

apply. In treating of the culture of the bulb three separate points occur to me:—1. The possession of good bulbs; 2. The season of planting; 3. After culture; and these I proceed to discuss separately.

GOOD BULBS.—The best Hyacinths are imported from Holland. A more beautiful bulb could scarcely be conceived than the gar-
den and around Haarlem in the spring and summer months, with their acres of ground, strewed with millions of Crocuses, Tulips, Hyacinths, blue, white, red, and yellow, of the richest and most varied hues, the more grateful to the eye, the more impressive, because following so closely on the footsteps of winter. As is well known, the culture of the Hyacinth and its allied speciality in Holland. I do not see why it should not be the same here, as the difference in some localities, climates, and soils would appear to me insufficient to account for its not being so. Perhaps our horticulturists are much occupied with other matters, and it might be commercially unwise to contend in the field against such skilful and indefatigable contemporaries without first acquiring a good knowledge of so distinct a branch of the art of gardening. We may, and I believe we can, bloom them as well here as there. The question remains, can we bring bulbs of the same growth into the market of the same quality and at the same price? The answer is, not at present. We can, in the present state of our cultivation and practice, buy and sell cheaper than we can produce.

The Hyacinth being a bulbous plant, the source of supply, at least during the early stages of its growth, depend on the nutriment stored up in the bulb the year before. Thus it will be seen that it is as important to obtain good bulbs as to grow them well when obtained. And here caution the cultivator against placing much confidence in large bulbs. True, a large, sound, solid, weighty, and well stored bulb is a fine specimen of food, the larger the better; but we must not be misled by many large, showy, frothy bulbs sold every year in Holland and in England which fail the test, and which it requires a practiced hand to apply. Then again, there are beautiful sorts of Hyacinths—of which the Tulip is a familiar example—which seldom produce large handsome bulbs. On the other hand, there are some indifferent kinds which produce bulbs of great size and beauty. Further, bulbs of the same kind differ in the hands of different cultivators. In fact, if we need only adduce one fact—and it may be attributed to the greater skill of the cultivator or to the superiority of his soil, it remains—that there is a difference of opinion in the prices of the different growths, the highest priced stock always coming from the readiest market. Having laid the foundation of a successful culture by the acquisition of good bulbs, let us pass to the next

2. **THE SEASON OF PLANTING.**—The natural period of rest for the Hyacinth is from June to October. If planted before the latter month, the shortening of the natural period of rest diminishes the vigour of growth and the beauty of the flowers. So if the planting be delayed far beyond that period, however well the bulbs may be kept, growth commences, the bulb feeds on the deposit of the previous year contained within itself without the means of recruiting the supply, and a loss of power is the consequence. Plant, then, in the month of October, applying a greater or less degree of heat, according to the season or seasons at which the flowers are wanted. If a very early, a very late, or a long succession of bloom be required, some should be planted earlier, and some later; but the month recommended above is the best, if the finest possible bloom is required, without regard to any definite period.

3. **AFTER CULTURE.**—The culture of Hyacinths falls naturally under three heads:—1, In pots; 2, In glasses. 3, In the open ground.

1. **Hyacinths in Pots.**—It is a matter of no small importance to secure a suitable soil, for although the plant in the first instance feeds on itself, the roots once in action, draw largely from the soil in order to replace the nourishment withdrawn from the bulb. A sandy loam should form the bulk of the soil, but such being usually poor, it must be enriched by a plentiful addition of manure. Cow-dung is the best of manures for the Hyacinth, and it is a good plan to obtain it in a fresh state, mixing it with the loam six months before required for use, turning the whole over two or three times in the interval, that the different substances may be well mixed together. When planting, place the bulb in the middle of the pot, setting it quite upright on a small bed of sand, and so that the apex of the bulb may be half an inch above the level of the soil. Soak the soil with water, and when well drained place the pots, in the first instance, out of doors on the solid ground that worms may not enter. Surround the sides of the pots with cinder ashes, and cover the top with about six inches of the same material. In about two months remove the pots to a cold frame, covering with a mat for five or six days, to avoid a sudden transition from darkness to light. When the mats are withdrawn, give more or less air, according to the season at which the bulbs are wanted to flower, bearing in mind that the more air given the better, provided the frost be completely excluded. The long drooping leaves which we see with some cultivators is due to a too warm or too close atmosphere. So soon as the flower-spike rises, a stiff wire should be passed between the bells the whole length of the spike, the lower end bent outwards till it reaches the circumference of the pot, winding it round the outside of the pot beneath the rim to keep the spike upright and steady. Plenty of water should be given from the time the leaves begin