7. Size.....	10	
8. Distinctness.....	10	
9. Novelty.....	5	
		=100 marks.

The most glaring faults in this class of subjects are to be found in the following

features, which are in most cases altogether incompatible with a high position: Open eyes, as they are called, when double flowers show any part of the disc or centre; split petals or florets; run or confused or fading colours; roughness of outline or surface.

MRS. MILLINGTON'S PRIZE FARM.

In America, the Ladies talk politics and make speeches, but in England they work farms. At the recent Competition of the Royal Agricultural Society, the farm which gained the first prize, "in fair fight," was found to be managed by a Lady,—not a small parlour farm or potato patch such as may be seen on this continent under female management, but a regular working business farm, with 800 acres under the plough. The following account of Mrs. Millington's farm is given in the *Agricultural Gazette*:—

Few competitions have created more interest than that which has occupied attention during the last week, between the various candidates for Mr. Mason's prizes. We hardly need remind our readers that a cup valued at £100 was offered by Mr. Mason, late High Sheriff of the County of Oxford, for the best managed farm held by a tenant, in a certain large but circumscribed district. The fact has for the last few months been well known in agricultural circles, and considerable interest has been expressed as to the result. Mr. Torr, Mr. Keary, and Mr. Gibbons formed a very well qualified committee of inspection, and these gentlemen, after visiting the candidate farms, first in April, and again within the last fortnight, have arrived at a decision already before the public. It is well known now that what was a matter of report a few weeks ago is true, namely, that the judges, after mature consideration, have decided to award the first prize to a lady. We regard this as a significant fact. Much has lately been said and written upon the capabilities of the fairer and gentler sex to engage in more masculine duties than have hitherto engaged their attention. The subject is a difficult one, and it is far from our intention now to discuss it. One thing is however clear, namely, that three experienced and accredited agriculturists have, after the closest scrutiny and the greatest care, concluded that, in an area of some hundreds of square miles, the best managed farm is in the hands of a woman. When the decision was known on Tuesday, we were naturally anxious to visit so notable a farm, and accordingly we left Oxford, its crowded show-yard and throng of visitors, and sought the privilege of a quiet walk around this distinguished piece of nineteenth century cultivation. Claiming to be country bred, and not altogether unacquainted with