

THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST.

so improved under the refining influence of scientific selection, as to make it the most desirable flower, even if both could be produced with equal simplicity of culture.

My reason for this statement is : that if from the comparatively few species used in the production of our hybrid Gladioli we have seen developed such marvels of beauty, and more within the past five years than in the preceding fifty, it is not unreasonable to expect an even more rapid proportionate increase in beauty and variation in the future, not only from the results of close selection from these perfected hybrids, but through the many newly discovered species yearly increased by botanical exploration, each bearing such special and distinct characteristics as to give greater promise for the future.

When first I became interested in the flower and purchased my amateur supply by the thousand, it seemed desirable to select the most beautiful ones and discard inferior sorts—so I began my first selected mixtures. During the long and dreary winter I cheered myself with thoughts of the pleasure awaiting me, but when the "selected" bloomed I concluded that a mistake had been made, for I could never have thought such flowers worthy of perpetuation. Of course I wanted to know the reason for the non-appearance of my favorites, and found this inability to reproduce characteristic flowers due to lack of vitality and fixity, caused by the self fertilization of a long in-bred and degenerated parentage.

Hybridizing and cross-breeding of selected varieties being the only path to my ideal, I gathered the best material obtainable and commenced work, and so absorbing and interesting has it become, that I never expect to abandon it entirely.

As a flower for amateurs the Gladiolus demands a first place on account of ease of culture, unequalled range of color and variation, and general adaptability for home, cemetery, and church decoration. Few flowers cover the whole range of color equal to the Gladiolus, and when fixed types are secured they can be reproduced year after year without loss.

Horticultural societies are justified in giving them prominence, but they may never hope to understand the flower, by always buying low grade and low priced stock. I cannot do it—and advise societies to advance the quality of their selections each year, for they will never secure more than fair stock at best, in comparison with the gems obtainable.

On one occasion in reply to an enquiry made by me, a society said, "We bought Gladioli last year," as though one, or even ten purchases of yearly advanced quality in low grade stock, would do more than give a glimpse of the true character and value of a flower that has been so recently improved.

This year a lady writing from Central York, asked me to exclude certain hybrids from her collection, saying, "I just hate them." Fancy beautiful and refined woman hating a flower—but her experience had not extended beyond the earlier hybrids of a section which excels the whole group in form, size, substance, quality, beauty, and range of color.

A large dealer last year expressed his objection to the form and size of a certain section, and was surprised to learn, that not only was the form referred to out of date in this section ; but was the largest and best formed flower bloomed by me in contrast to the world's best and latest introductions in that season, was of this condemned family.

I simply give these instances in sup-