

by the greatest effort of the horticultural skill of the exhibitor. It generally receives an amount of attention which he cannot afford to bestow on a general crop, provided his establishment is an extensive one; and we ought, therefore, to regard the exhibition fruit of a gardening establishment very much as we should the exhibition ox—as the exceptional animal on the farm. In judging fruit, therefore, we must first look to those points which exhibit the greatest amount of horticultural skill, and the first of these are size and symmetry.

In judging size and symmetry we must deal with each variety on its own merits. It would not be fair, for instance, to judge on the same grounds a bunch of Buckland Sweetwater grape and one of White Muscat of Alexandria. A bunch of Buckland Sweetwater may be much larger than, and equally as handsome as one of Muscat of Alexandria, and both may be in every point what gardeners call "well finished;" but the skill required in producing such a bunch of Muscat of Alexandria being much greater than that which is required to grow the Buckland Sweetwater, and the Muscat of Alexandria being a much superior fruit, I would give the preference to the latter, although inferior in size to the former. The same may be said of Black Hamburg and Black Prince shown in the same class, though not on the ground that Black Hamburg requires greater skill in the production of it, but because it is a superior fruit.

It matters not what description of fruit we may be judging; be it Grapes, Pines, Peaches, or any other fruit, size and symmetry are the features which first attract our attention, and therefore to size and symmetry, but not to size apart from symmetry, I attach, perhaps, the greatest importance when other points are not greatly deficient.

The next important feature is colour, requiring much skill in the development of it. This is by some regarded as of even greater importance than size and symmetry. I am rather inclined to give colour second place, except when it is unusually fine, and the difference of size and symmetry between the competing fruit is not great. In such a case I would certainly give preference to colour, for I conceive that in such circumstances there is greater exhibition of horticultural skill in producing the highly-coloured fruit than in producing the larger, because it betokens attention to the maintenance of the just equilibrium between the action of the roots and that of the leaves, and a knowledge as to the crop the plant is capable of producing, without which I conceive no fruit can be well and perfectly coloured. One may feed and force a plant so as to induce it to produce a large and showy fruit; but unless the treatment

is so regulated as to preserve the just equilibrium between the root, which serves as the mouth, and the leaves, which perform the functions of digestive organs, there is no guarantee either for high colour or perfect flavour, which generally go together. Still, I say, when fruit has not an objectionably bad colour, and is not deficient in flavour, but has size and symmetry, I would certainly give the award in favour of the larger fruit.

The next point on which I have to touch is flavour; and here I know there is great diversity of opinion. Some hold that the beginning and the end of all fruit culture is flavour; no matter how large or how small, or however badly coloured, the fruit may be, if flavour is obtained the grower has got all he has ever striven for. Now that is very well when fruit is grown merely for private use; and so long as the palate is satisfied there is no other desire to be gratified; but we are now discussing the merits of exhibition fruit, into which the whole energy of the cultivator is thrown to develop, not one, but every feature of his production, and the greatest display of cultural skill is to succeed in gratifying the mind as much through the eye as through the palate. It is not to be supposed that I depreciate flavour, on the contrary, I consider it an important point in making awards to exhibition fruit; but it ought only to come in when the competition is otherwise so close that another point is required to turn the scale.

There is only one exception I would make on the question of flavour, and that is in judging Melons, which, if they have not flavour, have nothing whatever to recommend them. They may be Vegetable Marrows, or Pumpkins, or any other vegetable production, if flavour is absent; and I think experience will testify that if the flavour of a Melon is even but indifferent, then the fruit is not worth eating, and hence I think all Melons ought to be cut and judged by flavour only.

In the discussion which ensued on the reading of Dr. Hogg's paper, Mr. Marshall said that flowers were grown to please the eye, and therefore were judged by the eye; but fruit being grown to please the palate, he thought that flavour should stand first as being more requisite, say to the Grape, than either size or colour.

Mr. Ayres remarked that it should be the duty of the Society to say that fruit should be grown for use, and not merely for exhibition; he would certainly consider flavour as the first requirement.

Major Clarke thought that fruit was produced commonly on two distinct principles, one to obtain fruit for exhibition, and the other to obtain it for dessert. The man who could combine these two principles he should certainly choose for his gardener.

#### JUDGING PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

The second paper was by Thomas Moore, Esq., F.L.S., a distinguished botanist, on the judging of Plants and Flowers. He treated the subject so fully as regards general principles, as well as details, that his paper is in reality an exhaustive treatise, and we can only refer to some of those points likely to interest the Exhibitors and Judges of our limited Nova Scotian Exhibitions.

**FLORISTS' FLOWERS.**—Though various in character, these admit of more ready and exact comparison than some other subjects; for the number of organs to be adjudicated on are fewer, and hence the requisite features admit of more exact comparison and definition, which definition has been already well worked out by florists. The features to be specially sought, and their relative value are these:—

1. *Form*—In most single flowers this should be circular, or, where the circle will not apply, symmetrical. In double flowers there should be a semi-geobular outline. Compound flowers follow the same law as double flowers. Tubular flowers, and some others of peculiar forms, offer exceptions, which can only be dealt with individually.

2. *Substance*.—The texture of the petals must be stout and dense if the flower is to be durable, for if flimsy it soon gives way, and loses both form and colour.

3. *Smoothness and Flatness of Edge and Surface*.—These qualities are eminently necessary to give refinement to the flower. A course rough-surfaced flower bears no comparison with one of velvet-like smoothness and softness, and evenness of margin is equally necessary. A regular series of wart-like spots, as in the case of some Lilies, is, however, admissible. In some cases, but not often, a well-developed fringe or frill is also admissible.

4. *Colour*.—This must be bright or pure and decided in self-flowers (that is, flowers of one colour), and clearly-defined and well-contrasted in striped or laced flowers.

5. *Fixity of Colour* is a quality of some importance, and depends partly, but not wholly, on the texture or substance of the corolla.

6. *Proportion of Parts to the Whole* is an essential element of beauty, but as this depends on the actual form, it must be defined individually in the different kinds of flowers.

7. *Size* is an advantage, so that it is not disproportionate nor conducive to coarseness.

8. *Distinctness* is absolutely necessary for the sake of variety.

9. *Novelty* is a quality always welcome, as it enlarges the field of floriculture; but, to count as a point in judging the change,