

Horticulture.

ROSEBANK NURSERY, AMHERSTBURGH.

We beg to call the attention of our readers to Mr. James Dougall's advertisement on another page. His collection of fruit trees, shrubs and flowers, is very extensive; and from the well-known attainments of the enterprising proprietor, both in the science and practice of his profession, all articles sent from his establishment may be safely relied upon for being correctly named and of genuine character. Many of the fruits raised by Mr. Dougall may be seen growing in a state of maturity in his extensive orchards. A sense of duty alone impels us thus to make honourable mention of one who has done much to advance both the agricultural as well as the horticultural interests of Canada.

THE LONDON HORTICULTURAL SEASON having now closed with the great Exhibition at Chiswick, on Wednesday last, the time has come for making a few general remarks in anticipation of future years. To our minds, the evidence of advancing horticultural skill, afforded by the Chiswick meetings, is most satisfactory. It may be true, that nothing has been produced more remarkable, as an example of high cultivation, than has been seen before; perhaps in some things skill can go no further. It is possible that individual cases of better gardening might be pointed out in former years; but what is far more important is the fact, that in no season has so little appeared of inferior quality. It has become as rare to find ill-grown plants in the exhibitions at Chiswick, as it once was to find them well grown. Things of which a head gardener would have been proud some twenty years ago, his apprentice would be ashamed of now. This alteration must be admitted to be immense gain; it proves, that although progress may in some particulars be arrested, it is upon the whole in vigorous and rapid march.

Nor can it now fall back. In the onward flow of the arts of civilization, there is no ebb; there may be eddies, and rapids, and bars, and shallows; and gales may for a moment force back the advancing flood, but such obstacles are soon overcome, and the mighty stream glides on with a force that accumulates as the volume augments. Against the return of gardening to its former state, we have this security, that the taste of the public has kept pace with the improvement of the profession. The employers of gardeners have become fastidious; what they would have admired in 1800, and endured in 1820, they now scout. A striking proof of this was afforded on Saturday, by the remarks of the visitors, who chanced to spy some unhappy grapes which an innocent country gardener had produced as a sample of his skill. The grapes were not so bad: we have seen far worse gain prizes; but the lookers on refused to endure them, because they have become accustomed to what is infinitely better. Visitors to these exhibitions come not only from every quarter of the globe, but from every hundred in England, perhaps from every village; they see what gardeners can do; they hear that the best results are often obtained by men with no better means than their own; and they return to their homes determined that there also really good gardening shall be introduced.

That is the security against the art of horticulture falling back to its ancient level.

The quality of the plants exhibited is not the only matter in which the public taste is changing; and it is as well to point out what direction the change is taking.

What are called large collections of plants have ceased to be popular. Admirable as have been the specimens shown under this denomination, visitors no longer crowd around them. You hear the passers by exclaim, "how fine! how lovely! What a capital garden Mr. — must have!" and that is all. The tents are deserted for a more attractive display. Nevertheless there are crowds around the "small collections;" although made up of similar plants, they have not lost their interest. The reasons of this we take to be several. In the first place there is little or no competition for the "large collections." One or two leviathans swallow all the minnows. In the next place the small collections are more varied, more choice, and are moreover for the most part composed of smaller specimens; to have a chance of winning in them, everything must be at least on the borders of perfection. Insufficient competition in the larger groups produces the contrary effect.

A similar indifference is manifested yearly towards heaths. They are in themselves among the most beautiful objects in the greenhouse; great success in growing them shows great horticultural skill; and the detached branches, or solitary bushes, amidst other plants, excite everybody's admiration. Nevertheless the heath tents are generally almost empty. This we take to be caused by the monotony of the form of heaths, and the entire absence of a graceful mode of growth. Groups of them have no picturesque effect. The flowers indeed display all the tints of red and yellow and white; the foliage is of the purest green; the blossoms are of greatly varied shape; and yet the plants have an uninviting sameness. The flowers are all tubes, the leaves are all narrow, and the general form of the bushes is so round that a person ignorant of their nature might imagine them to be relics of the clipped hedges of our ancestors. In fact a row of finely-grown Hottentot heaths is like a line of Hottentot Kraals. This is fatal to masses of such plants exciting pleasurable emotions in a crowd of lookers on.

It is because they are so entirely the reverse of this that the orchids fascinate everybody. Where they are, and where roses are, the crowd is greatest: it is either that the earliest visitors invariably resort, and there they linger. You never find the tent of orchids deserted. Men say that it is because of their singular forms, and their aromatic fragrance; but we believe that the explanation is chiefly to be found in their graceful outlines and infinitely varied aspect. It is as difficult to give sameness to a bank of highly cultivated orchids as it is to throw variety into a line of Cape heaths.

New plants are becoming less numerous. They scarcely appear, indeed, except from the great house of the VERRIES of Exeter, or from the garden of the Horticultural Society. But, on the other hand, there is the satisfaction of witnessing every now and then the reappearance of some old plant as good as new. Let us hope that we may see many more such cases. When, at the end of the last century and beginning of this, the horticultural *furor* began to tell upon the English mind, people could not grow the plants that merchants brought them. They were flowered, named, indifferently represented in botanical periodicals, starved to death, and forgotten. But among the casualties of those days were many beautiful creations, the names of which stand in our catalogues as so many records of horticultural usefulness. Because they flourished *anno Domini* 1795, they are set down as "old things," and, like other old things, are no longer cared for. From the way in which these plants are treated, one would think they possessed the attributes of humanity. We can, however,